

WINNING IDEAS FOR STARTUPS USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Growth is one of the key traits that startups must focus on to gain traction. **Maximizing growth** can be tricky, however, especially if funds are tight because you need to concentrate resources into other areas of the business. Yet, without customers, it will be hard to reach your targets.



Research is key

Just because you *can* post a social media message doesn't mean you *should* post one. **Not straight away, at least.** Like any other plan of action, those new to social media need to **research** their market before jumping straight in and creating content. You most likely formulated a business plan for your startup in the early stage of your company's conception, and it's essential that you apply the same thought process for your social media outreach. Research your audience, identify personas, and discover where your target market congregates online. Research could reveal that your audience is mostly on Twitter, as opposed to Facebook or Instagram. One of the best ways to determine this is by identifying the ages and personas of your target market and then cross-referencing them with social media networks.

Facebook users



83%
Women



75%
Men



62%
Of seniors use Facebook



Which suggests the demographic is a slightly older audience than, say, Instagram, whose average is between 24 and 35.



Keep up with the latest trends

Nobody wants to arrive at a party too early or too late. It's all about **timing** it so that you get there during the peak period. It's the same for **social media channels and implementing the latest trends**: users need to embrace trends just as they reach peak popularity. It's easier said than done but making sure you're slightly ahead of the curve with your social media output can give you an edge over competitors. One of the best ways to do this is by looking at the most popular social networks and reviewing the actions of the biggest brands in your industry. Whether it's using live streams on Facebook, **Instagram TV**, or taking advantage of **location-based marketing**, the latest trends can help propel your businesses' social media outreach. You want to be seen as a thought leader and trendsetter rather than a follower.



Use social media tools

If you're new to social media and feel like it's a continuous game of catch up, there is some good news. **Social media tools** make managing your efforts across each platform easier with in-depth insights and access to information all in one convenient place. Instead of needing to navigate to each social media platform individually, a social media tool lets you see everything that is happening across all platforms. It also provides data-rich insights that will help startups better understand their efforts. It acts as an easy way to monitor conversations, schedule and publish multiple posts, and compare yourself with competitors. Having a social media tool provides extra support, which is especially helpful if you're new to social media marketing.



Be consistent with your output

Opening social media accounts for your business is the easy part. Building an audience with engaging content is a somewhat harder task. Persistence will pay off, though, even if it feels like you're not building an audience to begin with. However, failure to see instant growth should not mean that you leave your social media account to accumulate digital dust. Instead, **schedule** regular posts, **engage** with other people and businesses online, and aim to start conversations. Regularly update your website with new content, such as blog posts, and then share them on social media.



Include images in posts:

On Twitter, tweets with images get **18% more clicks** and **89% more likes**. It might take a few months, but you will start seeing follower counts increase.



Don't go for the hard sell

The majority of startups navigating social media for the first time think about one thing: selling their product or service. Looking after your bottom line is essential for revenue growth, but going straight for the **hard sell on social media will end up being a costly mistake**. Using selling as the only method of communication will see **you lose trust with your audience**. And once that trust is gone, it's virtually impossible to build it back up. Instead, create content that enhances your audiences' knowledge and be a thought leader on topics in your industry. For example, if you're using LinkedIn, write regular posts about thought-provoking topics that speak to other professionals. Show value in your products and services by detailing how they can improve your industry. These methods are far more likely to get potential customers thinking about your products and services than a barrage of posts trying to sell your offering.



Get your audience involved

Social media has given everyone a voice. As a result, it's changed the way that consumers think about brands. They no longer want to buy products from faceless organizations, and **they also want to have their own input in the brand**. Essentially, you need to create a community where your followers feel like valued assets. One of the best ways to achieve this is by engaging with them and asking their opinions, whether it's about new branding material or asking what they want to see from your startup. If customers feel valued, they are more likely to become brand evangelists and champion your cause.



56%

of customers stay loyal to brands who **understand their needs**, which is why it's vital that you make your social media channels a community where everyone has their input.



Using social media to grow

Applying these suggestions for startups will help your business get off on the right foot in the world of social media. At first, it might seem like a tricky place to navigate. But keeping at it with creative, engaging content will prove to be a rewarding experience that sees you grow your follower count while enhancing your startup.