

LEARNING MADE EASY



6th Edition

Social Media Marketing

ALL-IN-ONE

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand



9
Books
in one!

Michelle Krasniak

Content & Social Media Marketing
Leader and Co-Author of *Social Media
Optimization For Dummies*

Social Media Marketing All-n-One For Dummies®

To view this book's Cheat Sheet, simply go to www.dummies.com and search for “Social Media Marketing All-n-One For Dummies Cheat Sheet” in the Search box.

Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Introduction](#)

[About This Book](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[Icons Used in This Book](#)

[Beyond the Book](#)

[Where to Go from Here](#)

[Book 1: The Social Media Mix](#)

[Chapter 1: Making the Business Case for Social Media](#)

[Making Your Social Debut](#)

[Defining Social Media Marketing](#)

[Understanding the Benefits of Social Media](#)

[Understanding the Cons of Social Media](#)

[Integrating Social Media into Your Overall Marketing Effort](#)

[Developing a Strategic Social Media Marketing Plan](#)

[Chapter 2: Tallying the Bottom Line](#)

[Preparing to Calculate Return on Investment](#)

[Accounting for Customers Acquired Online](#)

[Establishing Key Performance Indicators for Sales](#)

[Tracking Leads](#)

[Understanding Other Common Business Metrics](#)

[Determining Return on Investment](#)

[Chapter 3: Plotting Your Social Media Marketing Strategy](#)

[Locating Your Target Market Online](#)

[Segmenting Your B2C Market](#)

[Researching B2B Markets](#)

[Conducting Other Types of Market Research Online](#)

[Setting Up Your Social Media Marketing Plan](#)

Chapter 4: Managing Your Cybersocial Campaign

[Managing Your Social Media Schedule](#)

[Building Your Social Media Marketing Dream Team](#)

[Creating a Social Media Marketing Policy](#)

[Staying on the Right Side of the Law](#)

[Protecting Your Brand Reputation](#)

Book 2: Cybersocial Tools

Chapter 1: Discovering Helpful Tech Tools

[Keeping Track of the Social Media Scene](#)

[Saving Time with Content-Distribution Tools](#)

[Alternative Content-Distribution Services](#)

[Snipping Ugly URLs](#)

[Using E-Commerce Tools for Social Sites](#)

[Keeping Your Ear to the Social Ground](#)

[Measuring the Buzz by Type of Service](#)

Chapter 2: Leveraging SEO for Improved Visibility

[Making the Statistical Case for SEO](#)

[Thinking Tactically and Practically](#)

[Knowing the Importance of Search Phrases](#)

[Maximizing Metatag Muscle](#)

[Optimizing Your Site and Content for Search Engines](#)

Chapter 3: Optimizing Social Media for Internal and External Searches

[Placing Search Terms on Social Media](#)

[Optimizing Blogs](#)

[Optimizing Images, Video, and Podcasts](#)

[Optimizing Specific Social Media Platforms](#)

[Gaining Traction on Google with Social Media](#)

[Monitoring Your Search Engine Ranking](#)

Chapter 4: Using Social Bookmarks, News, and Share Buttons

[Bookmarking Your Way to Traffic](#)

[Sharing the News](#)

[Benefiting from Social Bookmarks and News Services](#)

[Researching a Social Bookmark and Social News Campaign](#)

[Submitting to Bookmarking Services](#)

[Submitting to Social News Services](#)

[Using Application-Specific Bookmarks](#)

[Timing Your Submissions](#)

[Encouraging Others to Bookmark or Rate Your Site](#)

[Using Social Media Buttons](#)

Book 3: Content Marketing

Chapter 1: Growing Your Brand with Content

[Introducing Content Marketing](#)

[Determining the Best Content Platform for Your Needs](#)

[Selling Your Brand through Content Marketing](#)

[Making Your Content Stand Out](#)

Chapter 2: Exploring Content-Marketing Platforms

[Building a Blog](#)

[Using Podcasts and Video on Your Blog or Website](#)

[Sharing Images](#)

[Using Social Media Platforms for Online Content](#)

[Guest Blogging to Grow Awareness and Expertise](#)

Chapter 3: Developing a Content-Marketing Strategy

[Determining Content Goals](#)

[Putting a Strategy on Paper](#)

Chapter 4: Getting Your Content to the Masses

[Creating an Editorial Calendar to Keep Content Flowing](#)

[Finding the Right Mix between Evergreen and Timely Content](#)

[Jumping on the AI-Generated Content Train](#)

[Executing Your Content Strategy](#)

[Sharing Your Content with the Public](#)

[Measuring the Success of Your Content Strategy](#)

Book 4: X

Chapter 1: Using X as a Marketing Tool

[Deciding Whether X Is Right for You](#)

[Communicating in 280 Characters](#)

[Promoting without Seeming like You're Promoting](#)

[Researching Other Brands on X](#)

[Knowing Quality Is More Important than Quantity](#)

Chapter 2: Using X as a Networking Tool

[Finding the Right People to Follow](#)

[Finding the Right Topics to Follow](#)

[Finding Out Who Is Talking about You on X](#)

[Responding to Posts](#)

[Searching on X](#)

[Filtering Search Results](#)

[Posting like a Pro](#)

[Sharing on X](#)

[Following the X Rules of Etiquette](#)

Chapter 3: Making X Yours

[Customizing Your X Profile Page](#)

[Considering a Premium or Business Account](#)

[Pinning or Highlighting Posts](#)

[Embedding Posts](#)

Chapter 4: Social Listening with X

[Using X to Listen to Your Customers](#)

Book 5: Facebook

Chapter 1: Using Facebook as a Marketing Tool

[Understanding the Appeal of Brands on Facebook](#)

[Branding with Facebook Pages](#)

[Examining the Components of a Facebook Page](#)

[Making the Most of Your Facebook Page](#)

[Understanding Your Facebook Administrative Functions](#)

[Filling Out What You're About](#)

[Using a Custom Username for Your Page](#)

[Inviting People to Join Your Community](#)

[Liking Other Brands](#)

[Creating Facebook Events](#)

Chapter 2: Creating and Sharing Content on Facebook

[Creating a Facebook Content Strategy](#)

[Sharing Your Brand's Story](#)

[Creating Content That Sings](#)

[Sharing and Being Shared](#)

[Bringing Your Community into the Mix](#)

[Making Connections with Facebook Groups](#)

[Learning through Insights](#)

Chapter 3: Advertising and Selling on Facebook

[Reaching More Fans with Ads](#)

[Measuring Your Ad's ROI](#)

[Selling on Facebook](#)

Chapter 4: Streaming Live Video on Facebook

[Understanding the Benefits of Live Streaming](#)

[Setting Up Your Live Stream](#)

[Engaging with Your Community via Facebook Live](#)

[Brainstorming Ideas for Live Videos](#)

Book 6: LinkedIn

Chapter 1: Promoting Yourself with LinkedIn

[Exploring the Benefits of Using LinkedIn](#)

[Creating an Online Resume](#)

[Understanding Recommendations and Endorsements](#)

[Using LinkedIn Messages](#)

Chapter 2: Promoting Your Business with LinkedIn

[Exploring the Benefits of a LinkedIn Page](#)

[Selling and Promoting with LinkedIn Product and Showcase Pages](#)

[Benefiting from LinkedIn Groups](#)

Chapter 3: Using LinkedIn as a Content Platform

[Blogging on LinkedIn](#)

[Promoting Your LinkedIn Articles](#)

[Posting Content on LinkedIn Pages](#)

Book 7: Getting Visual

Chapter 1: Pinning Down Pinterest

[Understanding Pinterest](#)

[Getting Started](#)

[Pinning on Pinterest](#)

[Building Your Pinterest Community](#)

[Using Tools for Pinterest Marketing](#)

Chapter 2: Snapchatting It Up!

[Getting Started with a Snapchat Business Account](#)

[Taking Your First Snap](#)

[Telling Your Snapchat Story](#)

Chapter 3: Getting Started with Instagram

[Promoting Your Brand on Instagram](#)

[Creating and Using Your Instagram Business Account](#)

[Determining What Is Photo-Worthy for Your Brand](#)

[Using Hashtags in Your Instagram Posts](#)

[Using Instagram Stories](#)

[Going Live with Instagram Live](#)

Chapter 4: TikTok(ing) Around the Clock

[Using TikTok for Brand Promotion](#)

[Creating and Personalizing Your TikTok Account](#)

[Determining What Videos You Should Create](#)

[Selling on TikTok Shop](#)

Chapter 5: Watching and Listening: Videos, Podcasts, and Your Brand

[Deciding if Video and Podcasts Are Right for You](#)

[Determining What Content to Create](#)

[Creating Your Content](#)

[Publishing Your Content](#)

Book 8: Other Social Media Marketing Sites

Chapter 1: Weighing the Business Benefits of Minor Social Sites

[Reviewing Your Goals](#)

[Researching Minor Social Networks](#)

[Assessing the Involvement of Your Target Audience](#)

[Choosing Social Sites Strategically](#)

Chapter 2: Maximizing Stratified Social Communities

[Making a Bigger Splash on a Smaller Site](#)

[Taking Networking to the Next Level](#)

[Selecting Social Networks by Vertical Industry Sector](#)

[Selecting Social Networks by Demographics](#)

[Selecting Social Networks by Activity Type](#)

[Finding Yourself in the Real World with Geomarketing](#)

[Spacing Out with X](#)

[Finding Your Business on Facebook](#)

[Making Real Connections in Meetup](#)

[Making Deals on Social Media](#)

[Setting Terms for Your Coupon Campaign](#)

Chapter 3: Profiting from Mid-Size Social Media Channels

[Deciding Whether to Invest Your Time](#)

[Entertaining Your Audience with Streaming Content](#)

[Turning Up New Prospects with Tumblr](#)

[Promoting Video with Vimeo](#)

Chapter 4: Integrating Social Media

[Thinking Strategically about Social Media Integration](#)

[Integrating Social Media with E-Newsletters](#)

[Integrating Social Media with Press Releases](#)

[Integrating Social Media with Your Website](#)

Chapter 5: Advertising on Social Media

[Integrating Social Media with Paid Advertising](#)

[Advertising on Facebook and Instagram](#)

[Advertising on X](#)

[Advertising on LinkedIn](#)

[Advertising on Pinterest](#)

[Advertising on YouTube \(and Google\)](#)

[Advertising on Snapchat](#)

[Advertising on TikTok](#)

[Interfacing with Influencers](#)

Book 9: Measuring Results and Building on Success

Chapter 1: Delving into Datas

[Planning a Measurement Strategy](#)

[Selecting Analytics Packages](#)

[Reviewing Analytical Options for Social Media](#)

[Getting Started with Google Analytics](#)

[Integrating Google's Acquisition Analytics](#)

Chapter 2: Analyzing Content-Sharing Metrics

[Measuring the Effectiveness of Content Sharing with Standard Analytics](#)

[Visualizing Video Success](#)

[Understanding Podcast Metrics](#)

[Measuring Your Results from Pinterest](#)

[Comparing Hard and Soft Costs versus Income](#)

Chapter 3: Analyzing X Metrics

[Using X Analytics](#)

[Using X Pro](#)

[Using Third-Party X Analytics Applications](#)

[Tracking Account Activity with the Notifications Tab](#)

[Using the Hashtag as a Measurement Mechanism](#)

[Calculating the X Follower-to-Following Ratio](#)

Chapter 4: Analyzing Meta Metrics

[Monitoring Facebook and Instagram from Meta Business Suite](#)

[Using Insights](#)

[Exploring the Insights Dashboard](#)

Chapter 5: Measuring LinkedIn Performance

[Measuring LinkedIn Success](#)

Chapter 6: Comparing Metrics from Different Marketing Techniques

[Establishing Key Performance Indicators](#)

[Comparing Metrics across Social Media](#)

[Integrating Social Media with Web Metrics](#)

[Using Advertising Metrics to Compare Social Media with Other Types of Marketing](#)

[Juxtaposing Social Media Metrics with Other Online Marketing](#)

[Contrasting Word-of-Web with Word-of-Mouth](#)

Chapter 7: Making Decisions by the Numbers

[Using Metrics to Make Decisions](#)

[Knowing When to Hold and When to Fold](#)

[Diagnosing Problems with Social Media Campaigns](#)

[Fixing Problems](#)

[Adjusting to Reality](#)

[Index](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Connect with Dummies](#)

[End User License Agreement](#)

List of Tables

Book 1 Chapter 1

[TABLE 1-1 Matching Social Media Services to Goals](#)

Book 1 Chapter 2

[TABLE 2-1 Resources for Business Metrics](#)

[TABLE 2-2 Social Media Store Solutions Offering Sales Statistics](#)

[TABLE 2-3 Lead-Monitoring and CRM Software](#)

Book 1 Chapter 3

[TABLE 3-1 Top-Level Demo-Geographic Social Groups from Nielsen PRIZM](#)

[TABLE 3-2 Stage in the Family Life Cycle](#)

[TABLE 3-3 Main Categories Available on Google Trends](#)

Book 1 Chapter 4

[TABLE 4-1 Calendar Software](#)

[TABLE 4-2 Social Media Dashboard Resources](#)

[TABLE 4-3 Social Media Policy Resource Sites](#)

[TABLE 4-4 Legal Resource Sites](#)

[TABLE 4-5 Brand Sentiment Resources](#)

Book 2 Chapter 1

[TABLE 1-1 Social Media Marketing Resources](#)

[TABLE 1-2 URL-Snipping Services](#)

[TABLE 1-3 Social E-Commerce Apps, Storefronts, and Resources](#)

[TABLE 1-4 Helpful Monitoring Tools](#)

Book 2 Chapter 2

[TABLE 2-1 Keyword Selection Resources](#)

[TABLE 2-2 Search Engine and Optimization Resources](#)

Book 2 Chapter 3

[TABLE 3-1 Search Engine Ranking Services](#)

Book 2 Chapter 4

[TABLE 4-1 Popular Social-Bookmarking Services](#)

[TABLE 4-2 Popular Social News Services](#)

[TABLE 4-3 Bookmarks for Specific Applications](#)

[TABLE 4-4 Sources for Social Share Buttons](#)

Book 3 Chapter 2

[TABLE 2-1 Popular Photo-Sharing Sites](#)

Book 3 Chapter 3

[TABLE 3-1 Outlining Your Content Inventory on a Spreadsheet](#)

Book 3 Chapter 4

[TABLE 4-1 Popular AI Content Creation Tools](#)

Book 8 Chapter 1

[TABLE 1-1 Social Network Research URLs](#)

Book 8 Chapter 2

[TABLE 2-1 Business Networks](#)

[TABLE 2-2 Vertical Market Social Networks](#)

[TABLE 2-3 Demographically and Geographically Stratified Sites](#)

[TABLE 2-4 Social Networks by Activity Type](#)

[TABLE 2-5 Geolocation Services](#)

Book 8 Chapter 4

[TABLE 4-1 Publicity and PR Resources](#)

Book 8 Chapter 5

[TABLE 5-1 Social Media Sites Offering Paid Advertising](#)

Book 9 Chapter 1

[TABLE 1-1 Free Analytics Packages](#)

[TABLE 1-2 Paid Statistical Packages](#)

[TABLE 1-3 Analytics for Specific Social Networks](#)

[TABLE 1-4 Helpful Google Analytics Resource URLs](#)

Book 9 Chapter 2

[TABLE 2-1 Analytics Availability on Content-Sharing Sites](#)

Book 9 Chapter 6

[TABLE 6-1 Online Metrics Resources](#)

[TABLE 6-2 Social Media by Genre and KPI](#)

[TABLE 6-3 Online Advertising Resources](#)

List of Illustrations

Book 1 Chapter 1

[FIGURE 1-1: TikTok has taken over as the top social media platform that markete...](#)

[FIGURE 1-2: The Instagram page for Blue Rain Gallery uses strong images to grab...](#)

[FIGURE 1-3: As part of its community-branding activities, Walt Arnold Commercia...](#)

[FIGURE 1-4: X is an excellent way for Albuquerque Economic Development to annou...](#)

[FIGURE 1-5: Array Technologies uses its LinkedIn presence to provide company up...](#)

[FIGURE 1-6: The average cost of social media compared to other marketing tactic...](#)

[FIGURE 1-7: The classic conversion funnel shows that only 2 to 4 percent of fun...](#)

[FIGURE 1-8: Social media is what helps small businesses meet their goals the mo...](#)

[FIGURE 1-9: All social media channels and other forms of online marketing inter...](#)

[FIGURE 1-10: Establish your social-marketing goals, objectives, and target mark...](#)

Book 1 Chapter 2

[FIGURE 2-1: The social media networks marketers use aren't always the most effe...](#)

[FIGURE 2-2: Social commerce revenues will grow rapidly over the next five years...](#)

[FIGURE 2-3: Typical e-commerce statistics available on Google Analytics.](#)

[FIGURE 2-4: Target Profit Sales calculator from AccountingforManagement.org.](#)

[FIGURE 2-5: The break-even chart plots fixed plus variable costs; each sale aft...](#)

[FIGURE 2-6: Play around with variables such as the investment time.](#)

[FIGURE 2-7: The relationship between performance metrics and business metrics f...](#)

Book 1 Chapter 3

[FIGURE 3-1: Statista \(top\) provides demographic information about the distribut...](#)

[FIGURE 3-2: Quantcast estimates topics that interest users of Goodreads.](#)

[FIGURE 3-3: B2C \(orange rows\) and B2B \(blue rows\) businesses often utilize diff...](#)

[FIGURE 3-4: HypeAuditor ranks the most influential Instagram users.](#)

[FIGURE 3-5: Build a social media marketing plan for your company.](#)

Book 1 Chapter 4

[FIGURE 4-1: Using Yahoo! Calendar, you can easily schedule your social media ac...](#)

[FIGURE 4-2: On the Google Calendar, you can provide specifics for a marketing t...](#)

[FIGURE 4-3: This mock-up of a social media dashboard from Netvibes gathers the ...](#)

[FIGURE 4-4: The Tools & Stats tab of this mock-up Netvibes dashboard displays t...](#)

[FIGURE 4-5: The social media dashboard from Hootsuite allows you to monitor and...](#)

[FIGURE 4-6: A basic social media policy may be enough to get you started.](#)

[FIGURE 4-7: This blogger sets out a clear acknowledgment policy on product endo...](#)

[FIGURE 4-8: A portion of The Brand Grader report for Netflix.](#)

[FIGURE 4-9: The Social Searcher results for #iPhone.](#)

Book 2 Chapter 1

[FIGURE 1-1: Enter a long URL at Bitly and receive a shortened URL in return.](#)

[FIGURE 1-2: Product offerings can begin on Facebook \(top\) and then link to a se...](#)

[FIGURE 1-3: The Etsy mini-badge on the right side of this blog drives traffic t...](#)

[FIGURE 1-4: The Shop section of the search results page \(top\). Click on a speci...](#)

[FIGURE 1-5: Mentionlytics provides several measurements of a brand's popularity...](#)

[FIGURE 1-6: Results page from a simple X search for *New Mexican Restaurants*.](#)

Book 2 Chapter 2

[FIGURE 2-1: The SEMrush keyword tool estimates the volume of requests for relat...](#)

[FIGURE 2-2: The People Also Ask box on Google SERPs is the Shangri-La of SEO \(t...](#)

[FIGURE 2-3: The page source \(top\) for the home page of Pennington Builders \(bot...](#)

[FIGURE 2-4: The page description metatag for the home page of the Pennington Bu...](#)

[FIGURE 2-5: Compare the blog post \(top\) — which uses the keyword phrase *persona...*](#)

[FIGURE 2-6: Breadcrumb trails help both search engine robots and real people na...](#)

[FIGURE 2-7: Page links on a site index provide easy access to all pages on the ...](#)

[FIGURE 2-8: The Brooklyn Kitchen \(top\) earns high placement in Google search re...](#)

Book 2 Chapter 3

[FIGURE 3-1: Field and Main, a restaurant in Marshall, Virginia, includes releva...](#)

[FIGURE 3-2: The “Specialties” you select for your LinkedIn Business page help p...](#)

Book 2 Chapter 4

[FIGURE 4-1: Use bookmarking services such as *Mix.com* to recommend content.](#)

[FIGURE 4-2: At Pinterest, companies can use different boards \(categories\) of im...](#)

[FIGURE 4-3: Digg shows links to individual articles submitted by hundreds of th...](#)

[FIGURE 4-4: A submission to FolkD, the social-bookmarking service.](#)

[FIGURE 4-5: On every page of its website, Field & Main restaurant includes chic...](#)

[FIGURE 4-6: Social share buttons encourage visitors to pass along your site or ...](#)

[FIGURE 4-7: This widget from Elegant Themes enables users to quickly recommend ...](#)

Book 3 Chapter 1

[FIGURE 1-1: Use the comment area to have a conversation with customers and pote...](#)

[FIGURE 1-2: When you create useful content, others will want to share it, which...](#)

[FIGURE 1-3: Many businesses choose blogs to start their content-marketing strat...](#)

[FIGURE 1-4: Every Monday, Field and Main restaurant in Marshall, VA posts a hea...](#)

Book 3 Chapter 2

[FIGURE 2-1: Use a blog to promote your business.](#)

[FIGURE 2-2: Some web-hosting companies, such as Bluehost, enable you to set up ...](#)

[FIGURE 2-3: This podcast was uploaded to Soundcloud and is brought into a websi...](#)

[FIGURE 2-4: Always check for image rights and ask permission before using a pho...](#)

[FIGURE 2-5: Use a photo-sharing site, such as Unsplash, to help market your bra...](#)

[FIGURE 2-6: Use share buttons to make it easy for others to share your content.](#)

[FIGURE 2-7: Guest blogging gives you the opportunity to reach a new customer ba...](#)

Book 3 Chapter 4

[FIGURE 4-1: An editorial calendar can help keep your content organized and prio...](#)

[FIGURE 4-2: Sharing your content on Facebook gives it the potential to go viral...](#)

[FIGURE 4-3: LinkedIn is another great place to share your content.](#)

[FIGURE 4-4: You can tell a lot about the performance of your content thanks to ...](#)

Book 4 Chapter 1

[FIGURE 1-1: X allows you to communicate in only 280 characters.](#)

[FIGURE 1-2: Use X to show your humanity and strike up conversations.](#)

[FIGURE 1-3: Using text speak hurts the eyes and looks unprofessional.](#)

[FIGURE 1-4: Sending spammy auto-DMs to your new followers will cause most of th...](#)

[FIGURE 1-5: Take a break and read some of the more lighthearted news stories un...](#)

[FIGURE 1-6: Don't let life \(or important posts\) pass you by!](#)

[FIGURE 1-7: Save time and build lists so you can quickly hone in on the topics ...](#)

Book 4 Chapter 2

[FIGURE 2-1: If you don't care for X's suggestions, let them know!](#)

[FIGURE 2-2: To get someone's attention on X, use an @reply.](#)

[FIGURE 2-3: @TMobileHelp acknowledged this customer's anger and asked to take t...](#)

[FIGURE 2-4: The main search results screen for the phrase "Social Media Marketi...](#)

[FIGURE 2-5: The Advanced Search box ... be sure to scroll down because there's so...](#)

Book 4 Chapter 3

[FIGURE 3-1: Your X profile page offers little space to make a big impression.](#)

[FIGURE 3-2: A header photo can highlight personality and passion.](#)

[FIGURE 3-3: Pinning posts keeps them at the top of your profile page.](#)

[FIGURE 3-4: Embedding posts involves adding code to your website.](#)

Book 5 Chapter 1

[FIGURE 1-1: Use your brand's logo for the profile photo.](#)

[FIGURE 1-2: Your Settings page is your Facebook toolbox.](#)

[FIGURE 1-3: The Manage Page is the central hub for your Facebook presence.](#)

[FIGURE 1-4: Your timeline is where you and your community interact.](#)

[FIGURE 1-5: Switch up your page's name or username here.](#)

[FIGURE 1-6: Choose your brand's name for your custom username.](#)

[FIGURE 1-7: Use the Invite Friends to Like Your Page box to invite friends to j...](#)

[FIGURE 1-8: Use share buttons on your content.](#)

[FIGURE 1-9: All your events will be listed here.](#)

[FIGURE 1-10: Select where you want to share your event.](#)

Book 5 Chapter 2

[FIGURE 2-1: #sunset is a popular hashtag, with 59 million posts!](#)

[FIGURE 2-2: You can find virtually anything in Facebook's version of the classi...](#)

[FIGURE 2-3: What's your favorite coffee roast level?](#)

[FIGURE 2-4: Quizzes for Pages makes it easy to put together fun quizzes for you...](#)

[FIGURE 2-5: Any group member can post content within a group.](#)

Book 5 Chapter 3

[FIGURE 3-1: A Facebook ad doesn't have to cost a lot of money.](#)

[FIGURE 3-2: The ad you create depends on your goals.](#)

[FIGURE 3-3: You can boost a post on Facebook to give it more visibility.](#)

[FIGURE 3-4: Facebook's Ad Center can help you get started.](#)

[FIGURE 3-5: To reach the right people, target your ads.](#)

[FIGURE 3-6: Facebook Marketplace is the classified ads section of the social me...](#)

[FIGURE 3-7: By clicking on your page's new shopping button, customers can be ta...](#)

[FIGURE 3-8: The Commerce Manager dashboard.](#)

[FIGURE 3-9: Setting up your Facebook Shop.](#)

[FIGURE 3-10: Sell your products in real time with Facebook Live.](#)

Book 5 Chapter 4

[FIGURE 4-1: Using Facebook Live is as easy as posting to your brand page!](#)

[FIGURE 4-2: Describe your video, set your permissions, and determine your audience...](#)

[FIGURE 4-3: Select where the video feed is originating from and where you want ...](#)

Book 6 Chapter 1

[FIGURE 1-1: Pay attention to your privacy settings.](#)

[FIGURE 1-2: Choose a photo that portrays you in a positive, professional manner...](#)

[FIGURE 1-3: You have various options when editing your profile photo.](#)

[FIGURE 1-4: Choose a background photo that says something about you.](#)

[FIGURE 1-5: All the sections you can add to your profile.](#)

[FIGURE 1-6: Click the pencil or plus \(+\) in each section you want to edit.](#)

[FIGURE 1-7: Your connections can recommend you based on their experiences working...](#)

[FIGURE 1-8: Adding skills to your profile shows the LinkedIn community you are...](#)

Book 6 Chapter 2

[FIGURE 2-1: Select your page type.](#)

[FIGURE 2-2: Use your company information to set up your LinkedIn Page profile.](#)

[FIGURE 2-3: Your blank slate of a company page.](#)

[FIGURE 2-4: Edit your company information here.](#)

[FIGURE 2-5: The Showcase Page for For Dummies: Custom Solutions \(left\) and its ...](#)

[FIGURE 2-6: The list of a company's Product Pages under the Products tab.](#)

[FIGURE 2-7: Group rules help to make a positive experience for everyone.](#)

[FIGURE 2-8: Select the connections you want to invite to your group.](#)

Book 6 Chapter 3

[FIGURE 3-1: Access your LinkedIn content dashboard from your home page.](#)

[FIGURE 3-2: Start writing your post in the LinkedIn blogging dashboard.](#)

[FIGURE 3-3: LinkedIn allows you to share your articles in a variety of places w...](#)

[FIGURE 3-4: Infographics really catch the audience's eye.](#)

[FIGURE 3-5: An announcement showing standing for an important award.](#)

[FIGURE 3-6: An interview with the new intern!](#)

[FIGURE 3-7: Letting everyone know you're also on X.](#)

[FIGURE 3-8: Informing connections about an upcoming conference.](#)

[FIGURE 3-9: Happy National Dog Day!](#)

[FIGURE 3-10: LinkedIn collaborative articles are a great way to showcase expert...](#)

Book 7 Chapter 1

[FIGURE 1-1: The Pin is the heart and soul of Pinterest.](#)

[FIGURE 1-2: Boards are made up of a collection of Pins.](#)

[FIGURE 1-3: Sharing is caring.](#)

[FIGURE 1-4: The results page after I selected a keyword from the search results...](#)

[FIGURE 1-5: Filter to find friends!](#)

[FIGURE 1-6: A sample pop-up created with MiloTree.](#)

Book 7 Chapter 2

[FIGURE 2-1: Start adding your company information.](#)

[FIGURE 2-2: Edit your Public Profile here.](#)

[FIGURE 2-3: Your account page.](#)

[FIGURE 2-4: The Snap screen is where you take photos or video or access Chat an...](#)

[FIGURE 2-5: Use your Snapcode to add followers.](#)

[FIGURE 2-6: Add some witty text or cute stickers to your Snap here!](#)

Book 7 Chapter 3

[FIGURE 3-1: The Edit Profile screen.](#)

[FIGURE 3-2: The Field & Main chef working hard in the kitchen.](#)

[FIGURE 3-3: Ingredients straight from the garden!](#)

[FIGURE 3-4: Everyone meet Julie!](#)

[FIGURE 3-5: Nike's Reels tab is full of creative videos.](#)

Book 7 Chapter 4

[FIGURE 4-1: Select one of these methods to open your TikTok account.](#)

[FIGURE 4-2: Welcome to your new profile!](#)

[FIGURE 4-3: The search results when you type **coffee**.](#)

[FIGURE 4-4: The different actions you can take on a TikTok video.](#)

[FIGURE 4-5: It's time to get creative!](#)

Book 8 Chapter 1

[FIGURE 1-1: The zoo of social media sites is vast. Your time, however, is limit...](#)

[FIGURE 1-2: Factor in relative market share, using data such as that from StatC...](#)

Book 8 Chapter 2

[FIGURE 2-1: The Karen Martin Group uses SlideShare to establish credibility, ex...](#)

[FIGURE 2-2: Selecting the *Near Me* option to find nearby places \(left\); then com...](#)

[FIGURE 2-3: A Meetup search for small-business activities near Denver produces ...](#)

Book 8 Chapter 3

[FIGURE 3-1: One of four popular ad types available on Spotify.](#)

[FIGURE 3-2: An easy-to-use blogging platform, Tumblr allows you to post virtual...](#)

[FIGURE 3-3: Showcase your brand's talent and creative side with Vimeo.](#)

Book 8 Chapter 4

[FIGURE 4-1: A newsletter service such as Mailchimp gives you the tools you need...](#)

Book 9 Chapter 1

[FIGURE 1-1: A typical Google Analytics dashboard displays key web statistics.](#)

[FIGURE 1-2: A HubSpot page showing details about social media activity.](#)

[FIGURE 1-3: A sample conversion exploration page for Google Analytics.](#)

[FIGURE 1-4: The Traffic Acquisition section of Google Analytics makes it easy t...](#)

Book 9 Chapter 2

[FIGURE 2-1: Viewing statistics for YouTube videos.](#)

[FIGURE 2-2: A plethora of metrics to gauge the performance of your video conten...](#)

[FIGURE 2-3: Basic statistics on Pins and followers were visible to everyone who...](#)

[FIGURE 2-4: Pinterest's analytics provide valuable information about users and ...](#)

Book 9 Chapter 3

[FIGURE 3-1: The X Analytics dashboard displays post activity.](#)

[FIGURE 3-2: Individual post metrics.](#)

[FIGURE 3-3: You can track all these activity types by adding columns to your X ...](#)

[FIGURE 3-4: TweetBinder showing the top 200 results for the hashtag #coffee.](#)

Book 9 Chapter 4

[FIGURE 4-1: The Insights Dashboard Overview page provides basic traffic, conten...](#)

[FIGURE 4-2: The pop-up window for exporting Insights.](#)

[FIGURE 4-3: Set your performance goals here.](#)

[FIGURE 4-4: The Audience detail page.](#)

[FIGURE 4-5: The Content Overview detail page.](#)

Book 9 Chapter 5

[FIGURE 5-1: Get a bird's-eye view of content performance here.](#)

[FIGURE 5-2: LinkedIn offers analytical detail for Visitors.](#)

[FIGURE 5-3: LinkedIn offers analytical detail for Followers.](#)

[FIGURE 5-4: Keep an eye on your competition with the Competitors tab.](#)

Book 9 Chapter 7

[FIGURE 7-1: Correlating an activity timeline with key performance indicators pr...](#)

[FIGURE 7-2: Compare the benefits you receive from social media with the benefit...](#)



Social Media Marketing

ALL-IN-ONE

6th Edition

by Michelle Krasniak

for
dummies
A Wiley Brand

Social Media Marketing All-in-One For Dummies[®], 6th Edition

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774,
www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2025 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved, including rights for text and data mining and training of artificial technologies or similar technologies.

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: THE PUBLISHER AND THE AUTHOR MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION WARRANTIES OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR EVERY SITUATION. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. IF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERSON SHOULD BE SOUGHT. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHER ENDORSES THE INFORMATION THE ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-

572-4002. For technical support, please visit
<https://hub.wiley.com/community/support/dummies>.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at
<http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit
www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2025933212

ISBN 978-1-394-31875-9 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-394-31877-3 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-394-31876-6 (ebk)

Introduction

You sat back, sighing with relief that your website was running faultlessly, optimized for search engines, and producing traffic, leads, and sales. Maybe you ventured into email marketing or pay-per-click advertising to generate new customers. Then you thought with satisfaction, “I’ll just let the money roll in.”

Instead, you were inundated with stories about Facebook pages, X and posts, blogs and podcasts, Snapchat, Instagram, and all other manner of social media buzz. By now you’ve probably tried more than one of these social media platforms. Perhaps you haven’t seen much in the way of results, or you’re ready to explore ways to expand your reach, increase customer loyalty, and grow your sales with social media.

Much as you might wish it were otherwise, you must now stay up to date with rapidly changing options in the social media universe. As a marketer, you have no choice when more than 93 percent of Internet users visit blogs and social media and when your position in search engine results may depend on the recency and frequency of social media updates. Social media marketing is an essential component of online marketing.

The statistics are astounding: Facebook has more than 3.07 billion monthly active users as of the first quarter of 2025; more than 7.5 million blog posts are published every day; more than 500 million posts were sent per day on average in 2024; and nearly 500 hours of video are uploaded every *minute* on YouTube. New company names and bewildering new vocabulary terms continue to flood the online world: TikTok, Snapchat, Bitmoji, influencer, and sentiment monitoring, for example.

Should your new business get involved in social media marketing? Is it all more trouble than it’s worth? Will you be hopelessly left behind if you don’t participate? If you jump in, or if you’ve already waded into the social media waters, how do you keep it all under control and who does the work? Which platforms are the best for your business? Should you take advantage of new channels or stick with the comfortable ones you’ve already mastered? This book helps you answer both sets of questions: Should your business undertake social media marketing? If so, how? (Quick answer: If your customers use a social media service, use it. If not, skip it.)

About This Book

The philosophy behind this book is simple: Social media marketing is a means, not an end in itself. Social media services are tools, not new worlds. In the best of all worlds, you see results that improve customer acquisition, retention, and buying behavior — in other words, your bottom line. If this sounds familiar, that’s because everything you already know about marketing is correct.

Having the most likes on Facebook or more reposts of your X content than your competitors doesn’t mean much if these achievements don’t have a positive effect on your business. Throughout this book, you’ll find concrete suggestions for applying social media tactics to

achieve those goals.

If you undertake a social media marketing campaign, I urge you to keep your plans simple, take things slowly, and always stay focused on your customers. Most of all, follow the precepts of guerrilla marketing: Target one niche market at a time, grow that market, and then reinvest your profits in the next niche.

Foolish Assumptions

I visualize my readers as savvy small-business owners, marketers in companies of any size, and people who work in any of the multiple services that support social media efforts, such as advertising agencies, web developers, graphic design firms, copywriting, or public relations. I assume that you

- » Already have or will soon have a website or blog that can serve as the hub for your online marketing program
- » Are curious about ubiquitous social media
- » Are comfortable using search terms on search engines to find information online
- » Know the realities of your industry, though you may not have a clue whether your competitors use social media
- » Can describe your target markets, though you may not be sure whether your audience is using social media
- » Are trying to decide whether using social media makes sense for your company (or your boss has asked you to find out)
- » May already use social media personally and are interested in applying your knowledge and experience to business
- » May already have tried using social media for your company but want to improve results or measure return on your investment
- » Have a passion for your business, appreciate your customers, and enjoy finding new ways to improve your bottom line

Note: Some of the links in this book do not work unless you have an account with the different social media platforms. For example, you cannot access the Pinterest Settings Page link until after you set up a Pinterest account and log into it.

If our assumptions are correct, this book will help you organize a social marketing presence without going crazy or spending all your waking hours online. It will help you figure out whether a particular technique makes sense, how to get the most out of it, and how to measure your results.

Icons Used in This Book

To make your experience easier, various icons are used in the margins to identify special

categories of information.



TIP

These hints help you save time, energy, or aggravation. Sharing them is our way of sharing what I've figured out the hard way — so that you don't have to. Of course, if you prefer to get your education through the school of hard knocks, be our guest.



REMEMBER

This book has more details in it than any normal person can remember. This icon reminds you of points made elsewhere in the book or perhaps helps you recall business best practices that you know from your own experience.



WARNING

Heed these warnings to avoid potential pitfalls. Nothing suggested here will crash your computer beyond repair or send your marketing campaign into oblivion. But I tell you about business and legal pitfalls to avoid, plus a few traps that catch the unprepared during the process of configuring social media services. Not all those services create perfect user interfaces with clear directions!



TECHNICAL
STUFF

The geeky-looking Dummies Man marks information to share with your developer or programmer — unless you are one. In that case, have at it. On the other hand, you can skip any of the technical-oriented information without damaging your marketing plans or harming a living being.

Beyond the Book

You can find an online cheat sheet on the book's companion website. Go to www.dummies.com and type **Social Media Marketing All-in-One For Dummies** in the Search box. The cheat sheet contains secrets for social media marketing success, online resources, and more. In addition, the website is the place to find any significant updates or changes that occur between editions of this book.

Where to Go from Here

As always with *All-in-One Dummies* books, the minibooks are self-contained. If there's a topic you want to explore immediately, start with the detailed Table of Contents or Index.

If you're just starting out with social media, I recommend reading [minibooks 1](#) and [2](#). The chapters in [Book 1](#) act as an overview of social media and will help you figure out how to integrate social media into your online marketing plan, which in turn is part of your overall

marketing plan. Remember, social media is the tail — your business is the dog! [Book 1](#) will help you establish reasonable expectations for a return on investment and structure an appropriate allocation of time, personnel, and funds to achieve success.

[Book 2](#) offers an overview of tools to manage your social media marketing efforts. You'll also learn how to leverage your existing search engine optimization approach to maximize the value of social media postings to earn better ranking on search results pages.

The six minibooks that follow focus on popular and niche social media services, with detailed how-to descriptions for putting together a content marketing strategy, marketing with social media, and advertising on social networks. The final minibook is a deep dive into social media analytics, so you can gather the information you need to make data-driven marketing decisions.

I wish you a fun and profitable experience going social!

Book 1

The Social Media Mix

Contents at a Glance

Chapter 1: Making the Business Case for Social Media

[Making Your Social Debut](#)
[Defining Social Media Marketing](#)
[Understanding the Benefits of Social Media](#)
[Understanding the Cons of Social Media](#)
[Integrating Social Media into Your Overall Marketing Effort](#)
[Developing a Strategic Social Media Marketing Plan](#)

Chapter 2: Tallying the Bottom Line

[Preparing to Calculate Return on Investment](#)
[Accounting for Customers Acquired Online](#)
[Establishing Key Performance Indicators for Sales](#)
[Tracking Leads](#)
[Understanding Other Common Business Metrics](#)
[Determining Return on Investment](#)

Chapter 3: Plotting Your Social Media Marketing Strategy

[Locating Your Target Market Online](#)
[Segmenting Your B2C Market](#)
[Researching B2B Markets](#)
[Conducting Other Types of Market Research Online](#)
[Setting Up Your Social Media Marketing Plan](#)

Chapter 4: Managing Your Cybersocial Campaign

[Managing Your Social Media Schedule](#)
[Building Your Social Media Marketing Dream Team](#)
[Creating a Social Media Marketing Policy](#)
[Staying on the Right Side of the Law](#)
[Protecting Your Brand Reputation](#)

Chapter 1

Making the Business Case for Social Media

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Accentuating the positives and eliminating the negatives
 - » Latching on to the affirmatives
 - » Integrating social media into your marketing plan
 - » Evaluating the worth of social media
-

In the best of all worlds, *social media* — a suite of online services that facilitates two-way communication and content sharing — can become a productive component of your overall marketing strategy. These services can enhance your company’s online visibility, strengthen relationships with your clients, and expand word-of-mouth advertising, which is the best type.

Given its rapid rise in popularity and its hundreds of millions of worldwide users, social media marketing sounds quite tempting. These tools require minimal upfront cash and, theoretically, you’ll find customers flooding through your cyberdoors, ready to buy. It sounds like a no-brainer — but it isn’t, especially now that most social media channels have matured into a pay-to-play environment with paid advertising.

Has someone finally invented a perfect marketing method that puts you directly in touch with your customers and prospects, costs nothing, and generates profits faster than a perpetual motion machine produces energy? The hype says “yes”; the real answer, unfortunately, is “no.” Although marketing nirvana may not yet be at hand, the expanding importance of social media in the online environment means that your business needs to participate.

This chapter provides an overview of the pros and cons of social media to help you decide how to join the social whirl, and it gives a framework for approaching a strategic choice of which social media to use.

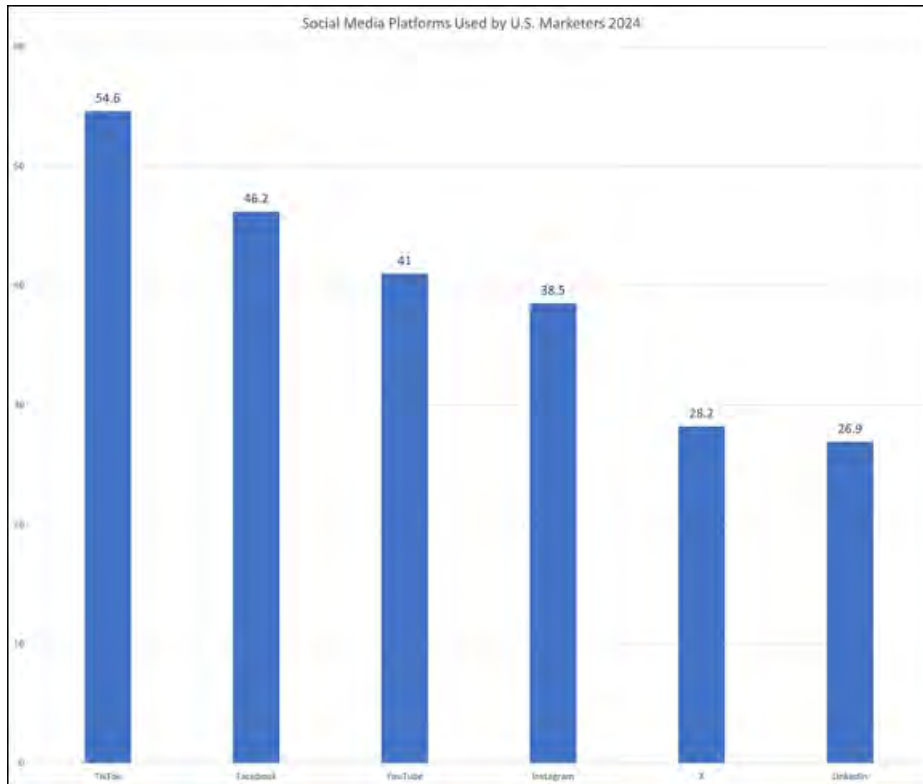
Making Your Social Debut

Like any form of marketing, social media takes some thought. It can become an enormous siphon of your time, and short-term profits are rare. Social media marketing is a long-term commitment.

So, should you or shouldn’t you invest time and effort in this marketing avenue? If you answer in the affirmative, you immediately confront another decision: What form should that investment take? The number of options is overwhelming; you can never use every technique and certainly can’t do them all at once. In fact, if you’re on social platforms that aren’t

appropriate for your brand, you could be doing more harm than good. Don't worry, though, I discuss how to determine the appropriate places to be online in [Chapter 3](#) of this book. If you take our advice, chances are you won't run into that problem.

[Figure 1-1](#) shows that most small businesses involved in social media use TikTok, with Facebook and YouTube coming in second and third place.



Adapted from Influencer Marketing Hub

FIGURE 1-1: TikTok has taken over as the top social media platform that marketers use.

Defining Social Media Marketing

The bewildering array of social media (which seem to breed new services faster than rabbits can reproduce) makes it hard to discern what they have in common: shared information, often on a peer-to-peer basis. Although many social media messages look like traditional broadcasts from one business to many consumers, their interactive component offers an enticing illusion of one-to-one communication that invites individual readers to respond.

The phrase *social media marketing* generally refers to using these online services for *relationship selling* — selling based on developing rapport with customers. Social media services make innovative use of new online technologies to accomplish the familiar communication and marketing goals of this form of selling.



TIP

The tried-and-true strategies of marketing (such as solving customers' problems and

answering the question, “What’s in it for me?”) are still valid. Social media marketing is simply a technique, not an entire marketing strategy.

This book covers a variety of social media services (sometimes called social media *channels* or *platforms*). The phrase *social media site* is used to refer to a specific named online service or product.

You can categorize social media services, but they have fuzzy boundaries that can overlap. Some social media sites fall into multiple categories. For example, some social networks and online communities allow participants to share photos and include a blog.

Here are the different types of social media services:

- » **Social content-sharing services:** These services facilitate posting and commenting on text, videos, photos, and podcasts.
 - *Blogs and content-posting sites:* Websites designed to let you easily update or change content and to allow readers to post their own opinions or reactions. Examples of blog tools are WordPress, Typepad, Blogger, Medium, and Tumblr. Blogs may be hosted on third-party sites (apps) or integrated into your own website using software.
 - *Video:* Examples are YouTube, Vimeo, Wistia, Vidyad, and TikTok.
 - *Images:* Flickr, Photobucket, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, 500px, Imgur. [Figure 1-2](#) shows how Blue Rain Gallery attracts followers on Instagram by highlighting some of the beautiful works of art it sells.
 - *Audio:* BlogTalkRadio, Pandora, Live365.
- » **Social-networking services:** Originally developed to facilitate the exchange of personal information (messages, photos, video, and audio) to groups of friends and family, these full-featured services offer multiple functions. From a business point of view, many social-networking services support subgroups that offer the potential for more targeted marketing. Common types of social-networking services include
 - *Full networks*, such as Facebook and Pinterest. [Figure 1-3](#) shows how SVN/Walt Arnold Commercial Brokerage, Inc. uses its Facebook page to build its brand and enhance community relations.
 - *Short message networks* such as X are often used for news, announcements, events, sales notices, and promotions. In [Figure 1-4](#), Albuquerque Economic Development uses its X account at <https://x.com/abqecondev> to assist new and expanding businesses in the Albuquerque, New Mexico area.
 - *Professional networks*, such as LinkedIn and small profession-specific networks. [Figure 1-5](#) shows how Array Technologies uses its LinkedIn Page to make announcements, impart company news, and attract employees.
 - *Specialty networks* with unique content, such as the Q&A network Quora, or that operate within a vertical industry, demographic, or activity segment, as opposed to by profession or job title.

» **Social-bookmarking services:** Similar to private bookmarks for your favorite sites on your computer, social bookmarks are publicly viewable lists of sites that others have recommended. Some are

- *Recommendation services*, such as Mix and Digg
- *Social-shopping services*, such as OpenSky and Storenvy
- *Other bookmarking services organized by topic or application*, such as sites where readers recommend books to others using bookmarking techniques



TIP

Some of the major social networks now have their own built-in marketplaces (discussed more in their respective books), so there's the added benefit of having everything in one spot – for both your customers and yourself from a social media management perspective.

» **Social news services:** On these peer-based lists of recommended articles from news sites, blogs, or web pages, users often vote on the value of the postings. Social news services include

- Feedly
- Reddit
- Other news sites

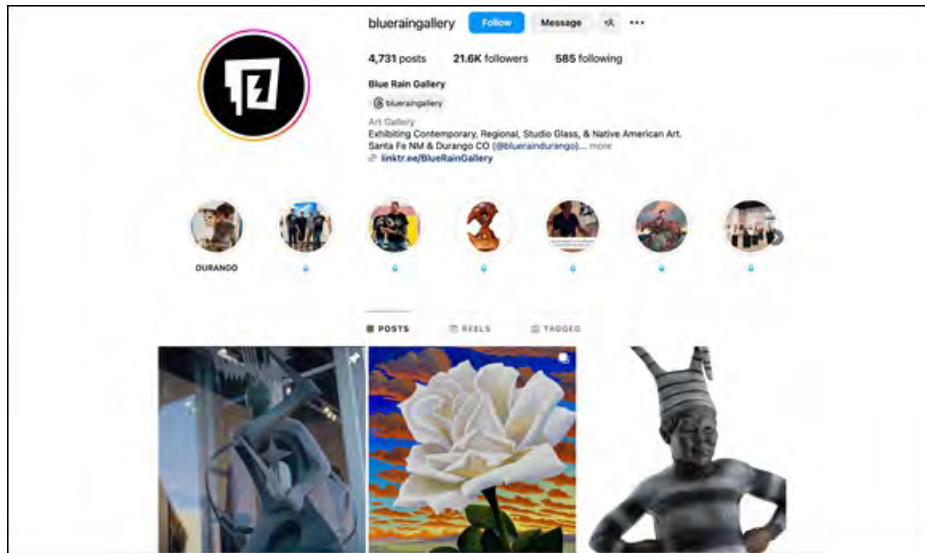
» **Social geolocation and meeting services:** These services bring people together in real space rather than in cyberspace:

- Foursquare
- Meetup
- MapMyFitness
- Other GPS (Global Positioning System) applications, many of which operate on mobile phones
- Other sites for organizing meet-ups

» **Community-building services:** Many comment- and content-sharing sites have been around for a long time, such as forums, message boards, and Yahoo!.

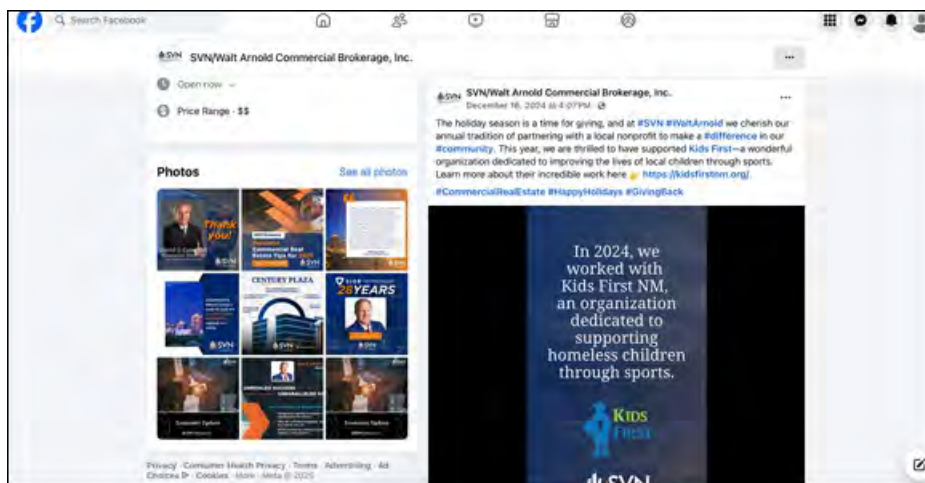
Other examples are

- *Community-building sites* with multiple sharing features, such as Ning and Mighty Networks
- *Wikis*, such as Wikipedia or WikiHow, for group-sourced content
- *Review sites*, such as TripAdvisor, Yelp, and Trustpilot to solicit consumer views



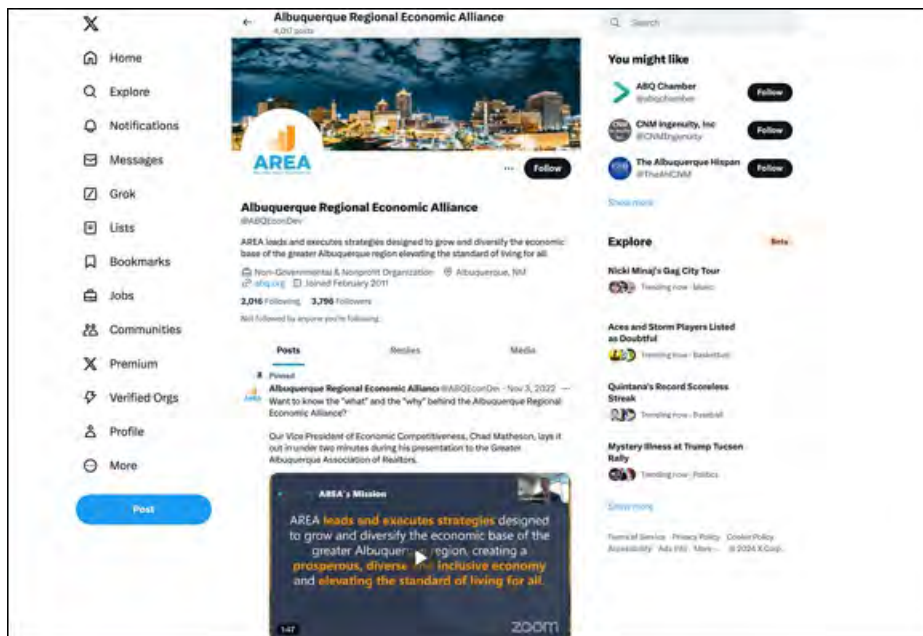
Courtesy of Blue Rain Gallery

FIGURE 1-2: The Instagram page for Blue Rain Gallery uses strong images to grab viewers' attention.



Courtesy of SVN/Walt Arnold Commercial Brokerage, Inc.

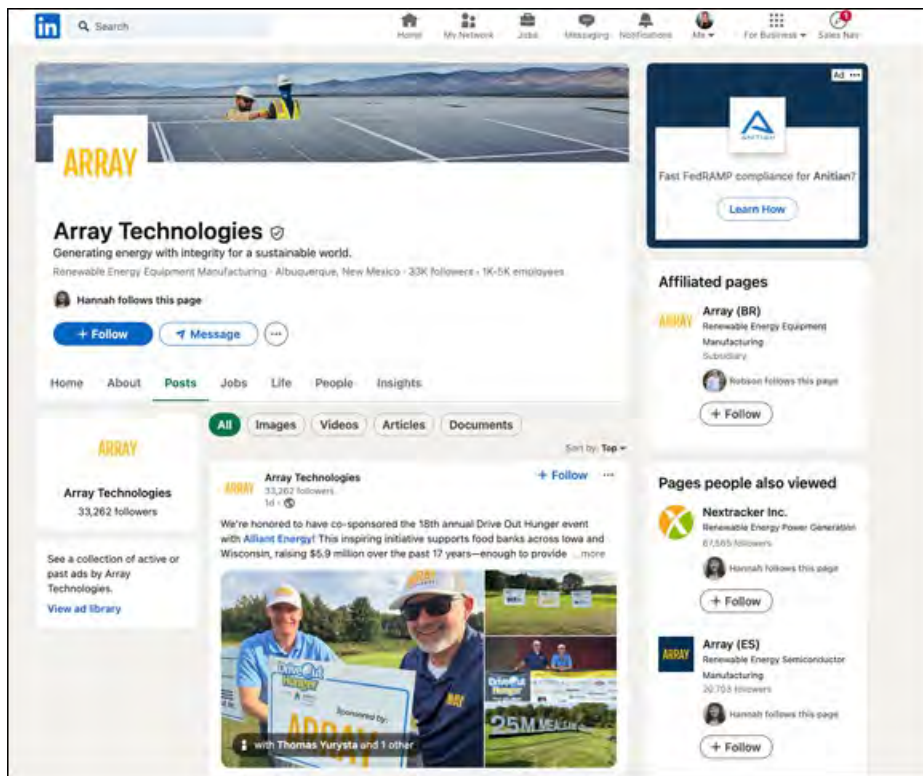
FIGURE 1-3: As part of its community-branding activities, Walt Arnold Commercial Brokerage talks about their annual holiday giving tradition.



Courtesy of Albuquerque Economic Development

FIGURE 1-4: X is an excellent way for Albuquerque Economic Development to announce news about local industry.

As you surf the web, you can find dozens, if not hundreds, of social tools, *apps* (freestanding online applications), and *widgets* (small applications placed on other sites, services, or desktops). These features monitor, distribute, search, analyze, and rank content. Many are specific to a particular social network, especially X. Others are designed to aggregate information across the social media landscape, including such monitoring tools as Google Alerts, [Mention.net](https://www.mention.net/), or SocialMention, or such distribution tools as RSS (Really Simple Syndication), which allows frequently updated data to be posted automatically to locations requested by subscribers.



Courtesy of Array Technologies, Inc.

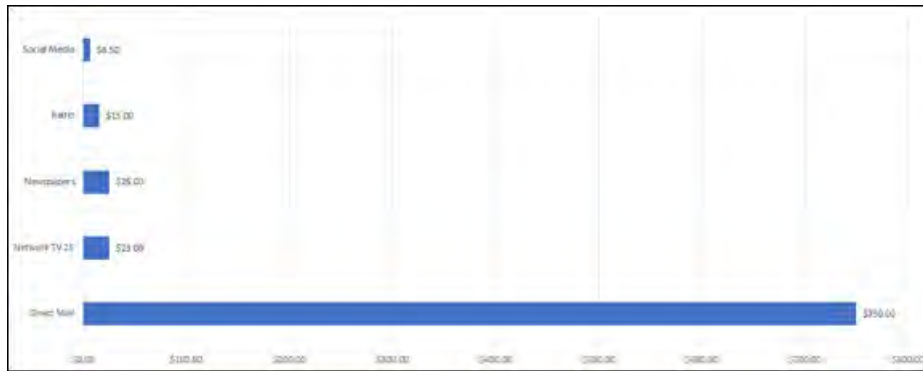
FIGURE 1-5: Array Technologies uses its LinkedIn presence to provide company updates.

[Book 2](#) offers a survey of many more of these tools; specific social media services are covered in their respective books.

Understanding the Benefits of Social Media

Social media marketing carries many benefits. One of the most important is that you don't have to front any cash for most social media services. Of course, there's a downside: Most services require a significant time investment to initiate and maintain a social media marketing campaign, and many limit distribution of unpaid posts, charging for advertising and distributing posts to your desired markets.

As you read the following sections, think about whether each benefit applies to your needs. How important is it to your business? How much time are you willing to allocate to it? What kind of payoff would you expect? [Figure 1-6](#) shows how the CPM (cost per thousand impressions) of social media can be as low as \$6.50, which translates to less than half of what the same attention costs using the cheapest of the traditional marketing methods.



Created with data compiled from TopDraw

FIGURE 1-6: The average cost of social media compared to other marketing tactics.

Casting a wide net to catch your target market

The audience for social media is huge. By the second quarter of 2024, Facebook claimed nearly 3.1 billion monthly active users worldwide, and a whopping 82 percent of active users accessed the network via their mobile devices. Furthermore, 90 percent of Facebook's traffic comes from outside the United States and Canada.

When compared to Google, this social media behemoth is in tight competition for the U.S. audience. In April of 2024, Facebook tallied about 194 million unique monthly U.S. visitors/viewers, whereas Google Sites surpassed it with almost 276 million visitors. Keep in mind, of course, that visitors are conducting different activities on the two sites.

X tallied more than 111.3 million U.S. visitors/viewers in August 2024 and totaled up about 500 million *tweets* (short messages) daily worldwide. A relatively small number of power users are responsible for the majority of tweets posted daily. More people read tweets than are accounted for, however, because tweets can be read on other websites.

Even narrowly focused networking sites claim hundreds of thousands of visitors. Surely, some of the people using these sites must be your customers or prospects. In fact, one popular use of social media is to cast a wide net to capture more potential visitors to your website.

[Figure 1-7](#) shows a classic conversion funnel, which demonstrates the value of bringing new traffic to the top of the funnel to produce more *conversions* (actions taken) at the bottom.



Watermelon Mountain Web Marketing: www.watermelonweb.com/Watermelon Mountain

FIGURE 1-7: The classic conversion funnel shows that only 2 to 4 percent of funnel entries yield desired results.

The conversion funnel works like this: If more people arrive at the top of the funnel, theoretically more will progress through the steps of prospect and qualified lead to become a customer. Only 2 to 4 percent, on average, make it through a funnel regardless of what action the funnel conversion depicts.



TIP Book 1, [Chapter 3](#) covers how you can assess traffic on social media sites using Quantcast, Similarweb, or other tools, and match their visitors to the profiles of your customers. Generally, these tools offer some information free, although several are freemium sites, with additional data available only with a paid plan.

Branding

Basic marketing focuses on the need for branding, name recognition, visibility, presence, or top-of-mind awareness. Call it what you will — you want people to remember your company name when they're in need of your product or service. Social media services, of almost every type, are excellent ways to build your brand.



REMEMBER Social media works for branding as long as you get your name in front of the right people. Plan to segment the audience on the large social media services. You can look

for more targeted groups within them or search for specialty services that may reach fewer people overall but more of the ones who are right for your business.

Building relationships

If you're focused on only short-term benefits, you'd better shake that thought loose and get your head into the long-term game that's played in the social media world. To build effective relationships in social media, you're expected to

- » Establish your expertise.
- » Participate regularly as a good citizen of whichever social media world you inhabit; follow site rules and abide by whatever conventions have been established.
- » Avoid overt self-promotion.
- » Resist hard-sell techniques except in paid advertising.
- » Provide value with links, resources, and unbiased information.

Watch for steady growth in the number of your followers on a particular service or the number of people who recommend your site to others; increased downloads of articles or other tools that provide detailed information on a topic; or repeat visits to your site. All these signs indicate you're building relationships that may later lead to, if not a direct sale, then a word-of-web recommendation to someone who does buy.

In the world of social media, the term *engagement* refers to the length of time and quality of interaction between your company and your followers.



REMEMBER Social media is a long-term commitment. Other than little experiments or pilot projects, don't bother starting a social media account if you don't plan to keep it going. Any short-term benefits you see aren't worth the effort you have to make.

Improving business processes

Already, many clever businesses have found ways to use social media to improve business processes. Though individual applications depend on the nature of your business, consider leveraging social media to

- » Promptly detect and correct customer problems or complaints.
- » Obtain customer feedback and input on new product designs or changes.
- » Provide tech support to many people at one time; if one person has a question, chances are good that others do, too.
- » Improve service delivery, such as cafes that accept to-go orders on X or Facebook, or food carts that notify customers where and when their carts will arrive.
- » Locate qualified new vendors, service providers, and employees by using professional networks such as LinkedIn.

- » Facilitate appointment setting by using the built-in scheduling capabilities on several of the more popular social networks.
- » Collect critical market intelligence on your industry and competitors by watching content on appropriate social media.
- » Use geolocation, tweets, and mobile search services to drive neighborhood traffic to brick-and-mortar stores during slow times and to acquire new customers.



REMEMBER Marketing is only part of your company, but all of your company is marketing. Social media is a ripe environment for this hypothesis, where every part of a company, from human resources to tech support, and from engineering to sales, can be involved.

Improving search engine rankings

Just as you optimize your website, you should optimize your social media outlets for search engine ranking. Now that search engines are cataloging X and Facebook and other appearances on social media, you can gain additional front-page real estate for your company on Google, Yahoo!, and Bing.



TIP Use a core set of search terms and keywords across as many sites as possible. Book 2, [Chapters 2](#) and [3](#) deal with search engine optimization, including tactics to avoid because they could get you in trouble for spamming.

Optimization pays off in other ways: in results on real-time searches, on external search engines that focus on blogs or other social media services; and on internal, site-specific search engines.

Selling in the social media marketplace

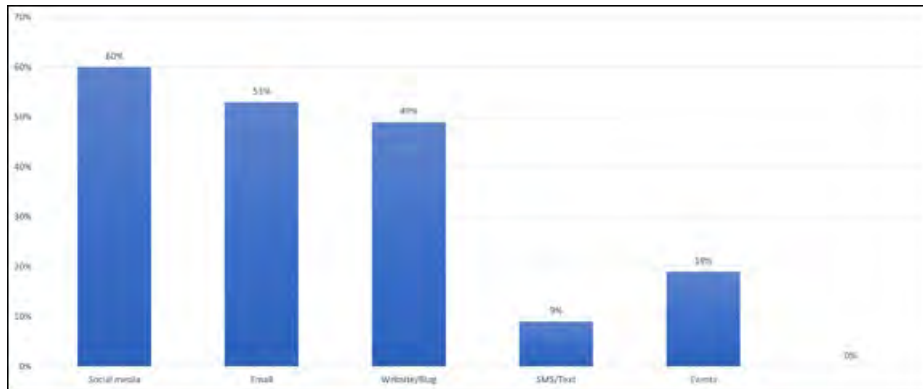
Conventional thinking several years ago suggested that social media was designed for long-term engagement — for marketing and branding rather than for sales. However, more and more social media channels now offer the opportunity for direct sales from their sites. In addition to selling on major social media channels such as Facebook, Pinterest, X, and Instagram, you will also find selling opportunities on smaller, niche social media:

- » **Sell music and event tickets.** SoundCloud and ReverbNation, which cater to music and entertainment, are appropriate social media sites for these products.
- » **Include a link to your online store on social-shopping services.** Recommend products — particularly apparel, jewelry, beauty, and decor — as Opensky does.
- » **Offer promotional codes or special deals to followers.** Offering codes or deals on particular networks encourages your followers to visit your site to make a purchase. You can also announce sales or events.
- » **Place links to online or third-party stores such as Etsy (see Book 2, [Chapter 1](#)) on**

your profile pages on various services. Some social media channels offer widgets that visually showcase your products and link to your online store, PayPal, or the equivalent to conclude a transaction.

» **Include a sign-up option for your e-newsletter.** It offers a bridge to sales.

The chart in [Figure 1-8](#) shows the results of Constant Contact's Small Business Now: The State of SMB Marketing survey that looked at the popularity of the different types of advertising for small businesses.



Constant Contact's Small Business Now: The State of SMB Marketing survey/Constant Contact

FIGURE 1-8: Social media is what helps small businesses meet their goals the most.



TIP Include sales offers in a stream of information and news to avoid turning your social media site into a series of never-ending advertisements.

Finding alternative advertising opportunities

Although time is money, the magic word is *free*. If you decide to approach social media as an alternative to paid advertising, construct your master social media campaign just as carefully as you would a paid one:

- » Create a plan that outlines target markets, ad offers, publishing venues, event attendance, and schedules for different ad campaigns.
- » If necessary, conduct comparative testing of messages, graphics, and offers.
- » Monitor results and focus on the outlets that work best at driving qualified visits that lead to conversions.
- » Supplement your free advertising with search engine optimization, press releases, and other forms of free promotion.



REMEMBER Advertising is only one part of marketing!

As you see traffic and conversions building from your social media marketing campaigns, you may want to reduce existing paid advertising campaigns. Just don't stop your paid advertising until you're confident that you have an equally profitable stream of customers from social media. Of course, if your ad campaign isn't working, there's no point continuing it.

Understanding the Cons of Social Media

For all its upsides, social media has its downsides. As social media has gained in popularity, it has also become increasingly difficult to gain visibility among its hundreds of millions of users.

In fact, sometimes you have to craft a campaign just to build an audience on a particular social media site. The process is similar to conducting optimization and inbound link campaigns so that your site is found in natural search results.



TIP

Don't participate in social media for its own sake or just because everyone else is.

By far, the biggest downside in social media is the amount of time you need to invest to see results. You need to make an ongoing commitment to review and respond to comments and to provide an ongoing stream of new material. An initial commitment to set up a profile is just the tip of the iceberg.



WARNING

Keep in mind that you need to watch out for the addictiveness of social media.

Individually and collectively, social media is the biggest-ever time sink. Don't believe us? Ask yourself whether you became addicted to news alerts during the 2024 presidential campaign or couldn't take your eyes off live coverage of the total solar eclipse. Or maybe you play Monopoly Go!, Wordle, or other video games with a passion, continuously text on your smartphone, or compulsively check email every ten seconds ... you get the idea. Without self-discipline and a strong time schedule, you can easily become so socially overbooked that other tasks go undone.

As you consider each of the social media options in this book, also consider the level of human resources that is needed. Do you have the time and talents yourself? If not, do other people in your organization have the time and talent? Which other efforts will you need to give up while making room for social media? Will you have to hire new employees or contract services, leading to hard costs for this supposedly "free" media?

Integrating Social Media into Your Overall Marketing Effort

Social media is only part of your online marketing. Online marketing is only part of your overall marketing. Don't mistake the part for the whole.

Consider each foray into social marketing as a strategic choice to supplement your other online-marketing activities, which may include

- » **Creating and managing a marketing-effective website:** Use content updates, search engine optimization (SEO), inbound link campaigns, and event calendar postings to your advantage.
- » **Displaying your product's or service's value:** Create online press releases and email newsletters. Share testimonials and reviews with your users and offer affiliate or loyalty programs, online events, or promotions.
- » **Advertising:** Take advantage of pay-per-click ads, banners, and sponsorships.



REMEMBER Social media is neither necessary nor sufficient to meet all your online-marketing needs.

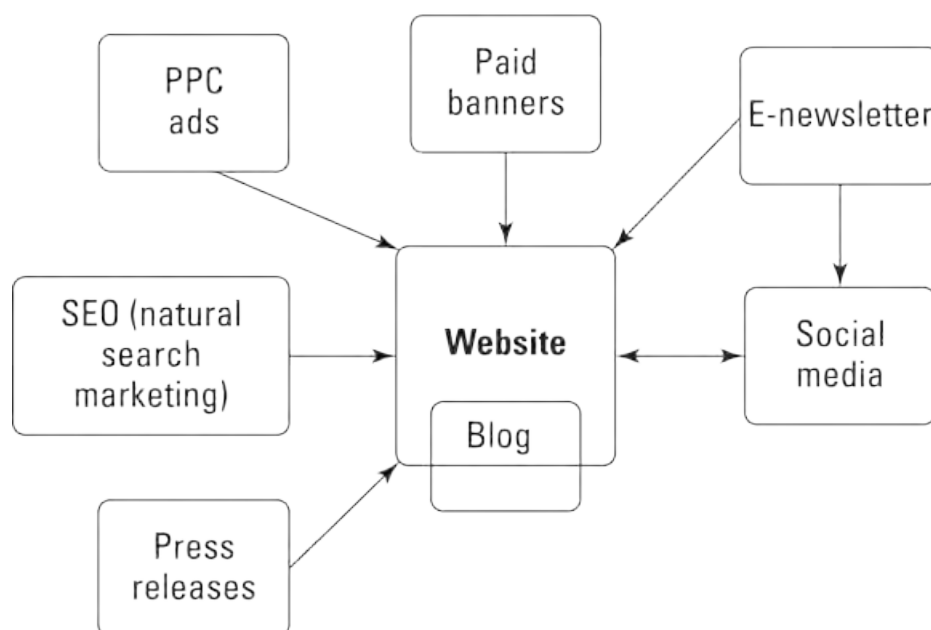
Use social media strategically to

- » Meet an otherwise unmet marketing need.
- » Increase access to your target market.
- » Open the door to a new niche market.
- » Move prospects through the conversion funnel.
- » Establish your expertise in your field.
- » Improve the experience for existing customers.

For example, the website for Fluid IT Services (www.fluiditservices.com) links to its Facebook, X, and LinkedIn sites, as well as its blog (www.fluiditservices.com/blog), to attract its audience. For more information on overall online marketing, see Stephanie Diamond's book, *Digital Marketing All-In-One For Dummies* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.).

To get the maximum benefit from social media, you must have a *hub site*, the site to which web traffic will be directed, as shown in [Figure 1-9](#). With more than 2 billion websites online, you need social media as a source of traffic. Your hub site can be a full website or a blog, as long as the site has its own domain name. It doesn't matter where the site is hosted — only that you own its name, which appears as www.yourcompany.com or <http://blog.yourcompany.com>. Though you can link to <http://yourcompany.wordpress.com>, you can't effectively optimize or advertise a WordPress address like this. Besides, it doesn't look professional to use a domain name from a third party.

What an Online Marketing Mix Looks Like



Watermelon Mountain Web Marketing: [www.watermelonweb.com/Watermelon Mountain](http://www.watermelonweb.com/WatermelonMountain)

FIGURE 1-9: All social media channels and other forms of online marketing interconnect with your hub website.

Consider doing some sketching for your own campaign: Create a block diagram that shows the relationship between components, the flow of content between outlets, and perhaps even the criteria for success and how you'll measure those criteria.

Developing a Strategic Social Media Marketing Plan

Surely you wrote an overall marketing plan when you last updated your business plan and an online-marketing plan when you first created your website. If not, it's never too late! For business planning resources, see the Starting a Business page at www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business/starting-business.

You can further refine a marketing plan for social media marketing. As with any other marketing plan, you start with strategy. A Social Media Marketing Goals statement ([Figure 1-10](#) shows an example) would incorporate sections on strategic goals, objectives, target markets, methods, costs, and return on investment (ROI).

You can download the form on this book's website (www.dummies.com/go/socialmediamarketingaiofd6e) and read more about ROI in Book 1, [Chapter 2](#).

Here are some points to keep in mind when putting together your strategic marketing overview:

- » The most important function of the form isn't for you to follow it slavishly, but rather to force you to consider the various facets of social media marketing before you invest too much effort or money.
- » The form also helps you communicate decisions to your board of advisors or your boss, in case you need to make the business case for getting involved in social media.
- » The form provides a coherent framework for explaining to everyone involved in your social media effort — employees, volunteers, or contractors — the task you're trying to accomplish and why.

Book 1, [Chapter 3](#) includes a Social Media Marketing Plan, which helps you develop a detailed tactical approach — including timelines — for specific social media services, sites, and tools.

The following sections cover the information you should include on this form.

Social Media Marketing Goals

Related to Hub Site (URL): _____

Prepared by: _____ Date: _____

Business Profile

Is the social media plan for a new or established company?

- ☐ New company ☐ Existing company, years in business: _____

Does the company have an existing brick-and-mortar operation?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does the company have an existing website or web presence?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does the company have an existing blog or social media presence?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, list all current URLs for social media.

Will your site serve:

- ☐ Business ☐ Consumers

What type of business is the website for?

- ☐ Manufacturer ☐ Service provider ☐ Retailer
☐ Distributor ☐ Professional

What does the company sell?

- ☐ Goods ☐ Services

Describe your goods or services:

What geographical range does the social media campaign address?

- ☐ Local (specify) _____ ☐ Regional (specify) _____
☐ National (specify if not US) _____ ☐ International (specify) _____

Social Media Campaign Goals

Rank the applicable goals of your social media campaign from 1-7, with 1 your top goal.

- _____ Increasing traffic/visits to hub site
_____ Branding
_____ Building relationships
_____ Improving business process (e.g., customer service, tech support)
_____ Improving visibility in natural search
_____ Increasing sales revenue
_____ Using social media as paid advertising platform

Financial Profile

Social Media Campaign Budget for First Year

Outside development, contractors,
includes writing, design, technical \$ _____

Special content production (e.g.,
video, podcasts, photography): \$ _____

Marketing/paid ads on social
media \$ _____

In-house labor (burdened rate) \$ _____

Other costs, e.g., tools, equipment \$ _____

TOTAL: \$ _____

Break-even point: \$ _____ Within: _____ ☐ mo or ☐ yr

Return on investment: _____ % Within: _____ ☐ mo or ☐ yr

Sample Objectives

Repeat for appropriate objectives for each goal within time frame specified
(for instance, 1 year).

Traffic objective (# visitors per month): _____ Within: _____

Conversion objective: _____ % Within: _____

Sales objectives (# sales per month): \$ _____ Within: _____

Average \$ per sale: \$ _____ Within: _____

\$ revenue per month: \$ _____ Within: _____

Other objectives specific to your site,
e.g., for branding, relationships, search
ranking _____ Within: _____

_____ Within: _____

_____ Within: _____

Marketing Profile

Describe your target markets. Give specific demographic or other
segmentation information. For B2B, segment by industry or job title or both.

What is your marketing tag?

Value proposition: Why should someone buy from your company rather
than another?

Name at least six competitors and list their websites, blogs, and
social media pages.

FIGURE 1-10: Establish your social-marketing goals, objectives, and target market definition on this form.

Establishing goals

The Goals section prioritizes the overall reasons you’re implementing a social media campaign. You can prioritize your goals from the seven benefits of social media, described in the earlier section “[Understanding the Benefits of Social Media](#),” or you can add your own goals. Most businesses have multiple goals, which you can specify on the form.

Consult [Table 1-1](#) to see how companies are using social media to reach their goals.

TABLE 1-1 Matching Social Media Services to Goals

Goal	Customer Communication	Brand Awareness	Traffic Generation	SEO
Facebook	Good	Good	Good	Good
Instagram	Good	Good	Good	Good
LinkedIn	Good	Good	Good	Good
TikTok	Okay	Good	Good	Poor
Pinterest	Okay	Good	Good	Good
Snapchat	Okay	Okay	Good	Poor
X	Good	Good	Good	Good
YouTube	Good	Good	Good	Good

Setting quantifiable objectives

For each goal, set at least one quantifiable, measurable objective. “More customers” isn’t a quantifiable objective. A quantifiable objective is “Increase number of visits to website by 10 percent,” “add 30 new customers within three months,” or “obtain 100 new followers for X account within one month of launch.” Enter this information on the form.

Identifying your target markets

Specify one or more target markets on the form, not by what they consume but rather by who they are. “Everyone who eats dinner out” isn’t a submarket you can identify online. However, you can find “high-income couples within 20 miles of your destination who visit wine and classical music sites.”

You may want to reach more than one target market by way of social media or other methods. Specify each of them. Then, as you read about different methods in this book, write down next to each one which social media services or sites appear best suited to reach that market. Prioritize the order in which you plan to reach them.

Book 1, [Chapter 3](#) suggests online market research techniques to help you define your markets, match them to social media services, and find them online.



TIP Think niche! Carefully define your audiences for various forms of social media, and target your messages appropriately for each audience.

Estimating costs

Estimating costs from the bottom up is tricky, and this approach rarely includes a cap. Consequently, costs often wildly exceed your budget. Instead, establish first how much money you're willing to invest in the overall effort, including in-house labor, outside contractors, and miscellaneous hard costs such as purchasing software or equipment. Enter those amounts in the Cost section.

Then prioritize your social-marketing efforts based on what you can afford, allocating or reallocating funds within your budget as needed. This approach not only keeps your total social-marketing costs under control, but also lets you assess the results against expenses.



TIP To make cost-tracking easier, ask your bookkeeper or CPA to set up an activity or a job in your accounting system for social media marketing. Then you can easily track and report all related costs and labor.

Valuing social media ROI

Return on investment (ROI) is your single most important measure of success for social media marketing. In simple terms, *ROI* is the ratio of revenue divided by costs for your business or, in this case, for your social media marketing effort.

You also need to set a realistic term in which you will recover your investment. Are you willing to wait ten weeks? Ten months? Ten years? Some forms of social media are less likely to produce a fast fix for drooping sales but are great for branding, so consider what you're trying to accomplish.

Costs usually turn out to be simpler to track than revenues that are traceable explicitly to social media. [Chapter 2](#) of this minibook discusses techniques for figuring ROI and other financial metrics in detail.



REMEMBER Whatever you plan for online marketing, it will cost twice as much and take twice as long as anticipated.

A social media service is likely to produce results only when your customers or prospects are already using it or are willing to try it. Pushing people toward a service they don't want is difficult. If in doubt, first expand other online and offline efforts to drive traffic toward your hub site.

Chapter 2

Tallying the Bottom Line

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Estimating the cost of customer acquisition
 - » Figuring sales metrics and revenue
 - » Managing and converting leads
 - » Breaking even
 - » Calculating return on investment
-

In this chapter, you deal with business metrics to determine whether you see a return on investment (ROI) in your social media marketing services. In other words, you get to the bottom line! For details on performance metrics for various types of social media as parameters for campaign success, see [Book 9](#).

By definition, the business metric ROI involves revenues. Alas, becoming famous online isn't a traditional part of ROI; it might have a public relations value and affect business results, but fame doesn't necessarily make you rich. This chapter examines the cost of acquiring new customers, tracking sales, and managing leads. After you reach the break-even point on your investment, you can (in the best of all worlds) start totaling up the profits and then calculate your ROI.

To get the most from this chapter, review your business plan and financial projections. You may find that you need to adjust some of your data collection efforts to ensure that you have the information for these analyses.



TIP If numbers make your head spin, ask your bookkeeper or accountant for assistance in tracking important business metrics from your financial statements. That person can ensure that you acquire the right data, set up spreadsheets to calculate key metrics, and provide regular reports — as well as instruct you how to interpret them.

You don't want to participate in social media marketing for its own sake or because everyone else is doing it. The following sections help you make the business case for yourself.

Preparing to Calculate Return on Investment

To calculate ROI, you have to recognize both costs and revenue related to your social media activities; neither is transparent, even without distinguishing marketing channels.

Surprisingly, the key determinant in tracking cost of sales, and therefore ROI, is most likely

to be your sales process, which matters more than whether you sell to other businesses (business-to-business, or B2B) or consumers (business-to-consumer, or B2C) or whether you offer products or services.



TIP The *sales cycle* (the length of time from prospect identification to customer sale) affects the timeline for calculating ROI. If a B2B sale for an expensive, long-term contract or product takes two years, expecting a return on your investment within a month is pointless.

For a *pure-play* (e-commerce only) enterprise selling products from an online store, the ROI calculation detailed in this chapter is fairly standard. However, ROI becomes more complicated if your website generates leads that you must follow up with offline, if you must pull customers from a web presence into a brick-and-mortar storefront (that method is sometimes called *bricks-and-clicks*), or if you sell different products or services in different channels. [Table 2-1](#) provides resource sites that relate to these issues and other business metrics.

TABLE 2-1 Resources for Business Metrics

Site Name	URL	What You Can Do
Hootsuite	https://blog.hootsuite.com/measure-social-media-roi-business/	Measure social media success.
Harvard Business School Toolkit	https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/item.aspx?num=38368	Use the break-even analysis tool.
	https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/item.aspx?num=39156	Calculate lifetime customer value.
National Retail Federation	https://nrf.com	Research, news, and white papers from the NRF's digital retail community.
Olivier Blanchard Basics of Social Media ROI	www.slideshare.net/thebrandbuilder/olivier-blanchard-basics-of-social-media-roi	View an entertaining slide-show introduction to ROI.
Accounting for Management	www.accountingformanagement.org/target-profit-sales-calculator	Target profit sales calculator.
HubSpot	https://blog.hubspot.com/service/what-does-cac-stand-for	Calculate customer acquisition costs.
Digital Branding Institute	https://digitalbrandinginstitute.com/how-to-measure-social-media-roi-in-google-analytics	Set up Google Analytics to measure social media ROI.
Search Customer Experience	https://searchcustomerexperience.techtarget.com	Find information about the customer experience.
WhatIs	http://whatis.techtarget.com	Search a dictionary and an encyclopedia of IT-related business terms.



REMEMBER Include the business metrics you intend to monitor in the Business Goals section of your Social Media Marketing Plan, found in Book 1, [Chapter 3](#), and the frequency of review on your Social Media Activity Calendar discussed in Book 1, [Chapter 4](#).

Accounting for Customers Acquired Online

The *customer acquisition cost* (CAC) refers to the marketing, advertising, support, and other types of expenses required to convert a prospect into a customer. CAC usually excludes the cost of a sales force (the salary and commissions) or payments to affiliates. Some companies carefully segregate promotional expenses, such as loyalty programs, that relate to branding or customer retention. As long as you apply your definition consistently, you're okay.

If your goal in social media marketing is branding or improving relationships with existing customers, CAC may be a bit misleading, but it's still worth tracking for comparison purposes.

The definition of your customers and the cost of acquiring them depend on the nature of your business. For example, if you have a purely advertising-supported, web-only business, visitors to your site may not even purchase anything. They simply show up, or perhaps they register to download some information online. Your real customers are advertisers. However, a similar business that's not supported by advertising may need to treat those same registrants as leads who might later purchase services or pay for subscriptions.



TIP The easiest way to define your customers is to figure out who pays you money.

Comparing the costs of customer acquisition

You may want to delineate CAC for several different revenue streams or marketing channels: consumers versus businesses; products versus services (for example, software and support contracts); online sales versus offline sales; and consumers versus advertisers. Compare each one against the average CAC for your company overall. The formula is simple:

$$\text{customer acquisition cost} = \text{marketing cost} \div \text{number of leads}$$

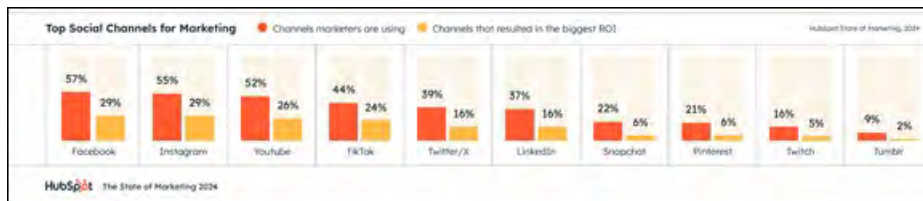
Be careful! This formula can be misleading if you calculate it over too short a timeframe. The CAC may be too high during quarters that you undertake a new activity or a special promotion (such as early Christmas sales or the introduction of a new product or service) and too low during quarters when spending is down but you reap benefits from an earlier investment in social media.



TIP Calculate your CAC over six months to a year to smooth out unique events. Alternatively, compute *rolling averages* (taking an average over several months at a time, adjusting the start date each month — January through March, February through April, March through May, and so on) to create a better picture of what's going on.

In [Figure 2-1](#), HubSpot ranks the different social media networks marketers are using compared with the return on investment for each. As you can see, people don't always put

their eggs in the highest ROI baskets!



HubSpot, *The State of Marketing 2024* report/HubSpot

FIGURE 2-1: The social media networks marketers use aren't always the most effective.



REMEMBER As with performance metrics, business metrics such as CAC and ROI aren't perfect. If you track everything consistently, however, you can at least compare results by marketing channel, which can help you make informed business decisions.

If you garner leads online but close your sales and collect payments offline, you can frame CAC as the cost of lead acquisition, recognizing that you may need to add costs for staff, collateral, demos, travel, and other items to convert a lead.

To put things in perspective, remember that the traditional business school model for offline marketing teaches that the CAC is roughly equivalent to the profit on the amount a customer spends during the first year.

Because you generally see most of your profits from future sales to that customer, you must also understand the *lifetime customer value* (how much and how often a customer will buy), not just the revenue from an initial sale. The better the customers, the more it's worth spending to acquire them. Harvard Business School offers an online calculator for determining lifetime customer value at <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/1436.html>.



WARNING Be sure that the cost of customer acquisition (CAC) doesn't exceed the lifetime customer value.



TIP Try to keep the total cost of marketing by any method at 6 percent to 11 percent of your revenues; you can spend less after you have an established business with word-of-mouth referrals and loyal repeat customers. Remember, customer acquisition is only part of your total marketing budget; allow for customer retention and branding expenses as well.

Small businesses (fewer than 100 employees), new companies, and new products usually need to spend toward the high end of the scale on marketing initially — perhaps even more than 11 percent. By comparison, mature, well-branded product lines and companies with a large revenue stream can spend a lower percentage on marketing.

Obviously, anything that can reduce marketing costs offers a benefit. See whether your calculation bears out that cost level for your investment in social media.

One is silver and the other gold

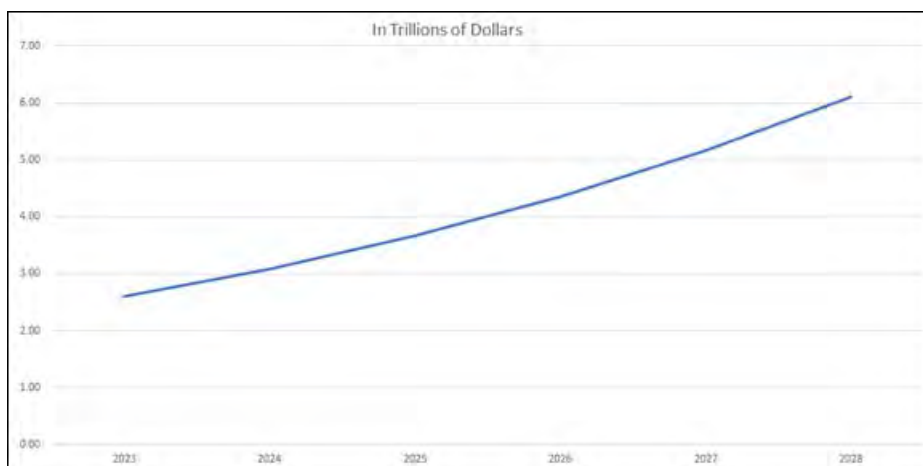
You might remember the words to that old Girl Scout song: “Make new friends but keep the old; one is silver and the other gold.” To retain customers, apply that philosophy to your policy of customer satisfaction. That may mean anything from sending holiday greetings to establishing a loyalty program with discounts for repeat buyers, from entering repeat customers into a special sweepstakes to offering a coupon on their next purchase when they sign up for a newsletter.

A marketing truism states that it costs anywhere from 3 to 30 times more to acquire a new customer than to retain an existing one. (For details, see www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-cost-customer-acquisition-vs-retention-ian-kingwill.) Although costs vary with each type of business, it’s common sense to listen to customers’ concerns, complaints, product ideas, and desires.

Thus, while you lavish time and attention on social marketing to fill the top of your funnel with new prospects, don’t forget its value for improving relationships with current customers and nurturing their involvement with your brand.

Establishing Key Performance Indicators for Sales

If you track ROI, at some point you must track revenue and profits as business metrics. Otherwise, there’s no ROI to compute. Unlike the previous emphasis on social media for customer engagement, recent statistics show a rapid increase in social commerce (direct sales from social media), as shown in [Figure 2-2](#). According to data from Precedence Research, social commerce sales in the United States is expected to triple in the next five years, from \$2.61 trillion in 2023 to \$6.12 trillion in 2028.



Adapted from precedenceresearch.com/social-commerce-market

FIGURE 2-2: Social commerce revenues will grow rapidly over the next five years (in trillions).

If you sell online, your storefront should provide ways for you to slice and dice sales to obtain crucial data. However, if your sales come from services, from a brick-and-mortar store, or from large contractual purchases, you probably need to obtain revenue statistics from financial or other external records to plug into your ROI calculation.



TIP If you manage a bricks-and-clicks operation, you may want to integrate your online and offline operations by selecting e-commerce software from the vendor who provides the *point-of-sales* (POS) package for your cash registers. That software may already be integrated with your inventory control and accounting packages.

Just as with performance metrics, you should be able to acquire certain key performance indicators (KPI) for sales by using storefront statistics. Confirm that you can access this data before purchasing your e-commerce package:

- » You should be able to determine how often customers buy (number of transactions per month), how many new customers you acquire (reach), and how much they spend per transaction (yield).
- » Look for sales reports by average dollar amount as well as by number of sales. Plugging average numbers into an ROI calculation is easier, and the results are close enough as long as the inputs are consistent.
- » You should be able to find order totals for any specified timeframe so that you can track sales tied to promotions, marketing activities, and sale announcements.
- » Look for the capability to sort sales by new and repeat customers; to allow for future, personalized offers; and to distinguish numbers for CAC.
- » Your sales statistics should include a conversion funnel (as described in [Chapter 1](#) of this minibook). Try to trace the path upstream so that you can identify sales initiated from social media.
- » Check that data can be exported to a spreadsheet.
- » Make sure that you can collect statistics on the use of promotion codes by number and dollar value so that you can decide which promotions are the most successful.
- » Having store reports that break down sales by product is helpful. Sometimes called a *product tree*, this report shows which products are selling by SKU (stock keeping unit) and category.

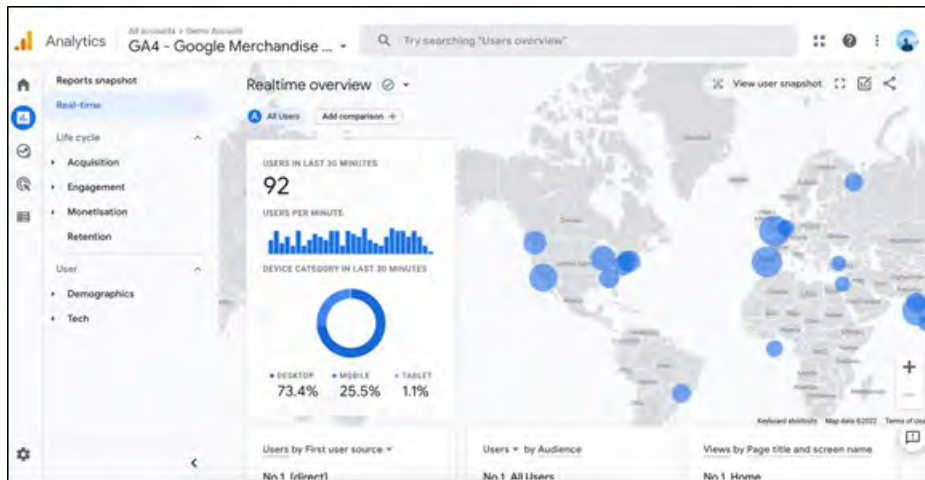
[Table 2-2](#) lists some storefront options that integrate with social media and offer sales analytics. Unfortunately, not all third-party storefront solutions offer ideal tracking. Many storefront solutions use Google Analytics, shown in [Figure 2-3](#), to track transactions.

TABLE 2-2 Social Media Store Solutions Offering Sales Statistics

Name	URL	Type of Sales Stats Available

Squarespace www.squarespace.com/small- Squarespace offers built-in analytics for e-commerce websites built on their

	business-website	platform.
Ecwid	www.ecwid.com/payment	Integrated storefront that works on social media, mobile, and blog sites.
ProductCart	www.productcart.com	Built-in Google Analytics integration at the product level.
Shopify	www.shopify.com	Offers its own reports as well as app integrations with Google Analytics, Meta (Facebook and Instagram), and more.
BigCommerce	www.bigcommerce.com	Social commerce platform that works with Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, as well as eBay, Amazon, and Google Shopping.
Shift4Shop	www.shift4shop.com	E-commerce platform that is a one-stop shop for creating an online store. It connects with Facebook, eBay, Amazon, and other channels.



Courtesy of [Shopify](#)

FIGURE 2-3: Typical e-commerce statistics available on Google Analytics.

As the value of social media for generating sales has grown, many social media channels have improved their tracking options for sales completed on a website. In addition to Facebook’s long-offered conversion pixel, Pinterest now has a tag code tool and X generates conversion code for placement on a “thank-you” page at the conclusion of a purchase.

If you created alternative SKUs for products sold by way of social media for tracking, be sure to merge them into the same category of your product tree. Using multiple SKUs isn’t recommended if your storefront solution includes inventory control.

You can input the numbers from your social media sales metrics into a sales calculator to forecast unit sales needed to meet your goals. [Figure 2-4](#) shows a calculator from AccountingforManagement.org at www.accountingformanagement.org/target-profit-sales-calculator. Users enter values for the variables in the fields at the top of the image and click Calculate; different forecasts appear below the fields.

Courtesy of AccountingforManagement.org

FIGURE 2-4: Target Profit Sales calculator from AccountingforManagement.org.

Tracking Leads

Often, your social media or web presence generates leads instead of, or in addition to, sales. If your sales process dictates that some or all sales are closed offline, you need a way to track leads from initiation to conversion. *Customer relationship management* (CRM) software helps you track prospects, qualified leads, and customers in an organized way. A simple database might allow different managers, salespeople, and support personnel to share a client's concerns or track the client's steps within the selling cycle.

The process of CRM and lead management may also include qualifying and nurturing leads, managing marketing campaigns, building relationships, and providing service, all while helping to maximize profits. [Table 2-3](#) lists some lead-monitoring and CRM software options.

TABLE 2-3 Lead-Monitoring and CRM Software

Name	URL	What You Can Do	Cost
HubSpot	http://offers.hubspot.com/free-trial	All-in-one software; manage inbound leads, lead generation, and more.	Free 14-day trial; starts at \$100 per month after free trial
Freshsales	https://www.freshworks.com/crm-platform	Lead scoring, phone, email, activity capture, and more.	Free 21-day trial; starts at \$11 per month after free trial
SplendidCRM	www.splendidcrm.com/Store	Install open source CRM software.	Options range from free open source download to unlimited use for \$960 per user



REMEMBER Although often thought of as the province of B2B companies offering high-ticket items with a long sales cycle, lead-tracking tools can help you segment existing and prospective customers, improve the percentage of leads that turn into clients, and build brand loyalty.

Understanding Other Common Business Metrics

Your bookkeeper or accountant can help you compute and track other business measurements to ensure that your business turns a profit. You may want to pay particular attention to estimating your break-even point and your profit margin.

Break-even point

Computing the *break-even point* (the number of sales needed for revenues received to equal total costs) helps determine when a product or product line will become profitable. After a product reaches break-even, sales start to contribute to profits.

To calculate the break-even point, first you need to figure out the *cost of goods* (for example, your wholesale price or cost of manufacturing) or *average variable costs* (costs such as materials, shipping, or commission that vary with the number of units sold) and your *fixed costs* (charges such as rent or insurance that are the same each month regardless of how much business you do). Then plug the amounts into these two formulas:

$$\text{revenues} - \text{cost of goods (variable)} = \text{gross margin}$$

$$\text{fixed costs} \div \text{gross margin} = \text{break-even point (in unit sales)}$$

[Figure 2-5](#) shows this relationship. This graph of the break-even point shows fixed costs (the dashed horizontal line) to variable costs (the solid diagonal line) to plot total costs. After revenues surpass the break-even point, each sale contributes to profits (the shaded area on the right).

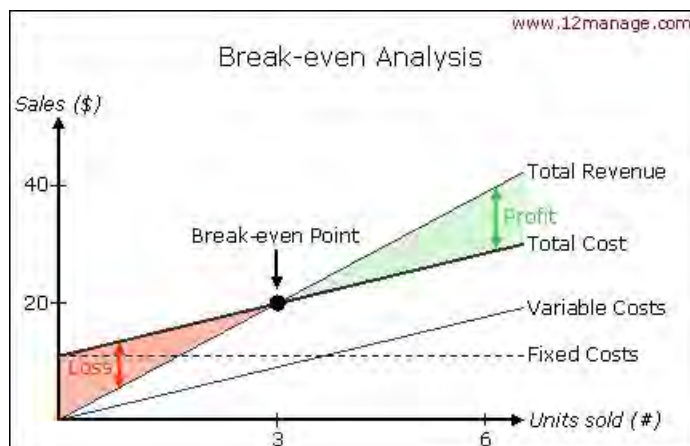


FIGURE 2-5: The break-even chart plots fixed plus variable costs; each sale after the break-even point contributes to profits.

The break-even analysis tool from the Harvard Business School Toolkit

(<https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/item.aspx?num=38368>) can also help you calculate your break-even point.

Profit margin

Net profit margin is defined as earnings (profits) divided by revenues. If you have \$10,000 in revenues and \$1,500 in profits, your profit margin is 15 percent ($1500 \div 10000 = 0.15$).

Revenue versus profit

One of the most common errors in marketing is to stop analyzing results when you count the cash in the drawer. You can easily be seduced by growing revenues, but profit is what matters. Profit determines your return on investment, replenishes your resources for growth, and rewards you for taking risks.

Determining Return on Investment

Return on investment (ROI) is a commonly used business metric that evaluates the profitability of an investment or effort compared with its original cost. This versatile metric is usually presented as a ratio or percentage (multiply the following equation by 100). The formula itself is deceptively simple:

$$\text{ROI} = (\text{gain from investment} - \text{cost of investment}) \div \text{cost of investment}$$

The devil is, as usual, in the details. The cost of an investment means more than cold, hard cash. Depending on the type of effort for which you're computing ROI for an accurate picture, you may need to include the cost of labor (including your own!), subcontractors, fees, and advertising. When calculating ROI for your entire business, be sure to include overhead, cost of goods, and cost of sales.

You can affect ROI positively by either increasing the return (revenues) or reducing costs. That's business in a nutshell.



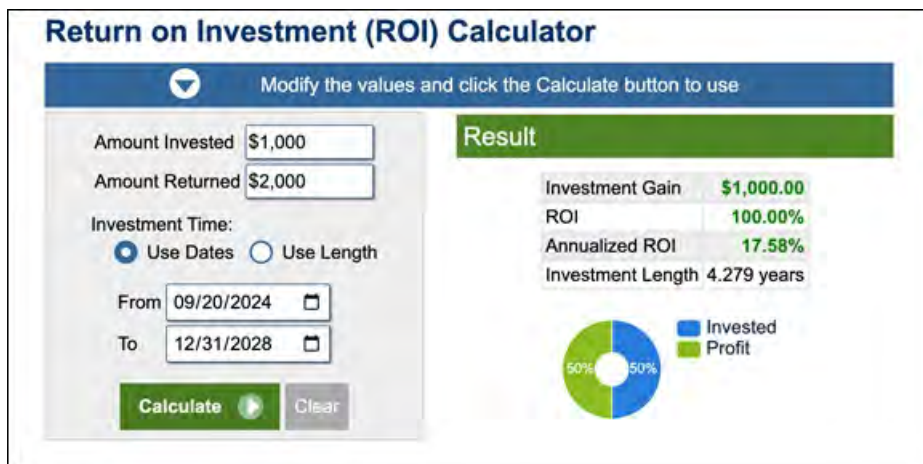
REMEMBER Because the formula is flexible, be sure that you know what other people mean when they talk about ROI.

You can calculate ROI for a particular marketing campaign or product, or an entire year's worth of marketing expenses. Or compare ROI among various forms of marketing, comparing the net revenue returned from an investment in social media to returns from SEO or paid advertising.



TIP Run ROI calculations monthly, quarterly, or yearly, depending on the parameter you're trying to measure.

Try the interactive ROI calculator at www.calculator.net/roi-calculator.html, which is also shown in [Figure 2-6](#).



Courtesy of: calculator.net

FIGURE 2-6: Play around with variables such as the investment time.

ROI may be expressed as a *rate of return* (how long it takes to earn back an investment). An annual ROI of 25 percent means that it takes four years to recover what you put in. Obviously, if an investment takes too long to earn out, your product — or your business — is at risk of failing in the meantime.



REMEMBER If your analysis predicts a negative ROI, or even a very low rate of return over an extended period, stop and think! Unless you have a specific tactical plan (such as using a product as a loss leader to draw traffic), look for an alternative effort with a better likelihood of success.

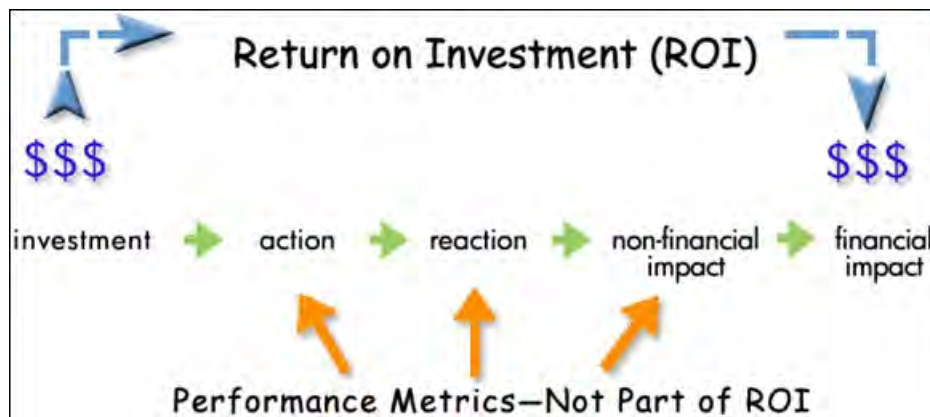
Technically, ROI is a business metric, involving the achievement of business goals, such as more clicks from social media that become sales, higher average value per sale, more repeat

sales from existing customers, or reduced cost of customer acquisition.

Many people try to calculate ROI for social media based on performance metrics such as increases in

- » The amount of traffic to website or social media pages
- » The number of online conversations that include a positive mention of your company
- » References to your company versus references to your competitors
- » The number of people who join your social networks or bookmark your sites
- » The number of people who post to your blog, comment on your Facebook page, or retweet your comments

These measurements may be worth monitoring, but they're only intermediate steps in the ROI process, as shown in [Figure 2-7](#).



Modified from Source: BrandBuilder, Olivier Blanchard Basics of Social Media ROI

FIGURE 2-7: The relationship between performance metrics and business metrics for ROI.

Here's how to calculate your return on investment:

1. **Establish baselines for what you want to measure before and after your effort.**
For example, you may want to measure year-over-year growth.
2. **Create activity timelines that appear when specific social media marketing events take place.**
For example, mark an event on an activity timeline when you start a blog or X campaign.
3. **Plot business metrics over time, particularly sales revenues, number of transactions, and net new customers.**
4. **Measure transactional precursors, such as positive versus negative mentions online, retail store traffic, or performance metrics.**
For example, keep a tally of comments on a blog post or of site visits.
5. **Line up the timelines for the various relevant activities and transactional (business) results.**

6. **Look for patterns in the data that suggest a relationship between business metrics and transactional precursors.**
7. **Prove those relationships.**

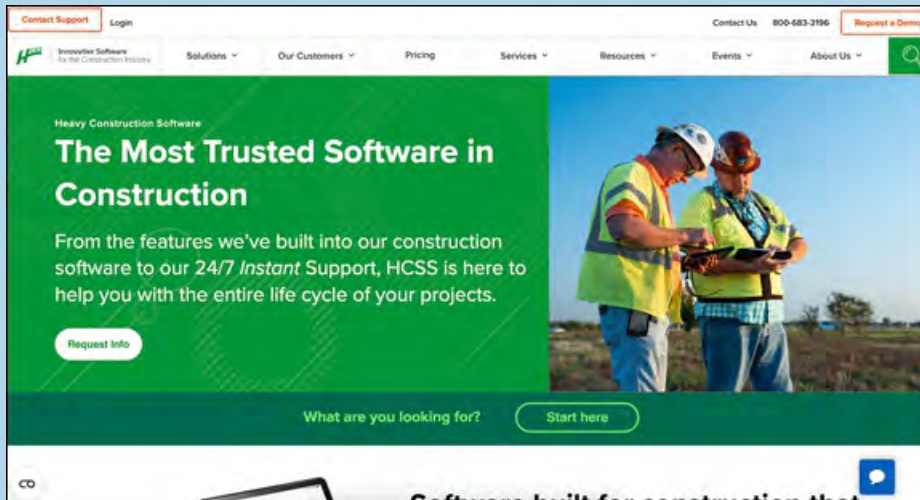
Try to predict results on the basis of the patterns you see, and monitor your data to see whether your predictions are accurate.



REMEMBER Improvement in performance metrics doesn't necessarily produce better business results. The only two metrics that count toward ROI are whether your techniques reduce costs or improve revenue.

SOCIAL MEDIA BOOSTS B2B COMPANIES, TOO

HCSS, a Texas-based firm that provides software to the heavy construction industry, allows companies to manage their entire job site from bid to completion on desktop, tablet, or mobile platforms. For nearly 35 years, HCSS has provided software to over 5,000 customers in the United States and Canada, and has grown to more than 220 employees.



Courtesy of HCSS

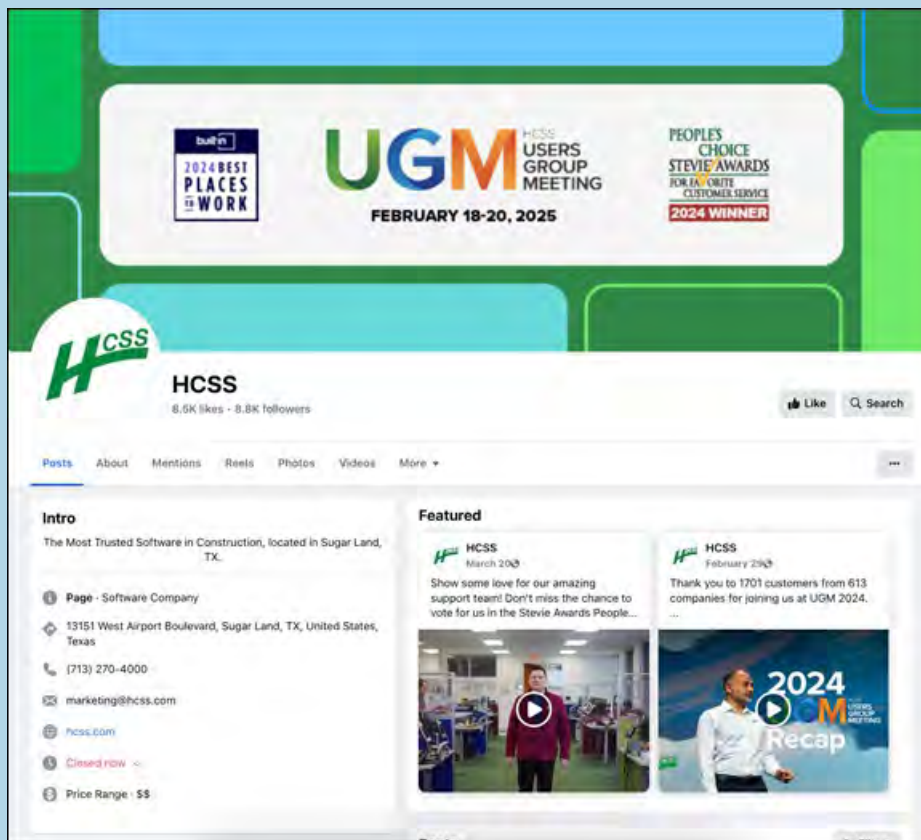
With its website well in place, HCSS started posting generic company-style content on standard social media platforms. Beginning around 2013, it took a more active strategic marketing approach to social media, looking for relevant information that its customers would want to read and repost. According to Skyler Moss, former director of digital marketing for HCSS, this effort turned its social focus from “Hey, look at me” to “Hey, here’s some helpful info you might like to know.” By shifting its content from features to benefits, the company started building a trust relationship with its followers. It took some trial-and-error experiments. “Basically,” says Moss, “You have to deliver the content that your audience wants through the social platform they want it on.”

As an example, Moss points to the nonprofit site I Build America, which HCSS developed to help the industry tell the story of the people, companies, and projects involved in construction. “We found through our social listening that the construction industry was segmented, with 100,000 social discussions going on daily, but on many different mediums, the most active of [which] was Instagram... We found the most popular #s [hashtags] being used, and tagged our photos with them, while also including our own, for example, #construction, #constructionlife, and #buildamerica.”

For the first month or two, Moss regularly posted photos on Instagram of real-world construction. From there, the message started to spread organically through the power of cross-tagging. In roughly nine months, the Instagram account for I Build America grew to over 16,000 followers with 100 percent user-generated content. Now more than 300 pieces of individual content are posted each month. “We have created our own conversation around #ibuildamerica by simply trying to tell the story of construction and the people who work in it, rather than making it all about us,” claims Moss.

Trying to figure out which platform is best for HCSS to use to achieve different marketing objectives has required a bit of research. Moss discovered the following:

- **LinkedIn-sponsored content placement worked best to generate qualified leads.** Although expensive in terms of cost per click, LinkedIn allows the company to target specific buyers and positions at a low cost per lead and a high ROI. Moss recommends knowing much more about your buyer than just a job title. He argues that marketers really need to understand the buyer's persona, from who they are to the types of customers they have and what drives them.
- **To increase site traffic and viral sharing, Facebook proved best.** HCSS runs two major contests every year, the Construction Intern Awards and the Impact Awards. The awards mix an expert judging panel with live voting to increase social awareness and referral traffic. Facebook was the best platform for live voting.



Courtesy of HCSS

At this point, the company's various marketing efforts produce hundreds of leads a month for sales staff to work on. Moss observes that “We've refined our funnel so well that our sales teams only work leads that we deem are qualified through our lead scoring.”

HCSS now manages numerous social media accounts split among its core business accounts, career topics, customer support, and the “I Build America” campaign. That's a lot to manage with only two full-time employees, some part-time interns, and Moss leading the effort. To help, they rely on multiple tools. One of the social media

interns, Jack Briscoe, had the responsibility of constantly monitoring notifications to see whether an urgent response is required. He used Google Alerts, Iconosquare to monitor Instagram, and Hootsuite to monitor Facebook and X. Hootsuite is used also to repost construction photos on Instagram, and MeetEdgar is used to schedule cross-posts by category on X and Facebook.

HCSS also uses a variety of tools to track the path from prospect to sale, starting with marketing automation software from HubSpot, which helps with lead scoring. Qualified prospects are then sent to sales using Salesforce. To follow customers' paths through sales funnels, Moss also relies on Google Analytics and Webmaster Tools, as well as CrazyEgg heat maps and video heat-mapping software. (A *heat map* is a color-coded display of data, such as where customers look on a web page or which links they click.) For social media, Moss uses data from Google Analytics and HubSpot to track leads and customer conversions.

"When you know ... how much you are spending on each social media platform and the value of a customer, you [can] calculate your CPL, or cost per lead Find the source that produces the best CPL and lowest CPC, cost per customer," says Moss. "That will help you refine your social media spending for ads, sponsored content, or retargeting." However, from his point of view, SEO traffic still retains the lead in ROI.

Moss fervently recommends starting with a persona, so marketers know exactly which marketing techniques will work, and how, when, and where different personas like to engage with content. He pursues that approach by targeting content that specifically addresses different personas' problems, needs, issues, and challenges. For HCSS, this method has led to a 300 percent growth in organic traffic versus branded traffic over the past three years.

Of course, a company this size has a robust marketing mix that also includes email, trade shows, print ads, newsletters, video-publishing platforms, and social media retargeting ads. Although Moss doesn't think that having social media icons on a website matters much now, he does think it helps to cross-promote content among social media channels. For example, he cross-promotes user-generated images from I Build America to X and Facebook. What makes a difference, he contends, is whether people on Facebook, for example, will share an interesting post with their own followers.

HCSS has also experimented with advertising on social media. It tried a three-month Facebook look-alike campaign and monitored the conversions and CPL. At the end, Moss decided that the CPL for its B2B market was way too high to sustain. On the other hand, a sponsored content campaign on LinkedIn drove more targeted customers at a lower CPL, even though the cost per click was five to ten times as high as on Facebook.

Both Briscoe and Moss have important insights to share. Briscoe reminds people to keep posting and experimenting. "Don't be afraid to not have the perfect content because that doesn't exist. You can't please everyone with just a single post," he says.

Adds Moss, "Always remember that your true north is your customer; they are your guiding compass and will tell you all you want to know. You just have to ask."

Following is a list of sites that make up HCSS's web presence:

- www.hcss.com
- www.facebook.com/HCSS4Construction
- www.youtube.com/hcsssoftware
- <https://X.com/hcss>
- www.linkedin.com/company/hcss
- www.instagram.com/ibuildamerica/?hl=en
- www.linkedin.com/company/i-build-america
- www.youtube.com/ibuildamerica
- <https://X.com/ibamerica>

Chapter 3

Plotting Your Social Media Marketing Strategy

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Finding your audience online
 - » Segmenting B2C markets
 - » Conducting B2B research online
 - » Planning your strategy
-

[Chapter 1](#) of this minibook discusses making the business case for social media marketing, looking at the question of whether you should or shouldn't get involved. That chapter is about strategy, goals, and objectives — this one is about tactics. It helps you decide which social media services best fit your marketing objectives and your target market.

Let your customers and prospects drive your selection of social media alternatives. To see the best return on your investment in social media, you need to try to use the same social media as they do. This principle is the same one you apply to all your other marketing and advertising efforts. Social media is a new tactic, not a new world.



REMEMBER Fish where your fish are. If your potential customers aren't on a particular social media outlet, don't start a campaign on that outlet.

This chapter shows how to use online market research to assess the match between your target markets and various social media outlets. After you do that, you're ready to start filling out your own Social Media Marketing Plan, which appears at the end of this chapter.

Locating Your Target Market Online

Nothing is more important in marketing than identifying and understanding your target audience (or audiences). After you can describe your customers' and prospects' demographic characteristics, where they live, and what social media they use, you're in a position to focus your social marketing efforts on those people most likely to buy your products or services. (Be sure to include the description of your target market in your Social Media Marketing Goals statement, discussed in Book 1, [Chapter 1](#).)

Because social media techniques focus on inexpensive ways to reach niche markets with specific messages, they're tailor-made for a guerrilla-marketing approach. As with all guerrilla-marketing activities, target one market at a time.

Don't dilute your marketing budget or labor by trying to reach too many audiences at a time. People still need to see your message or brand name at least seven times to remember it. Trying to boost yourself to the forefront of everyone's mind all at once is expensive.



REMEMBER Focus your resources on one niche at a time. After you succeed, invest your profits in the next niche. It may seem counterintuitive, but it works.

Don't let setting priorities among niches paralyze you. Your choice of niches usually doesn't matter. If you aren't sure, go first for what seems to be the biggest market or the easiest one to reach.

Segmenting Your B2C Market

If you have a business-to-consumer (B2C) company, you can adapt the standard tools of *market segmentation*, which is a technique to define various niche audiences by where they live and how they spend their time and money. The most common types of segmentation are

- » Demographics
- » Geographic location
- » Life-stage-based purchasing behavior
- » Psychographics or lifestyle
- » Affinity or interest groups

These categories affect not only your social media tactics but also your graphics, message, content, offers, and every other aspect of your marketing.



REMEMBER Your messages need to be specific enough to satisfy the needs and wants of the distinct subgroups you're trying to reach.

Suppose that you want to sell a line of organic, herbal hair care products using social media. If you described your target market as "everyone who uses shampoo" in your Social Media Marketing Goals statement (see Book 1, [Chapter 1](#)), segment that market into different subgroups before you select appropriate social-marketing techniques.

When you're creating subgroups, keep these concepts in mind:

- » **Simple demographics affect your market definition.** The use of fragrances, descriptive terms, and even packaging may vary by gender. How many shampoo commercials for men talk about silky hair? For that matter, what's the ratio of shampoo commercials addressed to women versus men?
- » **Consider geography.** Geography may not seem obvious, but people who live in dry

climates may be more receptive to a message about moisturizers than people who live in humid climates. Or perhaps your production capacity constrains your initial product launch to a local or regional area.

- » **Think about how purchasing behavior changes with life stages.** For instance, people who dye their hair look for different hair care products than those who don't, but the reason they color their hair affects your selling message. (Teenagers and young adults may dye their hair unusual colors in an effort to belong to a group of their peers; older men may hide the gray with Grecian Formula; women with kids might be interested in fashion, or color their hair as a pick-me-up.)
- » **Even lifestyles (psychographics) affect decisions.** People with limited resources who are unlikely to try new products may respond to messages about value and satisfaction guarantees; people with more resources or a higher status may be affected by messages related to social grouping and self-esteem.
- » **Affinity or interest groups are an obvious segmentation parameter.** People who participate in environmental organizations or who recycle goods may be more likely to be swayed by a green shampoo appeal or shop in specific online venues.

Different niche markets are drawn to different social media activities in general and to specific social media service providers in particular. The following several sections look in detail at different online tools you can use to explore the parameters that seem the most appropriate for segmenting your audience and selecting specific social media sites.



REMEMBER The most successful marketing campaigns are driven by your target markets, not by techniques.

Demographics

Demographic segmentation, the most common type of market differentiation, covers such standard categories as gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, family size, household income, occupation, social class, and education.

Sites such as Statista (www.statista.com) and Pew Research Center (www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/internet-broadband) provide basic demographic information compared to the overall Internet population, as shown in [Figure 3-1](#).

As you can see in [Figure 3-1](#), the Statista and Pew Research sites don't always share the same demographic subcategories or completely agree on the data. However, either one is close enough for your social-marketing purposes.

Use these tools to check out the demographic profile of users on various social media services, as well as your own users and those of your competitors. For example, by comparing the demographics on Statista, you can see that over a third of online users worldwide were aged between 25 and 34 years.



REMEMBER Look for a general match between your target audience and that of the social media service you're considering.



TIP Always check for current demographic information before launching your social media campaign.

Geographic location

Marketing by country, region, state, city, zip code, or even neighborhood is the key for location-based social media outlets, such as Swarm, or any other form of online marketing that involves local search.

Geographic segmentation also makes sense if your business draws its primary target audience from within a certain distance from your brick-and-mortar storefront. For example, geographic segmentation makes sense for grocery stores, barbershops, gas stations, restaurants, movie theaters, and many other service providers, whether or not your social media service itself is location-based.

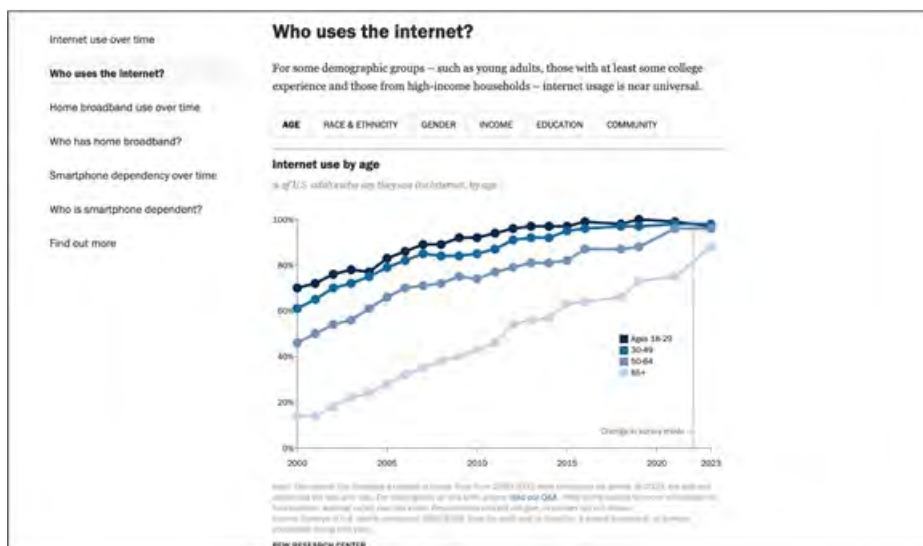
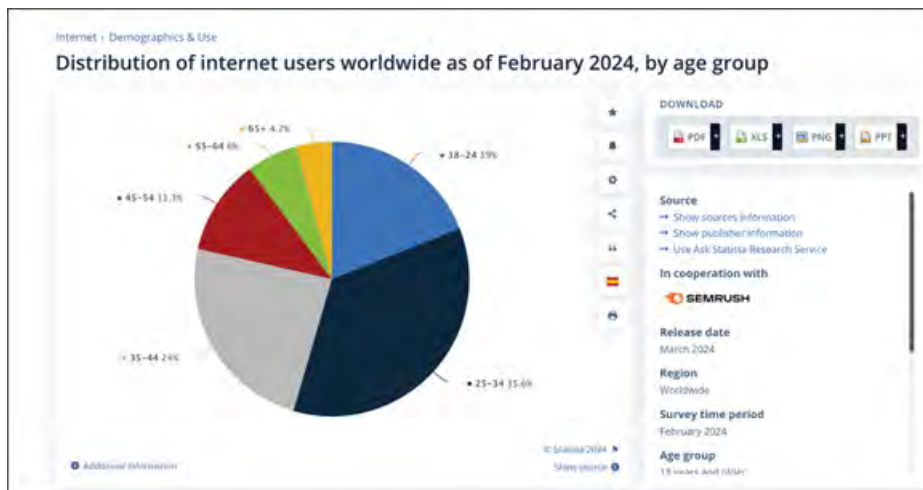


FIGURE 3-1: Statista (top) provides demographic information about the distribution of Internet users worldwide as of February 2024, by age group, and Pew Research (bottom) provides a different take on the same age demographic information.

Many social media services offer a location search function to assess the number of users in your geographical target area:

- » **X users near a specified location** (<https://x.com/search-advanced>): To find users who have tweeted from (or about) a location, type the city name in the “All of these Words” box at the top of the advanced search pop-up box and tap Search or hit Enter. The People section, which lists all usernames that contain the location you searched for, appears at the top of the search results page. Under that section are a selection of Posts that contain your search location. Scroll through user accounts or tweets until you find people or tweets that catch your eye.



REMEMBER The more search terms you put in the advanced search box, the more honed in your search results will be, so don't be afraid to be specific!

- » **LinkedIn users within a certain city** (www.linkedin.com): In the search box at the top of the screen, type your location and tap or click the Search button. On the search results page, tap or click the People button at the top. If you want to narrow down the search results to people that have their current location set to that city (as opposed to the search results mentioning the city somewhere in their profile), then click or tap the Locations dropdown at the top and select one of the location options to narrow it down even further.
- » **Facebook users near a certain location** (www.facebook.com): The most accurate way to size a potential target audience geographically is to create a Meta advertising account with a test ad, which you may choose not to launch. Then log into your Meta Business Suite. Click Ads in the left sidebar, then click the blue Create Ad button on the top right. Follow the prompts to choose an objective for an ad. (For audience research, it doesn't matter which objective you select.) Scroll down to the Audience section and click the radio button for People you choose through targeting. For the total number of Facebook users in your country, you can leave the default settings as they are. If you want to expand it to be additional (or fewer) locations, click the pencil icon on the top right of that section and make any adjustments to the demographic parameters you want, being sure to click the blue Save Audience button at the bottom of the pop-up box. Once you're back on the Audience screen, at the top of the right column, find the Estimated Daily Results box showing the total number of Facebook accounts in the area you selected. For more information, see the section on Facebook advertising in Book 5, [Chapter 3](#).



TIP If you can't determine the number of potential users for a social media channel in your specific geographic location, use the Help function on the social media channel, check the blog, or contact the company.

Several companies combine geographical information with demographics and behavioral characteristics to segment the market more finely. For example, the Nielsen PRIZM system offers demo-geographic data organized into 66 distinct sub-segments, some of which are described in [Table 3-1](#).

Purchasing behavior in different life stages

Rather than look at a target market solely in terms of demographics, *life stage analysis* considers what people are doing with their lives, recognizing that it may affect media behavior and spending patterns.

TABLE 3-1 Top-Level Demo-Geographic Social Groups from Nielsen PRIZM

Name	Description
Urban Uptown	Wealthiest urban (highest density) consumers (five sub-segments)
Midtown Mix	Midscale, ethnically diverse, urban population (three sub-segments)
Urban Cores	Modest income, affordable housing, urban living (four sub-segments)
Elite Suburbs	Affluent, suburban elite (four sub-segments)
Affluentials	Comfortable suburban lifestyle (six sub-segments)
Middleburbs	Middle-class suburbs (five sub-segments)
Inner Suburbs	Downscale inner suburbs of metropolitan areas (four sub-segments)
Second City Society	Wealthy families in smaller cities on fringes of metro areas (three sub-segments)
City Centers	Low income, satellite cities with mixed demographics (five sub-segments)
Micro-City Blues	Downscale residents in second cities (five sub-segments)
Landed Gentry	Wealthy Americans in small towns (five sub-segments)
Country Comfort	Upper-middle-class homeowners in bedroom communities (five sub-segments)
Middle America	Middle-class homeowners in small towns and exurbs (six sub-segments)
Rustic Living	Most isolated towns and rural areas (six sub-segments)

Reproduced with permission of The Nielsen Company; Source: Nielsen Claritas

Purchasing behavior may also differ by life stages, such as the family life cycle, as shown in [Table 3-2](#). Note that the family life cycle described in the table may not accurately reflect the wider range of today's lifestyles.



REMEMBER You're looking for a fit between the profile of your target audience and that of the social media service.



REMEMBER With more flexible timing for going through life passages, demographic analysis isn't enough for many types of products and services. Women may have children later in life; many older, nontraditional students go back to college; some retirees re-enter the workforce to supplement Social Security earnings. What your prospective customers do each day may influence what they buy and which media outlets they use more than their age or location.

For example, Statista found in 2023 there were nearly 4.89 billion social media users worldwide (www.statista.com/statistics/269615/social-network-penetration-by-region).

TABLE 3-2 Stage in the Family Life Cycle

Life Stage	Sample Products or Services They Buy
Single, no children (also known as Bachelor Stage)	Fashionable clothing, vehicles
Newly Married Couples, no children	Good furniture, new homes, insurance

Family Nest 1, young children	Baby food and toys, children's items, activities, and education
Family Nest 2, older children	College, possibly travel and furniture
Empty nest, children gone	Vacations, hobbies, savings for retirement
Solitary survivor	Savings, accommodations, medical expenses

Adapted from <http://www.marketing91.com/family-life-cycle/>

Psychographics or lifestyle

Psychographic segmentation divides a market by social class, lifestyle, or the shared activities, interests, and opinions of prospective customers. It helps identify groups in a social-networking service or other, smaller, social networks that attract users who meet your desired profile.

Behavioral segmentation, which is closely related, divides potential buyers based on their uses, responses, or attitudes toward a product or service. To obtain this information about your customers, consider including a quick poll as part of your e-newsletter, website, or blog. Although the results from those who reply may not be exactly representative of your total customer base — or that of prospective customers — a survey gives you some starter data.



REMEMBER Don't confuse the psychographic profile of a group with personality traits specific to an individual.

Psychographic segmentation, such as that found at <https://rockcontent.com/blog/psychographic-segmentation-examples>, helps you identify not only where to promote your company but also how to craft your message. For instance, understanding your specific target group, its mind-set, and its lifestyle might help you appeal to customers such as the Innovators described at that URL; they might be interested in your high-end line of fashion, home decor, or vacation destinations. Or you might target Experiencers at that URL for a wild new restaurant, a zipline adventure, or an energy drink.

Affinity groups

Segmenting by *affinity group* (a group of people who share similar interests or participate in similar activities) fills in the blank at the end of the “People who like this interest or activity also like ...” statement. Because psychographic segmentation uses activity as a subsection, that approach is somewhat similar.

For example, in [Figure 3-2](#), Quantcast estimates other interests of visitors to Goodreads (www.goodreads.com) based on their browsing behavior under the General Interests option. (This data is available only for *quantified sites* — that is, sites for which the site owners have verified the data.) A check mark to the right of the name of the site indicates that it is quantified; otherwise you see the label “not quantified.”

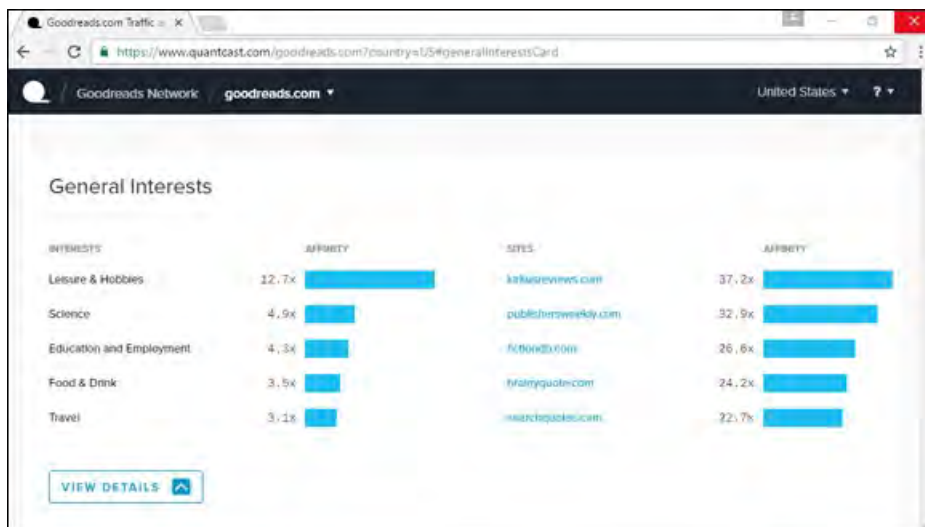


FIGURE 3-2: Quantcast estimates topics that interest users of Goodreads.



TIP For information on clickstream analysis (where visitors come from and where they go), see Book 9, [Chapter 6](#).

By using Quantcast in this way, you can obtain public information about visits to specific social media services or to your competitors' or other related businesses' websites. You can also use these services to profile your own business, although your website might be too small to provide more than rough estimates. If your business is too small, estimate the interest profile for your target market by running Quantcast for a verified, large corporation that offers a similar product or service.

You can also use Google Trends (www.google.com/trends/explore#cmpt=q) to search by the interest categories shown in [Table 3-3](#). Click All Categories at the top of the page to open a drop-down list. Google Trends uses real-time search data to estimate customer interest in various topics over time. You can select specific keywords, time periods, or locations for additional detail.

TABLE 3-3 Main Categories Available on Google Trends

Arts & Entertainment	Autos & Vehicles	Beauty & Fitness
Books & Literature	Business & Industrial	Computers & Electronics
Finance	Food & Drink	Games
Health	Hobbies & Leisure	Home & Garden
Internet & Telecom	Jobs & Education	Law & Government
News	Online Communities	People & Society
Pets & Animals	Real Estate	Reference
Science	Shopping	Sports
Travel		

Researching B2B Markets

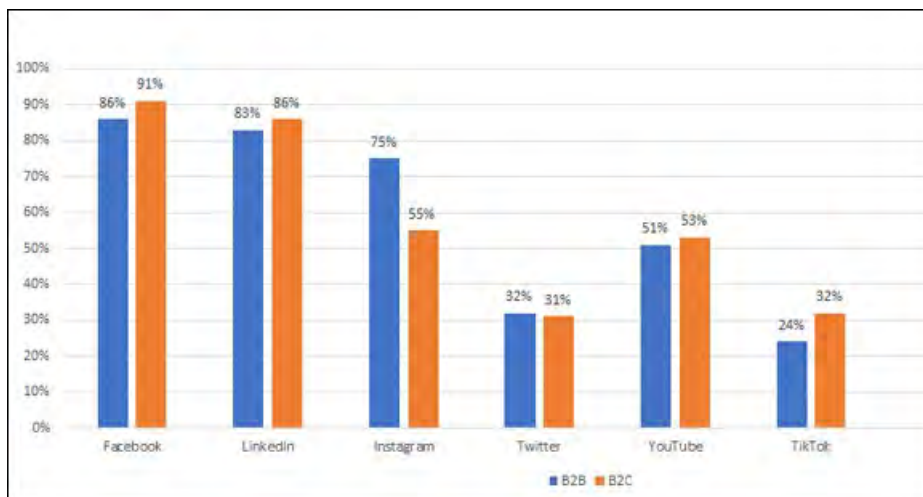
Market research and social media choices for business-to-business (B2B) markets are somewhat different from business-to-consumer (B2C) markets because the sales cycle is different. Usually, B2B companies have a longer sales cycle, high-ticket purchases, and multiple people who play a role in closing a sale; consequently, B2B marketing requires a different social media presence.

In terms of social media, more B2B marketing efforts focus on branding, top-of-mind visibility, customer support, customer loyalty, and problem-solving compared to more sales-focused messages from B2C companies.



TIP One key step in B2B marketing is to identify people who make the buying decision. Professional social networks such as LinkedIn, Networking for Professionals, or others on www.g2.com/categories/social-networks/small-business may help you research people on your B2B customer or prospect lists.

According to research by the Content Marketing Institute, more than 95 percent of all B2B marketers use some form of social media content (https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2020_B2B_Research_Final.pdf). As shown in [Figure 3-3](#), B2B firms may emphasize different forms of social media than B2C businesses. In many cases, the choice of social media varies by company size, industry type, experience with social media, and the availability of budgetary and human resources.



Adapted from *Social Media Examiner 2024 Social Media Marketing Industry Report*

FIGURE 3-3: B2C (orange rows) and B2B (blue rows) businesses often utilize different social media channels.

For more information on using social media for B2B marketing, visit one of these links:

<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-statistics>

<https://www.oberlo.com/blog/social-media-marketing-statistics>

<https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/report>

HubSpot (www.hubspot.com/marketing-statistics) also offers a range of B2B market research tools.

As always, the key is ensuring that your customers are using the type of social media you're considering. Use the search feature and group options on major social-networking sites to test your list of existing customers. Chances are good that if a large number of your existing customers are using that service, it will be a good source for future customers as well.

In addition to participating in general market research, you might want to try SimilarSites (www.similarsites.com), which not only assists with research on social media alternatives that reach your target market but also helps you find companies that compete with yours.



TIP Check competing sites for inbound links from other sites, as well as their outbound links, to see how they reach their customers.

Conducting Other Types of Market Research Online

The amount of research available online can be paralyzing. A well-crafted search yields most, if not all, of the social-marketing research you need. You aren't writing an academic paper; you're running a business with limited time and resources. Set aside a week or two for research, and then start laying out your approach.



TIP Don't be afraid to experiment on a small scale. In the end, what matters is what happens with your business while you integrate social media into your marketing plan, not what happens to businesses on average.

Despite these statements, you might want to touch on two other research points:

- » **The most influential sites, posters, or pages on your preferred social media:** You can learn from them.
- » **Understanding what motivates people to use certain types of social media:** Make the content you provide meet their expectations and desires.

Identifying influencers

Whether you have a B2B or B2C company, you gain valuable insight by reviewing the comments of *influencers* (companies or individuals driving the conversation in your industry sector). For example, to see the most popular posters on Instagram, I checked out

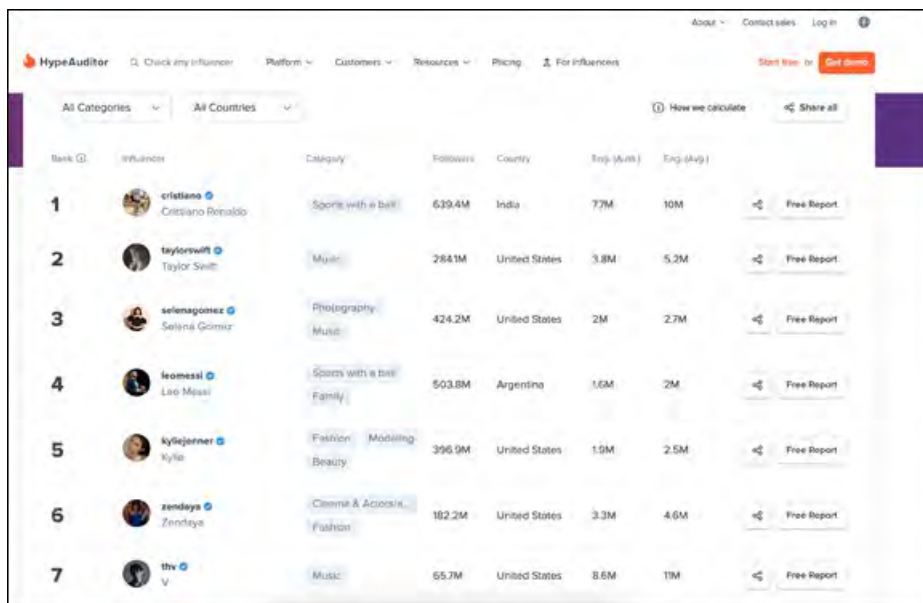
HypeAuditor at <https://hypeauditor.com/top-instagram>, as shown in [Figure 3-4](#).

You may be surprised to find that the most frequent posters aren't necessarily the ones with the most followers, and vice versa.

For additional tools to identify influencers on various social media channels, check out the lists at Search Engine Journal (www.searchenginejournal.com/top-social-media-influencers/475776) or SocialPilot (www.socialpilot.co/blog/top-social-media-influencers).

These sites can help you identify people you might want to follow for research purposes. You can find more information about tools for identifying influencers for each of the major services in their respective minibooks.

Influencer Marketing is covered in more detail in [Book 7](#) and [Book 8](#).



Rank	Influencer	Category	Followers	Country	Eng. (Auth.)	Eng. (Avg.)	
1	 cristiano Cristiano Ronaldo	Sports with a ball	639.4M	India	77M	10M	 Free Report
2	 taylorswift Taylor Swift	Music	284.1M	United States	3.8M	5.2M	 Free Report
3	 selenagomez Selena Gomez	Photography Music	424.2M	United States	2M	2.7M	 Free Report
4	 leomessi Leo Messi	Sports with a ball Family	503.8M	Argentina	1.6M	2M	 Free Report
5	 kyliejenner Kylie	Fashion Modeling Beauty	396.9M	United States	1.9M	2.5M	 Free Report
6	 zendaya Zendaya	Cosmetics & Accessories Fashion	182.2M	United States	3.3M	4.6M	 Free Report
7	 drake Drake	Music	65.7M	United States	8.6M	11M	 Free Report

FIGURE 3-4: HypeAuditor ranks the most influential Instagram users.

Understanding why people use social media services

The expectation that people gravitate toward different types of social media to meet different needs seems reasonable. The challenge, of course, is to match what people seek with particular social sites.

A review of successful social media models may spark creative ideas for your own campaign.

Setting Up Your Social Media Marketing Plan

You can dive into social media marketing headfirst and see what happens. Or you can take the time to research, plan, execute, and evaluate your approach. The Social Media Marketing Plan, shown in [Figure 3-5](#), is for people taking the latter approach. (You can download the form at <https://www.dummies.com/go/socialmediamarketingaiofd6e>.)



REMEMBER Plan your work; work your plan.

Social Media Marketing Form Tactical Options

Company Name _____ Date _____

Hub Site(s) (URLs of website or blog with domain name to which traffic will be driven) _____

Standard Social Media Identification Name/Handle _____

Social Media Project Director _____

Social Media Team Members & Tasks _____

Programming/Technical Team _____

Social Media Policy URL _____

Select boxes for all applications used.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLANNING

- ☐ **Dashboard** (select one, and enter URL and login info)
- ☐ Hootsuite
 - ☐ NetVibes
 - ☐ Custom
 - ☐ Other
- ☐ **Calendar** (select one, and enter URL and login info)
- ☐ Google Calendar
 - ☐ MS Office Calendar
 - ☐ Yahoo Calendar
 - ☐ Other
- ☐ **Social sharing service** (select one, and enter URL and login info)
- ☐ AddThis
 - ☐ AddtoAny
 - ☐ ShareThis
 - ☐ Other
- ☐ **Social media resources** (enter at least one resource site or blog to follow)
- ☐

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

- ☐ **Monitoring** (select at least one, and enter name, URL, and login info)
- ☐ Blog monitoring tool
 - ☐ Brand reputation/sentiment tool with fee (e.g., BrandsEye)
 - ☐ Topic monitoring tool (e.g., Google Trends, Addictomatic)
 - ☐ Google Alerts
 - ☐ HowSociable
 - ☐ IceRocket
 - ☐ Mention
 - ☐ Trackur
 - ☐ Twitter monitoring tool
 - ☐ WhosTalkin
 - ☐ Other

☐ **Distribution tools** (select at least one, and enter name, URL, and login info)

- ☐ RSS/Atom feeds
- ☐ Buffer
- ☐ Hootsuite
- ☐ OnlyWire
- ☐ TweetDeck
- ☐ Other

☐ **Update notification tools** (select at least one, and enter name, URL, and login info)

- ☐ Pingdom
- ☐ GooglePing.com
- ☐ Other

☐ **URL clipping tool** (select at least one, and enter name, URL, and login info)

- ☐ Bitly
- ☐ TinyURL
- ☐ Other

☐ **E-commerce tool or widget** (select one, and enter URL, and login info)

- ☐ Amazon widget
- ☐ Ecwid
- ☐ Etsy widget
- ☐ PayPal widget
- ☐ Shopify
- ☐ Storefront Social
- ☐ Custom
- ☐ Other

☐ **Search engine submissions** (if needed, enter URL, login info, and submission dates)

- ☐ Automated XML feed
- ☐ Yahoo!/Bing search engine submission
- ☐ Google search engine submission
- ☐ Specialty search submission sites
- ☐ Other

STANDARD SET PRIMARY KEYWORDS/TAGS

(Enter at least 8 but no more than 30)

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

STANDARD SET DESCRIPTION TAG

(Enter 150-character description, preferably including at least 4 of the preceding keywords)

SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICES

☐ **Social bookmarking sites** (select at least one, and enter name, URL, and login info)

- ☐ Delicious
- ☐ Google Bookmarks
- ☐ StumbleUpon
- ☐ Y! Toolbar
- ☐ Other

☐ **Social news sites** (select at least one, and enter name, URL, and login info)

- ☐ Digg
- ☐ Newsvine
- ☐ Reddit
- ☐ Slashdot
- ☐ Other

☐ **Social shopping and specialty bookmark sites** (enter name, URL, and login info for all)

- ☐ StyleHive
- ☐ ThisNext
- ☐ Other

☐ **Blogging sites** (enter name, URL, and login info for all)

- ☐ Blog directory submission site
- ☐ Blog monitoring site
- ☐ Blog measuring tool sites
- ☐ Primary blog
- ☐ Other

☐ **Primary social networking services** (select at least one, and enter name, URL, and login info)

Facebook

- ☐ Engagement
- ☐ Events
- ☐ Groups
- ☐ Insights

Twitter

- ☐ Follow Us
- ☐ Hashtags/lists
- ☐ Metrics
- ☐ Tools

LinkedIn

- ☐ Events/answers
- ☐ Groups
- ☐ Follow Us
- ☐ Metrics

Google Plus

- ☐ +1 (ratings)
- ☐ Circles
- ☐ Follow Us
- ☐ Metrics

Pinterest

- ☐ Follow Us
- ☐ Metrics

Specialty networks

Other demographic networks (e.g., Grandparents)

Other professional networks (e.g., Ryze)

Other vertical industry networks (e.g., DeviantArt)

☐ **Social media content-sharing sites** (enter name, URL, and login info for all)

- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Pinterest
- ☐ Podcasts
- ☐ Slideshare
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ Ustream
- ☐ Vimeo
- ☐ Vine
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Other

☐ **Social community sites** (enter name, URL, and login info for all)

- ☐ Forums
- ☐ Ning
- ☐ Other

☐ **Other social media services** (enter name, URL, and login info for all)

- ☐ Collective shopping (e.g., Groupon, Living Social)
- ☐ Geolocation (e.g., Foursquare)
- ☐ Social Mobile
- ☐ Other

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

☐ **Social platforms with paid advertising** (enter the URL and login info for all the options you select)

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Pinterest
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Other

☐ **Advertising metrics** (be sure to enter name, account login URL, username, and password for each social media platform on your spreadsheet)

- ☐ Click-through rate (CTR)
- ☐ Cost per click (CPC)
- ☐ Cost per thousand impressions (CPM)
- ☐ Conversion rate
- ☐ Cost per conversion

SOCIAL MEDIA METRICS

☐ **Key performance indicators** (enter at least 8, e.g., traffic, CPM, CPC, conversion rate, ROI)

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

☐ **Analytical/statistical tool** (select at least one, and enter name, URL and login info)

- ☐ Google Analytics
- ☐ Sitetrail's StatsTool
- ☐ StatCounter
- ☐ Yahoo! Analytics
- ☐ Other

Watermelon Mountain Web Marketing: www.watermelonweb.com/WatermelonMountain

FIGURE 3-5: Build a social media marketing plan for your company.

Depending on your marketing plan's complexity and the availability of support, think in terms of a timeline of 3 to 12 months to complete the following steps. Estimate spending half your time in the planning phase, one-quarter in execution, and one-quarter in evaluation and modification. To set up your own custom social media marketing plan, follow these steps:

1. Do market research and online observation.
2. Draft marketing goals, objectives, and your marketing plan using the form in [Figure 3-5](#).
3. Get your marketing ducks in a row with in-house preparation:
 - Hiring, outsourcing, or selecting in-house staff
 - Training

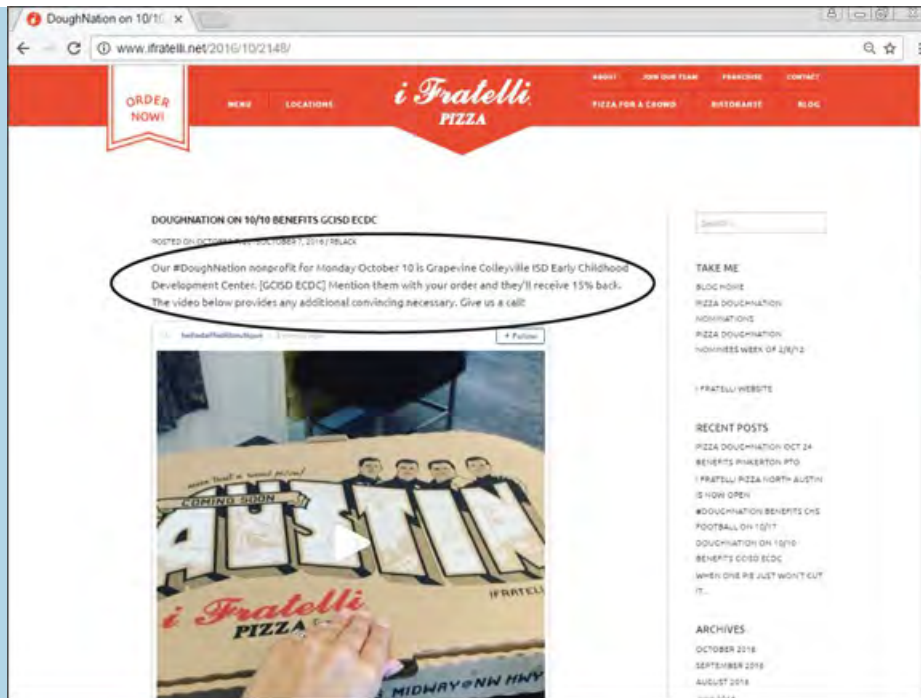
- Team-building
 - Writing a social media policy document
4. Complete preparatory development tasks:
 - Designing advertising creatives
 - Content overview (an outline of which marketing messages you want to send out when)
 - Measurement plan and metric implementation
 - Social media tool selection and dashboard development
 - Social media activity calendar setup (see Book 1, [Chapter 4](#))
 - Programming and content modifications to existing website(s), as needed
 5. Create accounts and a pilot social media program.
 6. Evaluate the pilot program, debug it, and modify it, as needed.
 7. Launch and promote your social media campaign one service at a time.
 8. Measure and modify social media in a process of constant feedback and reiteration.



TIP Don't be afraid to build a pilot program — or several — into your plan to see what works.

SOCIAL MEDIA HELPS RAISE THE DOUGH

In 1987, the Cole brothers established a family restaurant in Irving, TX, with a focus on friendly service and simple, handmade. Italian food. Today, i Fratelli Pizza (www.ifratellipizza.com), which now focuses on pizza, has grown to 20 locations since its start. The company has always valued charitable giving and active involvement in the community.



Courtesy of i Fratelli Pizza

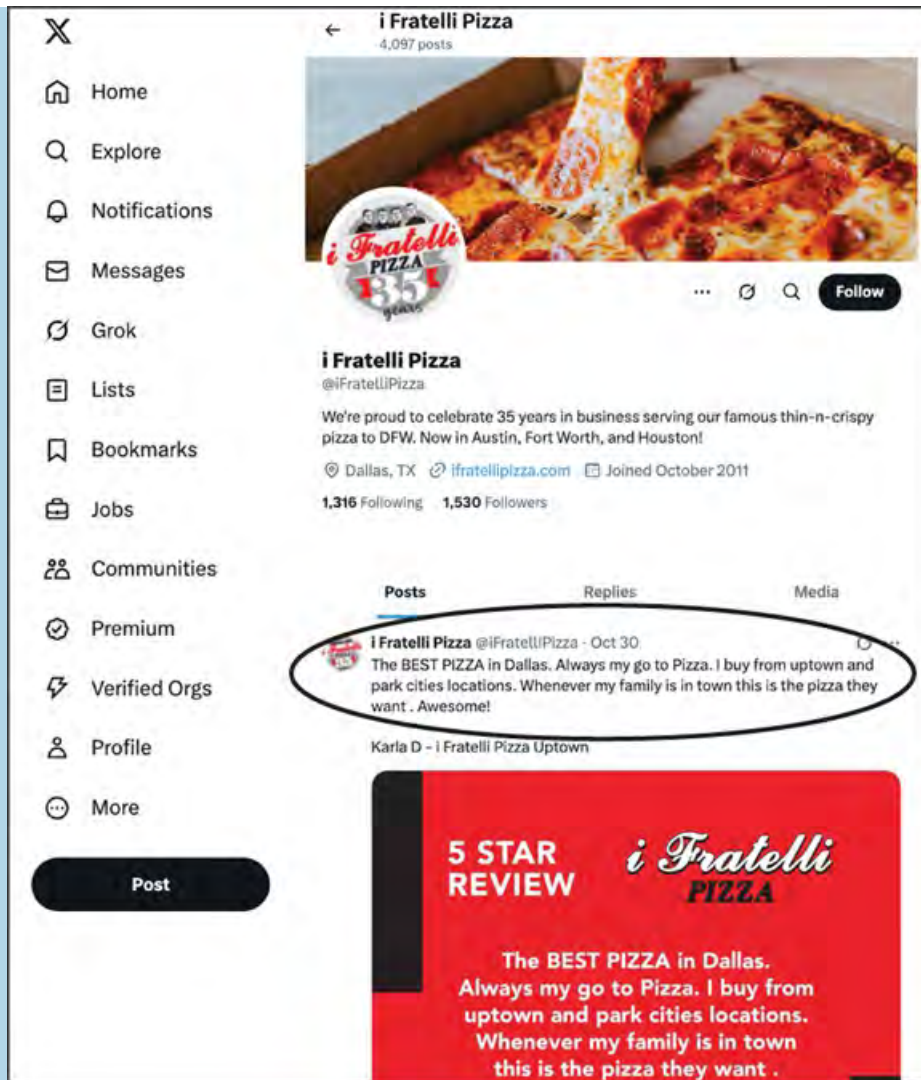
The company began using social media in 2010 as a no-cost method for staying “top of mind” with its patrons. Starting with Facebook, i Fratelli soon added a blog called “The Sauce,” followed by X and Instagram.

As it approached its 25th anniversary in 2012, the company decided to involve the community in its charity efforts, creating a weekly promotion called *Pizza DoughNation*, which is still an active promotion today. Residents nominate locally based nonprofits, churches, and high school booster clubs to receive 15 percent of the value of orders placed on a specific day using the recipient’s name, as seen in the following blog. The website also includes a description of the program, a nomination form, and tips for organizations to promote their fundraiser themselves.

At that time, while giving grew, so did site traffic, Facebook likes, viral sharing, sales, and positive branding. “The *DoughNation* program allows us to appeal to a new specific market (for example, a congregation or booster club) weekly, plus it gave us content to talk about across all platforms,” former Marketing Manager Rachel Black explained. The specific results, even in the first few months of the program, were impressive: a tripling of Facebook impressions, a five-fold growth in retweets on X, and a growth in ROI (in terms of increased sales) of more than 300 percent.

The company and the receiving organization both use social media to promote the fundraiser. For i Fratelli, that means using tweets for geotargeted messaging, cross-promoting among Facebook, X, Instagram, and the blog, and identifying influencers to tell the story.

While Black found that Facebook is the best channel to drive participation in *Pizza DoughNation*, she always promoted the fundraisers on all its channels. (See an example on its X feed in the nearby figure.) At the same time, the sponsored organization shares the promotional burden by publicizing the fundraiser among its own members and supporters.



Courtesy of i Fratelli Pizza

Black said that at the time, the company spent about 20 hours per week on social media, with one team member creating all the social content in-house for four to five posts per week for the restaurant. Initially, i Fratelli used an outside agency to create and implement the master promotional campaign for *DoughNation* but now handles that in-house as well.

Although Black used Google Analytics to monitor a pay-per-click AdWords campaign for the restaurant business, she didn't actively monitor social statistics. While she occasionally did a Facebook ad campaign to promote a specific sweepstakes or event, Black spent less than \$500 total on Facebook-sponsored posts.

While the *DoughNation* campaign seems simple, it was carefully planned and executed. Black pointed out that it's critical to target the correct audience when promoting a fundraiser on social media. "Our *DoughNation* organizations have specific, sometimes small, groups of supporters, which need to be targeted directly." Organizations get the best results when they use their own platforms to reach their audience and schedule the promotion in advance.

"It's important to use social media to your best advantage by understanding how others utilize the platforms," Black advised. "For instance, we will tag influencers such as the Convention and Visitors Bureau on *DoughNation* posts so they can retweet to their followers. The more post and re-post action you can capitalize on, the wider your audience. We also take the time to engage with others' posts weekly; when it comes time for our promotions, we have a captive audience ready to return the favor."

The following list of sites constitute i Fratelli's web presence:

- www.ifratellipizza.com
- www.facebook.com/ifratellipizza
- <https://X.com/iFratelliPizza>
- www.instagram.com/nevertrustaroundpizza
- www.ifratellipizza.com/blog

Chapter 4

Managing Your Cybersocial Campaign

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Scheduling social media activities
 - » Building a team
 - » Writing a social media policy
 - » Keeping it legal
 - » Protecting your brand's reputation
-

After you create a Social Media Marketing Plan, one major task you face is managing the effort. If you're the only one doing the work, the simplest — and likely the hardest — task is making time for it. Although social media need not carry a lot of upfront development costs, it does carry a significant labor cost.

This chapter discusses how to set up a schedule to keep your social media activity from draining all your available time. If you have employees, both you and your company may benefit if you delegate some of the social media tasking to them. You can also supplement your in-house staff with limited assistance from outside professionals.



REMEMBER For small businesses, it's your money or your life. If you can't afford to hire help to work on social media, you carve it out of the time you've allocated to other marketing activities — unless, of course, you want to add a minimum of another two hours to your workweek.

Finally, this chapter carries a word of caution. Make sure that everyone posting to a social media outlet knows your policy about what is and isn't acceptable, as well as how to protect the company's reputation and confidential material. As you launch your marketing boat onto the churning waters of social media, you should ensure that everyone is wearing a legal life preserver.

Managing Your Social Media Schedule

As you know from the rest of your business experience, if something isn't important enough to schedule, it never gets done. Social media, like the rest of your marketing efforts, can easily be swallowed up by day-to-day demands. You must set aside time for it and assign tasks to specific people.



TIP

Allocate a minimum of two hours per week per platform if you're going to participate in social media, rather than set up pages and abandon them. Otherwise, you simply don't see a return from your initial investment in setup. If you don't have much time, stick with the marketing you're already doing.

Controlling the time commitment

Social media can become addictive. If you truly like what you're doing, the time problem might reverse. Rather than spend too little time, you spend too much. You might find it difficult to avoid the temptation of continually reading what others have to say about your business or spending all your time tweeting, streaming, and posting.

Just as you stick to your initial dollar budget, keep to your initial time budget, at least for the first month until you see what works. After you determine which techniques have the greatest promise, you can rearrange your own efforts as well as your team's.



REMEMBER

Social media marketing is only part of your online-marketing effort, and online marketing is only part of your overall marketing.

Selecting activity days

One way to control the time you spend on social media is to select specific days and times for it. Many business people set aside regularly recurring blocks of time, such as a quiet Friday afternoon, for marketing-related tasks, whether they're conducting competitor research, writing press releases or newsletters for the following week, obtaining inbound links, or handling their social media marketing tasks.

Other people prefer to allocate their time early in the morning, at lunchtime, or just before leaving work each evening. The time slot you choose usually doesn't matter, unless you're offering a time-dependent service, such as accepting to-go orders for breakfast burritos via X.



TIP

Whatever the case, allot time for every task on your Social Media Activity Calendar, followed by the initials of the person responsible for executing the task.

Allowing for ramp-up time

Even if you're the only person involved, allow time for learning before your official social media launch date. Everyone needs time to observe, to master new tools, to practice posting and responding, to experiment, and to decide what works before rolling out your plan.



TIP

Bring your new social media venues online one at a time. This strategy not only helps

you evaluate which social media venue works but also reduces stress on you and your staff.

Developing your social date book

There are as many ways to schedule social media activities as there are companies. Whatever you decide, don't leave your schedule to chance.

Larger companies may use sophisticated project management software. Some offer a free trial such as Basecamp (<https://basecamp.com>), while others are available as freemium proprietary solutions, such as Smartsheet (www.smartsheet.com) and ProjectLibre (www.projectlibre.org), or as open source programs such as GanttProject (www.ganttproject.biz). For more options, see <http://alternativeto.net/software/smartsheet> or <https://www.workzone.com/blog/smartsheet-alternatives>. Alternatively, you can schedule tasks using spreadsheet software.

However, the simplest solution may be the best: Calendar software, much of which is free, may be all you need. Paid options may merge schedules for more people and allow customized report formats. Several options are listed in [Table 4-1](#). Look for a solution that lets you

- » Choose a display by day, week, or month or longer
- » List events or tasks in chronological format
- » Select different timeframes easily
- » Easily schedule repeat activities without requiring duplicate data entry

TABLE 4-1 Calendar Software

Name	URL	Free or Paid
Task Management Software Reviews	www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-task-management-apps	Free, shareware, and paid
Connect Daily	www.mhsoftware.com/industries/businesses	Paid, free trial
Keep & Share	www.keepandshare.com	Paid, free trial
Google Calendar	www.google.com/calendar	Free
Mozilla Lightning Calendar	www.thunderbird.net/en-US/calendar	Free, open source
Trumba	www.trumba.com/connect/default.aspx	Paid, free trial
Yahoo! Calendar	http://calendar.yahoo.com	Free



TIP

If several people are involved in a substantial social media effort, select calendar software that lets you synchronize individual calendars, such as Google, Yahoo!, or Mozilla Lightning. [Figure 4-1](#) shows a sample of a simple social-marketing calendar on Yahoo! The calendar shows the initials of the person responsible. Clicking an event or a task reveals item details, including the time allotted to the task, the sharing level, and

whether a reminder is sent and to whom. [Figure 4-2](#) offers an example of an event detail listing in a Google calendar.

Note: Google and Yahoo! require you to set up an account before you can use their calendars.



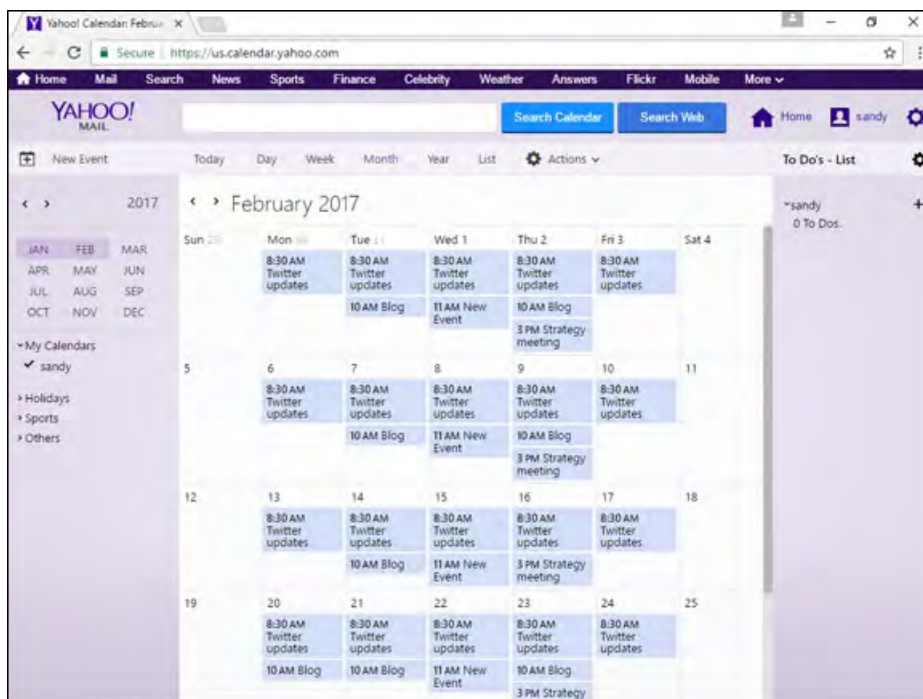
REMEMBER Throughout this book, this calendar is referred to as your *Social Media Activity Calendar*, and I add frequent recommendations of tasks to include on your schedule.



REMEMBER Set your calendar to private but give access to everyone who needs to be aware of your social media schedule. Depending on the design of your social media program, some outside subcontractors may need access to your calendar to schedule their own production deadlines.

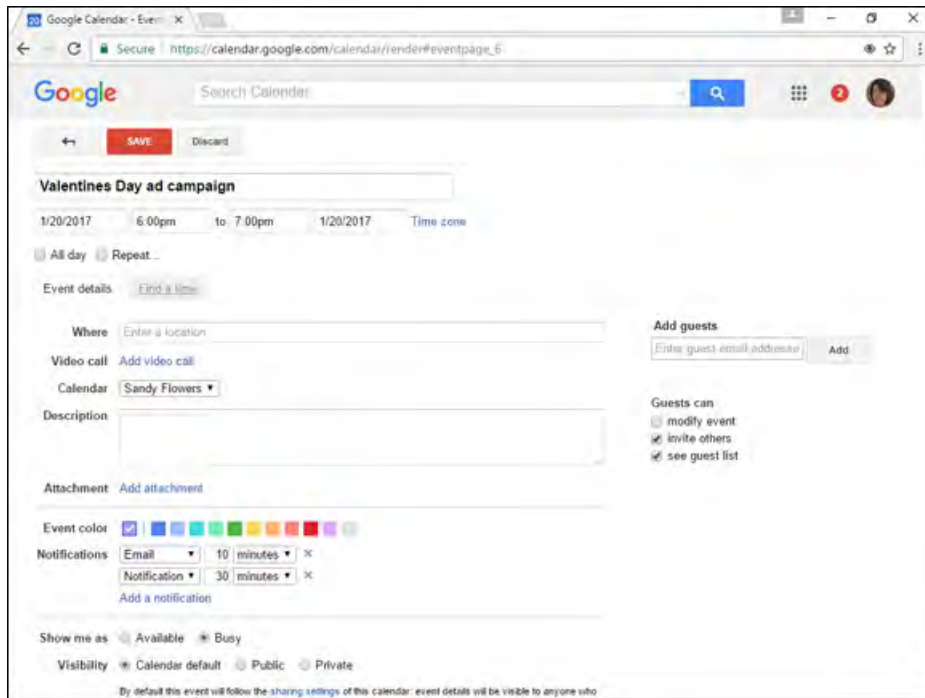
Creating a social media dashboard

Your social media marketing efforts may ultimately involve many tasks: Post to multiple venues; use tools to distribute content to multiple locations; monitor visibility for your company on social media outlets; and measure results by using several analytical tools. Rather than jump back and forth among all these resources, you can save time by using a graphical dashboard or control panel.



Courtesy of Watermelon Mountain Web Marketing: www.watermelonweb.com

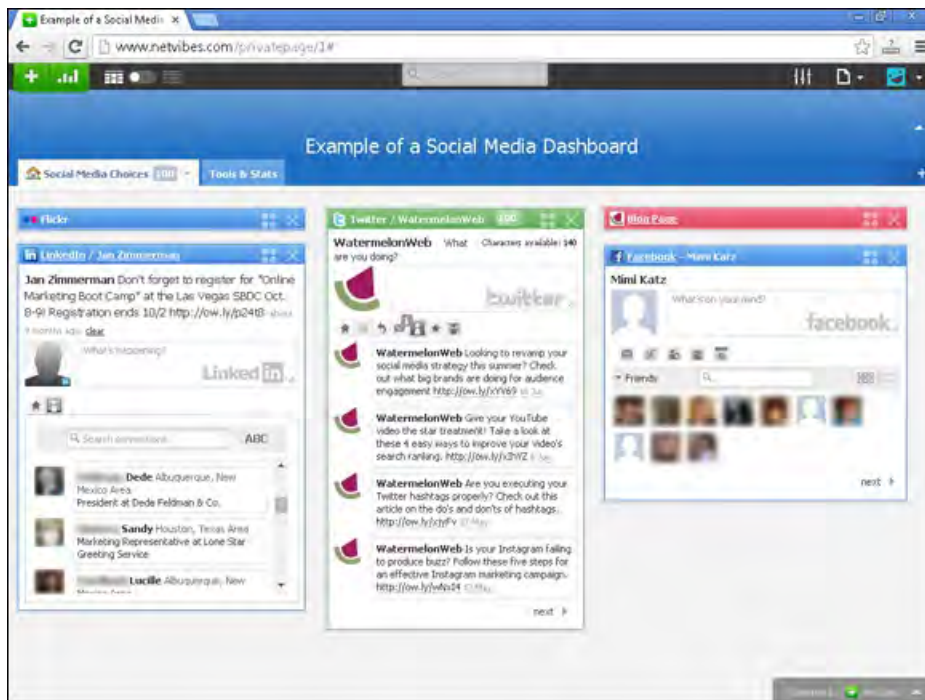
FIGURE 4-1: Using Yahoo! Calendar, you can easily schedule your social media activities.



Courtesy of Watermelon Mountain Web Marketing: www.watermelonweb.com

FIGURE 4-2: On the Google Calendar, you can provide specifics for a marketing task by modifying an event detail window.

Like the dashboard of a car, a social media *dashboard* puts the various required functions at your fingertips in (you hope) an easy-to-understand and easy-to-use visual layout. When you use this approach, the customized dashboard provides easy access in one location to all your social media accounts, tools, and metrics. [Figures 4-3](#) and [4-4](#) show several tabs of a customized Netvibes (www.netvibes.com/en) dashboard — one for social media postings and another for tools.

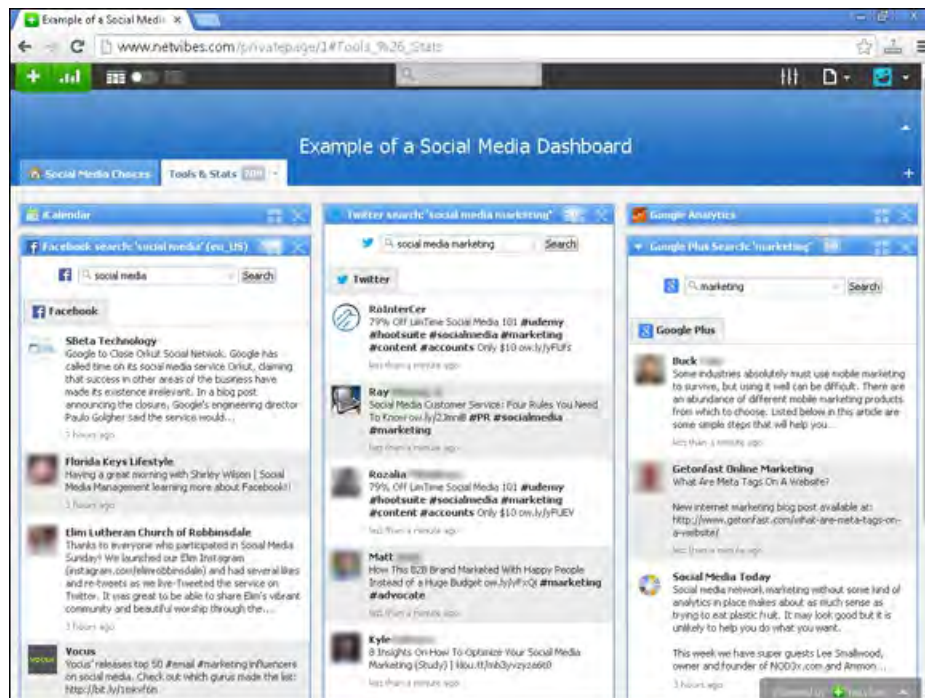


Courtesy of Watermelon Mountain Web Marketing: www.watermelonweb.com

FIGURE 4-3: This mock-up of a social media dashboard from Netvibes gathers the user's various social media services on the Social Media Choices tab.

The items on your primary dashboard may link to other application-specific dashboards, especially for analytical tools and high-end enterprise solutions; those application dashboards are designed primarily to compare the results of multiple social media campaigns.

[Table 4-2](#) provides a list of dashboard resources, some of which are generic (such as My Yahoo!) and others, such as Netvibes and Hootsuite (see [Figure 4-5](#)), which are specific to social media.



Courtesy of Watermelon Mountain Web Marketing: www.watermelonweb.com

FIGURE 4-4: The Tools & Stats tab of this mock-up Netvibes dashboard displays tools for distributing, monitoring, searching, and analyzing data.

TABLE 4-2 Social Media Dashboard Resources

Name	URL	Description
Hootsuite	www.hootsuite.com	Free trial, customizable dashboard for social media; subscriptions start at \$150/month.
DashThis	https://dashthis.com/social-media-marketing-dashboard	Create customizable dashboards with several integrations (including for advertising). Free for 15 days, then plans start at \$49/month.
MeetEdgar	https://meet Edgar.com	A categorized library with smart scheduling for up to five social accounts; starts at \$30/month.
Databox	https://databox.com/dashboard-examples/social-media	30+ free social media dashboard templates.
Improvado	https://improvado.io/blog/social-media-dashboard	Best practices for building social media dashboards.
Analytico	www.analyticodigital.com/blog/how-to-create-b2b-digital-marketing-dashboard	Tips on how to use a social media dashboard for B2B.

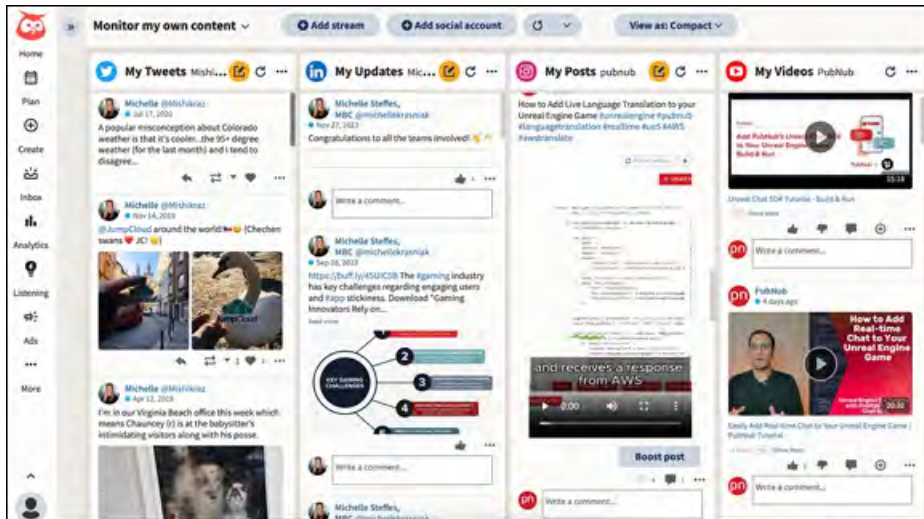


FIGURE 4-5: The social media dashboard from Hootsuite allows you to monitor and update multiple social network services.

Before you try to build a dashboard, list all the social media sources, services, and reports you want to display, along with their associated URLs, usernames, and passwords. It will help if you indicate whether services are interconnected (for example, note whether you're using a syndication service to update multiple social media at the same time) and how often statistical reports should be updated for each service (hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly).

The more complex your social media campaign, the more functionality your dashboard needs.



TIP Dashboards sound simple to use, but they can be a bit of a challenge to set up. In some cases, your programmer needs to create or customize *widgets* (mini-applications). Plan to create and test several versions of the dashboard until everyone is satisfied with the results.

Consider implementing password access for approved users to various functions in the dashboard. Some users might be constrained to viewing reports, whereas others might be allowed to change the dashboard configuration.

Building Your Social Media Marketing Dream Team

Just for the moment, assume that you have employees who can — and are willing to — share the burden of social media. If you live a rich fantasy life, assume that you might even hire someone to take the lead.

In a larger company, the nexus for control of social media varies: In some cases, it's the marketing department; in others, corporate communications, public relations, sales, or customer support takes the lead. Some companies disperse responsibilities throughout the

company and have tens to dozens of people blogging and tweeting.

If your plan requires multiple employees to leverage LinkedIn profiles for B2B reasons, as well as post on multiple blogs in their individual areas of expertise and tweet current events in their departments, your need for coordination will increase.

Be cautious about asking employees to coordinate links and comments with their personal social media accounts. This task should be voluntary. Alternatively, on company time and on an account that “belongs” to your company (using a business email address), ask employees to develop a hybrid personal-and-business account where their personalities can shine. Now, individual privacy and First Amendment rights are respected on their separate personal accounts, and you have no liability for the content they post there.



TIP No matter who does the bulk of the work — your staff members, contractors, or a combination of the two — always monitor your program randomly but regularly. In addition to getting routine reports on the results, log in to your accounts for a few minutes at various times of the day and week to see what’s going on. Most dashboards make it easy for you to review posts on your social media in one convenient place.

Seeking a skilled social media director

A good social media director should have an extroverted personality, at least in writing. This person should truly enjoy interacting with others and take intrinsic pleasure in conversation and communication. You might want to look, based on your chosen tactics, for someone who can

- » Write quickly and well, with the right tone for your market.
- » Listen well, with an ear for your target audiences and their concerns.
- » Post without using defamatory language or making libelous statements about competitors.
- » Communicate knowledgeably about your company and your products or services.
- » Recognize opportunities and develop creative responses or campaigns.
- » Work tactfully with others, alerting them when problems or complaints surface.
- » Articulate the goals of social media well enough to take a leadership role in encouraging others to explore its potential.
- » Analyze situations to draw conclusions from data.
- » Adapt to new social media and mobile technologies when they arise.
- » Learn quickly (because this field is extremely fluid).



TIP You usually can’t just add social media to someone’s task list; be prepared to reassign some tasks to other people.

Depending on the size and nature of your social media effort, your dream team may also need someone with production skills for graphics, podcasting, or videocasting, or at least for producing and directing the development of those components. Although this person may not need extensive graphical, photographic, presentation, or data-crunching skills, having some skills in each of those areas is helpful.

Hiring 20-somethings (or younger) because they're familiar with social media may sound like a good idea, but people in this age group aren't as likely to be familiar with business protocol and sensitive to business relationships as someone older and more experienced. You might need to allow extra time for training, review, and revision.

Consider a content marketer

If your budget is limited and you know that you want to build out a more robust content marketing strategy over time (content marketing is talked about throughout [Book 3](#)), you may want to consider hiring a content marketing professional rather than a social media director. One could argue that content marketing, a fairly new discipline (in name, at least) was born out of the need for businesses to provide a steady stream of high-value content for social media channels. In other words, content marketing is a thing because social media directors realized they needed high volumes of fresh content to move the needle in a positive direction with their social media following.

So, although several of the skills required to be a great social media director also apply to being a content marketer, there are a few additional ones to consider, including being someone who

- » Can create different types of content, from blog posts to e-books to videos ... *and* be able to sum said content up in one or two sentences to make it an enticing social media post that people will want to click on.
- » Is insatiably curious about anything and everything. After all, chances are high this person will have to learn a ton about your business and industry to create compelling, useful content.
- » Is an excellent researcher. This goes along with the previous point. Because they're probably not going to know everything about everything, having the ability to find helpful information is a necessity!
- » Has a sixth sense for consumer psychology. This one surprises people when I mention it, but if you know how your target audience thinks and acts and makes purchasing decisions, then you can be sure that the content you're creating is with them, answering questions and helping wherever necessary, every step of the way.

Looking inside

Before implementing a social media plan, speak with your employees to invite their input, assess their level of interest in this effort, evaluate existing skill sets, and ascertain social media experience. Consider all these factors before you move forward; by rearranging task assignments or priorities, you may be able to select in-house personnel to handle this new project.



TIP Leave time for communication, education, and training both at the beginning and on an ongoing basis.

Hiring experts

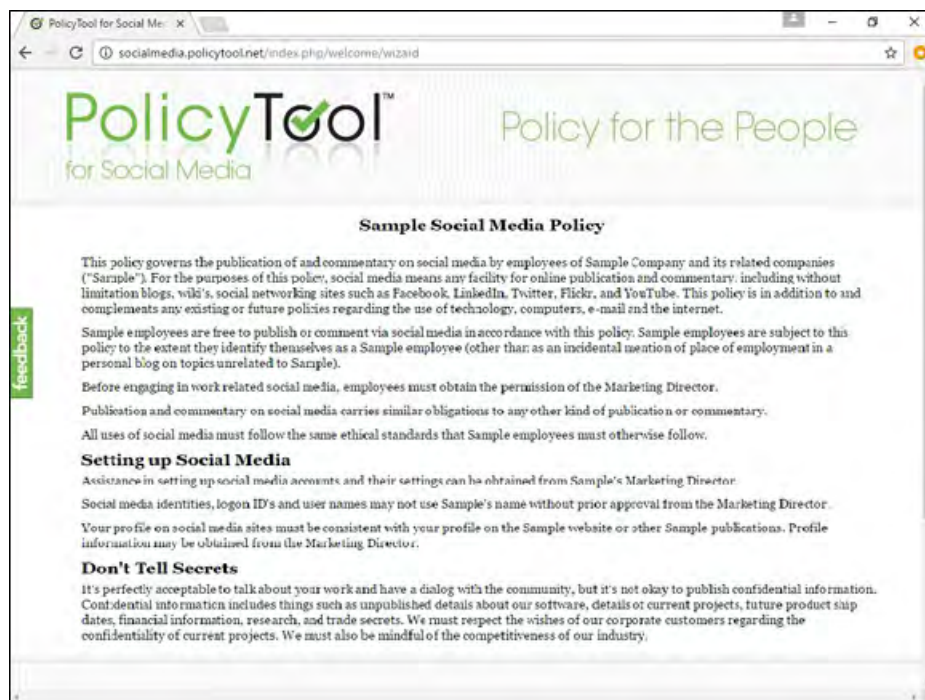
Think about using professionals for the tech-heavy tasks, such as podcasts, videocasts, or design, unless you're going for the just-us-folks tone. Professionals can get you started by establishing a model for your staff to follow, or you may want to hire them for long-term tasks such as writing or editing your blogs for consistency.

Many advertising agencies, PR firms, search engine optimizers, marketing companies, and copywriters take on social media contracts. If you've already worked with someone you like, you can start there. If not, select social media professionals the same way you would select any other professional service provider:

- » Ask your local business colleagues for referrals.
- » Check sources such as LinkedIn and UpWork. If appropriate, post your search criteria on your site, blog, social media outlets, and topic-related sites.
- » Request several price quotes. If your job is large enough, write and distribute a formal request for proposal (RFP).
- » Review previous work completed by the contractors.
- » Check references.

Creating a Social Media Marketing Policy

Even if you're the only person involved in social media marketing at the beginning, write up a few general guidelines for yourself that you can expand later. [Figure 4-6](#) shows a sample social media policy; you can download other examples from <http://socialmedia.policytool.net>.



Courtesy of Ellipsis.Digital, a division of rTraction Canada, Inc.

FIGURE 4-6: A basic social media policy may be enough to get you started.

Most policies address the social media issue both in terms of what employees are allowed to do on behalf of the company and what they aren't allowed to do. For example:

- » Employees may not be allowed to use personal social accounts on company time.
- » Some trained employees may be allowed to post customer support replies on behalf of the company, whereas others are responsible for new product information.

For additional information and examples, see the resources listed in [Table 4-3](#).

TABLE 4-3 Social Media Policy Resource Sites

Name	URL	Description
Sprinklr	www.sprinklr.com/blog/how-social-media-policy-benefits-business	Article titled "How does having a social media policy benefit your business?"
Content Marketing Institute	https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2020/01/write-social-media-guidelines	Social media guidelines and examples
LinkedIn	www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20140320152546-13721119-how-to-create-a-social-media-strategy-that-actually-gets-read	Article titled "How to create a social media strategy that actually gets read"
Sprout Social	https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-policy	Article titled "Social media policy: A guide for your organization"
Bloomberg Law	www.bloomberglaw.com/product/health/document/X44KC03C000000	Free checklist
Rocket Lawyer	www.rocketlawyer.com/document/social-media-policy.r1	Free social media policy generator
Hootsuite	https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-policy-for-employees	Article titled "How to Write a Social Media Policy" with templates



TIP

To increase compliance, keep your policy short and easy to read. Try to focus on what people *can do* rather than on what they can't do.

A typical policy addresses risk management, intellectual property protection, individual privacy protection, and the respect of your audience, company, and fellow employees. Given the rapidly changing world of social media, you'll have to keep your policy flexible and update it often.

Try to incorporate the following suggested concepts, adapted from Hootsuite (<https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-policy-for-employees>):

- » Hold individuals responsible for what they write.
- » Be transparent. Disclose who you are, including your company name and title.
- » Recognize that clients, prospects, competitors, and potential future employees are part of your audience.
- » Be respectful of everyone.
- » Understand the tenor of each social media community and follow its precepts.
- » Respect copyright, trademarks, and privacy rights.
- » Protect your company's confidential trade-secret and proprietary information in addition to client data, especially trade-secret information under nondisclosure agreements.
- » Do not allow personal social media activity to interfere with work.



TIP

The complexity of your social media policy depends on the extent of your social media marketing effort and the number of people and departments involved. Generally, the larger the company, the longer the policy.

Staying on the Right Side of the Law

Just about everything in social media pushes the limits of existing intellectual property law. So much information is now repeated online that ownership lines are becoming blurred, much to some people's dismay and damage.

When in doubt, don't copy. Instead, use citations, quote marks, and links to the original source. Always go back to the original to ensure that the information is accurate.



TIP Watch blogs such as TechCrunch (<https://techcrunch.com>) for information about legal wrangling. New case law, regulations, and conflicts bubble up continually.

Obtaining permission to avoid infringement



WARNING You can't (legally) use extended content from someone else's website, blog, or social media page on your own site, even if you can save it or download it. Nope, not even if you include a credit line saying where it came from. Not even if you use only a portion of the content and link to the rest. Not text, not graphics, not compiled data, not photos. Nothing. Nada. Nil. Zilch.

Though small text extracts with attribution are permitted under the fair use doctrine, the copyright concept is intended for individuals and educational institutions, not for profit-making companies. If you don't obtain permission, you and your company can be sued for copyright infringement. In the best-case scenario, you can be asked to cease and desist. In the worst case, your site can be shut down, and you might face other damages.

The way around this situation is simple: Send a permission request, such as the one in the nearby sidebar, "[Sample copyright permission](#)."

Be especially careful with photographs, which are usually copyrighted. Here are a few places to find free or low-cost images legally:

- » Select from the wealth of material offered under a Creative Commons license (<http://creativecommons.org>). Search for items that can be used for commercial purposes or are in the public domain.
- » Search for copyright-free images from the federal government.
- » Take advantage of all of the free, high-resolution images from Unsplash (<https://unsplash.com>).
- » FreeImages (www.freeimages.com) has thousands of free photographs.
- » Search <http://images.google.com>: Click the Tools link in the top right of the window, and then select Advanced Search from the pop-up menu that appears. In the Advanced Search screen that appears, scroll down to the Usage Rights drop-down list and select Commercial & Other licenses. Note that these images may still require attribution or have other limits on use; you should still contact the copyright holder for permission.
- » Look for stock images from sources such as iStockphoto (www.istockphoto.com), Shutterstock (www.shutterstock.com), or Freerange Stock (<http://freerangestock.com>).

SAMPLE COPYRIGHT PERMISSION

Dear _____:

Rocky Mountain Web Marketing wants permission to use your (*information, article, screenshot, art, data, photograph*) on our (*website/blog/social media page*) at [*this URL: RockyMountainWeb.com*] and in other media not yet specified. We have attached a copy of the information we want to use. If it meets with your approval, please sign the following release and indicate the credit line you want. You can return the signed form as an email message, a PDF file, a digitally signed document, a fax, or a first-class mail message. Thank you for your prompt response.

The undersigned authorizes Rocky Mountain Web Marketing to use the attached material without limit for no charge.

Signature:

Printed name:

Title:

Company name:

Company address:

Telephone/fax/email:

Company domain name:

Credit line:



TIP

Trademarks and logos also usually require permission to use, though the logos (icons) that social media companies provide for ShareThis or FollowUs On functionality are fine to use without permission. If you find an image in the Press or Media section of a company's website, you can assume that you have permission to reproduce it without further permission. Generally, a disclaimer that "all other logos and trademarks are the property of their respective owners" will suffice.



REMEMBER If it's illegal offline, it's illegal online.

Respecting privacy

Providing a disclaimer about keeping user information private is even more critical now that people sign up willy-nilly online. Individual privacy, already under threat, has become quite slippery with social-networking platforms allowing users to sign in using their credentials on all sorts of third-party sites. This may make sign-ins simpler for a user, but it gives these platforms access to user behavior on the web while giving third parties access to users' profiles for demographic analysis.

Photographs of identifiable individuals, not taken in a public space, historically have required a waiver to use for commercial purposes. When individuals post their images on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, or elsewhere, they may not intend to give permission for that image to appear elsewhere.

Respect a person's space; do not post publicly viewable images of people's faces on any of

your social media pages unless you have permission. For a simple photo waiver, see www.nyip.edu/photo-articles/archive/basic-model-release.

Revealing product endorsement relationships

Taking aim at companies that were arranging paid recommendations from bloggers, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) updated its regulations for digital advertising, including blogs, in 2013. The rule (found at www.ftc.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/press-releases/ftc-staff-revises-online-advertising-disclosure-guidelines/130312dotcomdisclosures.pdf) and guidelines (at www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/guidance/native-advertising-guide-businesses) require bloggers to disclose whether they've received any type of payment or free products in exchange for a positive review.

The rule doesn't appear to apply to individuals who post a review on public review sites (such as TripAdvisor or Yelp), but it applies if you review other companies' products on your blog or send products to other bloggers to request a review.

You can find out more about this requirement from the disclosure resources listed in [Table 4-4](#). Some bloggers, offended by the rules, have found humorous or sarcastic ways to comply. Others, such as The Review Stew whose blog appears in [Figure 4-7](#), are simply matter-of-fact about it.

TABLE 4-4 Legal Resource Sites

<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Description</i>
American Bar Association	www.americanbar.org/groups/intellectual_property_law/resources.html	Intellectual property resource lists
DisclosurePolicy	http://disclosurepolicy.org	Generate free disclosure policies
Electronic Frontier Foundation	www.eff.org	Not-for-profit focused on free speech, privacy, and consumer rights
Federal Trade Commission	www.ftc.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/press-releases/ftc-staff-revises-online-advertising-disclosure-guidelines/130312dotcomdisclosures.pdf	Federal guidelines for digital media disclosure
FindLaw	http://smallbusiness.findlaw.com/intellectual-property.html	Intellectual property resources
International Technology Law Association	https://www.itechlaw.org	Online legal issues
PublicLegal from the Internet Legal Research Group	www.ilrg.com	Index of legal sites, free forms, and documents
Nolo	www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/ecommerce-website-development	Online legal issues
Statusphere	https://joinstatus.com/creators/navigating-ftc-disclosures-a-guide-for-influencers	Article titled "Navigating FTC Disclosures: A Guide for Influencers"
U.S. Copyright Office	www.copyright.gov	Copyright information and submission
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office	www.uspto.gov	Patent and trademark information, databases, and submission



TIP Regardless of what you think of the policy, reveal any payments or free promotional products you've received. You can, of course, be as clever, funny, cynical, or straightforward as you want. Feeling lazy? Auto-generate a policy at DisclosurePolicy.org.

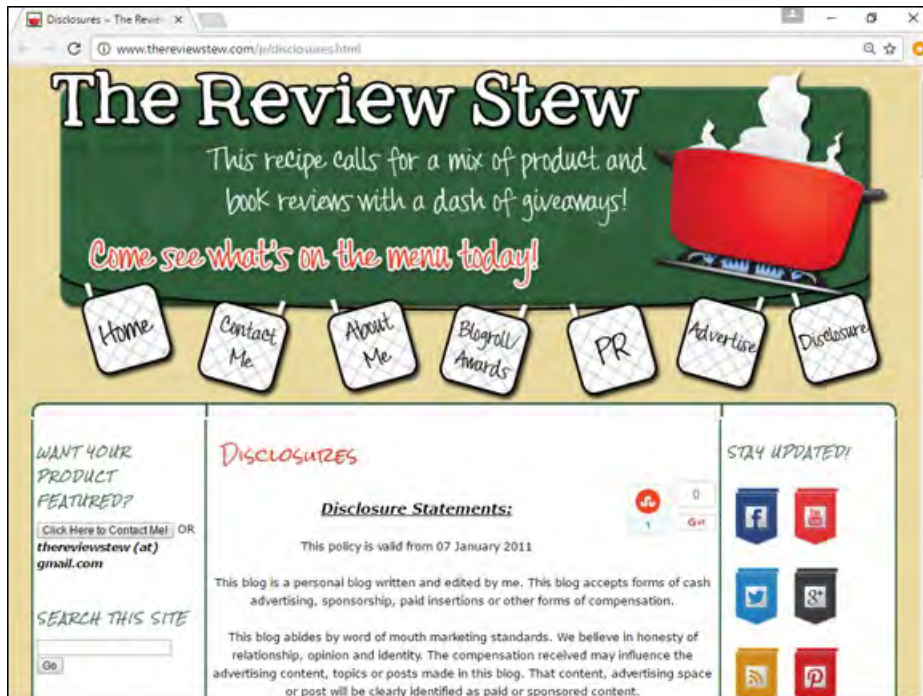


FIGURE 4-7: This blogger sets out a clear acknowledgment policy on product endorsement.

Protecting Your Brand Reputation

It's important to start protecting your brand now by registering your company name for social media accounts. To avoid *brandjacking* (others using your company or product brand name on social media for their own purposes or to write misleading or negative things about your company), try to choose the most popular, available handle that will work across multiple sites. Use your company or product name and keep it short.



TIP Even if you don't plan to do anything else in social media for a year or more, register your name now on Facebook, X, and LinkedIn, and on any other sites you might want in the future, such as Pinterest or YouTube. You can register your name on every site while you read this book or reserve them all at once.

A number of companies now offer tools that claim to assess the quality of what people are saying about your company, products, or staff. In addition to counting how many times your

name appears, they try to assess the *sentiment* of postings — whether statements are negative or positive. Some also offer an assessment of the degree of *engagement* — how enthusiastic or hostile a statement might be.

Some people then take this information, along with frequency of posting, and use their own proprietary formulas to assign a quantitative value to your online reputation, as shown in the example from The Brand Grader (free) (<https://mention.com/brand-grader>) in [Figure 4-8](#).



Courtesy of [BrandGrader.com](https://mention.com/brand-grader)

FIGURE 4-8: A portion of The Brand Grader report for Netflix.

Be cautious about assigning too much weight to these brand reputation tools, some of which are described in [Table 4-5](#). They may produce widely varying results, and most rely on software that can’t understand complex sentences or shortened phrases with words omitted. If you think your dense sibling doesn’t understand irony, don’t try sarcasm with a computer!

Notwithstanding the warnings, experiment with one of the free or freemium sentiment-measuring tools in [Table 4-5](#) to see what, if anything, people are saying. (*Freemium* tools offer a free version with limited features; more extensive feature sets carry a charge.) Those results, such as they are, will become one of many baselines for your social media effort. Unless you already have a significant web presence, you may not find much.

Of course, many of these tools are designed for use by multinational corporations worried about their reputations after negative events, such as the Silicon Valley Bank collapse that took down several tech companies in 2023 or the two fatal crashes of Boeing’s 737 Max within a six-month period.

TABLE 4-5 Brand Sentiment Resources

Name	URL	Description
Attentio	http://attentio.com	Social media dashboard to track sentiment and more; paid
DataEQ	https://dataeq.com/solutions/risk-reputation	Online reputation tool; paid
Oracle CX Marketing	www.oracle.com/us/solutions/social/overview/index.html	Social relationship management tool; paid

Birdeye	https://birdeye.com/cmp/reputation-management-platform	Comprehensive reputation monitoring dashboard; paid
Mention	https://mention.com/en	Real-time alerts for mentions of your brand's name; free trial and paid
Meltwater	https://www.meltwater.com/en/blog/top-social-media-monitoring-tools	List of the top social-monitoring tools; free and paid
Social Searcher	https://www.social-searcher.com	Various statistics such as sentiment, top keywords, and sources are given (see Figure 4-9)

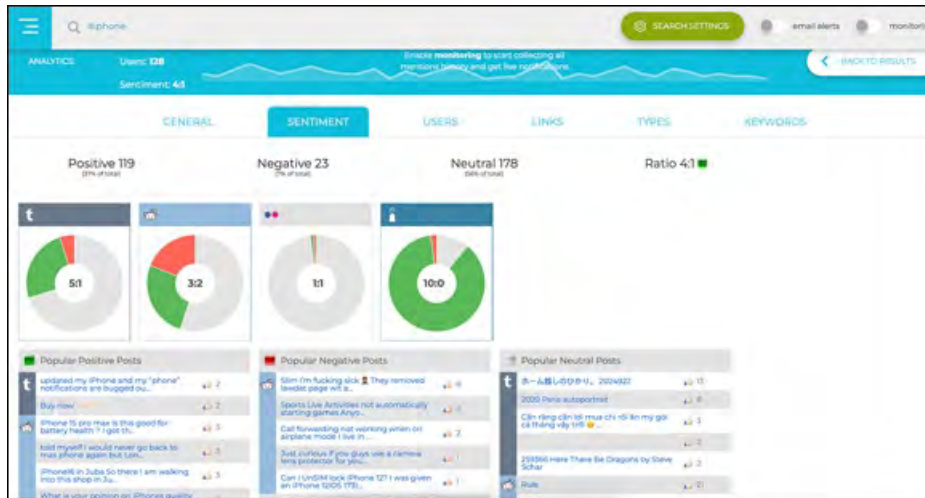


FIGURE 4-9: The Social Searcher results for #iPhone.

Book 2

Cybersocial Tools

Contents at a Glance

Chapter 1: Discovering Helpful Tech Tools

[Keeping Track of the Social Media Scene](#)
[Saving Time with Content-Distribution Tools](#)
[Alternative Content-Distribution Services](#)
[Snipping Ugly URLs](#)
[Using E-Commerce Tools for Social Sites](#)
[Keeping Your Ear to the Social Ground](#)
[Measuring the Buzz by Type of Service](#)

Chapter 2: Leveraging SEO for Improved Visibility

[Making the Statistical Case for SEO](#)
[Thinking Tactically and Practically](#)
[Knowing the Importance of Search Phrases](#)
[Maximizing Metatag Muscle](#)
[Optimizing Your Site and Content for Search Engines](#)

Chapter 3: Optimizing Social Media for Internal and External Searches

[Placing Search Terms on Social Media](#)
[Optimizing Blogs](#)
[Optimizing Images, Video, and Podcasts](#)
[Optimizing Specific Social Media Platforms](#)
[Gaining Traction on Google with Social Media](#)
[Monitoring Your Search Engine Ranking](#)

Chapter 4: Using Social Bookmarks, News, and Share Buttons

[Bookmarking Your Way to Traffic](#)
[Sharing the News](#)
[Benefiting from Social Bookmarks and News Services](#)
[Researching a Social Bookmark and Social News Campaign](#)
[Submitting to Bookmarking Services](#)
[Submitting to Social News Services](#)
[Using Application-Specific Bookmarks](#)
[Timing Your Submissions](#)
[Encouraging Others to Bookmark or Rate Your Site](#)
[Using Social Media Buttons](#)

Chapter 1

Discovering Helpful Tech Tools

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Keeping current with social media
 - » Distributing content efficiently
 - » Giving long URLs a haircut
 - » Selecting shopping tools that work on social media
 - » Monitoring the buzz
-

In [Book 1](#), you discover that the key to social media success is planning. This minibook reviews useful tools and resources to make your plan easier to execute. Before you start, you may also want to check out [Book 9](#), which focuses on measurement tools for traffic, costs, and campaign performance.

As you select tools and schedule tasks from suggestions in this chapter, remember to enter them on your Social Media Marketing Plan (Book 1, [Chapter 3](#)) and Social Media Activity Calendar (Book 1, [Chapter 4](#)). You can also download blank copies of these forms by clicking the Downloads tab at www.dummies.com/go/socialmediamarketingaiofd6e.

Try to select at least one tool from each category:

- » Resource, news, and blog sites that cover online marketing and social media
- » Content-distribution tools
- » URL-clipping tools
- » Shopping apps or services for social media, if appropriate
- » Buzz-tracking tools to monitor mentions of your business



TIP You can always jump right into the social media scene and figure out these things later, but your efforts will be more productive if you build the right framework first.

Keeping Track of the Social Media Scene

Unless you take advantage of online resources, you'll never be able to stay current with the changes in social media. Here's a quick look at how much the landscape changed in the course of just a few years:

- » Use of social media continued its explosive growth. According to Backlinko.com

(<https://backlinko.com/social-media-users>), out of 8.12 billion people in the world, nearly 64 percent of the population use social networks, regardless of age or Internet access. That’s about 5.2 billion people! And as amazing as it might seem, Internet users in 2023 averaged more than 6.6 social media accounts each (www.searchenginejournal.com/social-media-statistics/480507).

- » New social media platforms continue to pop up, proving that the power of innovation is still strong. Watch the growth of Discord (secure messaging) or Threads (short-form video for Instagram).
- » At the same time, other social media services went belly-up. Casualties of the social media wars included Periscope (a live video streaming app for mobile devices acquired by X), Google+ (a Facebook-like network), and most notably, Vine.co (the site noted for sharing short, looped videos, which had limited its recording functionality).

To keep current on the changing tides, subscribe to feeds about social marketing from social-marketing blogs or news services; check at least one source weekly. Also, review traffic trends on social media services weekly; they’re amazingly volatile. [Table 1-1](#) lists some helpful resource sites.

TABLE 1-1 Social Media Marketing Resources

Name	URL	Description
HubSpot	http://blog.hubspot.com	Inbound marketing blog about attracting the right prospects to your site and converting them into customers
MarTech	https://martech.org	Internet marketing news
MarketingProfs	www.marketingprofs.com/marketing/library/100/social-media	Social media marketing tips, including business-to-business
MarketingSherpa	www.marketingsherpa.com	Publisher of free case studies, research, and training for marketers
SiteProNews	www.sitepronews.com	Social media and search engine news
Social Media Examiner	www.socialmediaexaminer.com	Online social media magazine advising businesses on the use of social media to achieve marketing goals
Social Media Marketing Group on LinkedIn	www.linkedin.com/groups/66325	Professional, non-promotional discussion group
Social Media Today	www.socialmediatoday.com	Online community for marketing and PR professionals dealing with social media
TechCrunch	http://techcrunch.com	Technology industry blog
TechHive	www.techhive.com	Technology news site
Techmeme	http://techmeme.com	Top technology news
TopRank Online Marketing Blog	www.toprankblog.com	Blog about online and social marketing
X Marketing Blog	https://marketing.X.com	Ideas, success stories, and solutions for marketing on X

Saving Time with Content-Distribution Tools

Social media marketing can quickly consume all your waking hours — and then some. Just the thought of needing to post information quickly to Facebook, X, Instagram, blogs, Pinterest, and social news services might make any social marketer cringe.

Time to work smarter, not harder, with content-distribution tools to post your content to many places at once for tasks like the following:

- » **Routine maintenance:** Use a content-distribution tool whenever you make updates according to your Social Media Activity Calendar. What a timesaver!
- » **Quick event postings:** Share information from a conference, trade show, meeting, or training session from your phone by sending short text updates to X and LinkedIn. Or take a picture with your smartphone and send it to Instagram, X, and Facebook. To send something longer, use a distribution tool to post to your blog and Facebook.
- » **Daily updates:** Group all social media services that you might want to update with rapidly changing information, such as a daily sale or the location of your traveling cupcake cart by the hour.



REMEMBER If you have more than three social media outlets or frequently update your content, choosing at least one distribution tool is a must-have way to save time.

Some businesses prefer to craft custom postings for Facebook, X, and other services based on the specific audience and content needs of each channel, whereas others find this too time-consuming. Do what seems right for your business: Automate *cross-postings* (set up a service so that postings on one social media service automatically appear on others to save time), customize by channel, or mix and match.

In addition to Hootsuite, OnlyWire, and other tools described in the next few sections, you can use Really Simple Syndication (RSS) to feed content to users and to your various social media profiles. Keep in mind, however, that RSS works best with highly technical audiences. For more information about RSS feeds, see www.whatissrss.com.

Alternative Content-Distribution Services

You can select from several content-distribution services to *syndicate* (copy) your content from one social media service to another. All the services work roughly the same way, but each has its own peculiarities. Choose the one that's the best fit for you.



REMEMBER Reconfigure your settings on content-distribution tools whenever you decide to add or drop a social media service or create a special-purpose group for marketing.

Buffer

An easy-to-use app, Buffer (<https://bufferapp.com>) allows you to preschedule content

distribution to multiple social media platforms. It uses its own built-in link shortener to gather and compare data about the performance of posts on various channels.

Hootsuite

Self-described as “the leading social media dashboard,” Hootsuite (<http://hootsuite.com>) has expanded from its origins as a way to manage only the X experience. From scheduling to stats, Hootsuite now integrates more than 20 social media channels, allowing multiservice postings from one location to X, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube, and your blog, among others.

OnlyWire

OnlyWire (<http://onlywire.com>) updates up to 20 social networks simultaneously. It also passes updates between WordPress sites, RSS feeds, and social media channels.

OnlyWire also offers several handy mini-apps to facilitate sharing items quickly:

- » A developer API to custom-program content exchanges among your social media channels
- » A Chrome toolbar add-in that lets you quickly share web pages you like with your Facebook and X accounts
- » A WordPress plug-in that automatically submits your WordPress posts to the social media services you’ve selected
- » An app to deliver material from RSS feeds to your selected social media channels

SocialFlow by Piano

SocialFlow (piano.io/product/socialflow) is a high-end distributor of content and paid advertising across multiple social media networks. The company uses AI-powered publishing capabilities to schedule posts and activities for times when your target audience is active on specific channels.

X Pro

Owned by X, this tweet management tool, available as part of a subscription, (<https://pro.x.com>) lets you schedule tweets, track engagements, and organize multiple accounts in one convenient location.

UberSocial

If you’re on your smartphone all the time, UberSocial (www.ubersocial.com) may be perfect for you. This X smartphone app, available for Android and iOS, allows users to post and read tweets. Features vary slightly between the two device types, but all integrate LivePreview, which enables users to view embedded links next to tweets without closing the app and opening a new browser, making it an efficient way to use X on your smartphone. Other features include cross-posting to Facebook, managing multiple accounts, and the ability to format your posts.

Snipping Ugly URLs

Long, descriptive URLs that are useful for search engines are also messy in email, text messages, text versions of e-newsletters, and blogs, and make it difficult to retweet within the character limits of some social-networking platforms. The solution is to snip, clip, nip, trim, shave, or otherwise shorten ungainly URLs with a truncating service. Take your choice of those in [Table 1-2](#) or search for others.

TABLE 1-2 URL-Snipping Services

Service Name	URL	Notes
Bitly	https://bitly.com	Free and paid versions, with history, stats, and preferences
Ow.ly	http://ow.ly/url/shorten-url	Free 30-day trial, then plans start at \$99/month billed annually
Hootsuite blog	https://blog.hootsuite.com/what-are-url-shorteners	Ten URL shorteners for 2024: Save space and track links
TinyURL	http://tinyurl.com	One of the oldest and best-known truncators, plans start at \$13/month
Rebrandly	www.rebrandly.com	Free and paid versions to share and track custom domain name URLs
Zapier	https://zapier.com/blog/best-url-shorteners	Comparison review article

The downside is that the true owner of shortened URLs may be a mystery, so it doesn’t do much for your branding unless you select the option to create a custom URL. [Figure 1-1](#) shows a typical URL truncating service and the result.



REMEMBER As always, enter the name of your URL-snipping service on your Social Media Marketing Plan. To make it easier to track URLs and their snipped versions, select just one service.

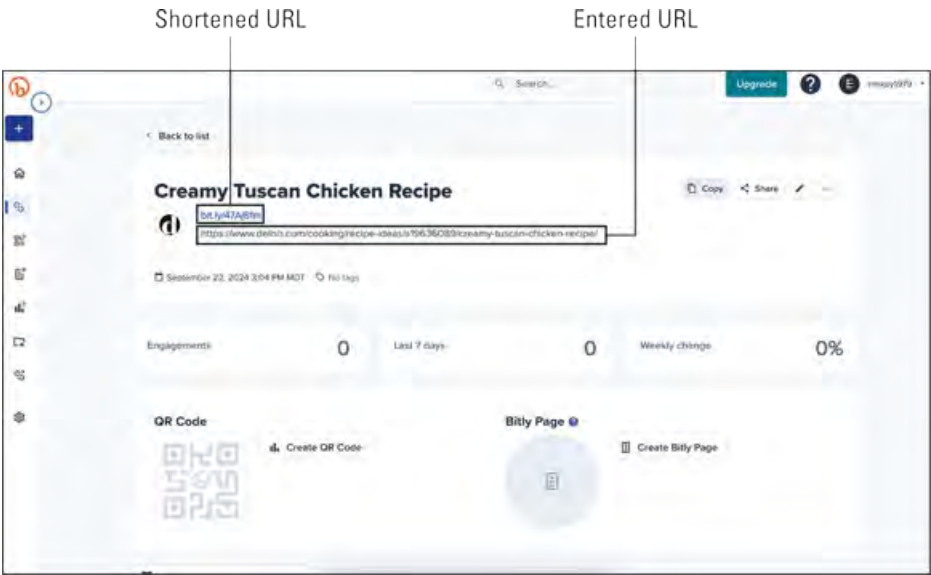


FIGURE 1-1: Enter a long URL at Bitly and receive a shortened URL in return.

Using E-Commerce Tools for Social Sites

If money makes the world go 'round, e-commerce takes the cybersocial world for a dizzying spin. Many options exist for promoting or linking to your online store from blogs and social networks, but several applications now let you sell directly (or indirectly) from social media pages.



REMEMBER Always check the terms of service on social media sites to be sure you aren't violating their rules. Some services may prohibit selling directly from their site. Check out the possibilities on Facebook Marketplace, Etsy, Pinterest, or Instagram Shopping.

Selling through links

The easiest way to sell from social networks and blogs is simply to post a banner or a text link to your own website or to other sites that sell your products (Etsy, for example). Additionally, you can post images on a site such as Facebook with links to your website or other sites.

Marleylilly is an online boutique that accomplishes this in a sophisticated manner, as shown in [Figure 1-2](#). For example, clicking a featured item on its Facebook timeline (www.facebook.com/marleylilly/?fref=ts) takes shoppers to Marleylilly's website at <https://marleylilly.com/product/diy-chenille-small-letter> to fill their carts and check out.



Courtesy of Marleylilly

FIGURE 1-2: Product offerings can begin on Facebook (top) and then link to a separate shopping website (bottom).

Displaying products on social media channels

If you're looking for a more seamless experience, consider e-commerce tools that display items from your existing online store on your blog or social media pages, and then either link automatically back to your web store to complete the transaction or permit users to purchase directly from the social media page.

E-commerce badges are mini-displays of products; these changeable badges (which appear onscreen as a large button with multiple links) link to an existing web store. If you already have an online store, check your shopping cart or *check stand provider* (the section of your online store that totals orders and takes payments) to see whether it offers a badge for social media, like the one shown in [Figure 1-3](#).



Courtesy of the owner of The Little Dabblerr

FIGURE 1-3: The Etsy mini-badge on the right side of this blog drives traffic to the Etsy shop for The Little Dabblerr.

Selling directly on social media

As we all know, every extra click can cost sales. That's why many businesses choose to sell directly from a social media channel in addition to or instead of linking people to their website, Etsy store, or Amazon store.

This solution can be a very cost-effective one for some B2C micro-businesses with only a few products, at least until they grow large enough to make a dedicated storefront worth the investment. Selling through a social channel may also make sense for introducing new or trending products or generating interest that would drive prospects to a fully empowered storefront.

Marketers for large companies and those with a B2B audience are a bit cautious. Social media channels are not yet flexible enough to handle large inventories or the long sales cycle generally needed to complete a high-ticket B2B purchase.



WARNING Another potential downside to selling only from social media is that you can't always land paid search ads on a social media channel. Some PPC platforms, including Google, require that a landing page include the actual URL for the company. If you plan to advertise only on the social media platform from which you are selling (such as Meta's Facebook or Instagram), this is not a problem.

Selling on Meta (Facebook and Instagram)

Multiple apps allow shoppers to either complete a purchase directly from your Facebook or Instagram page or be directed to another website to finish buying. Go to www.facebook.com/business/help/912190892201033 for more information.

Selling on Pinterest

Pinterest requires merchants to have a business account to sell on its platform. (See Book 7, [Chapter 1](#) to learn how to set up a Pinterest business account.) Once you sign up for a business account and claim your website, you get access to Catalogs that grab current products from an existing online store and place a link back to that product on each Pin you add to Pinterest. When you click a Product Pin, you're taken to that Pin, which contains a link back to that specific product on the vendor's website (see [Figure 1-4](#)).

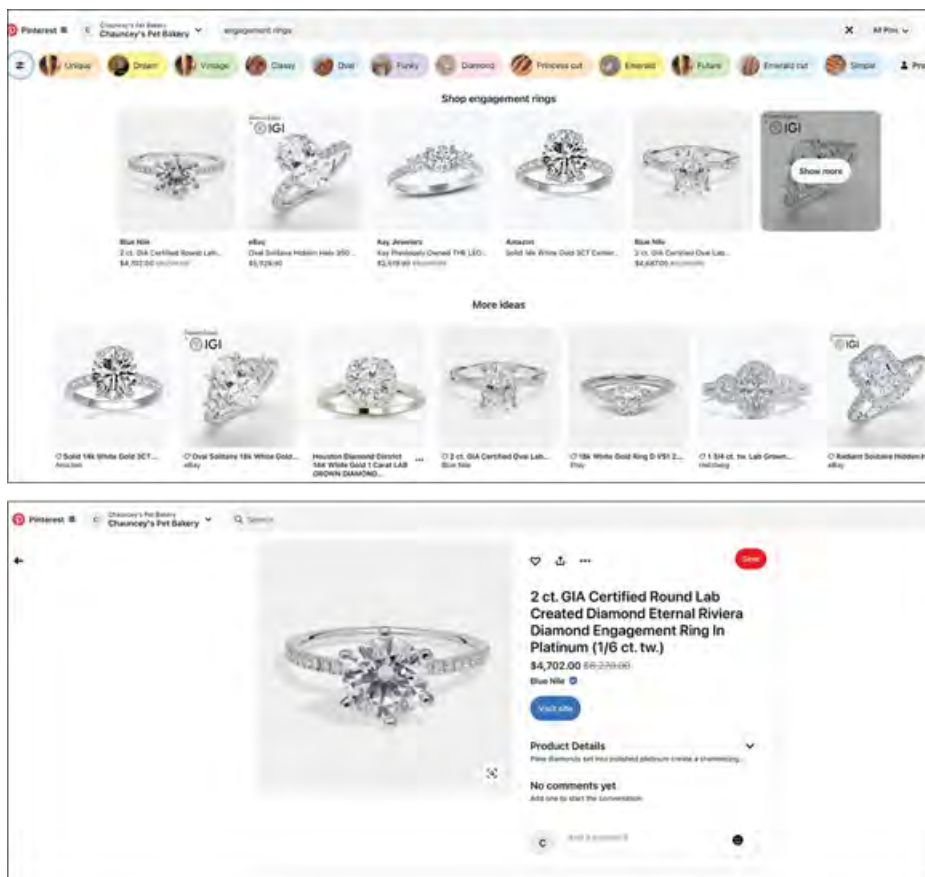


TIP For more information about selling through social media, try these sites:

www.shopify.com/blog/social-selling-platform or
<https://blog.hootsuite.com/what-is-social-selling>.

Reviewing third-party products for selling through social media

The following sections discuss some of the many third-party tools and products available for selling products through social media as an alternative to linking to a storefront on your website, or to selling directly using the sometimes limited solutions provided by the social media platform. Instead, most of these solutions link from social media to an independent storefront. Consider these items as examples of the range of products available. You should research and evaluate products to meet your own needs.



Courtesy of Blue Nile

FIGURE 1-4: The Shop section of the search results page (top). Click on a specific result to see the Pin with a link back to the product page on the vendor's website (bottom).

WooCommerce

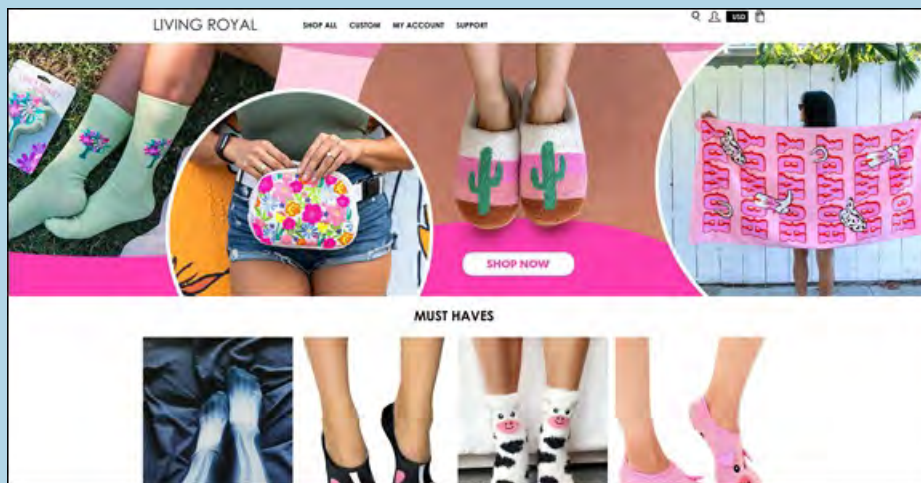
WooCommerce (<https://woocommerce.com>) is a multi-faceted e-commerce platform that works with search engines like Google, social networking platforms like TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest, and marketplaces like Amazon and Etsy. It's highly customizable and you can also add on extensions for selling subscriptions, taking bookings, and more.

StoreYa

StoreYa (www.storeya.com) is a suite of marketing and advertising apps to help businesses increase sales, leads, and social media presence. The apps are user-friendly, require no coding experience, and work with all major e-commerce platforms. One of their most popular apps is their Traffic Booster that drives targeted shoppers to your store.

MAKING A ROYAL LIVING FROM SOCIAL SALES

Living Royal, whose website appears in the next figure, proudly describes itself as a “funky printed sock company.” Started in 2010, the company makes all its socks at its Wheeling, IL, headquarters.



Courtesy of Living Royal

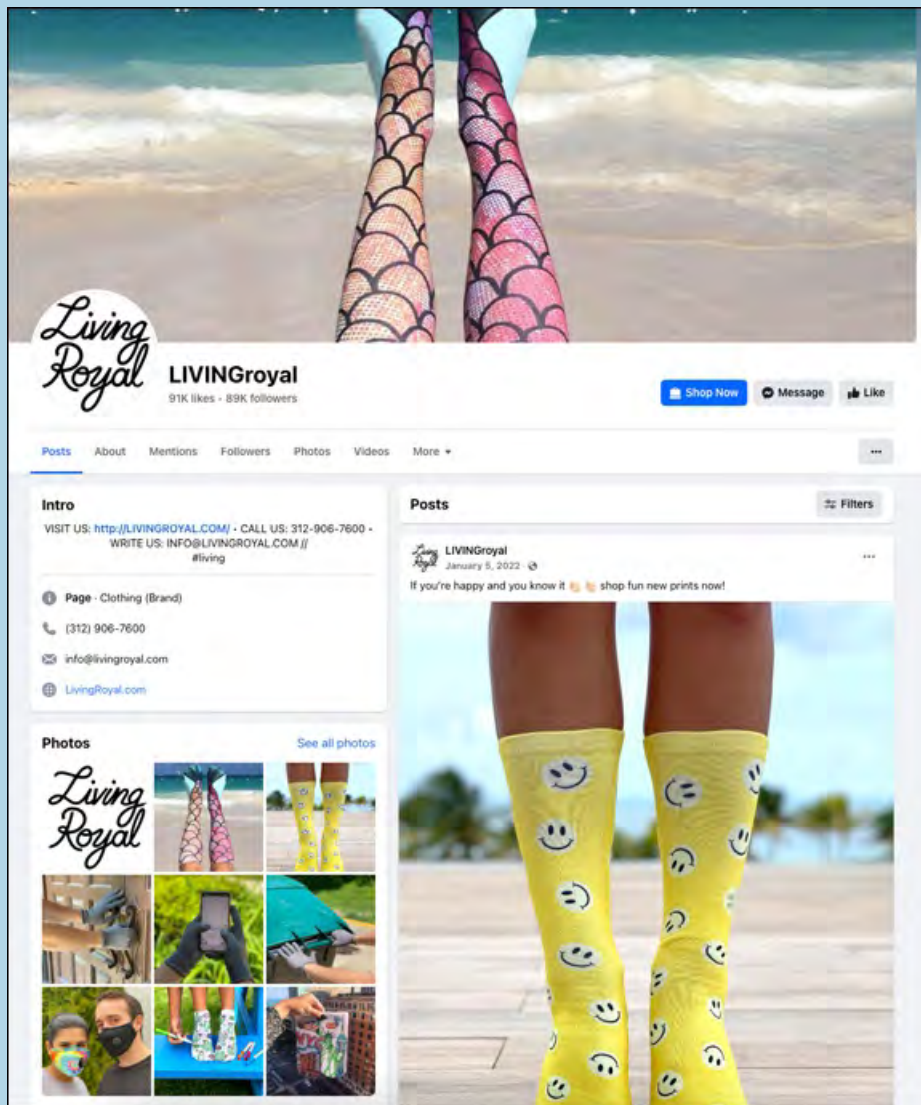
According to its president, Michael Elyash, “We knew the only way to be successful selling online was to have a large social media following. We started with Facebook, then went to X, Pinterest, and lastly Instagram.” Initially, social media was the only source of traffic for the newfound company.

The firm tested just about all social media channels to see which ones would best achieve various marketing goals, from online sales, retail customer acquisition, social following, and email collection to wholesale customer acquisition and branding.

The company found, for example, that at the time “Facebook was great at getting people to buy product,” citing Facebook’s capability to tightly target an audience. However, “Pinterest and Instagram were great for spreading awareness about our brand [but] were not as good at converting visitors into customers.”

To manage its social media activities, Living Royal took advantage of an Instagram visual-posting program from Later. “We typically posted once a day in the late afternoon,” Elyash explained. “A team of [four] people focused on social [media] from photography to social outreach,” with the goal of making the company’s social presence as

good as possible. To back up their results, the team relied on Google Analytics and Shopify. To get out the word, the team placed social media icons on every web page and pushed engagement through various contests and giveaways.



Courtesy of Living Royal

It wasn't always easy, Elyash noted. "Getting the attention of our audience at first was a real challenge. Finding out which style of imagery to get the right conversions also was a big issue for us. [But] if you test anything enough, you will find the right, winning combination."

Following is a list of Living Royal's web presence:

- www.livingroyal.com
- www.pinterest.com/livingroyal
- www.instagram.com/livingroyal
- www.facebook.com/Livingroyal
- X.com/livingroyal

Ecwid

Ecwid (www.ecwid.com) is a complete e-commerce solution for websites, blogs, Facebook, Tumblr, TikTok, Amazon, and more. Additional social media integration to share purchases and recommend products is available for “virtually anywhere you have an online presence” including Facebook, Instagram, Google Shopping, and Amazon.

Because the contents of your web store are mirrored on several sites, it’s easy to update your product catalog simultaneously at all sites and manage all online locations from one dashboard. Prices range from free for just an online store with up to ten products to \$105 per month for unlimited products. All paid packages include a free Facebook and Instagram store. They also have Linkup, which spotlights your top social profiles, content, and products in a single link that you can put in any of your online bios to drive more traffic to your stores.

Shopify

Shopify (www.shopify.com) is a full-featured store builder that lets social media platforms such as Facebook, Pinterest, TikTok, and Instagram users browse your catalog and purchase products directly from each of these social media channels. Monthly web-based plans range from a \$29/month starter package (billed annually) to \$2300/month for high volume or wholesaling merchants.



TIP When selecting a storefront solution for your website, investigate which ones offer either the capability to use the same solution on social media platforms or provide badges or apps for social media compatibility. Many companies have added this feature in response to demand.

Other resources for selling on social media

[Table 1-3](#) lists other e-commerce widgets, storefronts, and resources you may want to check out.

TABLE 1-3 Social E-Commerce Apps, Storefronts, and Resources

Name	URL	Notes
Big Cartel	http://bigcartel.com	Hosted e-commerce website geared toward artists and small businesses; capability to set up freestanding e-commerce sites.
BigCommerce	www.bigcommerce.com/features/sell-on-social	E-commerce platform for built-in selling on all the major social networks, search engines, and marketplaces.
eBay	https://go.developer.ebay.com	E-commerce badge for your eBay store; free APIs allow selling on eBay from anywhere online
E-junkie	www.e-junkie.com	Cart or Buy Now buttons for social media or blog; fees start at \$8/month for ten products up to \$40/month for unlimited products; handles charges for downloaded items (for example, music or white papers)
Etsy	www.etsy.com/seller-handbook/article/social-media-tips-from-an-etsy-expert/22423398853	List of third-party apps to sell on Etsy from social media; helpful ideas
PayPal	https://developer.paypal.com/docs/accept-payments	Accepting PayPal payments on mobile and social media

Soldsie	https://web.soldsie.com	Customizable links to drive traffic from your social media pages to your website
CommentSold	https://try.commentsold.com	A video commerce platform offering live selling, shoppable clips, AI-driven video generation, and comprehensive inventory and returns management
Wishpond	http://corp.wishpond.com/social-promotions	Apps to run promotions, such as coupons, contests, or group sales, and more.

Keeping Your Ear to the Social Ground

The onslaught of data from social media sites can be overwhelming. To garner some value from all the noise, you can take advantage of certain tools to monitor what's being said about your company.



TIP

When should you start to worry? Some experts suggest that a negative comment appearing within the first 20 results on a Google search on your name, brand, or product could be a sign of trouble. Don't worry about a one-off negative comment on a minor site.

Social media *monitoring* is about who's saying what. It's about your brand, your products, and your reputation. It's not the same as social media *measurement*, which deals with traffic statistics, conversion rates, and return on investment (ROI). Measurement is covered in [Book 9](#), including chapters about measurement tools specific to particular social networks.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Bring user feedback directly to you. Place a free feedback widget on your site from a provider like <http://shoutbox.widget.me>. This feature takes some programming knowledge; if you're not up to the task, ask your programmer. You can find some monitoring tools for specific types of services in the sections that follow.

Deciding what to monitor and why

If you didn't have anything else to do, you could monitor everything. That situation isn't realistic, so you need to set some constraints. Start with your goal and ask yourself what you want to accomplish. For example, you may want to

- » Track what's being said about your company and products, both positive and negative.
- » Conduct competitor or market research.
- » Stay up to date on what's happening in your industry.
- » Watch trends in terms of mentions, topics of interest, or volume of comments.
- » Gain a competitive advantage.
- » Monitor the success of a specific press release, media campaign, or product promotion.

- » Monitor infringement of trademark or other intellectual property.
- » Obtain customer feedback so you can improve your products and services.

After you decide on your goal, it should be obvious what search terms or keywords to monitor. Your list might include

- » Your company name
- » Your domain name
- » Names of executives and staff who speak with the public
- » Product names and URLs
- » Competitors' names
- » Keywords
- » Topic tags

Deciding which tools to use

The number of monitoring tools is almost as great as the amount of data they sift through. Research your options and choose at least one tool that monitors across multiple types of social media. Depending on the social media services you're using, you might want to select one from each appropriate service category, as well.

The frequency with which you check results from these tools will depend on the overall visibility of your company, the schedule for your submissions to different services, and the overall intensity of your social media presence. For some companies, it might be a daily task. For others, once weekly or even once per month will be enough.



TIP If you're not sure where to start, begin with weekly Google Alerts to monitor the web and Mention's daily alerts (14-day free trial and plans start at \$49/month) to monitor social media. Add one tool each for blogs and social media platforms you're active on or the ones you think people may be on and talking about your business on their own. Adjust as needed. (More on both these tools in the next section.)

Using free or inexpensive social-monitoring tools

Choose one or more of the tools in the following sections to monitor across multiple types of social media.



REMEMBER Mark your choices on your Social Media Marketing Plan. If the tool doesn't offer automated reporting, you'll need to enter the submission task, as well as the review task, on your Social Media Activity Calendar.

Brand 24 (<http://brand24.net>) starts at \$119 per month, billed annually, with a 14-day free trial. It includes both sentiment and data analysis to provide a good sense of the buzz around your product, brand, business, or search term. It covers blogs, forums, and multiple social media outlets, including X, Facebook, and Instagram, with alerts daily or more often. Additional features available with more expensive plans allow you to review customer behavior, actions, and posts.

Google Alerts

One of the easiest and most popular of the free monitoring services, Google Alerts (www.google.com/alerts) are notifications of new results on up to 1,000 search terms. Alerts can be delivered via email or RSS feed. You can receive results for news articles, websites, blogs, video, and Google books and forums.

You set the frequency with which Google checks for results and other features from your My Alerts dashboard page. Think of Alerts as an online version of a clipping service.

Google Trends

Google Trends (www.google.com/trends) is a useful market research tool. It not only provides data on the hottest current searches, but also compares the number of searches on the terms you enter to the total number of searches on Google overall during the same timeframe.

Click the Explore option in the top menu and type the search phrase that interests you in the Add a Search Term field. You can choose to refine your research by selecting options from the drop-down lists under Worldwide (location), Past 12 months (timeframe), All Categories (topic area), and Web Search (content type.) You can also compare the performance of multiple trends by clicking on the + Compare section and adding in additional search terms.

Mentionlytics

Type any brand name at app.mentionlytics.com, shown in Figure 1-5, to see how visible it is in social media. It even provides share of media (how often the brand name is mentioned in the media compared with other brands) and a keyword cloud. Click any element for additional details. Plans start at \$69/month after a free trial.

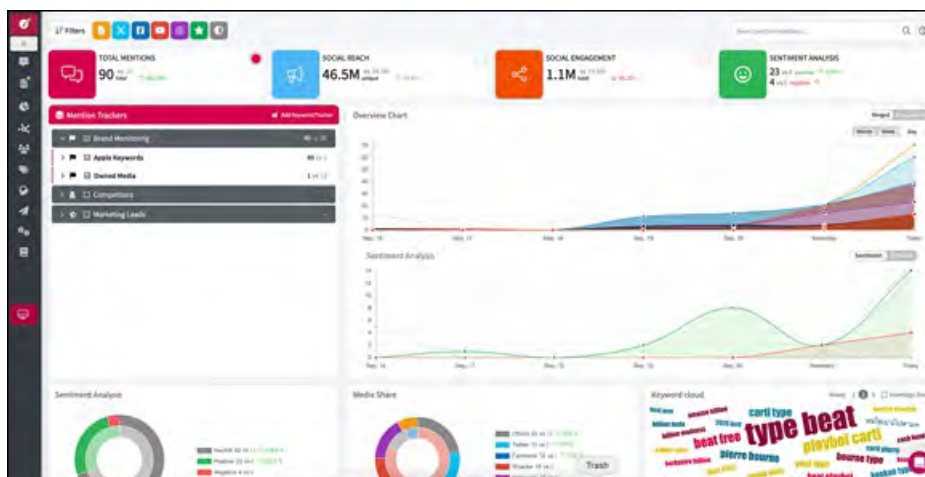


FIGURE 1-5: Mentionlytics provides several measurements of a brand's popularity online.

IFTTT (If This Then That)

If This Then That (www.ifttt.com) is an automation tool that lets you write a script (called an *applet*) to receive notifications and accomplish other tasks online. You can easily use IFTTT to manage your online reputation. It's easiest to browse existing public applets to find one that monitors your desired social media platforms; then tweak the applet to include the search terms you want to monitor. Plans start from free with limited functionality up to \$15/month for IFTTT Pro+.

Mention

Mention (<https://mention.com/en>) monitors multiple social networks, news sites, forums, blogs, and any web page in 43 languages. It offers several helpful features: one, the capability to export data, filtered by time and source, which allows you to compare your results to competitors' results; and two, real-time alerts plus a daily or weekly digest by email. Paid versions — which have higher limits on the number of alerts, mentions, and users — start at \$49 per month for 2 alerts, 5,000 mentions, and 1 user; all plans include a free 14-day trial.

Sprout Social

A high-end package of social media tools, Sprout Social (www.sproutsocial.com) includes a comprehensive monitoring feature that combines all alerts, messages, and actions into a single stream that can be analyzed to discover trends. You can watch for social media comments about your business, brand, products, competitors, or industry topics in near real time. Prices start at \$250 per user per month, but the company also offers a 30-day free trial.

Talkwalker

A comparable alternative to Google Alerts, Talkwalker (www.talkwalker.com/free-social-media-monitoring-analytics-tools) monitors the web for mentions of your brand, competitors, name, events, or other keywords. It provides email updates to your email inbox or RSS reader on a daily or weekly basis. The free version of Talkwalker has a limited number of searches; however, the paid Pro versions of Talkwalker (www.talkwalker.com/en/social-media-intelligence) include multiple social media sources, higher limits on the number of alerts, and other features.

Measuring the Buzz by Type of Service

The number of monitoring tools competing for market share is astonishing. The following tables are not intended to be comprehensive lists; instead, they simply provide some idea of what's out there. Don't forget the "simple" measuring services available directly through a social media platform, such as X's own search function, as shown in [Figure 1-6](#).

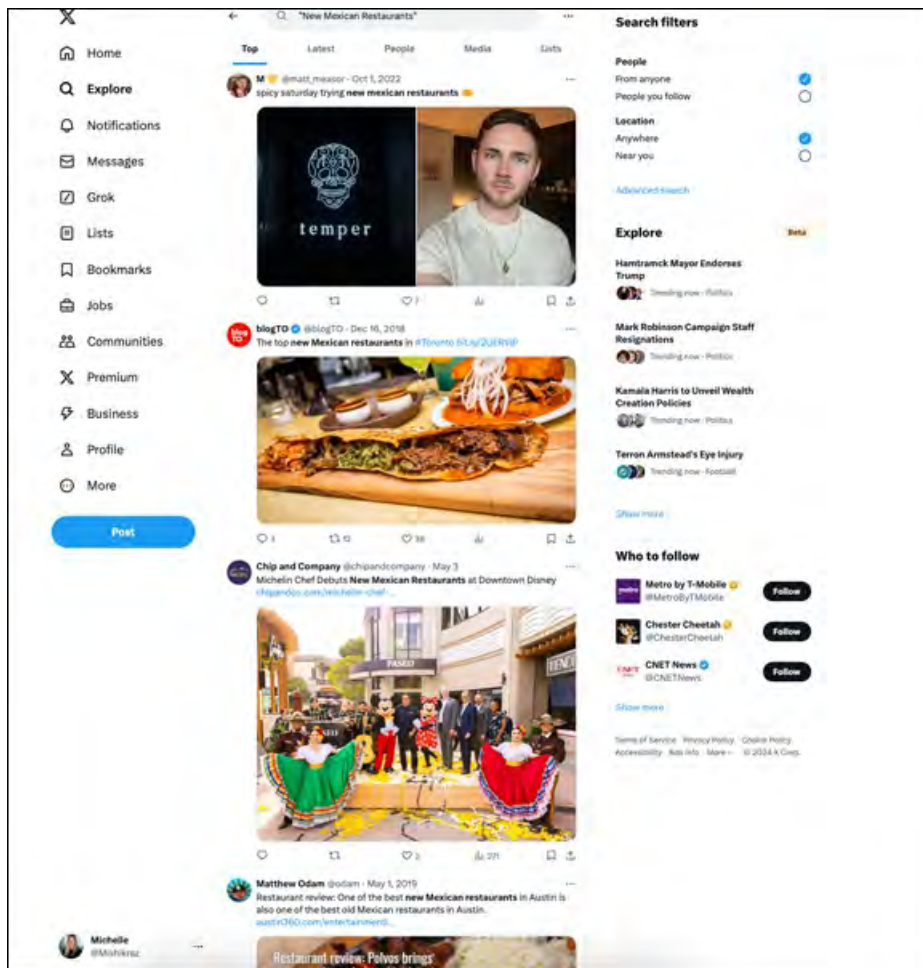


FIGURE 1-6: Results page from a simple X search for *New Mexican Restaurants*.

[Table 1-4](#) lists tools for monitoring blogs and forums; tools for news, RSS, and geolocation sites; tools for X; and some high-end tools at the enterprise level. You can always search for free tools in each category to get more options.



REMEMBER To ensure that your blog appears in a timely fashion in blog-monitoring tools, submit your blog to each one.

TABLE 1-4 Helpful Monitoring Tools

Name	URL	Description
Blog- and Forum-Monitoring Tools		
Attentio	http://attentio.com	A suite of B2B media monitoring and analysis tools; fee.
BlogSearchEngine	www.blogsearchengine.org	Search for blogs by topic area or search term.
Sovrn	www.sovrn.com	Free tool to help publishers monetize their websites and social media, reach their target audiences, and build relationships. Includes reports on user behavior, demographics, and actions.
Social News and RSS Tools		

Google News	http://news.google.com	Keyword search of Google News.
Yahoo! News	http://news.yahoo.com	Keyword search of Yahoo! News.
X-Monitoring Tools		
RiteTag	https://app.ritetag.com	Manage your own hashtags, receive suggestions for new hashtags, and compare the performance of different hashtags.
SocialOomph	www.socialoomph.com	One-stop shop for multiple tools to monitor and manage many social media channels; freemium model.
X Pro	https://pro.x.com	Real-time tool for X Pro subscribers to organize, engage, track searches, and activity in one interface.
X Search	https://X.com/explore	X's own search filter with advanced queries on multiple parameters.
Fee-Based, Enterprise-Level Monitoring Tools		
DataEQ	https://dataeq.com	Paid service tracks online conversations with monitoring and insight tools.
eCairn	www.ecairn.com	Segment target audiences to gain insights and engage with influencers.
Meltwater	www.meltwater.com/en/suite/social-listening-analytics	Monitor and measure buzz and sentiment in real time.
Khoros	https://khoros.com/platform/social-media-management#intelligence	Monitor community engagement as part of an integrated social media management package.
Salesforce Marketing Cloud	https://www.salesforce.com/marketing	Detailed monitoring of social media buzz about industry, competitors, and/or brand. Analyze customer desires, evaluate content engagement, and assess campaign reaction.

Chapter 2

Leveraging SEO for Improved Visibility

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding why SEO still matters
 - » Looking into the top search engines
 - » Focusing on the SEO basics of keywords and metatags
 - » Optimizing your web presence for search engines
-

No matter how popular social media may be, search engine optimization (SEO) must still be a part of your toolkit for a successful, broad-spectrum web presence. The goal of SEO is to get various components of your web presence to appear near the top — preferably in the top ten — of search results on general search engines or specific social media services.

You accomplish this by selecting appropriate search terms or keywords and then optimizing content, navigation, and structure to create a web page or profile that's search friendly for your selected terms. At the same time, you maximize cross-links from social media to increase the number of inbound links to your primary website.

Fortunately, you can optimize social media, from blogs to Facebook, very much the same way that you optimize a website. Some people call this social media optimization (SMO), referring to the application of SEO techniques to social media. SMO has become even more critical with search engines such as Google moving toward personalization and semantic analysis, which skews users' results on the basis of location and past searches.

If you do a good job optimizing multiple components of your web presence — your website, blog, Facebook page, X profile, and more — they may all appear near the top of search engine result pages (SERPs) on selected terms, increasing your company's share of that premium screen real estate. As mentioned in Book 1, [Chapter 1](#), improving search engine ranking is one strategic justification for implementing a social media campaign in the first place.

Making the Statistical Case for SEO

News of the publicity about social media usage sometimes overshadows the actual numbers. For example, comScore's Unique Visitor Table (www.comscore.com/Insights/Rankings) for November 2024 showed that Facebook (240.3 million unique visitors) fell behind Google sites (278.8 million), Microsoft sites (246 million), and Yahoo! sites (Verizon Media — 247.3 million) in terms of visits.

Although more than 2.1 billion people worldwide (194 million in North America alone) were called daily active Facebook users as of June 2024, that doesn't mean they were using it to

search for information that might lead them to your company.

At the moment, no social media alternative covers as wide a base of web pages or as commanding an algorithm for assessing relevance as search engines. What will happen in the future? Get out your crystal ball or watch eMarketer and other sites for more data. One thing about the web is for sure — like the world, it's always changing.

Given these statistics, do you still need to bother with search engine optimization techniques for your hub website, as Book 1, [Chapter 1](#) discusses? Absolutely. Here's why:

- » Although the younger subset of Internet users is attracted to searching for trending topics on social media or relying on friends' recommendations of products, not all members of your target audience are active users of social media — especially if you have a business-to-business (B2B) company or target an older consumer audience.
- » After you optimize your hub website or blog, registered under your own domain name, you can quickly transfer the techniques, tools, and results to social media, especially to blogs and tweets.
- » Inbound links to a hub website remain a key to high ranking in search results, especially on Google. Your social media pages are a rich source of these links. Google treats posts and profiles on social media channels, which are written in HTML, just like any other sites on the web for ranking and search.



REMEMBER Google can't review social media pages that have been set to private, no matter how much traffic or engagement those pages may have.

- » Most social media services still aren't as flexible as a full-fledged website when it comes to handling e-commerce, database applications, forms, or other myriad features involving real-time data entry. Most third-party apps on social media that offer some of this functionality can't give you the same degree of control as you have on your website.
- » Your website or blog benefits from links to your site from social media pages. In particular, make sure your profile is public and contains links to your site.
- » SEO remains a necessary, though not sufficient, method of ensuring site visibility based on a method other than the number of friends, fans, or followers you have. You're chasing profits, not popularity.



REMEMBER SEO isn't an end in itself. The goal is to draw qualified visitors to your website so that you can turn them into customers and clients. A strong SEO foundation helps direct traffic to your full-featured hub from your social media presence. SEO is a necessary component of a complete online-marketing strategic plan, but it shouldn't be the only one.

For more information about search engine optimization, see *Search Engine Optimization All-*

in-One For Dummies, 4th Edition, by Bruce Clay and Kristopher B. Jones (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.).

Thinking Tactically and Practically

The best results for SEO sprout from the best content — and so does the largest stream of qualified prospects. Although this chapter talks about many SEO techniques, none of them will work unless you offer appealing content that draws and holds the attention of your audience.

Two schools of thought drive SEO tactics for social media:

- » Optimize your website and all your social media for the same search terms, occupying the first page of results with one or more pages of your web presence.
- » Use your social media pages to grab a good position for some relatively rare search terms that your website doesn't use.

SEARCH ENGINE JARGON

Help yourself by mastering the terminology you see on search engine resource sites or in articles:

- **Natural or organic search** refers to the type of search results produced by a search engine's algorithm (set of rules) when indexing unpaid submissions.
- **Paid search results** are those for which a submission fee or bid has been paid to appear as sponsorships at the top of a search results page, in pay-per-click (PPC) ads in the right margin, or in some cases at the top of the list of search results.
- **Search engine marketing (SEM)** combines both natural and paid search activities.
- **Search engine optimization (SEO)** is the process of adjusting websites, web pages, and social media pages to gain higher placement in search engine results.
- **Social media optimization (SMO)** is the process of adjusting social media profiles and postings to gain higher placement in search engine results.
- **Spiders, crawlers, and robots (bots)** are automated programs used by search engines to visit websites and index their content.



TIP

Get greedy. Go for the best of both worlds. Use your standard search terms on social media profiles and the more rarely used terms on individual posts, photo captions, or updates.

Use a free trial at sites such as www.apexpacific.com, www.webseoanalytics.com/blog, or <https://moz.com/free-seo-tools> to see how your site ranks on different search terms.

Your tactical decisions about keyword selection may depend on those results, as well as on the goals and objectives of your social media campaign.

In the later section “[Choosing the right search terms](#),” you discover how to select terms that

people are likely to use and ones that give you a chance of breaking through to the first page of search results.

Knowing the Importance of Search Phrases

Users enter search terms in the query box on a search engine, website, or social media service to locate the information they seek. The trick to success is to identify the search terms that your prospective customers are likely to use.



REMEMBER For good visibility on a search term, your site or social media profile needs to appear within the top ten positions on the first page of search results for that term. Only academic researchers and obsessive-compulsives are likely to search beyond the first page.

Fortunately or unfortunately, everyone's brain is wired a little differently, leading to different choices of words and different ways of organizing information. Some differences are simple matters of dialect: Someone in the southern United States may look for *bucket*, whereas someone in the north looks for a *pail*. Someone in the United Kingdom may enter *cheap petrol*, whereas someone in the United States types *cheap gas*.

Other differences have to do with industry-specific jargon. *Rag* has one meaning to someone looking for a job in the garment industry, another in the publishing business, and yet another meaning to someone wanting to buy a chamois to polish a car.

Other variations have to do with spelling simplicity. Users will invariably spell *hotels* rather than *accommodations*, or *army clothes* instead of *camouflage* or *khaki*. And users rarely type a phrase that's longer than five words.



TIP The predominant length of a search query in English is currently between two and three words. With personal search and location-based search now built into engines such as Google, many users don't bother to include as many words in searches as they used to. However, because people are using voice to query their smartphones, search queries may become longer and are often phrased as a question, rather than as a noun phrase. Now you need to think of search phrases in terms of not only what your content includes, but also what your user might intend (take out your mind-reader hat) and how various concepts in your content relate to one another. Longer search queries, which are sometimes called *long-tail keywords*, are more likely to land people on a specific page or post. Therefore, lengthy queries, while rarely used, may be more likely to lead to conversions.

Choosing the right search terms

I recommend trying to come up with a list of at least 30 search terms that can be distributed

among different pages of your website (more if you have a large site). You must juggle the terms people are likely to use to find your product or service with the likelihood that you can show up on the first page of search results. Here are some tips for building a list of potential keywords:

- » Brainstorm all possible terms that you think your target audience might use. Ask your customers, friends, and employees for ideas.
- » Be sure your list includes the names of all your products and service packages and your company name. Someone who has heard of you must absolutely be able to find you online.
- » Incorporate all industry-specific search terms and jargon you can think of.
- » If you sell to a local or regional territory, incorporate location into your terms: for example, *Lancaster bakery* or *Columbus OH chiropractor*. It's very difficult to appear on the first page of results for a single word, such as *bakery* or *chiropractor*.
- » For additional ideas, go to Google, enter a search term, and a menu of related search terms will drop down. You may be surprised by the other search phrases that users try.
- » If you already have a website, look at your analytics results to see which search phrases people are using to find your site.
- » Use one or more of the free search tools listed in [Table 2-1](#) to get ideas for other keywords, how often they're used, and how many competing sites use the same term.
- » [Figure 2-1](#) displays results and synonyms from the SEMrush.com keyword overview tool for the phrase *cake decorating supplies*.
- » You can also try the Google Ads Keyword Planner Tool at <https://adwords.google.com/home/tools/keyword-planner>. Intended to help buyers of Google Ads, this tool is also useful when you're brainstorming search terms. However, to access this tool, you need to sign into an existing Google Ads account or create one by clicking the links on the Keyword Planner page.



TIP You'll get more accurate, detailed numbers if you also sign up for Google Search Console. You or your programmer should do this anyway at www.google.com/webmasters or <http://g.co/SearchConsole>.

- » Check your competitors' search terms for ideas. Visit your competitors' sites and right-click to view the page source, or look in the browser toolbar for something like View ⇒ Source. The keywords are usually listed near the top of the source code for a page. If you don't see them, use the Find command (Ctrl+F) to search for *keyword*.
- » Not sure who your competitors are? Enter one of your search terms to identify similar companies appearing on the first page of search results. Then you can go look at their other keywords, too.
- » Look at the tag clouds for topics on social news services or blog search engines to assess

the relative popularity of different search terms. *Tag clouds* visualize how often keywords appear in specific content or how often they're used by searchers, with the most popular terms usually appearing in larger type.

- » Avoid using single words except in technical fields where the word is a term specific to a particular industry, such as *seismometer* or *angiogram*, with only hundreds of thousands, rather than millions, of competing pages. Not only will you have too much competition on generalized single words, but results for single words also produce too wide a range of options. People simply give up.

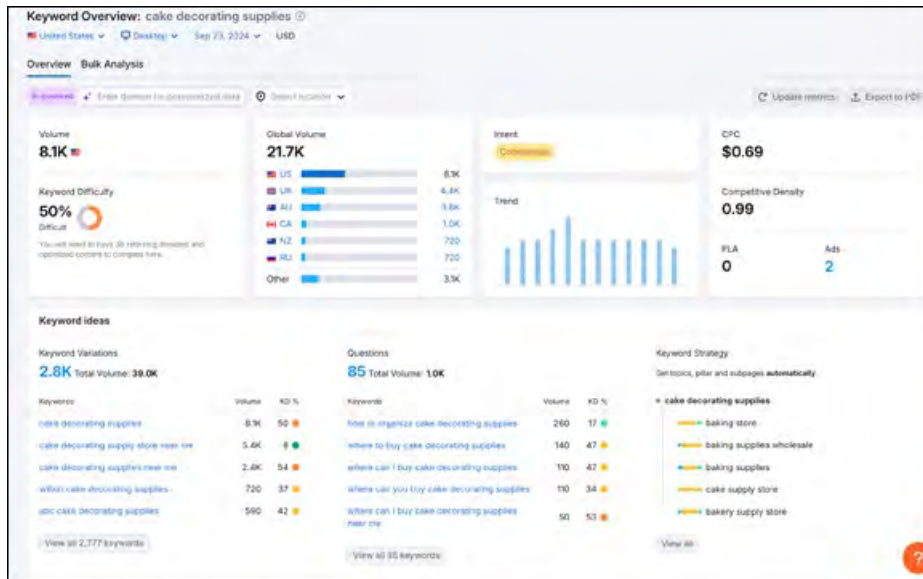


FIGURE 2-1: The SEMrush keyword tool estimates the volume of requests for related search terms and the cost per click for a term.

TABLE 2-1 Keyword Selection Resources

Name	URL	Description
Google Ads Keyword Planner	https://ads.google.com/home/tools/keyword-planner	Free keyword generator and statistics available to holders of Google Ads accounts; better results for paid accounts
Google Trends	www.google.com/trends	Research on trending search terms
SEMrush	www.semrush.com	Research keywords used by competitors for Google and Bing organic searches
Ubersuggest	https://neilpatel.com/ubersuggest	Free keyword suggestion tool
WordStream	www.wordstream.com/keywords	Basic keyword tools; 25 free keyword suggestions
Wordtracker	www.wordtracker.com	Keyword suggestion tool; free 7-day trial

Crafting a page, blog post, or social media profile for more than four or five search terms is difficult. Break up your list of terms into sets that you think you can work into a single paragraph of text while still making sense.



TIP

Optimizing for search terms that real people rarely use doesn't make sense. Sure, you can be number one because you have no competition, but why bother? You will show up on these words anyway. The exceptions are your company and product names and terms highly specific to your business.



REMEMBER

Always test your selected search terms to be sure that sites like yours show up in the results for that term. For example, entering *artificial trees* as a search term yields inexpensive artificial Christmas trees, especially at the holiday season, and perhaps some silk palm trees. However, that term doesn't produce appropriate results if your company offers \$30,000 tree sculptures designed for shopping malls, zoos, or museums.

Where to place search terms on your site

Sprinkle your keywords throughout the content that visitors will see. Although Google searches the entire page, it's a good idea to include search terms in the first paragraph of a page.

Opinions vary, but some experts recommend generally constraining your use to three to five search terms per page, aiming for a keyword density of 2 to 6 percent. The longer your content, the more search terms you can include on a page. Just be careful that the language remains readable!



WARNING

If your keyword density is too high, your content may not read well and Google will ding you for it.

Your home page should include your most important search terms and your brand names; you may want to include as many as eight terms. As you drill down in the navigation, the nature of the search terms may change. For example, give your *category pages* (additional pages in the top navigation), which have general overview information, two to four general, short phrases.

Detailed pages that describe your products or services generally appear at secondary or tertiary levels in your navigation. Keep the search terms on these pages focused on one topic per page, and optimize for one to three brand names or longer search terms related to your topic.



TIP

You generally don't get much mileage from search terms on boilerplate pages such as your privacy policy, terms of service, or contact us page unless you modify the content to include relevant information.

Winning the “People Also Ask” game

“People Also Ask” (PAA) is an interactive feature at the top of Google search engine results pages (SERPs) that present a list of questions related to the user’s original query. These questions appear in a collapsible box before the actual search results (see [Figure 2-2, top](#)). Think of it being position zero in the list. Clicking on any of the questions within the box opens an article that Google thinks best answers that question (shown in [Figure 2-2, bottom](#)).

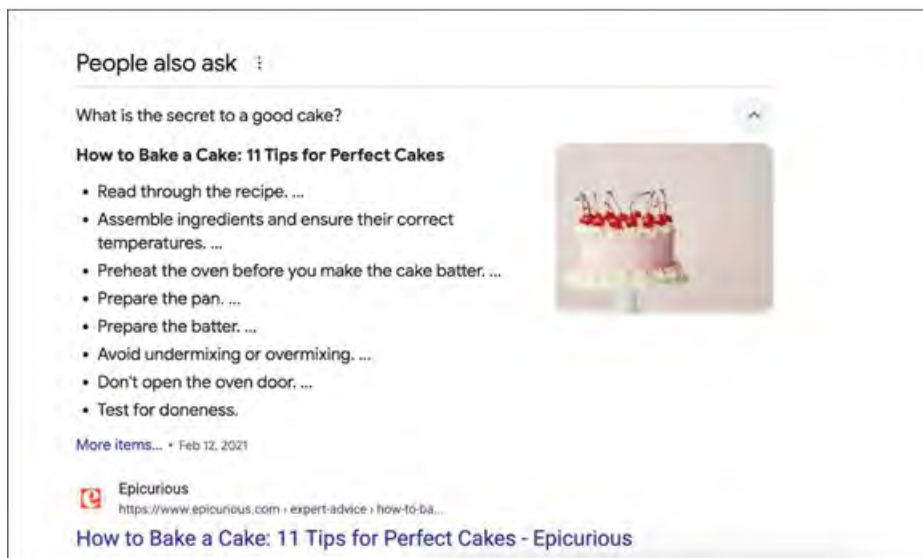
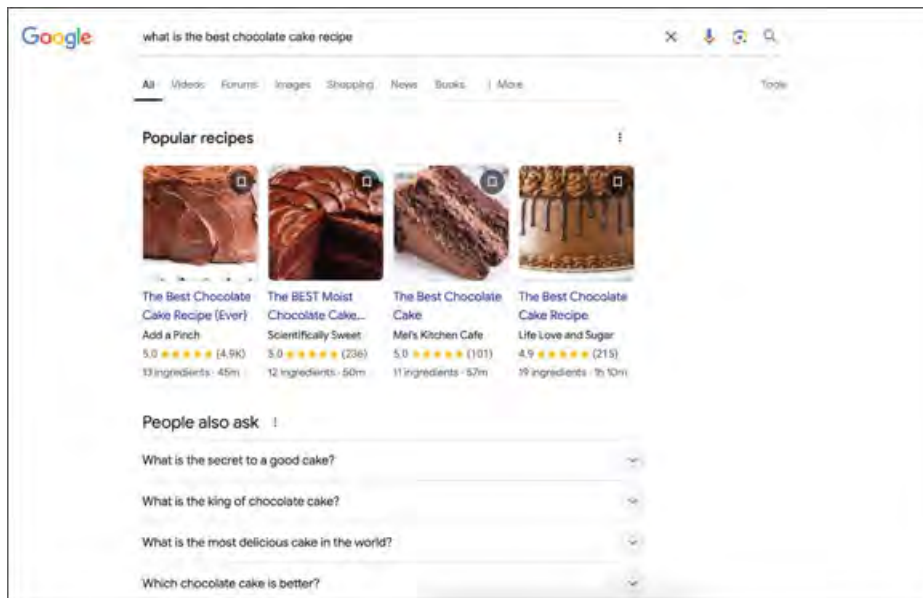


FIGURE 2-2: The People Also Ask box on Google SERPs is the Shangri-La of SEO (top); read this article to learn how to bake the perfect cake! (bottom).

As you can probably imagine, being one of the lucky few to be deemed worthy enough to be featured as an answer to a PAA question is quite the honor! That also means it’s quite difficult — though not impossible — to secure the coveted spot. Here are some tips to help you get your content noticed and tapped for this honor:

- » Start by thinking of a few questions related to your business or service. A good place to start is if you have a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document or page on your website. Or, has anyone asked you a question on any of your social media accounts? Type that question into Google search and see what other questions appear under the People Also Ask box on the SERP. Do any of these new questions catch your eye?
- » Create a piece of content that directly answers that question. Keep the opening paragraph of your content brief and accurate, and ensure you're tailoring each sentence to specifically answer the PAA question.
- » Use straightforward, concise language to deliver actionable insights that correspond to the user's search intent.
- » Use questions in your headers. Google's algorithms use headers to understand the content's structure and context, so it picks up on the fact that the content coming after the question is the answer. Using long-tail keywords in headers is also a good idea, because they tend to closely resemble the actual questions people ask.
- » Create comprehensive content to ensure you're covering all the pertinent points to make it a helpful, engaging piece of content. Google's algorithms weigh relevance and usefulness more heavily than content with a lot of marketing fluff or industry jargon. So, make sure whatever content you're creating to answer the question does so quickly in a neat little "blurb" that Google can pick up for PAA snippets, but also does a great job explaining the topic so it's truly useful for the reader.

Maximizing Metatag Muscle

Search engines use the title and description metatags to help rank the relevance of a website, blog, or social media page to a search query. Historically, engines needed many types of *metadata* (data that describes a web page overall) to categorize a website, but now search engines need only the title and description metatags for that purpose. Search engines can automatically detect the rest of the information they need, and too many metatags just slow them down.



WARNING The keyword metatag is no longer used by search engines, which rely on the appearance of search terms within readable text. Although the keyword metatag may be useful for human beings to track which terms were optimized, some experts recommend omitting it.

Title and page description tags have become even more important with the advent of social media. Facebook and some other platforms will pull content from these tags when a URL is shared.



REMEMBER Don't confuse the term *metatags*, which refers to specific entries that appear in page

source code, with the term *tags*, the label used to refer to assigned keywords in blogs, or the term *hashtags*, which is used for categorization purposes on many social media platforms.

To view metatags for any website, choose View ⇒ Developer ⇒ Source in Chrome; look for a similar command in other browsers. (You can also right-click a web page and choose View Source from the pop-up menu that appears.) A display appears like the one shown in [Figure 2-3](#) (top), which shows the primary metatags for Pennington Builders.

Note that the first paragraph of text shown in [Figure 2-3](#) (bottom) is optimized with some of the same search terms that appear in the keyword tag and title tag. Note also the page title above the browser toolbar, which also includes two of the search terms. The next section, “[Tipping the scales with the page title metatag](#),” talks more about the title metatag.



TIP

If you don’t see page title or page description metatags in the page source for your own site, you may be in trouble. That could partially account for poor results in search engines.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

You can usually insert metatags and <alt> tags for photos quite easily if you use a content management system (CMS) to maintain your website or if you use blog software. If you don’t, you may need to ask your programmer or web developer for assistance.

Tipping the scales with the page title metatag

Perhaps the most important metatag, the page title appears above the browser toolbar when users are on a website. (Refer to [Figure 2-3](#), bottom, to see where the output of the title tag appears on the screen.) A good page title metatag includes one or more keywords followed by your company name. Select one or more search terms from the set of keywords you’ve assigned to that particular page.

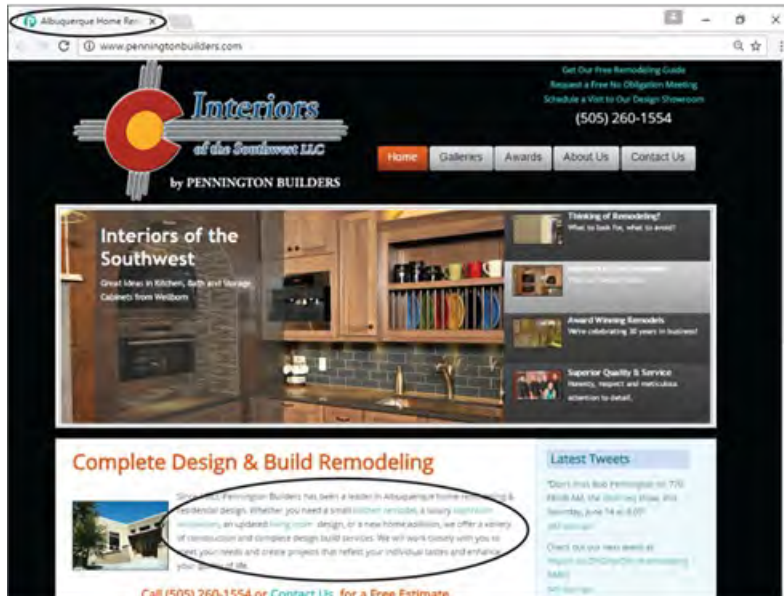


FIGURE 2-3: The page source (top) for the home page of Pennington Builders (bottom).

Because browsers may truncate the title display, place the search term first. Although you can use a longer title tag, I suggest an average length of seven to ten words and fewer than 70 characters. Some search engines may truncate title tags that are more than 55 characters anyway. A long, long time ago, way back in the dinosaur age of the Internet, page names were used to index a website. That method is now unnecessary; it's a waste of time to use a phrase such as *home page* rather than a search term in a page title. It's almost as big a waste of time as having no title tag. The portion of the <title> metatag (Albuquerque Home Remodeling & Residential Design) that appears in [Figure 2-3](#) (compare top image to bottom) is typical.



TIP

Because longer, more descriptive title tags may work better for social sharing, don't obsess about length. It's always better to write a title tag that gets clicks!

Google and other search engines dislike multiple pages with identical metatags. Changing the <title> tag on each page is one of the easiest ways to handle this preference. Simply pull another relevant search term from your list of keywords and insert it in front of the company name in the <title> tag.

Pumping up page description metatags

The page description metatag appears as several sentences below the link to each site in natural search results. It's important to write an appealing page description because you may want to repeat this tag in all your social media profiles.

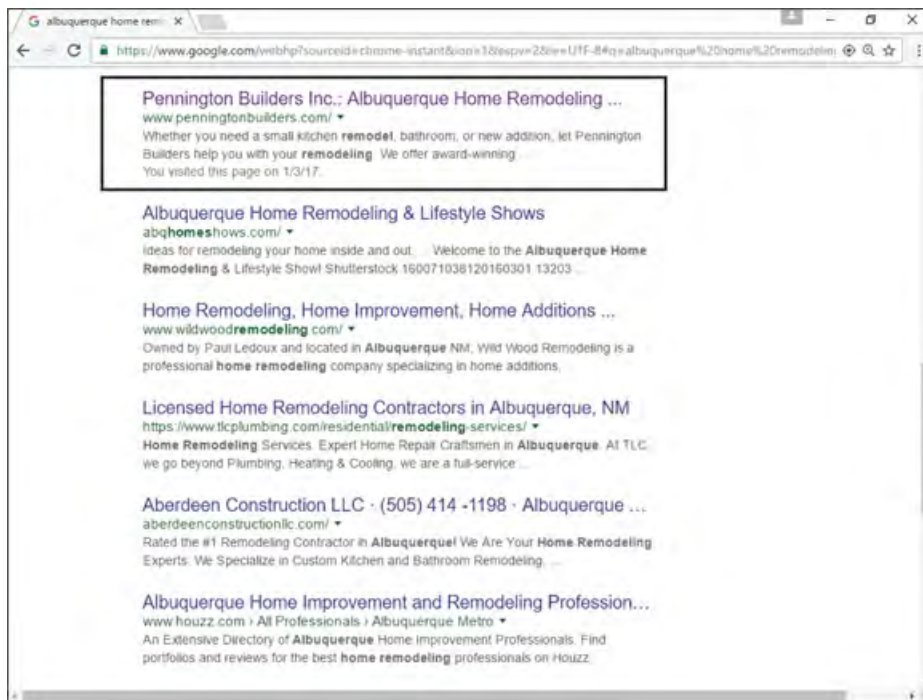
Some search engines truncate description metatags after as few as 115 characters, although you are generally safe at 150 to 160 characters, and no fewer than 50 characters. Just in case, front-load the description with all the search terms from the set you've assigned to that page. Search engines display the first line of text when a page description metatag isn't available.



TIP

Why pass up a marketing opportunity? Just because your site appears near the top of search results, you have no guarantee that someone will click through to your site. Write your page description metatag as though it were ad copy, including a benefits statement and a call to action.

[Figure 2-4](#) displays natural search results on Google with the page description for the home page of Pennington Builders. Note the inclusion of search terms (*kitchen remodel, home remodeling*) from the keywords metatag in [Figure 2-3](#) (top).



Courtesy of Pennington Builders

FIGURE 2-4: The page description metatag for the home page of the Pennington Builders site appears on the first page of the natural search results for the term *albuquerque remodeling*.

Painting a (word) picture for your images

Over 21 percent of Google search results contain images, so capitalizing on that important real estate on your website is a no-brainer. So, how do you put your images to work for you (and your website)? By using *image alt text*.

Alt text, also known as alt tags or alt descriptions, are the words that appear in place of an image on a web page if the image doesn't load on a user's screen for whatever reason. This text helps screen-reading tools describe images to visually impaired readers and enables search engines to crawl and rank your website a lot easier. Image alt text helps with accessibility, user experience, and image traffic, all three of which are taken into consideration by the search engine gods (and discussed in more detail next).



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Due to differences in content management systems, website builder platforms, image editing programs, social networks, and so on, taking you through where to add alt text to all your images is out of the scope of this book. For more information, you can check out this helpful resource on the University of Mississippi web page (<https://accessibility.olemiss.edu/home/web/adding-alt-text-to-images>) or talk to your web developer.

Accessibility means that any web page with images, movies, sounds, and so on should include equivalent information to its visuals or auditory content, generally in the form of words that a screen reader can read out loud.

User experience comes into play if a website has several pieces of visual or auditory content as large-sized files, thereby taking a considerable length of time to load on slower Internet connections.

Finally, image traffic refers to the images on your website showing up in search engine results, oftentimes as part of *image packs* at the top of the page. In other words, it's a way to drive organic traffic to your website that doesn't involve written content like blog posts.

Now that you know the *why* of image alt text, the *how* involves simply keeping in mind some best practices when adding this copy to your images:

- » **Be descriptive and specific.** But make sure you're staying within the context of the image. Don't keyword stuff just so you can say you put your primary keywords in another place; make sure every word you use properly describes the image.

For example, if your image shows a table decorated for the Thanksgiving holiday:

Bad: alt="Table with a few plates and a vase of flowers with a pumpkin next to it"

Good: alt="A brown table with 5 dinner plates that are white with blue stripes. In the middle of the table is a vase with 4 orange daisies and a small orange pumpkin."

- » **Keep your alt text fewer than 125 characters.** Screen readers typically stop reading after this point, so a lot of context may be lost if you're too long-winded.
- » **Use keywords sparingly.** Only include your primary keyword if it's relevant to the context of the image and text where the image is featured. You don't have a lot of characters to work with, so make sure you're making them count.
- » **Omit filler text.** Don't start your descriptions with "picture of a ..." or "an image of ...".
- » **Avoid repetitive content.** Don't add alt text to images that are already described within the text or if the images are just generic, stock photos that don't relate contextually to the content of the article.

Optimizing Your Site and Content for Search Engines

Optimization is the process of adjusting your site, blog, or social media profiles to play well with search algorithms. You optimize primarily by having plenty of relevant content, updating it often, and making sure that your web presence is easy for general and on-site search engines to discover with their spiders. The following sections cover a few of the most important tricks of the trade. For additional information on search engines and site optimization, check out some of the resources listed in [Table 2-2](#).

TABLE 2-2 Search Engine and Optimization Resources

Name	URL	Description
Google Search	https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/do-i-need-seo	Guidelines and suggestions for site optimization and SEO

Console		information for webmasters
Moz	http://moz.com	SEO learning resource with tools and community support
MozBar	https://moz.com/products/pro/seo-toolbar	All-in-one SEO toolbar with rankings
Search Engine Journal	www.searchenginejournal.com/seo/learn-seo	Best practices for URLs and SEO
Search Engine Land	http://searchengineland.com	Search engine news
Search Engine Watch	www.searchenginewatch.com www.searchenginewatch.com/2019/04/05/google-search-console-guide	Articles, tutorials, forums, blogs, SEO articles, and tips
UrlTrends	www.urltrends.com	Suite of SEO tools and reports



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Google has such a habit of modifying its search algorithms that the changes have been called *dances*. They typically don't announce all the changes but ... you'll know. Trust me — every marketer responsible for SEO at their company quickly learns about any recent updates, because they rarely have a positive effect on a site's traffic!



TIP

Because Google algorithm changes unfold over time, your best option is to watch your search engine results weekly and take action as needed. To stay up to date on Google's jitterbugs, waltzes, cha-chas, quick-steps, and other dances, you might want to bookmark <https://moz.com/google-algorithm-change>. You can also monitor any of the sources in [Table 2-2](#) for news.

Writing an optimized first paragraph

First and foremost, use the search terms you've assigned to each page in the first paragraph of text or the first paragraph of a blog posting. Although search engines now check the full pages of entire websites or blogs, it helps to have search terms visible near the beginning of the page's text for faster indexing.



TIP

There's nothing like on-site social media, such as a blog or a forum, to generate keyword-rich content for search engines to munch on. Best of all, other folks are helping you feed the beast! Generally speaking, keep your word count per article to at least 300 for SEO purposes. Although longer articles can increase opportunities for SEO, they may also turn off readers.

[Figure 2-5](#) shows a well-optimized posting (top) and its source code (bottom) from ArchibequeLawFirm.com. Archibeque Law Firm owns the blog. This entry includes the phrase *personal injury lawyer* in its URL, post title, and text. Note the social media chiclets in

the header. The source code uses the same term in the keyword and page description metatags.



TIP

Try to arrange your navigation so every page on your site is accessible with no more than three to four clicks from any other page.

Don't try to force more than a few terms into the first paragraph. If another phrase or two fits naturally, that's fine. Trying to cram more words into your text may render it unintelligible or jargon-loaded to human readers.



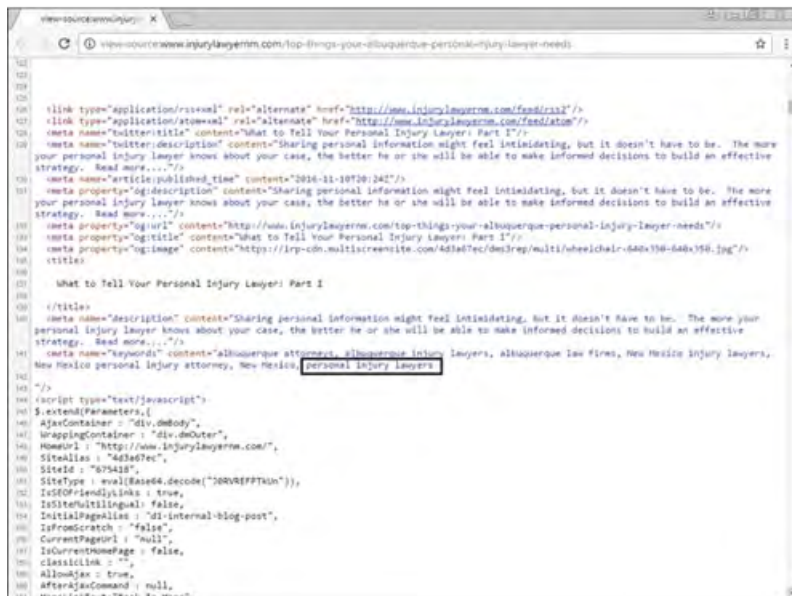
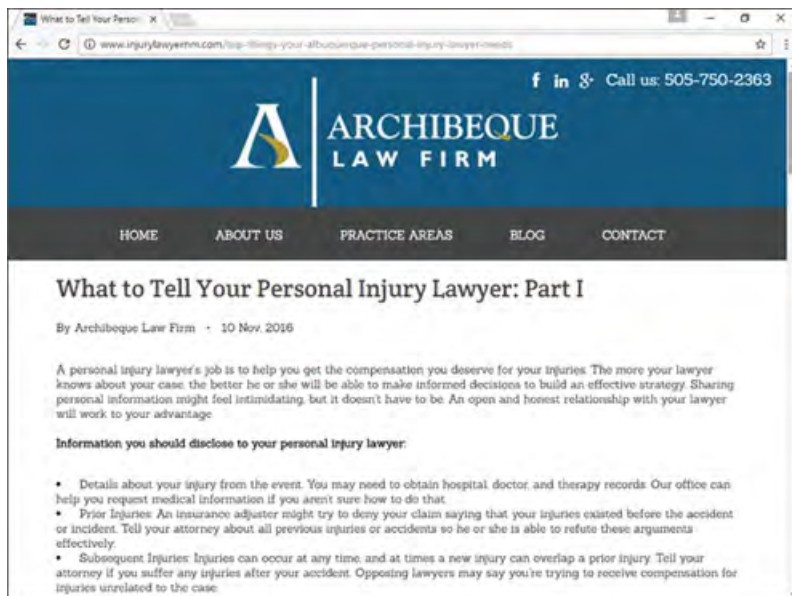
TECHNICAL
STUFF

No matter where the first paragraph of text appears on the page, place the text near the top of the source code. The text should appear above any tags for images or video.

Updating often

Search engines, especially Google, love to see updated content. Regular updates are a sign that a website is loved and cared for, and easily updated content is one of many reasons for having a blog or content management system on your site. If changing content is simple and free, you're more likely to do it.

At least once a month, change a paragraph of content on your site. Include this task on your Social Media Activity Calendar. (See Book 1, [Chapter 4](#).) If you can't commit to this task, at least ask your programmer to incorporate some kind of automatically updated material, whether it's a date-and-time stamp, a quote, or a syndicated content feed, for example.



Courtesy of Archibeque Law Firm

FIGURE 2-5: Compare the blog post (top) — which uses the keyword phrase *personal injury lawyer* in its title, page URL, and text — to the source code (bottom).



TIP If you follow no other search optimization tips in this chapter, make sure that you follow at least these two: Update often and optimize the first paragraph of text on every page.

Guess what? You score extra jelly beans in the relevance jar if your search terms appear in particular places on your website, in addition to your <title> and page <description> metatags. Follow these tips to optimize your web page or blog for your selected set of search terms. However, if they don't work naturally, don't force them:

- » **Links:** Use the words from your set of search terms as *text links* or *anchor text* (words that form an active link to another internal page or external site). Link liberally within text, but don't waste valuable real estate on meaningless phrases such as *Learn more* or *Click here*. They don't do a darn thing for your search ranking. Make sure that internal links open in the same window, whereas external links open in a new window so users don't lose track of your site.



TIP

If a clickable image opens another page, such as a product detail page, add a clickable caption that includes a search term or the product name. Score some points!

- » **Headings:** Headlines and subheads help organize text and assist readers who are skimming your copy for the information they want. Headings that include your search terms can also improve your search engine ranking.

Onscreen, these words usually appear in bold and in a larger font size or different color (or both) from the body copy.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Headings must carry the <h1> to <h6> tags, which define HTML headings, rather than appear as graphics. Search engines can't "read" words embedded in a picture.

- » **Navigation:** Search terms that appear as navigational items, whether for main or secondary pages, also earn extra relevance jelly beans. Like with headings, navigation must be in text, not graphic, form.
- » **URLs:** Include search terms in understandable URLs for your pages. URLs not only help with search engines but also are often used as link text elsewhere on the web — for example, when shared on social media.
- » **Body text:** Use search terms intelligently in your content. Above all, make sure that the content makes sense to a human reader and is rich in information.



WARNING

Avoid *keyword stuffing* — don't overload a page with repetitive search terms or a long list of different terms in an effort to juice your standing on search engine results pages. Not only do words out of context ring an alarm bell for Google, they make readers very unhappy. If you stick with well-written, natural English and useful content, you'll do just fine in both human and search engine results.

- » **Images and <alt> tags:** Not only may your images appear in image search results, they can also help with search engine results. The title, filename, caption, nearby text, and <alt> tag (the text that appears when hovering your cursor over an image on a PC) can contribute to a better ranking when they include a search term.

Sometimes you have to weigh the design considerations or limitations of your CMS or blog

against search engine optimization needs. Some designers prefer the greater control and flexibility of font styles available in a graphic. Unfortunately, text in graphics is not readable by search engines. Ultimately, only you can decide what matters more to you.



WARNING Under no circumstances should you implement *black hat* techniques, which are scams promoted as the search engine equivalent of a get-rich-quick scheme. For example, don't even think about hiding search terms in the same color as the background, installing magic pixels, or any other shifty tricks. These techniques might get you blacklisted from search engines.

Making your site search engine friendly

In addition to trying the techniques in the preceding section, which apply at the page level, you can take specific actions to make your site, as a whole, friendly to search engines.

Avoiding elements that search engines hate

If you expect a search engine to rank your site or blog favorably, you have to give it something to work with. Computers may be getting smarter all the time, but they can't yet "read" pictures, videos, or soundtracks, let alone minds. They need to be fed a rich diet of words. The list of search-engine-detestable content is short, but each of the following items can be avoided without harming your message:

- » **Graphics without descriptions:** As much as artists and photographers love pages without words, search engines hate them. Simple solutions can make your pictures search engine friendly: Provide an <alt> tag, a caption, or both, have text appear below the fold (as long as the text appears near the top of the code), or include a descriptive paragraph near the image. For an extra boost, include keywords in the filenames for photos.
- » **Parallax scrolling site design:** You may be familiar with the currently popular design trend to use large images, minimal text, and long scrolling pages on websites. Adapted from video game design, this approach often incorporates parallax design, in which the background and foreground move at slightly different rates. While this can provide an illusion of depth and lovely design effects, it also leads to slower load times (a downer for SEO) and makes it difficult to optimize text for search engines. In particular, it does not work well on mobile devices, an increasingly important factor in search ranking. With some extra effort by your programmer, you can still get decent search ranking, but it may not be worth the sacrifice. For more information, see <https://moz.com/blog/parallax-scrolling-websites-and-seo-a-collection-of-solutions-and-examples>.
- » **Substantially duplicate content at different URLs:** The content may not be malicious; maybe it's just printer-only versions of your website. Be sure to delete old versions of pages that have been replaced. Even if they sit in archives, search engines may try to index these pages and reduce your page rank for duplicate information. Have your programmer read the directions at <https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/66359> about how to handle this situation. On the other hand, if Google thinks the duplication is deliberate, your site may

be penalized or removed from the index.

- » **Splash pages:** This misguided attempt to design a website as though it were a book with a cover may harm site traffic. Generally, a site loses half its audience every time a click is required. Why cut your prospect list in half before you even have a chance to explain your benefits? Splash pages often consist of beautiful images or animations that make a statement about a company but carry no content or navigation. If you use rich media on a splash page, make sure to include a regular HTML link to a text-based page for search purposes.

Often found on sites of companies specializing in entertainment, web development, architecture, arts and crafts, or graphic design, splash pages usually offer viewers an option to skip the introduction and an arrow cueing them to click to enter the real site. The simpler solution is to not include a splash page on your site. For more about the pros and cons of splash pages, see <https://www.thoughtco.com/splash-pages-pros-cons-3469116>.

- » **Mobile friendliness:** It's now critical that your website be mobile friendly. Google will penalize sites that aren't mobile friendly in search results while promoting friendly ones. Mobile friendliness extends beyond simply resizing the screen to the smaller width of mobile devices. Pages must be downloadable in less than one second; the font must be large enough to read on a mobile screen; links must be far enough apart for distinct finger taps; and the amount of data transferred must be minimized. The good news is that the most common website builders out there (like Wix or Squarespace) automatically create a mobile-friendly version of your website. To test your site, enter your URL at <https://developer.chrome.com/docs/lighthouse/overview>. Read the results carefully for suggestions!



TECHNICAL
STUFF

If you insist on having a splash page or an entry page, at least don't annoy your visitors. Direct the navigational link for Home to the main page of real content, not to the splash page. With a bit of clever naming, you may be able to get search engine spiders to crawl over the first page of content and ignore the splash page.

Configuring URLs

The best URLs are readable and might include one of your search terms or a descriptive title: www.yourdomain.com/social-media-small-businesses. Using a search term from your set of keywords for your web or blog page earns you another point for relevance and lets users know what to expect. At least try to keep the URLs as readable text, as in www.yourdomain.com/pages/socialmedia/article1234.htm.

If the content in this entire section makes your eyes glaze over, just hand this chapter to your developer!



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Problems with page URLs tend to occur when they're automatically assigned by a content management system (CMS) or when the pages are created dynamically. Those URLs tend to look like gobbledygook: www.yourdomain.com/shop/AS-djfa-16734-QETR. Although search engines can review these URLs, these addresses do nothing for your search engine ranking and aren't helpful to users.

You can improve your URL configuration several other ways:

- » Use hyphens to separate words instead of using underscores, spaces, or plus signs.
- » Keep your URLs as short as possible. Make your URL easier to copy and paste by minimizing the number of words and trailing slashes.
- » Don't use database-generated URLs or pages created on the fly (called dynamic URLs) that include multiple non-alphanumeric characters. Search engines are less fussy than they used to be, but many still have problems indexing URLs that have more than four non-alphanumeric characters. Google recommends using a `robots.txt` file to prevent search engines from trying to spider URLs that generate search results or have infinite spaces (such as calendars). Send your programmer to <https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/url-structure> for Google's detailed recommendations.



REMEMBER

Be careful when redesigning a blog or website, especially if you're changing developers or platforms. If the existing site is already doing well in search engines, try to preserve its URLs. Not all transitions to a new platform accommodate this strategy. Ask your programmer before you begin.

A badly configured URL may simply not be indexed. This problem can become significant with product databases on e-commerce sites, especially when you want every individual product detail page to appear in search engines. Note that this doesn't apply to tracking ID numbers appended following a `?` to identify the source of a link. (For more on tracking URLs, see Book 9, [Chapter 1](#).)



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Fortunately, a technical fix exists. You (or your programmer) can implement the Apache `Mod_Rewrite` module or ISAPI Rewrite for Microsoft, which convert URLs on the fly to a format that's search engine friendly. Have your programmer review www.digitalocean.com/community/tutorials/how-to-set-up-mod_rewrite or www.helicontech.com/isapi_rewrite, respectively, for more information.

Indexing a site

You can easily create a virtual path to ensure that search engines crawl your entire site. A virtual path of links is especially important in two cases:

- » When the top and left navigational elements are graphics, making it impossible for search engines to know which pages are really on the site
- » When you have a large, deep, database-driven site without links to all pages easily available in the navigation

For a small site that has graphical navigation, you have a couple of simple fixes. You can create a parallel series of linkable main pages in the footer of your site, or create a navigational breadcrumb trail at the top of the page, as shown in [Figure 2-6](#). Either way can help both search engines and human beings know where they are within your site structure.

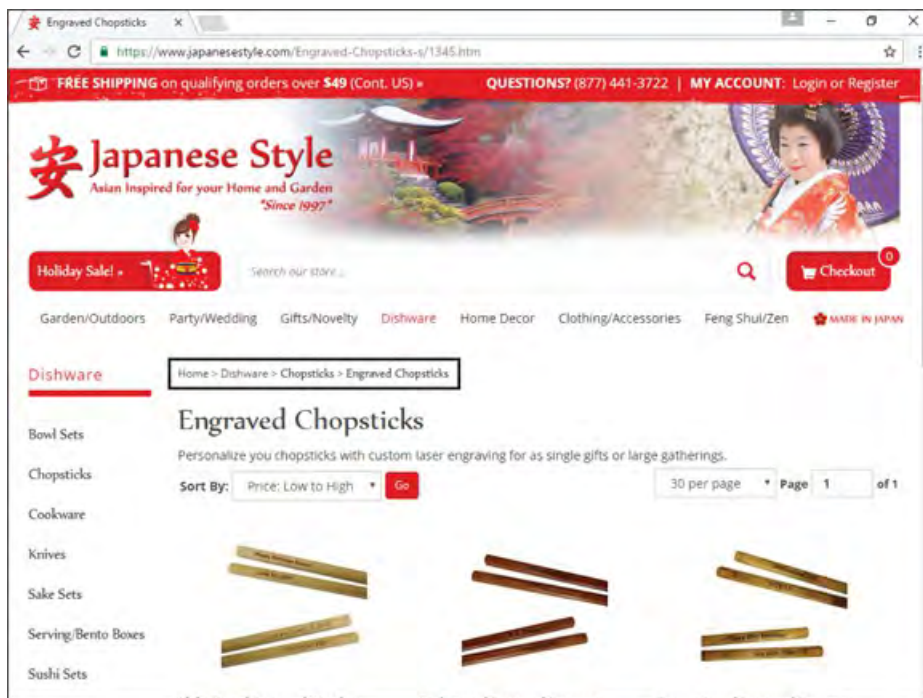
A *breadcrumb trail* (think Hansel and Gretel) helps users track where they are on a complex website. It typically consists of a series of page links that extend horizontally across each page, just above the content. Breadcrumb trails, which may either display the site structure or the actual navigation path a user has followed, usually look something like this:

Home page > Main section page > Internal page > Detail page



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Put these links in a Server Side Include (SSI) in the footer to ensure that links are displayed consistently on all pages. You then make future changes in only one place (other than in the site itself, of course).



Courtesy of Japanese Style (portrait in header graphic from

www.flickr.com/photos/paulsynnott/3406065635/in/album-72157616258070704/ via Creative Commons license

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>)

FIGURE 2-6: Breadcrumb trails help both search engine robots and real people navigate your site.

For a site that has a significant number of pages, especially on several tiers, the best solution is to include a linkable sitemap or site index, as shown in [Figure 2-7](#). It looks a lot like a junior high school outline, which is a perfectly fine solution for both search engine friendliness and site usability.

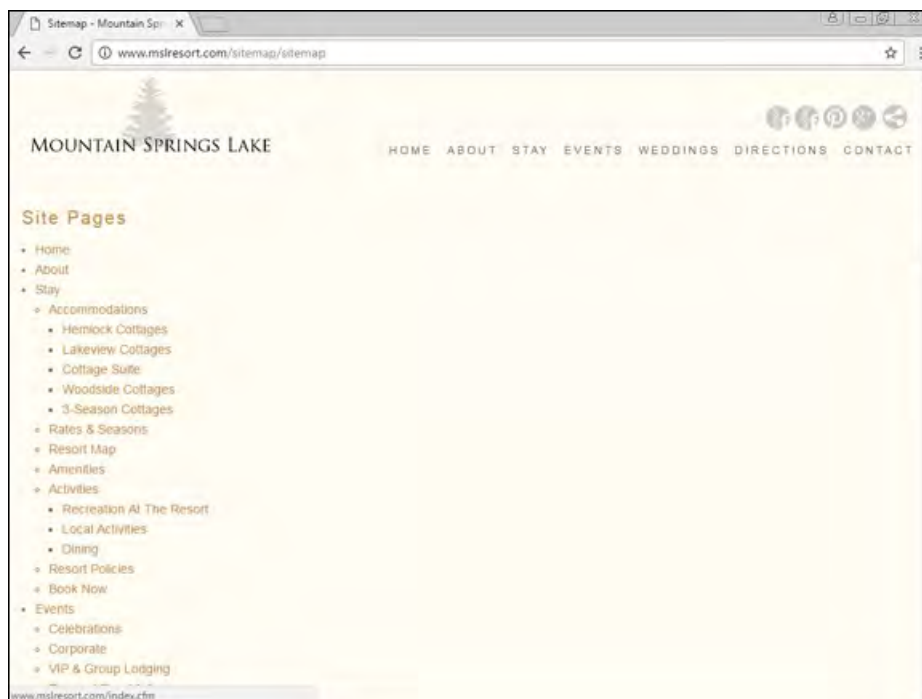


TECHNICAL
STUFF

Another solution exists for very large database-driven sites and large stores. Sitemap (XML) feeds that connect directly to Google or Bing provide current content to all your pages. Direct your programmer to www.xml-sitemaps.com or <https://developers.google.com/search/blog/2014/10/best-practices-for-xml-sitemaps-rssatom> for more information. If content on your site doesn't change very often, you can update these feeds manually every month. If you have continually changing inventory and other content, have your programmer upload these feeds automatically, at least once a day, using RSS.

If you want to index your site to see what pages you have, try one of these free tools:

- » **Bing Webmaster Tools:** Use the Index Explore tool in the Reports & Data section to view how Bing sees your site (accessible in the top navigation after you log in).



Courtesy of the Lodge at Mountain Springs Lake Resort

FIGURE 2-7: Page links on a site index provide easy access to all pages on the site.

- » **Google Index Status page:** This tool provides stats about which URLs Google has

indexed for your site over the past year. To get to this tool, sign in to the Google Search Console at <https://search.google.com/search-console>.

- » **Xenu's Link Sleuth:** Download and run this link verification program (at <http://home.snafu.de/tilman/xenulink.html>). In the results, click the link labeled Site Map of Valid HTML Pages with a Title.

Minimizing download time

Google now includes download time in its methods for ranking websites in search results. Companies continue to post pages that take too long to download, testing viewers' patience and occasionally overwhelming mobile networks. Try to keep sites to less than 500K to 1MB per page, especially now that about half of website visits are from smartphones.

High-resolution photos are usually the main culprits when a page is too large. It isn't the number of photos, but rather the total size of files on a page that counts. A couple of tips can help reduce the size of your page:

- » When saving photos to use online, choose the Save for Web option, found in most graphics programs. Stick to JPEG or GIF files, which work well online, and avoid larger, slower-to-load TIFF and BMP files, which are intended for print.
- » Post a thumbnail with a click-to-view action for the larger version in a pop-up window. Be sure to save the larger image for the web. (Refer to the first bullet.)



TIP Check the download size and time for your home page for free at sites such as www.websiteoptimization.com/services/analyze, which tests both mobile and web download times. Call your developer if changes are needed.

Using voice search optimization to your advantage

Voice search optimization refers to a collection of SEO practices designed to enhance your content's visibility in voice search results. The objective is to integrate responses to frequently asked verbal questions, ensuring that virtual assistants and voice search tools are more likely to select your page when delivering answers to users.

Voice search provides a valuable chance to capture organic search traffic, regardless of your industry. By optimizing for voice queries, you can engage a new audience of users who depend on devices like smartphones and smart speakers to find businesses and make purchases. Embracing voice search can also strengthen your overall SEO strategy, enhancing your site's ranking potential. Search engines favor sites that cater to voice searches, boosting your authority and improving your chances of appearing higher on results pages — possibly even securing a coveted position in voice search results.

Although some overlap exists between on-page SEO and voice search optimization, voice search has unique characteristics that differentiate it from traditional text-based searches on platforms like Google. One key difference is that voice search queries are typically more conversational, mimicking how people speak in everyday life instead of the concise,

keyword-driven approach often used in text searches.

Here are some ideas to make the most out of voice searches:

- » **Target long-tail and question keywords.** Voice searches tend to be longer, more specific, and often framed as complete questions, unlike the shorter, keyword-focused text queries. Optimizing for voice search involves targeting long-tail keywords — phrases with three or more words that capture specific user intent.
- » **Use conversational language.** Because voice searches are conversational, your content should adopt a similar tone to better connect with users. Incorporating a conversational tone not only makes your content feel more authentic, but also makes it more relatable and easier for users and search engines to understand.
- » **Optimize for mobile devices.** With over half of global Internet traffic coming from mobile devices, optimizing your site for mobile is crucial, especially given that a significant percentage of voice searches are performed on smartphones. Google takes the mobile user experience into account when ranking websites, meaning that a mobile-friendly site can improve both traditional and voice search rankings. Responsive design, quick loading times, and easy navigation are key elements of mobile optimization that also enhance the user experience for voice searches.
- » **The need for speed.** Website speed is a key ranking factor for Google, because users expect fast-loading pages. This is particularly important for voice search, where users expect quick answers to their queries. A slow-loading site can negatively impact your search rankings and user experience.

Optimizing for local search

Local search has obvious value for brick-and-mortar retail businesses using the web and social media to drive traffic to their stores. However, it's just as valuable for local service businesses such as plumbers or even for non-local businesses seeking online customers from a particular region.

Local optimization is needed for your site to appear near the top of results in spite of geolocation devices on smartphones (not always turned on), geographic tagging of images on Flickr and other photo-sharing sites, or the localization settings on Google results.



REMEMBER Chances are good that your business is not the only one of a particular type in your city or neighborhood. Localization is absolutely critical for restaurants, tourism, hospitality, and entertainment businesses.

The concepts used for local optimization on websites apply equally well to social media:

- » **Optimize search terms by city, region, neighborhood, or even zip code.** Rather than use a locality as a separate keyword, use it in a search term phrase with your product or service.

- » **Include location in any pay-per-click ads.** This is equally true whether your ads appear on a search engine, Facebook, or other social media.
- » **Post your business on search maps.** These maps include Google My Business (www.google.com/business), Bing Places for Business Portal (www.bingplaces.com), Yahoo! Local (<https://local.yahoo.com>), and Yext.com (www.yext.com/platform/content) which is a paid site. Consider using one or more of your social media pages as site link extensions (additional links that appear following your page description in search engine results).
- » **Take advantage of local business directories, events calendars, and review sites to spread the word about your company and its social media pages.** In some cases, you might want to use one of your social media pages rather than your primary website as the destination link. Most directories are also excellent sources of high-value inbound links.
- » **Use specialized local social media with a geographic component.** These options include social channels such as Meetup and Everplaces. You can find more on these social media services in Book 8, [Chapter 2](#).

You may want to view or manage search results for a location other than the one in which your computer is located, such as to view search results where various franchise customers are located. First do any search, such as for *grocery stores*. Scroll down to the bottom of the results page, where you will see the location Google is currently using. The simplest way to view search results for another place is to modify your search query to include the location you are looking for. As an alternative, use the Google AdPreview tool, at www.google.com/AdPreview. Enter your desired location and your search phrase in the search box at the top.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

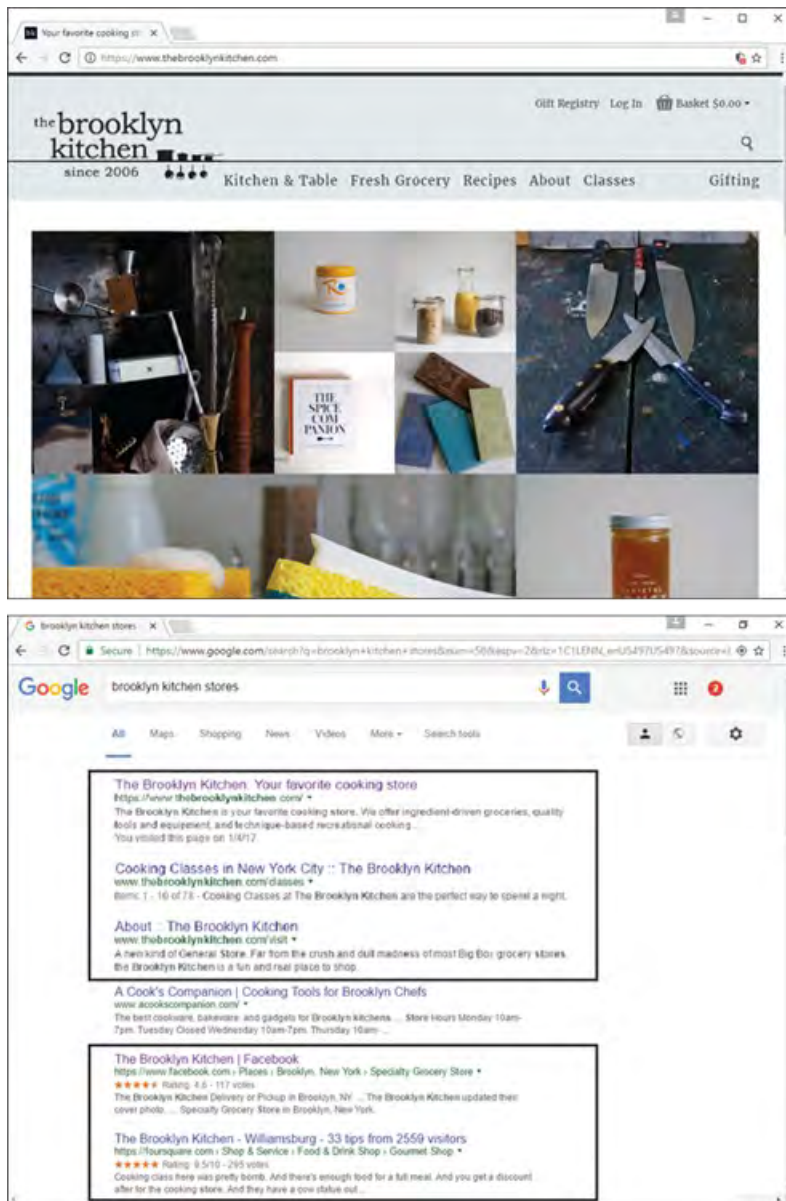
For a more sophisticated search filter, follow the directions at <http://searchengineland.com/localize-google-search-results-239768>. You'll find three other ways to localize search results for places other than where your computer or mobile device happens to be.

Getting inbound links from social sharing, social bookmarks, and social news services

Leverage your social-marketing activities to increase the number of inbound links to your site. If it's permissible, post your site to some of the social-sharing, bookmarking, shopping, and news services described in Book 2, [Chapters 1](#) and [4](#). (Not all social bookmarks allow you to submit your own site, so you may need to ask a friend to help.) You're generally required to include either your domain name or a specific page URL with your submission.

These links encourage both inbound links and traffic. Some of these sites pass *link juice*, which refers to the increased value your site achieves when it receives an inbound link from another site that already has a high ranking on search results. In [Figure 2-8](#), you can see an

example of a site that benefits from inbound links from multiple social media channels. Link juice is more valuable if you have multiple links from social news sites back to different news stories or content on your main site. For more information, see [Chapter 4](#) of this minibook.



Courtesy of the Brooklyn Kitchen

FIGURE 2-8: The Brooklyn Kitchen (top) earns high placement in Google search results (bottom) with inbound links from Facebook and Foursquare, which supplement the rankings of its own site.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Not all link shorteners are equal. Choose ones that will pass link juice with a 301 redirect. The link shorteners Bitly, Ow.ly, and TinyURL are safe bets. Of course, surround your links with relevant keywords. Just like with inbound link campaigns for

search engines, don't link everything from social-bookmarking, news, or shopping services to your home page. For example, multiple product recommendations on social-shopping sites should link to the appropriate product detail pages in your store.



TIP

Cross-link by submitting especially good blog entries to several social news services or by linking from one product recommendation to another on social-shopping sites or from one review site to another.

Reaping other links from social media

Inbound links can win you points in Google search results as an indication of your web relevance. One easy way to build inbound links is to distribute (*syndicate*) content, as described in [Chapter 1](#) of this minibook. By repurposing content on multiple social media sites, you increase not only your audience but also the number of inbound links.

Taking advantage of the many places to post links on social media pages not only drives traffic to multiple elements of your web presence, but also improves your search engine rankings in the process.



REMEMBER

Somewhere on your website or blog — at least on the About Us or Contact page — display a list of links to all your profiles on social media services, along with buttons for content-sharing options like ShareThis. As best practice, these links or chiclets should be on every page. This form of passive link building can pay off big-time with improved ranking in search results.

The more places these links appear, the better. You can also repeat text links to your social media pages in your linkable footer.



TIP

Don't be shy! Include calls to action to share your web page in the body copy of ads or e-newsletters. These links don't always have to hide their charms in the header or footer.

Here are a few other ideas for laying down a link:

- » Every profile on a social network has a place to enter at least your web address and blog address, if you have one. If possible, link to both. The links in profiles usually provide link juice, but the ones in status updates usually don't.
- » Include your web address when you make comments on other people's blogs, post reviews on recommendation sites, or submit someone else's news story. You may have to work it into the content. Use at least *yourcompanyemailaddress@yourdomain.com* for branding reasons!

- » Include your company name for branding and your web address for linking when you post to groups on any social-networking site, as long as it's appropriate, relevant, and not too self-promotional.



WARNING Read the Terms of Service on each site to be sure that you comply with requirements for use of email addresses, submissions, and links.

- » Post events on LinkedIn, X, Facebook, and elsewhere with a link to your site for more information.
- » Include a share button, described in [Chapter 4](#) of this minibook, to encourage additional distribution. People who receive content they like often pass it along or link to it from their own pages or blogs.
- » Be sure to post cross-links on newsletters and on all your social media profiles to all your other web pages, including to your primary site and your blog.



REMEMBER Now that social media is included in ordinary search results, using search terms consistently can help you occupy more than one slot in search engine results pages.

Considering SEO implication of AI content

It seems like only yesterday that the phrase *Artificial Intelligence* appeared only in the context of science fiction. Nowadays, you'd be hard-pressed to find an industry that hasn't been infiltrated by AI in some form or another.

Starting in 2023, marketers around the world perfected their ChatGPT inputs and stared in amazement as the AI churned out semi-coherent blog posts. Sure, they needed some polishing up here and there, but the amount of time it saved them in needing to create fresh content was immeasurable. The sheer volumes of content published to the Internet over the last two years is for the record books.

But there's a downside.

And that downside is *the sheer volume of content published to the Internet in only the last two years*. It's more challenging than ever to stand apart from the crowd by publishing great content online.

The novelty is starting to wear off, and now that we've had the chance to play around with these AI content-creation tools, we're seeing the cracks in the foundation. AIs have been known to fabricate facts, recycle ideas, write in the same awkwardly formal style for everything, and, worst of all, be downright inappropriate at times.

So, have the search engines started penalizing AI-generated content? Not exactly. What they are doing is weighing high-quality, well-written (read: human-generated) content more heavily. Although you're not being dinged for using an AI writing helper, it's certainly not doing you any favors. In fact, at this stage in the game, my best advice is to go against the

grain and put the time and effort into researching and writing content yourself (or get help from a hired human).

That's not to say that AI doesn't have its place in content creation. It absolutely does. It can greatly assist with tasks like research, outline writing, and even keyword research. It can come in handy if you're having a case of writer's block and can't think of a catchy headline for your article or meta description for your website.

AI is a great tool to *help* you create the high-quality, highly contextual content that will land you at the top of the SERPs or "People Also Ask" boxes. But if you want to put your best foot forward and have a strong dog in the SEO fight, then opt instead to use your "human-ness" to your advantage.

Chapter 3

Optimizing Social Media for Internal and External Searches

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Placing search terms on social media sites
 - » Improving search ranking for blogs
 - » Optimizing images, audio, and video
 - » Optimizing for internal searches
 - » Improving ranking on external search engines
-

Keep in mind that when we talk about optimizing social media for search, we're talking about two separate types of optimizations. The first is getting found in a social media channel, which has become increasingly difficult as the number of members reach into the millions or, in the case of Facebook, billions. The second is using your presence and posts on social media to improve your company's ranking in organic search results on Google and Bing.

Here's the good news: Everything this book covers about using SEO for your website or blog applies to other social media, too. (See [Chapter 2](#) of this minibook.) Whew! You still have to implement the techniques, but you can save time by reusing search terms, metatags, inbound links, and optimized text.

This chapter goes through various social media platforms one by one, providing explicit directions for internal and external search optimization on blogs, multimedia, X, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and LinkedIn. It also addresses the specific challenges of being found on real-time search, including social-media-specific search engines.

Placing Search Terms on Social Media

Start by reviewing your research for keywords and phrases. Decide on a primary set of four to six terms that best describe your company. Because your search terms must still relate to your content, you may want to reuse other sets for individual posts from your SEO research, mix them up, or include additional terms not optimized on your primary site.

You can place these types of terms in many locations:

- » **Tags:** *Tags*, which are the social media equivalents of keywords, are assigned to specific content. Because many social media services place a limit on the number of tags that can be assigned to a given piece of content, choose a few from your primary set of search terms and select others (for example, brands, products, market, or competition) from your secondary list or elsewhere that are specific to your content.



TIP

If you're pulling tags out of thin air, remember to confirm which synonyms are most popular with the users of that service. For example, do people search for *Yule* or *Noel* or *Christmas*? Use a keyword selection tool for websites (see the table in [Chapter 2](#) of this minibook on keyword selection resources) or check a tag cloud (also in [Chapter 2](#)), if it exists, on the service you're using for the latest trends in tag usage.

- » **Hashtags:** #search, #nowwhat, #huh? Words or phrases preceded by the pound sign (#) are called *hashtags*. Used on social media to designate a search term or topic, hashtags facilitate internal searches on that platform. When people click on or search for a hashtag, they receive a page or stream of compiled posts using that hashtag. X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Tumblr (blog), Pinterest, and other social networks all support the use of hashtags.

Alas, it's difficult to determine what similar hashtags might already be in use, let alone which of the similar hashtags are the most effective. Sometimes you can effectively transpose hashtags to different platforms and sometimes you can't. For starters, try creating hashtags for your company name, brand names, and search terms that are part of your standard suite of keywords. Test the terms you use to see whether they're popular or rarely used.

For more on hashtag etiquette and best practices, see <https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-use-hashtags/> or <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/hashtags-twitter-facebook-instagram>.

- » **Profiles:** Just about every form of social media asks you to establish an account. Most profiles ask for a brief description of your company and location, as well as the URLs for your website and blog. Work your primary set of keywords and brands into your profile and any other place you can comfortably integrate them, including featured products, department names, the marketing tagline, and staff bios.

Occasionally, a service requests only your email address. Of course, use the one with your domain name in it.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

If you haven't already set up email to forward from *you@yourdomain.com* to whatever email address you have from your ISP, do so now. Most hosting packages include at least five free email addresses. Email from [@yourdomain.com](#) not only makes you look more professional but also adds to brand value.

- » **Page content, status updates, and comments:** Obviously, you should include search terms in the first paragraph of text for each blog post. They don't need to be part of your primary set of terms, so you have some creative flexibility. Incorporate search terms in updates and comments, too, to increase the likelihood of being found in on-site search results.
- » **Metatags, titles, and headlines:** Use search terms from your list in the title of your blog

or page name; in the title of your post; in <alt> tags, captions, or descriptions for images; and within metatags if you have a separate URL for a blog. Each service handles these elements a little differently, as discussed in the later sections on individual services.



REMEMBER Every search engine has its own rules. You may need to tweak your terms for not only general search engines, but also internal search engines on specific social media services.

Optimizing Blogs

Because blogs (discussed in Book 3, [Chapter 2](#)) are basically websites in a different format, the same principles of site optimization and configuration apply, including the need for inbound links and cross-promotion on social media services. Hard-learned lessons and best practices truly pay off because search engines crawl frequently updated blogs at least daily.



REMEMBER Integrate your domain name with your blog URL (<http://yourblog.yourdomain.com>) or buy a separate, related domain name (<http://yourcompanyblog.com>), even if a third-party server hosts your blogs. For SEO purposes, you must own your own blog domain name. A blog at www.mycompanyblog.blogspot.com or www.typepad.com/mycompanyblog isn't acceptable.

Blogs are primo link bait. The casual sharing of relevant, text-based links in posts, the use of *blog rolls* (bloggers' linkable recommendations of other blogs), and related thematic material attract inbound links like black jackets attract white cat fur. With all that link juice, plus rapidly updated content, many blogs quickly zoom to page one in search engine results.



REMEMBER Review all requests for inclusion on your blog roll or reciprocal link offers. Make sure that the requesting site is relevant, has a decent page rank, and is one that you feel good about recommending.

Different blog platforms operate somewhat differently, leading to confusion on the part of bloggers trying to optimize sites for search engines. Whatever your platform, the same methods you follow for websites still apply, with a multitude of additions:

- » Include keywords from your primary list in your blog name, such as http://yourcompany.com/social_media_blog. The blog name should appear with an HTML <h1> tag on only the front page. On other pages of your blog, the heading level can be as low as <h3>.

- » Include keywords in individual titles for each post. Use these keywords in the <title> tag in the source code for that entry, as well as in the page URL. Put those titles at the HTML <h1> level.
- » Include primary keywords in the first sentence of content, which becomes the page <description> metatag by default, unless you write one manually. Use your secondary keywords in the body of your post.
- » Fill out the tag box with your keywords, but do so judiciously. You don't need to bloat your blog tags with synonyms or terms you don't need to rank on.
- » Incorporate search terms in anchor text for links on your blog.
- » Use <alt> tags, captions, and descriptions with search terms for any images or media you upload to your blog.
- » Post rich, appealing content with search terms regularly and often.
- » Make sure the search engine spiders can crawl your blog easily by including a side navigation column on all pages and by offering access to archives and previous posts from all pages of your blog.
- » Include a linkable breadcrumb trail that includes keywords without reaching the point of overstuffing.
- » Provide internal text links to your own related posts, especially to relevant ones that are already ranking well.
- » Submit your blog to blog directories and syndicated submission sites. You can find excellent lists at <https://bloggerspassion.com/blog-submission-sites> and <https://directorist.com/blog/free-rss-feed-submission-sites>.
- » Use your blog roll as a resource — just having a blog roll isn't enough. Contact other bloggers to request a backlink or offer a reciprocal appearance on your blog roll in exchange for a backlink. Just be careful that you don't inadvertently create a link farm. For more on blog roll links, see www.britmums.com/2014/07/blogs-sidebar-blogroll-yet.
- » Get backlinks to your blog with *trackbacks* (an automated way of notifying other bloggers that you've referenced their blog) or by posting comments on other blogs. Not all blogging hosts support trackbacks.
- » Create an XML sitemap and submit it to search engines, just as you would for your website.
- » Use *permalinks* (permanent links) to maintain blog URLs permanently.
- » Use analytics tools to monitor traffic and user behavior.



TIP

If you need quick suggestions for good blog keywords, return to Google's free Keyword Planner, as described in [Chapter 2](#) of this minibook.



TIP If you're an experienced blog writer, your posts are probably already written with one designated search term in mind. Review your top 10 to 15 most-viewed posts, make a list of the keywords you used for them, and use that list as input into the Google Ads Keyword Planner.



TECHNICAL STUFF Long blog pages with a lot of responses, including those from spammers, may end up with too many outbound links. If your blogging platform offers the option, mark it as “No Follow” or ask your programmer to place an HTML `nofollow` attribute in the code just before links from comments to discourage people from leaving fake comments that include links to their own sites in hopes of increasing their own search rankings.

Optimizing WordPress

Although plug-ins for WordPress templates can be set to automatically generate title and page description metatags, you may want to tweak the automated SEO results for important posts. Auto-generation is fine for mundane posts or when you're short on time. For more information on selecting plug-ins, see Book 3, [Chapter 2](#).

For more flexibility and additional optimization features, try the Yoast SEO plug-in at <http://wordpress.org/plugins/wordpress-seo> or the AIO SEO Pack at <https://wordpress.org/plugins/all-in-one-seo-pack>.



TIP Make your WordPress life easier by searching the list of WordPress plug-ins for items you need at <http://wordpress.org/plugins>. Compare plug-ins carefully — they're not all alike.

Here are a few things you can do to optimize your WordPress blog posts:

- » **Swap elements of the blog post title.** Reverse the WordPress plug-in default arrangement by putting the post title first, which contains keywords, followed by the name of your blog.
- » **Use a consistent format for keyword-rich page titles on all pages.** You can set up the format after you're in your template and apply it everywhere by using the Yoast or AIO SEO Pack plug-ins.
- » **Aim for longer content lengths.** All of your posts should be a minimum of 300 words, but the more words you have, the more opportunities you have for utilizing WordPress's SEO features.
- » **Insert a longer title description, with more search terms, into the image title field.** WordPress automatically uses the title you give an image as its `<alt>` tag. Unless you

insert a longer title description with more search terms into the Image Title field, WordPress uses the filename as the image title.

When you write a post and add tags, WordPress automatically adds your tags to its global tag system. The global system determines the WordPress list of hot topics in real time. Users can click any word in the real-time tag cloud to view the most recent posts for that tag.



TIP

Duplicate content can have a negative effect on your SEO efforts. So, how do you avoid getting penalized for it? Read this article on www.greengeeks.com/blog/are-you-being-penalized-by-google-for-duplicate-content.

Optimizing Squarespace

As one of the fee-based platforms, one may reasonably expect that Squarespace would have a few nifty built-in SEO features, and you'd be correct! Some are automatically enabled on all Squarespace sites, whereas others require some input (keywords and so on) from you. Here are some of the SEO-friendly features of Squarespace:

- » Squarespace automatically generates and links a proper sitemap.xml, which lists every URL and image metadata on your site for indexing.
- » All pages on Squarespace sites have static URLs that search engines can easily read and index.
- » All metatags for pages and <link> tags for RSS feeds are automatically generated. Images contain <alt> and <title> tags, for better search engine indexing. Squarespace also adds <alt> tags to image descriptions, and if there is no description, <alt> tags are added to the filename.
- » All Squarespace Domains and third-party domains include free SSL (Secure Socket Layer) certificates when connected and pointing to Squarespace sites. You must enable SSL in your domain's settings, because sites that aren't SSL-secure may be penalized in search engine rankings.
- » In the Settings section of your Squarespace site, enable AMP (Accelerated Mobile Pages) to create lightweight versions of your posts with formatting that loads faster on mobile devices. AMP works with Google to prioritize results in mobile searches.
- » All mobile-friendly Squarespace sites are also search engine friendly. Just make sure you don't disable mobile styles behind the scenes or have so much content on your site that it loads very slowly, which can work against you in search engine rankings!



TIP

Squarespace has a helpful video on optimizing your site for search engines at www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6uMCfw2SbQ.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Wherever your website domain is hosted (for example, GoDaddy or Bluehost) will have self-help documentation on how to enable SSL certificates. When in doubt, contact your webmaster or programmer for assistance.

Optimizing Wix

Wix (www.wix.com) is one of the more popular, free website builders. One of the draws of Wix over other platforms like Blogger is that there are industry-specific templates with “thousands” of drag-and-drop design features you can use to create your site. Wix is arguably one of the easiest blogging platforms to optimize because it has its own SEO helper built right in, aptly named the Wix SEO Assistant. The SEO Assistant provides you with recommendations to help increase the chances of your site attracting visitors from search engines.

- » Utilize the Wix Marketplace (www.wix.com/marketplace) if you’d rather enlist the help of a Wix partner for your website optimization.
- » Use long-tail keywords. The more targeted your keyword, the more you’ll be able to attract the right audience and increase the chances of people finding (and clicking on) your website in the search results.
- » Choose the correct domain name. Make sure it’s not too long, but that it’s easy to remember while still reflecting your brand. Try to use one of your primary keywords in your domain name.
- » Utilize local SEO, especially if you have a brick-and-mortar store. People are more likely to search for *Cupcakes in Denver* to quickly narrow down the search results.
- » Craft unique titles and descriptions on every one of your website’s pages.



TIP

Want to read more about optimizing your Wix site for SEO? Their handy SEO guide gets into even more detail about the ins and outs of search engine optimization (www.wix.com/seo/learn/wix-seo-guide) as well as this blog post for some quick SEO tidbits: www.wix.com/blog/2017/10/12-seo-tips-boost-wix-website.

Assigning permalinks

Because most blogs are created on dynamic, database-driven platforms, their posts don’t have fixed web addresses. Links to individual posts disappear after the posting is archived and no longer available on a page. Obviously, that’s bad news for inbound links and SEO.

Permalinks (short for *permanent links*) solve that problem by assigning a specific web address to each post. Then individual posts can be bookmarked or linked to from elsewhere, forever.

Most blog software programs, such as WordPress and Squarespace, already offer this as an

option; you just have to use it. If your blog doesn't offer it, you can generate permalinks at www.generateit.net/mod-rewrite, although you may need help from your programmer to install them. Try to avoid links that look like this: www.yourblog.com/?p=123. Instead, choose an option to use one or more keywords, such as www.yourblog.com/contests/summer-travel-sweepstakes.

If you prefer to customize your permalinks, use the Permalink option in the Post Settings box. On the page where you're writing a post, click the Settings tab in the right column. Select Permalink from the drop-down menu that appears. Then you can create a URL that's different from your title, which you might want for search term reasons.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

To generate WordPress permalinks, open the Settings option in the Admin panel, which appears in the left navigation. From there, select Permalinks from the second-tier navigation and choose either the Common Structure option or the Custom Permalinks option to enter your own structure. (For example, you might want to insert a category.) For new blogs, that's it; for existing blogs, you may need to use the Redirection plug-in, as well. For more information, see <https://wordpress.org/documentation/article/customize-permalinks>. For directions about creating permalinks on Blogger, visit <https://support.google.com/blogger/answer/41373> and scroll down to the "Rewrite your URLs" section.

Optimizing Images, Video, and Podcasts

Because search engines can't directly parse the contents of multimedia, you must take advantage of all opportunities to use your relevant search terms in every metatag, descriptive field, or <alt> tag. You can find more about podcasts and video in Book 3, [Chapter 3](#).

Make these fields as keyword- and content-rich as you can. In these elements, you can often use existing keyword research, metatags from your website or blog, or optimized text that you've already created:

- » **Title and <title> tag for your content:** This catchy name should include a search term.
- » **Filenames:** Using names such as *image1234.jpg* or *podcast1.mp3* doesn't help with SEO; names such as *PlushBrownTeddyBear.jpg* or *tabbycats-sing-jingle-bells.mp3* are much more helpful. Use terms also in category or directory names.
- » **Tags:** Use relevant keywords, just as you would with other social media.
- » **<alt> tags:** Use these tags for a short description with a search term; for example, *Used cat tree for sale*.
- » **Long description metatags:** Follow this example: *longdesc=for sale-gently used, gray, carpeted 6 foot cat tree with 4 platforms*.

- » **Content:** Surround multimedia elements with keyword-rich, descriptive content, especially in caption fields.
- » **Transcriptions:** Transcribe and post a short excerpt from a keyword-loaded portion of your video or podcast.
- » **Anchor text:** Use keywords in the text link that opens your multimedia file.
- » **Large images:** Upload large versions, as well as the thumbnails that are visible on your blog or website.
- » **RSS and XML:** Expand your reach with media RSS and sitemaps.

For more information on indexing multimedia, see

<https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/google-images>.

Optimizing Specific Social Media Platforms

Each social media platform offers specific opportunities to optimize content for internal and external searching. They all share one thing in common: a section for a company profile. Profiles offer a rich opportunity for external SEO; they are invariably searched by Google and Bing. Let's take a look at optimizing major social media platforms one by one.

Optimizing X

In addition to adhering to the standard admonishments about providing good content and using well-researched keywords, you can follow a few extra guidelines to improve search results on both internal X searches and on external searches:

- » **Your name on X acts like a <title> tag.** If you want to benefit from branding and to rank on your own or your company name, you have to use it! If you haven't already done this, log in to your X account, click Profile in the bottom left sidebar, and then click the Edit Profile button underneath your header image. Then change your name.
Your username, or X *handle*, should relate to your brand, company name, or campaign and be easy to remember. It can include a keyword or topic area.
- » **Pack your one-line bio with keywords.** Your X bio serves as the page <description> metatag and is limited to 160 characters. Use resume-style language and include some of your primary search terms. Talk about yourself or your company in the third person.
Click on the Profile link in the left-hand menu, then click the Edit Profile button underneath your header image. Here you can edit your profile photo, header graphic, name, business description, location, and website URL. Remember to click the Save button when you finish.
- » **On your profile page, use your business address as your location.** Doing so helps with local searches. Remember to save your changes.
- » **Brand your X cover (header) image.** Use your standard business logo, logotype, or a photo showing one of your products or services, resized to the current cover dimensions of 1500 x 500 pixels.

- » **Include keywords and hashtags in your posts and reposts whenever possible.** That way, you offer search engines more than a time stamp. With its 280-character limit on text, X might be a good place to use those single-word terms. Use keywords in your X hashtags, too.



REMEMBER X no longer counts multimedia attachments, links, quoted posts, or @names against the 280-character limit on posts.

- » **Remember the importance of the initial 42 characters of a post.** They serve as the <title> tag for that specific post. Search engines will index the full post, however, and X will include the entire post in the <title> tag if users click on an individual post.
- » **Format your reposts.** Because a quoted post doesn't count against your character limit, you probably want to keep the original post intact. Use the Repost button to paste the content into a new post box. Add the letters RT and the @username of the original author. However, you can insert your comment as long as it's less than 280 characters. Finally, click Post to post the repost.
- » **Maximize reposts as a measure of popularity.** Write interesting content or share good articles, especially when the direct link to detailed content goes to your own site.
- » **Increase your visibility.** When linking to your X profile from other sites, use your name or company name rather than your X handle as the anchor text for the link. (Search engines don't handle well the @ in a X handle; for example, @watermelonweb.) If you happen to have a post with great keywords and hashtags, you can pin your post to the top of your timeline.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Because X adds a nofollow attribute to links placed by users, linking to your site from X won't help your ranking on search results pages. Truncated URLs (such as the TinyURLs described in [Chapter 1](#) of this minibook) behave just like their longer-version cousins because they're permanent redirects.

Links from X boost branding and drive traffic to your site. It's all one giant loop. For more information on X, see [Book 4](#).

Optimizing Facebook

Take advantage of myriad opportunities to gain traffic from your Facebook pages by applying optimization techniques. Next to blogs, Facebook pages offer the highest number of opportunities to use SEO on social media to reach people who don't already know you. Fortunately, Facebook search engines can index all shared content on Facebook.



REMEMBER Every social network has different rules for its account names and profiles. Although

consistency is preferable for branding, follow the rules carefully. When you first create a Facebook page for your business, as described in [Book 5](#), try these techniques:

- » Use an easy-to-remember version of your business name alone or combined with a search term as your business's Facebook page name. If possible, use the same username on all social networks for branding reasons. Facebook doesn't like generic names.
- » Aim to include your top 3 keywords in the 255-character bio section.
- » In the Website field on the About page, enter your primary domain name. In the description box, list all your other relevant domain names, including other websites, your blog, and other social media pages. Later, you can also place links to your website or blog or another type of social media in your posts. Generally, it's easier to use the actual URL than to implement anchor text.
- » Place keyword-loaded content in the first paragraph of each of the remaining boxes under About Us. The boxes may vary depending on the type of page you elected to create. Include your contact information in the Contact and Basic Info box; address information also helps with local searches. Your page <description> metatag may work well in the Details About box because it's already optimized for search terms. Try to include your site URL and be sure to include all your brand names and all the products or services that you offer.

For more information on creating a Facebook account and business pages, see [Book 5](#).

Optimizing Instagram

Not surprisingly, the rules for optimizing Instagram are similar to those of other social media sites, which means your profile is where you do the optimization. Keep in mind that Instagram, like sites such as Facebook, X, and Pinterest, are search engines in and of themselves. It's not all about optimizing for Google; you should be keeping in mind these search options as well.



REMEMBER Because Google doesn't index images, to get the most bang for your social media buck, you have to make sure you're *really* paying attention to what you're using in all the places where you can put words.

To maximize your search engine visibility on Instagram, I recommend the following:

- » Sign up for an Instagram business account. Doing so gives you access to different features than a personal account (see Book 7, [Chapter 3](#)).
- » Make sure you're using your top keyword in your username and primary name.
- » Put your secondary keywords in your bio.
- » Post often because the more you post, the more opportunities to use the rest of these SEO tips! Aim for two to four times a day, every day.
- » Stay on top of the analytics so you know what type of content is performing the best and

replicate that as best as you can. The better your content is performing, the more likely it's going to show up in search results.



REMEMBER You should be keeping a regular eye on the analytics for all of your social media accounts.

- » Optimize the first 45 to 50 characters of your posts. They become the post's page title in Google search results; in other words, include one of your prized search terms.
- » Hashtag those keywords in all your captions (see [Figure 3-1](#)) or put them as the first comment.
- » Use the Alt text option. On the same page where you enter your caption, tap the Advanced Settings link all the way at the bottom and tap the Write Alt Text link. It's an accessibility feature that visually impaired people use to "see" your photo, as well as helping the Instagram algorithm to organize content.

For more suggestions on optimizing Instagram, see <https://keyhole.co/blog/instagram-seo-tips> or <https://searchengineland.com/7-mistakes-to-avoid-when-optimizing-your-instagram-account-for-seo-328937>.



FIGURE 3-1: Field and Main, a restaurant in Marshall, Virginia, includes relevant hashtags in every caption.

Optimizing Pinterest

With its visual content, Pinterest is perhaps the most challenging social media option to optimize for search engines. Start by creating a business account or converting your personal one at www.pinterest.com/business/create, as described in Book 7, [Chapter 1](#). Then take advantage of several tried-and-true techniques to give your Pinterest site some search oomph:

- » Verify your website by clicking the Verify Website button next to the Website Text field. Follow the directions in the pop-up window so that your site will show up on profile and search results. For more details, see www.pinterest.com/settings.
- » Optimize your username or business profile name or both to include your company name and a search term describing what you sell or what business category you're in (unless

you're a well-known brand). For example, instead of listing only *Pretty Puppy*, use *Pretty Puppy Play Clothes for Puppies*.

- » Use your four most important search terms and your page <description> metatag in the About You section of your company profile (under Settings).
- » Optimize for local search by including your city, state, and zip code in the Location field of the profile. Of course, include the URL for your website or blog or both in the Website field.
- » Use a descriptive filename that includes a keyword for each of the images you Pin from your website or blog. The source link for each image will go back to your website or blog to increase your inbound links and drive traffic to specific pages. If you have optimized images on other photo-sharing sites, you can use that URL as the image source for a Pin.
- » Include keywords in the title *and* description for each board and Pin, whether the boards are employee headshots, photos of your company at trade shows, or images also used on your blog. For local optimization, include your city. You might want to structure boards by customer type, product, service, or brand name to maximize the search terms you use. Just remember to keep your descriptions captivating. They need to be more than a collection of search terms to engage Pinners.
- » If you create data charts or infographics, be sure to include keywords in the title for your charts or graphics. (Try the infographics tool at <http://piktochart.com>, which offers a limited free account.)
- » Remember to add the linkable Pinterest icon and link to your suite of social media buttons on your website, blogs, and other social media pages.

For more ideas, visit <https://neilpatel.com/blog/pinterest-seo>.



WARNING Use only images you own or have permission to use on Pinterest. You're liable for any copyright infringement. Respect the use of any credit lines required by Creative Commons or the owner of the image.

Like with other social media, Pinterest is a back-scratching site — you like me, and I'll like you. To increase traffic to your Pinterest posts (and eventually to your website), follow other Pinterest users and boards related to your company, re-pin relevant images, and click their Like buttons.



TIP Pinterest offers a great tool called *Rich Pins*, which allow you to incorporate additional information on the Pin itself. There are Rich Pins for movies, recipes, articles, apps, places, and products. Rich Pins are also how you sell items using Pinterest. For more about Rich Pins, visit <https://business.pinterest.com/getting-started/#pin-formats> or

<https://help.pinterest.com/en/business/article/rich-pins>.

Since its inception as a visual scrapbooking network, Pinterest has evolved into a visual search engine for the millions of competing images found on its own site. (Compare to Google Image Search.) As with every search engine, you can take advantage of certain techniques to help Pinterest users discover your Pins among the wealth of images. For details on on-site optimization, see www.rankwatch.com/blog/pinterest-for-seo-content-marketing.

For more information on creating and using Pinterest for marketing, see Book 7, [Chapter 1](#).

Optimizing LinkedIn

LinkedIn (discussed in [Book 6](#)) doesn't offer quite as many options for SEO as other forms of social media. Start by including search terms in your profile text, in the descriptions of any LinkedIn groups you start, and in postings to a group. Just keep it gentle and unobtrusive. Follow these steps to optimize your profile and to pass along some SEO credibility:

- » Use your name or company name in your LinkedIn URL (<http://www.linkedin.com/in/yourcompanyname>). Because search engines look at keywords in URLs, this technique makes your company easier to find.
- » Use your primary keywords in your tagline (the line of text underneath your profile banner).
- » LinkedIn's company pages are a bountiful gift for SEO. Google displays up to the first 156 characters of the text on a company page. Therefore, you can use content similar to your page <description> metatag within the first paragraph of your LinkedIn profile. It should already be loaded with some of your primary search terms.
- » Craft an "About" section that uses relevant keywords.
- » Fill out as many sections of your page as you can. Under the Edit Page section (in the left sidebar of your Page's Admin dashboard), you can see a number of options to edit including relevant keywords (called "Specialties") to associate with your company. This means even more real estate to utilize your keywords (see [Figure 3-2](#)).
- » Like links from X, links from LinkedIn to other sites don't carry link juice. You can include one website link on your page, so be sure to use your company's website (if you have one). If you don't have a website, use your blog or another social media network username.
- » For successful search results within LinkedIn, make it easy for LinkedIn members to search for companies like yours. Be sure your description includes search terms for your business, industry sector, experience, and expertise.

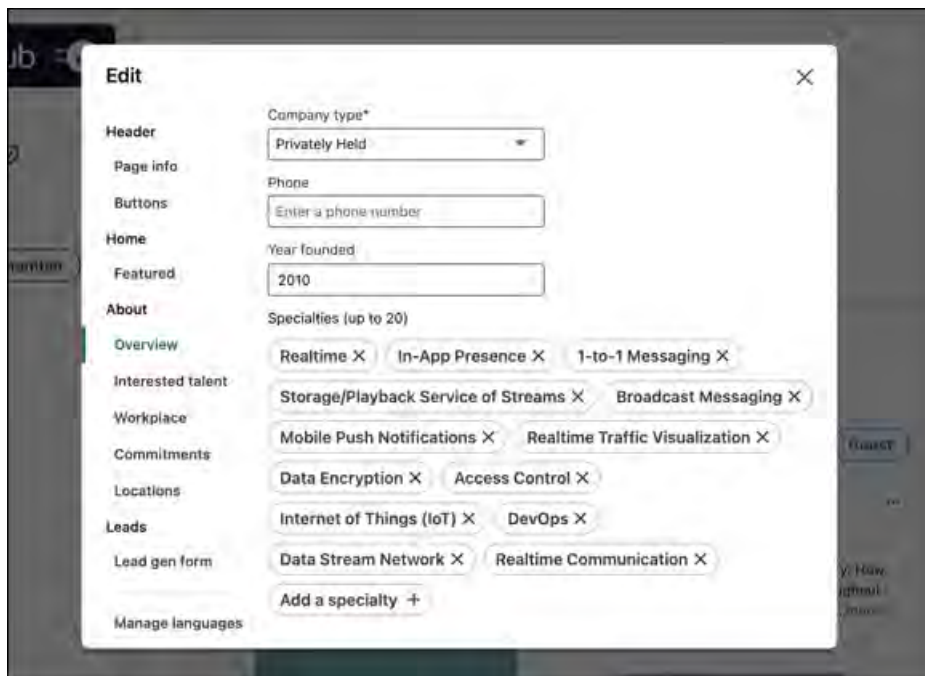


FIGURE 3-2: The “Specialties” you select for your LinkedIn Business page help people find you.

For more optimization ideas, see <https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/linkedin-pages/best-practices> or <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/linkedin-company-pages>.

Optimizing YouTube

YouTube is similar to Instagram in the sense that it’s a visual platform, which means that you have to make good use of the word real estate that you’re given.

To ensure the search engines are paying attention to your YouTube content, I recommend the following:

- » Always tag your videos with related keywords. It doesn’t only have to be your primary and secondary keywords — even words that are loosely related can help.



WARNING Don’t use a bunch of random words hoping that someone will stumble upon your content and love it. For example, if you’re a cupcake bakery, you can use related keywords like “baked goods” or “desserts,” *not* “motorcycles” or “election coverage.”

- » Use your primary keyword(s) in the title of your video. Keep them short (between 60 and 70 characters) with the most important information up front.
- » Change the video’s filename to something descriptive.
- » You have 5000 characters for your video description, but I don’t recommend using all 5000! Make your most descriptive, SEO-rich copy between 200 to 300 words, making sure you include your primary keywords at the beginning because YouTube displays only

the first 100 characters or so. You can write more to fit in more keywords (remember not to keyword stuff!), but consider adding bullets or other formatting to make it easier to read.



TIP

If you're including a call to action (CTA) or other link, consider putting it towards the beginning of your description so users don't get lost in the shuffle.

- » Spread the word! One of the factors that goes into how search engines (especially Google, who owns YouTube) operate is viewership, of course. In other words, when people watch your videos, they'll start to rank better. That's easier said than done, though, when 500 *hours* of video are uploaded to YouTube *per minute*!

That's why you should not only promote your YouTube Channel on all your other social media accounts, but also specific videos. Consider embedding videos in blog posts or upload "behind-the-scenes" videos from your office because they're quick and inexpensive to make.

For more information on how to optimize YouTube, HubSpot's guide is a great resource and you can find it here: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/youtube-seo> or Search Engine Watch's YouTube Optimization Guide, which is here:

www.searchenginewatch.com/2019/02/04/youtube-optimization-guide.

Optimizing TikTok

TikTok SEO is all about ensuring that your content not only ranks high in TikTok search results, but on search engines, too. The TikTok algorithm takes into consideration various factors, like keyword usage, content quality, and user interactions. Follow these steps to spruce up your profile and to fight your way to the top of the heap:

- » Make sure you're paying attention to how your audience is behaving on the platform. What hashtags are they using? What accounts are they following? What types of content are they engaging with the most? What types of comments are they leaving? Becoming familiar with how your audience interacts with the accounts they love allows you to write better titles and descriptions for your videos, making them easier to find in TikTok and Google searches.
- » Add your primary keywords to your content in the titles, descriptions, and captions of your videos. This includes any spoken or onscreen text, like lyrics or explanations!
- » Encourage people to comment on your content and be sure to return the favor and comment on theirs. TikTok's algorithm considers video engagement when it's serving up search results.
- » Use your most relevant keywords in your TikTok profile, and don't be afraid to make them into #hashtags directly within the #profile so you can kill two #birds with one #stone!

Optimizing Snapchat

Like TikTok, Snapchat (discussed in [Book 7](#)) is pretty limited in what you can optimize as far as SEO goes, simply because it's a visual platform. But that doesn't mean you can't get any bang for your Snapchat buck, though! Where it lacks in places to slip in keywords, Snapchat makes up for it in driving traffic to your website — which will in turn help your search engine rankings. See how that works? Here are some tips to get your Snapchat into shape for the search engine gods:

- » Knowing what types of content your audience likes goes a long way on social media, but especially on Snapchat, whose audience tends to lean towards the Gen Z (12–27) age range. Use clear and catchy captions and hashtags and include a call to action or link to your website.
- » Use Snapchat to interact with your audience by asking questions, soliciting feedback, or launching polls and quizzes. The more you connect with your audience, the greater your brand awareness will become because you'll increase your authority and gain their trust and loyalty, all of which can lead to more organic traffic and referrals to your website.
- » Add a swipe-up link to your snaps and stories or create a Snapcode that links to your website.
- » Use your keywords in all captions and onscreen text. Be sure to add relevant hashtags to each post, making it easier for people to find your content.

Gaining Traction on Google with Social Media

Sigh. Nothing ever stands still in the social whirl — or maybe social tornado is a better description.

Google doesn't evaluate engagement on any social media platforms. It is aware of inbound links and search terms that appear in posts and profiles. Take action based on this information:

- » **Post early, post often.** Real-time search creates pressure to update frequently on social media so that you can stay near the top of the results stream. Multiple recent posts can tip the scale in your favor. Schedule times on your Social Media Activity Calendar (see Book 1, [Chapter 4](#)) to post to your blog, add to your Facebook timeline, or send tweets at least twice a day. Use management tools like those described in Book 1, [Chapter 4](#) to make this process easier.
- » **Share and share alike.** Post a lot of appealing, keyword-rich content on social media, and explicitly invite others to link to it. Good content on social media may draw a lot of likes, but the number of links to that content pushes up search results.
- » **Pin your hopes to Pinterest.** The Google spider crawls Pinterest Pins and boards, looking for relevant keywords in descriptions. Use hashtag keywords for each Pin for extra SEO-oom-pa-pa.



TIP

Think about which messages are truly time-critical and save your real-time efforts for them. On your Social Media Activity Calendar, enter the times that you expect your target market might be searching, such as first thing in the morning or right before lunch.



TIP

Get some sleep! There's no point tweeting in the middle of the night when your customers are in bed (unless you're selling to insomniacs or international customers halfway around the world). Your tweets may be long buried by tweets from dozens — if not hundreds — of others by the time the sun rises. Better yet, schedule your tweets ahead of time with Hootsuite, Buffer, or other dashboard tools for specific social media channels.

Monitoring Your Search Engine Ranking

If you're serious about SEO, you'll want to monitor how well you're doing. [Table 3-1](#) lists some search engine ranking software that shows where your site appears on search engines by keyword or page. Most ranking software carries a charge, but some offer a free trial or will rank a limited number of pages, keywords, or engines for free.

TABLE 3-1 Search Engine Ranking Services

Name	URL	Starting Price
CheckMoz	www.checkmoz.com	Free bulk moz rank checker
mozRank Pro Checker	https://moz.com/tools/rank-tracker	Free 30-day trial; starts at \$49/month for one site
Rank Tracker	www.link-assistant.com/rank-tracker	Free version; licenses \$600–\$1400/year
Search Engine Rankings	www.mikes-marketing-tools.com/ranking-reports	Free
SERank	www.ragesw.com/products/search-engine-rank.html	\$50–\$100 (other tools also available)

SEO is a long-term strategy to deliver solid traffic over time to your hub website or blog. It takes time for your investment in SEO to pay off, and results can vary unpredictably from one week or month to the next. Generally, after you have everything set up and running smoothly, monitoring once per quarter should be enough, except for exceptionally large and constantly growing sites.



REMEMBER

Enter your preferred SEO tools in your Social Media Marketing Plan and insert the tasks into your Social Media Activity Calendar.

Chapter 4

Using Social Bookmarks, News, and Share Buttons

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Differentiating between social bookmarks and social news
 - » Submitting to social-bookmarking sites
 - » Submitting to social news sites
 - » Using social share buttons
-

Social bookmarks and social news services are essentially peer-to-peer referral networks. Each one is an expansion of the former tell-a-friend call to action. Rather than email a link to a site or some content to one or two people, users can notify many people at a time. Advocates of these recommendation services often argue that they filter the avalanche of websites that appear in standard search engines. Because social bookmarks and social news services rely on popular input from real people, rather than from algorithms, some Internet users place a greater value on these search results.

Hundreds of these services exist, which you can see on www.tutorialmines.net/social-bookmarking-sites. This chapter discusses the benefits of using these services, including higher search engine ranking, more traffic, and free visibility for minimal effort. It also emphasizes using share buttons to encourage viral sharing of social media and website content.



TIP Search engines recognize inbound links from many (but not all) of these services, so appearing on them can improve your search engine ranking. See [Chapters 2](#) and [3](#) of this minibook for more information on search engine optimization.

Bookmarking Your Way to Traffic

You most likely already know how to bookmark sites in a browser. Social-bookmarking services work in much the same way, but you save bookmarks to a *public* website rather than to an individual computer. Then, users of bookmarking services can easily share links to their favorite sites and can easily share content with friends or colleagues (or with the world) while enjoying convenient access to their own bookmarks from any browser, anywhere.

Social bookmarks act as testimonials from one amorphous group of web users to many others. Bookmarking services, such as Mix.com (shown in [Figure 4-1](#)) and Pocket

(<https://getpocket.com/home>), recommend websites, blogs, videos, products, or content. At [Mix.com](https://mix.com), among other things, users can view bookmarks from their own list of favorites, friends' favorites, or everyone in the [Mix.com](https://mix.com) database of submitters. Several subsets of bookmarking services are specific to certain applications (blogs only, for example) or activities (shopping only, for example).

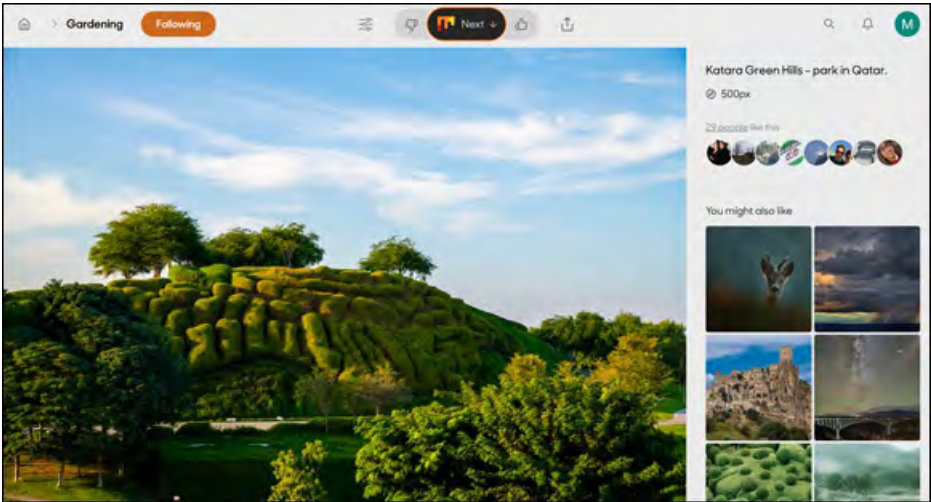


FIGURE 4-1: Use bookmarking services such as [Mix.com](https://mix.com) to recommend content.



REMEMBER Participating in social bookmarking is a no-brainer. Even if you do no other social media marketing, you should submit your site to several social-bookmarking services, if they permit it, as part of your search engine optimization (SEO) efforts. Note that some services may not permit direct submission but will allow you to include a badge on your site to encourage your viewers to submit the site.

Users generally search for listings by *tag* (keyword), category, most recent, most popular, or individual submitter. Bookmarking services rank items by the number of people who have cited them.

[Table 4-1](#) lists some of the dozens of popular social-bookmarking services and shows whether you're allowed to submit your own site. The Passes Link Juice column indicates whether search engines recognize a link from that service, as discussed in Book 2, [Chapter 2](#).

TABLE 4-1 Popular Social-Bookmarking Services

Name	URL	Allows Self-Submission	Passes Link Juice
Pocket	https://getpocket.com	Yes	No
FolkD	http://www.folkd.com	Yes	No
Linkroll	www.linkroll.com	Yes	No
Mix.com	www.Mix.com	No	Yes
Yahoo! Toolbar	https://help.yahoo.com/kb/SLN27821.html	No	Yes



TECHNICAL
STUFF

The visibility of your website on search engines improves when you have inbound links from a site that already has a high ranking in search results, but only if it passes link juice. Search the site's source code to see whether it contains a <nofollow> tag. Sites with a <nofollow> tag do not pass link juice. Without that tag, links follow by default.

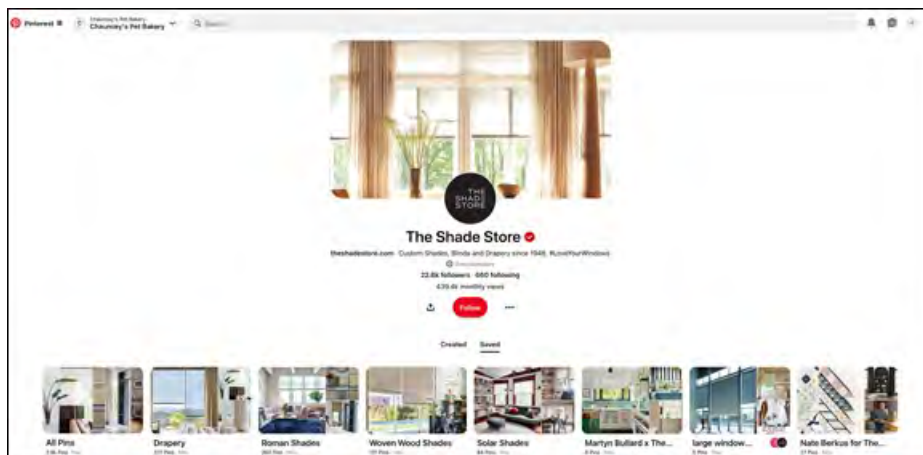


TIP

You can find more information about the sites in this list and helpful lists of more social media bookmarking and other platforms at www.ebizmba.com/articles/social-bookmarking-websites or <https://directorist.com/blog/free-dofollow-social-bookmarking-site>.

Later in this chapter, I discuss how to research bookmarking services, decide which ones to use, and then submit a site.

Pinterest, the online-scrapbooking site, functions in many ways as a meta-bookmarking site. (For more information on Pinterest, see Book 7, [Chapter 1](#).) The site attracts huge audiences and drives traffic to commercial websites, especially in the areas of weddings, home décor, women's apparel, cooking, do-it-yourself, and shopping. The Shade Store, a custom window treatment firm, is an example of a company using Pinterest (see [Figure 4-2](#)).



Courtesy of the Shade Store

FIGURE 4-2: At Pinterest, companies can use different boards (categories) of images (Pins) based on product lines and users' interests.

By Q3 2024, Pinterest surpassed 522 million monthly active users, with 57 percent of Pinterest users accessing the platform at least once a week. According to Sprout Social (<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/pinterest-statistics>), the demographics are a retailer's dream: Although the number of men using Pinterest is increasing, about 76 percent of users are women, and Charle (www.charleagency.com/articles/pinterest-statistics) states that 83 percent use it to make shopping and purchasing decisions.



TIP Traffic has skyrocketed for vendors specializing in home, lifestyle, apparel, food, and weddings, as users follow Pins back to their source. If these are your target markets, start Pinning!

Sharing the News

In comparison with social-bookmarking services, social news services such as Reddit and Digg (shown in [Figure 4-3](#)) point to time-sensitive individual postings and articles. Whereas bookmarking services look at sites without reference to timeliness, social *news* services focus on what's news now.

Users can recommend dozens of different content pages on a particular website to a social news service, quickly driving significant amounts of traffic to the originating site. Many social news services rely on users to vote on submissions, with more popular results appearing on the service's front page. Unlike bookmarks, social news services aren't designed to share a list of recommendations with friends.

[Figure 4-3](#) shows recently posted popular articles in the Popular channel on Digg. Although most entries link to standard news sources, business press releases and even special offers may appear.

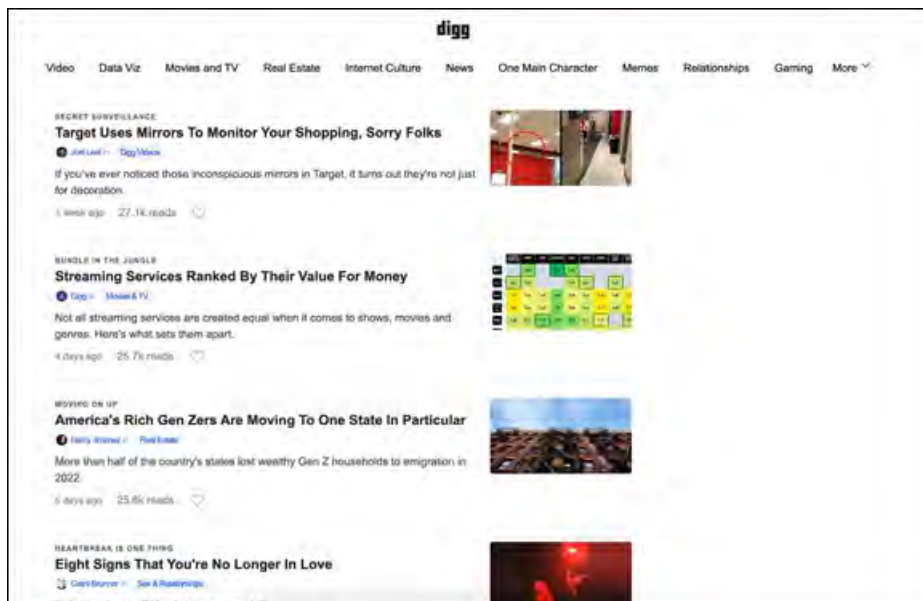


FIGURE 4-3: Digg shows links to individual articles submitted by hundreds of thousands of Internet readers.



REMEMBER Peer-based recommendations aren't always golden. Because they reflect whoever randomly happens to have posted, these posts may be volatile, biased, and

nonrepresentative. They certainly don't reflect scientific results. In fact, you may find some recommended articles shocking or disgusting. Watch the articles that appear for a few days to be sure you feel comfortable with the quality of what people recommend.

[Table 4-2](#) lists some popular social news sites and whether you can submit your own site or press releases. The Passes Link Juice column indicates whether search engines recognize a link from that service.

TABLE 4-2 Popular Social News Services

Name	URL	Uses Popularity Voting	Allows Self-Submission	Allows Press Releases	Passes Link Juice
Digg	www.digg.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fark	www.fark.com	No	Yes	Yes	No
MetaFilter	www.metafilter.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reddit	www.reddit.com	Yes	Yes, but not often	Yes	No
Slashdot	www.slashdot.org	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Benefiting from Social Bookmarks and News Services

Social bookmarks and news services offer multiple benefits. To start with, they're free, which is quickly becoming unusual in the social media world. Free is always a positive factor for online guerrilla marketers. In addition, you may benefit in many other ways by using these services:

- » **Improved search engine ranking:** By using your primary search terms in tags and other elements of your submissions, you may improve your overall web presence in general search engines. The appearance of your content on these services supplements your own site in general search results.
- » **Increased inbound links:** Inbound links from social-bookmarking and social news services may dramatically improve your position on search engine results pages, as well as deliver visitors directly to your site.
- » **Increased brand visibility and traffic:** The more people who see your website or content listed on one of these services, the more people will remember your name and visit your site. Like many other social-marketing techniques, bookmarks and news services help fill the conversion funnel.
- » **Increased readership and membership:** If you're a writer, pundit, professional speaker, or consultant, these services can be extraordinarily valuable. After you establish a reputation on a service, you may find that you have loyal followers, as well as many new readers, subscribers, clients, and speaking gigs.
- » **Increased earnings:** You can consider people who visit your URL from social-bookmarking and social news services as prequalified prospects, pushing them farther

down the funnel toward likely buyer status. Be sure that your site validates the ratings it has earned, though.

- » **Triggered more influencers:** Many online influencers watch social-bookmarking and social news services to spot trends and decide whether to mention a site or an article in their own blogs or tweets. Of course, submissions by these influential people carry additional value in the eyes of their followers.



REMEMBER Monitor comments about your site to confirm that recommended pages, content, or products continue to appear and that links still work. Visitors shouldn't see 404 File Not Found messages.

Your task is to ensure that your business is listed in the appropriate services and shows up near the top of results. Always review a potential social news service to check that it's not just a spam aggregator, to make sure that postings are recent, to see what's permitted in its Terms of Use, and to discover how it ranks on Google. Sounds a lot like the process of finding inbound links in [Chapter 2](#) of this minibook, doesn't it?

The following sections talk about researching social news services, selecting the right ones for your business, and submitting to them.



TIP For more social news sites, check out www.seoaimpoint.com/top-social-bookmarking-sites-list.php and <http://newinternetorder.com/get-backlinks-social-news-sites>.

Researching a Social Bookmark and Social News Campaign

Listing your website, blog, or content initially is easy. You, or others, can post your site on as many services as you want. Being listed high in the rankings is a more difficult task, though.



WARNING Check the Terms of Use on these services; in some cases, you can't submit your own site or content. Many news services have more constraints on the voting process than on submissions.

Here's how to post your site to the right services:

1. Research appropriate social-bookmarking and social news services.

For an overview, try Quantcast to review the user base, demographics, and traffic statistics for each prospective service. You can check sites such as Upstrack

(<https://upstract.com>) for the most popular daily headlines on the Internet. Generally, you're looking for services that

- Receive a lot of traffic
- Specialize in your market niche
- Attract your target market

2. Visit each site to confirm that it fits your needs and attracts your audience.

To understand more about the kinds of people who use a particular service, look at other top sites bookmarked in your category or the content rated most favorably. Are the businesses and articles complementary to yours? To your competitors? Are the users of each service likely to try the products or services you offer?



TIP You can sometimes tell whether an audience might be receptive to your offerings by looking at who's paying for ads on particular pages.

3. Sort by the names who submitted postings to see which individuals or companies are responsible for most of the public listings.

Don't be surprised if the results follow the 80/20 rule: 80 percent of posts will come from 20 percent of users. The top ten submitters are likely to be the influencers on that service.

Executing your plan

Because a distinct effort is involved in recruiting other people to submit your site to social-bookmarking and social news services, select just a few services from your research to begin. Start with the popular ones listed in [Tables 4-1](#) or [4-2](#) to see whether readers will vote for your content or repost your links on smaller services, saving you the effort.

Some groupthink takes place on these services. If you have a popular post on Digg, for example, someone may copy it to Reddit or [Mix.com](#) for you. Some services display a list of icons above every story for readers to share elsewhere.

Most users select only one social-bookmarking service because they want only one place for their own favorites. That behavior complicates your task because you may need to submit to multiple services to obtain broad coverage. Strive for a realistic balance between coverage and the level of effort you can commit. If you're short of time, don't worry. Start small — you can always do another campaign later.

After you select your list of appropriate services, write them into your Social Media Marketing Plan (found in Book 1, [Chapter 3](#)) with a schedule for regular postings and review. Then create an account and a profile, if appropriate, for each selected service. Finally, submit the URLs for your site (or sites) or content, as appropriate. Your schedule will probably reflect

- » An initial mix of multiple one-time submissions to social-bookmarking services
- » Regular, repeat submissions to one or two social news services, within the constraints of

their Terms of Use

- » Occasional additions to your social bookmarks
- » Regular monitoring of links to your site and mentions in the cybersocial whirl



WARNING Watch for scam services offering hundreds of automated social bookmark submissions. You don't need hundreds, any more than you need hundreds of search engines. Besides, you could end up blacklisted for using sites such as SocialAdr.



TIP Many services offer a toolbar add-in to help users easily submit sites or content whenever they find something they like. You might find it handy to install toolbar add-ins for the specific services you expect to use regularly. Better yet, install a share button (see the section “[Using Social Media Buttons](#),” later in this chapter) on your site and use the button to access your suite of accounts.

Monitoring results

As I discuss in [Book 9](#), you always need to monitor the results of all your marketing techniques. Watch traffic statistics to identify which services produce the most referrals and when you see spikes in traffic. Stick with the services that become good referrers, of course — especially if they eventually lead to qualified prospects and sales. Replace the ones that don't work.

Consider trying a tool designed for monitoring appearances on social-bookmarking and social news sites, including when others have recommended or rated you. You can use these monitoring tools to assess these elements:

- » The success of your social-bookmarking and social news campaign
- » The efficacy of one posting compared with another
- » The unauthorized use of trademarks
- » The effectiveness of a specific press release or sales promotion
- » The appearances of your competitors on social bookmarks and news services

Book 2, [Chapter 1](#) discusses multiple tools for monitoring mentions of your business or website on social networks and blogs. Many of those tools also monitor bookmarking and news services. You might also want to try

- » **AllTop** (www.alltop.com): Collects current headlines and lead paragraphs from websites and blogs and sorts by topic
- » **BuzzFeed** (www.buzzfeed.com): Monitors hot stuff online to share
- » **Upstrack** (upstrack.com): Aggregates current headlines from the most popular sites on

the Internet

- » **Social Searcher** (www.social-searcher.com): A free topic search for multiple social media sites

Submitting to Bookmarking Services

Consider submitting URLs to bookmarking services from a personal, rather than business, address or have friends or employees use their personal email addresses as the submission source. Use neutral, non-promotional language in any comment or review. [Figure 4-4](#) shows how to submit a site to FolkD, a popular social-bookmarking service. Submitting to social-bookmarking services is usually very simple: Create an account and submit a URL with a brief description.

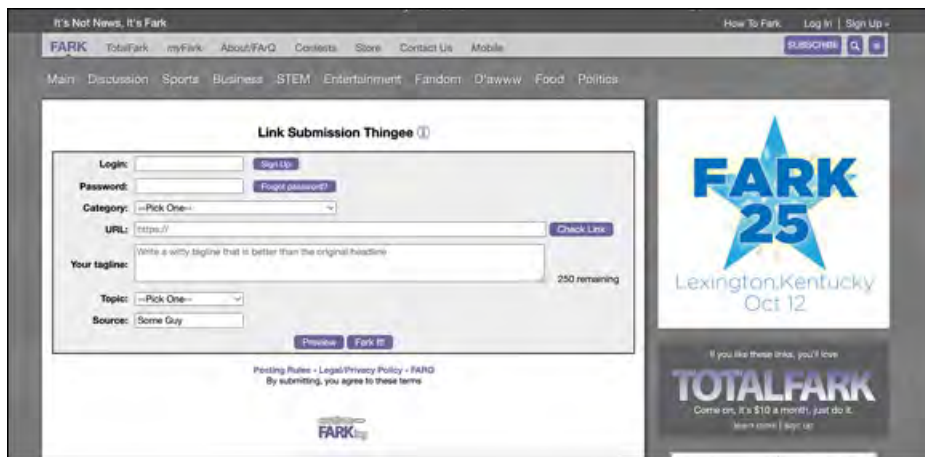
The image shows a screenshot of the FolkD website's submission form, titled "Link Submission Thingee". The form is located on the left side of the page. It includes fields for "Login:", "Password:", "Category:" (a dropdown menu), "URL:" (with a "Check Link" button), "Your tagline:" (with a note "Write a witty tagline that is better than the original headline" and a "250 remaining" counter), "Topic:" (a dropdown menu), and "Source:" (a text field). There are "Preview" and "Fark It!" buttons at the bottom of the form. To the right of the form is a large blue star graphic with "FARK 25" and "Lexington, Kentucky Oct 12" text. Below the star is a "TOTALFARK" banner with the text "Come on, it's \$10 a month, just do it." and "Learn more | Sign up". The top of the page has a navigation bar with links like "TotalFark", "myFark", "About/FAQ", "Contents", "Store", "Contact Us", and "Mobile". There are also "Log In" and "Sign Up" links in the top right corner.

FIGURE 4-4: A submission to FolkD, the social-bookmarking service.

Try to use appropriate search terms in category names, tags, text, or titles when you submit your site. Select terms that searchers are particularly likely to use. Generally, you can find those terms in traffic statistics for your website or in *tag clouds* (a graphic display of search terms that appear in an article, with the most-frequently used terms appearing in a large font) from the target service. (Read about tag clouds in Book 2, [Chapter 2](#).) Enter your site in as many categories as possible.

If you have separate domain names or subdomains for your blog or community site, submit a few of them as bookmarks, along with your primary website, as long as the number is reasonable (say, less than six). You can also post social bookmarks to where links are permitted on Facebook, LinkedIn, or other social-networking pages to further enhance your visibility. Just don't personally submit too many of your own pages to one bookmarking site lest you become marked as a spammer.



WARNING Be discreet. Don't spam social-bookmarking or news services with multiple frequent submissions. Although you can organize a few submissions from others to get the ball

rolling, don't set up multiple accounts per user on a social news service to vote for yourself or use automated submitters, which not only might have malware but also might be prohibited. Like regular search engines, these social services act aggressively to detect and blacklist spammers. Read the Terms of Use on every site if you have questions.

Submitting to Social News Services

Think of social news services as peer-reviewed indexes to short-term, contemporary articles, whereas social bookmarks are more useful for longer-term content. Submitting frequently to social news services is not only acceptable but also practically obligatory, particularly if your site generates news within a particular industry or geographical region or if your livelihood is content dependent. Generally, with most social news services, you must create an account first and then submit content.

Because users are in and out of these services often, you always need new content to catch their attention. These users prefer peer-recommended stories versus ones selected by staff editors or that appear in an unfiltered syndicated feed from other sources.

People who view your content are asked to vote stories up or down and are often given an opportunity to comment, as well. You generally need to create an account to post, vote, or comment on stories, but anyone can read the listings.

Always select appropriate categories for your material, such as technology, world news, politics, business, entertainment, lifestyle, or environment. Avoid vague categories such as general, other, or miscellaneous — they're deep, dark pits from which your content may never escape!



TIP

On Reddit, you can create niche subject communities called *subreddits*. Subreddits, which have their own rules and must be approved by a moderator, offer the opportunity to maximize attention for your business area. There are 50 default subreddits and more than 10,000 others, plus local subreddits. For more information, see <https://nealschaffer.com/subreddit>, or www.reddit.com/r/help/comments/2yob6r/creating_a_subreddit.

Selecting content for social news services

Content choice is critical. Not every item on your blog or website will entice readers to submit or rate an article. Generally, the ones that drive the most traffic to your site will have timely content, such as breaking news, or entertainment, humor, or quality resource information not found elsewhere.

Keep the following in mind when deciding what to post on social news services:

- » **Remember that social news services are culturally dependent.** If you're trying to reach an international market, you may need to submit your content in languages other than

English. Note that other countries and languages might have their own localized social-bookmarking and news services. Visit <https://directorist.com/blog/free-dofollow-social-bookmarking-> sites or international search engines to identify the appropriate, remaining social news services.

- » **Avoid out-of-date material.** If you must submit older stories, look for such items as features, interviews, how-to's, and essays that have longer-lasting interest. Those items are good for social-bookmarking sites, too.
- » **Match your content submissions to sites where readers like the types of stories you want to recommend.** Look at the tag cloud for frequency of use on tags similar to yours over the past 6 to 12 months.
- » **Select the services with features that best match the content you offer and the audience you're trying to reach.** Some social news services allow links to images, video, and audio; others accept only links to text.
- » **Think tactically.** Initiate posts for specific pages, posts, or articles that have the potential to lead to traffic, prospects, or sales, not for your everyday internal company news update.



REMEMBER If you get a reputation for posting meaningless items or using the comment space for hard-sell language, you might find it hard to gain traction on these sites; you might even be banned for posting junk.

Preparing social news stories for success

Although you might be tempted to splatter social news services with your stories, just give them a little thought. Set up tags, titles, and lead lines carefully. Follow these online journalistic tips for improved results:

- » **Write a catchy headline, not an academic title.** Keep headlines short and memorable. Try to use vivid verbs (not just nouns) and active voice. Instead of “New social media app created by local company” for your star-gazing app, try “AstroWare’s New App Rockets to the Stars.”
- » **Write a good lede.** The headline and first line of a story (the *lede*) are often the only elements that viewers see. Set a hook to catch readers and make them want to link back to your original content. Tell people what’s in it for them or how they’ll benefit by reading the story.
- » **Write a good description, comment, or summary.** Keep it short (20 to 25 words!) and focus on benefits.
- » **Check your facts, spelling, and links.** If you make errors, someone is likely to post a negative comment. If your links don’t work, you lose potential traffic — a primary reason you’re using social-bookmarking and news services in the first place.
- » **Prepare your site for success.** Just in case, be sure to structure your site to take advantage of new traffic. Links to related articles on your site or blog give interested

readers more than one story to explore, thus increasing the number of page views per visit. To increase conversion rates, use calls to action and visual reminders to sign up for syndicated feeds and newsletters, subscribe to a paid publication, or make a purchase.

- » **Serve up your site.** Be sure that your hosting package allows for increased traffic. Traffic from social bookmarks tends to build slowly, but an appearance on the front page of a social news site can flood your server with more traffic than it's set up to handle. A quick call to your host or IT department should confirm your preparations.



TIP These writing tactics not only help attract the kind of viewers who are more likely to click through, but also help increase the time users spend on your blog or website.

Using Application-Specific Bookmarks

Some bookmarking and social news services are constrained to specific types of content, such as blogs or video, and others are specific to topic or activity, such as shopping or product reviews. [Table 4-3](#) provides some examples.

You can find more shopping bookmark sites by searching for *topic area + bookmarking site* on any search engine to find specialty bookmarking services.

TABLE 4-3 Bookmarks for Specific Applications

Application Name	URL
Blogs	
Feedly	www.feedly.com
Reviews	
Consumer Reports	www.consumerreports.org
SnapFiles	www.snapfiles.com/userreviews/latest.html
TripAdvisor	http://tripadvisor.com
Shopping	
Lyst	www.lyst.com
Video	
DailyMotion	www.dailymotion.com/us

Timing Your Submissions

Like with search engines, getting yourself on the first page of social-bookmarking and social news services can be difficult. You generally have only a 24-hour window on social news services to attract enough attention for either lasting value or timeliness. Remember that you may need to coordinate submissions by others to get things started.

There's no point in posting in the middle of the night, when many people are asleep on one

side of the country or both. Generally, posting between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. U.S. central daylight time works well, with an anecdotal peak of best results around 3 p.m. Workdays are generally better for generating traffic, although weekends see less competition. Of course, you need to adjust submission times if getting a scoop is critical or if you seek visibility on an international site.

On the other hand, if you're posting to specific bookmarking services (such as social-shopping or sports-bookmarking sites) that aren't time-dependent, weekends may find more of your audience available. It's a lot like scheduling an e-newsletter delivery or press release, both of which are audience dependent.



TIP Your best bet is to experiment. Note that timing for news sites is not the same as timing posts for major social media channels. Based on HubSpot data (<http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/best-times-post-pin-tweet-social-media-infographic>), the best times to post on social media to ensure maximum engagement are as follows:

» **Facebook:**

- Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Friday from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

» **X:**

- Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. and from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

» **LinkedIn:**

- Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., and at 1 a.m.

» **Pinterest:**

- Every day at 12 p.m. and evening hours
- Friday at 3 p.m.
- Saturday from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m.

» **Instagram:**

- Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.

» **TikTok:**

- Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- Monday at 2 p.m.
- Saturday at 8 a.m.

Try submitting the same post to different services at different times of the day, or try

submitting different posts to the same service at different times. Monitor traffic to your site by the hour and day, and adjust your plans accordingly.

Generally, social bookmarks drive traffic to your site slowly as people find your URL, but you can generate a spike in traffic by pushing your site on social news services (if they permit it). You can ask several people to submit your site, but leave it to others to vote it up or down.

Try to get 15 to 25 people to submit your posting within the first few hours of its publication. That's usually enough to get attention from others and build momentum for votes. Receiving 25 recommendations within a few hours means a lot more than receiving 25 recommendations within a week!

While your visibility on the service rises, so, too, does traffic to your site.



REMEMBER For all the value these services may have as recommendation search engines, the traffic on them is nothing compared with traffic on major search engines, such as Google and Bing. Optimization for general search engines is still absolutely necessary, as discussed in Book 2, [Chapter 2](#), and forms the basis for your success.



TIP Local Reddits work differently than other subreddits. Take advantage of your local Reddit to market both location-specific topics and locally related posts for subjects and events, from marathons to meals. Always remember to link directly to your local Reddit in posts on any other subreddits. And don't forget to check Reddit's traffic stats to estimate how many Reddit readers live in your community. For a list of all local Reddits, visit www.reddit.com/r/LocationReddits/wiki/index. If your community isn't listed, request a listing from the moderator. For more ideas for Reddit marketing, see <https://zapier.com/blog/reddit-marketing>.

Encouraging Others to Bookmark or Rate Your Site

Like most political campaigns, the popularity contest on services that rely on votes or frequency of submission can be managed to your advantage. It just takes a little planning. Although illegal vote-rigging and outright manipulation are forms of cyberfraud, the following techniques are valid ways to encourage others to submit or rate your site:

- » **We all get by with a little help from our friends.** Always have other people submit your material; on some services, submission by others is required. One easy way is to email a circle of employees, colleagues, and friends to help when you post a new page or content, or help them set up syndicated feeds from your selected services. Ask them to submit or comment on your posting within a few hours after being notified.

- » **Scratch backs.** In addition to posting your own stories, recommending material on other sites that complement yours (as long as you don't drive traffic to your competition) is good practice. If you help others increase the ratings on their stories through your repostings and votes, they're more likely to return the favor. These practices establish your reputation as a fair-minded individual who's interested in the topic, not just in sales.
- » **Be a courteous responder.** You make friends and influence people by responding to comments on your stories and commenting on others. Again, one good turn deserves another. Consider it as building your cyberkarma.
- » **Become known as the go-to poster.** If you frequently post interesting material on one service, you may develop a reputation and a following, with readers watching for new items from you. They will happily rate or rank items you suggest.
- » **Ask.** People who visit your site might be willing to let others know about it, but you need to remind them. Put a call to action or share button at the end of a story or post, reminding them to tell a friend or share your content publicly. If you've decided to focus on a particular service, display its icon with a link (see the later section "[Using Social Media Buttons](#)"). You might even include a call to action to install a toolbar.



REMEMBER Don't confuse *popularity* — a subjective and manipulated quantity — with the *quality* of leads that a bookmark or social news mention may generate. Popularity is a means, not an end. Ultimately, you're better off with fewer but higher-quality visitors arriving at your site.

Like exchanging reciprocal links to improve search engine ranking, exchanging bookmarks has become common practice. Like linking, bookmark swapping can be done honestly, but it has a darker side.

Follow the same principles that you do with links:

- » Don't exchange bookmarks with spamlike junk sites — only with ones that offer value.
- » Be suspicious of people who offer to sell bookmarks or votes.
- » Look for relevance, including shared tags or search terms, as well as traffic rankings on the exchanging site.

Because submitting too many of your own pages to a bookmarking service can tag you as a spammer, you can participate in a service in which members bookmark each other. These are similar to some of the old link exchanges, banner exchanges, and web rings. Be cautious. Avoid anything that looks illegitimate.



WARNING Avoid automated submission services or scripts. The safest way to participate in social bookmarking is the old-fashioned way: individually, by hand.

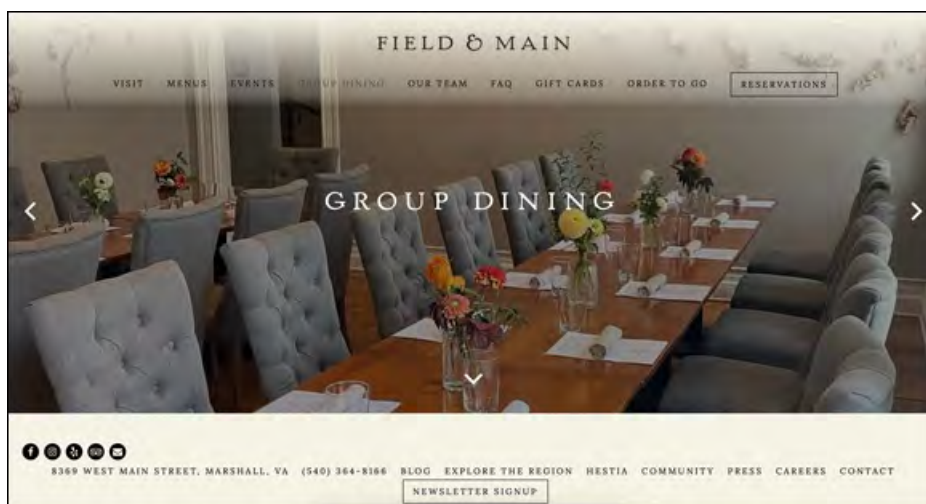
Using Social Media Buttons

Social media buttons have two functions: Follow Us buttons cross-link visitors to multiple elements of your web presence; share buttons enable visitors easily to share your content or website with others. Place buttons consistently near the top of a page or an article, where you place key information.

When you repeat smaller versions of the buttons at the end of each post on your blog, users can share a specific item rather than the entire blog. Social media buttons can also be placed on e-newsletters and on multiple social media networks. Anecdotal evidence from some companies that tried organized campaigns shows dramatic increases in traffic on their social media sites.

Follow Us buttons

Follow Us buttons — sometimes called *chiclets* — link visitors to other elements of your social media presence, such as to your Facebook profile, X page, or blog. In [Figure 4-5](#), the chiclets on the bottom left on every page of the site for Field & Main (www.fieldandmainrestaurant.com) encourage users to link to the restaurant's Facebook page, Instagram page, Yelp page, TripAdvisor, and email.



Courtesy of Field & Main

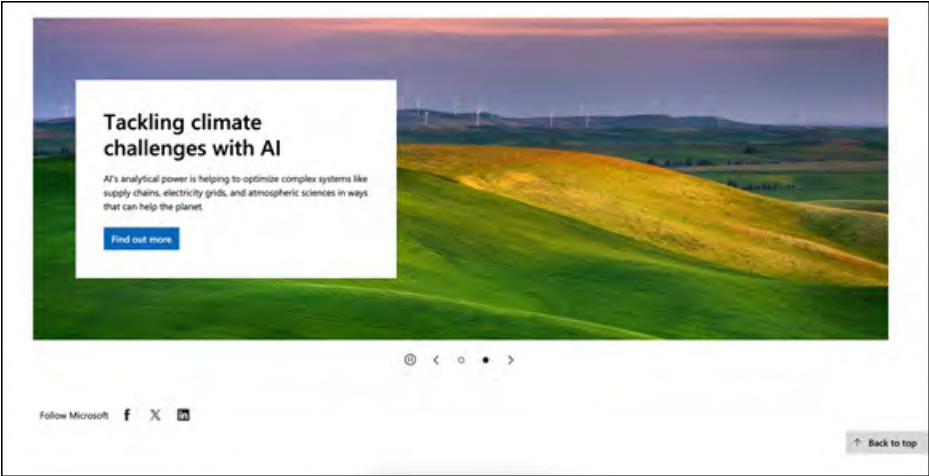
FIGURE 4-5: On every page of its website, Field & Main restaurant includes chiclets that link to its social media pages.

Almost all services offer free standard icons along with code to insert them. Alternatively, you can search for creative icons online at sites such as www.iconfinder.com/social-media-icons and www.flaticon.com/categories/social-media or use a social bookmark links generator, such as Search Engine Genie (www.searchenginegenie.com/social-bookmarks-link-generator-tool.php).

Share buttons

Social share buttons from services such as AddToAny give the user sharing options, as shown in [Figure 4-6](#). This approach lets visitors easily share content by linking them to the sign-in

page for their own accounts on other social-sharing services.



Courtesy of Microsoft

FIGURE 4-6: Social share buttons encourage visitors to pass along your site or content through their own accounts.

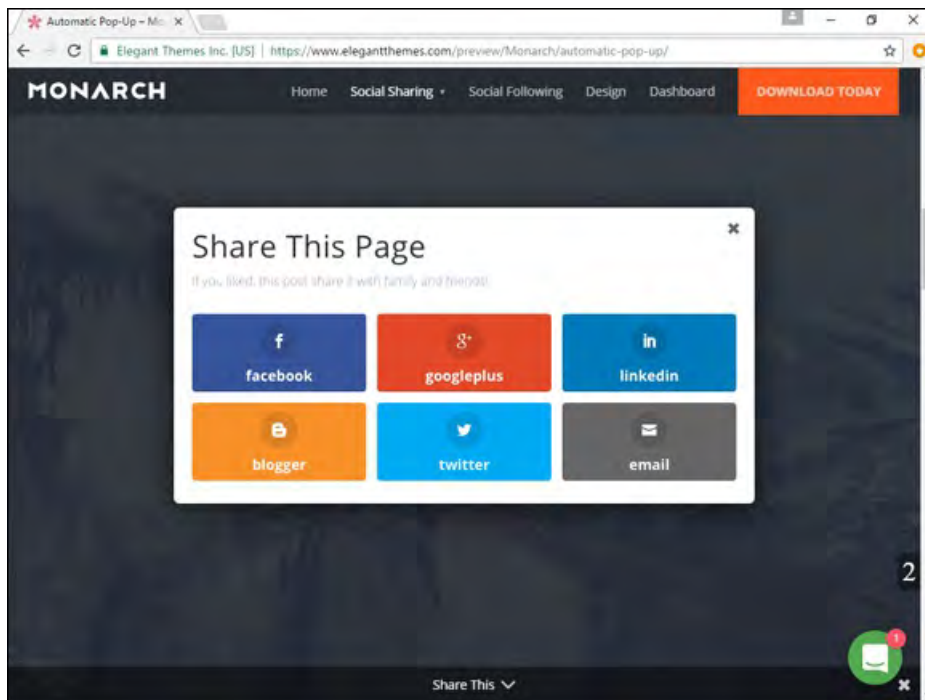
In an interesting variation, Shareaholic (www.shareaholic.com/publishers) offers buttons that appear as you mouse over an image. Several sources for other social share buttons are listed in [Table 4-4](#).

These free, easy-to-install buttons allow users to transfer content quickly to their own profiles, blogs, preferred social-bookmarking service, instant messages, email, or text messages. You can even use a special widget, albeit for a fee, from Elegant Themes (www.elegantthemes.com/preview/Monarch/automatic-pop-up) that facilitates sharing products or pages from your site, as shown in [Figure 4-7](#). This is viral marketing at an epidemic level!

Register for free analytics on sharing services that offer it to see how and where users elected to share your material or site. You can often find a toolbar add-on for each service on the site. You may want to install the ones you need in your browser and offer that option to your users in a call to action.

TABLE 4-4 Sources for Social Share Buttons

Name	URL
WordPress.org	https://wordpress.org/plugins/ultimate-social-media-icons
AddToAny	http://addtoany.com
HubSpot article titled "How to Create Social Media Buttons for All the Top Social Networks"	http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/29544/The-Ultimate-Cheat-Sheet-for-Creating-Social-Media-Buttons.aspx
BuddyBoss	www.buddyboss.com/resources/docs/integrations/social-media-share-buttons-social-sharing-icons
ShareThis	http://sharethis.com



Courtesy of Elegant Themes

FIGURE 4-7: This widget from Elegant Themes enables users to quickly recommend products or pages from your site.



REMEMBER Always include Print, Email, and Favorites (for personal bookmarks) in your set of social share buttons. Some people like the convenience of the old stuff.



TECHNICAL STUFF If you aren't comfortable inserting code on your site, ask your web developer or programmer to do it for you. Sometimes even your hosting company can help. Specify which Follow Us or share buttons you want to have visible, and ask to have the buttons appear on every page of your site.

If all these tasks seem overwhelming, plenty of providers are willing to help you for a fee. Most SEO firms, press and public relations firms, online-marketing companies, specialized social-marketing ad agencies, and copywriters who specialize in online content now offer assistance with social bookmarking, social news, and other forms of social media marketing. Try searching for *social media services*, *social media agencies*, *digital media marketing*, or *social media marketing*.

Book 8, [Chapter 4](#) discusses more advanced methods for integrating social media into your overall marketing plans.

Book 3

Content Marketing

Contents at a Glance

Chapter 1: Growing Your Brand with Content

[Introducing Content Marketing](#)

[Determining the Best Content Platform for Your Needs](#)

[Selling Your Brand through Content Marketing](#)

[Making Your Content Stand Out](#)

Chapter 2: Exploring Content-Marketing Platforms

[Building a Blog](#)

[Using Podcasts and Video on Your Blog or Website](#)

[Sharing Images](#)

[Using Social Media Platforms for Online Content](#)

[Guest Blogging to Grow Awareness and Expertise](#)

Chapter 3: Developing a Content-Marketing Strategy

[Determining Content Goals](#)

[Putting a Strategy on Paper](#)

Chapter 4: Getting Your Content to the Masses

[Creating an Editorial Calendar to Keep Content Flowing](#)

[Finding the Right Mix between Evergreen and Timely Content](#)

[Jumping on the AI-Generated Content Train](#)

[Executing Your Content Strategy](#)

[Sharing Your Content with the Public](#)

[Measuring the Success of Your Content Strategy](#)

Chapter 1

Growing Your Brand with Content

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Discovering the world of content marketing
 - » Considering your content platform choices
 - » Using content to sell your brand online
 - » Developing content that stands out from the crowd
-

Everything you see online is content — the written word, images, podcasts, radio, video, infographics, charts, and even social media updates on Facebook and X. Content can amuse or teach, but it's also a powerful tool for catching the attention of search engines and the people who are looking for whatever it is you do. Many businesses are achieving positive results by using different types of content to reach customers and raise brand awareness.

This chapter discusses content marketing; in particular, it defines content marketing and discusses the importance of having a content strategy in place.



TIP

Don't get overwhelmed thinking about all the different kinds of content you have to create. The important thing to remember is that you don't have to use every content platform available. Instead, master one or two platforms and see where that takes you.

Introducing Content Marketing

Today is a wonderful time to be in business. Thanks to the web, you can use endless tools to promote your business or brand, and many of these tools are free.

You don't have to have a way with words or a flair for the dramatic to sell your product or service online. All you need to do is tap into your creativity. Using online content to promote your personal or business brand can mean the difference between local and global recognition.

Defining content marketing

If you're dabbling in social media to help market your business, you may have heard the expression *content marketing*, which is the practice of using blog posts, podcasts, videos, and images to promote your product or service. For example, if you own a farmer's market and you wish more people could find information about your business when they search online, you can create content that is attractive to search engines, making it easier to find your store on the web.

Think about the type of content people who visit farmer's markets are searching for online. For example, they might be looking for articles on how to choose the best strawberries, or the times of year when different fruits and vegetables are in season. When readers land on your blog posts, they'll see other links to more of your content, as well as your location, special events, sales, and other items of interest posted at your website. Content marketing drives people to a particular location, helping you achieve your goals.

Examining how content marketing can help your business

Content marketing serves several purposes — first and foremost is to *eventually* drive traffic and sales. I say eventually because although it's important, you have to keep in mind that people will only buy from companies they trust. And part of building that trust is establishing yourself as vested and knowledgeable in your industry. You do that by creating high-quality, relevant content.

For starters, relevant content helps your business get a better ranking in search engine results. So if your business initially showed up on page 10 of a Google search, content marketing, if done right, can help your business move to the first or second page for many different *search terms* — the words and phrases entered into the search engines.

When you create good content, something wonderful happens: People don't just read your content; they also leave comments to participate in the conversation, as shown in [Figure 1-1](#).

The image shows a web interface for a comment section. At the top, it says "Speak Your Mind" in a large, bold, blue font. Below that, it says "Logged in as Deb Ng. Log out?" in a smaller blue font. There is a large, empty rectangular text box for writing a comment. Below the text box is a green button with the text "POST COMMENT" in white. At the bottom of the interface, there is a search bar with the text "Google™ Custom Search" and a green button with the text "SEARCH" in white.

FIGURE 1-1: Use the comment area to have a conversation with customers and potential customers.

People also share your content with their friends and online followers, as shown in [Figure 1-2](#). Next thing you know, other people are reading, sharing, and commenting. Even though they're not directly promoting your brand, you're getting wonderful brand recognition because the more people who share your content, the more people are seeing your logo, brand name, and other recognizable features.



FIGURE 1-2: When you create useful content, others will want to share it, which leads to better brand visibility.

Here are some additional ways that content marketing can benefit your company:

- » **Your company has a voice.** Content marketing allows you to present your business in a positive light. In addition to creating helpful educational content, you're also able to address customer concerns, competitor messages, and both bad and good reviews.
- » **You establish expertise.** Are you really good at something, or is your brand known for being the foremost expert in its field? Content is an excellent way to share your expertise with others. When people think you're smart and transparent, they're more likely to trust you, which leads to sales.
- » **You increase brand visibility.** The more content you share, the more your name is seen online.
- » **Your local business can become global.** Online content helps a business that had only local connections grow to a place where more people can learn about what that business does. This access to a wider audience can mean national and even global exposure.
- » **Content marketing can be inexpensive.** Creating and sharing content doesn't have to be expensive. If you or your team is creative, you can even handle content creation in-house. The types of content you create can be anything from a blog post, which doesn't cost anything, to a highly produced video, which can be costly. Both methods work.
- » **Any business can use content marketing.** It doesn't matter what your business does. If you have an existing customer base, you can create content to communicate with them and reach even more customers.



- » **TIP** **People can find your business for as long as your content remains online.** Creating content that's relevant both now and in the future, however, means your brand's name will continue to come up in searches — both now and in the future. *Evergreen content* — content that people will always be searching for, such as instructions for how to build a treehouse or how to maintain a healthy lawn all season — has staying power. Book 3, [Chapter 4](#) goes into detail about evergreen content.
- » **Content allows people to make informed decisions.** The more information you share with people about your product or service, the better able they are to make purchasing decisions. Your content will enable customers and potential customers to make comparisons and purchase with confidence.
- » **You can repurpose your content.** Content can be reworked and rewritten to add new information and make existing content more current. Or you can take a written content piece and represent it graphically. For example, if you've written a blog post on the Top 10 Motorcycles for Beginners, then you can create an infographic that reworks the blog post information in a more “show don't tell” kind of way.



- TIP** Don't feel like you have to be a graphic designer or even have one on your staff. There are some great applications out there that do all the heavy lifting for you ... some of them are either free or very low cost. One popular option is www.canva.com that offers a freemium version, or piktochart.com that provides templates that you can download and work from.
- » **Content inspires your team to be creative.** Your entire team can help plan the content and suggest ideas for blog posts, articles, videos, podcasts, and more.



- TIP** People enjoy consuming content. They like to watch videos that teach and entertain, and they enjoy reading enlightening articles. If your content provides a valuable service and shares good information, it has the potential to be seen by many people.

Determining the Best Content Platform for Your Needs

You can choose from plenty of content platforms, and it's easy to become overwhelmed if you're not sure which method to start with. The important thing to remember is that you don't have to do everything at once, nor do you have to create content on every single platform or social network. It's better to choose a couple of platforms and build content and community there over time, rather than spread content out in many different places.

The content platforms you choose depend on several factors:

- » **Goals:** What are some of the reasons you're creating content? Is it for SEO? Authority? Knowing why you want to attract customers will help you to determine which content and social media platforms to use.



REMEMBER Sales wasn't included as a goal in the last bullet because it's a given that your *ultimate* goal is to increase sales! If you're doing content marketing right, it will eventually positively affect your sales.

- » **Budget:** Some brands pull out all the stops to create a viral video, whereas others put very little money into a blog post. [Figure 1-3](#) shows a WordPress blog post, which costs only as much as you're willing to pay for web hosting. Sometimes low-budget content goes viral, and sometimes high-budget content tanks.
- » **Expertise:** If you create your content to teach, choose a platform that best illustrates your knowledge.
- » **Talent:** Do you have a talented team of writers? Is someone on staff handy with a camera, or technically equipped to set up a podcast? Choose a platform that your team has the experience to use. You can still experiment, but your first effort should be something you and your team are comfortable doing.
- » **Demographic:** The age and interests of your customers and community matter when choosing a content platform. Content should be tailored to that age and on a platform people in that demographic are mostly likely to use. For example, teens and people in their early 20s don't spend a lot of time on Facebook, and seniors don't often spend time on Instagram.



WARNING Don't hop on a platform just because it's the latest thing or someone's brother's girlfriend said it's going to be *the latest thing*. Really put thought into your available resources and where your audience hangs out. Otherwise, you could be spreading yourself (or your team) too thin and it may not pay off anyway, because the audience you're targeting may not even be on there.



FIGURE 1-3: Many businesses choose blogs to start their content-marketing strategy because they're inexpensive and simple.



TIP Don't dive into content creation blindly. Take some time to learn about your community and create a strategy. Marketers who have a plan in place are the ones who succeed. Book 3, [Chapter 3](#) talks more about content strategy.

Selling Your Brand through Content Marketing

So how do you go about selling your brand online through your content? The secret is to look like you're not selling. People don't like someone who's pushy and are turned off by obvious sales pitches. However, when you share important information, you build trust with your readers and customers. They appreciate learning about what your brand has to offer, and next time they have a need for a product or service like yours, they'll contact you — not only because your brand is now familiar but also because they know from your content that you're a resource that can be trusted.

Here are a few ideas to try selling through content:

- » **Share information about your product or service.** Whether you're using blog posts or video, content allows you to show how your product works and how to get the best results. With content, you can go beyond the product label and discuss benefits, risks, and proven results.



REMEMBER Don't be heavy-handed when posting about your product or services. If you're writing a blog post on your company website, for example, people automatically know it's on a company website. You don't need to constantly remind them by shoe-horning your

product or service into every piece of content you create.

- » **Answer frequently asked questions.** Do your customers have questions? Do some questions arise more than others? Your content allows you to answer common questions your customers and potential customers have about not only your products and services but also your competitors’.
- » **Create links that lead to your product or service.** For every piece of content that you post online, you should, at the very least, also post a link to related sales or Contact Us pages.
- » **Offer free content in exchange for a newsletter signup or registration.** The reason so many businesses use newsletters is because they’re collecting email addresses so they can send their customers sales pitches. Many brands even use content to entice newsletter signups. For example, they’ll give a link to download a free e-book for every registration.
- » **Address known issues through your content.** If people are leaving negative reviews or comments about specific issues with products or services, don’t ignore them. Use your content to talk about the issues and put rumors to rest.
- » **Tell your brand’s story.** People love history, and they especially enjoy feeling as if they’re part of history. If you or your brand has a unique story, use content to share your history, your mission, and your goals. This type of honesty builds trust, and people shop where they trust.
- » **Cover topics your competitors don’t.** Check out your competitors’ websites and social media accounts. What industry-related content are they *not* posting about? Once you determine these topics, get creating!
- » **Open up lines of communication.** Content enables you to have a conversation with your community. For example, any questions or comments posted to X, Pinterest, a Facebook page, blog posts, or YouTube are an opportunity for you to have a conversation with your customers.



TIP I recommend you answer the question on the social media platform that it was asked on. For example, if someone asked a question on your Pinterest account, then there’s a good chance the answer may only be of interest to the audience on Pinterest. If you find that you’re getting the same questions on multiple platforms, however, then feel free to answer once and share many times!

None of the preceding suggestions look like heavy-handed selling. However, your content took care of the hard part of the sales process: It got people to your website.



REMEMBER Not all content is created in the same manner. For example, blogs are usually text or image heavy, whereas podcasting and video require recording equipment and a little more technical knowledge. However, all are doable and easy to maintain, and all have

the capability to drive traffic and sales, as well as raise awareness for your product or service.

Making Your Content Stand Out

All this content creation is for naught if no one sees it. If you want to have the kind of content that people read or view, and then share, you have to take steps to ensure that your content stands out from the rest. Despite what you see on Facebook, you don't have to bring cats into your content for it to be well received. (Although it can't hurt, right?)



TIP For your content to stand out, it has to be useful and appealing. Answer this question: What value will your customers and potential customers receive from viewing your content?

What follows are some considerations for creating the type of content people respond to. Content should

- » **Have a purpose:** Don't create content for the sake of creating content; otherwise, it will be bland, redundant, or confusing. Content should have both a plan and a purpose. For example, content should teach, or drive traffic to different parts of your website. Even content created solely to go viral has a purpose. When you understand why you're creating the content, it will be easier for you to write, photograph, or record a video.
- » **Provide value:** If a video makes someone laugh, it has value. If a blog post teaches people something, it has value. If a tweet breaks news, it has value. In other words, don't create content that doesn't offer anything to the viewer or reader.
- » **Answer a question:** If people are searching for information and land on an article on your website, will they stay to read the whole thing, or will they move on after a quick scan? Your content should answer a question, even if the question is simply, "What am I doing here?"
- » **Be unique:** What perspective can you give to your niche that no one else has covered? Content that stands out does so because it's different — not the same old, same old.
- » **Be easy to relate to:** People like to read a blog post or watch a video, and then nod their head in agreement. For example, a funny video from a car-cleaning service that shows kids dropping food in the car or scribbling on the back seat with a permanent marker might have parents sharing the content because they've been in the same situation.
- » **Be visual:** A vibrant or intriguing photo will catch the eye, and readers will want to know how it relates to the content.
- » **Have variety:** Mix up your content with new, timely, and evergreen information. Experiment with photos, videos, and written content, too.
- » **Be entertaining:** Entertaining content isn't necessarily slapstick or pet tricks. Entertaining content might be educational, interesting, or intriguing. If content entertains, consumers

will want to see more content from you and may even want to learn more about your product or service.

- » **Be inspiring:** You want to create content that encourages reaction. Whether it's a call to action, a link to more information or a sales page, or an invitation to comment and share, your content should give readers and viewers the idea to do these things. It should make them want to take action.
- » **Be scannable:** People consume content differently on the web than they do in print. Whereas they'll read books and consume newspaper and magazine articles in their entirety offline, most people have short attention spans on the web. Furthermore, there's so much content on the web, people have become somewhat blind to it. So, break up all content into easily digestible pieces with images, headings, subheads, bullet points, and numbered lists. (Sort of like what I'm doing here!) If you present the content in this way, people can scan it and still take something away from it.
- » **Have an intriguing title:** You don't have to create a scandalous or shocking headline, but your content should have a title that will immediately capture attention and encourage readers or viewers to want to learn more.



WARNING By all means be entertaining and use a catchy headline. However, it's best to avoid *click-bait*, or content that draws people in with a shocking, intriguing, or scandalous headline but doesn't deliver much in the way of value or substance. In other words, focus more on content that provides a helpful or educational purpose and avoid driving traffic for traffic's sake.

- » **Be shareable:** It's great when someone likes your content; it's even better when they like the content so much they want to share it with others. The more people who share your content, the more recognizable your brand. Shareable content is great marketing.
- » **Be compatible:** Make sure your content can be read and viewed easily across mobile platforms. Because so many people are consuming content on smartphones and tablets, it won't do to have content that doesn't work on every mobile platform.
- » **Be published with some regularity.** You don't have to publish content every day, but if you post consistently, people have something to look forward to. For example, if you post to the corporate blog every Tuesday, regular readers will stop by every Tuesday to see your new content. Book 3, [Chapter 4](#) discusses working with editorial calendars, which can help in planning regular content. [Figure 1-4](#) shows Field and Main's Instagram account with a photo for "Hearth Picture Monday."



REMEMBER The web is flooded with content that's inaccurate or fluffy and that doesn't really share solid information. By creating content that's valuable and that serves a purpose, you're cutting through the clutter and noise to become a trusted resource. This content creation may not seem like selling, but when it comes time to buy, potential customers

will remember you for providing quality content and equate it with a quality product or service.



FIGURE 1-4: Every Monday, Field and Main restaurant in Marshall, VA posts a hearth-related picture on their Instagram account.



TIP

Content Marketing Institute (<https://contentmarketinginstitute.com>) is a wonderful resource for everything content marketing. They have how-to articles, templates, classes, e-books — you name it. This blog by HubSpot (<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/content-marketing>) is another place to check out to learn more tips for successful content marketing.

Chapter 2

Exploring Content-Marketing Platforms

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Creating and sharing professional content
 - » Guest blogging for fun and profit
 - » Getting social
-

As [Chapter 1](#) of this minibook discusses, content encompasses a wide variety of platforms, and every platform is beginner-friendly. After all, we all have to start somewhere. However, you may find that you're more comfortable using some platforms over others, which is perfectly normal. Your content strategy can include one platform or all of them. As you become familiar with the different options, you can determine for yourself which work best for your needs.

Take a look at some of the different platforms available to you:

- » **Blog:** Informal, conversational, articles.
- » **Podcast:** Audio files akin to an online radio show. A podcast can be a single person discussing issues or ranting, or interviews, music, or news updates.
- » **Video:** Videos can be used to promote, sell, entertain, and enlighten.
- » **Image:** Use photographs in blog posts or alone to tell a story. Infographics can be used to breathe life into boring statistics.
- » **Social media:** Facebook, Pinterest, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok, and other social-networking sites can be used as content — that is, to create your own post or to share relevant content that someone else created.

This chapter explores some of the available platforms and talks about ways that you can use them all as part of your content-marketing strategy.

Building a Blog

Blogs, such as the one shown in [Figure 2-1](#), are no longer link-heavy, personal journals used to describe one's day or give a daily rant. Businesses use blogs as marketing tools to share updates and industry-related news and to offer tips, recipes, or ideas for using products and services.

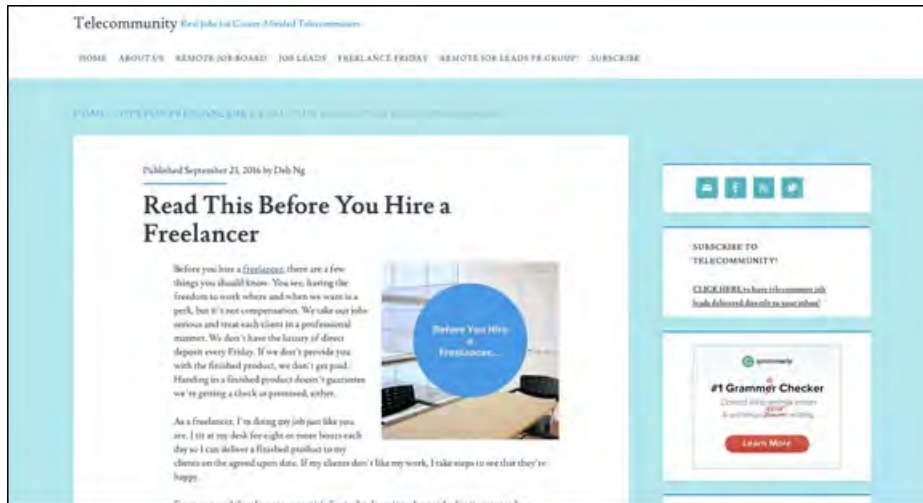


FIGURE 2-1: Use a blog to promote your business.

Blogs have also become a great place to post audio/visual content such as infographics, videos, and podcasts. Most blogging platforms offer the capability to create *multimedia* posts.

The good news is that even if your background isn't in writing or web design, you can easily maintain a regular blog. All you need is a way with words and the ability to write in a conversational tone. And now that there are tools like ChatGPT available, even the hard part of thinking of relevant topics or creating outlines to get your writing started can be done for you! I highly recommend you limit your use of AI writing tools for tasks like research or outline writing, because the content produced by the artificial intelligence is ... well ... robotic sounding. Only humans can write in a conversational way. The conversational aspect sets blogs apart from more newsy and antiseptic articles. A little bit of creativity when it comes to making visual content doesn't hurt, either!

Understanding how blogging can benefit your business

People enjoy reading blogs because of the simple language and the ability to add their own comments. At the other end of the spectrum, blogs allow businesses to engage with their customers or community in a new way.

Additionally, blogging has the following features:

- » **Catches the attention of search engines:** If you're looking for a heavier Internet presence, you most likely want people to be able to find you when they're searching Google, Yahoo!, Bing, or other search engines. Blogging is perfect for this purpose. With the right content and regular updates to your blog, there's no reason why you shouldn't land in the top results for any number of search terms.
- » **Catches the attention of the people using search engines:** With the right headlines, *keywords* (the words and terms people use when using search engines), and images, web searchers are intrigued enough to land on one of your pages. If your blog is informative, they may even be intrigued enough to explore several different pages.
- » **Is shareable:** When people find something they like online, they share it via email or on one of the social networks. When a blog post touches on an interesting or sensitive topic,

your readers will likely want to pass it on. Most blogging platforms have the option to add *social-sharing* buttons to your blog posts, to make sharing your content even easier.

- » **Allows everyone to join the conversation:** Most blogs allow for comments at the bottom of each blog post. Readers love to comment because it gives them the opportunity to add their own thoughts and opinions and to share experiences. Are you worried that a wayward spam comment may be left? Chances are, you'll get your share of them. Have no fear, though. Most platforms either allow for comment *moderation*, or hiding a comment until you manually go in and approve it, or spam-filtering capabilities built right in.
- » **Allows you to manage your reputation:** Sometimes people say something about a business or brand that isn't nice. Sometimes rumors fly. Sometimes you just need to set the record straight. Blogging allows you to speak to your community at a time when you need them most.
- » **Builds expertise:** When you share tips on a regular basis, you're seen as someone who is knowledgeable in your field. You may even get a reputation as someone who really knows your stuff. Folks ultimately buy from companies (and people) that show they are experts in their industries.
- » **Can make you the go-to person for the subject matter:** With regular blogging, journalists, authors, conferences, and even other bloggers are likely to contact you for interviews and speaking engagements and to write articles or guest blog posts so that you can share your knowledge with their communities.
Enables you to grow your community: When you have regular readers who comment on your blog and share your blog posts, they become your online community. Your community advocates for you and helps spread the word about your brand, product, or service. (I talk more about building an online community later in this chapter.)
- » **Is inexpensive:** Most blog platforms don't cost anything to use. Your biggest expense will be web hosting and possibly hiring someone to help with content creation and design. Blogging is one of the least expensive marketing tools you can use.
- » **Allows you to update thousands of people at one time:** As your community grows and more people read your blog each day, it will become a place where you can update your customers on promotions, news, updates, and new product information.
- » **Allows you to connect with other businesses, brands, and experts:** Blogs are wonderful networking tools. They allow you to link to people you respect and receive links back in return. You may even discover that influential people in your niche are following your blog and participating in your conversations.
- » **Allows you to add personality to your business:** The beauty of blogging is the conversational tone. Because the writing is more casual than news articles, you can add humor and personality to your blog posts. Readers appreciate this lighthearted approach because they don't feel as if they're being talked down to. Besides, everyone likes to share entertaining content.
- » **Builds trust:** When you keep your community updated and use your blog as a two-way

communication tool, you build trust among your customers and community. People won't feel you have something to hide if you're open and honest on your blog, which gives them a good feeling about using your product or service.

- » **Is easy:** After you set up your blog and it's ready to roll, maintaining it is easy. In most cases, all you need to do is type the day's blog post and add the necessary links, images, or other bells and whistles.

What types of businesses can benefit from blogs? Just about anyone with a story to tell or a product to sell can benefit from having a blog, but some brands benefit more from this form of content than others. For example, blogs are perfect for product-oriented brands.

Some items that product-oriented brands can blog about include the following:

- » **Ingredients:** If you take pride in using wholesome ingredients, you should talk about it often. It's an important message and strong selling point. In fact, each individual ingredient can be turned into at least one blog post — probably more.
- » **Recipes:** If you add two parts water to your household cleaning product, can it be used to clean stains on a rug? Can your brand of peanut butter be used as the base for a number of different dishes? Blog about it!
- » **Uses for the products:** Vinegar has at least 100 different uses; how about your product? If your product can do a variety of different things, talk about it.
- » **Launches and product news:** Do you have a new product on the horizon? Are you opening up shop in a new location? These items are worthy of a blog post.
- » **A behind-the-scenes peek:** Your customers and community would love to know that you and the other people who work for your brand are real. Announce promotions. Take photos around the office. Show your employees hard at work or goofing off ... er, team-building. Make your community feel as if they're in on a secret.



TIP

A common mistake brands make when blogging is to assume every update has to be a sales pitch or product-oriented content. The best blogs barely sell. Instead, they focus on the benefits of the product. Go beyond the obvious, and you'll have a blog people want to read.

Deciding if blogging is right for you

Any business or businessperson can benefit from regular blogging. If you have something to say or something to sell, blogs are a simple, cost-effective solution to reach many people at once.



REMEMBER

Building a blog takes time. You have to update it often and either set up notifications so you can be emailed when someone leaves a comment, or else monitor it at least once

per day for comments. You also have to promote new content on social networks or in newsletters so that your community can learn when you publish new blog posts. Don't expect to see massive traffic when you're just starting out, though. Most new blogs show a slow, steady growth rate.

Setting up your blog

Before choosing a blog platform, decide whether you want to host the blog on your own domain or on a blog platform's subdomain. Although a hosted blog through platforms such as WordPress or Blogger is free to use and maintain, most bloggers and business owners agree it's more beneficial to put out the money and purchase your own domain and hosting. Even so, it doesn't have to be an expensive endeavor, and it's well worth the investment.



REMEMBER Depending on the blogging platform that you use, hosting on a blogging platform's subdomain means you may have limited design and customization choices, and you may not be able to support advertising.

Setting up a blog can be as easy as you need it to be. Because you're using your blog for marketing, I'm going to go ahead and assume that you prefer to self-host your blog. A self-hosted blog means you pay for the hosting yourself and handle blog installation and design.

It's much better SEO to have traffic come to your own website (and brand) than someone else's, anyway. A self-hosted WordPress blog (as opposed to the free blog hosted on the WordPress subdomain) is the marketer's blogging tool of choice because it's so easy to use and to adapt to your needs.

Some hosts — for example, Bluehost — allow you to easily set up a WordPress blog with little effort. All you have to do is click a button, such as the one shown in [Figure 2-2](#), and follow the simple step-by-step instructions. See www.bluehost.com for more details.

Install WordPress button



FIGURE 2-2: Some web-hosting companies, such as Bluehost, enable you to set up a blog on WordPress with a mouse click.

If you already have a website for your business, you'll want to host your blog there, with a link to the blog in the site's navigation menu. Your webmaster can install a WordPress setup in less than an hour. Or if you want to find out how to do it yourself, check out *WordPress All-in-One For Dummies*, 5th Edition by Lisa Sabin-Wilson (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.).

As for design, you can look up WordPress themes online and upload one to your blog, or you can hire a designer for a more custom look. Most brands choose to have their blogs blend in with their website and match their logos, so they opt for a custom design.

Here's a look at the components of a successful blog:

- » **Dashboard:** Your blog's *dashboard* is its control center. From here, you can choose to add a new post, upload plug-ins, customize the design, add a new static page, or take care of any blogging business.
- » **Blog post:** A *blog post* is an individual article. Each time you create content for your blog, you're adding a blog post. The blog is the entire setup; the post is an individual article. In your dashboard, you can set up how many blog posts you want to appear on the blog's home page. Blog posts are generally listed with the most recent posts first. Eventually, the oldest blog posts are no longer on the home page, but users can search the categories or the blog itself for older posts.
- » **Static page:** Similar to a blog post, a *static page* is a page of content that stays in place, instead of falling off the home page when new content is added. The blog's navigation usually has a link to the static page. One example of a static page is an About page that

lists information about your company, a sales page that offers a look at products and services, or a pricing menu.

- » **Categories:** You can set up categories to make it easier for your readers to find specific content. For example, if your company is a dairy farm, your categories might be Products, Recipes, and Events. You can place categories in your blog's sidebar navigation.
- » **Search:** A search bar can help your readers and customers find specific content.
- » **Comments section:** By enabling comments at the bottom of each post, you're inviting your customers and readers to share their own tips and anecdotes.
- » **Sidebar:** Your blog's sidebar houses important information. For example, information about you and your brand, the menu of categories, the search bar, Follow buttons for Facebook and X, and links to sales pages.
- » **Share buttons:** Each of your blog posts should have share buttons so that readers can share the blog posts with their friends on Facebook, X, and other social networks. You can set up a share button by downloading a plug-in.
- » **Plug-ins:** Plug-ins allow your blog to have some wonderful bells and whistles. For example, you can use plug-ins to keep spam out of your comments section, share your content, and configure advertising. To search for plug-ins, simply use the search function in the Plug-In section of your blog's dashboard. There are even plug-ins to help you with search engine optimization (SEO).



TIP The beauty of blogs is how easy they are to customize. You can do almost anything with a blog, such as sell products or tell a story. You can even use a WordPress blog setup to create an entire website. Take some time to explore all the options to make your blog stand out from the competition.

Using Podcasts and Video on Your Blog or Website

Text isn't the only game in content marketing. Many brands are now taking advantage of creating podcasts and video blog posts to add variety to their written content. The following sections explore the benefits of creating podcasts and video and how you can add them to your content-marketing plan.

Deciding if podcasting is right for you

With social media, you don't have to join every network or pontificate from every platform. Some people love podcasting, but others would rather type than talk. Is podcasting right for you?

Podcasting doesn't necessarily have to entail the use of a lot of expensive equipment. Many hard-core podcasters do have their own studios, whereas others get by with a simple

microphone. Sound quality is important, however, and if you host hard-to-listen-to podcasts full of static and feedback, folks are going to stay away. If you choose to do a *vlog* or a video blog (or video podcast), then there's also quality camera equipment to think about.



REMEMBER You don't want to spend lots of money on expensive equipment if you're not into podcasting. Definitely try podcasting a few times to be sure there's interest — not only from you but also from your community.

You also have to consider editing. All those perfect podcasts you watch or listen to aren't necessarily first takes, especially if you're just starting out. You're bound to have some fits and starts, and even a few "uhms." Your options are to leave them in or edit them out — and editing out can be time-consuming.

I don't mean to discourage you from podcasting, but I also don't want you to enter into it blindly. Here are a few things to consider before launching your first podcast:

- » **Is podcasting something you want to do on a regular basis?** Will you want to record a podcast at least once a month and then edit and upload the podcast? For newbies, this process can take several hours.
- » **Will you be able to handle the technical aspects?** Blog platforms are mostly intuitive, and most people can figure them out without much effort. Editing a podcast isn't difficult, per se, but it's not as easy as clicking a Send button.
- » **Will you have listeners?** Do you know people will tune in? Will podcasting be worth the effort? Some communities aren't into regular podcasts. Also, the success of your podcast depends on the brand. For example, if you're a laundry detergent manufacturer, do you think you can come up with enough interesting material to bring in listeners each time you upload a podcast?
- » **Will you be able to bring in listeners?** Although you're using podcasting as a marketing tool, you'll have to do a fair amount of marketing yourself to bring in listeners. Where will you find them, and how will you get them to listen? Building a podcast takes time.
- » **What do you hope to achieve by podcasting?** Determine your reason for podcasting before you begin so that you can tailor your podcast to the right people. For example, if you're raising awareness for a cause, you wouldn't talk about the same thing as if you were selling a product.
- » **Where will you host your podcast?** Will you post your podcast to your blog, website, or another area? If you host the podcast on your blog or website, your site will receive more traffic. If you host through iTunes or Soundcloud, you may have more listeners. And there's nothing wrong with using a combination of both.



TIP Some podcast hosting platforms like Soundcloud integrate with your website; so

while your podcast is uploaded to and hosted on Soundcloud, listeners can access the episodes via a feed functionality installed into your website (see [Figure 2-3](#)).

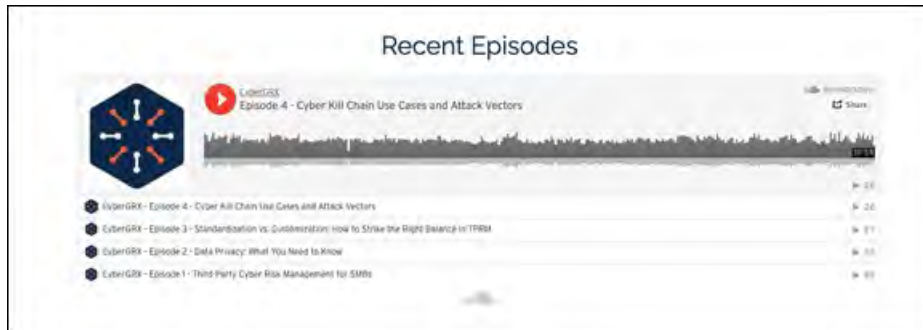


FIGURE 2-3: This podcast was uploaded to Soundcloud and is brought into a website via a feed.

Not everyone has the time or even patience to read long, lengthy articles and blog posts. Having content that people can listen to at their convenience is another great option for spreading your message and can open you up to a new audience. Many people enjoy downloading podcasts to their smartphones and listening to them in the car or at the gym. Podcasting can be more convenient than text or video because you can listen much in the same way you listen to music while you're going about your day. There's nothing to print, and you're not chained to your laptop.



REMEMBER Because your listeners hear your voice in a podcast, you build a different type of relationship. When they can hear your voice, and your emotion and passion as you talk about your favorite topics, you add another element of trust to your message. They laugh with you at jokes and know when you're dead serious. In text, your audience can easily misread tones and inflections. The content of a podcast is more engaging because it's more emotional.

Unlike written content, podcasts aren't scannable, unless you include the transcript wherever your podcast is posted. Although people can fast forward as needed, most people are more focused when they're listening than when they're scanning a blog post.

Podcasts also allow you to expand upon your expertise. When you write a blog post, brevity is important. You have to say what you have to say in 500 to 1,000 words, or you run the risk of losing your reader. On the other hand, podcasts allow you to talk until the talking is done. Many podcasts run 30 to 60 minutes. Another beautiful thing about podcasts is how you can interview another person of interest and ask as many questions as you want.



TIP For more information on podcasting, check out David Jackson's School of Podcasting website and podcast at <http://schoolofpodcasting.com>.

Using podcasts to drive traffic and land sales

When you think about traditional marketing tactics, very few brands considered broadcasting regularly to appeal to more people. Perhaps they'd advertise on a popular program, but they didn't really want to commit staff or cover the cost for 30 minutes or an entire hour of programming. It's different today, though. Many brands are discovering how podcasting appeals to a whole different group of people. As long as your podcast isn't a long sales pitch, you definitely have the ability to drive sales.

Here's how podcasting drives traffic and sales for your brand:

- » **Your host page always leads to an action page.** Whether you host your podcast on a blog or website, it should always be embedded on a page offering listeners an opportunity to take further action. It's not enough to embed your podcast. List bullets of the podcast's main points to draw in readers and offer a link to a More Information page for listeners who want to find out more.
- » **If you host a good podcast, others will recommend it.** If you have informative, actionable, engaging content, new listeners will not only come back but also tell others about it.
- » **Search engines pick it up.** Podcasting pages also catch the attention of search engines. Use your search terms on your podcast's host page; folks looking for podcasts on your topic or to find out more about your topic will stop by for a listen.
- » **Choose buzz-worthy content, which always brings in more listeners.** When you podcast an interesting discussion, with notable guests, you'll bring in regular listeners. Regular listeners also bring in new listeners, either with share buttons or word-of-mouth recommendation. This traffic, in turn, can lead to action, whether it's sales, awareness, or another goal.

If you're intrigued and want to learn more, Book 7, [Chapter 5](#) gets into much more detail about podcasts.

Sharing Images

Images are an important part of content creation. They help illustrate a point, break up text, and add more to the conversation. But using an image in your content isn't as simple as pilfering a photo from Google Images and adding it to your blog post. In addition to choosing a photo that helps to enhance your content, you also have legal and copyright considerations.

The following sections explore how to add great images to your content without breaking the law.

Using images for your online content

A picture doesn't always say a thousand words, but it often gives your content a little extra something-something. People like images; their eyes are drawn to them. If it's not the headline that makes them take notice, your image can be the one-two punch. Because online content works best when it's scannable, images give the reader another area to focus on, as well.



TIP

Images are also good search engine optimization. When you take the time to add keywords to your captions and filenames, search engines will pick up the search terms. Your images then show up in image searches, such as Google Images. Search engines can't crawl actual images, though. So adding text to pictures won't have any effect on your rankings.

You can also use images for other reasons. For example, you can invite your community to "caption this" on your Facebook page or create a X discussion by sharing a photo and inviting discussion. Images are another way to provide content and bring in readers, build community, and (I hope) drive sales.

Legalities: What you need to know about sharing images

Adding a photo to your blog isn't as simple as downloading an image. People who take photos own the copyright to them. Just because you see a photo online doesn't mean that you have permission to use it. Also, just because you don't see a copyright symbol doesn't mean that the image isn't copyright protected.



WARNING

Some people feel that because something is posted on the web, it's in the public domain. This assumption isn't true, either. It's always important to check each and every image for the available rights and usage. You can tell whether you can use a photo by reading all the details around it. Some of the most common types of rights and usage are explained in the following list:

- » **All Rights Reserved:** The photo isn't available for use unless you contact the author for permission. If you receive permission to use the image, you may embed it into your blog post as long as you provide attribution. The photographer may also require a link back to the original content. Please note that this requirement usually means that you're granted only one-time usage for that specific blog post or content. You don't have permission to use the photo as often as you want.

In addition, most images require a fee to use: If you want to use an image more than once, you'll have to pay extra. Make sure that any agreement between the photographer and you is clear, and that you have a good understanding of how many times you can use the image and what other requirements may be in place for its use.
- » **Some Rights Reserved:** The agreement between you and the photographer isn't as strict, but it also means you should read all the fine print to find out exactly what rights you have when using the image. You may have unlimited use but have to attribute to the photographer each time. It also may mean that you can use the image on a personal blog but not for commercial use.
- » **No Derivative Works:** You're not allowed to take the photo and alter it in any way and publicly post it as your own. You can't add anything to the photo, nor can you change

colors or retouch it using Photoshop. If you do use the photo, be sure you're using it with the proper permission and attribution.

- » **Editorial:** Editorial licensing means a certain photo is allowed to be used only for an event, documentary, journalism, or educational purposes. In other words, the image cannot be used commercially, or to gain profit from.
- » **Royalty-Free:** If an image is listed as Royalty-Free, it means that you'll pay a one-time fee to license the image, but the copyright of the image still belongs to the photographer. The image can be used indefinitely and commercially.
- » **Creative Commons:** You're welcome to use the photo if you follow the listed guidelines, as shown in [Figure 2-4](#). Although, in many cases, Creative Commons photographers allow others to share their photo, usually royalty-free, it doesn't mean that the images are free to use any way you want. Read all the fine print. The photographer may require specific credits, limited usage, and a link back to the original content.



TIP Many photo-sharing sites, including the ones listed in the following section, clearly call out the licensing that applies to the image. So be sure to read the fine print before you click purchase!



REMEMBER Even if no specific requests are made, the right thing to do is to offer attribution to the photographer. Using a photo is the same as quoting another blogger on your blog or sharing someone else's text on your blog. If you post someone else's photo and pass it off as your own, even if that's not your intention, you're not only violating copyright laws, but you're sharing in an unethical manner.

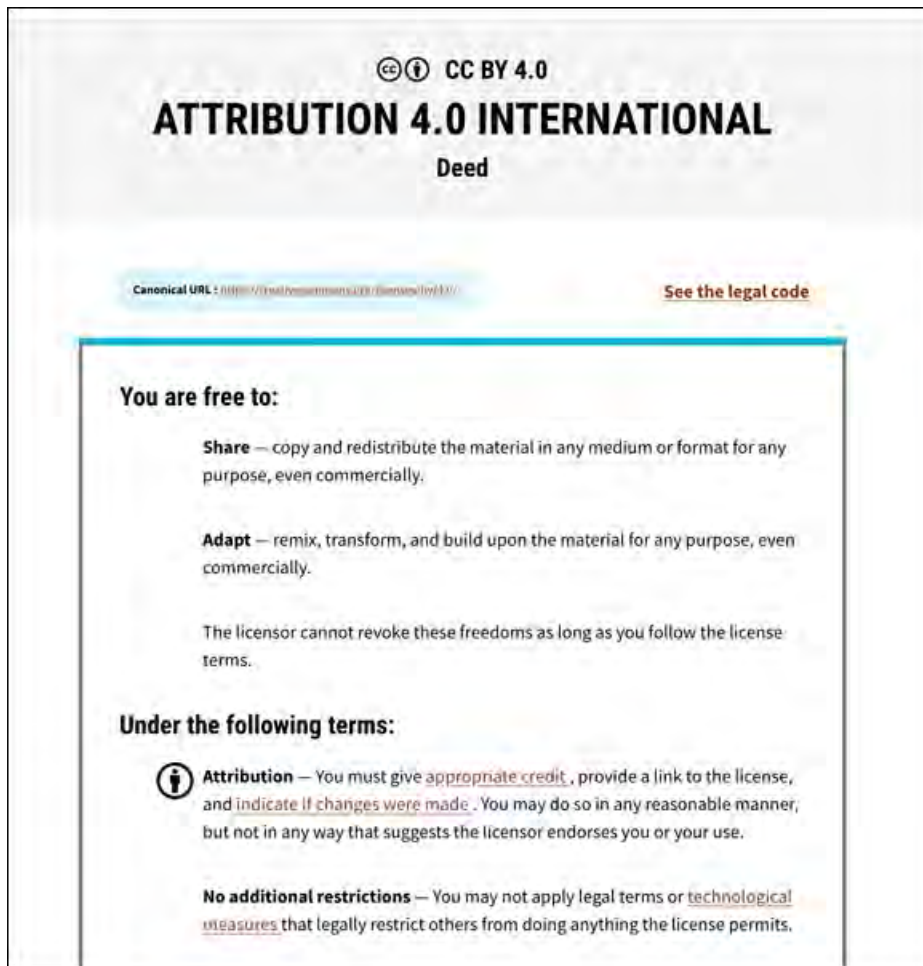


FIGURE 2-4: Always check for image rights and ask permission before using a photo.



WARNING A good general rule for anyone looking to use a photo found online (or offline!) is, “When in doubt, ask.” In some cases, photographers discovered years later that bloggers had used their images, and the photographers successfully sued for back royalties.

Finding images online

Don’t let all this talk about rights and usage discourage you from finding photos to use for your content. Finding photos to use isn’t difficult, and the rights are usually laid out for you below each photo.



TIP Instead of typing keywords into your favorite search engine’s image search, which can lead to confusion about rights, it’s a better idea to become a member of photo-sharing sites. [Table 2-1](#) lists some popular photo-sharing sites and indicates whether the sites are free or require a monthly or per-photo fee.

Some sites allow you to use photos for free as long as you follow certain guidelines, such as notifying the photographer and giving attribution. Notifying the photographer, though, isn't the same as asking permission. If the site requires you to notify the photographer, it simply means the photographer has given permission already; they just want to know where it's going to be used.

TABLE 2-1 Popular Photo-Sharing Sites

Site	URL	Description
123RF	www.123rf.com	Offers a 7-day free trial, then different paid options.
Bigstock	www.bigstockphoto.com	Photos and videos; requires a subscription fee after a 7-day free trial.
Creative Commons	http://creativecommons.org	Allows for the posting and sharing of Creative Commons works.
Dreamstime	www.dreamstime.com	Offers a 7-day free trial, then different paid options.
Flickr	www.flickr.com	Images often fall under Creative Commons, but check underneath each image page to view rights for each photo.
Freeimages	www.freeimages.com	Offers a wide variety of free-to-use images, but be sure to check the restrictions.
iStockphoto	www.istockphoto.com	Photos, illustrations, and video. Fee-based either via credits or a subscription fee.
Morguefile	www.morguefile.com	Offers free photos that are mostly taken by amateur photographers and aren't always professional quality. They are royalty-free.
Pinterest	www.pinterest.com	Enables you to search images on the site and then contact the original photographer to find out whether you can buy a copy of the photo.
Pixabay	https://pixabay.com	You can find not only royalty-free images, but also illustrations, video, music, sound effects, and more.
Shutterstock	www.shutterstock.com	You need a subscription or you can purchase on-demand packs.
Unsplash	https://unsplash.com	Royalty-free and free high-resolution photos.
Wikimedia Commons	http://commons.wikimedia.org	Offers royalty-free and free photos.

Also, some photographers won't allow their images to be used on certain sites — for example, pornography, political, religious, or any other sites where the image may be taken out of context or use of it will reflect poorly on the photographer. However, the photo-sharing site you choose explains these limitations for each photo.



REMEMBER Many of the photos shared for free online, even on image-sharing sites, aren't shot by professional photographers and can sometimes look a little rough or amateurish. However, you can still find plenty of professional-quality photos on these sites.

Most stock-image sites require you to pay a fee. It can either be a monthly fee, where you're granted permission to use a set amount of photos, or a per-photo fee. You may also be required to attribute the photo to the photo-sharing site so that everyone knows where the image came from.



TIP Some design applications such as Canva (www.canva.com) provide their own library of images, videos, music, and so on that you can use in your designs. On the freemium plan, your options are limited, however if you're a paying subscriber, you get full access to whatever they have to offer to use however you want to.

Sharing images on photo-sharing sites

Images aren't useful only for illustrating your content. They're also handy as a marketing tool. When you share and upload your own images, you can reach a whole new audience. For example, if you like to photograph local architecture, you can post your images to a photo-sharing site, such as Unsplash (see [Figure 2-5](#)), and catch the eye of people who are also into architecture. They may end up following you on X or Instagram because they enjoy your take on the subject matter.

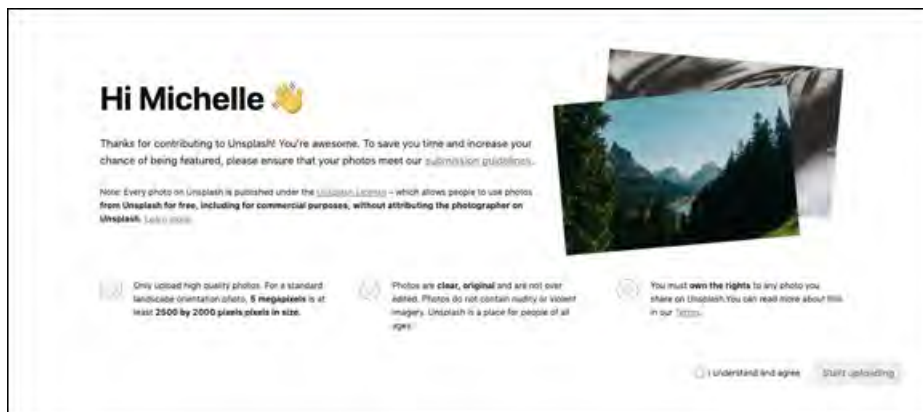


FIGURE 2-5: Use a photo-sharing site, such as Unsplash, to help market your brand.



TIP When you allow others to use your images, you also create an opportunity for backlinks. When users attribute a photograph to you and link to your website, they're alerting search engines, which is always a very good thing. Moreover, others will follow the attribution to your blog or website, and some may even become members of your community.

Sharing photos is also a way to establish expertise. For example, foodies often share images of their latest culinary creations or a wonderful dinner out. If your business is an auto dealership, sharing images based on the cars you sell can help bring in new business. If you sell cosmetics, sharing before-and-after makeover pictures can lead to sales. If you tag people in images on your Facebook page, their friends might see those photos. In this sense, tagging can lead to new customers and community members.

Oftentimes, when you post an image on a social network devoted to image sharing, others will comment. Those comments lead to a whole new way to grow your community.

Smartphone users like using Instagram and Snapchat to share images. See [Book 7](#) for more on visual social sharing.



TIP

When you share an image on photo-sharing sites, make sure to leave contact information. This is helpful in case someone wants to share the image or find out more about you.

Using Social Media Platforms for Online Content

Most people don't usually think of social media updates such as on X or Facebook as "content." However, social media is an important part of any content-marketing strategy. (See [Chapter 3](#) in this minibook for the lowdown on developing your content-marketing strategy.) Not only are all your posts and updates considered content, but you can also use social media as a marketing tool for your blog posts, videos, and podcasts.

Although I'm going to cover the nitty-gritty details of how to use Facebook and X later in this book, I'd be remiss if I didn't at least share here why you need to include social media in discussions about content and content marketing.

Why social media? Here are some reasons:

- » **Social media can be good SEO.** Public social media updates can appear in searches.
- » **Your customers and potential customers are on the social networks.** It makes sense to go where the people are. If your customers are using Facebook, Instagram, and X, it's well worth your time to spend time talking to them on those platforms.
- » **Social media can help more people to see your content.** Not everyone will see your blog or video updates. Sharing on social media not only puts your content in front of more eyeballs, but your customers may also share that content, giving it even more exposure.
- » **Social media is a good way to update customers and community.** If you have quick updates, using X, LinkedIn, or Facebook will share your news without having to invest a lot of time creating.
- » **Social media is affordable.** The social-networking platforms are all free to use, although sites like LinkedIn and X offer Premium memberships that give you access to more features.

Deciding which social media platforms to use

Social media encompasses a broad range of platforms. For example, blogs, video, image sharing, and podcasting all fall under social media's wide umbrella. Social media also includes the different social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, X, TikTok, and LinkedIn.

Like all other content-marketing platforms, you don't have to have a presence on every social media platform available. When brands sign on for too many platforms, at least one of them ends up in neglect. It's much better to have a presence on a few platforms than to have dead space and old news on an existing platform. Try building up one platform at a time rather than spreading yourself thin on a variety of social networks.

How do you know what platforms to choose? Here are some questions to help you determine the best platform(s) for you:

- » **Where are your customers?** Before you sign up for a social media platform, understand the platform's demographics and how that platform relates to your customers' and clients' demographics. For example, if your brand is hoping to attract teens, you have a better chance of doing so on Instagram or Snapchat than on Facebook. If you sell crafting or home design products, Pinterest is your game.
- » **What platforms are your competitors neglecting?** I hope you are investigating your competitors' social media use. If so, there are two items to note:
 - Are they dominating a particular platform? This means that your customers are using that platform, too, and you want to get in on it.
 - Do you see an opportunity for growth and outreach on another platform that your competitors aren't using? It might be worth your while to consider testing the waters there as well, so that you can be the dominant force for your niche.
- » **Which platforms are you best equipped to handle?** Can you write better than you can take photos? If so, Facebook is probably a better place to begin than Instagram. Do you only have a few minutes a day to dedicate to posting? Then X probably isn't your best bet because updates on that platform tend to get lost very quickly due to the sheer volume of tweets posted each day.
- » **What is your budget?** Can you spend money on your social media efforts? You have a better chance of having your content seen on Facebook and Instagram if you purchase advertising through Meta. X and LinkedIn also offer more visibility to those who pay to play. These aren't deal breakers, however, and you can still reach your customers and community in a smaller capacity without a big budget.
- » **What kind of content will you be sharing?** If you prefer to share photos over words, you'll want to choose a more visual platform like Instagram or Pinterest. If videos are your schtick, then TikTok or YouTube are where it's at. However, Facebook lends itself better to having a conversation around a video or blog post.



REMEMBER Don't spend too much time agonizing over a high follower count on the social networks. The numbers aren't as important as making quality connections and cultivating existing relationships. The quality over quantity route is infinitely more rewarding than random Follows just to up your numbers. These days, follower count is considered a *vanity metric* that is cool to look at and you definitely want to make sure

it's going in the right direction (up!), but it's not a complete sign that your social media efforts are paying off.

Creating and sharing content with social media

Social media serves a dual purpose in your content-marketing strategy. You can use it as a way to create content, but also as a way to share content.

You start with using social media as a content-creation platform. What's interesting about the social networks is how many different things you can do with them. Here are some ideas:

- » Use X to tell 280-character stories about your brand. If you have a story that takes up more than 280 characters, then you can create *threads* to keep your tweets together.
- » Use Instagram to create a *meme* (a viral photo people use to write and share funny captions) using your photos. Also, use Instagram to share tips, for example, when styling shoes, jewelry, or accessories with an outfit. (If yours is a brand that does this sort of thing.)
- » Use Snapchat or TikTok to create visual stories about your business.
- » Use Pinterest to share design tips and how-to's. If you handle marketing for a hair or nail salon, or sell products to the same, use Pinterest to share different hair or nail style tips.
- » Use Facebook to share product information, unique recipes, and photos of attractive place settings. Food product manufacturers would do well to share original recipes on Facebook.
- » Use LinkedIn's blogging platform to share tips for professionals.

In addition to using social media as a tool for content creation, it's also a terrific tool for sharing content on different platforms. Every bit of content you post online should have the capability to be shared on the social networks as well. So, if you publish a blog post, you'll also want to share the link on all the social networks in which a brand has a presence.



TIP You want to give your online community the opportunity to share your content as well. For example, you might notice blog and online articles have buttons near the top or bottom of the content where the author invites readers to share the post on Facebook, X, YouTube, and even LinkedIn. See [Figure 2-6](#) for an example of share buttons.



FIGURE 2-6: Use share buttons to make it easy for others to share your content.

You'll find that when your brand has a loyal online community, they will want to share your content with others. Having share buttons allows them to do that with just a couple of clicks.

Guest Blogging to Grow Awareness and Expertise

Another way to use content to drive traffic to your website is through guest blogging. *Guest blogging* enables you to create content to showcase your expertise, but you're posting it to someone else's blog. This might seem counterproductive, but there's a definite purpose to guest blogging.

[Figure 2-7](#) shows the Type-A Parent blog with a guest blog post. With guest blogging you can do the following:

- » **Share your perspective with a new audience.** The purpose of guest blogging is to find people who don't hang out in the usual places. You're expanding your network.
- » **Benefit from some quid pro quo.** If you provide a guest post for someone else's blog, then chances are good that if you ask them to write one for yours, they'll oblige.
- » **Grow backlinks for your blog.** Guest blogging is terrific SEO. When another blog links to your blog, you now have what are called *backlinks*. Backlinks are important for driving traffic and catching the attention of the search engines.

- » **Sell to people who you might not have reached otherwise.** Because you're reaching out to a new community, you've expanded your selling base. Guest blogging can lead to new fans, newsletter signups, and even sales.



FIGURE 2-7: Guest blogging gives you the opportunity to reach a new customer base.

Understanding guest blogging

Guest blogging is a form of content marketing in which you're writing articles for someone else's blog or website. Even though your content is on a blog that isn't owned by you, you still reap many benefits. As you discovered in Book 2, [Chapter 2](#), having other blogs link to your site attracts people to your site and helps your site rank higher on search engines.

Just as when writing content for your own blog, guest blog posts have to offer something of value. You won't have many people inviting you to guest blog if you share only fluff. Guest blogging content should teach, inspire, or cause people to take action. However, guest blog posts should never sell. Nothing turns off readers more than a blatant sales pitch.

Something else to know before you write your first guest blog post is that you shouldn't write an article filled with links to your blog or website. Most blog owners allow a link in a bio, where you can describe your expertise and link back to your business. Some bloggers also allow a relevant link in the body of the guest blog post. It's best to ask each blogger their policy on linking back to your site. Everyone who accepts guest blog posts does so with the knowledge that there will be at least one link back to the guest blogger's site of choice.



TIP Don't limit yourself to a particular subject or demographic. Think about all the types of websites that can benefit from your content. For example, if you are a writer, reach out to a variety of businesses in which writing is relevant to what they do. So, you might create a guest post for a marketing company on writing sales copy or calls to action, or one for a real estate school on writing effective home descriptions.

Finding relevant blogs and pitching your content

If you'd like to include guest blogging as part of your content strategy, it's important to put

together a list of relevant blogs and websites so you know to whom you should pitch your guest blog post:

Consider the following when looking for relevant blogs for your content:

- » **Relevant subject matter:** You don't have to stick to the exact subject matter, but the topics should be somewhat related. It wouldn't do to submit a post on the benefits of free-range chickens to a vegan recipe blog, for example.
- » **Search engine ranking:** Do your best to choose blogs that rank high on search engines. For example, *AllTop* is a favorite for people who want to submit guest blog posts because it ranks so high in searches.
- » **An engaged community:** Find blogs with active readers. If a blog has many active discussions going on in its comments section or on social networks, your guest post might receive the same attention. This attention can drive interest to your own blog, which can result in action.
- » **Traffic:** It makes no sense to post to a blog that receives no traffic. Research each blog to make sure it has a good flow of traffic to both blogs and social networks.
- » **A positive reputation:** Make sure the blog fits your own rules for engagement. For example, if you provide a family atmosphere, you don't want to risk your reputation by posting to an adult-oriented blog.

After you have an idea of whom you'd like to share a guest post with, it's time to work on your pitch.



TIP Nothing makes bloggers less inclined to accept your guest blog post than a cookie-cutter pitch. If you tailor each pitch to fit the individual blog, you'll have a better chance of acceptance.

Consider the following questions when pitching to another blogger:

- » **Who is the blogger?** Make sure you know exactly to whom you're pitching. Use names when reaching out and make it clear you know who the bloggers are and what they do.
- » **Do you understand the subject matter?** In your pitch, it's important to show that you know the focus of the other person's blog and how your business — and guest blog post — are related.
- » **What will readers learn or take away from your blog post?** Why should someone else give up precious bandwidth for your post? Your pitch should detail talking points and takeaways so that the blogger has a good idea of the value you offer to their community.
- » **What is your end result with guest blogging?** Why are you guest blogging? Are you promoting a product? Are you launching your business? Do you want to establish yourself as a thought leader? Make your intentions clear.



REMEMBER Your writing is reflected in your pitch. Be sure to proofread; you don't want to create a bad impression with typos or grammatical errors.

Promoting your guest blog posts

When you pitch a guest blog post, make sure the person you're pitching to knows that you are going to help promote it.

For example, you can do the following:

- » **Share the blog post on social networks.** Post your guest blog post on Facebook, X, LinkedIn, and anywhere else you feel your readers will benefit from the link.
- » **Link to the blog post on your own blog or website.** You can link to your guest blog posts in different places, including a bio page, an About page, or a media page (where you list all your online contributions), or even as a relevant link in articles or blog posts.
- » **Share the blog post in your newsletter.** Don't forget to share your guest blog post in your newsletter. Many people subscribe to newsletters so that they don't have to become members of online groups or fan pages.



REMEMBER Guest blogging is a two-way street. Don't assume you're being allowed to submit guest blog posts because the other bloggers are kind. They would like you to also drive traffic to their own website. Make sure you promote your guest blog post in a way that benefits everyone involved.

Chapter 3

Developing a Content-Marketing Strategy

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » **Thinking about what you want to achieve with your content**
 - » **Developing a content strategy**
 - » **Outlining your strategy on paper**
-

All content needs a plan. It's not enough to write something and post it to your blog platform; you also want to take the time to plan your content so it makes sense. If you're just posting without any clear direction, your content can become confusing, and your customers won't know what actions to take.

Having a clear content-marketing strategy is even more important than the content itself. Without a plan, you won't be able to see the big picture and you'll be creating and posting without a result in mind. Having a strategy in place allows you to focus on traffic, sales, and growth. A strategy helps you know what kind of content to create and how to achieve the desired growth with that content.

This chapter talks about putting a content-marketing strategy together to achieve your objectives.

Determining Content Goals

Because you're reading this section, you're probably thinking about starting a blog, podcast, or video series, and you want to learn how to do so to achieve a particular result. Knowing why you're creating content is the first — and the most important — step in your content-marketing strategy.

Here's a look at many of the goals that businesses and business people hope to achieve with their content strategies:

- » **Drive traffic.** Your content will help to bring new traffic to your blog or website.
- » **Make sales.** If you have a product or service to promote, sales is probably your top reason for wanting to learn more about content marketing. Content is terrific for selling because you can drive traffic directly to your sales page or website.
- » **Build brand recognition.** By putting out content regularly, you're increasing readership or viewership. After you have an audience, you're creating brand recognition. If you're recognized as sharing useful or entertaining content, people will know your brand and your logo. When it comes time to buy, your business will come to mind because you

already have an online presence.

- » **Establish expertise.** Content can be educational. You can use your content to share product information, details, and usage tips, or you can use your content to establish expertise for your personal or professional brand. If you share useful and important information, your community will see you as somewhat of an expert.
- » **Improve search engine rankings.** Plenty of good-quality content can help your business land on the first or second page of the top search engines.
- » **Build trust.** Your content enables you to be transparent with customers and community. When you're honest about what you do and keep an open line of communication, people have trust in the brand. Trust equals sales.
- » **Inspire customer loyalty.** Content that informs and rewards customers can also inspire customer loyalty. Your customers will not only make return visits to your content channels but also share your content with others.
- » **Generate subscriptions and registrations.** Content can lead to newsletter signups or website registrations. For example, you can direct traffic to a specific page or offer premium content (such as an e-book) in exchange for a signup or registration. I describe how content can help drive sales and grow your mailing list in the "[Collecting leads with your content](#)" section, later in this chapter.
- » **Engage customers.** Content allows your customers to chat with you. Whether it's friendly banter on X or a more opinionated discussion on your blog, they'll appreciate having a voice.
- » **Build links to your content.** A content-marketing strategy is a link-building strategy. As long as you're providing valuable content to your consumers, other businesses and professionals will link to your content so that they can share it with their own communities. All those backlinks are good search engine optimization (SEO).
- » **Generate leads or new opportunities.** Smart content leads to smart opportunities. For example, if you regularly blog on important topics in your industry, those blog discussions can land you new clients or speaking engagements.



TIP

Not everyone uses their content for the same purpose, so you can't count on doing what everyone else is doing online. Take some time to outline your goals before you begin.



REMEMBER

Some people take great pleasure out of *trolling* the comments sections of websites or social media accounts. I highly recommend you dedicate some time regularly to reading through the comments people are leaving on your content to ensure they're not abusive or derogatory to your brand or other people.

The following sections describe several of these content goals in more detail.

Driving traffic

Traffic is a top goal in most content-marketing strategies. Businesses want to bring traffic to their websites that they can divert to sales or other sign-up pages, but they aren't sure how to drum up interest. By producing relevant, valuable content, you're catching the attention of the search engines.

When you're working out how to use your content to drive traffic, consider the following:

- » **Guest blog posts:** Your content doesn't have to be only on your own pages or platforms. You can also consider writing a guest blog post for another blog. There are great benefits to guest blogging, including backlinks and creating brand visibility. Target the most influential blogs in your niche and read several posts before pitching to make sure you're a good fit. If you think that blogger's audience can benefit from your expertise, send the blogger a note describing the post you'd like to write and asking if they are interested. I talk in depth about guest blogging in Book 3, [Chapter 2](#).
- » **Videos:** If you create a great video, others might want to share it on the social networks. You don't have to make a video that's a big sales pitch, but do put your company's information at the end of the video and link to your website or sales page in the video page's description. The interesting thing about videos is that if everyone is sharing it, they'll mention your name. "Hey, check out this funny video from XYZ brand."
- » **How-to content:** People are always searching online to learn how to do things. If you create useful how-to content that includes descriptive steps to complete a certain task, people will find it online via the search engines and land on your website. If it's truly useful, they may even stick around and read a few more pages or see what you have to sell. If the content receives a lot of traffic, you may even consider creating a video showing the steps you outlined in the written content to get even more eyes on it.
- » **Lists:** List blog posts come in many shapes and sizes, and they serve a variety of purposes. You can create a list of influential professionals in your niche or list steps to achieving a specific goal. You can even create funny lists such as those at BuzzFeed. The beauty of the list post is how it gets shared. If people enjoy your list or find it useful, it has the potential to go viral, which can lead to a lot of traffic and backlinks.
- » **Calls to action:** If you want to get people to take a specific action, lead them there with a *call to action* (CTA). For example, if you're posting a link to your content on Facebook, give a call to action such as, "To learn more about building treehouses, see over 150 plans with step-by-step instructions for each at our website."
- » **Optimized content, including photos:** Use your keywords to attract search engines. Don't make the words repetitious and annoying, but do insert keywords and key phrases as needed. Save photos with keywords in your metatags as well, so that you can bring in traffic from users searching images online.
- » **Social networks:** Sharing links to your content with a brief call to action will send traffic from Facebook, X, and all the social networks you use to share with your community.

- » **Easy sharing:** Using share buttons on all your content will inspire others to post your content to their Facebook news feeds, Pinterest boards, or X streams, or to email that content to friends who might have an interest.
- » **Relationships with influential people:** Use your content to build relationships. For example, profile or interview influential people on your blog. They'll share that content in return, possibly bringing in a few new sales.



TIP

Content marketing isn't about advertising or spamming. Calls to action shouldn't be overly "pitchy." The idea behind content marketing is that your content will be so interesting and useful, it will catch the attention of search engines, as well as the people who can benefit from such content.

Making sales

Okay, to be honest, even though you don't want content to seem as if you're selling, you want sales — otherwise, you wouldn't be marketing so hard. People who consume your content know this. For example, people know a brand such as Starbucks has a great social media presence to sell its products, and no one holds it against the company. The only thing they would hold against a brand is obnoxious sales tactics.

So, how do you sell through content without being pushy? Here are a few ideas that might help:

- » **Use a call to action.** Have a call to action at the bottom or end of your content. For example, suppose your content is a how-to project for building a birdhouse, and you list all the materials and steps needed to create a beautiful birdhouse. At no time during the tutorial itself should you sell. However, when it's all over, you can post a relevant link with this call to action: "Stop by our website to purchase plans and materials needed to complete this project." You didn't sell at all, but you did give a suggestion at the end. Even if people don't buy right then, they now know where to go when it comes time for them to build their birdhouses.
- » **Use newsletters.** Another way businesses use content to sell is through a newsletter signup. For example, through calls to action on blogs, websites, and social networks, brands invite their customers and community to subscribe to their newsletters. Many businesses even offer something of value in exchange for the newsletter signup — for example, a coupon for significant savings or an e-book. Each week, the brand sends subscribers a newsletter that features tips and news and also links to sales and discounts. Many of the discounts are offered only to subscribers.
- » **Answer questions.** You can also try answering questions. If you notice customers or potential customers ask the same questions, address those questions in your content, giving your customers the ability to buy with confidence.
- » **Follow the one-percent rule.** Content should follow a 99:1 ratio. That is, only 1 percent of your content should be a sales pitch. The rest of your content should focus on helping,

educating, and entertaining. Your customers will prefer to support you by reading your content and buying your products or services, as needed, rather than to read spiel and jargon all the time.

- » **Focus on your customers' needs.** Your content should have a purpose. For example, it can answer common questions that your customers may have. You can also use it to teach how the product or service works and establish expertise in a niche.
- » **Provide proof.** People have to know that what you're selling works. Create *infographics* (images listing facts) and case studies, or share reviews from existing customers.



REMEMBER Although traditional advertising and marketing still has its place, selling today is less about heavy block letters and lots of exclamation points. Instead, people are inspired to buy after consuming content and feeling as if they can trust a person or brand.

Establishing expertise

Content marketing allows both businesses and individuals to share expertise in a niche or topic group. For example, authors or independent contractors can use content to prove to their potential readers or clients that they know their topic.

Some of the methods used for establishing expertise include the following:

- » **Blog posts, articles, case studies, online reports, and white papers:** Text-based content is excellent for sharing tips, knowledge, facts, demographic information, and anything written that highlights your particular expertise.
- » **E-books and traditional books:** Books enable you to expand beyond the blog post. You can offer a book as a perk to entice people into buying, sell it to earn some side cash, or offer it for free to gain name recognition.
- » **Videos:** You can use video for interviews, product demonstrations, case studies, and even mini-webinars. Video allows you an opportunity to connect with your audience because they can hear your voice and see your facial expressions.
- » **Guest blog posts:** Reach out to influential bloggers in your niche and ask them if you can offer a guest post for their blogs or if you can exchange blog posts. Appearing in another person's blog gives you an opportunity to expand your reach.



REMEMBER If you want people to see you as an expert in your field, use content marketing.

Growing your online community

Another common content-marketing goal is for online community growth and development. Your content gives you an opportunity to open up the channels and communication between you and your customers. Through your content, you also have the ability to foster loyal

relationships, the kind that lead to word-of-mouth marketing. What follows are some ways content helps to grow your online community:

- » **Have a dialogue.** Your content opens up a two-way line of communication. Through your content, you can address a variety of consumer- or product-related issues, and through comment areas and social media, your customers can respond.
- » **Collect and respond to feedback.** When you give your customers a chance to talk to you via your content, you have a wonderful opportunity to learn how they truly feel about your product or service. They'll share the bad and the good, which can help you improve. When your online community sees you responding to their comments and concerns, it builds trust. Trust equals sales.
- » **Build brand loyalty.** All the trust you establish means customers who care about your product or service. That loyalty means they stay with the brand and recommend it to others.
- » **Grow your social media presence.** When you share content online, your community will want to follow you on all online platforms. You can also use social networks to discuss content. For example, if you post an article to Facebook, your Facebook community can have a conversation about the article in the comments section of the same Facebook post.
- » **Share promotions and discounts.** Through your content, you can offer special sales for your online customers, and also offer coupon codes and other discounts.



TIP No one likes to receive negative feedback or a bad review. But it's vitally important that you don't delete these comments but instead, address them publicly (if appropriate). If the situation requires looking up personal account or purchase information, then reply to the person publicly that you'll be sending them a DM (direct message) to signal to others that you've acknowledged the negative comment and you're handling it in private. This transparency helps build trust within your audience.

Collecting leads with your content

Your content has another important purpose — lead generation. Building your mailing list is an essential part of your content-marketing strategy and should be one of your top goals.

Having customers and potential customers sign up for a newsletter or other type of online subscription can drive a lot more sales than if you had relied on content marketing without incorporating email contact. A database of email or even snail mail addresses means you can share your content directly.

How do you get people to sign up or subscribe without a heavy sales pitch? By offering them something of value for free. For example, many brands create e-books, white papers, and in-depth reports that they offer for free if their customers register for their newsletter using a valid email address.

First, you have to convince your community that they will receive something of value. In

addition to the free content, regularly send them a newsletter or *email nurture* in their email inboxes. Make sure these follow-up emails contain tips, ideas, news, and discounts — discounts that lead to sales.



REMEMBER Make sure you're adhering to all privacy laws when collecting information from people. Many countries have their own individual laws like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe (<https://gdpr-info.eu/issues/email-marketing>) and the CAN-SPAM Act in the United States (www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business) that have guidelines about how personal information (including email addresses) can be collected and used.

Putting a Strategy on Paper

When you have a good idea about the types of goals you hope to accomplish with your content-marketing strategy, put your strategy on paper in an order that makes sense to you and your team. If you don't take the time to list all your goals, as well as the steps needed to achieve those goals, you may forget an important step along the way.

Understanding the elements of a content-marketing strategy

Components of a successful marketing strategy include the following:

- » **Definition of goals:** Define goals so everyone who reads and uses the strategy has a clear picture of what you're hoping to achieve with content marketing.
- » **Core message:** What message are you trying to share with your customers and community? Is it a sales message? Are you trying to raise awareness for a cause? Do you want to share details for a new product? Keep your core message in mind while you plan your strategy.
- » **Target audience:** Knowing whom you're trying to reach can help you to focus on content and platform.
- » **Keywords:** Pinpoint the words and phrases people are using to lead to your website and your competitors' websites. Discuss ways you can use these keywords in your strategy.
- » **Content platform and types of content:** Your strategy should include a plan of action for each different platform, which can include blogs, websites, images, and the social networks.
- » **Editorial calendar:** An editorial calendar should list the content you're releasing each week, as well as deadlines for all. (I talk about putting together an editorial calendar in Book 3, [Chapter 4](#).)
- » **Task delegation:** A strategy is made up of tasks. Delegate tasks as part of the strategy, complete with deadlines, or nothing will get done.

- » **Reporting and analytics:** Keeping careful records is essential to any strategy so that you can know what works and what doesn't, and how to tweak next time around.

Doing a content inventory

What content do you have already, and what have you done with it? For example, do you have a blog? If so, are you only posting once a week? Consider the steps needed to get people to view your content. Also, what unpublished content do you have that might be useful to your community? For example, you can repurpose internal reports and demographic information into content to share with your readers.



TIP

Make a list of all the content that's available to use and the different ways you can use it. (A spreadsheet is especially handy for putting together these lists.) Using existing content can save time and resources, as compared to creating content from scratch.

You can format a content inventory on a spreadsheet as described in [Table 3-1](#).

TABLE 3-1 Outlining Your Content Inventory on a Spreadsheet

Column	Notes
Type of content	Note whether the content is an article, an e-book, a video, or another form of content. When you're planning your editorial calendar, mix around the types of content you're using. For example, don't release five videos in the same week. Having a list of the types of content available can help you avoid doubling or tripling up on the platform.
Name of content	When choosing a title for your content, think of something that is eye-catching, reflects the content itself, and has the type of keywords that will attract search engines. A good rule of thumb for headlines is, "If I saw this, would I want to learn more?"
Date published, if published	You want to space out the topics so that you're not publishing a repurposed bit of content soon after you published the original.
Description of content	Arrange the list so that you can see, at a glance, what the content is about so that you can plan your editorial calendar accordingly.
Ways to repurpose original content	For example, if someone wrote a blog post that wasn't used, how can you transform it into something that you can use? Also, what previously published content can you rework into something new? List all the different ways your content can be used — or reused.
Notes	Is there anything your team should know about the content? Do you have thoughts about how it should be published? Also, if it was previously published, note whether it was well received or poorly received.

Now that you have the components of your strategy and a content inventory, it's time to think about what's missing:

- » Do you want to cover a topic, a how-to, an editorial, or another type of content that you don't already have as inventory? If so, make a list so that it can become part of your strategy.
- » What are competitors doing that you're not? List all the ways you can take inspiration from people who have a similar business.
- » Is there content you want to create that, as far as you know, no one else is doing? It

doesn't hurt to suggest taking a risk.

Taking steps to achieve your goals

A *strategy* is a plan you put into place to achieve your goals. It lists all the steps you need to complete, along with an explanation of why each step is necessary. You have to sell your strategy to your team, put ideas into place, and assign each task to the best person for the job.

Here's an example of how you might put your content strategy on paper:

- 1. Give an overview of your content strategy.**

You use your overview to sell your content strategy to your team or anyone who has a stake in the business. Talk about why the strategy is necessary and what you hope your result will be. Discuss the problems you hope this strategy will solve and why you feel it would benefit the business and the community as a whole.

- 2. Outline your goals.**

List your goals for the strategy and how the strategy will help you to achieve your goals.

- 3. Discuss your customers and community.**

Whom are you writing for? Profile typical members of your community and customer base. Discuss how your different types of content will appeal to the different demographic groups.

- 4. Share your ideas for content.**

List a clear plan for your content. Include titles, keywords for each title, a platform for each title, and how you plan to share each title on the social networks.

- 5. Discuss how you'll share each piece of content.**

For example, if you record a podcast that features an expert interview, you should share it not only with your community but also with the expert's community. Discuss a strategy for sharing on your pages and the expert's pages (with that expert's input) and targeting mutual influential friends who can also help share.

- 6. Talk about cost.**

Consider how much this will cost. Be honest about the investment involved, what you consider a necessary expense, and what kind of return on investment (ROI) you expect in the long run.

- 7. Provide a call to action.**

The most essential part of your content strategy is the call to action. Whether you're driving traffic, sales, or brand recognition, you need to guide people to the end result.

- 8. Attach an editorial calendar.**

Create an editorial calendar, and include it with your strategy so that your team can see what you have planned in the upcoming months. You'll probably need to tweak the calendar after everyone has a look because they'll all have suggestions and ideas. I discuss how to create an editorial calendar in more detail in [Chapter 4](#) of this minibook.

- 9. Set a follow-up date.**

You're going to have to do a bit of reporting in three to six months to discuss the results of your content strategy. You have to prove it worked and discuss things that went well, things that didn't work, and how to move forward.



TIP

After you have your strategy in place, you or another person on your team will have to keep detailed records, including an analytics report to see whether campaigns and keywords are driving traffic, and a sales report to see whether sales did, indeed, go up.

Chapter 4

Getting Your Content to the Masses

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Planning content
 - » Creating content with staying power
 - » Tapping into the power of AI
 - » Putting your content plan into play
-

Think about content marketing like the old tree-falling-in-the-forest joke. If you put your content online and no one sees it, does it really matter that you took the time to create it? Why invest all that time into writing or creating an awesome video, just to let it languish?

Taking the time to put an editorial calendar into place, as well as a plan for sharing your content, can help to get as many eyes on that content as possible.



TIP Content promotion is equally as important as content creation. Without promotion, no one will know about your blog posts, videos, and other content.

This chapter talks about how to get your content seen. Some of the methods discussed may not be visible to the public (that is, they happen in the background) and may not seem important, but they really do make a difference.

Creating an Editorial Calendar to Keep Content Flowing

You might wonder what an editorial calendar has to do with getting people to view your content. The more organized you are, the better your strategy and your content will come together. An editorial calendar keeps your content team on track and ensures that fresh content is flowing on a regular basis, as shown in [Figure 4-1](#).



FIGURE 4-1: An editorial calendar can help keep your content organized and prioritized.

Exploring the benefits of an editorial calendar

Scheduling content ahead of time is important for several reasons:

- » **Allows the marketing team to plan accordingly:** If your content is part of a particular campaign, or if a campaign is being created around your content, the team has enough time to work rather than plan a hasty, last-minute campaign.
- » **Ensures you won't be duplicating content:** Seeing a month's worth of content on a calendar can help keep you from becoming repetitive and redundant.
- » **Enables you to plan seasonal or timely content:** If you're posting seasonal content, do it at least six weeks in advance to be available for search engine results. With an editorial calendar, you can set reminders to post seasonal content.
- » **Gives everyone deadlines to meet:** With an editorial calendar, everyone can verify when content is due and when to post content online.
- » **Provides transparency:** If you work at an organization that has other departments like a sales team or support team, then having a content calendar available gives them a glimpse into upcoming content so they can help get the word out either to current customers, prospects, or people reaching out for support.
- » **Enables you to post content with regularity:** Editorial calendars keep things consistent. You can see when you last put content online and how long it has been between postings.

Deciding what to include on your calendar

Here are some of the items to list on your editorial calendar:

- » **Content:** The title of the content and a description, if you feel it's necessary.
- » **Types of content:** Blog post, video, podcast, social media updates, newsletter, and so on.
- » **Authors and producers:** Assign the tasks.

- » **Editorial tasks:** If writing needs proofreading or videos need cleaning up, note it on the editorial calendar.
- » **Marketing tasks:** Posting content or links to content on the social sites, creating email newsletters, and any other promotional tasks.
- » **Deadlines:** The day the content is to be completed by the author or producer.
- » **Reminders:** If you need to think about items such as seasonal content or a product launch, put those reminders on the calendar.
- » **Date of publication:** The day that the content goes live.
- » **Publication location:** Where you are posting the content.
- » **Reporting:** If you have to provide accountability to management, note the day reports are due on the editorial calendar.



TIP

Google Calendar is free to use and is stored online. You can share the calendar, so your entire team will have access to it, and you can allow others to add to it. Google Calendar also enables users to set reminders in the form of an email or a pop-up message. This post on Hootsuite also has a number of free downloads for not only content calendars, but also helpful calendars and tracking sheets (<https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-templates>).



WARNING

Don't load up your editorial calendar with so many details that it's hard to read. The calendar should act only as a reminder. You can go into greater detail in your content-marketing strategy and with your project management program, if you're using one.

Finding the Right Mix between Evergreen and Timely Content

When you write a news analysis, do a product review, launch a product or service, or discuss an industry trend, this content gets more or less dated as time passes. It may bring in some eyeballs when the news first breaks, but after a while, searches for these news items or product news will trickle to a stop.

On the other hand, evergreen content has the potential to be searchable indefinitely. A blog post titled "How to Change a Tire" is a good example of evergreen content. Some other examples of evergreen content follow:

- » How-to's
- » Histories (even if it's the history of a certain product or service)

- » Biographies
- » Informational posts (for example, “The Health Benefits of Bananas”)
- » Etiquette (for example, “The Etiquette of Commenting on Blogs”)
- » Rules (for example, “Rules of Grammar”)

Achieving a good balance with your content is important. You want both trendy and evergreen content. If not, you’ll receive spikes in traffic here and there but not a steady rise, which is what you really want.



WARNING Many bloggers go for shocking headlines and controversial content in hopes of snagging the retweet crowd. This approach works sometimes, but your content and page traffic will spike and drop off. To keep traffic numbers high all the time, make the content consistent and appealing to searchers and readers for months, if not years.

Evergreen content is highly linkable as well. With the right kind of content, you’ll always have something to link to internally. Plus, other content creators can use your content as a reference for their own blog posts. Also, consider how evergreen content works for all platforms: text, video, and audio.



TIP If you write three blog posts per week, try writing an evergreen post once during that week. Soon, you’ll see regular, steady streams of traffic rather than one-off spikes like you’d get with scandalous news or controversy.

Jumping on the AI-Generated Content Train

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionized the way many professions have approached their crafts. You have AI engines that can write computer code, create realistic illustrations and photos, and of course, create written content.

There were concerns that AI would replace all *knowledge workers* in the very near future. Some of that concern was warranted as many companies unfortunately jumped at the chance to save money by replacing their workforce with AI. But the smart companies didn’t make such hasty decisions, knowing that the consequences of using AI to replace sentient human beings was uncharted territory. And their hesitation has paid off, because they’re the companies who are now able to more easily differentiate themselves online because their content wasn’t created *by the same AI engine that created everyone else’s content*.

If you’re here reading this section, then you’re one of the lucky ones who won’t have to spend countless hours replacing the pages and pages of boring, personality-less content they created using AI tools. Some part of you recognized that it’s more about adapting to work *smarter* as opposed to using machines to work *harder*, but with lackluster results.

So, let's get into how you can use AI to help *you* take your content marketing to the next level!

Understanding the dos and don'ts of using AI-generated content

Like many things in this world, using AI to generate online content for your business isn't all good or all bad. It's all about educating yourself on both sides of the coin and making the best decision for you. Here are some points to keep in mind when deciding whether to go the route of AI to generate content:

- » **Do** put some time in researching any AI tool you're considering. Look at online reviews, sign up for free trials or freemium level accounts, and do a Google search to read any conversation threads on forums or social media sites.
- » **Don't** take any reviews they have on their website as your only source of information. Of course they're only going to be positive! Especially beware if the application offers an incentive to anyone who leaves a positive review on either their website or any other review website.
- » **Do** compare all the features of the tool before committing to one. Some offer a lot more functionality such as SEO feedback, plagiarism checks, the ability to customize the "tone" of the content, and more.
- » **Don't** fall for the discounts they give for signing up for an annual contract right up front. Sure, no one wants to pay an extra \$20 a month for a month-to-month subscription, but the only way to *truly* know if the tool meets your needs is to dive in and experience it fully for a month or two. If it turns out that you absolutely love the tool, you can sign up for an annual subscription at that point and be (fairly) confident that it'll meet your needs for the next 12 months.



TIP Sometimes when you're on a month-to-month plan with one of these applications, they'll send you emails with deeper discounts if you switch over to an annual plan. Resist the urge until you're *really* sure ... then dive in!

- » **Do** go into it with the idea that whatever result you get from the AI content creation tool is just a starting point. You're going to have to go in and "humanize" the results to make it into the conversational and approachable writing that attracts readers.
- » **Don't** blindly publish anything that the tool spits back at you. There have been several documented cases where the information provided by the AI tool is blatantly false. In fact, ChatGPT even has a tiny little disclaimer at the bottom of the main page that says, "ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important info."
- » **Do** use it to speed up your content creation process by asking it to perform research (but again ... double-check your facts!), create an outline for a blog post or e-book, give you blog topic ideas based on a theme, or even explain a complicated concept to you in easy-to-understand terms.

- » **Don't** use it to become a content factory where you're churning fluffy blog post after fluffy blog post that doesn't really provide any value to the reader. Content marketing is *always* quality over quantity.

Striking a balance to ensure SEO success

The last section discusses some important do's and don'ts when it comes to using AI to create content for your online presence. So how do you make sure you're balancing the convenience that these tools provide while also ensuring you're keeping your readers (and the search engines) happy by providing high-quality, informative content?

At the time of this writing, Google has made it clear that AI-generated content will not impact search rankings (see developers.google.com/search/blog/2023/02/google-search-and-ai-content) as long as your content remains helpful, original, and relevant.

Google uses a set of guidelines they refer to as E-E-A-T when determining how the search engine should be ranked content. Here's what that acronym stands for and what it means for content creators:

- » **Expertise.** Demonstrate that your content is crafted by individuals with genuine, first-hand expertise on the subject. This can be achieved through author bios, "behind-the-scenes" insights, or by integrating personal experiences directly into the content.
- » **Experience.** Showcase your expertise on the topic by providing in-depth, accurate content, highlighting author credentials, and referencing credible sources and studies.
- » **Authoritativeness.** Strengthen your brand's authority by regularly delivering high-quality content, gaining recognition and mentions from reputable sites, and building a solid reputation within your industry.
- » **Trustworthiness.** Be open about the creators behind your content, offer accessible contact and customer service details, uphold a positive reputation, and adhere to ethical content standards.

As long as you're taking E-E-A-T into account when using AI to generate content, you should be appeasing the search engine gods ... at least for now.

Taking advantage of the different AI content tools

Now that you know about some best practices to keep in mind when deciding if using an AI tool to generate content is the right move for you and your business, it's time to get into some of the more popular tools out there, shown in [Table 4-1](#), that you can put to good use!

TABLE 4-1 Popular AI Content Creation Tools

Site	URL	Description
ChatGPT	https://chatgpt.com/	Probably the most well-known out of all the AI content tools, though it offers few bells and whistles outside of straight content writing. Offers both free and a Plus option for \$20/month.
Grammarly	www.grammarly.com	Described as an "AI writing partner," it's more of a tool to polish up what you're writing as opposed to originating full-blown blog posts. A helpful Google Docs plug-in will automatically check your work as you go. There's a freemium plan, and paid plans start at \$30/month (billed monthly).

Jasper	www.jasper.ai	Provides tailored suggestions and templates for various types of writing, including blogs, social media, and ad copy. It uses advanced language models to create natural, contextually relevant text, streamlining the content creation process. There's a 7-day free trial, then plans start at \$49/month (billed monthly)
Copy.ai	www.copy.ai	Helps users create engaging content for marketing, social media, and blogs by providing customizable templates and creative prompts. It simplifies content creation by generating text that aligns with user goals and brand voice, saving time and enhancing productivity. The tool offers a freemium version, and paid versions start at \$49/month when billed monthly.
SEOWind	seowind.io	If creating SEO content is at the top of your to-do list, this tool aids in generating SEO-optimized articles by providing insights, outlines, and relevant keywords based on top-ranking content. It streamlines the writing process by delivering data-driven recommendations to improve search rankings and content relevance. There's a 3-day trial, and then plans start at \$59/month if billed monthly.
Type	type.ai	Type is an AI writing assistant that enhances content creation by offering smart suggestions, real-time collaboration, and tools to improve clarity and creativity. It optimizes the writing process, helping users produce high-quality content more efficiently and effectively. Plans start at \$29/month after a 14-day free trial.
Writesonic	writesonic.com	Writesonic assists with creating high-quality content for blogs, ads, social media, and websites by generating well-crafted text tailored to user specifications. It streamlines content production through various templates and language options, making it versatile for different writing needs. It includes 25 credits for free (good for one high-quality blog post) and plans start at \$20/month (billed monthly).
Claude	claude.ai	This tool is designed to assist with tasks like drafting text, answering questions, and brainstorming ideas. It's built for natural, conversational interactions, helping users generate insights, summaries, and solutions across various topics efficiently. There's a freemium version and paid plans start at \$20/month. Annual discounts kick in if you choose the next highest level (Team).

Executing Your Content Strategy

After you receive approval for your content strategy and you've decided whether or not you're going to use an AI tool to help you create content, it's time to put the wheels in motion. What was once on paper now has to go to work in real time.

Follow these steps to execute your content strategy:

1. Schedule and assign tasks.

Get your content strategy going:

- a. *Add all necessary items to your editorial calendar.*
- b. *Assign tasks in your project management system.*

2. Make sure all aspects of your content strategy are working as planned.

Your strategy needs to be on target and on time:

- *Request periodic updates or progress reports.* Check on each task halfway through. If you're using a project management system such as Basecamp, you'll find areas where you can communicate with your team, as well as receive notifications and reminders when something is due or past due.
- *Make sure things are on track and on schedule.* Check to make sure everything is going according to schedule. If someone is falling behind, see what needs to be done to meet your deadlines.



REMEMBER Be strict with deadlines; otherwise, no one will adhere to them.

3. **Make sure all your team's hard work is paying off.**

Keep tabs on how things are going:

- *Review your measurement tools.* You have to know whether all your team's efforts are working. Keep an eye on your analytics to see whether you're achieving your goals.
- *Report any findings.* Keep records and set up regular reports — weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annually. Compare numbers and note trends.
- *Make recommendations to improve your content strategy.* A content strategy isn't a static document. It requires updating and reworking.



REMEMBER Don't rest on your laurels. As long as there's an Internet, you need to put out content. Keep repeating the cycle and tweaking as needed.

Sharing Your Content with the Public

You're going to have to do more than set it and forget it when it comes to your content. This is where the *marketing* part of the content-marketing strategy comes in.

Social media is a wonderful tool for sharing. Don't be afraid to use the different platforms, but don't share only links to your own content. If you're overly promotional and only toot your horn, you'll lose friends and followers rather than earn new members of your community.

Here are some suggestions for sharing your content with the public:

- » **Share your content with Facebook fans.** When you share your content on Facebook, it shows up in your fans' news feeds. If they like the content, they'll share it with their friends, and so on and so forth. This is how content goes viral. ([Figure 4-2](#) shows how readers share content they feel is entertaining or informative.)
- » **Share links to your content on X.** Sharing links to your content on X means the links will show up in your followers' feeds. If they like the content, they'll repost it to their followers.
- » **Share your content on other social networks, such as LinkedIn and Pinterest.** You want your content to be seen by as many people as possible (see [Figure 4-3](#)).
- » **Content swaps.** Building up relationships with other bloggers and companies has many benefits, one of them being you can do *content swaps* where the other party writes an article or blog post for your site and vice versa and you both promote the content. It's a

win/win situation!



WARNING Be sure that the content being swapped is original content, or else you both could be penalized by search engines for having duplicate content on your sites.

- » **Share content in your regular newsletter.** Does your business have a regular newsletter? (If it doesn't, it should!) Include a brief excerpt (a paragraph or two) of new content with a link to the full article, video, or image.
- » **Other email marketing.** Did you release a new e-book, white paper, or research report? Send out an email to your list letting them know about it and give a few bullets of what they'll learn if they download it.



REMEMBER If you're sending *gated content* to your email list, it means you ... well ... already have their email addresses. So, consider this a freebie and include the link to the ungated version.



FIGURE 4-2: Sharing your content on Facebook gives it the potential to go viral.

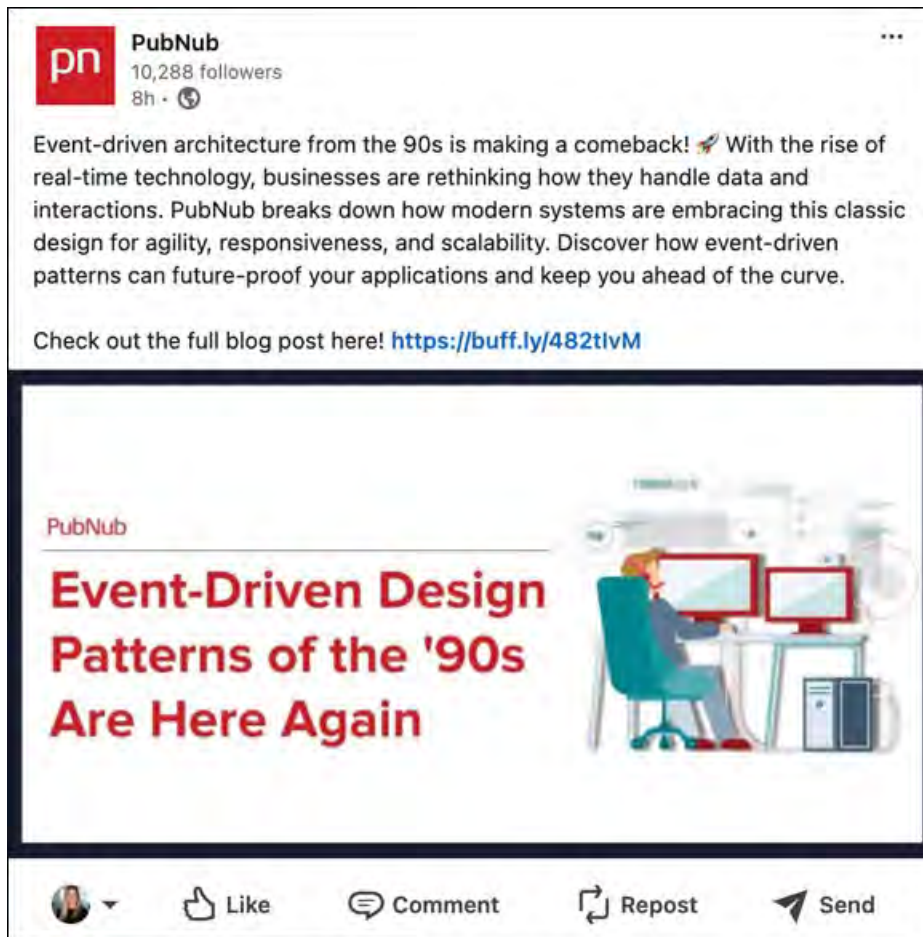


FIGURE 4-3: LinkedIn is another great place to share your content.

- » **Ads.** If you created a new piece of gated content, consider running online ads to push people to download it. You can do this via Google Ads or ads on social media sites. I discuss online advertising more throughout [Book 8](#).
- » **Enlist the help of your team members.** Send out an email to your entire company telling them of new content and ask for their help in getting the word out about it. Include prewritten social posts to make it even easier on them. Remind them that the content is always posted on the company's social media channels, so another option is for them to just click the Share button!
- » **Reach out to influential professionals.** If you know of influential professionals in your niche who have a good reach via social media or an email newsletter, see whether you can build up some sort of relationship in which you share each other's content.
- » **Share and share alike.** When you share content from other people and brands, some will happily reciprocate.



TIP

Create the kind of content people want to share: People don't share boring content.

Instead, they want to read or hear or watch content that educates, inspires, and entertains. Before publishing any content, ask yourself, “Would I want to share this?”



TIP Pay special attention to activity times on social networks. For example, if you notice that you receive the most engagement on Facebook at 10 a.m., continue to post Facebook content at that time, while avoiding off-peak hours.

Measuring the Success of Your Content Strategy

An analytics program tells you how and why people are coming to your site. Without it, you know little about your customers, your community, or the content they’re consuming.



TIP The type of analytics program you use depends on your needs, but most bloggers are comfortable with the free, tried-and-true Google Analytics (available at www.google.com/analytics to anyone with a Google account). Use Google Analytics to see how many visitors are coming to your pages and what they’re doing after they arrive. [Figure 4-4](#) shows some of the measurement fields discussed in the following list.

Analytics programs are simple to install and come with detailed, easy-to-follow instructions. You upload a plug-in or place some code on your blog or website. [Book 9](#) discusses analytics programs in more detail.

Page	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Exit Rate	% Exit
1 /	30,822	25,030	00:00:56	14,742	43.99%	47.83%
2 /	4,442	4,007	00:01:28	1,876	54.82%	52.76%
3 /	3,358	3,136	00:00:58	76	35.21%	66.88%
4 /	3,262	3,130	00:00:52	1,877	5.31%	2.82%
5 /	728	645	00:00:54	112	15.10%	60.83%
6 /	719	637	00:00:56	173	70.67%	51.34%
7 /	488	425	00:00:25	302	60.44%	72.88%
8 /	449	372	00:00:45	515	9.75%	4.81%
9 /	347	328	00:00:51	524	19.22%	62.88%
10 /	324	325	00:00:54	28	9.09%	60.14%
11 /	320	312	00:00:22	126	69.83%	49.23%
12 /	300	240	00:00:53	142	6.90%	23.68%
13 /	407	390	00:01:05	78	57.68%	43.71%
14 /	419	427	00:00:40	45	39.64%	74.81%
15 /	369	357	00:00:51	292	9.54%	9.31%
16 /	349	295	00:00:02	8	2.00%	74.81%
17 /	349	379	00:01:17	148	4.77%	48.03%
18 /	361	421	00:01:40	134	75.64%	54.95%
19 /	218	206	00:01:48	98	74.57%	58.65%
20 /	218	206	00:00:56	46	63.84%	45.83%
21 /	206	202	00:01:00	54	54.27%	47.58%
22 /	276	260	00:00:51	244	8.47%	9.62%
23 /	276	257	00:01:08	42	50.80%	62.83%

FIGURE 4-4: You can tell a lot about the performance of your content thanks to Google Analytics.

Here is what you can discover from your analytics program:

» **Number of people who visit your content:** Your analytics program lists how many people visit on a given day, week, month, or even hour. This information enables you to pinpoint traffic trends. Knowing the most popular times of the day or week for readers can

help you plan content and sales campaigns.

- » **Your most popular content:** Your analytics program offers a rundown of how many people read your pages, letting you know which content went over well and what people weren't interested in reading.
- » **Bounce rate:** The *bounce rate* is the amount of time people spend on a page. A high bounce rate means people leave your site quickly, and a low rate means folks are staying for a while and consuming your content. If you have a high bounce rate, you want to work on having the kind of blog and content people want to read.
- » **Keywords and search terms:** You need to know who's visiting your blog and why. Your analytics program can show you which keywords people are searching for through search engines before landing on your site. When you know these often-used keywords, you can use them in your content to attract even more readers.
- » **Response to advertisements and sales pages:** Many analytics have *heat maps*, which allow you to see specifically where most people are spending their time on each page. As a result, you can place ads in the right spots and see whether folks are reading and reacting to your sales pages.
- » **Top traffic referrers:** Your analytics program shows you whether your X or Facebook campaign is working. In fact, if anyone is sharing or talking about your content, you can follow the trail using your analytics program.
- » **Page views:** You can discover how many people read a page and move on to read more pages, or leave after reading only one page. Page views are different from bounce rates in that *page views* tell how many individual pages each person spends time on at your blog or website, and bounce rates tell you only how long someone stays on your website before leaving.
- » **Whether your content is driving sales:** Your analytics program shows you whether your content is leading folks to sales pages and how many people are taking action on those pages.

All this information can help you refine your marketing strategy because it gives you deeper knowledge about customers and the online community. It's like you're spying on their habits, in a noninvasive way. When you know how, when, and why people are consuming your content, you're better able to tweak it for maximum potential. This knowledge can lead to more sales and visibility.



TIP

In addition to checking to see whether your content is driving more customers to your blog or website, you also want to notice other trends:

- » **Sales:** Have you noticed higher sales since beginning your content strategy? Is your content driving people to the right pages? Note trends in sales, especially what's driving people to buy.

- » **Signups and subscriptions:** Check the number of people who are signing up for a service, product demo, or offered freebies, as well as subscriptions to the company newsletter. Did your content lead people to take action?
- » **Social media engagement:** Do you have more friends, fans, and followers? Are more people talking about your brand online? Are more people sharing your content and visiting your social media pages?
- » **Visibility:** Is your personal or professional brand being talked about in a positive way?



REMEMBER There will always be people who want to read blog posts, listen to podcasts, watch videos, share images, and interact on the social networks. If you're looking to grow your business, it makes sense to go where the people are. Content helps you sell without looking like you're selling, while building trust among your customers and community.

Book 4

X

Contents at a Glance

Chapter 1: Using X as a Marketing Tool

[Deciding Whether X Is Right for You](#)

[Communicating in 280 Characters](#)

[Promoting without Seeming like You're Promoting](#)

[Researching Other Brands on X](#)

[Knowing Quality Is More Important than Quantity](#)

Chapter 2: Using X as a Networking Tool

[Finding the Right People to Follow](#)

[Finding the Right Topics to Follow](#)

[Finding Out Who Is Talking about You on X](#)

[Responding to Posts](#)

[Searching on X](#)

[Filtering Search Results](#)

[Posting like a Pro](#)

[Sharing on X](#)

[Following the X Rules of Etiquette](#)

Chapter 3: Making X Yours

[Customizing Your X Profile Page](#)

[Considering a Premium or Business Account](#)

[Pinning or Highlighting Posts](#)

[Embedding Posts](#)

Chapter 4: Social Listening with X

[Using X to Listen to Your Customers](#)

Chapter 1

Using X as a Marketing Tool

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding the benefits of X for your brand
 - » Embracing brevity
 - » Checking out the competition
-

Twitter took the world by storm in 2006. At first, the social media and blogging communities mostly embraced Twitter, but soon brands began appreciating its value. Today, Twitter, or X as it was rebranded to in 2022, is mainstream.

At first, X looked like a lot of people dropping links and talking about nothing important. But X offers several benefits and can very much be used as a valuable marketing tool — because, make no mistake, X can totally make a brand.

This chapter discusses the benefits of X and how you can use it to raise brand awareness and drive traffic and sales.

Deciding Whether X Is Right for You

Even if you’ve never used X (see [Figure 1-1](#)), you’ve probably heard about this online social-networking service. The X icon, previously the famous blue bird and now a simple, stylized letter X, is everywhere, from cable news broadcasts to your local supermarket. Everyone wants you to follow them on X.



FIGURE 1-1: X allows you to communicate in only 280 characters.

Before you post the X icon on your blog or website, or add your X handle to your business cards, you need to know what exactly X is and whether it’s the right marketing platform for you.

X is a microblogging social network. The following section of this chapter gets into the microblogging aspect, but suffice it to say that everything you post has to be short and simple. Believe me: Communicating in a short form isn’t as easy as it sounds, especially if you want to get a message out. Still, millions of people are using X, and many brands are finding success.

People use X to do the following:

- » **Build a community.** The best reason to join any social network is to grow a community of friends and advocates. Your community consists of the people with whom you build trust and relationships because they view you as being accessible. These people are the ones who will have your back.
- » **Find new customers.** Thanks to the Internet, you now have the ability to reach a global market. With X, you have the ability to reach millions of new people. Each person you interact with has the ability to reach people, as well. You can leverage all that reachability into sales.
- » **Have a conversation.** The best part of X and other social networks is the capability to sell without sounding like you're selling. It's called *conversational marketing*, and it's exactly what it sounds like. When you have a conversation with your friends and followers, people get to know who you are and what you do. When they have a need for someone who does what you do, they're more likely to call on you. They may even like you so much that they decide to buy what you're selling just to support a friend. All it takes is to ... well ... sound like a friend.
- » **Ask questions.** The best way to learn about your customers and potential customers is to ask questions. I'm not saying that you need to have a X poll (unless you want to), but there's nothing wrong with dropping a question now and then to find out about a demographic or habit (see [Figure 1-2](#)).
- » **Offer customer support.** Many people like to reach out to their favorite brands on X to ask questions about a product or service, or to ask for direction or technical support. X is another way to be accessible to your customers. You can also use X to search and make sure your customers aren't having issues.



- » REMEMBER **Discover what people are saying about you.** It's important to receive feedback, especially unsolicited feedback. Sometimes folks are talking about your brand online, and you definitely want to know about it.
- » **Promote your content.** Did you just write up a killer blog post? Are you releasing a new video? Do you want to let folks know about a new product launch? X is an awesome tool for promoting new items.
- » **Host X chats.** X chats allow you to discuss topics at length or bring in special guests. They're another way to interact with your community.
- » **Promote brand visibility.** When people see your logo on X and they see you communicating with customers and other X friends, they feel confident in the brand. They like the human element and especially knowing that when they reach out to you on social networks, you'll be there to respond.
- » **Give out perks.** Some brands share X-only discounts and freebies as a way to reward their followers. Lucky recipients will no doubt share these perks with their own followers.



FIGURE 1-2: Use X to show your humanity and strike up conversations.



REMEMBER X is a commitment. Networking on X isn't as simple as sending a post and expecting to bring in the masses; it's also a matter of building relationships, getting to know people, and holding a conversation.

Communicating in 280 Characters

Possibly the most challenging part of X is the 280-character limit. This amount may seem like a lot at first — until you try to post something pithy or clever and realize you can't fit everything you want to say. Once you start deleting characters, your sentence can lose all meaning.

Don't fret and, whatever you do, don't break out the text speak (see [Figure 1-3](#)). Brevity is easier than you think.



FIGURE 1-3: Using text speak hurts the eyes and looks unprofessional.



WARNING You may notice that a lot of people use shortened words, such as *u* rather than *you* or *2* rather than *too* or *to*. The problem is that using acronyms or abbreviations is unprofessional and hurts people's eyes. Ditto running words together to fit them in the space. A good general rule is that if people can't read your sentence at first glance, you'll lose them.

Here are a few tips for getting the most out of your 280 characters:

- » **Make every word count.** Use words that show an action or make an impact. Avoid filler words, such as *that*.
- » **Use short words when at all possible.** Try short, eye-catching words over longer words. Just about every “big” word has a shorter counterpart.

- » **Punctuation matters.** You may be tempted to skip your periods and commas to fit in more characters. Run-on sentences don't look pretty, and they're hard to read. Do your best to use proper grammar and punctuation.
- » **Use humor.** Do you know what gets lots of reposts and responses? A funny post. That isn't to say every post needs to be slapstick, but don't be afraid to say something funny now and again. Your community will enjoy it.
- » **Get to the point.** Don't take the scenic route; get right to the point. You have only 280 characters to work with, so say what you have to say without mincing words.
- » **Grammar counts.** Don't use poor grammar simply because you think it fits the post. Grammatical errors turn people off from wanting to do business with you because they feel you're unprofessional.
- » **Use sentence case.** All uppercase letters make people feel AS IF YOU'RE YELLING AT THEM, and all lowercase letters look as if you're too lazy to press the shift key. Make a good impression by rocking the uppercases and lowercases.
- » **Give value.** Being silly and fun on X is okay, and it's fine to say something frivolous, as well. Just be sure to add value into the mix. If you're using X to promote your business, share your expertise, as well.
- » **Don't always make it about you.** Don't make every post about you or your business. Visit with your community. Participate in other conversations, ask questions, and share links to other people's stuff.
- » **It's okay to use characters.** Even though I discourage text speak, feel free to replace the word *and* with an ampersand (&). Replacing a word with an accepted character isn't considered unprofessional.



TIP Before you get started with posts, research other brands that are having success using X and observe how they're interacting with their communities. You may come away from the experience with some good ideas for interacting with your own communities. (See the upcoming "[Researching Other Brands on X](#)" section.)

Promoting without Seeming like You're Promoting



REMEMBER On social networks, there's a delicate balance between promoting and spamming. If everything you do is calling attention to you or your business, you'll find yourself losing followers faster than you can bat an eye. The beautiful thing about conversational marketing is that you can talk to your friends and followers about anything in the world,

and it still has the potential to drive business.

Your first course of action is to follow the right people (see [Chapter 2](#) of this minibook). After all, why be on X if you're not reaching people? Don't worry about starting out slowly at first; your numbers will grow if your posts offer value, and you gain a reputation for being interactive and engaging. The tricky part is to get people to like what you do without turning them off with spam or over-the-top sales tactics.

You can easily be overly promotional on X, especially when you see others do nothing but drop links. Because of the 280-character limit, many people used to feel it was more important to fit in a link than some interesting text. The problem was, many of the people who dropped too many links either lost their followers, didn't gain new follows, or ended up ignored by their existing followers. The good news is, links are no longer counted towards your 280 characters, leaving everyone breathing a sigh of relief!

What follows is a list of do's and don'ts for promoting your brand on X without looking like you're promoting your brand on X:

- » **Do follow the people who will receive the most value from your posts and your brand.** You may be tempted to follow everyone you can simply to receive a follow-back in return, but this approach leads to a cluttered, hard-to-follow X stream with people who don't care about you or your brand. Be selective with your follows for the best level of engagement. Go for quality over quantity.
- » **Don't auto-follow everyone who follows you.** You may be considering paying for an *auto-follow program* — that is, an app that automatically follows everyone who follows you or who follows a specific X account or keyword. An auto-follow program isn't a good idea. You won't know everyone in your X stream, and people who auto-follow are easy to spot because they have a high ratio of people they follow versus people who follow them. This ratio imbalance is usually the sign of a spammer, and it drives followers away.
- » **Do search for specific keywords and topics.** By all means, use your search function to find the people who follow a specific keyword or talk about a particular topic.
- » **Don't spam everyone who is talking about those topics and keywords.** Do you know what people who use X regularly hate? They can't stand it when they mention a word, and then all these spammers come out of the woodwork. For example, mentioning "iPad" on X leads to a flurry of hopeful salespeople bombarding the unsuspecting poster with links to discounts on tablets. You'll find yourself reported as a spammer if you spam.



TIP

Use keywords as a guide and a suggestion, but don't hit with a sales pitch everyone who talks about or uses your particular keywords.

- » **Do ask questions.** Get some interaction going with your X community by asking questions. Keep in mind that you won't get a response every time, but sometimes some great conversations ensue. Also, don't be afraid to use question time to solicit feedback —

both positive and negative.

- » **Don't respond to each question with a link.** If people reach out to your brand on X, you may at times respond with links and at other times avoid them. For example, if they can't find a sign-up page for your newsletter, by all means respond with a link. If they ask a general information question falling within your area of expertise, don't respond with your latest blog post. That'll get old and spammy after a while.
- » **Do be sure to inject your personality into your posts.** Don't be afraid to use humor, slang (that isn't vulgar or offensive), or any other words that show off your personality. You want to show your human, endearing side. The people who are most successful on X aren't afraid to show their personality and fun, playful side.



- » **WARNING Don't rely solely on the scheduled post.** Scheduling your posts, usually through apps such as Hootsuite or Buffer, helps to make sure that you post announcements throughout your day. However, when all you post are announcements, links, or sales pitches, you're broadcasting, not interacting. If it helps, go ahead and schedule those announcements, but do stick around in case someone has questions. Try to have back-and-forth interaction through your posts.

It's common etiquette to remove scheduled marketing posts in the face of a tragedy or a catastrophic event so as not to seem insensitive. A brand that uses a tragic event to promote or sell is seen as newsjacking and it might create a backlash. For example, if you manufacture umbrellas, it would be bad form to schedule a post offering to sell umbrellas during a hurricane where there's been massive destruction or even a loss of life.
- » **Do answer questions and respond to comments.** If folks are reaching out to you on X, it's a good thing. It means they're putting their faith in you and find you accessible. Make sure to check X throughout the day for questions and comments so that you can address everything in a timely manner.
- » **Don't ignore a post because you don't want to draw light to negativity.** All feedback is good feedback, even the bad stuff. Answer questions even if they relate to a negative experience, especially because people are watching. If you'd rather not talk about such things with so many people in attendance, invite the poster to take it offline with a phone call or email.
- » **Do share links to your stuff.** Have a great promotion? Share the link! Did you write a great blog post? Share the link! Does someone else have something cool to promote? Share the link! After all, if you're using X as a promotional tool, you're looking for a result for your ultimate goal, a goal that you can't meet without the link. Don't let all our warnings about spamming make you afraid to share.
- » **Don't only drop links.** If your X stream is nothing but links and self-promotional spamminess, you'll drive everyone away. Make sure that links are a small percentage of what you share on X.
- » **Do share links to other people's stuff.** Social networks aren't only about you. Highlight

other people's achievements, and they'll be more likely to highlight yours. Remember, though, a "you scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours" mentality gets a bit old.

- » **Don't share or repost a link unless you know what it's about.** Have you ever seen a popular poster share a link and instantaneously receive hundreds of reposts in return? It's a good bet many of those reposters didn't even click the link to read what it's all about. Blind faith is cool and all, but what if the poster was linking to a post that is a lie or something offensive or inappropriate? Sometimes they may not even know the information they're reposting about is false, so although they're sharing in good faith, they're actually promoting *fake news*. A repost is an endorsement, and it's in the best interests of your brand to know exactly what you're putting out there.
- » **Do post every day.** Consistency is key to social media success. Put yourself out there every day so that you're a visible presence. When folks know when to expect your post, it's a good thing.
- » **Don't let your X account become a ghost town.** People feel better knowing that their favorite brands are socially engaged. When they look up a brand on X and there haven't been any posts since 2014, it tells everyone the brand isn't interested in what their community thinks.
- » **Do take conversations private.** Not everything has to be out in the open. Nothing is wrong with offering to take an in-depth conversation offline or private. Sometimes, a one-on-one conversation is best because you don't want to make everyone else in your stream feel excluded! Also, if you're dealing with a negative situation, there's little you can resolve in 280 characters, so taking the conversation private is the way to go.
- » **Don't auto-DM.** Avoid sending auto private or direct messages (DMs), as shown in [Figure 1-4](#). Some apps instantaneously send *thank you* or *follow this link* private messages as soon as someone follows you. Auto-DMs and spam DMs are a sure way to receive an immediate unfollow. DMs are considered a private area, and most posters don't want their privacy invaded.

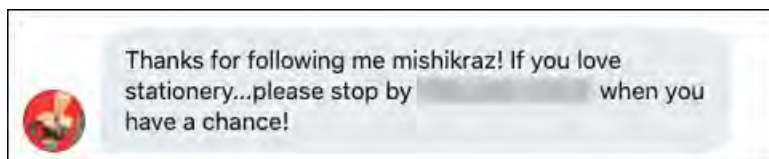


FIGURE 1-4: Sending spammy auto-DMs to your new followers will cause most of them to immediately unfollow you.

- » **Do talk about yourself and your brand.** You're going to hear and read a lot about how social networks aren't for self-promotion and how it's all about the conversation, and that's true. However, it's silly to think that you're spending all your time on X or Facebook and can't even promote your brand.
- » **But don't talk *only* about yourself and your brand.** It's all about balance. Go ahead and promote your stuff, but make sure that you have a good ratio of conversational posts versus promotional posts. Different experts have a good idea of what that ratio should be, but usually trial and error determine what works best for you. Try posting one to two

promotional posts out of every ten posts.

- » **Do find topics of interest.** Try introducing a different discussion topic or question to your community each day. See whether you find any news that will interest your niche, or talk about the latest tools and techniques. Find something discussion-worthy and go for it.
- » **Don't be corporate and boring.** People don't always want to discuss the brand. While they do enjoy some transparency from time to time, you'll lose people if your posts are all about the corporate shareholder meeting. Do share some company business, but all work and no play will make you a very dull poster.
- » **Do talk to everyone.** If your X account has 2,500 followers, 2,500 people are interested in learning about you or your brand. Of course, you can't reach out to everyone by name every day, but ensuring that many of your daily posts apply to everyone is almost as good as reaching out to everyone. At times you'll want to reach out to individuals, but you'll lose followers if your X account is a hotbed of exclusivity.
- » **Don't reach out to only the big names.** Many people feel that if they reach out to the big names on X, they'll receive more attention. When someone with thousands of followers reposts your link or mentions you on social networks, you're bound to get more followers and interest in your brand. However, if you're only reaching out to the big names, it won't be long before you gain a reputation for pandering to famous people. Your biggest advocates aren't the people with a huge following; they're the people who use your brand and interact with you every day. Collectively, they can have a bigger reach.
- » **Do take advantage of X's features.** On the left side of your X home page is a menu with different options such as Explore, Bookmarks, and Lists. The Explore screen shows you the topics and stories that are trending around the world. They are broken out by topic based on your previous viewing activity but also by current events, News, Sports, Fun, and Entertainment. [Figure 1-5](#) shows you the curated list of news articles underneath the Entertainment category. The Bookmarks screen, shown in [Figure 1-6](#), is a great place to collect different posts that you'd like to refer back to in the future. Given the speed at which posts are published, it's a handy feature! Finally, the Lists feature ([Figure 1-7](#)) is where you collect your favorite X accounts so you can access them quickly. They can be created based on virtually any topic (like the Marketers list by Mashable in the figure).



TIP Many parts of this laundry list of action items and things to avoid make it sound as if you're not promoting at all, and that's the point. On social networks, people don't want to be pitched to, unless they invite it. They want to enjoy a conversation and share interesting items they find online. If you turn it from a heavy sales pitch to a conversation between friends, you may find that you land more sales.



FIGURE 1-5: Take a break and read some of the more lighthearted news stories underneath the Entertainment category on the Explore page.



FIGURE 1-6: Don't let life (or important posts) pass you by!

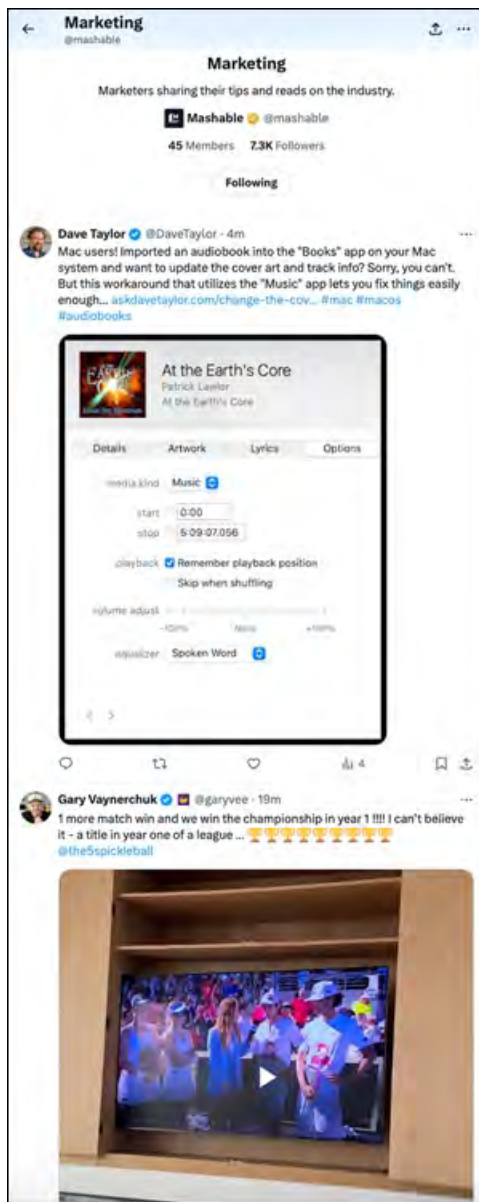


FIGURE 1-7: Save time and build lists so you can quickly hone in on the topics and accounts that you find most useful.

Researching Other Brands on X

Finding out more about how other brands are using X can help you formulate your own X marketing plan. Many brands achieve success on social networks because they're interesting and engaging. Scope them out and learn by their example.

First, get off X and get on Google. Do a Google search to find the brands that have been successful on X. So many case studies online talk about brands that are doing X right. Read the case studies and follow the brands to see them in action. Note the following:

» How often are they posting each day?

- » What are they posting about?
- » How are they handling customer comments, inquiries, and complaints online?
- » How often are they dropping links?
- » Are they offering discounts, freebies, or other perks to their followers?
- » In what way are they bantering good-naturedly with both brands and individuals?
- » Have they created and/or are they on any Lists?
- » What kinds of accounts are they following?
- » Does it appear that more than one person is running their account?
- » What is setting their X apart from the rest?

Next, you want to determine how brands similar to yours are using X. You may love certain aspects of their community outreach and not agree with others. This contrast is good because it means you won't be tempted to flat-out copy their approach.

Finally, research cases of companies that made mistakes — you can find plenty of these case studies and stories online. For example, some brands haven't reacted well to negative feedback; others have dropped a personal post from the company account.



TIP

When you learn about the way others are using X and learn from their mistakes, you'll become a positive case study yourself.

Knowing Quality Is More Important than Quantity

Too many people on X worry about numbers when they should be thinking about other things. For example, sometimes brands don't feel as if they're successful unless they have tens of thousands of followers. True, it's great to have such a large reach, but the truth is, a brand can't interact with all those people. By all means, strive for the big numbers, but don't obsess over them. Instead, worry about building up quality followers: the customers and members of your community who truly believe in the brand and will advocate for you online. Build a core follower base, and the rest will fall into place.



WARNING

You may also be tempted to follow thousands of people right off the bat so that they'll follow you in return. Before you do so, keep in mind that all these people are going to show up in your X stream. Adding thousands of people is much easier than removing them.

Although nothing is wrong with following so many people, sometimes seeing what people are

saying in your X stream is hard because so many people are talking at once. Following so many friends can make it difficult to find the quality conversational posts through all the links and spam. Also, if X thinks that you're randomly and blindly following people, it will suspend your account pending investigation.

By all means, continue to add new followers, but do it slowly so that you know whom you're following and are better able to have a conversation.

You may also be wondering how many posts you should send out on any given day. Although it's true people don't want to see only you in their X streams, it's also true that I can't give you a set-in-stone rule regarding the amount of posts you should be sending out. Spontaneity is what leads to success, and if you're counting, planning, and scheduling posts, you're going to lose a lot of the element of fun and surprise many successful brand accounts have. Do what feels right. If you're deep in conversation with others, you're going to be sending out more posts than you would on a slow day. Also, if you're launching a new product, you're probably going to spend more time on social networks than you would on a normal day.

Keep an eye on your analytics because they can give you a good idea of things like the best times to post, the topics that get the most engagement, and the volume of messages that your audience responds best to. Don't worry, [Book 9](#) talks all about utilizing analytics data to determine the success of all your social media efforts.

Finally, many brands and individuals are concerned about the number of links they share on a given day. Of course, you don't want to spam links all day; but again, it depends on the day and what you're sharing. Always do your best to add balance and have more conversational posts than link posts — you don't want to be known only for dropping links.



REMEMBER Don't obsess over numbers. Succeeding on X is more about posting quality information to quality people than about going overboard with followers or worrying about whether or not you posted enough in one day. Good, organic growth always trumps big numbers.

Chapter 2

Using X as a Networking Tool

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Following and reaching out on X
 - » Using X etiquette
 - » Socializing on X
-

The people who do nothing but drop links on X are missing out on some amazing opportunities. That's because X is not just a useful promotional tool but also an important networking tool.

Before the Internet, most people had to join professional organizations and attend networking events on a regular basis. Although that's still the case now, all that in-person networking can be expensive. Many people who are just starting out in their fields can't afford to put out the money to attend a lot of events or join many professional groups.

The beauty of X and other social networks is the capability to reach so many people without spending a lot of money. With millions of people on X at any given time, you have ample opportunity to reach out and be reached out to. Make no mistake, X may force you into brevity, but the opportunity to grow your professional network is there.

This chapter takes a look at how to use X as a networking tool and a few best practices for making the most of your experience.

Finding the Right People to Follow

The first step in your X marketing journey is to spend time with the people who make up your community and enjoy their company. To do that, you have to build up a follower base.

The best way to find followers on X is search X for the people who are most likely to support your brand. Here are some ideas for getting started:

- » **See how many of your existing customers are online.** If you're already in business, you probably have a list of people with whom you do business. They may also be on social networks. Use your mailing lists to find people to follow on X. Most business people now have their X accounts on their business cards and email signatures. You can also use X's search function.
- » **Find your friends and followers from other social networks.** If you already have a Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, or any social media account set up on one of the other networks, see whether those same friends are on X and give them a follow.
- » **Follow other professionals you know from your respective space.** If you share tips or

interact online with other professionals, follow them on X, as well. If you find interesting people, see if they've created any lists (or are on any themselves) to find like-minded individuals.

- » **Use X search to find people with similar jobs or brands to yours.** Use the search function located at the top of your X page or X app, or go to <https://x.com/explore>. Search for similar brands and interests.
- » **Access the Explore link in the left sidebar.** [Chapter 1](#) of this minibook talked about the Explore page and how it's an awesome place to not only keep up to date on what's going on in the world, but also a place to find new accounts to follow.
- » **Take advantage of the Who to Follow feature on the right side of your screen.** The recommendations shown to you here are based on the accounts you currently follow as well as the searches you've done on X, and the types of accounts you've engaged with in the past. Click on the Show More link at the bottom of this section to be taken to the Connect page, with even more account options to follow.
- » **See who follows brands similar to yours.** When you find brands that do the same as or close to what you do, follow their followers.
- » **Use your keywords in X search.** Take the keywords you use to optimize your pages and search for them.



TIP Starting a X follower base is as easy as following someone first. Once you start following people, most will follow you in return.



WARNING Be careful with randomly following dozens of people at once. X has tools to detect a huge bulk following and can suspend your account pending further investigation. If X checks your history and feels you're adding people only so they'll follow back so you can spam them, they'll close your account. Conversely, X also prohibits mass unfollows. So if you're only following for the follows, and plan on unfollowing people after they follow your account, you might get banned.

Finding the Right Topics to Follow

X is a great networking tool; after all, this entire chapter is dedicated to it! Luckily for you, X provides various ways to connect with others on the platform. The preceding section was about finding accounts (people and brands) to follow, but X also makes it easy to follow specific topics because they serve them up *for you* on a silver platter!

That's right. X has gone and done the heavy lifting for you and now suggests posts and accounts that are similar to ones you've interacted with in the past either by following similar accounts, interacting with one of their posts, reposted anything, or even interacted with a

relevant ad. You can find all these suggested topics and accounts under the For You tab on at the top of your Home timeline, search results page, and Explore page.

Some may not like that X is taking it upon themselves to fill up your timeline with posts and accounts that you didn't personally select, which is why they give you the option to provide feedback in order to customize your X experience. All you have to do is click the three dots icon on the top right of any post and select either Not Interested in You Might Like This (to opt out of the suggestions entirely) or Not Interested in This Post (to let X know you don't like the subject matter), as shown in [Figure 2-1](#).

While you're scrolling through all these posts, whenever you find one you're interested in, simply click the three dots icon on the top right of it and select Follow *@account name* or Subscribe to *@account name*. When you *follow* an account, you'll see all their general posts in your feed. If you *subscribe* to an account, then you gain access to any exclusive account they offer as part of a paid subscription program. I talk more about subscriptions in [Chapter 3](#) of this minibook.

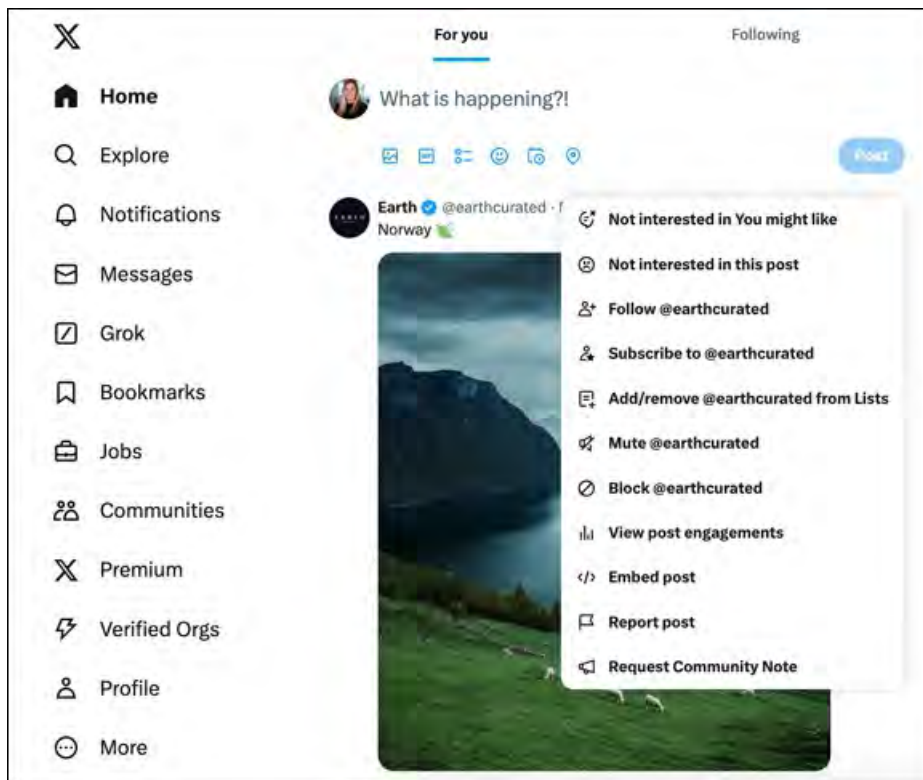


FIGURE 2-1: If you don't care for X's suggestions, let them know!

Finding Out Who Is Talking about You on X

Nothing is voyeuristic or wrong about observing conversations on X. Most people who post are hoping others will notice and join the conversation. If they didn't want a public conversation, they'd send a direct message (DM) or use some other form of communication. They also wouldn't mention or @reply you unless they wanted you to know what they're

saying. So if you see a complaint or @reply (see [Figure 2-2](#)), it's in your best interest to respond, even if it's just to say, "Thank you."

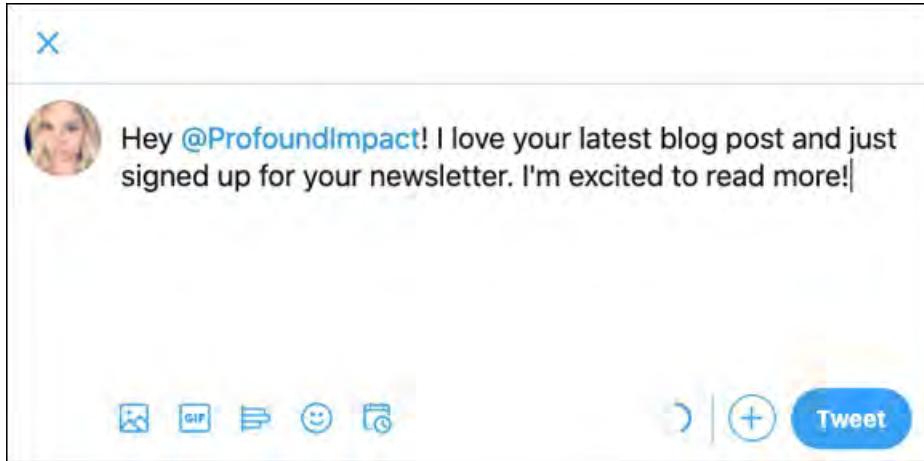


FIGURE 2-2: To get someone's attention on X, use an @reply.

As a brand (personal or professional), you always want to keep your ear to the ground. With X, you can easily monitor the conversation and respond to comments and queries.

Many times, if someone is talking about or to you, that person will @reply you. This means that person is putting an @ in front of your X screen name to get your attention. Without the @, there's a chance you won't see the post, unless you do a search on your name, your company name, or specific keywords. Also, if you're reaching out to someone, you have to put an @ in front of that person's screen name, or the post will get lost among the thousands of other posts.

It's good customer service to find out what people are saying about you on X. It gives you an opportunity to learn about problems or concerns and shows your customers and community you're accessible.



TIP Make time each day to explore X and see who is talking and what they're saying. Don't shy away from criticism or critique. Instead, thank the other party and take it as valuable feedback.

Responding to Posts

To monitor the conversation so that you can find out whether people are posting about you or your brand, keep an X app, such as Hootsuite or Sprout Social, open on your computer's desktop (or mobile device if there's an app available). You can set up these apps to ping you every time you receive an @reply or when someone posts a specific search term, including your name or that of your brand. (I cover apps in [Chapter 3](#) of this minibook.)

You need to set up these searches to reach out or respond to the people who are talking about or to you. For example, if you work for a restaurant chain and someone posts out a picture of

one of your dishes and talks about how much the meal was enjoyable, you want to acknowledge the post by thanking the other party and encouraging them to visit again. If someone posts that a meal was subpar, you want to respond with an apology and perhaps even offer a discount or coupon for another meal to make things right.



WARNING Avoid public negativity at all costs. If people are saying negative things about you or your brand, do reach out to them publicly to ask if you can help, but also ask if you can take it private via phone, email, or IM so that you can discuss without feeling pressured to respond to the whole world. Be especially wary of trading barbs or disparaging remarks, or using rude language. This behavior can harm your brand beyond repair and lead to a public relations nightmare. A good rule of thumb is to never post anything online you wouldn't want to see on the front page of *The New York Times*. [Figure 2-3](#) shows how T-Mobile's customer service account, @TMobileHelp, responded to an irate customer.

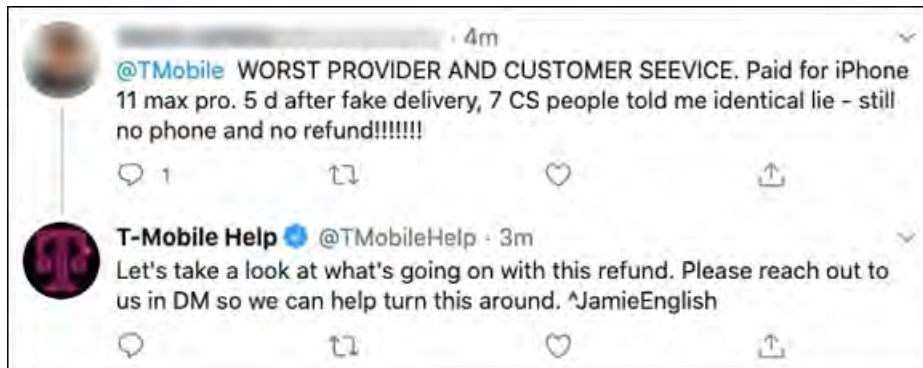


FIGURE 2-3: @TMobileHelp acknowledged this customer's anger and asked to take the conversation out of the public forum.



TIP When you @reply someone, the comment is there for the world to see! Always keep that in mind: Other than direct messages, everything is public on X.

Searching on X

X is an excellent, robust search tool. As discussed in the preceding sections, you can use it to discover who is talking about you or your brand as well as more topics that you'd like to keep informed about. However, you can use X also as an awesome search engine to find people to follow or reach out to, to find similar brands, and to see what's going on with specific keywords, search terms, hashtags, and news items.



TIP

Traditionally, X isn't considered to be a search engine, but that doesn't mean you can't treat it like one. If you're looking for something, anything, there's a very good chance you'll find it on X.

What follows are some of the ways to use X's search function or the Explore link at <https://x.com/explore> as a search tool. You can find the following:

- » **People:** Search specific names, X handles, professions, or hobbies. Don't forget to give them a follow so that you can connect.
- » **Brands:** Use X to search for similar brands to see how they're using the platform.
- » **Clients:** Search terms will help you find potential clients. Also, consider the types of people you seek out offline to drum up business, and search for the same types of people online.
- » **Jobs:** You can search for job-specific hashtags and keywords to find job openings on X. Moreover, many brands and job boards post out job opportunities. X also has a specific Jobs section listed in your left sidebar. Clicking that will take you to a job-specific search page.
- » **Hashtags:** The X search engines help you follow your favorite hashtags.
- » **Search terms:** When you use a X search for particular search terms and keywords, you'll find everyone who is talking about those words and phrases.
- » **Your brand:** Discover what others are saying about your brand.
- » **Your passion:** Search your favorite subjects.
- » **News:** Whether you want to go local, international, or niche-oriented, you can search for the latest news on X.



TIP

Take advantage of X's trending topics: Discussions might be happening that can benefit you or your brand. Simply use the trending hashtag to ask questions or respond to people who are already chatting using that hashtag. Don't spam or get into hashtag jacking. Be sure to stay on topic if you're getting involved in a hashtag conversation, and avoid sharing links unless they're specifically requested.

Filtering Search Results

With over 360,000 posts being sent *per minute*, it goes without saying (although I'm going to say it anyway), that there is *a lot of content* running through X. A lot a lot. As in, over 6,000 posts *every second* a lot. Can you imagine trying to find anything in all that noise, let alone a post you saw a few months ago by a very active account that you don't remember the name of but you know it contained the phrase "happy hour" and the word "dog" somewhere in it.

Yikes. Talk about impossible to find (or at least very improbable).

Thankfully the folks at X didn't want us to suffer in that way, so they gave their search function an upgrade and now it's very similar to the one you use when looking something up on Google. Once you type your search term into the search bar at the top of the page and press Enter, you'll see the screen shown in [Figure 2-4](#).

If you search for "Social Media Marketing", a number of results appear, but if you wanted to narrow the results down even more, you have the option to filter the results by people and/or location by utilizing those radio buttons on the top right of the screen.

Alternatively, if you want to get even more targeted results, you can click the Advanced Search link at the bottom of the Filter section and the box shown in [Figure 2-5](#) appears. As you can see, this is where you can really find that proverbial needle in the haystack. Or, in the case of your opening example, that 2-month-old post that contains the phrase "happy hour" and the word "dog".

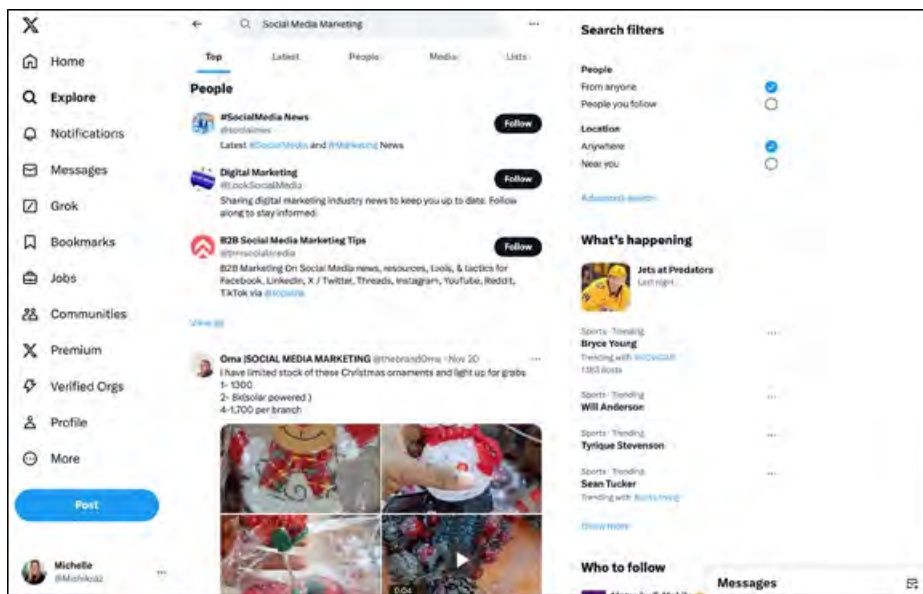


FIGURE 2-4: The main search results screen for the phrase "Social Media Marketing".

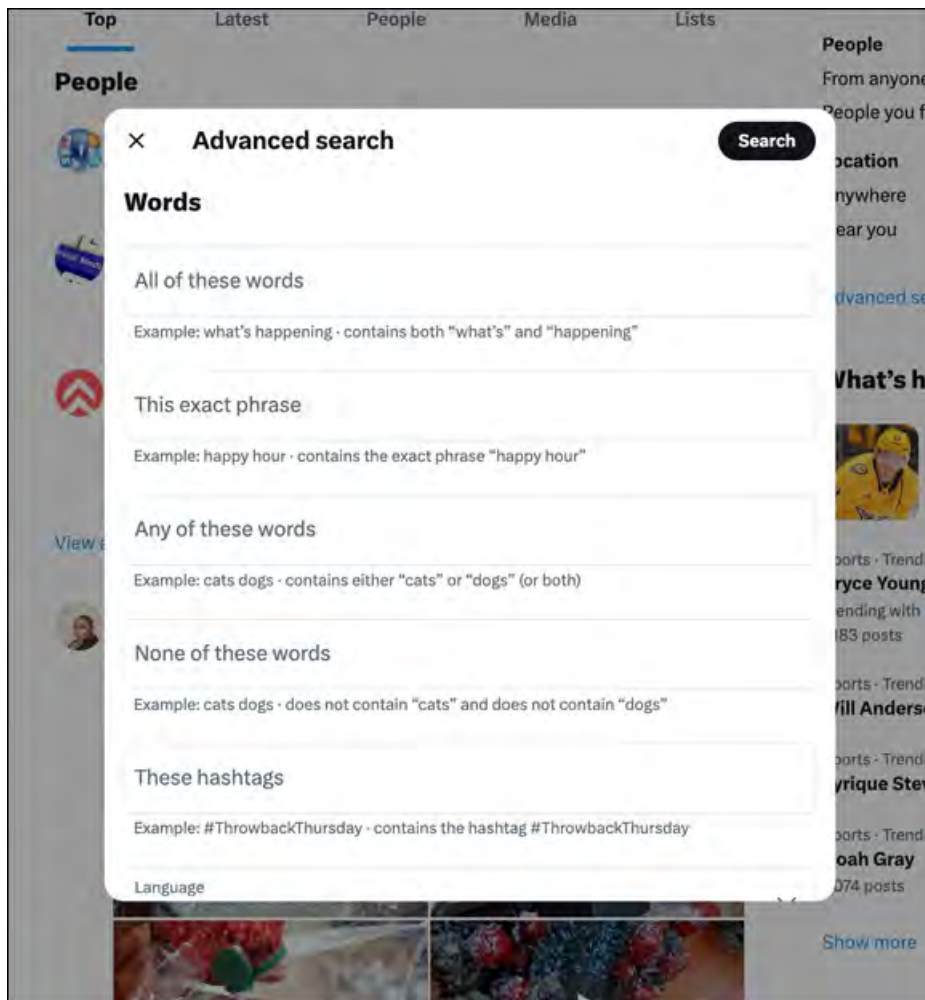


FIGURE 2-5: The Advanced Search box ... be sure to scroll down because there's so much more to see!



TIP Play around with different search parameters and see what kind of results you come up with. Who knows, maybe you'll stumble upon a friend's (or competitor's) cringe-worthy post from a few years ago and get a good laugh (and learn what not to say!)

Posting like a Pro

There's a difference in the way someone wanting to do business uses X as opposed to a teen who only wants to post out to friends. Just as you conduct yourself in a professional manner at offline networking events, you'll also want to conduct yourself as a professional on social networks. People really do pay attention.

Articulating in 280 characters

Text speak, using abbreviations and shortened words to shorten a cellphone text message, is difficult to read and unprofessional when used while representing your brand on any platform.

Because X allows for only 280 characters, you may be tempted to use abbreviations or shortened words to fit in everything you want to say, but I don't recommend it.

What follows are some tips for making every character count. (I provide more details in [Chapter 1](#) of this minibook.)

- » **Spell out every word.**
- » **Use punctuation.**
- » **Practice the art of brevity.**
- » **Let your personality shine through.**



REMEMBER Using social networks isn't a reason to forget you're a professional. When you're using your brand account, conduct yourself in the same manner in which you'd conduct yourself at an offline business event.

Using the hashtag

When you put a pound sign (#) in front of a keyword, you're using a *hashtag*. The hashtag makes it easy to follow a conversation centered on a keyword or topic. For example, if yours is a sausage brand and you want to create a recipe contest around your world-famous kielbasa, you might use #kielbasarecipes as your hashtag. The benefits to using a hashtag over an @reply abound:

- » **Hashtags catch the attention of others.** Sometimes people aren't necessarily part of a conversation but join in after espying a catchy hashtag in their X streams.
- » **Hashtags add longevity to a conversation.** An @reply can die in a busy X stream, but following the hashtag will allow you to view all posts in a conversation at one time.
- » **Hashtags allow posts to appear in a stream even if the other party doesn't @reply you.** Often during X chats or hashtag campaigns, participants in the conversation don't use an @reply to catch your attention but instead rely solely on the hashtag. When you view a hashtag chat using an app such as Hootsuite, you can better view the entire conversation at one time.
- » **You can measure the results of a hashtag.** Several apps and services, such as Keyhole (keyhole.co/twitter-analytics) offer not only a transcript of a hashtag but also data from all the people who use the hashtag — for example, how many people viewed the hashtag (who didn't necessarily participate in the conversation), how many people clicked links, and which people are the most influential ones using the platform.

When you use hashtags, you can take your X conversations to a new level. Hashtags allow you to have, keep track of, and measure a conversation, something important to anyone marketing a brand.



TIP Be careful about sharing too many links or promotional posts on someone else's hashtag, an activity called *hashtag jacking*. Hashtag jackers spam popular or trending hashtags to drive traffic to their own interests, and it's considered a serious breach of X etiquette.

Sharing on X

The beauty of X is how awesome a tool it is for sharing. The people who use X love to discover new articles, videos, and people. They're quick to offer a recommendation or review, and they especially enjoy when you ask for their opinions. If they like what you say, they'll even give you a repost.

Knowing when to @reply and direct message

For the most part, your responses to other posters will be public unless someone specifically reaches out to you via direct message (DM). Sometimes, though, you want to take public messages private because you don't want to expose some things to the entire X universe:

- » **Long conversations between you and someone else:** Yes, X is all about public conversations, but you also don't want to clutter up your friends' X streams with a long conversation you're having with someone else. For something expansive, consider using *threads*, which is basically either you replying to yourself repeatedly, or you and the other participant(s) replying repeatedly to the original post, resulting in all subsequent posts being *nested* under the original post, keeping all posts about that original topic together.
- » **Complaints:** If someone has a complaint about your brand or is reaching out in a negative manner, let that person know you're sorry for the inconvenience and offer to take it to a phone call, email, or DM so that you can better handle the situation. You don't want to sweep the complaint under the rug, nor do you want to ignore it. However, you don't necessarily want to air all your brand's negativity to the masses, either.
- » **Personal details:** It should go without saying that private email addresses, phone numbers, addresses, and other personal details shouldn't be available to the public. If you need to share this information or need to request that others share it with you, it's best to take it private.
- » **Information that isn't meant for public consumption:** Sometimes there are details you'd like to share with people but can't put it out to the public yet. By all means, use an X DM.
- » **Something that may embarrass someone:** Perhaps a negative situation is the result of customer or client error. The last thing you want to do is shame that person on the social networks. If you need to talk to someone because of a potentially embarrassing error, take it private.

For the most part, your X updates are public. However, use your best judgment. Every now

and then, you may need to take things private. Something else to consider: In 2010, it was announced that posts were going to be archived in the Library of Congress, although that practice ceased in early 2018.

Reposting and being reposted

For many people on X, getting reposted is part of their marketing plan. It may not seem like much, but a repost can go a long way. For example, if you post out a link to your latest blog post and someone else reposts it, more people are likely to view your blog post. The more reposts you get, the further your reach.

If you're on X for any length of time, you may notice that certain famous posters and those with the most followers get reposts every time they post something. What follows are some tips for reposting other people's posts and also for writing the types of things people will want to repost:

- » **Say something people want to share.** If you're posting links to your food or talking about the weather, your content isn't very shareable. The type of content people share is usually funny, unique, profound, or interesting.
- » **Share something others want to share.** Don't share for the sake of sharing; share because you think an item has interest or value. Before posting a quote or link, ask, "Will this interest my community enough that they want to share it with others?" Think about why you felt compelled to share it and whether your community will feel the same way.
- » **Don't write for the repost.** Usually posts fall flat when people are trying hard to be clever or funny. Repostable posts are usually organic and spontaneous, not forced or flat.
- » **Don't repost just because someone famous said something.** Many people repost well-known people in hopes of catching their attention. If you repost celebrities all the time, it tells your community you don't care about them as much as you do famous people. If the Kardashians have nothing to do with you and your community, and the celebrities aren't saying anything all that great, save your repost for someone more deserving.
- » **Say "thank you" for reposts.** When people repost something you said or share links to your blog posts, be sure to say "thank you." It shows them you appreciate the community effort.



WARNING Avoid the *vanity repost* — when someone posts something nice about you and you repost it. Most people think a vanity repost is bragging and roll their eyes at those who do it.

Blocking people

It's going to happen. Some people on X are so abusive or spammy that you have no recourse but to ban them. First, don't feel guilty. We all have a list of blocked posters, even if we don't talk about them. Second, understand that no one has to put up with abuse.

What does it mean to *block* your posts? Simply, it means the person you block shouldn't be able to see or respond to your posts.

Here are some reasons you might want to block people from viewing your posts or participating in your conversation:

- » Every time they respond to a question or comment, it's with a link to a sales page.
- » Every time you post, they respond with something snarky.
- » Someone uses vulgarity and profanity on a regular basis, and that's not your thing.
- » Someone is abusive to you and your followers.



TIP If someone isn't being nice on X, or if someone is using your conversations as an excuse to sell stuff or drive traffic to their site, go ahead and block that person. Your community will probably applaud you.

If you block an account they cannot

- » Follow you
- » Direct message you
- » Tag you in photos
- » View your posts when logged in on X (they may be able to if accessing X content via a third-party program)
- » Find your posts in search when logged in on X
- » View your following or followers lists, likes or lists when logged in on X
- » Add your account to any of their lists

Creating a successful X campaign

Your X campaign takes careful planning. It's not enough to shoot out a post every now and then. You also want to put a strategy in place. If you don't go into it with a specific plan and goal, your posts may be sporadic and haphazard, and you won't achieve the success you were hoping for.

Here are some tips for creating a successful X campaign:

- » **Plan a follower strategy.** Determine the types of people you want to follow and have follow you in return. Consider a mix of people who are customers, have the potential to be customers, and work in similar jobs, as well as brand accounts that may have a tie-in with your community. (For more on this topic, see the section "[Finding the Right People to Follow](#)," earlier in this chapter.)



TIP

Refer to the target audience research I talk about in Book 1, [Chapter 3](#).

- » **Plan a content strategy.** Think about the types of posts you want to post each day. Consider a mix of humor, news, questions, reposts, and a few promotional posts with or without links. I go over content strategies in [Book 3](#).
- » **Plan a hashtag strategy.** Hashtags can be a lot of fun. You can have a regular hashtag chat or use a hashtag in contests, news, and updates about your brand and more. Plan for at least a couple hashtag updates per day. (See the earlier “[Using the hashtag](#)” section for details.)
- » **Don’t make every post a sale.** Plan a balanced content strategy so that your posts feature more than selling. Perhaps publish two links or sales for every ten posts.
- » **Don’t make every post about your brand.** Share non-brand-related thoughts and ideas so as not to make everything about you.
- » **Ask questions.** Ask questions not only about your products and services, but also about news items, trending topics, and topics geared toward individual members of your community.
- » **Share other people’s stuff.** Share links to blog posts, images, news articles, and videos by a variety of people.
- » **With all that said, don’t be afraid to share your own stuff.** There’s no shame in sharing your own blog posts, news, and even links to sales and discounts. Again, it’s all about balance.
- » **Think outside the box.** Think about ways to reach your community on X that are different from the same old, same old. Plan content or campaigns that few people are using. Research some unique ways brands are using X, and then put your own spin on them. (For more on researching brands, see [Chapter 1](#) of this minibook.)
- » **Use X with other platforms.** Plan content and campaigns that span the platforms. Use teaser posts to draw attention to blog posts or Facebook content, for example. (For more on marketing with Facebook, see Book 5, [Chapter 1](#).)
- » **Call out your community.** If someone in your community has a milestone, offer public congratulations. Wish happy birthdays and anniversaries, and offer condolences or congratulations. Don’t forget to use the @reply so that the other party knows you’re offering good wishes.
- » **Seek assistance.** If you have any technical questions or would like recommendations on the latest gadgets and gear, reach out to your community. Try to have at least one question per week because your community appreciates seeing your human side.
- » **Create discount codes for your community.** Although you don’t want to be spammy, offering perks to your community is a nice gesture. Why not create discount codes for only your X members to thank them for their support? Try for at least one discount per month.



- » **TIP** **Be transparent.** Be honest with your community. If you're asked questions, don't tap dance around an issue or fudge numbers — it's sure to backfire on you.

Using keywords in your posts

With 280 characters, you need to choose your words wisely, so using keywords in your posts is not always recommended. However, you can make your X content more searchable by using keywords in some of your posts. Your keywords should make sense and work in a sentence, and others should be searching for them online.

Try writing your keyword posts ahead of time, playing with the words so that they make sense. If you're using keywords to make announcements, perhaps take an hour or two to write up a list of appropriate posts. When you try to post keywords off the cuff, it often doesn't come out as intended.

To make your posts even more searchable, use your keywords as hashtags. Using hashtags makes it easy to refer to them later to see who else is using them. A hashtag is different from a keyword; a hashtag is used to hold a conversation rather than make your post visible in a search.



- WARNING** Don't use keywords for every post. If your community feels like you're using X only to drive traffic or sell something, you're sure to lose followers.

Following the X Rules of Etiquette

Like everything else online, X has certain unwritten rules of behavior.

What follows is a list of accepted X practices. Most of these items are common courtesy, and some are things that aren't as intuitive to new X users. Although most of these items won't get you booted off X, not following certain rules of etiquette can cost you some followers:

- » **Don't spam.** If a potential follower takes a peek at your X stream and it's nothing but preprogrammed links, the person is going to turn tail and run. If you post sales or traffic driving links all day, you're going to lose community. If you talk only about yourself, your brand, or your product, you'll never enjoy a good conversation. Balance your promotional posts with conversational posts.
- » **Be positive.** There's a time and place for negativity, and X usually isn't it. Avoid rants, profanity, and depressing woe-is-me type topics. If you're bringing down the mood of the community, they won't feel the love anymore and will unfollow.
- » **Don't use all caps.** TYPING IN ALL CAPS IS CONSIDERED YELLING. It hurts the eyes, too. Avoid it at all costs.
- » **Don't swear unless you're sure that your community isn't easily offended by**

profanity. Some people don't mind a little cursing, but others do. If you're going to go the edgy route, make sure that your community is comfortable with it.

- » **Don't feel you need to follow everyone who follows you.** Not everyone who follows you is a good fit. Don't feel compelled to follow everyone who follows you first. By the same token, don't be afraid to unfollow someone who doesn't sit well with you or your brand's message and tone.
- » **Give credit where it's due.** If you're sharing a tip, quote, or link you saw someone else share, give that person credit. You don't want a reputation as someone who steals other people's thunder.
- » **Don't hijack someone else's hashtag.** Don't use someone else's hashtag to promote your stuff. It's wrong and will turn off both old and new followers.
- » **Don't respond to a post with a sales push.** If someone is reaching out to the community for assistance, don't respond with a link to something promotional. It makes you look insincere. Instead, reach out with genuine, helpful information.
- » **Avoid private jokes.** If you can't share with everyone, don't share at all.



REMEMBER When using X, follow your best practices for business in the offline world. Sure, it's a more casual form of communication, but you're still looking to make a good impression.

Chapter 3

Making X Yours

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Personalizing your page
 - » Creating your profile
 - » Using X apps
 - » Posting from your devices
-

X has evolved over the past few years to highlight users and their interests. Visitors to your X home page now find an eye-catching header image that draws the attention to your avatar and bio. This setup is especially helpful for users who want to find people to follow who have common interests. The X page now allows users to add personality and passion to their profiles.

X has also introduced a couple of new features that make marketing (and earning money) directly on the X platform even more business friendly.

This chapter discusses the features that can help make your X experience even better, and also suggests ways to take your X profile page to a whole new level.

Customizing Your X Profile Page

Don't overlook customizing your X profile page. Otherwise, it's just a page with no personality, giving others no reason to follow you. You see, unless potential followers know you, they don't have much to go on. They'll want to click your profile page and know immediately whether you're worthy of a follow.

On your website, you take the time to create an About page that's representative of you and your brand (see Book 3, [Chapter 2](#)). Your X profile page, shown in [Figure 3-1](#), should be no different.

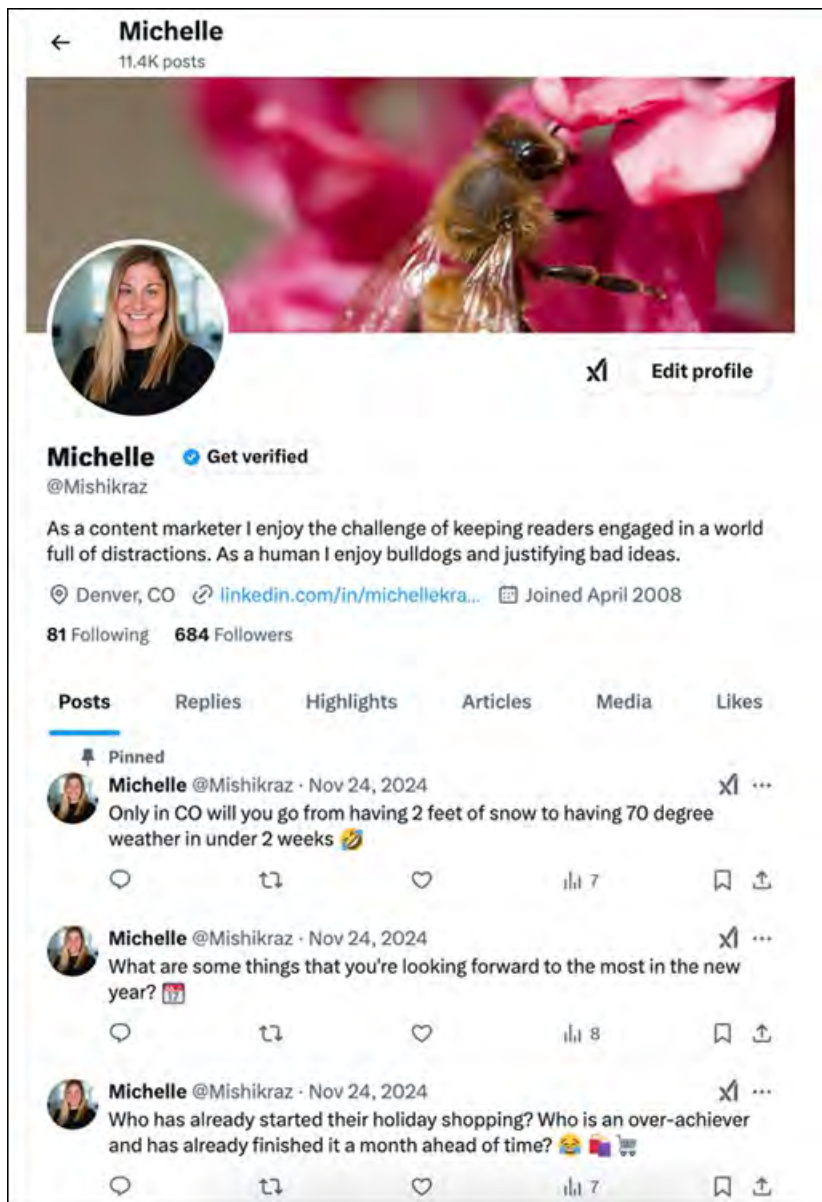


FIGURE 3-1: Your X profile page offers little space to make a big impression.

The following elements make up your X profile page:

- » **Header photo:** A large background image that best represents you or your brand
- » **Avatar:** A photo or logo that you feel best represents your brand
- » **Bio:** A few lines telling who you are and what you do
- » **URL:** A link to your blog, website, or other social media account
- » **Tenure:** How long you've been on X
- » **Followers/Following:** How many people you follow and are following you
- » **Post count:** How many posts you've published (top left, above your header photo)

» **Location:** Where you're based



WARNING As Book 4, [Chapter 2](#) mentions, following more people than you have followers is a sign of someone who uses auto-follow software, which is usually an indication that you're spammy or heavy into sales. People tend to stay away from those who don't organically grow their followers.

Your most recent posts are also listed on your profile page. The number of recent posts is important because it shows potential followers that your account is still active.

The following sections explain how to add a header photo and avatar to your X profile page.

Creating a header photo

Generic X pages are boring. By creating a custom header photo (see [Figure 3-2](#)), you're offering a better opportunity for potential followers, customers, and members of your community to find out more about you. A picture is worth a thousand words, right? You're also proving you're a real human being and not some spammy bot. People who make up accounts for the purpose of pushy selling or spamming don't take the time to create a custom header image because they know they'll probably be banned soon. Your background not only represents you as a brand, but it also tells folks you're legit.

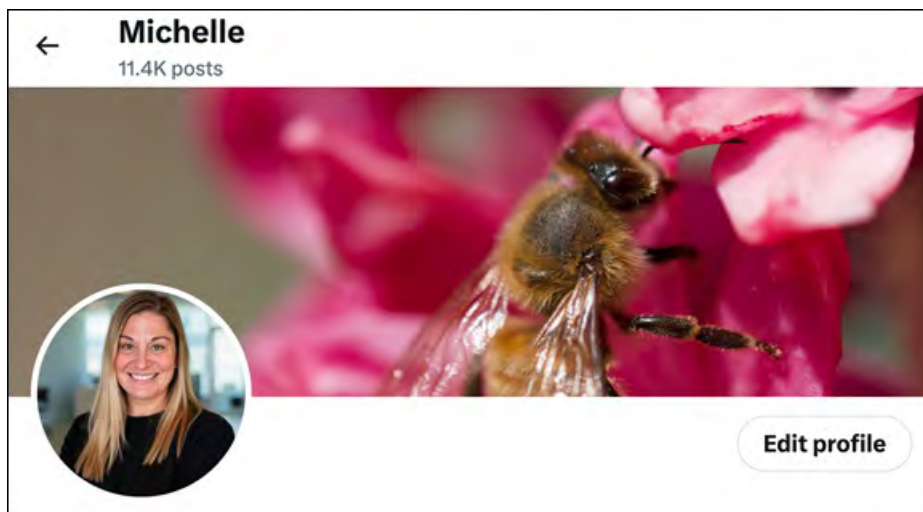


FIGURE 3-2: A header photo can highlight personality and passion.



REMEMBER Use the space in your X header image to define your brand and entice people into wanting to learn more about you.

Before you create your header image, take a look around. Visit other people and brands to see how they're customizing their X pages and get some ideas. If you're technically challenged and not sure that you can create the right type of header image, hire someone to put together

something representative of you or your brand. If you're representing a personal brand — for example, if you're a freelancer — your photo should say something about you and your interests or expertise. I sell my nature photography, so I've chosen to display one of my photos as opposed to just a logo. If you're placing a header photo on a brand page, the image should be representative of your brand and customers.

Deciding what to include in your header

Consider putting these elements into your background image:

- » **Your brand's logo:** Your logo doesn't have to be front and center, but incorporating it helps with brand recognition.
- » **An image representative of your brand:** For example, if you work for a beer company, consider a frosty mug of one of your premium beers as a header image.
- » **Your fans and community:** Showing how people who are passionate about the brand are using the brand is a great sales tactic.



WARNING You may see brands that have text in their header image. If you're not willing to keep that updated, you may want to stay away from that tactic. There's nothing worse than seeing a header image advertising an event that happened six months ago, for example.

Uploading a header image

After you create a header image, you're ready to upload to your X page:

1. **Click the Profile link in the menu bar on the left side of your home page.**
You see your profile page.
2. **Click the Edit Profile button, located below the position where your cover shot should be.**

A new box pops up and you see a camera icon over your profile and cover photo areas as well as places where you can edit your name, bio, or location.



TIP None of this information is required when you sign up for an account, but it is recommended you at least enter your name, bio, location, and URL in addition to uploading a cover photo.

3. **Click the cover photo camera icon to select the option to upload a new photo or click the X to remove an existing photo.**

A dialog box appears where you can navigate to the photo on your computer. If you chose to delete your photo, the photo disappears immediately and the only other option you have is to upload a new one.

4. **Select the photo that you want to use and click Save.**

You now have a custom X header that shares information about you and your brand, and (you hope) reflects the message you're trying to share.

Creating a custom X avatar

Your X *avatar* is the small image next to your @name that your followers see every time you post. If yours is a personal brand, you may want to use an image showing your likeness. If you're managing a professional brand, consider using a logo for your avatar.

Uploading an avatar is simple. Just follow these steps:

1. **Click the Profile link in the menu bar on the left side of your home page.**

You see your profile page.

2. **Click the Edit Profile button, located below the position where your cover shot should be.**

You see a camera icon over your profile as well as places where you can edit your name, bio, and location.

3. **Click the camera icon over the avatar area.**

A dialog box appears where you can navigate to the photo on your computer.

4. **Select the photo that you want to use, crop your image to make sure it shows exactly what you want it to (optional), and then click Save.**

Congratulations, you now have a custom X avatar!



TIP

While you were given the option to remove an existing header photo when on the Edit Profile screen, you don't have that option for your avatar because X always wants there to "be a face to the name."



WARNING

Make sure your avatar remains familiar to your community. If you change your avatar more than people change shoes, your brand isn't going to be very recognizable on X.

Considering a Premium or Business Account

In 2021, Twitter (yes, the blue bird one) launched *Twitter Blue*, which was their premium subscription service that was then rebranded to *X Premium* when the platform changed from Twitter to X.

In contrast, *X for Business* is a suite of features that include access to *X Ads* as well as *Professional Accounts*.

Whew! Did you get all that?

To break it down further, I'll take you through the standout features for each account type.

X Premium

X Premium is their paid subscription service that has three tiers: Basic, Premium, and Premium+, with more features available in each higher tier.

- » **Basic:** Includes features like editing posts, the ability to write longer posts (up to 25,000 characters!) and upload longer videos (up to ~3 hours long), reply prioritization (your replies to others' posts are bumped to the top), text formatting, bookmark folders, custom app icons, and more.
- » **Premium:** All the features in Basic plus a check mark next to your username, reduced ads, access to apply for ads revenue sharing and creator subscriptions (more about subscriptions later in this chapter), larger reply prioritization, ID verification, Media Studio, and access to Grok, X's Artificial Intelligence (AI) bot that is similar to OpenAI's ChatGPT, except that its answer can be a little, shall I say, sassier.
- » **Premium+:** All the features in Basic and Premium as well as the benefit of having no ads anywhere on X, receiving the largest reply prioritization, and a newer feature called Articles, which are similar to LinkedIn articles, where you can write and publish an ... wait for it ... article. These are similar to blog posts on a company blog, except that they live on the X platform, so your followers can access them directly, without needing to click a URL and go elsewhere.

Pricing in the United States starts at \$3/month or \$32/year for Basic, \$8/month and \$84/year for Premium, and \$16/month and \$168/year for Premium+. Visit help.x.com/en/using-x/x-premium#tbpricing-bycountry for pricing information for your location.

X Business

If you ever want to advertise on X, then you will get well-acquainted with X Business. In addition to gaining access to X ads (which Book 8, [Chapter 5](#) covers), you can also start using Professional Accounts, which is a suite of premium services exclusively for business users.

According to X, Professional Accounts “allow businesses, brands, creators, and publishers to have a unique and clearly defined presence on the platform and the ability to grow and strengthen their presence on X.” In other words, you get access to a lot more marketing bells and whistles than your average X users.

These features include:

- » **Professional Home:** A unified dashboard that empowers professionals to monitor performance, explore product offerings, access valuable resources, and boost results.
- » **Professional Category:** Enables professionals to display their professional identity directly on their profile.
- » **Profile Spotlights:** A dedicated space on a professional's profile to showcase what's most important to them and includes the categories Location, Shop, Mobile App, and Link.
- » **X Shopping:** A suite of tools designed for professionals to sell their products directly on X.

- » **X Ads and Quick Promote:** The ability to place several different types of ads on X, as well as the ability to amplify the reach of individual posts without navigating the full Ads Manager.

Weighing the pros and cons

So, should you pay extra for exclusive features? The answer is ... it depends.

It may be worth giving one of the paid tiers a try if you find yourself aligning with any of the following:

- » **You have an active community:** If you have a large number of followers who are active and engage with your content.
- » **You post a lot of videos:** Getting access to the longer video lengths and bigger file sizes would be helpful.
- » **You engage with other brands frequently:** If part of your marketing plan includes engaging and replying to other brands, then you may benefit from getting your @replies boosted to the top of the heap.
- » **You don't have a blog:** The Articles feature is a good way to publish long-form content if you don't have anywhere else to publish it at the moment.
- » **You'd benefit from being verified:** If you're in an industry that responds well to having the security of interacting with verified profiles, by all means sign up for it.
- » **If you dislike ads:** Hey ... it happens! You wouldn't be the first marketer to dislike being advertised to (all the while advertising to others). Humans are a complicated species!
- » **You want to offer subscriptions:** If you think you'll want to offer exclusive content to a group of paying subscribers, then you'll have to sign up for one of the paid tiers (more on Subscription in the following section).
- » **If you love AI technology:** If you're someone who loves interacting with and benefiting from using AI technology to lighten your load, then Grok may turn out to be the X partner you never knew you wanted.

Offering Subscriptions

Subscriptions are when users on the platform can pay X to subscribe to your content, gaining access to exclusive perks like bonus material and direct interactions with you. Subscriber replies are marked with a badge, making it easier for you to recognize and engage with them. Additionally, you may earn a share of the revenue X generates from subscriptions to your content.

In order to be eligible to offer Subscriptions, you must meet the following criteria:

- » You are 18 years of age or older.
- » You have a complete profile with an account name, a bio, a profile picture, and a header image.
- » You have a verified email address.

- » You have secured your account by enabling two-factor authentication.
- » You do not have a history of repeatedly violating the X user agreement or X's Content monetization standards.
- » Your profile does not feature the identity of another person, brand, or organization, nor does it use a fake identity intended to deceive others.
- » You are subscribed to X Premium.
- » You have a X account that has been active for 3 months or more.
- » You maintain 500 active followers or more.
- » You have posted content in the past 30 days.
- » You have completed X's identity verification.

You can find more information about all the policies at help.x.com/en/rules-and-policies/subscriptions-policy.

Pinning or Highlighting Posts

Did you post something especially important, amusing, or newsworthy? Is your brand currently running a promotion? X now offers the ability to *pin* (free accounts) or *highlight* posts at the top of your X profile page so they remain there, even after you add other posts. As [Figure 3-3](#) illustrates, the pinned post stays at the top of your profile page, so it's the first thing people read when they access that page. Highlighting posts essentially collects them all on a dedicated tab so you can have a curated list of all the content you want to call attention to.



FIGURE 3-3: Pinning posts keeps them at the top of your profile page.

To pin posts, follow these steps:

1. **Click the Profile link in the menu bar on the left side of your home page.**
You see your profile page.
2. **Select the post you want to pin to your profile (or highlight) and click the three dots icon on the top right of the post.**
A drop-down menu appears.
3. **Select either the Pin to Your Profile or Highlight on Your Profile option.**
Once you make your choice, congratulations, you've pinned or highlighted your post!

Keep in mind that if you have a post that is already pinned, the new post will override the old one. X only allows you to pin one post at a time. You can highlight as many posts as you want, however.

To unpin a post, follow the preceding steps, but choose the Unpin from Profile option in Step 3.

Embedding Posts

X has a feature where you can *embed* posts onto your website or blog. To embed something simply means using a small bit (usually one line) of code to pull the content in question from its original source. So, in the case of X's embed capabilities, it lets you pull posts either from your own account — or someone else's — directly onto your website. Pretty neat, huh?

Embedding provides a number of benefits:

- » **If you embed your own post, you encourage your website visitors to repost or “favorite” it.** Readers can also follow you right from your article, if they don't already.
- » **If you're embedding another person's post, you're essentially quoting them directly.** That way, there won't ever be questions about whether or not you transcribed their message correctly.
- » **You can save meaningful content directly onto your website.** Say you're going to post something on X, but it doesn't call for an entire section of your website or its own blog post. Embedding the post ensures your site visitors still get exposed to that content.
- » **You show you're active on social media.** These days, if a brand isn't on social media in some capacity, consumers tend to think it a bit odd. It's just become *the norm*.



WARNING Having said that, you should truly keep your accounts active and up to date. Letting an account go dormant for long periods is almost as bad as not having one at all. Almost.

Although embedding posts definitely has benefits, there are some downsides, too:

- » **The post can be deleted.** This is especially true in the case of another person's post. Although you can control what you delete on your own X account, you don't have a say in what another person does. If you're caught off guard, the spot on your site where the post was embedded will show an ugly error.
- » **The other person may not be too pleased that you've embedded their post.** Yes, posts are public if the other person's account is public (unless they're DMs, which you cannot embed). But that doesn't mean the other person wants you to embed their post onto your website. Whatever the reason, it may be best to reach out and ask if it's okay that you do so. Chances are, they not only won't mind, but they'll appreciate the exposure.
- » **Even if the post is yours, something can happen to the third-party content.** If you

embed one of your posts that links to an article on a third-party site, for example, you're at the mercy of that website. If anything happens to that content, your embedded post will be useless.

- » **You aren't as active on X as you should be.** Say you decide to embed a post you post today but then drop off the face of X earth for another three years. A person visiting your site probably won't know the context behind your absence, and the old content shows that you're not keeping your content fresh.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

X offers an Embed Post feature if you click the three dots icon on the top right of any post. It'll provide you with a line of code that you'll then have to paste wherever you want the embedded post to show up (see [Figure 3-4](#)). The instructions for how to do that heavily depend on where you host your website, so it's out of the scope of this book. I recommend you check out the help pages of your website platform provider.

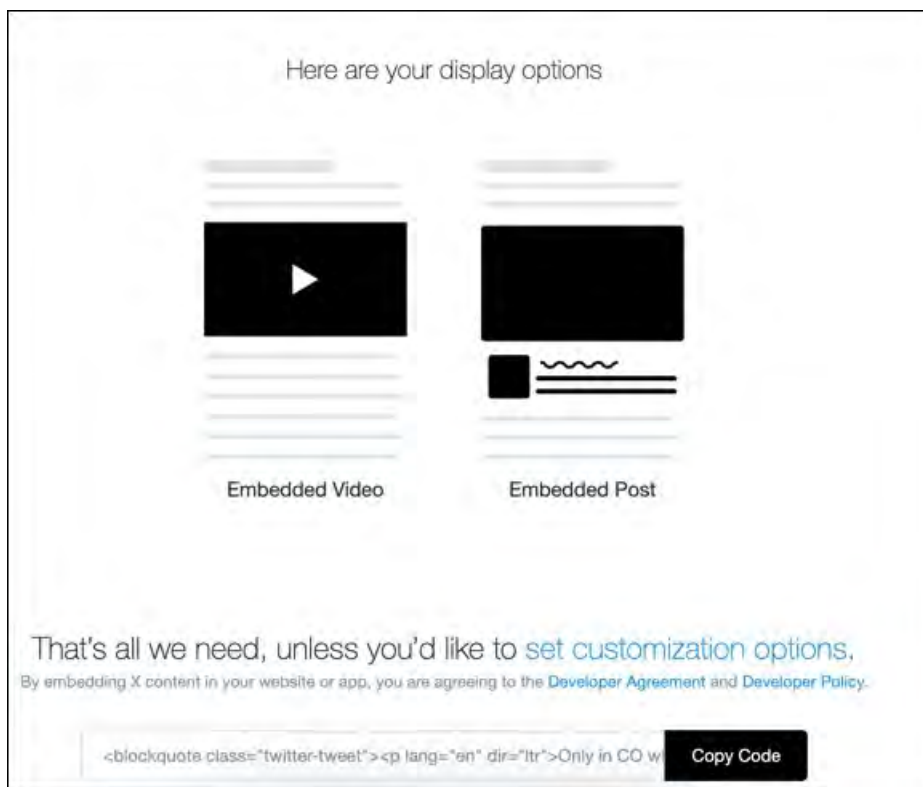


FIGURE 3-4: Embedding posts involves adding code to your website.

Chapter 4

Social Listening with X

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » **Discovering what your customers are saying about you**
 - » **Selling by helping**
-

Social media has opened up countless opportunities for businesses to connect with their customers. Social networks present brands with a valuable opportunity to hear what their customers are saying, providing an unprecedented peek into their lives. Using social media to monitor conversations is called *social listening*, and it's something all businesses should take advantage of daily.

This chapter discusses the benefits of social listening, and how to use X as a tool to monitor — and participate in — important conversations.

Using X to Listen to Your Customers

These days, businesses can't sweep complaints under the rug. Before everyone was online, it was easy to ignore negativity. Nowadays, customers can take their complaints public, and if businesses aren't careful, those complaints can go viral.

Because so many people are on X, it's one of the best places to go to hear what customers are saying. Before getting into the nitty-gritty of how to use social listening, I'll first discuss some of the benefits. Here are some important reasons to use X to monitor your customers' online conversations:

- » **Gain insight into how customers feel about your products and services.** You can search X to learn who is talking about your products and services. By monitoring these conversations, you can discover how people are using your products, what type of experiences they're having, and what, if any, improvements need to be made.
- » **Respond to customer questions.** Many customers find it easier to reach out on X and ask 280-character questions than to commit to email. Sometimes, instead of reaching out to the brand, they'll ask other people about their experiences and whether they recommend using your brand. Monitoring these conversations allows you to listen in — and even participate.
- » **Handle customer complaints.** Much to the chagrin of businesses everywhere, customers take their complaints online when they are disgruntled. Although no one ever wants to see their company associated with negativity, it's a chance to show off customer service skills and gain new customers as a result.
- » **Grow your online community.** By monitoring conversations where people are discussing

topics related to your brand, you can share wisdom, expertise, and product information, growing your online community and customer base in the process.

- » **Gauge the effectiveness of your customer service.** By monitoring online conversations, you can see how your customer service teams are handling online inquiries. Moreover, you can also see what customers and potential customers are saying about them on X.
- » **See how campaigns are working.** One way to gauge how sales and marketing campaigns are working is to see how people are responding to them on X. You can monitor to see what kind of buzz is happening and whether people are sharing.
- » **Collect important demographic information.** Use X to determine important information about your customers. For example, do the people who talk about your brand tend to be in a particular industry?
- » **Track sentiment on a regular basis.** Start a spreadsheet and take note of sentiment for specific days, weeks, months, and years.
- » **Learn your customers' frequently asked questions about your company.** Knowing what your customers are asking helps you to shape your campaigns, content, and business.
- » **Note competitors.** Monitoring X chatter is a good way to gauge the popularity of competitors, how their campaigns are working, how they interact with their customers online, and online sentiment towards their brands.
- » **Meet potential brand advocates.** As your brand and X account gain in popularity, you'll notice a few diehard fans. These are your brand advocates. When you communicate and share discounts with them, they'll continue to sing your praises online.
- » **Improve upon products and services.** Because people like to air grievances on X, you can use social listening as a way to gather information and use it to make your products and services even better.

X gives you a wonderful opportunity to move beyond customer service 800 lines and online support tickets. Many of today's customers don't have the patience to navigate a phone menu or wait for someone to respond to an email complaint. In fact, they might feel X is the best avenue to get a response because they know businesses don't want to see online negativity.



TIP The best way to monitor X conversations is with X tools and third-party apps. Using apps such as Hootsuite or X Pro enables you to set up different columns for different search terms so you can see all your information at a glance. To learn more about X tools, see Book 4, [Chapter 3](#).

Here are some searches to consider:

- » **Your brand name:** Always search for conversations centered on the name of your company. If several brands are under your company's umbrella, search for all those names as well.
- » **Searches related to your brand's product or service:** For example, if yours is a cereal

brand, you might want to search for *nutrition*, *breakfast*, and *recipes*.

- » **The keywords people use to search for your brand, product, or service:** When people land on your website, what search terms are they using? Use these words and phrases when you search on X. They might not necessarily be talking about your stuff, but you might find a good conversation starter and attract new people to the brand.
- » **Your competitors:** It's always a good idea to see what people are saying about your competitors, what your competitors are sharing, and what new products they're introducing.
- » **Related searches that aren't necessarily brand specific:** Sometimes you can grow your online community by searching outside the box. For example, if you work for an umbrella brand, you can do obvious searches for *umbrellas* and *rain*, but also look to see what people are saying when they talk about *weather*, *sunshine*, and even *vacations*. (No one likes to be stuck in the rain unprepared while on vacation!)

After you begin searching, it's time to take notes and take action. For example, if people are mentioning an aspect of an item that frustrates them, you can pass the information on to your design department so they can make the necessary changes. Also, if you see people complaining about not receiving an item or being charged the wrong price, you can delegate to the customer service department so they can reach out and rectify the situation.



REMEMBER Many of the people who complain on social media are hoping to catch a brand's attention. Use that moment to do the right thing so you can turn a disgruntled customer into a long-term advocate.

Responding to questions and complaints

It's not enough to monitor and listen to X conversations. It's also important to respond. How and when you respond can make all the difference in the world. You'll find that if you're kind and responsive, you'll not only help one customer but also show others you care about the people who buy your products and services. People appreciate good customer service, and it gives them confidence in the brand. Thus, a public customer service strategy helps the customer in need while giving your brand a positive image in potential customers' minds.

However, responding to customers doesn't necessarily mean the public has to be privy to every conversation a brand has with people online. It's also important to know when to take it private. A 280-character post is not enough to solve most problems or give in-depth responses to questions. With that in mind, let's now explore some best practices for responding to questions and complaints on X:

- » **If you can help in 280 characters, by all means, do so.** Brevity is fine, but people prefer to have problems handled properly, character count be damned. It's fine to answer general questions in a post if you're able to do so. You can even break your answers down into several posts — as long as it doesn't become too convoluted and difficult to read. However, if a question or complaint requires more than a brief answer, find a platform

that enables you to use more words.

- » **Use a name when you can.** If you can determine a first name from a X account, it's good practice to use it. Using a first name makes the response personal instead of looking like a canned response.
- » **Be kind and respectful.** When responding online, it's always a good idea to remember you're representing your brand. Anything perceived as being uncaring or unkind is a reflection on your brand.
- » **When possible, take it private.** A private message on X can be as long or short as you'd like. Nothing is wrong with responding to a comment or question with "Hi, John. Let's take this to DM so I can give your answer the attention it deserves." When you're private, you can even ask for a phone number so you can resolve the issue voice to voice. You can also use email, phone, Skype, or another platform that's convenient for both of you.
- » **Never share private information on X.** Never ask for information such as a phone number or address on X. Save the personal details for a private message, a phone call, or communication on another platform that isn't available for public consumption.
- » **Don't leave people hanging.** If someone reaches out to your brand's X account with a question or customer service issue, respond as soon as possible. Many brands with a strict X policy like to respond within an hour. When you don't respond promptly, it sends a negative message. Even responding by writing "I'm looking into that" is better than nothing.
- » **Do your best to avoid online negativity:** Back-and-forth, tit-for-tat negativity can harm a brand's image. It's better to take the high road during an angry conversation than say something that can cause a loss of sales — or even your job.
- » **Don't ignore legitimate negative feedback.** Many times, negativity comes with truth. Always hear what people are saying. If people are angry, let them know you heard them and invite them to converse privately so you can rectify the issue. If they respond with abuse, move on. If there's a legitimate issue, do your best to clear it up so the negativity doesn't continue.
- » **Always follow up.** If you help one of your X customers, a good practice is to follow up in the next few days to see if everything is now rectified. Your customers will appreciate the additional care.



TIP

Collect positive posts and use them for testimonials. Share them on your website and promotional materials to inspire others to get behind your brand.



TIP

Turn on the Receive Messages from Anybody option so people don't necessarily have to follow you to send you a direct message. Here's how to do so:

1. **Click More in the left sidebar and choose Settings and Privacy from the menu that appears.**
2. **From the menu that appears, select the Privacy and Safety option.**
3. **Once that menu expands to the right, click Direct Messages and check the circle that says Everyone.**

Your changes are automatically saved.

Gaining new customers by being helpful

The beautiful thing about X is how you can use it to bring in new customers without even using a sales pitch. All you have to do is be helpful.

When you're making your rounds monitoring the conversation, don't look only for people who are asking questions or talking about your brand. Note what people are saying about the brand and respond in a helpful manner. You can have conversations that have nothing at all to do with your business.

It doesn't matter if someone is reaching out to your brand specifically. When people ask a question publicly on X, they're inviting responses from anyone who is available for conversation.

For example, say the social media manager for a rainwear company is making the rounds on X. While looking at the different conversations, the manager notices someone asking what the weather will be like. This is a great opening for a raingear company. They can respond with a weather report, and if there's room, can also post, "I know where you can get a great raincoat if you need one!" Here's another example: A company selling cold-weather gear notices a certain area is going to receive a significant amount of snow. The social media manager can send a post reminding people snow is coming and offer a discount code for snow boots.



TIP

Using X for customer service involves more than answering questions and complaints. Look for opportunities to be helpful as well. Doing so leaves a favorable impression of your company, which means people are more likely to use your product or service when there's a need.

Book 5

Facebook

Contents at a Glance

Chapter 1: Using Facebook as a Marketing Tool

[Understanding the Appeal of Brands on Facebook](#)

[Branding with Facebook Pages](#)

[Examining the Components of a Facebook Page](#)

[Making the Most of Your Facebook Page](#)

[Understanding Your Facebook Administrative Functions](#)

[Filling Out What You're About](#)

[Using a Custom Username for Your Page](#)

[Inviting People to Join Your Community](#)

[Liking Other Brands](#)

[Creating Facebook Events](#)

Chapter 2: Creating and Sharing Content on Facebook

[Creating a Facebook Content Strategy](#)

[Sharing Your Brand's Story](#)

[Creating Content That Sings](#)

[Sharing and Being Shared](#)

[Bringing Your Community into the Mix](#)

[Making Connections with Facebook Groups](#)

[Learning through Insights](#)

Chapter 3: Advertising and Selling on Facebook

[Reaching More Fans with Ads](#)

[Measuring Your Ad's ROI](#)

[Selling on Facebook](#)

Chapter 4: Streaming Live Video on Facebook

[Understanding the Benefits of Live Streaming](#)

[Setting Up Your Live Stream](#)

[Engaging with Your Community via Facebook Live](#)

[Brainstorming Ideas for Live Videos](#)

Chapter 1

Using Facebook as a Marketing Tool

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Using Facebook pages
 - » Setting up your Facebook presence
 - » Making the most of likes
 - » Using Facebook events
-

Facebook is the world's most popular social network, where people of all ages, professions, and backgrounds gather to stay in touch and share cute cat photos with friends, present and former colleagues, old classmates, and family.

Having billions of people gathered in one place is the perfect opportunity for any brand to raise awareness and grow a community of customers and advocates. If you're not on Facebook already, you're missing out on a huge opportunity. Simply put, Facebook is where the people are — and you have to be where the people are if you want to succeed in business.

This chapter explores how Facebook pages work and how you can make them work for your brand.



TIP

Facebook has become one of the most robust social media platforms for marketing, but this book can only cover a fraction of that functionality.

Understanding the Appeal of Brands on Facebook

People who *like*, or give a thumbs-up to, a brand on Facebook are more likely to buy from that brand. *But they're not liking you to buy from you.* They're liking you to find out more about you and to receive updates and news regarding products and services. They may have had a positive experience with the brand and want to engage more. In any event, it's important to know why people are so willing to like a business on a social network.

Everyone knows plenty of people who like brands on Facebook. Friends and family come to Facebook each day to enjoy the company of others, but not necessarily to engage in a lot of deep reading or thinking. So why are people following brands on Facebook? Here are several reasons:

- » **They are seeking a discount.** The majority of people liking your brand's Facebook page are hoping to receive some sort of benefit. This doesn't mean you have to give discounts and freebies every day, but if people know at some point they'll receive coupons, codes,

or other perks, they're more likely to sign up and remain active members of your Facebook community.

- » **They are looking for updates and news.** Fans follow television shows, bands and musicians, and other forms of entertainment to learn about showtimes and dates, new releases, and more.
- » **They want to interact with like-minded people.** People enjoy following local businesses, news stations, politicians, movies, television shows, and other businesses on Facebook to talk about those things with other enthusiasts.
- » **Their friends are doing it.** When someone shares a brand's Facebook post, that person's friends will see that action. The power of suggestion can lead others to like a brand page, if only because they know other friends are fans, as well.
- » **They are following a recommendation.** When people feel good about a brand, they leave positive comments on their timelines and tell their friends, hoping that the friends then enjoy the same positive experience. If their friends also enjoy the experience, those friends in turn invite their friends and family, and so on.
- » **They want to express their loyalty.** Customers who enjoy the brand offline often seek out the brand to enjoy online. In addition to receiving freebies or updates, they're mostly interested in showing support to a name they believe in.
- » **They are seeking entertainment.** If your content is stale with only the occasional businesslike updates, you're not going to keep your Facebook fans. However, if your content is entertaining and fun, and keeps folks coming back to see what you're going to talk about each day, your community will continue to grow.
- » **They have a question.** Your community has many questions, but they may not want to call a customer service line and wait on hold. Being able to reach out via Facebook gives people a way to connect without having to invest a lot of time.
- » **They want to give feedback.** Many people follow a brand on Facebook so they can leave feedback regarding a product, service, or experience.



REMEMBER Many people who like your Facebook page won't interact further on it. They'll read your updates on their news feeds and may even take advantage of discount codes or calls to action, but they won't comment or communicate. That's fine; marketing to the silent members of your community is still important.

If your brand's Facebook page is engaging and the person running it is funny, knowledgeable, and patient, your Facebook community will evolve into something wonderful. Some followers will comment on posts, others will vote in polls — and, yes, a number of folks will buy when you have sales or offer discounts.



WARNING Although this chapter explores all the ways a brand can benefit from using Facebook to reach its customers, remember that Facebook is continuously evolving and changing its algorithm. It's not as easy for brands to reach their Facebook fans as it used to be, and social media marketers are encouraged to stay on top of Facebook updates and changes. If you don't keep apprised of Facebook news, your brand can be penalized for not following specific rules or understanding how specific changes will reflect on the brand's Facebook page. Also, you may not receive as much traffic to your page if you don't know how the latest algorithm works. This is why it's important to keep apprised of Facebook news and updates. Searching for Facebook on Google News (under Technology) will alert you to any changes and recommendations for handling said changes.

Branding with Facebook Pages

You may think you know Facebook pretty well because you have a personal account, but Facebook pages for brands and your Facebook profile have major differences. Facebook pages have to follow specific rules to avoid coming across as overly spammy. For example, you have to follow specific guidelines for selling or running contests. (For more on these guidelines, see [Chapter 2](#) in this minibook.)

The purpose of the Facebook page is simple: to promote a brand. The goal of most brands is to have as many individuals like them as possible to best get their message to the masses. Some brands (such as Coca-Cola, with more than 108 million followers) can reach more people with one Facebook update than with a television commercial — and it's cheaper, too. So a major brand's goal is to make its Facebook page as interactive as possible to get those likes.

After your brand has accumulated fans and followers, a variety of interactions can occur. A representative of the brand posts an update in hopes of getting as many likes, comments, and shares on that post as possible. When people like or comment on a public post, or share a status update or an image, their friends can see that action, which means it's exposed to even more people.

If a brand's update gets liked or shared or both by hundreds of thousands of people, it has the potential to be seen by millions of people. This visibility leads to higher brand recognition, even if the people who viewed the update didn't share it in return. You want as many people as possible to at least know about your brand on Facebook.



TIP If your page is truly interactive and offers some cool perks, your community will be inspired to invite others to like the brand, as well. So another purpose of the Facebook page is to create a community of brand advocates and word-of-mouth marketers.



REMEMBER Facebook pages are a way to humanize your brand and make you seem more real to your customers or community. If you take the time to answer inquiries, post updates, and make them feel as if they're part of the brand, too, your fans will put their faith and trust into you and are more likely to support your efforts.

Brands are taking advantage of Facebook pages because they're a way to reach people honestly and effectively. The most successful brands on Facebook aren't shouting "Buy Me!" or posting only product updates. They're having conversations with their communities, and it's working.

Examining the Components of a Facebook Page

A Facebook page has several components; here are a few that you'll want to be familiar with before launching your own page:

- » **Profile photo:** Most brands use this space to post their logo or something that's regularly associated with the brand. Your profile photo isn't the biggest photo on your page, but it's visible at eye level for whoever visits your page. (See [Figure 1-1](#).)

Make sure that you properly prepare your graphic so it doesn't end up distorted when Facebook places the image into its pre-sized box. Facebook recommends the image be at least 196 pixels wide, and square rather than rectangular.



FIGURE 1-1: Use your brand's logo for the profile photo.

- » **Cover photo:** The biggest photo on your page, this cover photo can be a touching, amusing, or scenic image that best represents your brand and what it stands for.
- » **About:** Includes your company's message, mission statement, or a brief bio of who you are and what you do. Your About page should be compelling and written in an engaging style. For more on your About page, see the section "[Filling Out What You're About](#)," later in this chapter.
- » **Intro:** This section is where you can put a short bio (254 characters max), but otherwise it pulls information such as the page category, website, and so on from the About section.
- » **Contact info:** This section, found on the About page, should list all the ways people can get in touch with you. At the very least, it should include email addresses where your community can offer feedback. You should also include your X handle, blog, or website.
- » **Mentions:** Posts by other brands where your brand is tagged. You can delete the tags if

they're inappropriate, highlight them if they're something you feel everyone should see, or disable this feature so that no one else can tag you in posts.

- » **Call to Action Button:** A customizable button on the right side of the page that gets people to perform an action such as contacting you or signing up for your newsletter.
- » **Professional Dashboard:** Your Professional Dashboard (see [Figure 1-2](#)) is where you discover how many new likes you have each week, how many people are sharing on your page, what countries people are visiting from, and more.

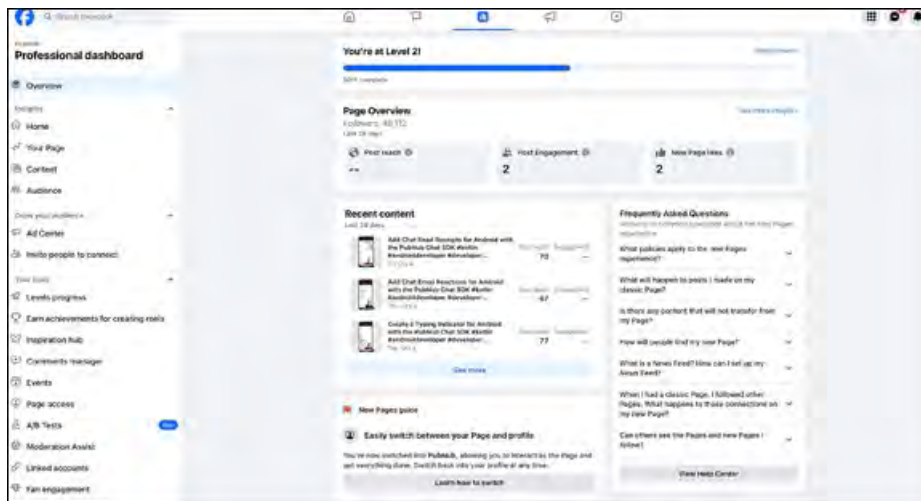


FIGURE 1-2: Your Settings page is your Facebook toolbox.

- » **Manage Page:** The aptly named Manage Page (see [Figure 1-3](#)) is the central hub where you access all your page management tools.
- » **Timeline:** Your brand's public-facing Facebook page, shown in [Figure 1-4](#), is where you post content.
- » **Featured:** Posts you want to keep front and center on your timeline.
- » **Tabs:** Extras your community can click to engage with the brand. Photo Albums, Video, Channels, Reviews, and Events are a few of the options accessed through tabs.



FIGURE 1-3: The Manage Page is the central hub for your Facebook presence.



FIGURE 1-4: Your timeline is where you and your community interact.

Making the Most of Your Facebook Page

Setting up your page is simple and can take as little or as much time as you want, depending on how many bells and whistles you add to your profile.

Some interesting features of pages include the following:

- » **Private messaging:** Allows your community to reach out and ask questions privately and then receive a personal response in return. Please note that some brands turn off the messaging feature because they'd rather not receive private messages. You can turn off the private messaging feature, but you'll miss valuable community feedback because not everyone wants to publicly post to your wall.
- » **Notifications:** A number on the top right of the page shows all your new notifications so that you can welcome new members by name, see who's messaging you, know who's posting to your timeline, and find out who's talking about you on their own timelines.
- » **The capability to pin key events and photos:** You can make certain content "sticky" to highlight key dates, milestones, and events by using the Featured section.

Adding a profile picture

To set up your timeline, the first step is to upload a profile picture. Your profile picture is the small photo on the left, usually a brand logo.

To upload your profile photo, follow these steps:

1. **Hover your cursor on the profile image area and click the camera icon.**

A pop-up window appears, enabling you to choose to upload a new or edit an existing profile picture. If this is the first time you're adding a profile image, you'll see the placeholder image that's the first letter of your page's name.

2. **Click the + Upload Photo button at the top of the box.**

3. **Assuming that you're going to upload your brand's logo, choose the file you want to upload from the File Upload window that appears.**

Alternatively, if you've already uploaded the image you'll be using, you can select it from one of the available folders at this time.

4. **Add a description of the photo and resize the photo (if needed) using the slider.**

The description will show up next to the photo if someone clicks on your logo. You can also choose to make the photo temporary, for example, if you uploaded a holiday version of your logo and you want to revert to your normal logo after a short length of time.

5. **Save your profile photo.**

Adding a cover photo

Your next step is to choose your cover photo. This is the large background photo appearing at the top of your timeline (refer to [Figure 1-1](#)) and the first thing people will see when landing

on your brand's page. Your cover photo is more than just a picture; it's a representation of your brand. You have a wonderful opportunity to illustrate your brand, product, or service in any way you want — and you want to make a lasting impression. Many top brands, such as Ben & Jerry's, Ford, and Coca-Cola, take great care in designing their cover photo.



TIP Before you get started, take time to research other brands on Facebook to see how they're using their timelines. This may give you some good ideas.

To add a cover photo to your timeline, follow these steps:

1. **Select the button with a camera icon that says *Add cover photo* located on the bottom right of the image.**
2. **In the pop-up menu that appears, choose whether you want to upload a new photo or a photo from an existing photo album.**
 - *Choose cover photo:* If you want to use a photo that already resides in your page's photo albums, choose this option.
 - *Upload photo:* If you want to upload an image from your computer, choose this option.

After you choose a photo, you can reposition it by clicking the image and dragging it up or down.

3. **Click *Save Changes* on the top right.**

This helpful link has information for working with the cover photo:

<https://snappa.com/blog/facebook-cover-photo-size>.



TIP Keep in mind that your timeline cover image doesn't have to be permanent. You can change it as often as you see fit. Change with the seasons or to coincide with product launches.

To change your timeline cover image or profile photo, follow these steps:

1. **Click *Edit cover photo* located on the bottom right of the photo.**
2. **Choose where you want to get your photo from.**

You have these choices:

- *Choose cover photo:* If you want to use a photo that already resides in your page's photo albums, choose this option.
- *Upload photo:* If you want to upload an image from your computer, choose this option.
- *Reposition:* For only a cover photo. You can keep your current cover photo and

simply reposition it by clicking and holding the cover photo, and then dragging it to its new position.

- **Remove:** You can remove the cover or profile photo with this option. You don't have to remove the current photo to change it. Instead, you can just choose one of the first two options.

3. Click Save Changes.

Adding finishing touches

If you went through the steps in the preceding sections, your Facebook timeline is pretty much set up except for a little tweaking. From here, you can do the following:

- » **Pin (Feature) content.** Make certain posts or images *sticky*, meaning they'll stay in the same location at the top in the Featured section until you unpin them. Featuring content is a good way to highlight sales events, announcements, and promotional campaigns. Note that Facebook allows you to Feature only one item at a time.

To pin a post: After you post an update, select the three dots located at the upper right side of the published post. From the drop-down menu, select Pin Post.

- » **Give fans something to start with.** There's nothing worse than landing on an empty Facebook page! Be sure to add a few interesting posts to your page to kick off the fun! You could add a behind-the-scenes video to give viewers a sneak peek to your brand, post an Employee Spotlight where you highlight someone from your company, or any other interesting content that gives newcomers a positive introduction to you and your brand!
- » **Clean up your tabs.** Make your brand's page even more interactive with tabs that allow you to post testimonials from customers, list any promotion you're running, share information about upcoming events, and so much more.

If a tab or section doesn't apply to your business — for example, if you don't want to list Sports or Movies — you can click the three dots on the top right of the section and select Hide Section. Alternatively, you can select Manage Sections from the bottom of the More drop-down menu and uncheck (or check) the sections you want to be visible on your page.



TIP

Don't go overboard with the bells and whistles. When you have too many items added to your page, your brand's account becomes too cluttered and confusing. Take the time to research the best tabs for your community and use them in a way that doesn't assault the senses.

Understanding Your Facebook Administrative Functions

Facebook allows you to have a detailed look at the activity on your brand's page with several administrative features. I will discuss two of the most important links in the left sidebar: Settings and Professional Dashboard. Both of these sections are chock-full of the information needed to provide your Facebook community with a positive user experience.

Settings

The Settings section can be found at the very bottom of the sidebar, and here are some of the most common functions you'll utilize:

- » **Preferences:** The Preferences section of the Settings sidebar has a couple of important administrative functions, including turning on (or off) notifications, media settings (how videos are shown), and Reaction preferences (whether or not you want to publicly show how many likes or interactions your posts get).
- » **Audience and Visibility:** This is the catch-all section that contains a shortcut to your page details (such as contact information), your page's name and username (see [Figure 1-5](#)), whether or not people can find you via search outside of Facebook, whether or not they can message you, the visibility and shareability of your page's posts, page and tagging permissions, as well as blocking capabilities.
- » **Payments:** If you run (or plan to run) Meta ads, then this is where you'll enter your payment information.
- » **Permissions:** If you've connected your Instagram or WhatsApp accounts, then you can access those settings here. Furthermore, if you've ever used your Facebook account credentials to log into or sign up for other sites, those sites will be listed here as well.
- » **Your Information:** This is the "Big Brother" section of the Settings! Here you'll find all the different things you've done on Facebook (such as searches you've performed or updates you've posted) as well as where you'll go if you ever want to deactivate (temporary) or delete (permanent) your Facebook page.

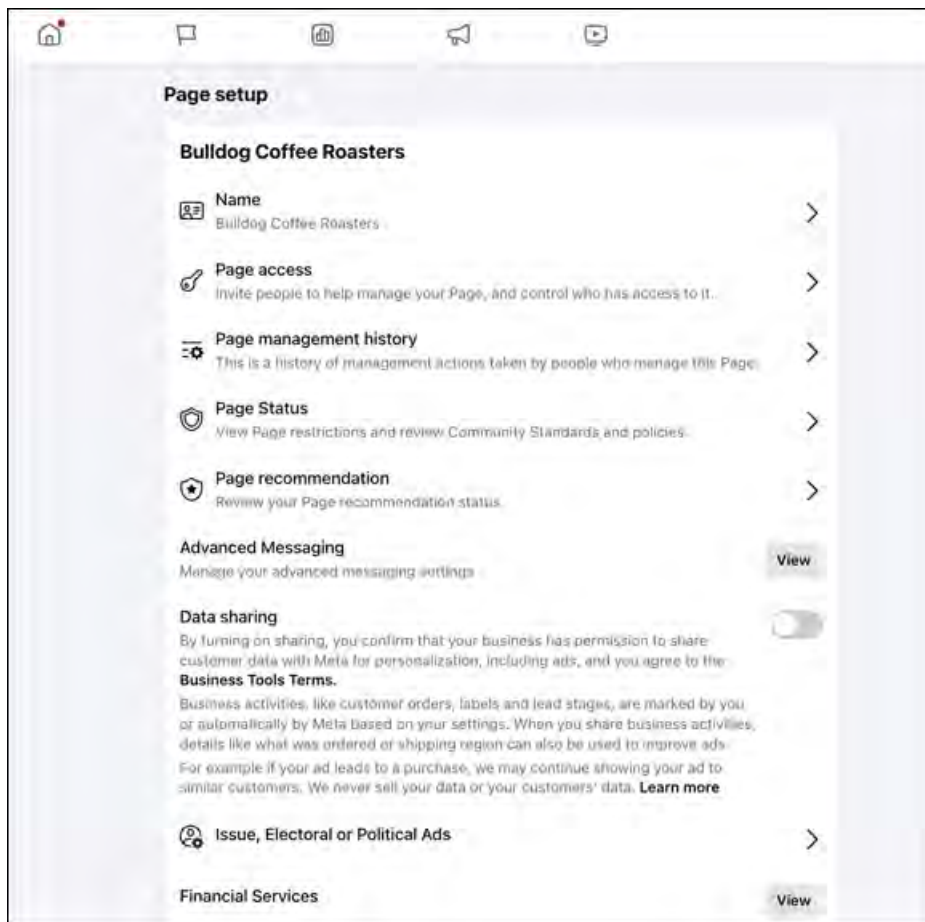


FIGURE 1-5: Switch up your page's name or username here.



REMEMBER This is only a fraction of the functionality under the Settings link in your page's sidebar, so be sure to click through the other options to get a feel for everything your page has to offer.

Professional Dashboard

The Professional Dashboard section shares important analytics details for Facebook page administrators. Although Book 9, [Chapter 4](#) dives into Facebook Insights into greater detail, here are a couple of settings you can access via this section:

- » **Overview:** The Overview tab shows a very high-level view of your page performance including post reach, engagement, and new page likes. It also shows your most recent posts (and their performance) and gives general tips on how to improve your page and post engagement.
- » **Home:** The Home tab of the Insights section gives the 30,000-foot view of your page performance, including post reach and engagement, the number of new likes your page has received, and follower growth. When you have at least 100 followers, you'll also see

an overview of audience insights on this tab.

- » **Your Page:** The Your Page tab gives some of the same information as the Home tab, except it goes into more detail about how your audience interacted with your content, including likes, shares, and photo views.
- » **Content:** The Content tab of the Insights section breaks down post performance to show reach and engagement, and you can boost the post (use it for advertising) directly from this location.
- » **Audience:** The Audience tab gives more granular detail about the audience that is interacting with your page and posts.
- » **Ad Center:** If you're running ads on Facebook, the Ad Center section is where you see all the details about the performance of your ads as well as where you can make adjustments. For example, it gives a rundown of how many people saw your brand's Facebook ad and what actions, if any, they performed. (I discuss Facebook advertising in detail in [Chapter 3](#) of this minibook.)
- » **Invite People to Connect:** This one is pretty self-explanatory!
- » **Levels Progress:** Facebook has gamified page creation, so if you love to collect points and advance to higher levels, then pay attention to this page where you can see different activities you can do to (literally) take your page to the next level!
- » **Inspiration Hub:** Here you can see some popular hashtags as well as Reels to get the creative juices flowing.
- » **Comments Manager:** It's only a matter of time until your audience starts interacting with your content and leaving comments! This is where you'll go to moderate comments and control how they show up on your page (if at all).
- » **Events:** When you start listing events on your page and collecting responses, here is where you'll go to see who has shown interest in attending, who has committed to attending by clicking on your tickets, how many people have seen your event listing, and more.
- » **Page Access:** If you plan to have additional page admins, this is where you'll go to invite them and assign permissions.
- » **A/B Tests:** When you want to see which version of your video your audience prefers, then you'll set up, run, and see the test results here.
- » **Moderation Assist:** If you want to reduce the time you'll spend manually moderating page comments, then this virtual moderator is here to help and is fully customizable.
- » **Messaging Settings:** This is where you'll go to set up automated message replies, set up an away message for people to receive if they reach out after your business hours, and more.
- » **Linked Accounts:** This takes you to the same place as the Linked Accounts tab under Settings.
- » **Business Apps:** Here you can connect several third-party apps to your page to expand its functionality. The options include appointment and reservation setting apps, as well as e-

commerce apps that connect directly to a virtual storefront.

- » **Page Recommendation:** This tab confirms that Facebook is recommending your page to others (or not) and gives tips on how to increase the probability of it being recommended.
- » **Meta Business Suite:** This is the central nervous system of your Facebook page. It's where you can access your Ads Manager, Inbox, a chronological list of your posts, your content Planner (scheduler), page Insights, and more.
- » **Stars:** Stars are a feature that allows you to monetize your video and audio content. Viewers can buy Stars and send them to you while you're live or on past live videos that had Stars enabled, or while you're live in a live audio room. For every Star you receive, Facebook will pay you \$0.01 USD.
- » **Help and Guidance:** Here you'll find a few options to learn more about setting up a Facebook page and some best practices for making it successful.



TIP Before launching your brand's Facebook page, take some time to explore all the administrative features and learn how to use them. The last thing you want to do is fly blindly.

Filling Out What You're About

Your Intro section, the spot where you share a brief story or description about your brand, is essentially your business profile. You should be able to tell people what your brand is about while not overwhelming them with details. While some of the information in this section is automatically populated when you fill out the About tab of your page, the Bio is only accessible by clicking the Add Bio button on the left side of the page.



TIP Your Facebook page is a vehicle in which to drive traffic to your website or sales page. Keep your profile information brief but intriguing so that readers seek out more information from your home page.

Clicking the Edit Details button underneath the Bio is another way to add or edit the details also listed under the About tab. Here are some important details to include in your brand's business profile:

- » A link to your blog or website or both.
- » Links to other social media profiles — for example, X and LinkedIn.
- » A physical address, if you have one, or be sure to click the radio button that says "My page doesn't have a location" underneath the address section.
- » Hours of operation.

» Contact information such as your phone number.



TIP The purpose of your brand's Facebook page is to engage with your community and share your brand's story, which is why Facebook gives you only 255 characters to do it!

Using a Custom Username for Your Page

You have the option to have a custom username for your brand's page, which also serves as its custom URL. A recognizable username means better search engine optimization, and people are more likely to remember this name over an address featuring a lot of random numbers and letters.

To create your custom username, follow these steps:

1. **Click Settings in the left menu, select Page Setup, and click the Name option.**
2. **Click Edit next to Username.**

You'll see the screen with a place for you to enter your username choice, as shown in [Figure 1-6](#).

3. **Type your desired username into the box and click the Save Changes button to finish.**

If the username isn't available, you'll see a red X and the words Username is not available. If your chosen username is available, you'll see a green check mark next to the username and it'll say Username is available.

You're all set! Now people can find your page easier by just searching for your username or typing it directly into the browser bar — for example, www.facebook.com/BulldogCoffeeRoasters.

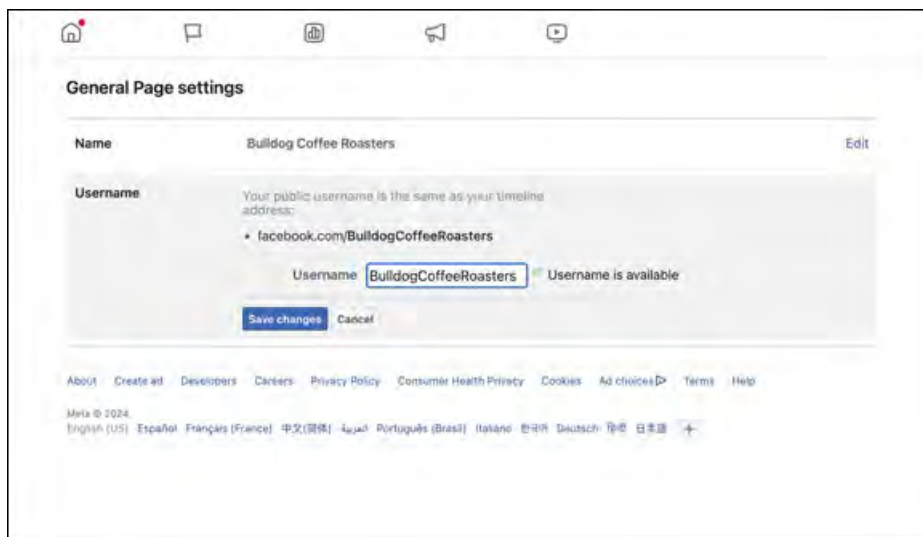


FIGURE 1-6: Choose your brand's name for your custom username.

It should go without saying that it's a good idea to choose your brand name as your username. However, if your brand name is common, someone may have already beaten you to the punch. If that's the case, see whether you can add another word to your brand name so that you still have that recognizability.



TIP You can change your username at any time by going to the Settings section in the left sidebar. I don't recommend changing it too often, though. The whole idea of social media marketing is to build up a loyal following, and how can you do that if your existing followers keep losing you?

Inviting People to Join Your Community

The most important aspect of having a Facebook page isn't compelling About information or the perfect cover photo. Instead, it's the community of people who will become your biggest advocates. If you're like most brands, you want to have as many people interacting on your wall as possible.

Before you begin inviting folks to join your community, keep in mind a couple of things:

- » You can invite only people you're friends with. (I discuss how to attract people who aren't your friends in the section "[Getting likes from others](#)," later in this chapter.)
- » Facebook frowns upon blatant attempts to get likes on specific posts and takes measures to make sure you're not like-baiting by having people like your page in exchange for a perk.

Inviting friends to like your page

When choosing friends to invite to like your page and participate, take care to choose those who will really appreciate being part of that community. When you randomly and regularly invite people who don't care to be a part of the brand, they might get annoyed at having their Facebook experience interrupted with brand messages, and this can cost you a Facebook friendship.

To invite friends to like your Facebook page, follow these steps:

1. **Click Professional Dashboard in the left sidebar.**
2. **Click the Invite People to Connect link.**
A box appears that prompts you to switch over to your personal profile by clicking the blue Switch Now button at the bottom.
3. **Once you click Switch Now, click the checkbox next to each friend's name in the box that appears (see [Figure 1-7](#)).**
4. **Click the blue Send Invites button on the bottom of the box.**

Your friends receive an invitation to like your brand's page. Not all will accept your

invitation, so please don't take it personally. Some people simply don't want to follow brands on Facebook.

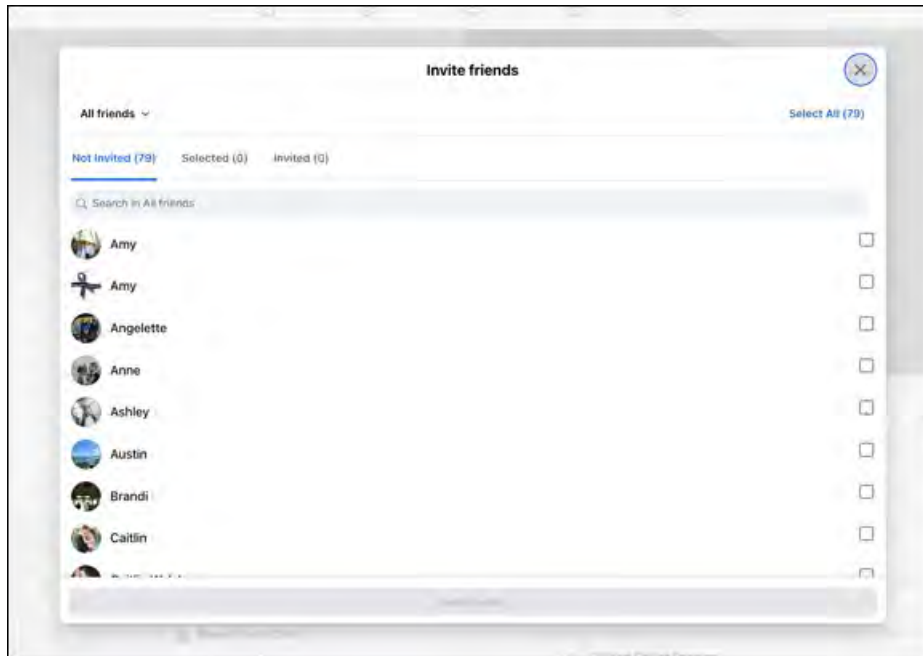


FIGURE 1-7: Use the Invite Friends to Like Your Page box to invite friends to join your community.

Getting likes from others

In addition to inviting friends to like your brand on Facebook, you can also try some of these methods for raising brand awareness and getting likes:

- » **Use your brand's X, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Pinterest accounts to bring in new community members.** Without spamming, invite people to join your Facebook page from time to time. If space permits, also share the benefits of becoming a member of your Facebook community.
- » **Invite your community to share.** Although Facebook frowns upon contests and events in which people have to like a page to participate, nothing is wrong with inviting your community to share content they like.
- » **Create the type of content your community will share.** Have you ever logged in to your personal Facebook account to find that your friends are sharing a funny video, a provocative image, or an informative article? This is the type of content people enjoy sharing on their walls. A Facebook page that is nothing but brand updates is not compelling. Instead, share informative or fun items with your community, and they will not only share in return but may also inspire others to like your brand.
- » **Place share buttons on your blog and website.** If you want people to share your content, you have to give them a way to share. Having a Facebook share button, like those shown in [Figure 1-8](#), on your blog or website will encourage readers to like your page. You can also place individual share buttons on the bottom of each post so people can share your content.

- » **Be consistent.** If you post engaging or compelling content every day, folks are more likely to like your brand. If you're sporadic and haphazard with your content, you won't receive many likes in return.
- » **Place share information in offline content.** If you have offline content — for example, if yours is a supermarket brand with a weekly flyer or a retail shop with posters on the windows — be sure to let shoppers know how they can follow your brand on the social networks. If you're a restaurant, add the URL for your social networking channels on the back of your menus or have postcards handy for customers.



FIGURE 1-8: Use share buttons on your content.



REMEMBER Unlike the popular movie tagline, if you build it, they won't necessarily come. You have to give everyone a reason to want to show up each day. Everyone has a favorite brand of detergent or applesauce, but few people love these brands so much that they want to receive updates from them every day. It's not enough to have a presence; give everyone a reason to like you.

Liking Other Brands

One step you shouldn't overlook in your Facebook marketing campaign is to like other brands, even competing brands. Many people are afraid to like competitors because they feel they'll lose community to someone else. This fear isn't true at all. People who like brands on Facebook like many different brands, even if some are similar.

Here are some of the benefits of liking brands on Facebook:

- » **Using your brand account, you can participate in discussions happening on other pages.** Your comments may inspire others to check out your brand's page and like you.
- » **It puts you on the other brand's radar, which may be a good thing.** They may want to use and recommend your product or service one day or collaborate on a promotion.
- » **It creates brand awareness.** The more people who see your logo, the better. When people see your logo on the social networks, it instills trust. They feel you're more accessible.

» **It helps to establish your expertise.** When you participate in discussions and respond to comments and inquiries in a knowledgeable manner, people see you as an authority and are inspired to follow you on the various social media channels.



WARNING Be sure to follow the rules of social media etiquette and avoid dropping links on another brand's page unless you're invited to do so. The last thing you want is to have a reputation as a spammer. Also, if Facebook feels you've been spammy, you could lose your account.

Creating Facebook Events

The power of community is a wonderful thing. A tight-knit community will rally around the brand for all occasions. They'll comment on blog posts and social networking updates, respond to promotions and discounts, and attend events. In fact, a good way to gauge community interest is to create an event.

What is an event? Events include the following:

- » Sale
- » Party
- » Meetup
- » Conference

Events can also be online affairs, such as the following:

- » Webinar
- » Contest
- » Facebook Live chat

When you create an event using Facebook, you have the opportunity to invite everyone who likes your brand's page to attend.

Creating events doesn't take much time at all, and they're simple to set up. Just follow these steps:

1. **Click the Events tab underneath the header photo. (You may have to click the More tab and select Events from the dropdown.)**

The Events page appears.

2. **Click the blue Create Event button on the top right.**

The Create Events box appears.

3. **In the box that appears, enter all the details of your event.**

You might enter the event name, date, time, and location, and a few words about the event.

4. **Upload a cover photo for the event, any ticket or registration information, and click Create Event.**

Make sure the image is representative of the event. In other words, if you're having a cupcake showdown, don't upload a picture of your puppy!

You'll be taken back to your page's Events dashboard. You'll see all scheduled events listed on the top of the page, as shown in [Figure 1-9](#).

5. **Click the Share Events button on the right side of the event's listing.**

A pop-up box appears in which you can enter a message and choose where to share the event ([Figure 1-10](#)).

6. Click the blue Share Now button to share your event.



FIGURE 1-9: All your events will be listed here.

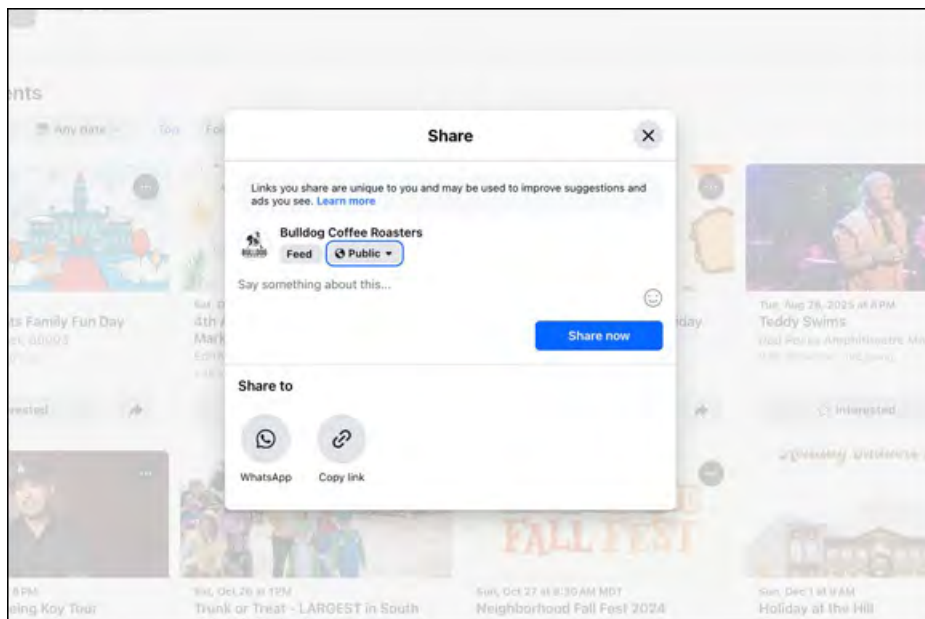


FIGURE 1-10: Select where you want to share your event.



WARNING Don't use events as invitations to spam. If you post about the event a couple of times a day to your news feed to drive traffic and sales, you're going to lose your community and possibly your Facebook account.

Chapter 2

Creating and Sharing Content on Facebook

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Planning a Facebook content strategy
 - » Coming up with shareable content
 - » Creating a community with groups
-

Your brand's Facebook page, just like everything else you do for your brand both online and off, requires a strategy and a set of goals. Plan what you hope to achieve with Facebook, as well as how you hope to achieve it, before you make your first post or upload your brand's cover photo. Just as you would take time to plan a marketing or advertising campaign, so should you also think through your Facebook campaign.

Facebook may look like a random bunch of comments and images, but it's much more than that. For your brand page, it's a way to create the type of content people want to both digest and pass along to others. However, creating interesting content isn't necessarily your most important objective. Most marketers use Facebook as a way to engage with customers, to sell, or to raise brand awareness. The content is a way to make that happen.

This chapter discusses how to create the type of content that inspires your Facebook community to react.



TIP See Book 3, [Chapter 3](#) for a more in-depth look at planning and implementing a content strategy for all platforms, including Facebook.

Creating a Facebook Content Strategy

Many brands set up a Facebook account without any idea of what to do with it. Just like with a blog, website, or even an X account, you have to have a plan. To just randomly post topics and hope they stick will lead to inconsistency and confusion.



WARNING Facebook is constantly changing the rules for brands and brand pages, and to enter into Facebook marketing blindly without any planning and research on your part can mean Facebook will penalize your page — or even your personal account. A poorly executed brand page can reflect badly on you, as a social media marketer, and on your brand.

Take some time to put together a plan before you get started. If you already have a Facebook account for your brand and it needs an overhaul, pretend you're starting from scratch and plan a strategy anyway.

The first item to check off your list is your goal. What do you hope to achieve with your Facebook account? You won't be able to plan the right types of content without listing your goal first. For most brands, the goal is to build a community of advocates, which will lead to traffic to the main company website and, hopefully, sales.

After you know your brand's goal, you want to plan the type of content that will help lead to that goal. Now, this doesn't mean if you're looking for sales, every Facebook post should be selling something. However, you should post with sales and the people who help you achieve your goal in mind. (For more on creating content, see the section "[Creating Content That Sings](#)," later in this chapter.)

What follows are some ideas for the types of goals you might want to achieve with your Facebook page, as well as the content to help you best achieve each goal:

- » **Drive sales.** Your content should inspire a sale but not necessarily be a sales pitch. For example, has one of your customers been in the news as a result of using your product? If so, share that story. Do the ingredients in your products have health benefits? If so, talk about them and share other healthy living tips. Do you offer a business-oriented coaching service? If so, use your Facebook page to share tips and best practices. In this manner, you're not exactly selling, but you are putting the idea of the sale in people's minds.
- » **Increase your community.** Your updates should be more conversational. The people who join your Facebook page will do so because of the engaging content, which will help to establish trust. This trust leads to community growth and sales through customer loyalty and word-of-mouth marketing.
- » **Grow your mailing list.** Do you want more people to sign up for your newsletter? If so, offer sneak peeks of what they'll receive if they sign up.
- » **Create brand awareness.** When you share news and updates regarding your brand, it

shows up in news feeds belonging to the people who are Facebook fans of your brand. When they like or comment on your public posts, those actions can show up on their friends' and families' news feeds, as well. When people share your content, it helps to turn your brand into a household name.

- » **Establish expertise.** Use Facebook to share facts and drop tips. This approach is especially useful in selling books, providing informational products and services, and promoting blogs.
- » **Receive feedback.** Use Facebook to create polls, ask questions, and pick the brains of the people who use your product or service. Just be sure you're ready to receive some brutally honest answers.
- » **Drive traffic.** Link to your blog posts and web articles, and create discussions around the day's topics.
- » **Have multiple goals.** Most brands have multiple goals for their Facebook pages. Mixing and matching content to serve many different purposes is okay. Be mindful of sharing too many links, however, because it can be perceived as spammy.



TIP

You may not necessarily see your cover photo as a sales tool, but as one of the first things people see when they land on your Facebook page, that's exactly what it is. The photo may not be of your product or service, but it should inspire the sale. (For more on setting up your cover photo, see [Chapter 1](#) in this minibook.)

Take time to understand your community. Watch them interact on the various social networks and watch how they interact on Facebook with you. Use your Facebook Insights and Professional Dashboard to observe the types of content they best react to and what they shy away from. When you know your community, you can plan the most successful types of content. See the last section in this chapter for more information on Insights.

Sharing Your Brand's Story

Your community enjoys being made to feel as if they're part of the brand, even learning some secrets about your brand or being regaled with tales from back in the day. When your customers feel connected to you, they're more likely to share your stories — and products or services — with their friends and family. The more stories you share, the more brand loyalty is inspired.

Some items you may want to include on your brand page include the following:

- » **A brand logo:** Use your logo as the profile photo — it helps to promote brand awareness.
- » **A cover photo representative of your brand:** Your timeline cover photo is designed to catch the eye of anyone landing on your page.
- » **A bio describing your brand:** You have the opportunity to grab the attention of potential

customers with a couple of forceful sentences under your profile photo.

- » **A longer brand description in the About section:** Use your page's About section to tell potential customers what you do and how your product or service will benefit them.
- » **Links to your website and social media pages:** Your Facebook community isn't network-exclusive. Many of your customers enjoy interacting at your blog or on X, too. Be sure to include links to all the different places folks can follow you.
- » **Contact information:** Include your email address in your timeline's About section. Also consider including other important contact details, including a customer service phone line and address.
- » **A specific action:** In the area where you post, you'll see a box that says *Add to Your Post* where you can take specific actions. For example, you can add a feeling or activity, which gives you the ability to share your excitement about an upcoming product launch. You can also invite a collaborator to the post or provide a link to drive newsletter subscription signups.
- » **Events:** Are you having a special sale? Throwing a gala? Having a X chat? If so, use the Events function. You can invite people individually, and also have the event show up in your timeline. Use events sparingly, however. No one wants to be hit up with an event invite every day.
- » **Photos and Reels:** Your online community is especially receptive of Photos and Reels (videos). You can share images of your team and offices, old historic photos, and even videos of your company's old television commercials. The options are endless. Photos and Reels are shared more often than any other content, as well.



REMEMBER Facebook calls prerecorded videos that you upload to the site *Reels* and refers to live streaming as *Live Video*. Throughout [Book 5](#), I may use the terms *Reels* and *videos* interchangeably, but whenever I'm talking about live video, I'll always refer to it as such.

- » **Live Video:** You can livestream from a company event or while walking through your office to give a behind-the-scenes look into your company culture.



WARNING If you have co-workers who can be ... ahem ... a little unpredictable, you may want to steer clear of them if you'll be livestreaming. There's no time delay to edit something out!

Creating Content That Sings

If you create a Facebook content strategy, then you should have some idea of what to talk about with your Facebook community. Planning content by using an editorial calendar or a spreadsheet can help to keep you from posting stale updates because you don't know what to

say.



TIP

Before creating content for your Facebook page, visit some successful pages to see how those brands handle content. Seeing how other brands are engaging their communities can inspire you to do some neat things of your own. Also, visit competitors to see what they're doing right, and also what they're missing. There may be an opportunity to fill a void with some much-needed content.



REMEMBER

Your content isn't about the sale, but rather the conversation and engagement that may lead to the sale. Make sure to provide a mix of fun questions, photographs, videos, and informative articles and blog posts.

What follows are some tips for creating good content for your Facebook page:

- » **Don't make everything serious and deep.** It's best to keep brand interaction light. Although thought-provoking questions and discussions are part of a good content strategy, don't forget to add humor to the mix.
- » **Brevity counts.** Although you can be wordier than when using X, Facebook isn't your blog. Keep updates brief. Too many words, and people lose interest. Write for the short attention span.
- » **Stay on topic.** When you write about a mishmash of things that have nothing to do with your niche, people get confused. If yours is a cereal brand, your community expects topics centered on cereal — for example, nutrition and recipes. If you start talking about cross-country skiing or barbecue grills, people are going to wonder what any of that has to do with your brand.
- » **Try to create content that's open-ended.** Give your community opportunity to respond. Ask questions or talk about the sorts of things that provoke a discussion. Make sure everything you post is inviting a response.
- » **Let your comments be your guide.** What kinds of questions does your community ask on your page? What posts do they most respond to? When they do respond, what do they say? Look to your community for topics. If certain topics stir up more interest than others, plan more of those types of topics.
- » **Proofread everything you post.** When you don't take the time to read over everything and eliminate errors and typos, it tells your community you don't care enough about them to communicate error-free. (See what I did there?)
- » **Look to your blog or website traffic for ideas.** If people are using search terms, phrases, and certain topics to land on your content, use these same topics when creating content for your Facebook community.
- » **Be careful of TMI:** Although you should use a personal touch on a brand page, there's

such a thing as too much information. Avoid making your brand page about you as a person, unless the brand page is for your personal brand.

- » **Don't be afraid to court controversy.** You don't want to always have negativity and squabbles on your Facebook page, but the occasional controversial topic does wonders to create a discussion.



WARNING When you post too many controversial topics or allow a lot of negativity on your brand page, eventually the only people who come around are those who thrive on drama and negativity. A positive attitude, with positive content, will inspire positive results.

Sharing and Being Shared

Sharing is an important part of brand page interaction. Creating the right types of content means that same content may be seen by thousands of eyes. When your community and others share your content, it generates brand recognition and word-of-mouth marketing. If you're known for creating interesting and creative content, you gain even more fans on your Facebook page, which means more potential sales.



REMEMBER Be careful not to write for Facebook, an inanimate thing, instead of people. Too many brands make the mistake of creating content for its ability to go viral, as opposed to making content that resonates with people. When all your content is obvious click-bait, your fans will grow wary of all the shocking headlines and exclamation points.



TIP People like to feel as if they discovered something wonderful. Sharing items with their friends and family sometimes can make them feel as if they created that content themselves.

When someone clicks the Share button below something you posted, it means your content is going to show up in the news feeds of that person's friends, as well. If a dozen fans with 200 friends each share your content, your post has the potential to be seen by 2,400 people. Out of all those people, it would be terrific if ten new fans like your page as a result. However, even if they don't, sharing is creating brand recognition.



REMEMBER If you're recognized for putting out shareable content, more people will follow and use your brand, and your brand will be seen as a respected authority in your field.

Posting content that followers will want to share

So, what types of content do people want to share?

- » **Photos:** People share more photos than anything else. Make sure that your photos are relevant, thought-provoking, discussion-worthy, and even amusing, but don't make them offensive. People see photos before they see words, so put some thought into the photos you share.
- » **Funny or amusing content:** People like to share content that makes them laugh. Post tasteful but amusing photographs, blog posts, or videos.
- » **Heartwarming stories:** People love a good success or comeback story. They enjoy hearing tales of folks who beat the odds. People share inspiration.
- » **Relatable content:** Ever read an article and think, "Oh my gosh. This happens to me all the time!"? People respond well to content they can relate to. Create content based on experiences everyone in your community may share.
- » **Discounts:** Most people who follow brands do so in hopes of receiving special perks that they can share with their friends and family.
- » **Live video:** Facebook's Live Video feature enables businesses and individuals to share news and events as they happen.
- » **Reels:** Did you take some behind-the-scenes video footage from your last company kick-off? By all means, share it far and wide! (That is, if it's not giving away any trade secrets)
- » **Lists, tips, and how-tos:** People enjoy sharing learning experiences. Share tips or steps to success.



TIP Say thank you to the people who share your content. When they're called out in a positive manner, they're more inclined to continue with the support. If another brand page shares your content, try to do the same for continued cross-promotion.

Don't sit around waiting to be shared, however. Do some sharing of your own. Take some time each day to visit other Facebook accounts and find content relevant to your community to share. This goodwill toward other brands puts you on their radar, and they may want to reciprocate. In addition, your community will appreciate your finding discussion topics or images to share with them. This especially works if you switch your Facebook identity to that of your brand page and not your personal account.



TIP You don't have to limit shared content to Facebook posts or your own content creation. Sharing blog posts, images, videos, and podcasts by others will help create goodwill among different communities and will bring in more awareness of your brand page.

Using hashtags in your posts

Hashtags make topics searchable without having to use a search bar or search engine. When you use a hashtag in your Facebook post, it's visible to all who search for the topic used in your hashtag. For example, if you're posting a healthy recipe using the grain quinoa, you can use the hashtag #quinoa, #recipes, or even #healthy. Now everyone who's searching for that same hashtag will see your post.

Here are some best practices for using hashtags:

- » **Use hashtags sparingly.** Too many hashtags hurt the eyes. Try for one or two — any more than four is too many and makes your update look cluttered and confusing.
- » **Hashtags should make sense.** Don't use a hashtag because it's popular or trending. Use one that works with the content. The last thing your brand wants is to be accused of *hashtag jacking*, or spamming a hashtag with your irrelevant content.
- » **Hashtags are all one word.** Avoid spaces and hyphens when using hashtags. They're all one word, usually all lowercase.
- » **Do a search before using a hashtag.** If you have a hashtag you want to use, do a search of that hashtag first. It could be in use or could have previously held inappropriate content.
- » **Don't worry about uppercase or lowercase.** Hashtags are usually all lowercase. Don't worry about making sure words are separated by capital letters.
- » **Encourage others to use the hashtag, too.** If you're hosting an event, think up a relevant hashtag to represent the event and encourage attendees to attach it to their own social media updates so it gets even more exposure.
- » **It's okay to use a unique hashtag.** Don't be afraid of making up your own hashtag. A unique hashtag can help your brand stand apart.



REMEMBER Hashtags are searchable on Facebook (see [Figure 2-1](#)). Look to see how many people are posting about that hashtag and aim to utilize popular (but still relevant) ones.

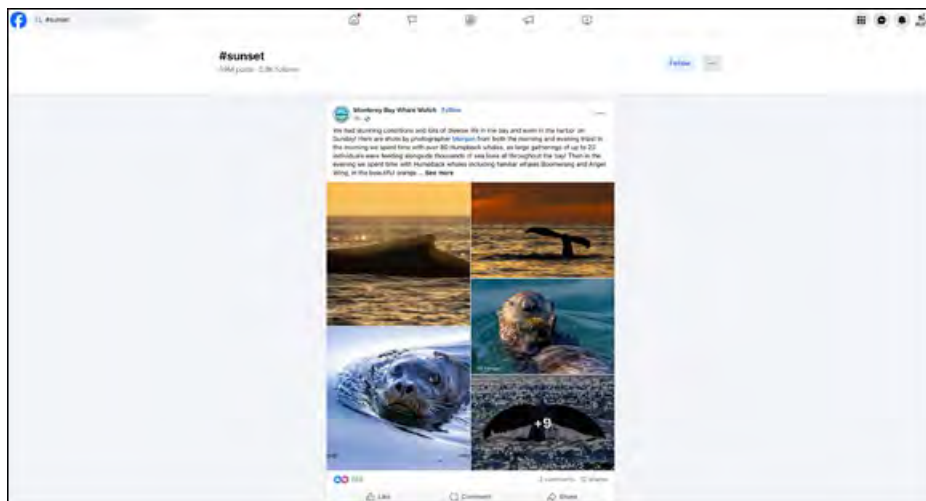


FIGURE 2-1: #sunset is a popular hashtag, with 59 million posts!

Bringing Your Community into the Mix

Every tip you read about Facebook will come to nil if you don't have a positive, productive community. The more people who like your brand page, the more people you have responding to and commenting on your posts and campaigns. You want your community members to feel good about participating, and when they feel good, they share, and they buy.

The last thing you want is a timeline filled with random updates. Take some time to explore the different Facebook apps to find out how to better interact with people. When you share in different, unique ways, your community will grow, and so will sales and brand recognition.

Selling on Facebook

It used to be that people on Facebook weren't there because they wanted to buy or find a good bargain. It was to keep in touch with family and friends near and far. But the truth is, the platform has come a long way in just a couple of years. Now Facebook offers the perfect social-shopping opportunity because people can socialize, shop, and share. In fact, people are more likely to buy something they see their friends buying and if they don't have to even leave the platform to do so. (Book 2, [Chapter 1](#) talks more about selling directly on Facebook.)

Facebook has specific rules about what brands can present to their communities, especially when it comes to selling, promoting, and holding contests. If not kept in check, Facebook can become a haven for spammers, so regulations are necessary. It's a good idea to familiarize yourself with Facebook's Terms of Use for brands before selling; go to www.facebook.com/page_guidelines.php.

Facebook requires the use of specific apps for selling and promotions to keep spammers out of the mix and to ensure that all opportunities are legitimate. So, to sell on Facebook, you have to do so the right way.

Here are a couple of apps to help you sell on Facebook:

- » **Facebook Shop:** This feature gives you the opportunity to create a shopping experience on your timeline. The app appears as a Shop button and allows you to display merchandise or sell products and services. The number of items you can sell depends on the third-party application you're using. Read more about third-party selling platforms for Facebook in Book 2, [Chapter 1](#).
- » **Facebook Marketplace:** This feature allows your advertisement to appear in classified advertising format. [Figure 2-2](#) shows you a typical Marketplace page with the search bar and categories on the left side of the page.



TIP Facebook advertising is a terrific way to sell products and reach people who share similar likes and interests. Check out [Chapter 3](#) in this minibook for more about using Facebook advertising.



REMEMBER Not all your selling on Facebook has to be via apps and widgets. You can also create action terms and phrases to post on your timeline that lead your community to your website. Sharing news about a sale, new merchandise, or a discount is fine, as long as you're not spamming.

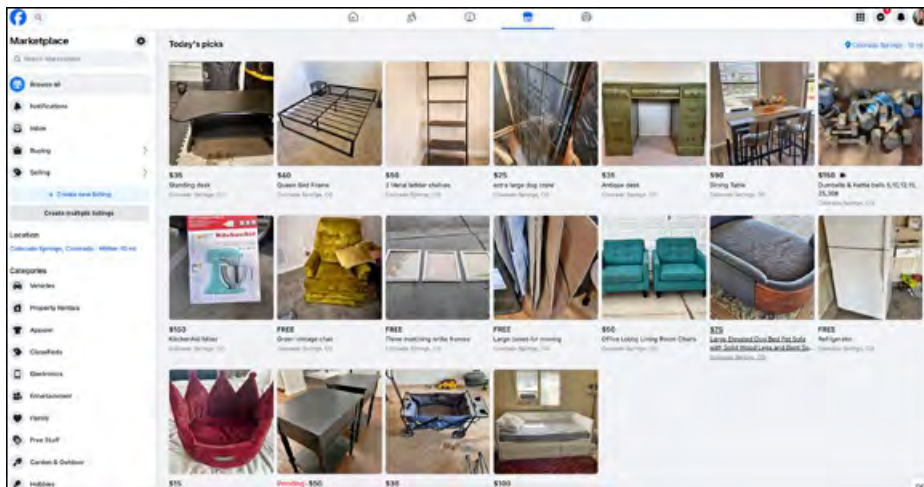


FIGURE 2-2: You can find virtually anything in Facebook's version of the classified ad.

Creating polls, quizzes, and contests

For a truly interactive experience, you have to give your Facebook community the tools to get the party going. Asking questions or posting links is only a small part of growing your Facebook network. To truly tap into the power of the people, create some other fun experiences.

Polls

Polls can be fun and frivolous, or you can use them to collect information about the

consumer. People like to participate in polls because they feel as if they're part of a campaign. Plus, creating a poll isn't a big-time commitment; a simple click of the button, and you have the user's vote.

Facebook used to allow brand pages to host polls, but now they've limited it to Events for brand pages. [Figure 2-3](#) shows what a poll looks like on an Events page.



WARNING Polls are best advised for bigger, active Facebook communities. When smaller communities put out polls and have a poor showing, they may receive only a couple of responses.

Quizzes

For even more community interaction, try creating quizzes. Quizzes aren't necessarily a way to gather information from your community, but if the quizzes are entertaining, the people who take them will share them with others in the community.

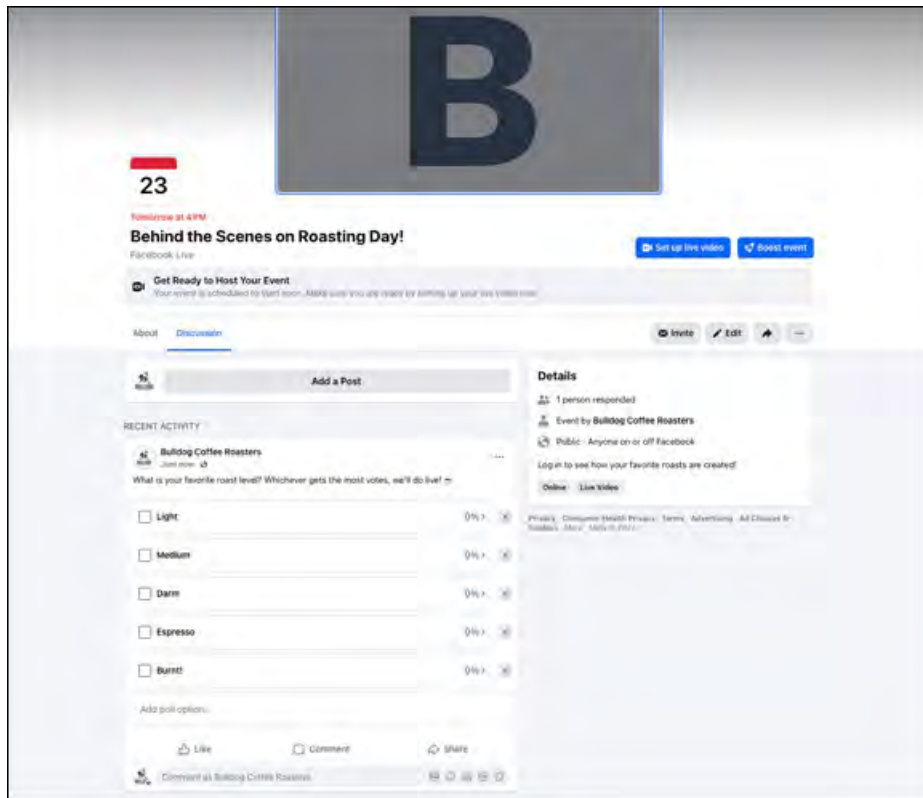


FIGURE 2-3: What's your favorite coffee roast level?

With a quiz-building app like Quizzes for Pages (<https://quiz-app.co>), you can make fun, creative quizzes for your page (See [Figure 2-4](#)). For example, if you're representing an Italian restaurant, create a quiz seeing how many Italian words and phrases your community recognizes. If yours is a car brand, list the parts of the car and see whether your community knows what each part does or where it's located. At the end of the quiz, have a ratings score

for expertise. These quizzes are frivolous, but fun and extremely shareable. They're also great community-building tools.

Contests

Contests are another way to perform community outreach and raise awareness of your brand. However, like with selling, Facebook has specific rules about contests. You don't have to download a special app to host contests, but Facebook does have specific rules as to what is and what isn't allowed.

Check out this list of contest apps from Blogging Wizard and try out the different options to see which one best fits your needs: (<https://bloggingwizard.com/social-media-contest-tools>).

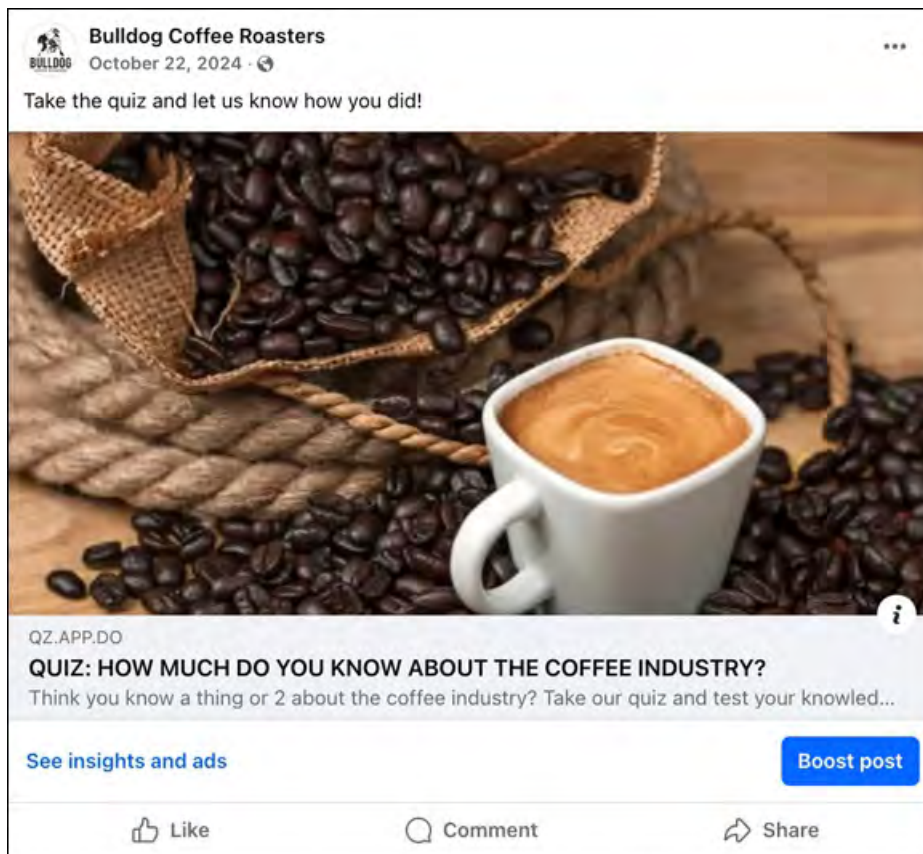


FIGURE 2-4: Quizzes for Pages makes it easy to put together fun quizzes for your Facebook page.



TIP

Before running a contest on Facebook, read Facebook's promotions policy. Check the policy each time you run a contest because the rules often change, and you don't want to be caught unawares. See section 7 in Facebook's Terms of Use for pages at www.facebook.com/page_guidelines.php#promotionsguidelines.

Offering discounts to your community

One of the main reasons people follow brands on Facebook is because they're interested in receiving bargains, freebies, or discounts. In fact, these types of perks are a terrific way to reward your community for their loyalty.

When you offer discounts and perks that are available only to your Facebook community, it makes people feel special and inclined to share your brand with others. Discounts are what fans share the most when it comes to brands.

You can offer discounts in a variety of ways:

- » Set up a unique code for your Facebook community only.
- » Link to discounts on your website.
- » Use the Facebook offers feature to post your discount and an image directly within your Facebook Shop. This feature is available through your Facebook Shop Commerce Manager.



TIP Do be careful not to spam your Facebook page with discount codes and sales pitches. Although your community is interested in receiving bargains, they're not interested in reading spiel and jargon every time they see an update from you. Balance your discounts with other content and don't post sales or discounted items more than once per day.

Making Connections with Facebook Groups

Brand pages and groups are different in that pages are for fans to have conversations and learn about a brand, whereas groups allow like-minded people to interact and have conversations on a more expansive basis. Although you wouldn't have dozens of conversations going each day on your brand page, you can have many conversations going at the same time in a group, where members can opt in (see [Figure 2-5](#)).

Facebook groups are a way to have more interaction with your customers or fans, and to encourage them to interact with each other. People tend to let their hair down more in a group than on a public Facebook page. Some active groups are updated often throughout the day. Groups turn fans and customers into a thriving community of participants.

To create a Facebook group, follow these steps:

1. **Click the Groups function, in the left sidebar of your Facebook home page.**
2. **Click the blue +Create New Group button in the top left of the page.**

The Create New Group dialog box appears.

3. **Determine your Group name, invite members, and select your privacy options.**

Facebook enables users to select the level of privacy for their group in order to allow for more intimate discussion. There are times people want to share their opinions but aren't comfortable doing so because liking or commenting on a public page can mean their Facebook friends might see what they're doing.

There are different levels of group privacy:

- With a Public group, anyone can see the group's messages and members.
- With a Private group, only members can see posts and other members.

4. **Click Create, and you're good to go.**

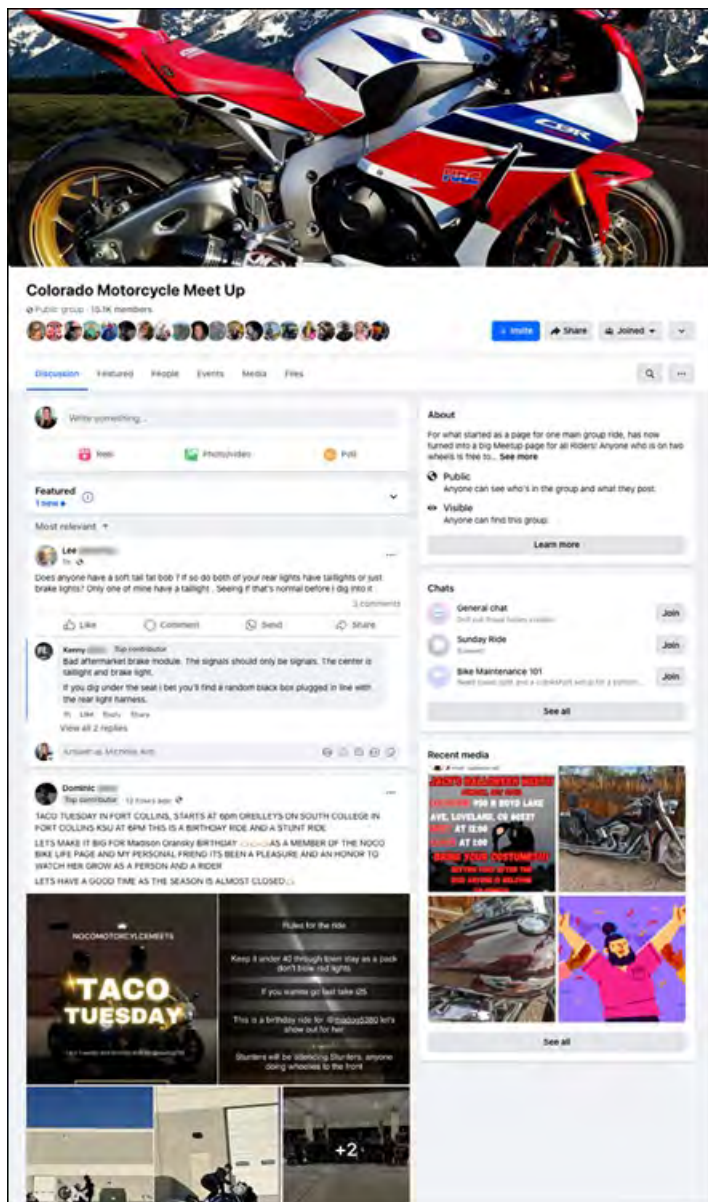


FIGURE 2-5: Any group member can post content within a group.



TIP Don't create a group unless you already have people to invite. Facebook won't allow you to create an empty group.

After you start your group, you can do a few things to make it interactive and appealing. For example, you can upload a cover photo that's representative of the group. You can also pin a welcome message or group rules to the top of the page.

Groups allow you to share photos and even upload documents and files, so be sure to spend some time exploring all the different features.



WARNING When creating separate discussion groups on Facebook, don't allow them to turn into cliques. If members feel excluded, they won't feel as strongly about your brand. Continue adding members to your groups to keep the interaction fresh. See Book 3, [Chapter 3](#) for more on creating communities, not cliques.

Learning through Insights

Facebook continues to evolve, with the rules for brands changing all the time. Although some social media marketers aren't thrilled with many of the changes, most are reluctant to move away from Facebook because it's still where most of their customers converge.

No matter how they feel about Facebook's changes to both algorithms and rules for brand pages, marketers can't deny the benefit of using Facebook's *Insights*, or analytics panel, to learn more about their customers and online community. This section is just the tip of the Insights iceberg. Read more details about how to use Insights in Book 9, [Chapter 4](#).



TIP The more you use Facebook Insights to analyze your page's content, the more your page will grow. The information on your Facebook page offers a valuable look into your Facebook community's habits. When you know how they behave while they're on Facebook, you can create the type of Facebook content that they will best respond to. When you plan your Facebook content strategy, make sure to allow time to analyze all the data that comes with Facebook Insights.

Getting the scoop on your fans through Insights

Facebook Insights is an analytics tool for your brand page that enables you to see what your community is up to and keep track of likes, unlikes, comments, shares, and so on. You can even access downloadable reports for in-depth analysis. In short, Facebook Insights gives you a peek into what people are doing when they land on your page.

Through Insights, located in the left-hand menu, you can determine your Facebook page's success. Here is some of the information you can find out from Facebook Insights:

- » **How many people liked your page each day, week, and month:** In addition to finding out how many people liked your page on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis, Insights also breaks down the likes by demographics once you have at least 100 page followers.
- » **How many people unliked your page:** Don't just measure likes. Learning how many people unliked your page is important, too. It helps you determine how your Facebook community is reacting to your content and the amount of updates you're serving up each day. Knowing which topics and content lead to the most unlikes can help you to share only content that provokes a more positive response.
- » **Organic likes versus paid likes:** Learn whether the likes you received were achieved via

people who landed on your page on their own or who were brought in through paid advertising. If you find that most likes are via paid advertising, analyze your content to see why it might not be bringing in many organic views.

- » **Your page's reach:** Because likes, shares, and comments can be seen by people who aren't fans of the page, each post has the capability to reach many people. Insights will let you know your Facebook page's true reach.
- » **Engagement per post:** Insights breaks down each post and lets you know how many comments, likes, and shares it received.
- » **Types of posts:** You can find out which types of posts do better than others — for example, if a humorous image gets more engagement than a link to a blog post or straight-up text.
- » **Details on demographics:** Facebook Insights offers a variety of demographics, including age, gender, and location, once you have at least 100 followers.

Putting Insights data to good use

Now that you have all this information about your Facebook community, what are you going to do with it? The reason Facebook provides Insights for pages is because they know how important it is for you to see whether Facebook offers good *ROI*, or return on investment. By analyzing the data offered in Insights, you can make any needed improvements and drive even more traffic and engagement to your Facebook page.

Take some time each week to check out your Facebook numbers and make note of the following:

- » **If your likes are going up:** You're doing something right! When people like your page, it means they're interested in your brand. It also means the promotion you're doing on behalf of your Facebook page is working, and you're creating the type of content folks are responding to and sharing. Continue doing what you're doing — but don't be afraid to add different types of content to see what your Facebook community best responds to.
- » **If your likes are going down:** You could be losing Facebook fans for a variety of reasons. Maybe you're updating too many times a day. Two to three times per day is optimal. Any more than that, and people are going to tire of seeing you in their news feeds. It can also be that you're not offering the type of content they find interesting. Experiment with different types of content to see what they react to most.
- » **If your likes aren't doing anything:** You want your page to receive new likes daily, and if this isn't happening, you have to step up your game. Try changing your timeline photo to see whether you can find one more appealing to your community. See what you can do to find the type of content or images that appeal at first glance to the people landing on your page.
- » **If people are responding well to certain types of content:** Take note. If people are commenting, liking, and sharing certain content on your Facebook page, this is the type of content you want to continue to provide. Do still create a good mix of different types of content, but give the people what they want, as well.

- » **If your demographic is made up of people of a certain age:** If your community is made up of 20- or 30-year-olds, tailor most of your content to appeal to people in these age groups.
- » **If specific types of content receive more engagement:** If you notice photos and videos get more shares and comments than a simple post with a few sentences of text, add more visual content to your Facebook page.
- » **If no one is responding to certain types of content:** If you post certain types of content and no one is responding, your community isn't interested. Avoid posting this type of content in the future.



TIP Facebook provides Insights so that you can better understand the people who are interacting on your page or show interest in your brand. When you know how they react to your content, you can plan the types of campaigns they best respond to. Because you're given the additional benefit of demographics, you can also target your content so it appeals to a particular gender, age, or even locale.

Chapter 3

Advertising and Selling on Facebook

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Paying to reach more people
 - » Choosing specific people to target
 - » Boosting your Facebook posts
 - » Understanding if advertising is working for you
-

Since Facebook is a free service, it has to make its money somehow. Brands that pay for advertising on Facebook can find they reach more people, achieve more interaction, and even drive traffic to their websites. And since Facebook and Instagram are both under the parent company Meta, you can kill two advertising birds with one stone and have your ads show up on both platforms through one dashboard.

Advertising on Facebook and Instagram is a worthy investment. For a reasonable amount of money (sometimes less than you'd spend on a designer coffee drink), you can reach a highly targeted audience of potential buyers of your product or service on both social platforms. You're in complete control; everything from the ad's art and copy, to the length of time you run your ad and the maximum amount spent is controlled through the Ad Center.

This chapter covers the basics of Facebook advertising so that you can determine whether it's worthwhile to pay for more fans and interaction.

Reaching More Fans with Ads

Should you pay to play on Facebook? Many brands are asking this very question. Because of fairly frequent changes to Facebook's algorithm, fewer fans are seeing your Facebook posts in their news feeds. If you're trying organic methods for growing your fans and interactions (for example, viral or more visual content) and those methods aren't panning out, advertising might be worth looking into.



REMEMBER Although the topic of this chapter is Facebook advertising and I'll be speaking in terms of Facebook, keep in mind that whatever ads you place on Facebook can also run on Instagram without needing to do anything extra because both platforms sit under the umbrella of Meta.

The good news for small businesses is that it's not expensive to advertise on Facebook. You can invest as little as \$1 in an ad or boosted post (as shown in [Figure 3-1](#)), or as much as hundreds of dollars. The more you spend, the more people you reach.



FIGURE 3-1: A Facebook ad doesn't have to cost a lot of money.



TIP If you're wary of spending money on a Facebook ad, try testing the waters with a small amount. Boosting a post (I talk about that in the section "[Targeting your fans](#)," later in this chapter) for as little as \$15 or \$20 is a good way to gauge if you want to advertise on Facebook on a more regular basis without putting out a large investment. You can set the price for a boosted post. So even if you have a small advertising budget, you can still see results with a lower priced boosted post.

Facebook offers different ad choices, so it's important to put money into the right campaign for your needs. Just as it's important to have a Facebook content strategy (see [Chapter 2](#) of this minibook), it's equally as important to have a plan for advertising.

Deciding whether you want to invest in an ad

First, you need to determine what you hope to achieve with your Facebook ad. What follows is a look at some of the reasons people invest in Facebook advertising:

- » **More engagement on your brand page:** If you have fans but no one is communicating by likes, shares, or comments, they might not be seeing your page in their news feeds. An ad can help to reach more people and up the engagement.
- » **More likes to your brand's page:** Sometimes a brand needs a boost to get started. Using Facebook advertising is a good way to gain new fans who wouldn't have known your brand has a Facebook page otherwise.
- » **More event attendees:** If you're hosting or co-hosting an event, you want to make sure it's as successful as possible, and the way you do that is to get it in front of as many relevant people as possible.
- » **More traffic to your website:** When your posts appear in more fans' news feeds, more fans will click your blog posts, articles, and other shared web pages.
- » **More leads:** Facebook advertising can help you bring more leads into your sales funnel.
- » **More messages:** A Facebook ad can encourage users to contact you via Facebook Messenger.

Taking out a Facebook ad means more visibility for your brand. On your own Facebook feed, much of the brand content isn't shared by your friends — you're seeing it because that page's

manager used advertising. Advertising can be targeted to people who have similar interests or friends of fans, which means more views and actions on your Facebook page.



WARNING People can control what they see in their Facebook feeds. For example, if they find an ad offensive or annoying, they can opt to not see the ad. They can also opt to not see any posts from your brand. So try to share content that is educational, entertaining, and visually pleasing. When people enjoy your advertised content, they'll like your page so they can see more.

Choosing the right goal for your Facebook ad

Different types of Facebook ads can help marketers achieve a variety of goals. Familiarize yourself with your choices so you can see which ones best suit your needs.

The ad types that are available to you ([Figure 3-2](#)) depend on the type of business page you selected when you first signed up, but here is a sampling of Facebook ad types:

- » **Automatic:** If you're unsure about the type of ad you want to run, then select this option, fill out a few pieces of information, and Facebook will decide for you.
- » **Get More Calls:** If you want more people to call into your business, then select this ad type.
- » **Get More Website Visitors:** These ads are geared toward driving traffic to your website. A specific article or page on your website is highlighted, so when readers click to learn more, they are taken to your website rather than your Facebook page.
- » **Boost a Post:** When you *boost* a Facebook post by clicking Boost Post, as shown in [Figure 3-3](#), that post appears higher in your fans' news feeds. A single post or update can have a wider reach than a post you didn't boost. For example, if a single post normally gets 200 views, you can boost a post so it receives 2,000 views.
- » **Get More Messages:** Encourage people to contact you via Facebook Messenger.
- » **Get More Visits:** Page promotion ads advertise the page itself, with a Like button included so viewers can like directly from their news feeds. You can choose to target this (and other) ads to a specific demographic or send it to friends of fans.
- » **Get More Page Likes:** This looks like and serves the same purpose as the Get More Visits ad type.
- » **Get More Leads:** Get *qualified leads* by running ads that ask questions of responders to gauge their intent to buy.

The cost of a Facebook ad is up to you. Whether you choose to spend \$5 to put your ad in front of several hundred people or hundreds of dollars to have your ad put in front of thousands of people, you set a cost you can live with.

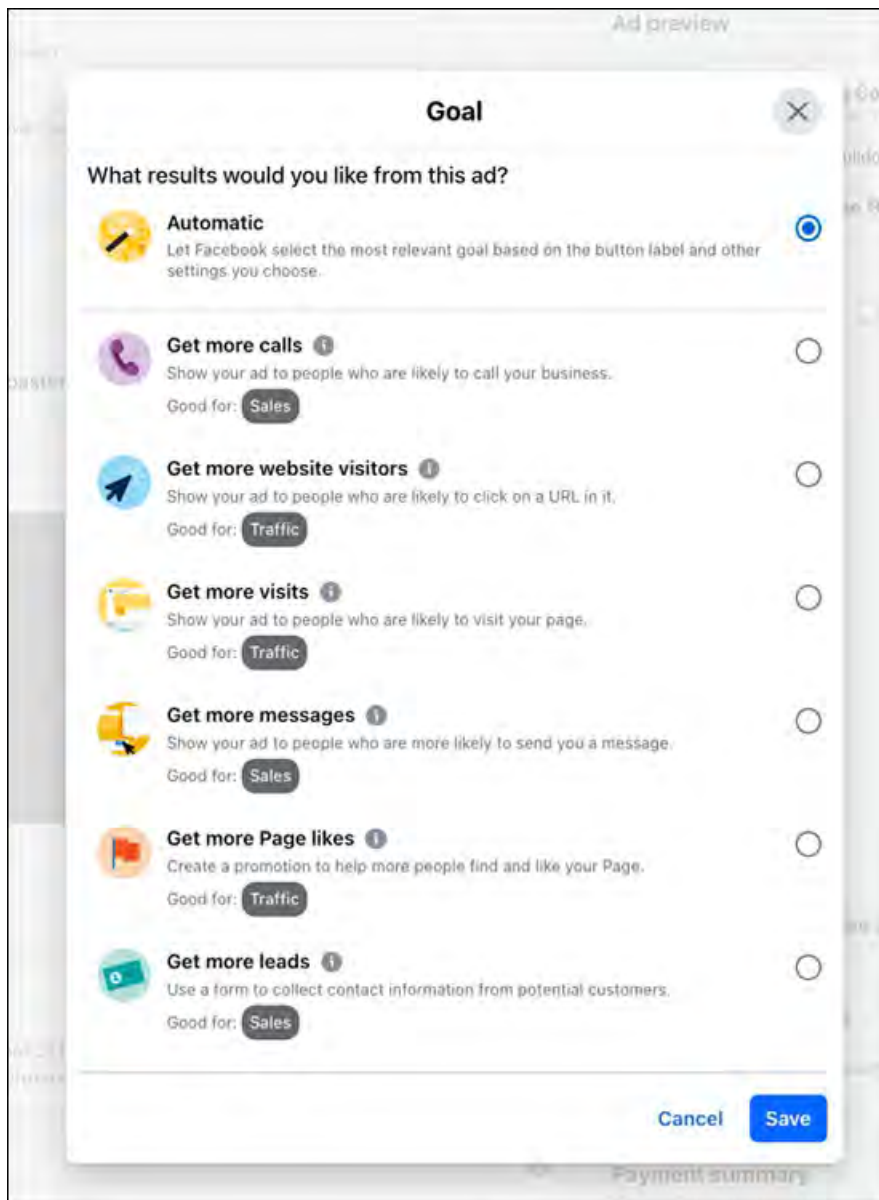


FIGURE 3-2: The ad you create depends on your goals.

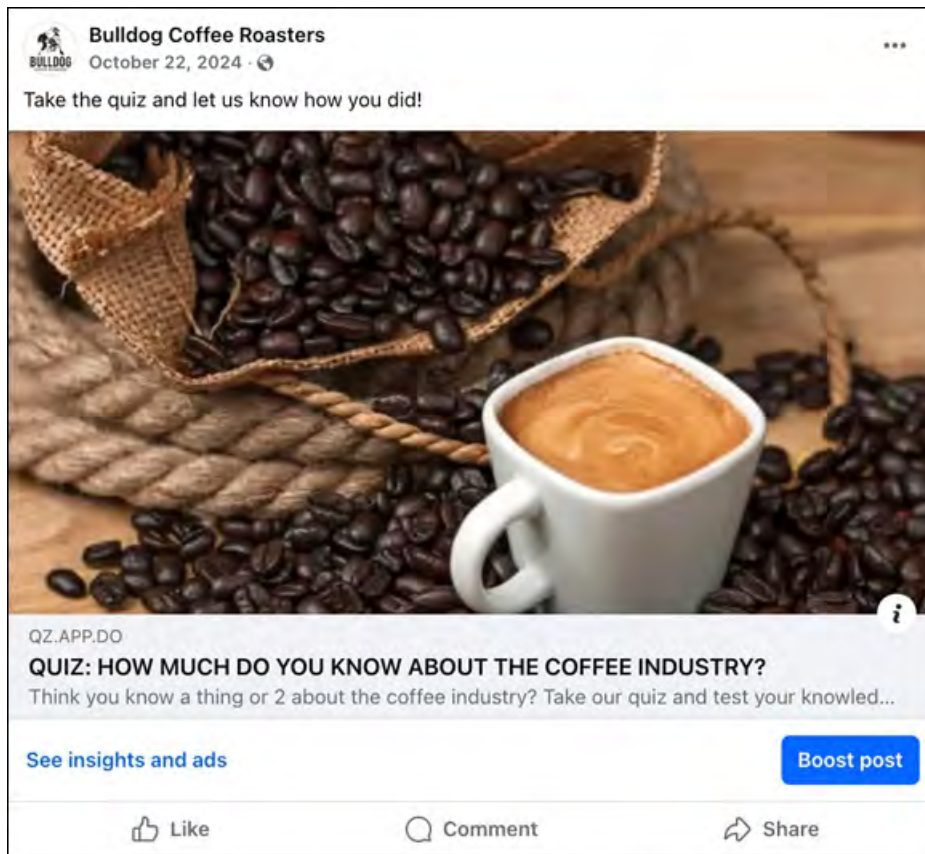


FIGURE 3-3: You can boost a post on Facebook to give it more visibility.



TIP Before investing in a Facebook ad, take some time to familiarize yourself with Facebook's guidelines for advertisers at www.facebook.com/business/ads-guide/update. The last thing you want is to have your ad pulled or declined because it wasn't in compliance.

Meta Business Suite

There are several places you can go to create ads and access ad performance data. One of these, the Meta Business Suite, is designed for businesses looking to manage their entire Meta social media presence in one place, which is especially useful if you're managing more than one Facebook and/or Instagram page.

There's such a thing as too much of a good thing, however, especially when you're just kicking off your social media marketing journey. The Meta Business Suite is very robust and gets into granular detail about content performance, your audience, ad performance, and more. This amount of data can sometimes be overwhelming to those who don't live it day in and day out like social media managers do. I recommend you start with the page management areas discussed in this book, and as your Meta marketing presence matures, you can dive into the Meta Business Suite and truly be able to make the most out of all of the rich data it offers.

Creating an ad with Ad Center

Facebook's Ad Center is where you will go to create your Facebook ads. Once you place your ad, however, you will monitor its performance in the *Ads Manager*.

To create an ad in the Ad Center, follow these steps:

1. **Access the Ad Center via the link in the left sidebar on your page.**

2. **Click the blue Advertise button, as shown in [Figure 3-4](#).**

The Choose Ad Type page appears.

3. **If you want to Boost a Post or Event, click the appropriate option. Otherwise, click the Create New Ad button.**

The Create New Ad page appears.

4. **Choose a marketing goal for your ad.**

The Automatic option is selected by default. To change it, click the Change button to the right of that section, select the option that best represents your goal, and then click Save. For example, you can send people to your page, encourage people to call your business, or encourage them to send you a message via Facebook Messenger. When you select a scenario, you're taken to a window where you're asked to perform a series of actions including naming your campaign, select various demographics to target your ad to, and choose your budget.

5. **Fill in all the required information about your campaign.**

As you're filling out all the information, the ad and audience information on the right side updates to reflect the changes. If this is the first time you're running an ad, you'll have to add in your payment information here, too.

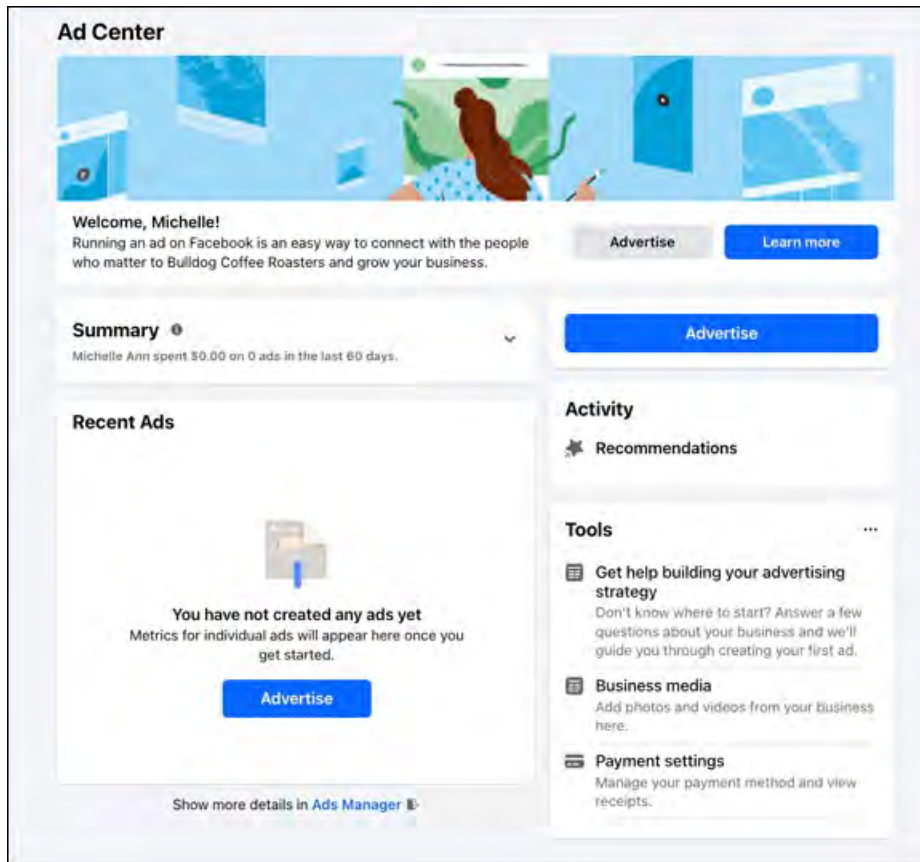


FIGURE 3-4: Facebook's Ad Center can help you get started.

6. If everything is to your liking, click the Publish button.

After you create your ad, you can use the Ad Center to access analytics, print reports, and see your page history, among other functions. For example, you can see at a glance how many ads you've purchased and how each is performing.

Targeting your fans

One of the nicest features about Facebook advertising is the capability to target fans — or potential fans. For example, if you want to boost a post, you can target your audience as follows:

1. **After you create your post, click the Boost Post button, located to the bottom right of your status update (refer to [Figure 3-3](#)).**

The Boost Post page appears.

2. **Scroll down to the Audience section of the Boost Post page, click the pencil icon in the Audience Details box.**

The Edit Advantage+ Audience box appears (see [Figure 3-5](#)).

3. **Select options to narrow down your target audience and Click Save Audience when you're finished.**

You can narrow your audience down by features such as gender, age, physical location or

click on the Browse button in the Detailed Targeting section to access psychographic criteria such as relationship status, education, or income level.

4. Under Budget and Duration, determine the amount of money you want to spend and how long you'd like the ad to run.

5. Select where you want your ad run.

Your options are Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, any combination of the three, or you can opt into the Advantage+ placements choice, which automatically places your ad throughout Meta's audience network (including the three manual options). Note: the Advantage+ placements button is selected by default, but deselecting it will display the other options mentioned.

6. Choose your payment method.

You can pay by credit card, add your online bank account information, use Facebook Ad credits, or PayPal.

7. Click Publish to publish your ad.



REMEMBER Your ad won't start running immediately. Facebook has to review the ad first to make sure it's in compliance. This review doesn't take long; in most cases, your ad will run within a couple of hours.



TECHNICAL STUFF You have the option to include a Facebook *pixel* with your ad to track its progress using outside websites such as Shopify or HubSpot. I recommend you work with your developer on this because it involves connecting accounts and if you're unfamiliar with the concept, something may go awry, and it could have a negative effect on both the ad and the website.

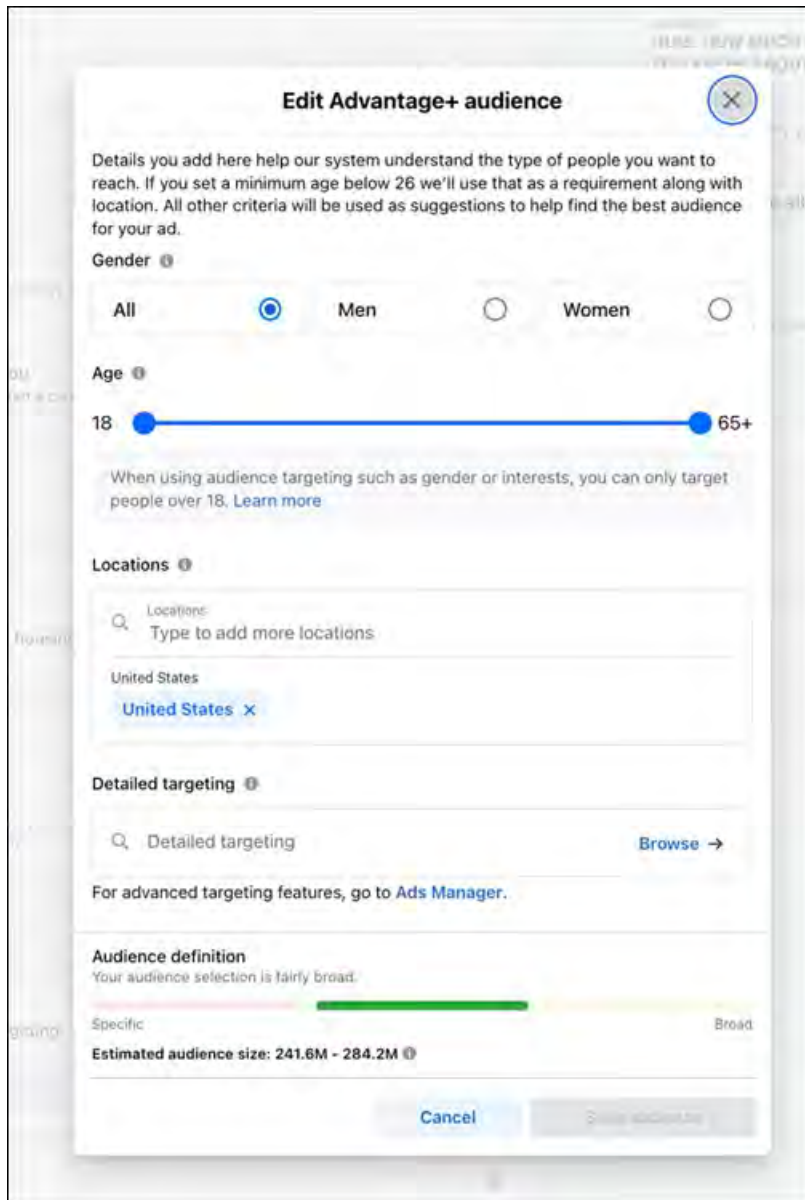


FIGURE 3-5: To reach the right people, target your ads.

Measuring Your Ad's ROI

It's important to know how well your Facebook ad is performing, and Facebook has the tools to help you with this. Whether you use your page's Insights dashboard (described in [Chapter 2](#) of this minibook), the Meta Business Suite, or the Ads Manager dashboard, you can determine whether your investment is working.

What follows are a few of the ways to determine your ad's return on investment:

- » **Regular content versus paid content:** When you select Content on your Insights dashboard, you receive an overview on how your posts are performing. You can also see whether a post is paid or unpaid, enabling you to make a comparison.

- » **Likes:** You can compare likes achieved during paid campaigns with organic likes.
- » **Reach:** You can see at a glance how much of a boost a paid post received and how many people were reached as a result of that boost.
- » **Engagement:** On your Ad Center dashboard, you can see a list of your advertising and how much engagement each received. You can even see the cost per engagement.

So how do you put all this together to determine ROI? First, it depends on your goals:

- » **If your goal was to receive likes to your Facebook page or to have more people see a specific post,** you can analyze the numbers and determine whether you achieved the results you were hoping for. If you spent \$100 and received one like, your campaign probably didn't work for you. But if you spent \$100 and received 50 likes, you have to determine if spending \$2 per like is a worthwhile investment for you.
- » **If you wanted to drive traffic to your website,** you can easily measure your success through the Ad Center's click-through reporting and your own website's analytics. On days you purchased advertising, how much traffic did it send to your website, and was the amount of traffic worth the money spent? Moreover, how many of the people who came to your website as a result of the ad will continue to visit in the future? Measure traffic over time and see whether you have a nice steady rise and repeat visits as a result of your ad.

You can also measure sales. If you receive traffic and no sales, the ad might need to be reworked or retargeted or maybe Facebook ads aren't a good fit. In this case, consider trying more than once, just to make sure. However, if you notice a rise in sales as a result of your Facebook ad, continue with this investment.



REMEMBER It's important to determine whether a Facebook ad campaign is worth the investment. If you don't take time to analyze the numbers and determine whether you're meeting your goals, you're throwing away money.



TIP Facebook makes it even easier to determine the ROI of your Facebook marketing activities with its *ROI Snapshot* report template, available through the Ads Reporting tab of your Ads Manager dashboard.

Selling on Facebook

It used to be that in order to sell on Facebook, you couldn't really — err — sell. At least not on your business page. Remember what I said about “selling without selling?” Blatant, heavy-handed selling definitely turns followers off. So, it's best to stay away from it. Or, at the very least, keep it to the bare minimum and infrequently. Having said that, how *do* you sell on

Facebook? Keep reading for the different options.

Facebook Marketplace

Facebook Marketplace (see [Figure 3-6](#)) is a free online classifieds section that you access from the left sidebar on your Facebook profile. People utilize the marketplace like they do Craigslist, except on Craigslist you can advertise services such as lawn care or house cleaning. On Facebook Marketplace, you can only sell items, vehicles, and rent or sell homes. Occasionally people go against Facebook's Commerce Policies (www.facebook.com/policies/commerce), but if you're caught, your ad will be removed and you run the risk of being banned from posting altogether.

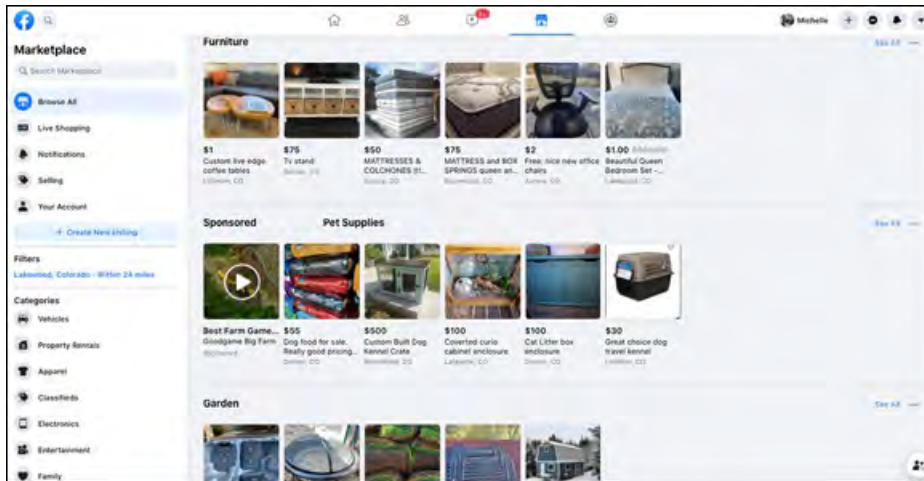


FIGURE 3-6: Facebook Marketplace is the classified ads section of the social media platform.



TIP Don't take chances by trying to sell prohibited things. You could lose your Facebook business page and all the hard work you put into building it. Besides, there are other ways to sell on Facebook that *are* within the rules, and those are discussed in the following section.

Shopping buttons

Another way you can sell on Facebook is to *not* sell on Facebook. This is the perfect option if you have an existing e-commerce option on your business's website.

To add a shopping button to your Facebook page, follow these steps:

1. **Click the button with the three dots on the bottom right of your header image and select Add Action Button from the drop-down menu.**
2. **Click the radio button next to either the View Shop option or the Buy Now option and click Next.**

You're now asked where you want to send people. If you are installing the View Shop button, you have to choose between sending them to a Facebook shop or to a third-party e-commerce platform. If you're installing the Buy Now button, then you will only have

third-party platforms to choose from.

3. Select your e-commerce platform from the list provided.

A list of several of the most popular platforms appears.

4. Follow the remaining instructions to connect your e-commerce shop to your Facebook page.

The steps you'll be taken through depend on the platform your shop is hosted on. Once completed, you'll be the owner of a shiny new shopping button! (See [Figure 3-7](#).)



FIGURE 3-7: By clicking on your page's new shopping button, customers can be taken directly to your website's e-commerce site.

Facebook Shops

Facebook Shops lets you sell items directly on Facebook and, as is the case with the shopping buttons, you can send people to your website from your shop to complete their purchase.

If this is the first time you're setting up a shop, you have to do so by using the Commerce Manager (see [Figure 3-8](#)) that can be found at:

www.facebook.com/commerce_manager/onboarding_landing.

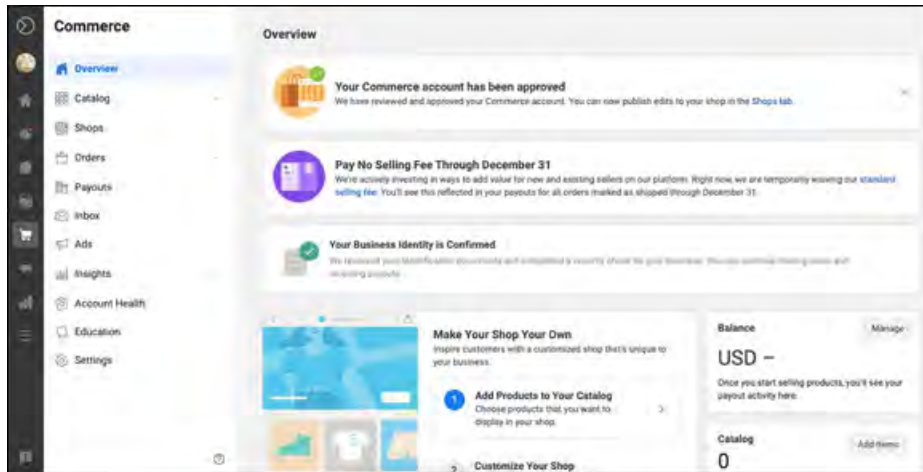


FIGURE 3-8: The Commerce Manager dashboard.

Once there, you're given the option to send customers to your website to complete their purchase or let them do it directly on Facebook or via direct message (see [Figure 3-9](#)). After you complete the setup of your Commerce account (see [Figure 3-10](#)), you can begin to set up your shop. (If you're using a third-party e-commerce platform like Shopify, you go through a different process. Click the Get Started button at the bottom of the page to begin. (Book 2, [Chapter 1](#) talks more about third-party e-commerce platforms.)

For detailed information about setting up and running Facebook Shops, head over to their help page: www.facebook.com/business/help/268860861184453?id=1077620002609475.

One interesting feature accessible in your Commerce Manager is Live Shopping, where merchants utilize Facebook Live (see [Chapter 4](#) of this minibook) to talk about their wares. Think of it as the Facebook version of the Home Shopping Network. [Figure 3-10](#) shows a number of merchants who are currently online selling their items.



FIGURE 3-9: Setting up your Facebook Shop.

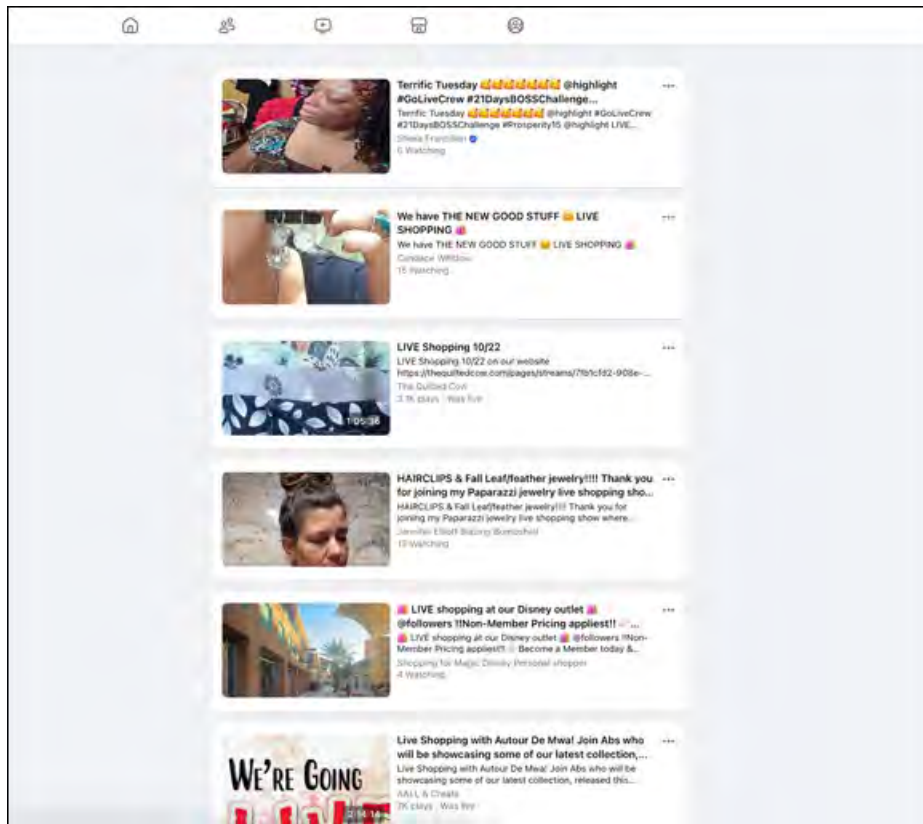


FIGURE 3-10: Sell your products in real time with Facebook Live.

When you're selling to a live audience on Facebook, your video feed appears similar to a regular Facebook post, giving visitors the opportunity to like, comment on, and share your live feed, all in real time! This is a great way to interact with potential customers and "put a face" to your business.

When people comment on your post, you can see the different items that seem to be a hit with viewers and the items that aren't getting a great response. This gives you insight into the types of products that resonate well with this particular audience.



TIP While you're live on camera, have another person moderating the comments section in case questions are being asked. If there are, you can answer them on camera, because others may have those same questions. This is also a great opportunity to get ideas about future content to post about!

Chapter 4

Streaming Live Video on Facebook

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Delving into video
 - » Getting creative with a live stream
 - » Going live!
-

Social media has presented marketers with new ways to communicate with customers and potential customers. They're able to move beyond the written word or a simple photograph, to audio, two-way communication, and video. In the past, live streaming was a technical, expensive consideration, but it no longer has to be. Thanks to tools such as Facebook Live, the capability to bring a brand to life is easier than ever. You don't need fancy equipment or a crew to follow you around. Live streaming is now as simple as using a smartphone and a Facebook app.

Facebook Live doesn't present a one-sided video experience, either. People who watch Facebook Live streams in real time are able to communicate in the form of comments or reactions, such as thumbs-ups, smiley faces, and hearts. The best part is that the person who is doing the live stream can see these interactions and respond.

If some viewers miss the live part of the live stream, they still have the ability to watch again later. They can't participate as the event is taking place, but that doesn't mean they're not going to benefit from the experience. A live stream can last forever.

Facebook Live is available to everyone who has a Facebook account. It's available to both brand pages and individual pages, although your brand page has to be at least 60 days old and have at least 100 followers in order to qualify to go live as your page.

Some of the types of businesses and professionals that regularly use Facebook Live follow:

- » **News organizations:** Many newspapers, broadcasters, and other news organizations go live with breaking news updates, interviews, and event coverage.
- » **Teachers:** Educators use Facebook Live to share homework tips, read books, and share learning experiences.
- » **Fitness and sports coaches:** Physical fitness professionals are sharing fitness tips and workout demos.
- » **Musicians:** Entertainers are using Facebook Live to perform.
- » **Product manufacturers:** Manufacturers are sharing demos, product information, and even behind-the-scenes looks at their factories.
- » **Bloggers:** Facebook Live is a terrific extension of a blog — many bloggers use it to share

their passion and communicate with their readers.

- » **Entertainment venues:** Local theaters use Facebook Live to share backstage secrets and introduce performers.
- » **Restaurants:** Chefs use Facebook Live to put up cooking demonstrations or to show how popular dishes are assembled.
- » **Retail chains:** Shops and stores use Facebook Live to livestream sales events, give product demos, and share news and promotional information.
- » **Charitable events:** Charities and causes are using Facebook Live to stream 5Ks, hold basket auctions, and to show viewers how and where funds are needed and allocated.

As you can see, with Facebook Live the possibilities are endless.



TIP

Search for examples of how some of your favorite brands are using Facebook Live. Seeing how it works in action can inspire some fresh ideas of your own.

Understanding the Benefits of Live Streaming

Using a livestreaming tool such as Facebook Live isn't just another social media vanity project. It's a way to humanize your business and interact with your customers and online community. You don't even have to appear on your live video if you're camera shy; train the camera on an event or an item of interest and narrate without appearing onscreen. Because Facebook Live encourages a reaction, it's not a one-way effort. In fact, the engagement with your viewers is a favorite part of a Facebook Live stream.

The benefits of Facebook Live abound. Here are some reasons to take your Facebook experience live:

- » **Show a human side to a brand.** Live streaming allows you to discuss your brand while enabling viewers to see you in action.
- » **Interact with viewers.** Because Facebook Live gives viewers the capability to comment or react, you're able to respond live to their questions, comments, or other interaction.
- » **Bring new ideas to life.** Sometimes it's easier to illustrate or demonstrate a point with video than with words on a page. Facebook Live gives you an opportunity to make your actions speak louder than words.
- » **Reach more people than with written posts.** As all brand page managers know, it can be a struggle to reach as many people as possible with a Facebook post. However, Facebook gives preference to live video, so more of your Facebook community sees video over your usual posts. Moreover, when more people see video posts, it gives a boost to future posts.
- » **Send a notification to everyone who likes your page.** Unlike your regular posts, everyone who subscribes to your brand page receives notifications when you go live. This gives you the ability to reach as many fans as possible. Also, if your fans are enjoying the

video, they can share it with friends and family, so you can reach even more people.

- » **Show events as they happen.** If your company is doing something interesting or important, you can show those events in real time. This gives everyone an opportunity to feel as if they're there.
- » **Continue to provide the content.** Your Facebook Live videos can stay on Facebook for as long as you want them to. Now anyone can see those videos any time they want. And if people search for a topic that you livestreamed about, they can find your video, which might lead to new customers.
- » **Get Facebook preference.** Marketers are always looking for ways to boost their Facebook posts, and Facebook's algorithm can make it difficult for people to see brand posts in their feeds. However, Facebook's algorithm gives preference to Facebook Live videos, so more people see the live stream than other (non-boosted) posts.
- » **Live stream in Facebook groups.** You can use Facebook Live in private or public groups, allowing you to target a specific audience without making a public video.
- » **Use Facebook Live on event pages.** If you have a Facebook event posted, you can livestream from that event page. Event streaming enables people who couldn't attend to see the action, and attendees can look back on the videos after the event.
- » **Broadcast in the moment.** When you use Facebook Live you don't have to wait an hour for the video to render, there's nothing to upload, and you get to share the action live, as it happens.
- » **Eliminate the need for fancy equipment.** Don't worry about purchasing expensive recording equipment. With Facebook Live you need only a mobile device, webcam, or a camera and streaming software.

Facebook has a product called Live Producer for those companies who want to create professional-level videos with video cameras and special encoding (streaming) software, allowing for additional features such as more editing options and scheduling. Although that process is more advanced and out of the scope of this book, you can read more at www.facebook.com/live/producer.
- » **Add a call to action.** You can put information at the end of the video that encourages viewers to perform a particular action. For example, you can ask them to visit a sales page, donate to charity, or subscribe to your company newsletter.
- » **Seek out users of all levels.** Facebook Live isn't only for developers or advanced users, nor is it only for people who run brand pages. Anyone who has a Facebook account can use Facebook Live.
- » **Showcase and educate.** Facebook Live provides marketers with an opportunity to showcase products and services, teach a how-to project, or offer other forms of education.

As soon as you go live on Facebook, you'll be able to see how many people are viewing the video stream at any given time. You can also see the names of people who are viewing so you can say hello by name. Knowing who is watching and when viewership picks up and drops off enables you to fine-tune your video content so it appeals to the most people.



TIP

A favorite feature of Facebook Live is the capability to engage with your community. Definitely take advantage! If someone comments, read the comment on the air and respond. If people give you a heart, thumbs-up, or smiley face, call them out and let them know you appreciate that they took the time to show their approval. Many of the people who engage during Facebook Live streams are hoping for a shout-out.

Setting Up Your Live Stream

Ready to give Facebook Live a whirl? Is your smartphone handy? Let's get started!



TIP

To practice, set privacy preferences to Only Me, so that no one else can see your video. You can practice using your private account rather than your brand page. To learn more about Facebook Live, read the official Facebook Live page at <https://www.facebook.com/business/help/216491699144904?id=1123223941353904>.

Use Facebook Live in the same manner in which you'd post a photo or written update:

1. **From your brand page, tap or click the What's on Your Mind? box.**

You now have the ability to perform a variety of tasks, including adding a photo, checking in to a location, or going live, as shown in [Figure 4-1](#).

2. **Select Live.**

You're taken to the screen shown in [Figure 4-2](#), where you have to select to Go live in the moment or create a live video event to take place in the future.

3. **(Optional) Click the button that says *Create a Test Broadcast before Going Live*.**

This will help ensure your technology is working properly and you're ready to see and be seen!

4. **Click the Go Live button.**

You're taken to a page to set up the live stream (see [Figure 4-3](#)). This includes selecting where the video feed is originating from (webcam or streaming software), adding details to be included with the post sharing your recorded video (after it's complete), audience selection settings, and more.

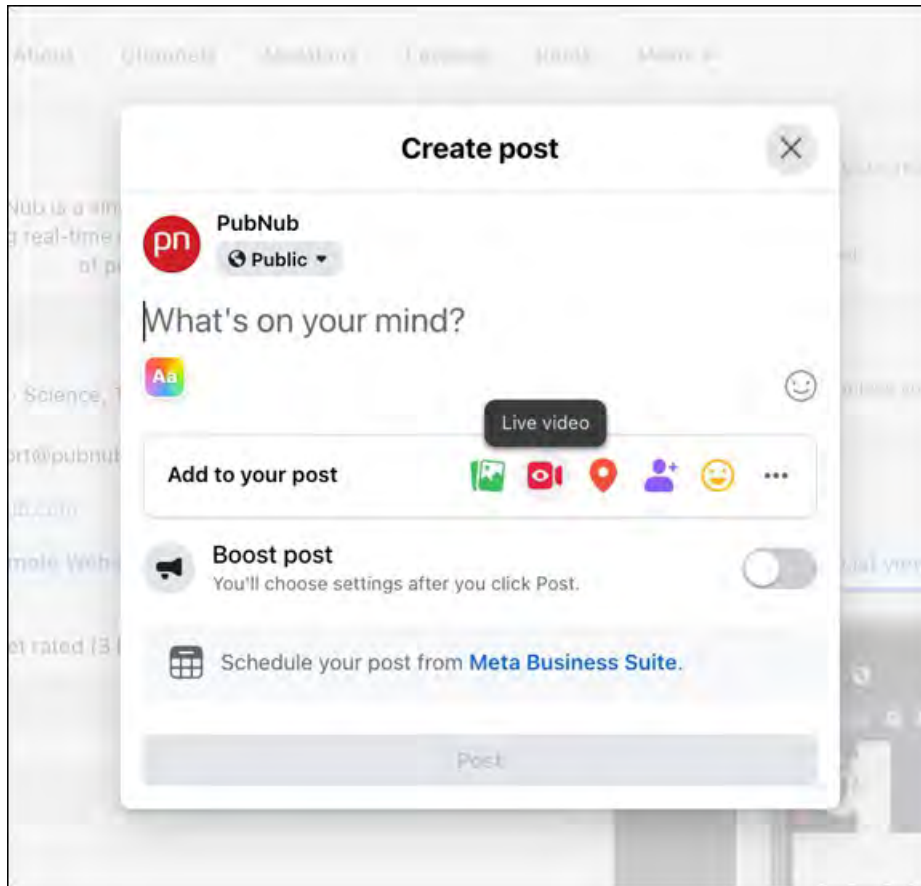


FIGURE 4-1: Using Facebook Live is as easy as posting to your brand page!

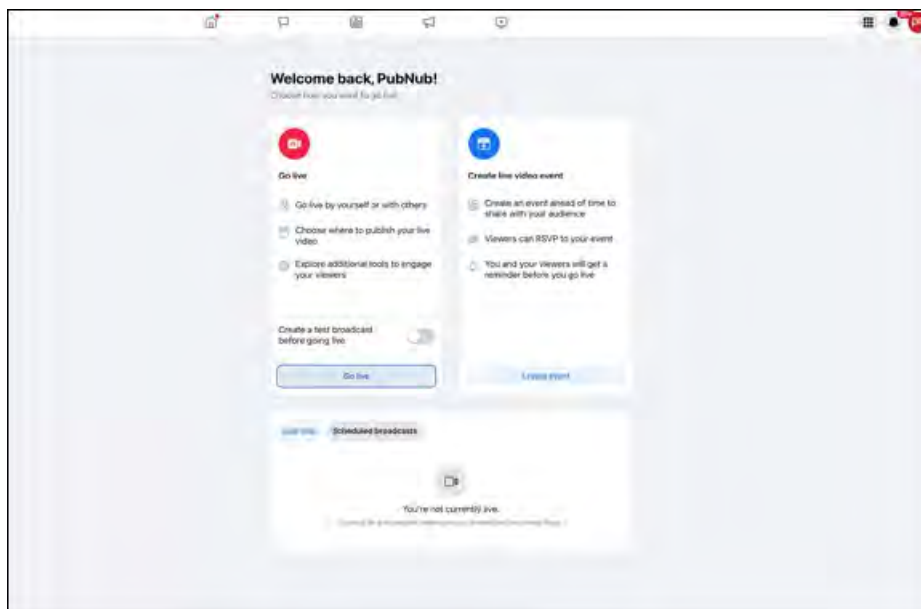


FIGURE 4-2: Describe your video, set your permissions, and determine your audience.

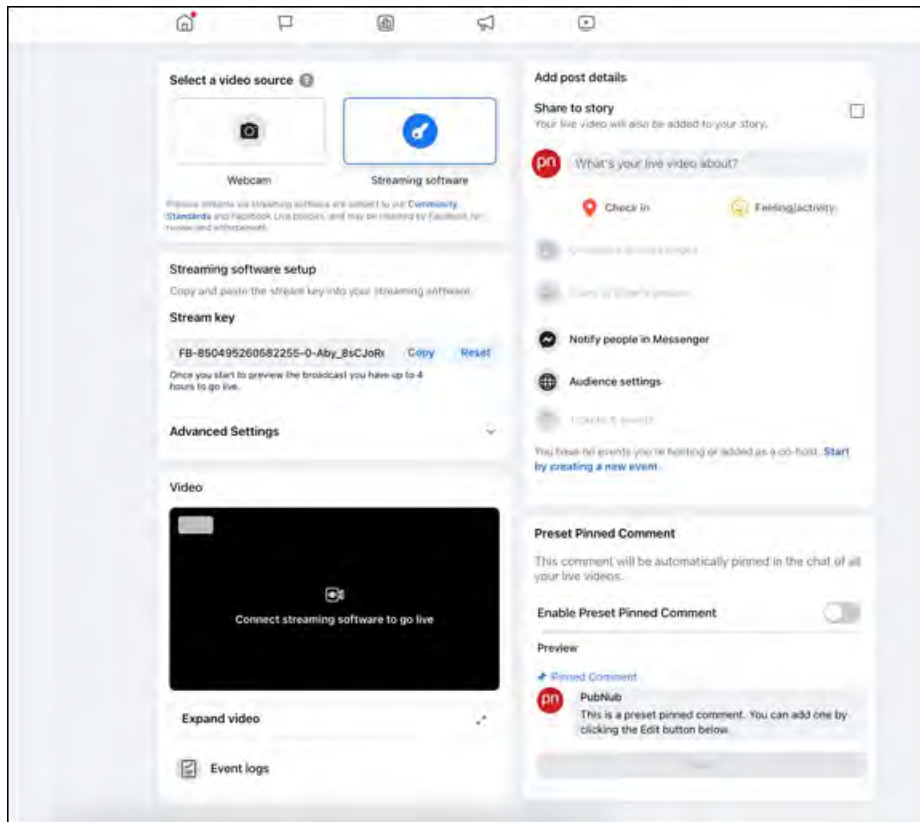


FIGURE 4-3: Select where the video feed is originating from and where you want to share the finished recording.

5. Describe your video, and then tap or click Start Test or Start Live Video.

Type a title for the video or a description of what your viewers will be seeing. Note, the Start button will be grayed out until you enter a title and description (at least). After you're live, you can begin! You see a red recording icon and the number of viewers when you're live.

6. Record your video.

Don't forget to engage with your audience!

7. To end the video, tap Finish.

8. To post the video to your timeline, tap the Share button.

The default settings are to post the video to your timeline and to upload the video in High Definition (HD). If for whatever reason you don't want to post the video to your timeline, uncheck these options. You can also delete your video by tapping the Delete button and/or save it to your device by tapping the Save button.



TIP To edit the video description, delete the video, or change your privacy options, simply click the Edit Post function next to the video post on your timeline.



WARNING Don't click Go Live unless you're ready to go live. The last thing you want is to be caught unawares. Get your camera set up and pointed at your target, alert any interview subjects or anyone else who is going live with you, and make sure you're camera-ready. Better yet ... take advantage of the Testing function!

After your live stream, you can gauge how well your video did with your online community. Discover how many people were in your live audience, how many minutes were viewed, the amount of people reached, and more. You can also access a graph to see your viewership over time, which will enable you to see where peak viewership happened during your video.

Follow these steps to view your video analytics:

1. **In the left sidebar of your brand page, click Professional Dashboard.**
2. **Select the Content option.**
3. **Scroll down until you find the video and click on the video to view the analytics information.**

Here are a few more things to know about Facebook Live:

- » Live streams can last up to 8 hours! But unless you have 8 hours' worth of exhilarating content to present, I don't recommend you go that long.
- » Make sure you have a strong signal before recording. The last thing you want is to lose your stream because of a slow connection.
- » Facebook doesn't mind if you give a brief call to action at the end of your video. You might want to direct your viewers to a special web page or to a sign-up page.
- » After recording, you can edit your video's description to add a URL if needed. This is especially helpful if you use a call of action or want to give people a place to go to get more information.
- » Videos should be at least 10 minutes. Short video snippets don't get much in the way of viewership or interaction.



TIP Consider announcing live events so you'll have more viewers. Surprises are fun, but if your Facebook community knows you'll be broadcasting from a specific place at a specific time, they'll be waiting for you. You have an opportunity to reach more viewers by advertising your live event.

Engaging with Your Community via Facebook Live

A favorite aspect of Facebook Live is the capability to interact with viewers. Give-and-take between the viewer and the person producing the video provides a more authentic experience and can endear a brand to its community.

When you take time out to pay homage to the people who are watching your video, you're telling them that they're a part of the event and that you value them and the experience.



TIP You can engage with your Facebook Live viewers in several ways. By talking *with* them rather than *at* them, you're encouraging participation. So it's important to notice who is viewing your video at any given time. In turn, viewers will communicate in the form of comments, or by reactions.

Here are some tips and best practices for engaging with your Facebook community:

- » **Respond to comments and interaction by using names.** Respond, by name if possible, when people post comments and use reactions. When you use names, you're making the viewers feel special and important.
- » **Encourage questions.** Invite your viewers to ask questions so you can respond.
- » **Ask questions.** Ask questions so your viewers can respond. Read their responses out loud so they know you see them.
- » **Create live polls.** Make things even more interactive and give your viewers the opportunity to interact with your Live Video by answering questions or giving opinions.
- » **Welcome new viewers by name.** When new viewers join the live stream, call them out by name. They'll appreciate being noticed.
- » **Have a moderator.** If you're going to be the one presenting (or starring in) the Live Video, then be sure you have a second person on hand who can monitor the chat to ensure all attendees are staying kind and respectful to you and others.



REMEMBER It's important to make your viewers feel as if they're an important part of the livestreaming experience. When you call them out by name, they feel as if you value their viewership, input, and time.

Brainstorming Ideas for Live Videos

Like all other Facebook content, you'll want to have a plan in place for all your Facebook

Live videos. Unlike a regular Facebook post, it's not as easy to go back and edit your video. If you struggle with finding the right thing to say or don't have talking points before you shoot your video, there may be lag time or uncomfortable pauses in the action, causing you to lose viewers.

If you want to use the Facebook Live feature regularly, put together an editorial calendar for ideas and dates. For each item on your editorial calendar, include the video's description, the people who will be involved, the shooting location, and any other pertinent details. Work on a script, talking points, or interview questions before your broadcast.

Your video content should be reflective of your brand, even if it's loosely related. Take steps before airing to make sure the content is entertaining or informational. Treat Facebook Live content as you would any other content. Be creative, be entertaining, and have fun.

Here are some creative ways to use Facebook Live:

- » **Book readings:** Launch a book by reading a chapter.
- » **Recipe demos:** Share knife skills, talk about specific ingredients, and offer tips for food presentation. Facebook Live is the perfect platform for foodies!
- » **Co-broadcast with a guest:** With Facebook's Live With feature, you can invite one other person to co-broadcast with you. This option is great for conducting interviews, having a guest speak about a particular topic, or even hosting them for a Q&A session.
- » **Physical fitness:** Showcase exercises and offer tips for keeping fit and doing exercise in a proper, safe manner.
- » **Nutrition:** Share ideas for proper eating habits. Show off food swaps, present flavorful, healthy choices, and demonstrate how to cook delicious healthy food.
- » **Listening parties:** Preview a new song, promote a concert, or showcase new talent.
- » **Product manufacturing:** Bring customers to a factory or plant, or from the farm to the table. Seeing how something is made is a good way to get your customers to trust the brand and product.
- » **Product demos:** Show how a newly launched product works.
- » **Behind the scenes:** Share what goes on behind the scenes. For example, you can show planning meetings or introduce your Facebook community to staff.
- » **Recording studio:** Get a tour of a recording studio or watch a favorite band record a new song.
- » **Theaters:** Provide tours of theaters and previews of performances.
- » **Teaching:** Teach people how to do what you do. For example, a math teacher can share algebra shortcuts and a science teacher can demonstrate experiments.
- » **Interviews with notable people:** Conduct interviews with people who are doing amazing things or have insight to share with your Facebook community.
- » **Q & A with your online community:** Do an online town hall. Invite your Facebook community to ask questions of you and your team. This two-way conversation brings

others into the video and makes them feel as if they're part of the brand.

- » **FAQs:** Answer the questions you're asked the most (FAQs, or frequently asked questions).
- » **Online charity auctions or telethons:** Raise money for a favorite cause.
- » **Life hacks:** Share relevant tips for easier living.
- » **DIY projects:** Share tips for building a birdhouse, restoring furniture, repairing a wall, or installing drywall.
- » **Real estate:** Provide a video tour of a new house on the market.
- » **Interior design:** Present tips for furniture spacing, accessory placement, and color examples.
- » **School events:** Livestream a school's concerts, plays, and sporting events.
- » **Town events:** Promote local events such as parades and sporting events, or visit and highlight local businesses.
- » **Art projects:** Show off works in progress, with fans watching as the artist finalizes the product.
- » **Job openings:** Announce job opportunities, showing where the chosen candidate will be working and what the job entails.
- » **Safety tips:** Share tips of fire safety or water safety.

I hope these ideas inspire you to come up with a few of your own.



WARNING Avoid negativity or depressing topics, if possible. If people are made to feel uncomfortable or bad about themselves, they'll stay away from future live streams.

Book 6

LinkedIn

Contents at a Glance

Chapter 1: Promoting Yourself with LinkedIn

[Exploring the Benefits of Using LinkedIn](#)

[Creating an Online Resume](#)

[Understanding Recommendations and Endorsements](#)

[Using LinkedIn Messages](#)

Chapter 2: Promoting Your Business with LinkedIn

[Exploring the Benefits of a LinkedIn Page](#)

[Selling and Promoting with LinkedIn Product and Showcase Pages](#)

[Benefiting from LinkedIn Groups](#)

Chapter 3: Using LinkedIn as a Content Platform

[Blogging on LinkedIn](#)

[Promoting Your LinkedIn Articles](#)

[Posting Content on LinkedIn Pages](#)

Chapter 1

Promoting Yourself with LinkedIn

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Using LinkedIn as an online resume
 - » Highlighting your career
 - » Endorsing and being endorsed
 - » Private messaging with LinkedIn
-

LinkedIn sometimes gets a bum rap because people aren't sure how to use it, or because they don't see the same type of interaction as they do on social networks like Facebook, X, and Instagram. However, different social networks serve different purposes, and thus they're used differently. Don't write off LinkedIn just because it's more about business than cat photos. If you use it on a regular basis, it can be a formidable part of your marketing plan — not just in finding work but also in making important connections.

LinkedIn isn't merely a place to post your resume. Use it to connect with old business associates and meet new associates. You can share your achievements, recommend colleagues, find jobs, and join discussion groups filled with like-minded people. You can also use LinkedIn to promote your brand with brand pages or groups. Many businesses are using LinkedIn to connect with a more professional crowd.

This chapter shows you how to set up a profile that attracts the attention of potential employers and clients while highlighting your expertise. It also shows you how others can help highlight your achievements and how you can recommend others in return.

Exploring the Benefits of Using LinkedIn

LinkedIn has many features for the brand and social media marketer. You can establish your expertise through the LinkedIn content platform, interact with your community via brand pages and groups, and reach out to others via LinkedIn messaging.

Also, LinkedIn offers opportunities to network every day. You can expand your business connections through LinkedIn far more than by using Facebook or X.

You need to be on LinkedIn for the following reasons:

- » **Recruiters and human resources professionals are on LinkedIn.** People who are hiring are looking at your profile on LinkedIn. In fact, if you're not on LinkedIn, it may lead them to speculate why. For example, are you not Internet savvy? If you're looking for a job, it's expected you'll be on LinkedIn.
- » **LinkedIn has extensive job listings.** If you're looking for work, you can take advantage

of LinkedIn's job search engine. Most brands are using LinkedIn as a way to find suitable candidates through job listings, and there are plenty of listings exclusive to LinkedIn.

- » **Receive (and give) endorsements and testimonials.** LinkedIn enables your peers to endorse your skills and write up recommendations, and you can do the same for them. People who are searching for networking connections or job candidates will take these recommendations into consideration. (I discuss endorsements and testimonials in more detail in the section "[Understanding Recommendations and Endorsements](#)," later in this chapter.)
- » **Make important business connections.** You get to choose whom to connect with on LinkedIn. For example, you can connect with past co-workers, employers, and Fortune 500 executives. You never know who will accept your invitation.
- » **Join professional groups that include like-minded people.** LinkedIn hosts thousands of online groups, enabling professionals to network within their respective niches.
- » **Reach out to the people who are viewing your profile.** LinkedIn tells you who's viewing your profile, which opens the door when it comes to meeting new people and making important connections. For example, if someone you're interested in working with has viewed your profile, you can contact that person, saying, "I noticed you viewed my profile. I'd love to chat."
- » **Updating an online resume is easier than continuously updating a paper resume.** With LinkedIn, you don't have to worry about formatting documents or hiring a professional resume writer. You just have to click the Edit button (pencil icon) and enter your desired information. The formatting is done for you. (However, you still have to worry about spelling and grammar.)
- » **Establish your expertise by using the LinkedIn content platform.** LinkedIn invites users to create content, as well. Posting articles on LinkedIn and taking advantage of Collaborative Articles (see [Chapter 3](#)) can help to establish your expertise.
- » **Read news from your connections.** Your connections post news, tips, and updates, which you can look over to stay current on industry trends and timely topics.
- » **Research other businesses.** These days, it seems like most businesses are on LinkedIn. If you're interested in working with a particular business, you can use LinkedIn to read its business page, connect with people who work for that business, and more.
- » **Introduce others to your books, websites, blogs, and more.** Your profile has spots where you can list books or academic papers you authored and links to your blog, website, or other online content. This drives more traffic (and sales) to your interests.



REMEMBER On LinkedIn, your community members aren't called friends or followers; instead, they're considered *connections*. You have varying *degrees* of connections: The closer you're connected to a person, the more ways you can interact with them. For example, you can't send a private message to someone who isn't a first-degree connection.

Creating an Online Resume

Something interesting is happening in the world of hiring. Many employers are now accepting LinkedIn profiles instead of resumes. In fact, many online job applications even offer an option to link to a LinkedIn profile rather than to upload your resume.

Even if you're not looking for work, someone may be looking for you. Recruiters visit LinkedIn daily, throughout the day. They are always looking for fresh prospects, and LinkedIn enables them to see new, qualified people.

LinkedIn is also a way for salespeople, customers, and potential clients and job candidates to learn about a business.



REMEMBER Keep your LinkedIn profile updated because you never know who's going to come calling.



TIP If you're open to recruiters (or other LinkedIn members) contacting you about a job opening they have, there's a "Visibility" option under the Edit Job Preferences menu. Toggling this setting to "Recruiters Only" adds a note to the top of your profile that you're open to them contacting you. Be careful, though. Although LinkedIn does everything it can to prevent your existing employer from seeing this note, it can't make any guarantees. Clicking the button for "All LinkedIn members" makes your job-searching status open to everyone on the platform.

Projecting a professional image on LinkedIn

LinkedIn isn't your usual social network. Most people aren't on LinkedIn to find friends; they're looking for professional connections, so how you present yourself is very important. Whereas you may be a little more casual with your profile photo and bio on Facebook, for example, the type of photo you use on LinkedIn and the information you share on your profile should be of a more professional nature.

Here are a few things to consider before creating your LinkedIn profile:

- » **Your title or headline is front and center.** Your title is the second thing people view after your headshot. Choose a title that represents you and what you do in the most professional manner. If you want to attract clients, for example, use a title that best highlights both you and your business.
- » **Participate in groups.** Many people say they're not on LinkedIn to socialize; rather, they want to have an online resume. Don't discount the importance of joining groups, however. Not only are they important networking tools, but when you join a group, those groups show up on your profile. Group membership shows potential connections that you're looking to continuously learn and network.

- » **Make sure your About section is professional, but personal.** The About section of your profile should sum up your career in a businesslike tone but should also feature elements of your personality. For example, nothing is wrong with adding elements of humor, as long as you aren't raunchy or over the top.
- » **Spelling and grammar matter.** You wouldn't hand out a paper resume that contained misspellings, and neither would you want people to view an online resume riddled with errors. Clients want to know you'll take care with their product or service. A resume with errors says you don't pay attention.
- » **Ask for recommendations.** Your colleagues and former colleagues can give testimonials as to how you work. Don't be afraid to ask them to recommend you on LinkedIn — and don't forget to reciprocate.
- » **Use relevant keywords.** Keywords help recruiters and potential employers, clients, and connections find you.
- » **Decide whether you want to browse LinkedIn publicly or anonymously.** When you view another member's profile, that action shows up in the person's Who Viewed Your Profile section. You may not mind making it known you looked at someone's profile, but it can lead that person to contact you to see whether they can help with anything or to make a connection. However, if you go anonymous, you can't see who viewed your profile, or any of the statistics LinkedIn offers regarding the people who viewed your profile. To browse anonymously, go to your privacy settings as outlined in the next bullet point. Then select Visibility (in the menu on the left side), choose Profile Viewing Options, and choose Private mode.
- » **Check your privacy settings so that your activities aren't broadcast to the world.** When you update your resume or add experiences, your connections may receive notifications of those updates. This can be a problem if you don't want your current employer or clients to know you're in the market for something new. Adjust your LinkedIn privacy settings, as shown in [Figure 1-1](#), if you don't want others knowing you're making changes.
- » **Add media to your profile.** You can add video, images, and presentations to your LinkedIn profile. Take advantage of these tools to show off your creative side.
- » **Reorder skills so the most important skills are at the top.** You can set up your skills so they're in the order you feel goes from most to least important.
- » **List places you volunteer.** Clients, employers, and other connections like to know the people they work with are doing some good in the world. List your charitable endeavors.
- » **Select the languages you speak.** With more and more companies going global, it's a feather in your cap if you're able to speak additional languages. Just be sure not to misrepresent your fluency level!
- » **Don't skimp on the accomplishments.** You may find it to be a humble brag to talk about the great things you do, but it's perfectly acceptable in your LinkedIn profile. Go ahead and list all your important achievements, awards, patents, relevant coursework, or anything else you'd like connections to know about your professional experience.

For more information on how to put your best foot forward with your LinkedIn profile, check out *LinkedIn Profile Optimization for Dummies*, 2nd Edition, by Donna Serdula.



FIGURE 1-1: Pay attention to your privacy settings.

Choosing and uploading a profile photo

According to LinkedIn, a profile with a photo receives up to 21 times more views than a profile without a photo. It also holds true many professionals won't connect with people on LinkedIn unless they have a photo on their profile. Photos add an element of trust. It also tells others you care enough about your professional profile to make sure you have all the necessary elements. If you can't take the time to present yourself in the best light, how can a business trust you to present them in the best light?



WARNING Choose the right type of photos for your LinkedIn profile. Because your photo is the first view of you people see on LinkedIn, if you choose an inappropriate photo, a potential client may wonder what other bad choices you make. Thus, take the utmost care with your LinkedIn profile photo.

Choosing a profile photo

Here are a few guidelines for choosing a profile photo:

- » **Headshots are fine.** Most professionals on LinkedIn choose to go with a headshot. Some even have headshots done professionally for their LinkedIn and other professional social profiles. You don't have to break the bank to post a headshot on LinkedIn, but fancy backgrounds and photos of your entire body are unnecessary. Although it's important to have a photo on LinkedIn, most people just want to see your face, like the profile photo in [Figure 1-2](#).
- » **Avoid party or vacation photos.** Your LinkedIn profile isn't the place to post personal photos. Don't post an image of you in a bikini or with beer in hand. Neither type of picture portrays you as a professional and can even cost you a job.
- » **Choose a simple background.** If you have a photo with a white background, or with nothing going on in the background, it's a better choice than a photo that has a lot going on.

- » **Avoid photos with others.** Don't post group photos or photos with a significant other, kids, or friends. It's not professional, and people won't know which person is you.
- » **Choose an up-to-date photo.** The photo should reflect what you look like now. This way, if professional connections see you in real life, they can recognize you instantly. For example, if your profile shot has you with long brown hair, but you now sport a bright pink Mohawk, that might be a deal breaker for image-conscious employers who wouldn't have invited you in for an interview had they known what you really look like.
- » **No selfies.** There's a time and place for selfies. LinkedIn isn't it. Selfies aren't considered professional.
- » **No wedding photos.** You may be over-the-top blissfully happy because you're a newlywed, but if you choose a profile photo in a wedding dress, it might lead to a potential client or connection feeling you're too focused on the wedding or marriage to concentrate on anything else.
- » **Avoid pets or objects.** Using a photo of pets or objects, rather than a photo of yourself, will lead others to wonder why you're being vague about your professional appearance. Do you have something to hide?
- » **Avoid blurry images.** A blurry profile photo indicates you don't pay careful attention to what you're putting out there.
- » **Avoid a logo.** Logos are fine for brand pages, but few people will want to ask you to represent their brand if your own brand is front and center.

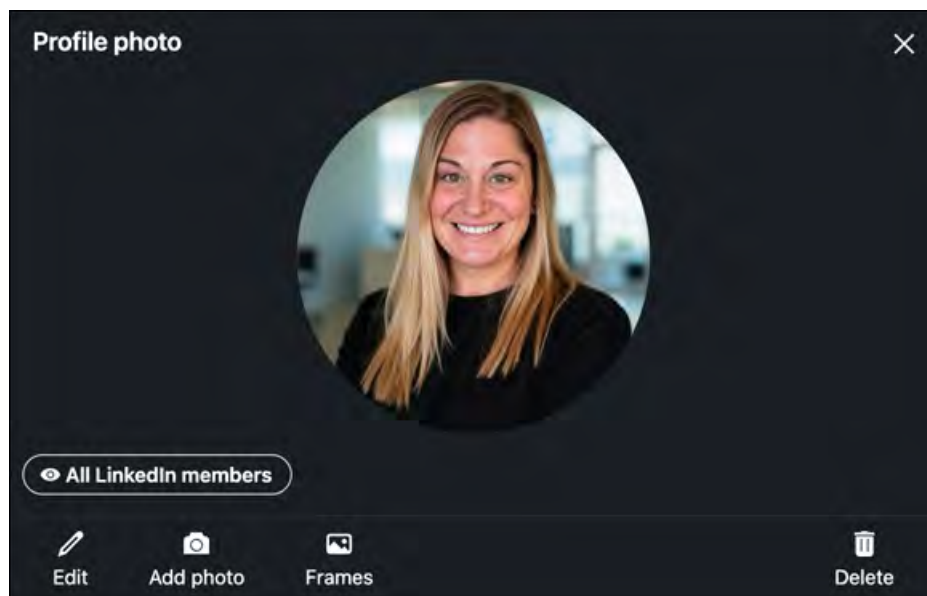


FIGURE 1-2: Choose a photo that portrays you in a positive, professional manner.



REMEMBER Your LinkedIn photo is the first thing people see when they access your profile. Choose wisely. As the saying goes, you never get a second chance to make a good first

impression.

Uploading a profile photo

To upload a photo to LinkedIn, follow these steps:

1. **From your LinkedIn home page (where your news feed is), click on your profile in the upper left corner, and then click either your existing photo (if you want to change) or the empty space where the photo goes.**

The Profile Photo page appears.

2. **Click the Delete Photo button (if you want to remove the existing photo) or the Add Photo button.**

If you select Add Photo, a pop-up window appears giving you the option to use your computer's camera to take a photo or to upload one from your computer.



TIP I highly recommend you upload a photo because your computer's camera quality may be lacking.

3. **In the File pop-up window that appears, select the photo you want to use and click Open.**

The photo-editing pop-up window shown in [Figure 1-3](#) appears.

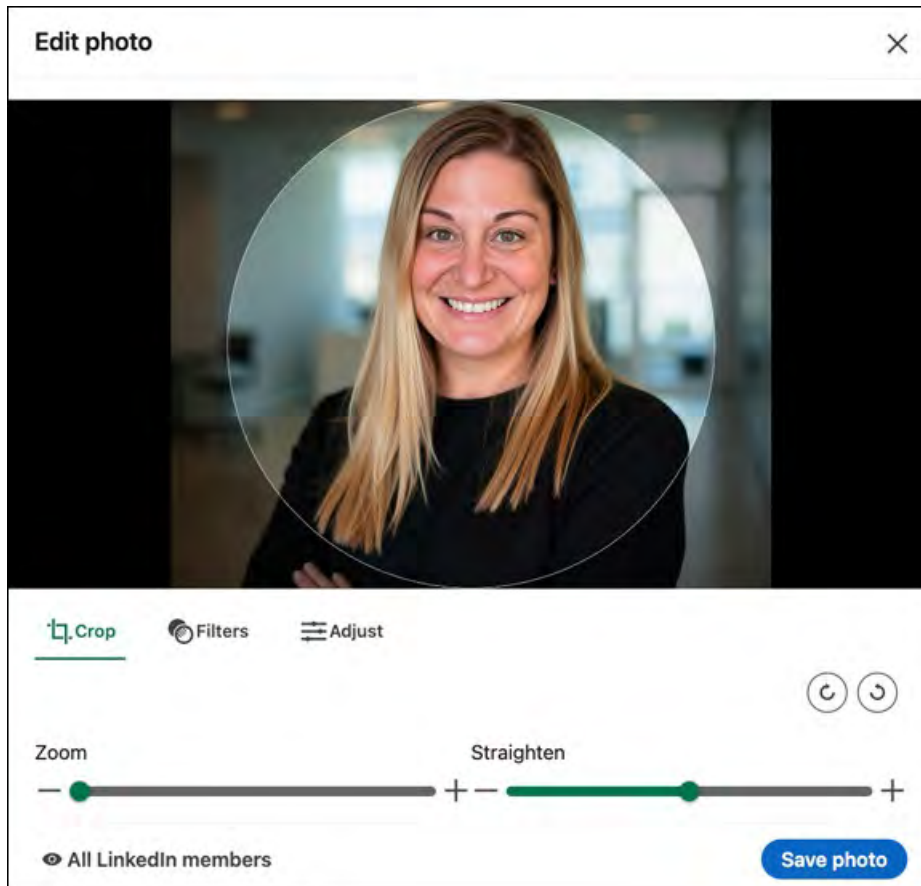


FIGURE 1-3: You have various options when editing your profile photo.

4. **Decide if you want to zoom in on your photo, straighten it, crop it, apply one of the six filter options, or adjust the photo settings yourself (brightness, contrast, and so on).**
5. **Click Save Photo to, yep, you guessed it ... save your photo!**



REMEMBER Think carefully about whether or not you want to use a filter on your photo. Depending on how the original photo looks, filters can make the image look unnatural and unprofessional.

Uploading a background photo

You can elect to have a background image on your LinkedIn profile. This should be an image that's representative of you as a professional or of your brand. The background photo appears beneath your profile photo across the top of your profile.

To upload a background photo such as the one shown in [Figure 1-4](#), follow these steps:

1. **Click the Pencil icon that appears in the top right of the cover shot area (see [Figure 1-4](#)).**

If you don't currently have a background image, you'll see a camera icon that, when clicked on, gives you the option to upload a photo or choose an image that captures your interests or personality.

2. **In the Edit Photo box that appears, click the Delete Photo button (if you want to remove the existing photo) or the Change Photo button.**

If you select Change Photo, a pop-up window appears giving you different cover photo options to use to show support for current social issues or to upload one from your computer. Deleting it leaves you with no background image displayed.

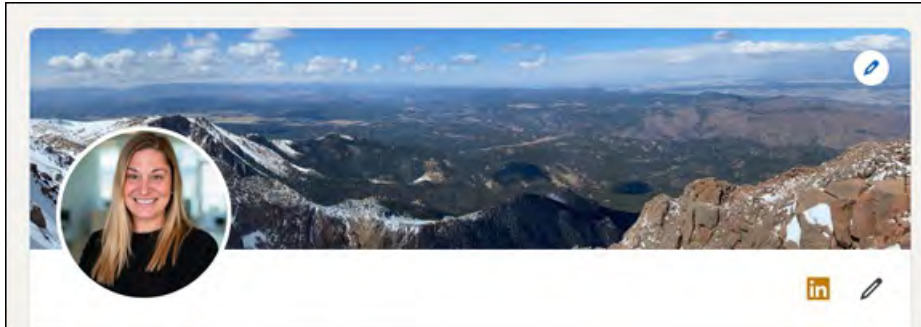


FIGURE 1-4: Choose a background photo that says something about you.

3. **In the File pop-up window that appears, select the photo you want to use and click Open.**

A photo-editing pop-up window appears.

4. **Decide if you want to zoom in on your photo, straighten it, crop it, apply one of the seven filter options, or adjust the photo settings yourself (brightness, contrast, and so on).**
5. **Click Save to save your photo.**

Filling out your profile

What should you include in your LinkedIn profile? Considering it's an online resume, include your work history, achievements, accolades, and anything that portrays you and your career in a positive light.

An interesting feature of LinkedIn is that it lets you customize what sections you have in your profile. The basics like your name and current position will always be visible, but if you don't add any information to a particular section, it won't show up on your profile. [Figure 1-5](#) shows all of the available sections.



FIGURE 1-5: All the sections you can add to your profile.

Once you decide what sections you want, it's time to populate them with information. To fill in all the appropriate items on your LinkedIn profile, you'll have to click on the plus (+) sign or pencil in the top right of each section you want to edit as shown in [Figure 1-6](#). Make your changes and updates, and then click Save. You'll also notice that you have to click the appropriate pencil to edit each individual section and save those sections separately as you finish updating the items you want to edit.

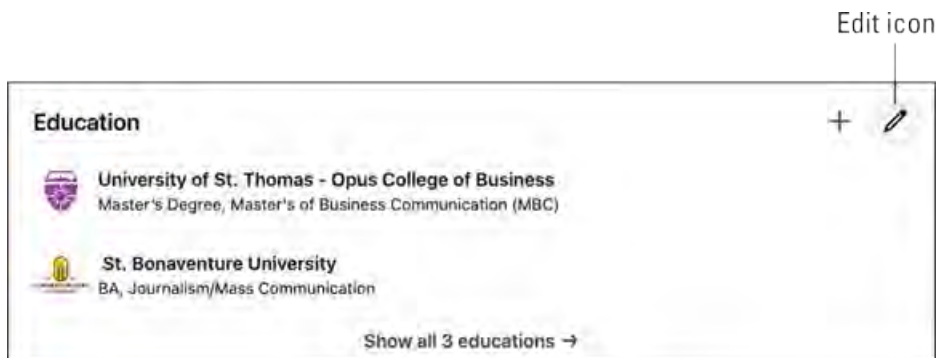


FIGURE 1-6: Click the pencil or plus (+) in each section you want to edit.

Here's some additional information about the most popular profile:

» **Intro:** This is a permanent section where you add in your headline, current position, education history, the region in which you live, the industry you're in, and your contact information. You can also add a former (for example, maiden) name, select if you want to open your profile to all LinkedIn users (as opposed to just connections), and whether or not you want to display the Premium Profile Badge (if applicable). You can also add a custom button that sends people to a URL of your choosing, with the following available options:

- Visit my store
- Visit my website
- View my portfolio
- View my blog
- Book an appointment
- Subscribe to newsletter



TIP

I highly recommend you take advantage of this piece of real estate on your LinkedIn profile to send people to one of your other web properties! It's a great, built-in call to action that can pay off big when it comes to driving visitors to your other websites.

» **About:** With the About section, the world is your oyster! It's a big blank box for you to

add in whatever you want about yourself. You can look at this section as a big blank piece of paper where you can write about your professional accomplishments, special skills, or even a little bit about your personal life. Many people choose to use this area as a de facto resume. At the bottom you can also select up to five Skills to be displayed in this section of your profile. This is the perfect opportunity to use your keywords for other professionals to locate you via searches. You cannot remove this section.



WARNING LinkedIn Premium members have the option to “Write with AI” and have LinkedIn’s built-in content writer create their About section for them. Although this can be super exciting in theory (especially if writing isn’t your strong suit), I caution to use the feature sparingly and always review what it comes up with before saving it to your profile. AI-generated content tends to be generic and repetitive ... essentially stripping away all the “human-ness” from what’s written. If you decide to use the AI option, be sure to go back and edit it so it still sounds like it was created by you.

- » **Activity:** All your LinkedIn activity can be found in this section. So whenever you post something, comment on someone else’s post, and so on, it’s collected here for all to see. You cannot remove this section.



WARNING Not that any of our readers would do this, but let’s say that *hypothetically* a LinkedIn user gets a kick out of trolling other users or leaving less-than-nice comments on people’s posts. All that activity will appear in this section for the rest of this hypothetical person’s network to see. You’ve been warned!

- » **Experience:** This is another permanent section where all your jobs are listed in reverse chronological order. In this section you can edit (or delete) each job individually by clicking the pencil icon that’s on the top right and clicking Delete Experience on the bottom left of the box that appears. To add a job, click the plus sign (+) in the top right of the box.
- » **Education:** List high school and college education, and all degrees and honors. These are also listed individually, and you can adjust them the same way you do your experience section.
- » **Volunteer Experience:** It’s always great to show that you’re also involved in your community. You can add and edit entries individually in this optional section.
- » **Skills & Endorsements:** In this section you list all the skills you want associated with your profile so people can find you in searches (think of them as prewritten keywords). I discuss endorsements more in the following sections.
- » **Accomplishments:** Have you won any awards or were you granted any patents? Have you recently taken coursework to support your professional growth? Have you published anything? Here’s an optional section where you list all those accomplishments.
- » **Recommendations:** I discuss Recommendations, as well as how they’re different from

Endorsements, in the following sections.



TIP

Don't set up your LinkedIn profile once and then forget about it. Just like you evolve in your career, so should your online resume. Take care to keep it updated.

Understanding Recommendations and Endorsements

LinkedIn offers the opportunity to receive recommendations and endorsements from your peers:

- » **Recommendations:** Like job references. People you work with can write a few paragraphs to attest to your skills and expertise. Having testimonials backs up what you write in your LinkedIn profile and acts as proof that you can do what you promise.
- » **Endorsements:** Like check marks attesting to your skills. LinkedIn occasionally asks your peers whether they'll endorse you for particular skills. If they agree, they only have to click a button to endorse you. Their LinkedIn profile photos show up next to the skills they endorse you for.

Having many people endorse you for your individual skills helps to establish your expertise. Moreover, it has benefits for the people who endorsed your skills, as well, because when their profile photos show up in your Skills area, others can click it to see their profile.

The beauty of recommendations and endorsements is that they save you from having to keep files of references to hand over to potential clients and employers.

The following sections cover the benefits and basics of recommendations and endorsements so that you can have social proof of all your career achievements.

Receiving recommendations

Don't underestimate the importance of LinkedIn recommendations. It's essential to back up your experience with other peoples' experiences in working with you. Potential clients or employers can look at testimonials on LinkedIn, saving themselves a lot of time researching your skills and helping them see that you're someone who's trustworthy, and that you can get the job done.



REMEMBER

Recommendations aren't visible on public LinkedIn Pages. Instead, they're visible to only first-, second-, and third-level connections who are logged in. Therefore, people who aren't familiar with your industry and don't have many of the same connections in common can't just stumble upon your recommendations.

Here are some tips and best practices for receiving recommendations:

- » **Don't be afraid to ask.** Just like you ask employers, clients, and co-workers for reference letters, don't be afraid to ask them for recommendations on LinkedIn.
- » **Request many recommendations.** The more, the merrier. If you have many stellar references, it means many people appreciate your work. Get as many on your LinkedIn profile as you can.
- » **Do some back scratching.** Offer to trade recommendations. Give a recommendation to get one.
- » **Offer to write it yourself.** Sometimes people don't have time to write a recommendation. Offer to write a recommendation that the person can approve and post at their convenience.
- » **Use LinkedIn's Ask for a Recommendation feature.** LinkedIn offers a way for you to ask your connections for recommendations. When you select this option, shown in [Figure 1-7](#), your connections receive a message asking for a recommendation.

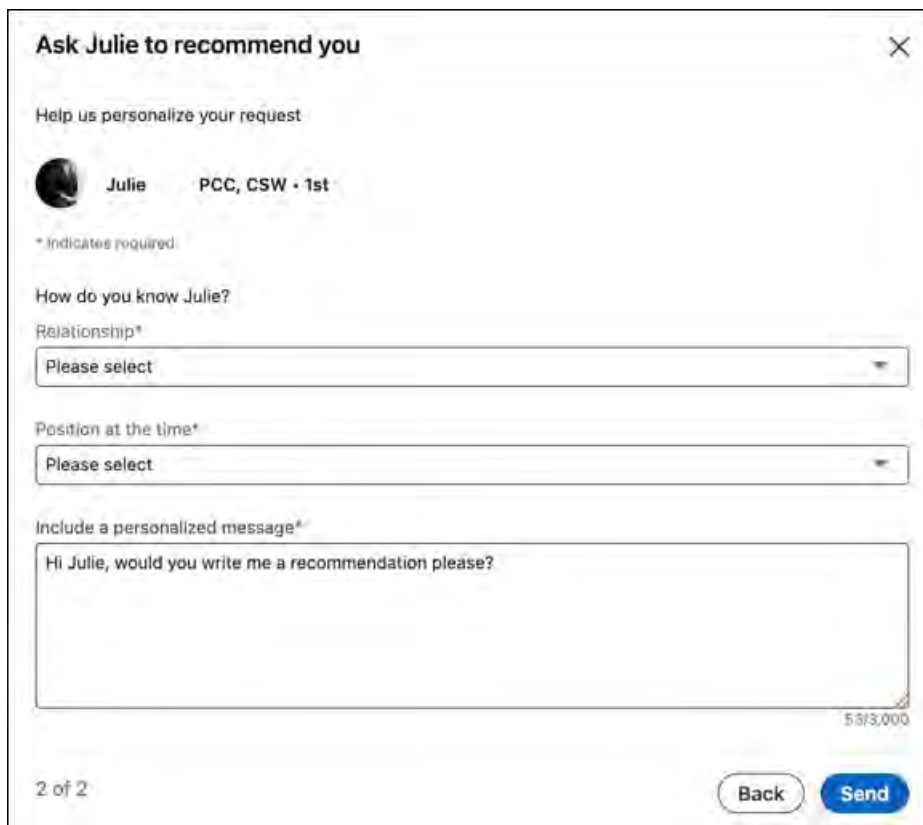
The image shows a screenshot of a LinkedIn interface titled "Ask Julie to recommend you". At the top right is a close button (X). Below the title, it says "Help us personalize your request". There is a profile picture of Julie, followed by her name "Julie" and her title "PCC, CSW • 1st". A note below says "* Indicates required:". The form asks "How do you know Julie?" with a "Relationship*" dropdown menu currently showing "Please select". Below that is a "Position at the time*" dropdown menu also showing "Please select". Then, it asks "Include a personalized message*" with a text area containing the text "Hi Julie, would you write me a recommendation please?". A character count "53/3,000" is visible at the bottom right of the text area. At the bottom left, it says "2 of 2". At the bottom right, there are "Back" and "Send" buttons.

FIGURE 1-7: Your connections can recommend you based on their experiences working with you.



TIP

Don't request a recommendation from a client or colleague with whom you may have had a stormy relationship. Even though you might have done stellar work, bitterness can

show through in a recommendation. When in doubt, it's best to move on to someone you know you have a positive relationship with.

Giving recommendations

You should also give recommendations to deserving colleagues and connections. They'll appreciate the recommendations because it makes their LinkedIn profiles look good.

Recommending others strengthens your relationships with those people, and it also helps to add more visibility to your profile because your recommendation will appear in other profiles.

To give a recommendation to a LinkedIn connection, follow these steps:

1. **Go to the profile of the person you want to recommend.**

Under the header photo is a button with the word *More*.

2. **Click the *More* button and on the drop-down menu, choose *Recommend* from the list that appears.**

The Recommendations screen appears.

3. **In the *Write a Recommendation* text box, select your relationship with the person, as well as what position they were in when you worked together, and then click *Next*.**

4. **Write your recommendation and click *Send*.**

The person you recommended is then notified.



TIP

Don't wait to be asked to give recommendations to people whose work you respect. You can recommend anyone at any time. Providing recommendations gives your profile more visibility and sets you up as an influential person. You're also doing something nice for someone else.

Asking for endorsements

Endorsements are a way for your connections to attest to your skills without having to write out a recommendation. They can respond to a prompt generated by LinkedIn asking if you're good at particular skills, they can respond to a request from you, or they can even offer an endorsement out of the goodness of their hearts.

The most popular way to receive endorsements is when LinkedIn prompts your connections to do so. For example, every now and then when you log into LinkedIn, a prompt appears at the top of your page listing several of your connections and asking you if those people are skilled in a particular topic. You can endorse by clicking *Yes* to answer the question, or click *X* or skip to not respond.



REMEMBER

Endorsements show others that you have the skill set to back up your profile. Make sure that the skills listed and endorsed on your profile are the best representation of you.

Adding skills to your profile

You can add endorsements so that your contacts know for which skills you want an endorsement. To add skills to your profile, follow these steps:

1. **On your profile page, scroll down to the Skills section.**

2. **Click the Plus (+) icon.**

A pop-up screen appears (see [Figure 1-8](#)).

3. **In the Skill text box, enter the skills you want to highlight.**

As you type, different skills will appear. Click the skills that best describe your expertise to automatically add them to your profile. Alternatively, if you see a Skill that interests you in the list of suggested skills underneath the text box, click on that Skill to add it.

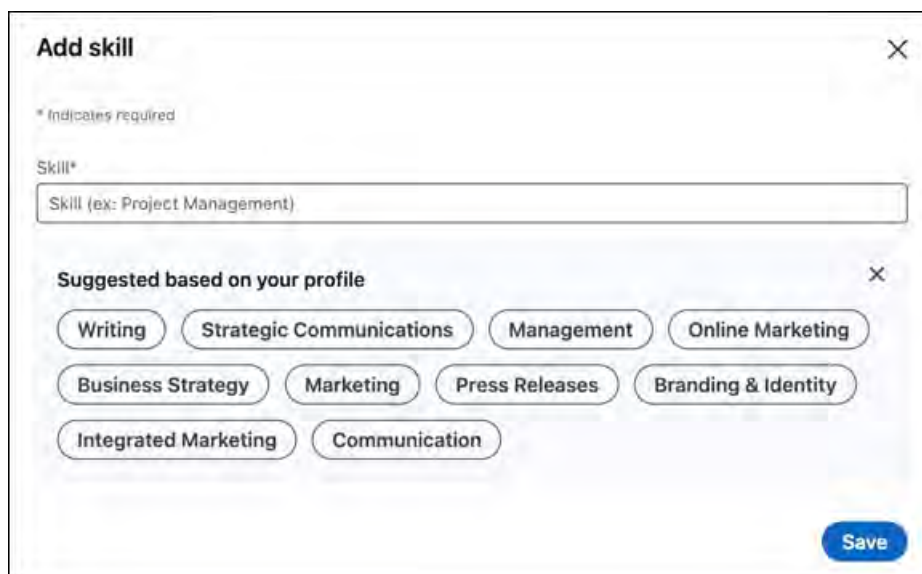


FIGURE 1-8: Adding skills to your profile shows the LinkedIn community your areas of expertise.

4. **In the next pop up, click the boxes next to the places where you used that skill and click Save when you're finished.**

You can check as many boxes as applicable.

5. **Repeat Steps 2 through 4 for each skill you want to add.**

Removing skills from your profile

It's good to show you're well rounded on your LinkedIn profile with a lot of skills and endorsements. Sometimes, though, LinkedIn will generate skills that aren't appropriate, but your friends may endorse them anyway. Fortunately, you can remove skills from your profile if you don't feel them to be a good fit, or if they aren't what you want to be known for.

To remove skills from your profile, follow these steps on the Skills & Endorsements Settings screen:

1. **In the Skills section, click the pencil icon to edit your skills.**

2. **Click the pencil icon next to the skills you want to remove.**
3. **Delete the skill on the bottom left of Skills box.**
4. **Click Delete to confirm the deletion or No Thanks if you've changed your mind.**

Reordering skills

You can also reorder your endorsements so that the most appropriate and important skills appear on top of your skills list, and the stuff you're not as great at appears at the bottom.

To reorder skills, follow these steps:

1. **Click the icon showing three dots on the top right of the Skills section and drag it to the desired location in the group of skills.**
2. **In the box that appears, click the icon showing three dots on the top right of one of the Skills you want to move and drag it to the desired location in the group of skills.**
3. **Repeat as necessary.**
4. **Your changes are saved automatically, so when you have your skills in the order you want, click the X on the top right of the box to exit.**

Opting out of endorsements

You may not even want to have endorsements on your LinkedIn profile. Although they're nice to have, they're optional.

To opt out of receiving endorsements, follow these steps:

1. **Click the pencil icon on the top right of the Skills section of your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **On the pop-up box that appears, click the icon showing three bars on the top right and select Endorsement Settings.**
3. **Decide if you want to be endorsed by toggling the button to green (yes) or gray (no).**
Two options appear: You can allow LinkedIn to suggest contacts to endorse them and/or for them to endorse you, again by toggling the button green or gray.
4. **Click Save.**

Using LinkedIn Messages

LinkedIn provides a way to send and receive private messages that you can access in your LinkedIn mailbox. You can send and receive private messages only with first-level connections. However, other levels of connections can choose to pay for one of the LinkedIn Premium accounts to use InMail, which start at \$29.99 per month as of this writing. So anyone can send you a message if they want to badly enough. Fortunately, you receive messages mostly from connections.



TIP

If a person has a Recruiter account or utilizes LinkedIn Sales Navigator, they can send you a message, even if you're not direct connections. You can adjust your Messages settings at any time under the Communications section on the Settings & Privacy menu.

Why would you want to send a personal message to a connection? Maybe you don't have that person's email address and need to get in touch. Or you might want to request an endorsement or recommendation, which you can do via private message. You can also reach out to someone from a group you participate in to further a discussion or ask to connect.

To send a LinkedIn message, follow these steps:

1. **At the top right of any LinkedIn Page, click Messaging (chat bubbles icon).**
2. **In the Messaging box on the right side, click the Compose a New Message button (paper and pencil icon).**
3. **In the text box at the top, type your connection's name.**
You can send a message to one person or multiple people at once.
4. **In the Write a Message field, enter your message.**
LinkedIn also lets you add photos, attach files, send gifs, or include emojis.
5. **Click Send.**



TIP

For a more in-depth look at using LinkedIn, check out *LinkedIn For Dummies*, 6th Edition, by Joel Elad (Wiley).

Chapter 2

Promoting Your Business with LinkedIn

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Using a LinkedIn Page
 - » Showcasing products with LinkedIn
 - » Putting together a LinkedIn group
-

LinkedIn isn't merely a social network for job seekers to get their resume to the right people. It's also a wonderful marketing tool for businesses. LinkedIn Pages enable you to connect with a different kind of audience — a more businesslike audience.

The people who network on LinkedIn are professionals — yes, some are looking for work but many are looking to meet and learn from other professionals. These same professionals are using LinkedIn also to research businesses because they want to work for or with the brand or they want to become a customer of the brand. You don't want to miss out on an important opportunity because you didn't start a company page on LinkedIn.

This chapter delves into some of the things you can do with a LinkedIn Page so that you can gain better brand visibility, highlight your products and services, grow your business, and drive traffic to your website and sales pages. It also talks about Showcase Pages and finally delves into using Groups to build a community.

Exploring the Benefits of a LinkedIn Page

A *LinkedIn Page* is different from a business page on Facebook or Pinterest, especially in the content being shared. Everything on LinkedIn is geared toward businesses and professionals, which presents a different atmosphere than other social media sites. You also have a unique opportunity to create specific pages that showcase your different products, services, events, and brands.

Why does your business need a LinkedIn Page? Here are a few reasons:

- » **Share job openings.** You can set up your LinkedIn Page so that it lists open positions with your business. In addition to viewing the listings, candidates can also learn more about your business from the information you put forth on your company page.
- » **Use Showcase Pages.** You can create special pages for products, services, and events. These Showcase Pages enable you to share in-depth information and engage with a target audience.
- » **Share content.** Share blog posts, articles, and more with the LinkedIn community.
- » **Share news.** You can share news — for example, product launches — with your

LinkedIn community through your company page.

- » **Increase your searchability.** Increase your business's visibility on both LinkedIn and the search engines.
- » **Engage with your community.** Use your company page to chat with your followers.
- » **Increase opportunities for your team to network.** People who list your business as their place of employment on their LinkedIn profiles will also show up on your company page as working for your brand, which gives them more opportunities to network.

Creating a LinkedIn Page

A LinkedIn Page gives your brand a strong presence on an important business and career-oriented social network. As such, you don't want to just slap together any old page and be done with it. Put time and care into your page — it's well worth the effort.

Here are some tips and best practices for your LinkedIn Page:

- » **Choose a background image that represents your brand.** Just as with Facebook and X, your LinkedIn Page encourages the use of a large cover image, in addition to a smaller profile shot, such as a logo. Choose an eye-catching background image that shows off your company in the best possible light.
- » **Take advantage of the career page.** If you have job openings in your company, you can highlight them on your career page. Those jobs have the potential to appear in front of many more qualified professionals than if you simply took out an ad. Your page will show up in a job search on LinkedIn, adding even more brand visibility.
- » **Optimize your page for search.** Use relevant keywords to attract searches within and outside LinkedIn.
- » **Check your company page every day.** Engage with your community on a daily basis. Posting new content each day ensures traffic every day, as well.
- » **Host an event.** Whenever your company is having an event, whether it's an in-person event like a sale, an open house, or an online event such as a webinar or flash sale, take advantage of LinkedIn's Events feature to let your network know all the details.
- » **Use images and video.** Mix up your content to keep interest going on your page.
- » **Stay on topic.** Make sure to share content relevant to your brand.



TIP Before setting up your LinkedIn Page, look around to see how other brands are using LinkedIn. You may walk away with some good ideas for your own page, as well as see how your competitors are interacting with the community.

Setting up your brand's profile

A company page on LinkedIn is an important marketing tool. Because people will be researching your brand and interacting with you online, you definitely want to take advantage

of the opportunity to connect with others on LinkedIn.



WARNING You have to have an existing personal LinkedIn account to create a company page. If you make up a fake account and LinkedIn suspects you're using a fake account, you receive notification and your page may become unpublished.

It doesn't take much time to set up a LinkedIn Page. Just follow these steps:

1. **Select the For Business icon (a square made up of little boxes), located on the top right of any LinkedIn Page.**
2. **From the drop-down list that appears, select Create a Company Page.**
3. **Choose a page type (see [Figure 2-1](#)). Your options are Company, Showcase Page (discussed in a later section), and Educational Institution. Select Company.**
The company details page appears.
4. **Fill in your company name, select a LinkedIn URL, and add your website and other pertinent business information in the appropriate text boxes, as shown in [Figure 2-2](#).**
You can also upload your logo and include a tagline at this time. As you're adding in your company information, you can see a preview of your page on the right side.



TIP The LinkedIn URL is automatically filled in based on your company name, but I recommend shortening it, if possible. For example, for a company called "Michelle's Cupcake Bakery," you may want to shorten it to "MichellesCupcakes" to make it easier to remember.

5. **Select the I Verify That I Am the Official Representative of This Organization... checkbox.**
6. **Click Create Page.**

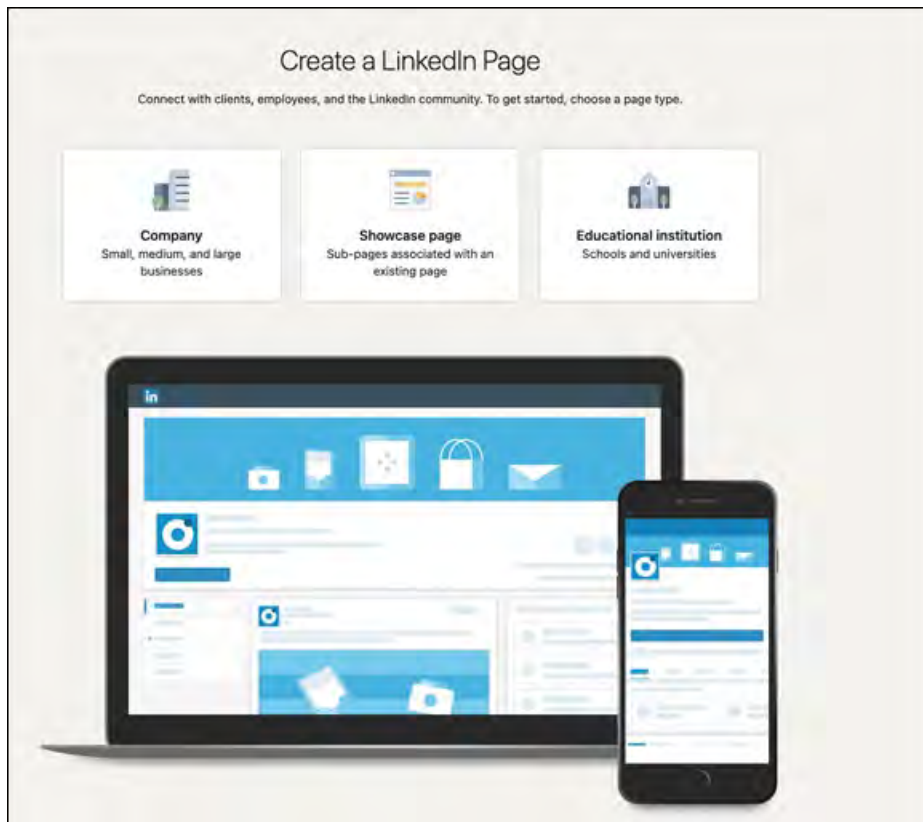


FIGURE 2-1: Select your page type.

The image shows the 'Let's get started with a few details about your company' form on LinkedIn. The form includes the following fields and sections:

- Name***: A text input field with a placeholder 'Add your organization's name'.
- LinkedIn.com/company***: A text input field with a placeholder 'Add your unique LinkedIn address'.
- Learn more about the Page Public URL**: A link to learn more.
- Website**: A text input field with a placeholder 'Begin with http://, https:// or www.'.
- Industry***: A dropdown menu with 'ex. Information Services' selected.
- Organization size***: A dropdown menu with 'Select size'.
- Organization type***: A dropdown menu with 'Select type'.
- Logo**: A section with a 'Choose file' button and a note 'Upload to our system'.
- Tagline**: A text input field with a placeholder 'ex. An information services firm helping small businesses succeed.' and a note 'Use your tagline to briefly describe what your organization does. This can be copyrighted.'
- Page preview**: A section showing a mockup of the page with the company name, tagline, and industry.
- + Follow**: A button to follow the page.
- Footer**: A checkbox for 'I verify that I am an authorized representative of this organization and have the right to act on its behalf in the creation and management of this page. The organization and I agree to the additional terms for Pages.' and a link to 'Read the LinkedIn Pages Terms'.

FIGURE 2-2: Use your company information to set up your LinkedIn Page profile.

Optimizing your company page

Once you create your page, you're faced with a lonely looking page, as you can see in [Figure 2-3](#). It's time to add some additional content and fill it out. After all, your page is live for the world to see, and you don't want to keep it empty for too long.

Uploading a cover photo

The same reasons it's important to have a cover photo for your personal LinkedIn profile also apply to having one for your business page.

To upload a cover photo, perform the following steps:

1. **Click the Pencil icon that appears in the top right of the cover shot area and select either Upload a Photo or choose one to support a cause.**
2. **In the File pop-up window that appears, select the photo you want to use and click Open.**
3. **Drag your cover photo to properly position it within the cover photo area.**
You can also click Change Image to remove the photo, allowing you to start the upload process over.
4. **Click Apply to save your photo.**

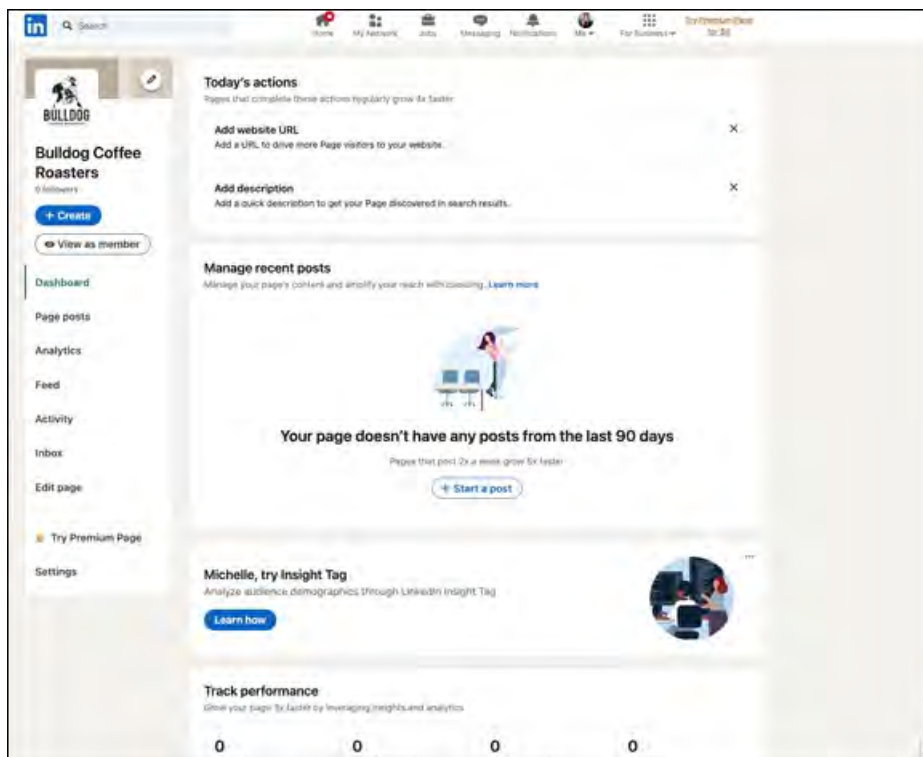


FIGURE 2-3: Your blank slate of a company page.

Writing a company description

The company description area of your LinkedIn business page is prime real estate for your keywords. It's also where you can describe your business a little bit more to give people an

idea about what you do and the passion you have for doing it!

To add a company description, follow these steps:

1. **Click the Edit Page button that appears in the left menu.**

The Edit pop-up box shown in [Figure 2-4](#) appears.

2. **Click Overview in the left menu and in the Description box, type an overview of your company and services.**

You have 2,000 characters to work with, so make them count!

3. **Click Save when you're finished.**



REMEMBER Be sure to use your primary keywords at the beginning of your company description to ensure they quickly catch the eye of your audience!

FIGURE 2-4: Edit your company information here.



TIP Click through the other options under the Edit Page menu and fill out the sections that apply to your business. Some may not, so don't worry. Just add as much information as you can to help build out your company page and make it easier for others to find (and follow!) you.

Adding and removing administrators

You may want to appoint an administrator or two for your LinkedIn Page. Most businesses let

the marketing or social media department handle LinkedIn updates.

To add an administrator, follow these steps:

1. **On your company page, click Settings on the bottom left of the page and select the Manage Admins option.**

Your company's Manage Admins page appears.

2. **In the Designated Admins section, type the name of the person who will be handling the company page.**

If you want to remove someone as an administrator, click Remove Admin to the right of the person's information in the Designated Admins section.

3. **Click the radio button next to the permissions level you want this person to have.**

Your choices are Super Admin (full permissions), Content Admin (posting and managing content only), or Analyst (can only access page analytics).

4. **Click Save located on the bottom right of the box.**

Sharing your brand's content

Of course, you shouldn't have a company page and not do anything with it. Just like you would on Facebook, X, and Instagram, you should share content on LinkedIn.

Some types of content that do well on LinkedIn include the following:

- » **Company news:** Share new hires, product launches, event announcements, promotions, and anything of note happening with your company.
- » **Industry news:** Share news of interest or related to your niche.
- » **How-to's and tutorials:** Show how to use your product or service or offer tips for others in your industry.
- » **Business-oriented images and videos:** Don't forget to add visual elements to your company page.
- » **Upcoming events:** Whether you're hosting the event or attending as a sponsor or exhibitor, it's great to share the information to let your network know.
- » **Funny GIFs or memes:** Unless your business is of that nature, it's a good idea to stay away from the usual hot-button issues such as religion or politics. It's difficult to determine what is going to offend someone these days, so when in doubt, don't post it. But, for example, if it's a funny image that quotes a well-known comedy movie such as "The Office," then chances are others on this professional network will find it entertaining!
- » **Blog posts and articles:** If your business has a blog, share posts on LinkedIn. Also, share related content from other brands.



WARNING Be mindful of how often you post. If you batter your LinkedIn community with a constant barrage of updates, they'll consider you too spammy to follow. Most brands update one to three times per day at most, with updates spaced out several hours apart.

[Chapter 3](#) of this minibook discusses sharing content on LinkedIn in more detail.

Selling and Promoting with LinkedIn Product and Showcase Pages

LinkedIn provides you with the perfect opportunity to highlight products and services with Showcase Pages. *Showcase Pages* (see [Figure 2-5](#)) are standalone pages that you can use to announce product launches, websites, events, and any kind of business unit, division, product, service, or opportunity. They look and have most functionality of business pages and they show up on the right side of your business page within a box titled *Affiliated Pages*.

Basically, a showcase page is an additional LinkedIn business page where you can engage your community and share a particular aspect of your business. For example, if your company has several smaller brands, you can use a company page as your main page with the smaller brands highlighted in the Showcase Pages, like Wiley does with their For Dummies: Custom Solutions brand shown in [Figure 2-5](#).

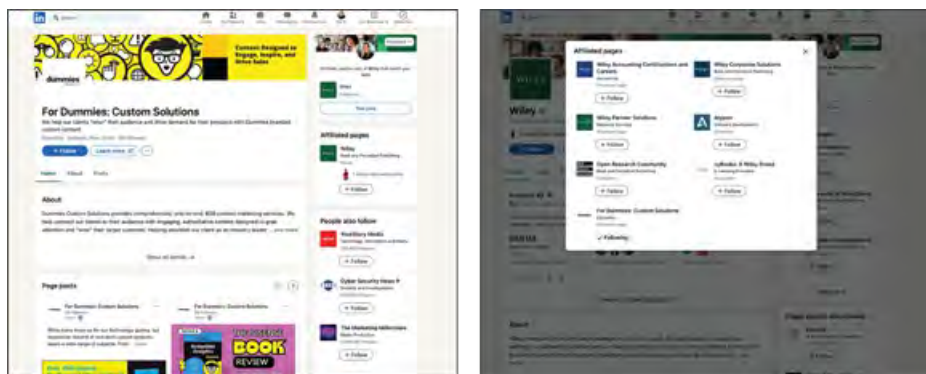


FIGURE 2-5: The Showcase Page for For Dummies: Custom Solutions (left) and its listing on an affiliate page as a division of Wiley (right).

Highlighting your products and services

People enter Showcase Pages through the right sidebar of your company page, so people can see at a glance what's being showcased whenever they visit any of your pages. Best of all, people can follow the pages that interest them without having to follow all pages.

What are the benefits of Showcase Pages? Use them to do the following:

- » **Share in-depth information about your brand.** Rather than a brief status update, Showcase Pages enable you to share any and all necessary information with your LinkedIn community.

- » **Share with a target audience.** Because people follow only the Showcase Pages that interest them, you're interacting with people who truly want to be there. The audience is more targeted, and you don't have to sell as much on your company page.
- » **Answer questions and receive feedback regarding the showcased element of your business.** When people have questions regarding your product or service, they can ask on the appropriate Showcase Page. Talking with you or your team can increase their confidence with the brand, making them more likely to buy. Moreover, you can use this opportunity to receive valuable feedback.
- » **Increase engagement.** Multiple Showcase Pages mean multiple opportunities for having a conversation with your now well-informed LinkedIn community.



TIP You can create 25 Showcase Pages for each company page. And you can delete a Showcase Page if you need to make room for another. If your brand has a lot of things going on, choose the most important items to highlight. You might want to save one or two pages for new product launches or events, instead of using all 25 at once.

Utilizing Showcase Pages

Only a company page administrator can create Showcase Pages. Before you begin, you need to know the following:

- » The name of the Showcase Page
- » The URL you want to use for the Showcase Page
- » A short and sweet tagline — up to 120 characters
- » The industry your page falls under

You also need to have a logo for your Showcase Page, preferably one highlighting the showcased item or service.

To create a Showcase Page, just follow these steps:

1. **Select the For Business icon (a square made up of little boxes), located on the top right of any LinkedIn Page.**
2. **From the drop-down list that appears, select Create a Company Page.**
3. **Choose a page type (see [Figure 2-1](#)). Your options are Company, Showcase Page, and Educational Institution. Select Showcase Page.**
The details page appears.
4. **Enter the name of the company page the Showcase Page will be associated with.**
When you start typing the name of your company page, the available options will appear beneath the box. Select your company page.
5. **Enter the name of the Showcase Page.**

This would be the company division, product line, specific service, and so on.

6. Create a related URL.

Make sure it's relevant to the Showcase Page. For example, if your business is a coffee roaster, then you may want to highlight all the different locations you source your beans from. In that case your URL could be something like *global-sourcing-partners*.

7. Upload a logo.

This could be your company logo customized for what's being showcased. For example, it could be a different color, or a different shape.

8. Type in the page's tagline.

You have 120 characters to briefly describe what your organization does.

9. Select the I Verify That I Am the Official Representative of This Organization... checkbox.

10. Click Create Page.

Your LinkedIn Showcase Page will be listed in the Affiliated Pages section of your main business page.



TIP Most of the same features you have to take advantage of on normal LinkedIn Pages (content-posting capabilities, analytics, and so on) are available on Showcase Pages.

LinkedIn used to be a social network strictly for making professional connections. Now it provides you with some wonderful tools to promote your business and drive sales. Don't miss this opportunity to reach a whole new audience.

Setting up a Product Page

Product Pages are a sub-page type whose main purpose is to give a deeper dive into a specific product of a company. A Product Page has spots to spotlight featured customers, ratings, and reviews, as well as calls to action to entice people to contact you about the product. Once a Product Page (or Pages) are added to a company page, a new *Products* tab shows up on the company's page (see [Figure 2-6](#)).

One unique feature of Product Pages is that they have to be reviewed and approved by the team at LinkedIn. The purpose behind this step is to build a trusted community, so those who go searching for quality products can be confident that what they're seeing on LinkedIn is the real deal.

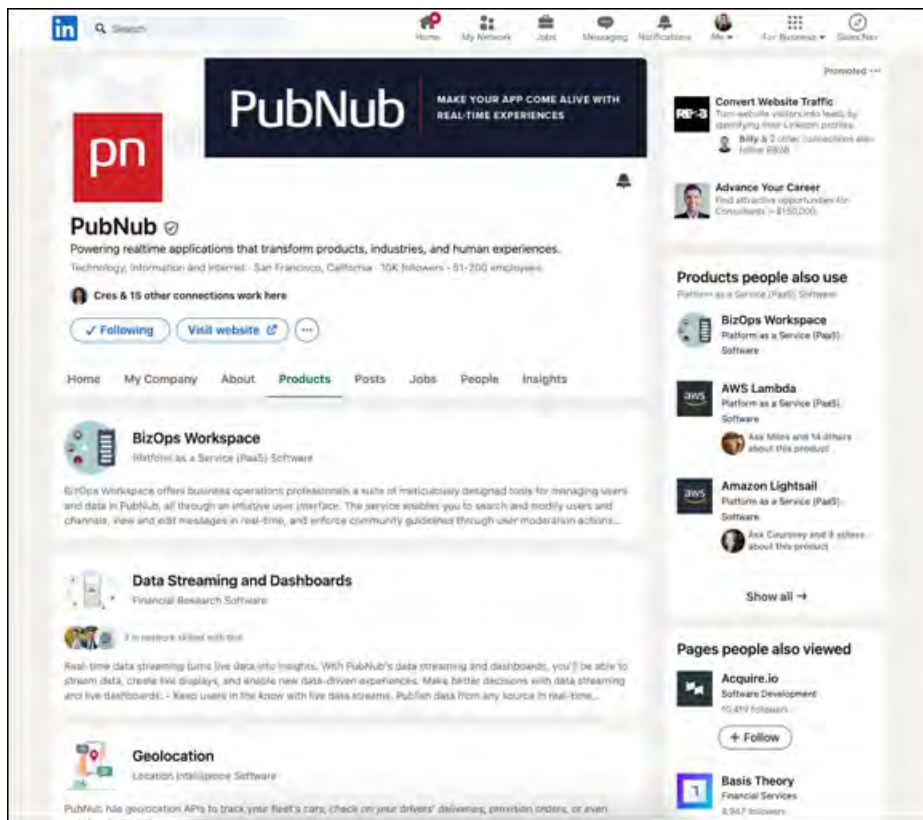


FIGURE 2-6: The list of a company's Product Pages under the Products tab.

Note: At the time of this writing, LinkedIn Product Pages are only available to those businesses in the following types of industries: business-to-business (B2B) software, computer hardware, financial services, insurance, education, healthcare, and pharmaceutical.

How do you know if a Product Page is right for your company? Well, they work best for companies that sell products business-to-business (B2B). For example, PubNub, the company shown in [Figure 2-6](#), sells a software development platform to companies who have their own apps. They use a LinkedIn Product Page to highlight different product add-ons that make their customers' lives easier.

To create a Product Page, follow these steps:

1. **Navigate to your LinkedIn business page and click the blue Create button on the left side under your logo image; select Add a Product from the menu that appears.**
2. **Click the corresponding radio button to identify if the product has the same name as your business or if it has a different name, and click Next and then Next again.**
3. **Type in your product name.**
You have 100 characters to work with.
4. **On the next screen, make your way down the page, adding a product category, website link, pricing overview, intended audience, product highlights, media (images and video), and more.**

You may not have all the information available, but add as much as you can. The more

information you have, the more likely your page will be approved for publication by LinkedIn.

5. **Once you've entered sufficient information, click the Submit for Review button at the top of the page.**

The button remains grayed out until you have filled out most of the sections.

That's it! Now it's just a waiting game until your page gets approved (or denied). As of now, you don't get any notification that your page has been approved, so make a note to check occasionally to see if it's live. They're considerably backed up ... I've had pages that have taken over 3(!) months to get approved, so be patient!

Benefiting from LinkedIn Groups

A LinkedIn group is much different than a LinkedIn Page or an individual profile. A group is less about your brand and more about growing a community and engaging people about a specific topic or niche. Creating a group doesn't promote your business in an obvious way, nor does it give you a place to sell — however, a group can be a wonderful place to learn more about your online community and your niche, which can help with the sales process.

LinkedIn groups provide you with a way to extend your brand's reach without selling. When you spend time with your online community, you gain their trust, and trust leads to sales. This chapter talk about how to rock a LinkedIn group so that it's the place everyone wants to be.

Exploring groups

LinkedIn *groups* are like forums where the members of your group can ask and answer questions and share ideas. You can create up to 5 groups a day and have up to 3 million members in your LinkedIn group, so it gives you an opportunity to reach many people.

The benefits of a LinkedIn group abound:

- » **Establish expertise.** By participating in discussions, you're showing off your knowledge.
- » **Learn about the people who are interested in your brand or niche.** Having ongoing discussions outside of your company page gives you an opportunity to learn about the people who are part of your online community.
- » **Understand what questions your community might have.** Knowing what people have questions about can help you shape your content, as well as your products and services.
- » **Drive traffic to your website and sales pages.** By putting a link to your website in the group description, you're driving traffic to your interests.
- » **Create subgroups.** LinkedIn offers the capability for groups to break off into subgroups. You can use this feature to focus on specific topics without having those topics dominate the entire group.
- » **Make new connections and expand your reach.** The people who participate in groups may want to connect with you — and vice versa.

- » **Hold in-depth discussions.** A group enables you to delve deeply into topics, instead of simply putting a quick update on your company page.

Growing a community with a LinkedIn group

Business people like to network. They want to have career-related discussions with others and ask questions while also establishing their own expertise and making new connections. By participating in a LinkedIn group, they're helping to make that happen.

The following sections discuss how to set up a LinkedIn group, as well as how to set guidelines and restrictions for it.

Setting up a LinkedIn group

You can set up your LinkedIn group in a matter of minutes. Follow these steps to create your group:

1. **At the top of any LinkedIn Page, click the For Business icon and then select Groups from the left side of the drop-down list that appears.**

Your personal Group page appears.

2. **Click the Create Group button on the top right.**

3. **Fill in all necessary information about your group, including group name, description, and group rules.**

Be as descriptive as possible about the purpose of the group so you have the right type of networking happening in the group.

4. **(Optional) Upload a logo or photo.**

You can also upload a cover image just like you can with LinkedIn Pages and personal profiles.

5. **Select the Private box if you want your LinkedIn group to be unlisted.**

Otherwise, your group will be open to the public and will be discoverable in searches.

6. **In the Permissions section, select either the option of Allow Current Members to Invite People or Require New Post Moderation by Admins.**

7. **Click the blue Create button.**

Congratulations! You now have your very own LinkedIn group.

You're now ready to set up and manage your group. Take some time to familiarize yourself with the available management tools and group settings.

Choosing a public or private group

LinkedIn offers two options for types of groups. In a *public group*:

- » Members can invite others to join the group.
- » Discussions show up in search engine results.

In a *private group*:

- » Discussions don't show up in search engine searches.
- » Only members can view discussions.
- » Only administrators can invite and approve new members.
- » The group is indicated by a padlock icon.

Keep in mind that having a public group can be a good thing because it's more visible and more people can see brand interaction. The downside is that some people might shy away from participating in a public group.

You can share conversations that you have with public groups with your other online communities. For example, if your group is having an interesting discussion, you can post a link to it on your Facebook page and invite your community to join the discussion. This link can lead to additional membership. With a private group, you're less likely to see additional membership because anyone who isn't a member can't access the link.

Both public and private groups have their benefits, and some top online brands have no problem managing either.



TIP

Having a private group and the ability to control membership can help reduce spam and keep out trolls. But it could also mean that the group doesn't grow. Set up your group so that you approve all new members regardless of how you invited them.

To edit your LinkedIn group settings so that your group is standard or unlisted, follow these steps:

1. **While in the group, select Edit Group, located on the left side of the group page.**
You see a menu in the left sidebar with all your group administration options.
2. **Scroll down to the Discoverability section.**
3. **Select either the Listed or Unlisted option.**
4. **Click Save.**

Establishing group guidelines

Don't overlook your group rules (see [Figure 2-7](#)), which set some guidelines for members so they know what's expected and what behavior won't be tolerated. For example, LinkedIn groups can be a hotbed of spam if not moderated properly. Members always want to share links to their blog posts and articles, and this can be a turnoff to other members because your group will soon resemble a spammy link farm.

So, in your group rules, you can let everyone know where you stand on allowing members to post links.

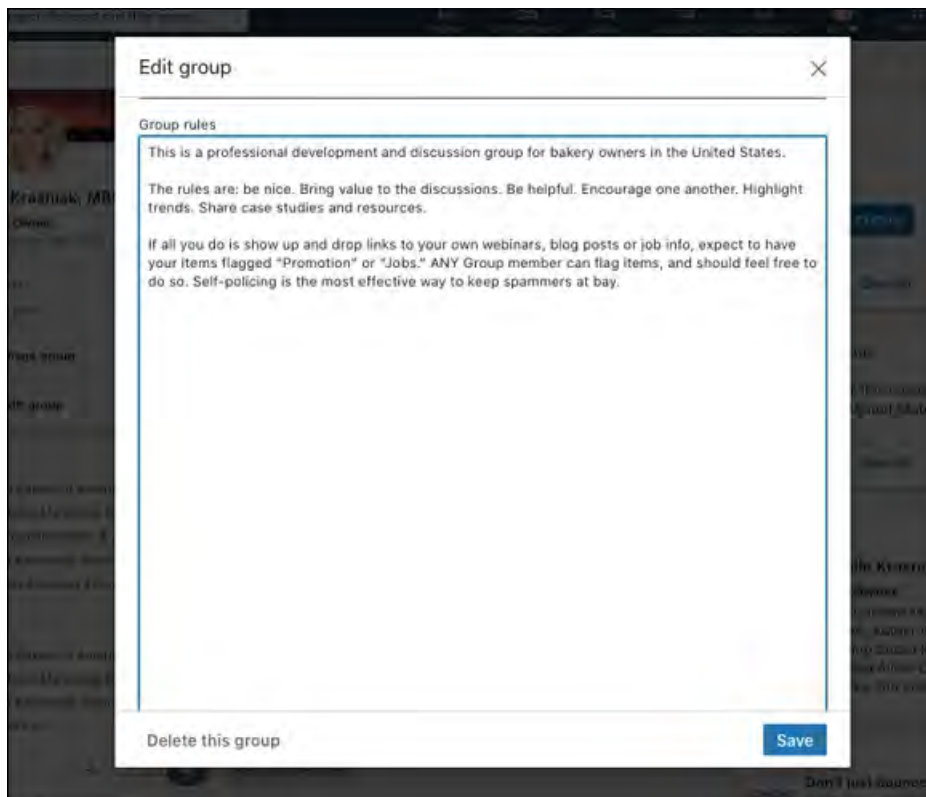


FIGURE 2-7: Group rules help to make a positive experience for everyone.

You can set up your group rules by clicking the Edit Group function in the left sidebar of your LinkedIn group. Type your rules and click Save. **Note:** You'll need to access your group management page to edit group rules.

You might also set a few gentle guidelines for how members treat each other. For example, if you'd prefer not to have members swearing in their comments, you can mention this restriction in your group rules.



TIP If you're already a part of some existing LinkedIn groups, read their group rules for ideas about what to include in your own group rules. If you're not a member of any groups, check out a few open groups to see how they handle group rules.

Growing your group

After you create a group, you need members. You can increase your membership by inviting connections or approving requests to join.

Inviting others to join your group

To invite other LinkedIn members to join your group, follow these steps:

1. **At the top of any LinkedIn Page, click on the For Business icon and then select Groups from the drop-down list that appears.**

The Your Groups page opens, displaying a menu of groups you belong to or own.

2. Select your group's name.

The group's page appears.

3. Select Manage Group, located on the left side.

4. Click the Invited link on the left of the page and click the blue Invite Connections button.

A list of your connections appears, as shown in [Figure 2-8](#).

5. Check the box to the left of any connection that you want to invite to your group.

Alternatively, you can enter the person's name in the search box or filter your connections using the drop-down filters underneath the search box.



TIP Take care in selecting connections to invite to your LinkedIn group. Not everyone you're connected to will want to join your group; select only those you feel will have an interest.

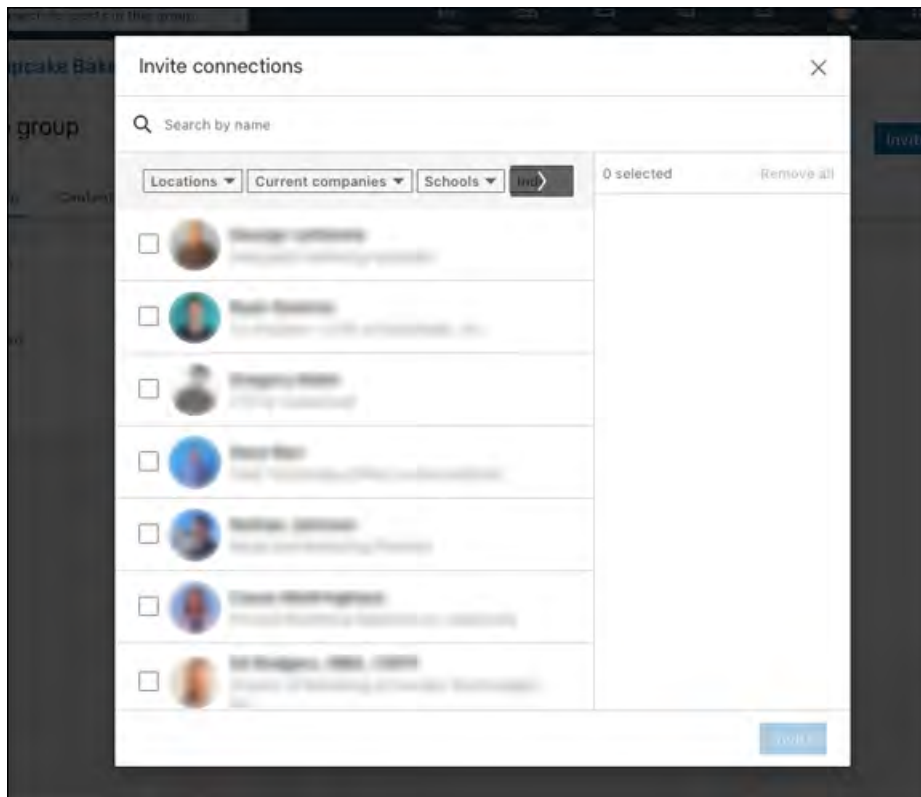


FIGURE 2-8: Select the connections you want to invite to your group.

6. Click Invite.

The invited people will see a notification at the top right of their LinkedIn Page, indicating an invitation. If their email is set up to send LinkedIn notifications, they will

also receive an email invitation.

Everyone you invite through a LinkedIn invitation is preapproved to join your group. No further approval is necessary for these connections.

Approving or preapproving group members

In addition to receiving an invitation, potential group members can find your group by doing a search on LinkedIn for groups in a particular topic. You can set up your group for auto join, where group members don't need approval to join the group. However, this setting opens the door for spammers and abuse.

You can and should set up your group so that individual membership has to be approved, which helps you keep out spammers and fake accounts. For example, if a profile has only vague information, few or no connections, or no headshot, it may be a fake account, and you can elect not to allow that person in the group.

To edit your group settings so that members can join automatically or have to request to join, follow these steps:

1. **While in your group, select Edit Group.**
2. **In the Permissions section, check or uncheck the box next to *Allow Members to Invite their Connections***
3. **Scroll to the bottom and select Save.**



TIP Don't be afraid to share your group on your other social channels. Many people with whom you're not connected via LinkedIn might follow you on another social network. If they follow you on Facebook or X or subscribe to your newsletter, they might be interested in joining your LinkedIn group as well.

Moderating your LinkedIn group

Have at least one person in place to manage your LinkedIn group. Without someone in charge, anarchy can ensue. Managers can make sure that your community members are treating each other respectfully and that no one is spamming with links and sales pitches.

Before you appoint someone to watch over your LinkedIn group, understand the roles available for managing LinkedIn groups:

- » **Owner:** The person who created the group. Controls moderators, membership, and all aspects of group administration. Ownership can be transferred if the group owner is moving on. Full list of permissions:
 - Add more group owners and group managers.
 - Delete a group.
 - Manage the group membership.

- Edit group information and settings.
- Remove or block other group owners or members.
- Moderate group content.
- Delete posts and comments created by other owners/managers.
- Recommend group posts.

» **Manager:** A group can have up to 20 managers. Group managers can:

- Approve or deny requests to join the group.
- Recommend group posts.
- Pin or unpin posts.
- Review and approve group posts.
- Moderate group content.
- Invite connections to join the group.

Smaller groups might not require heavy moderation, but if your group has thousands of members, you might want to appoint at least a couple of people in manager roles so that nothing falls through the cracks.



REMEMBER For someone to become a manager, they must already be a member of the group.

To appoint a manager, follow these steps:

1. **While in your group, select the Manage Group option on the left side.**
2. **Locate the member you want to promote to be a group manager.**
You can scroll through all your members, search for the member using the search box, or filter using the filter options.
3. **Click the three dots to the right of the member's name and select Make Owner or Make Manager.**
4. **Click Confirm.**

The user receives a message informing them they've been made a group manager.

Pinning posts

To highlight a community discussion, you can pin it to the top of the posts, so it always stays visible to the rest of the group. This is a nice way to single out interesting discussion topics and bring attention to individual community members.

To pin a discussion, click the Pin This Post button at the top right corner of the post you're highlighting, and click the blue Pin button on the pop-up box to confirm your selection. To unpin the post, simply click the gray Unpin button on the top right of the pinned post.

Keep in mind that this chapter touches on the basics of a LinkedIn group. You can do so much more with LinkedIn groups, such as creating subgroups for different topics. For information on using LinkedIn Pages, Showcase Pages, and Groups For Business, see *LinkedIn For Dummies*, 6th Edition, by Joe Elad (Wiley).

Chapter 3

Using LinkedIn as a Content Platform

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Blogging with LinkedIn
 - » Sharing your LinkedIn content across platforms
 - » Selecting the best content to share on your Page
-

LinkedIn offers members the opportunity to showcase their expertise by publishing long-form content on the LinkedIn platform. Even if you have a blog or a website where you share content, you might still want to consider writing on LinkedIn, at least occasionally.

Having a post on LinkedIn enables you to reach a new, more professional social network — and what could be a whole new audience.

This chapter discusses the benefits of using LinkedIn as a content platform, plus a few of the basics for posting and promoting your content.

Blogging on LinkedIn

With all the content platforms available, why publish on LinkedIn when you can use your own blog or website, keeping all the traffic to yourself? Although you don't receive direct traffic to your website when you publish to LinkedIn, it does provide you the capability to drive traffic. If you share informative content, people will want to learn more and look up your website, blog, and other projects.



TIP You can only publish long-form content in the form of an *article* on your personal LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn Pages and Showcase Pages only allow for short-form (about 700 characters) content. I refer to content posted on LinkedIn Pages and Showcase Pages as *posts*.

Some of the benefits of using LinkedIn as a content platform are

- » **Your articles appear on your profile.** When you publish an article, it's listed on your professional profile. Therefore, anyone who views your profile may also click through to read your content.
- » **Your articles can be seen by your entire professional network on LinkedIn.** The bigger your network, the more people can potentially view your content.
- » **People with whom you're not connected can see your articles, leading to new connections.** If a connection of yours engages with your content in some way (liking it,

commenting on it, and so on), then that activity shows up in their news feed, meaning their connections will see it.

- » **If you don't already have a blog, you can use the LinkedIn platform.** Everything is already set up for you, and it's free.
- » **LinkedIn members can follow your content without having to follow you or be connected with you.**
- » **You increase the chances for engagement with other professionals.** Readers can comment or like your posts.

Creating your first post

You can create articles from your LinkedIn home page. Follow these steps:

1. **At the top left of any LinkedIn Page, click the LinkedIn icon.**

Your LinkedIn home page appears. This page includes updates from connections and a space for you to add your own updates, as shown in [Figure 3-1](#).

2. **At the top of the page, click Write Article.**

A blogging dashboard like the one shown in [Figure 3-2](#) appears.

3. **In the Title area, fill in your title.**

4. **In the Write Here area, write or paste content.**

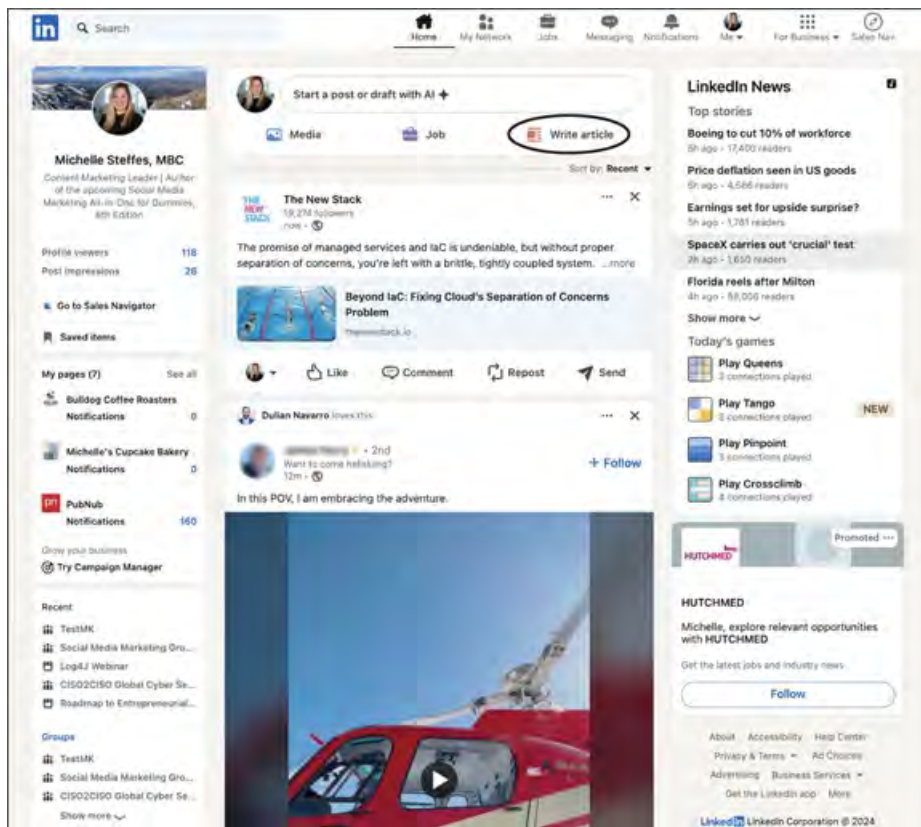


FIGURE 3-1: Access your LinkedIn content dashboard from your home page.

You can use the formatting buttons as needed. Don't forget to use your keywords!



TIP

Add photos or videos to make your content more dynamic and interesting.

5. Add a cover image to draw people into your content.

The image you use should relate back to the content you're writing about.

6. (Optional) Click the Manage button on the top right to view SEO settings (under Settings), view your existing drafts, and more.

7. Click Next, located at the top right of the page next to the Manage button.

You'll get a pop-up where you can compose a LinkedIn post announcing your article. Once you write a competing intro for it, click Publish or click the clock icon to schedule it for a later day or time.

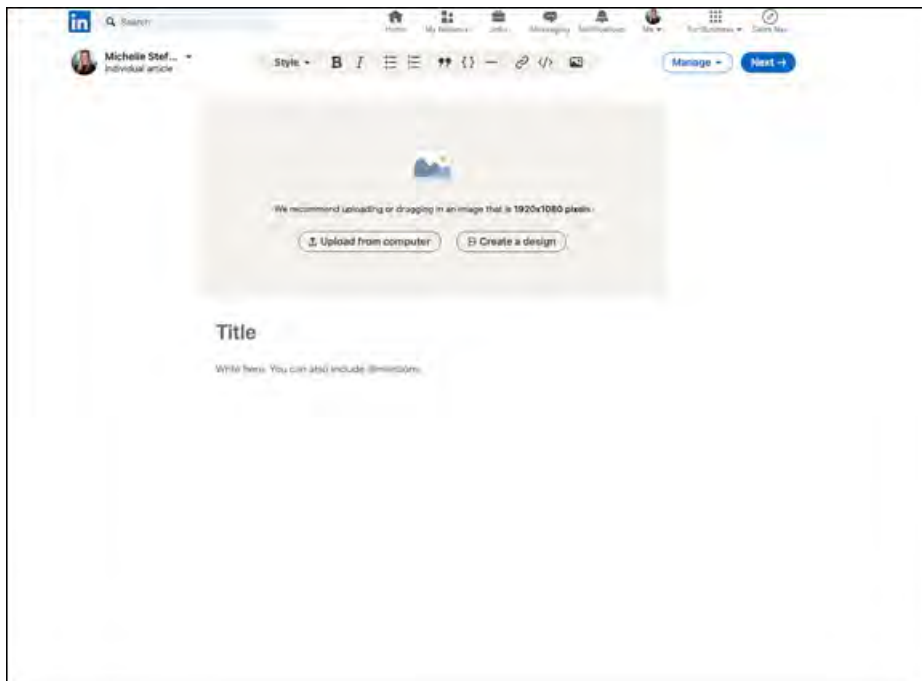


FIGURE 3-2: Start writing your post in the LinkedIn blogging dashboard.



TIP

Proofread! Giving your post one last read-through and format check before publishing ensures that you have no spelling, grammatical, or formatting errors; those mistakes can make you look unprofessional. LinkedIn also has the option to share the draft with someone else to get feedback. Just click on the Publishing Menu link on the left side of the formatting bar.

Writing in a professional voice

Because LinkedIn is considered a platform for professional, career-oriented people, you have to write in the proper tone. Although you can still use a casual blogging style, do be mindful of your words and topics.

What follows are some tips and best practices for writing in a professional voice and successful blogging on LinkedIn:

- » **Stay in your area of expertise.** Stick with topics you know well so that you can establish yourself as an expert. If you talk about things you're unsure of, someone may comment to prove you wrong, which can make readers lose faith in your expertise.
- » **Solve problems and answer questions.** What do people want to know about your industry and what you do? Make sure your content serves a purpose. Readers like posts that teach and guide.
- » **Give advice to others starting out in your profession.** Young professionals are reading your posts on LinkedIn. What can you tell them that you wish you knew when you were just starting out?
- » **Brevity counts.** Word count should fall between 500 and 800 words. Anything more than that, and people begin to lose interest.
- » **Respectfully disagree.** If you're writing to disagree with another blogger or writer, be respectful in your disagreement. Make your points without finger-pointing, name-calling, or accusation.
- » **Respond to comments.** If readers ask questions, share tips, or add to your discussion, be sure to respond. If they know you're likely to respond, and they feel as if their opinion matters, they're more likely to become regular readers and even share your content.
- » **Link thoughtfully.** Add links as needed, but only if they add to the discussion. Don't write a post that contains nothing but links.
- » **Know your demographic.** Understand whom you're writing for. You may have to do a little research and learn more about your connections, the people who visit your LinkedIn company page, or those who use your product or service.
- » **Think carefully about your headline.** Try to avoid overly inflated headlines. Keep them brief and professional. If it looks like it belongs to a tabloid, you're on the wrong platform.
- » **Use rich media.** Don't forget to add a visual element to your posts. LinkedIn enables you to use images, as well as embed videos from YouTube and presentations from sites like SlideShare and Prezi.



TIP

If you're still not sure about whether to write on LinkedIn's platform, take some time to look at some other blog posts there. Seeing how well it works for other professionals may inspire you to create some content. At the very least, try one post to test the waters.

Promoting Your LinkedIn Articles

Almost every content platform offers a way to share your newly created content with others, and LinkedIn is no different. In fact, in addition to the article being published on your profile, it gives you the option to share your article on LinkedIn by creating a unique URL that will take people directly to the published article.

To share an article, follow these steps:

1. **Before you publish your article on LinkedIn, click the Manage button on the top right of the compose window and choose Settings.**

A window appears showing several options.

2. **In the Article URL section at the top, click the Create URL button.**
The button will be clickable only if you've already typed an article title.
3. **Click the Copy button to copy the URL to your computer's clipboard ([Figure 3-3](#)).**
4. **Click the blue Save button to exit the window.**

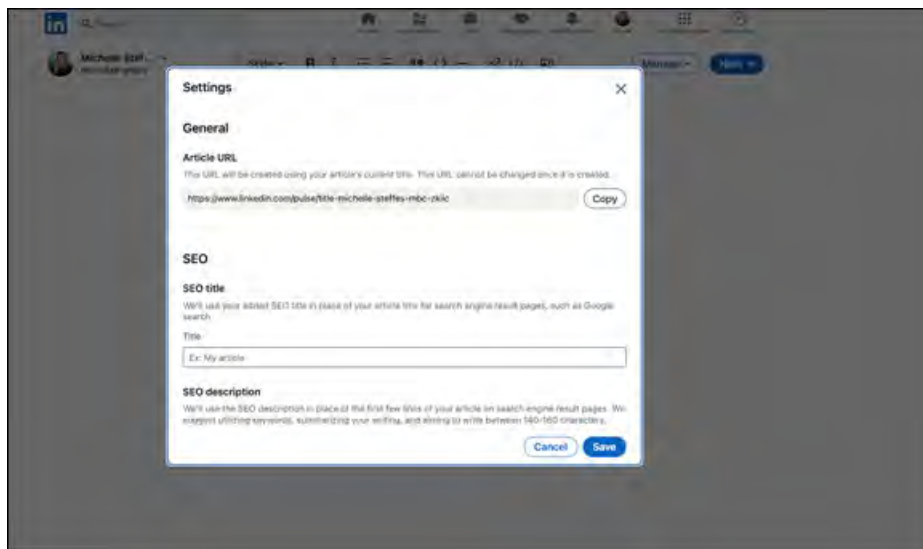


FIGURE 3-3: LinkedIn allows you to share your articles in a variety of places with a custom URL.



TIP Create a spreadsheet tracker where you keep all your LinkedIn article URLs in one place for future reposting. Make sure you include things like the article title, when it was originally posted, social networking sites where it's been shared, and the dates of any updates (if applicable).

Creating content on LinkedIn is another way to tell your brand's story, share tips and news regarding your industry, and increase your personal and professional brand visibility. The best part is that your posts have the potential to be seen by a vast professional community. How could you not take advantage of the opportunity?

Posting Content on LinkedIn Pages

Even though you can't write long-form content directly on your LinkedIn Page and Showcase Page, you can (and should!) be posting compelling and engaging content regularly in order to build your audience, brand, and thought leadership.

Deciding on the content to post

So, what kind of content should you post, you ask? Great question! As long as you keep it relevant and professional, the sky's the limit. Here are some examples:

- » **Infographics:** People love visual content and if you combine visuals with facts and figures, you're sure to catch your audience's attention (see [Figure 3-4](#)).
- » **Videos:** Videos also do well, provided that they're short (try to keep them under two minutes). You can do a behind-the-scenes look at your office or share a video from a recent industry event you attended.



FIGURE 3-4: Infographics really catch the audience's eye.

- » **Company and employee-related posts:** Whether your company won an award ([Figure 3-5](#)), or you do a monthly feature where you interview an employee ([Figure 3-6](#)), people love learning more about companies and the team behind the scenes.



FIGURE 3-5: An announcement showing standing for an important award.

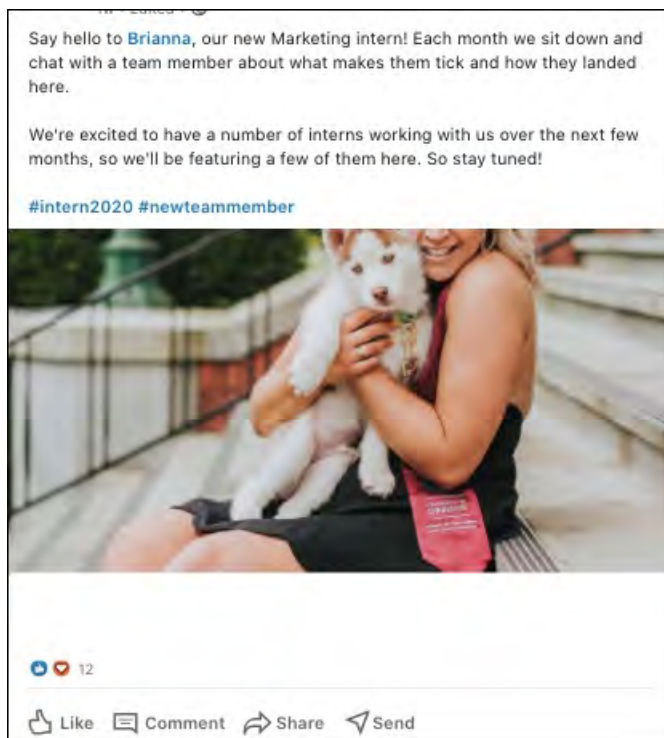


FIGURE 3-6: An interview with the new intern!

- » **Product and features announcements:** Did your company just release a new product or feature? Mention that in a post.
- » **Job postings:** Are there job openings at your company? Your connections will appreciate the notification in case they or someone they know are in the market for a new job.
- » **Cross-promote your other social media accounts:** Let people know where else they can

find you online (see [Figure 3-7](#)).

- » **Information about upcoming events, including links to register:** Are you hosting or participating in an upcoming event like a conference? Give connections the information with a link so they can register (see [Figure 3-8](#)).
- » **Downloadable content such as e-books and white papers:** If you have some long-form content that you want to share with your connections, do a post about it.
- » **“Happy National XX Day!” posts:** Who doesn’t like to hear that it’s National Dog Day (see [Figure 3-9](#)) or National Day to Wear Chartreuse? (Okay, maybe the latter not so much.)

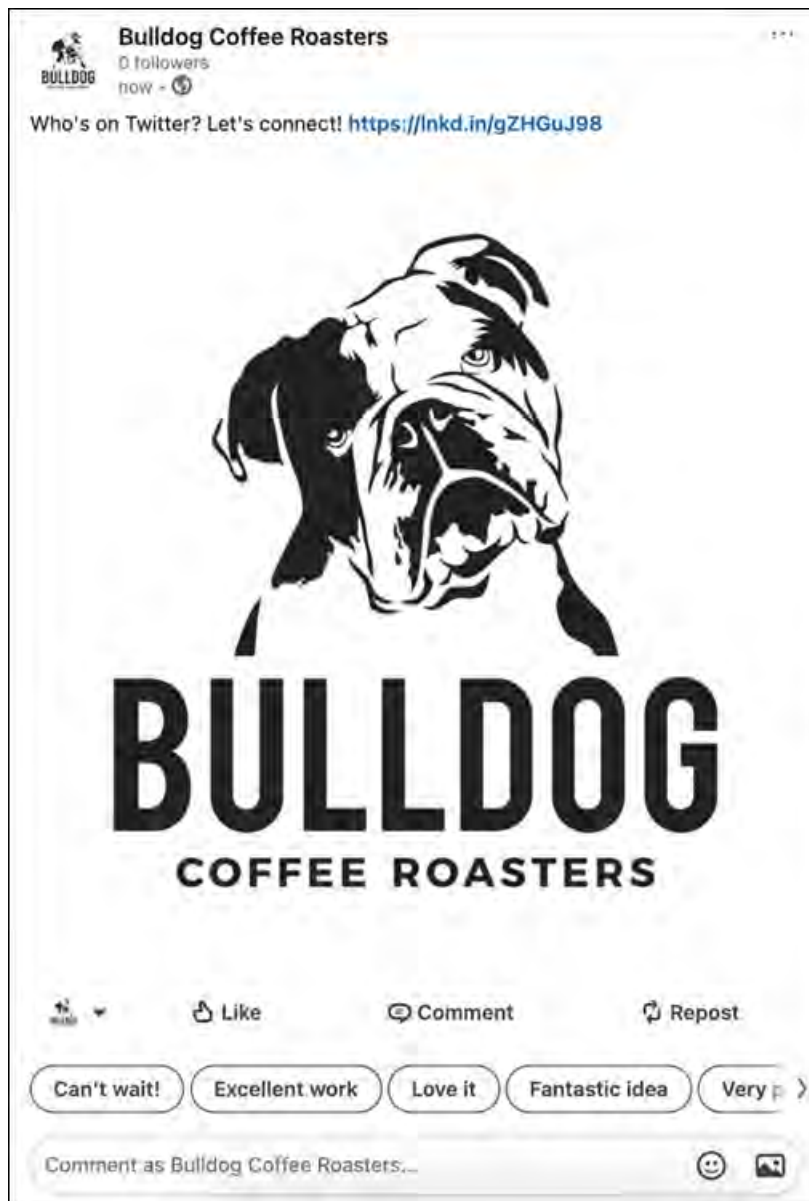


FIGURE 3-7: Letting everyone know you're also on X.



FIGURE 3-8: Informing connections about an upcoming conference.

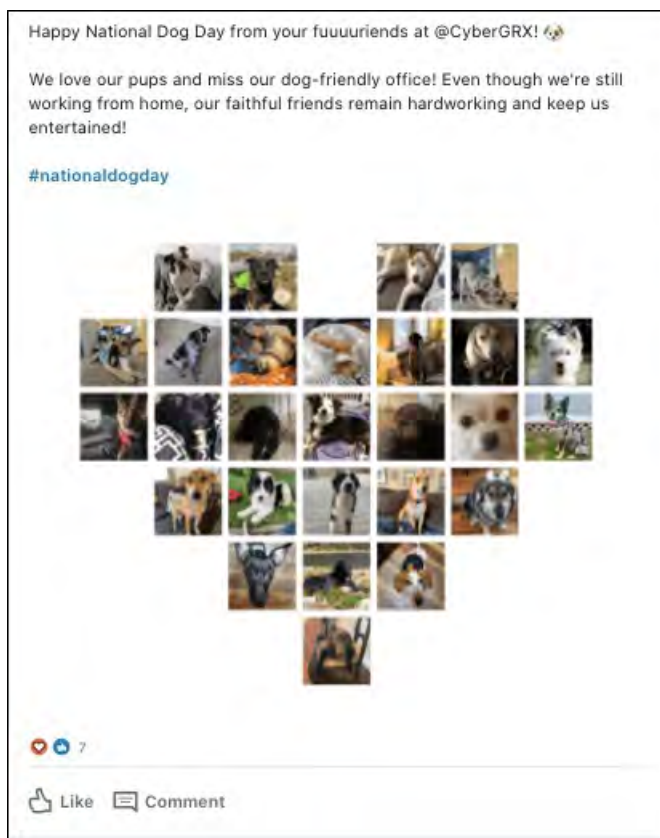


FIGURE 3-9: Happy National Dog Day!

- » **Third-party content:** Share the love! Not only will you be providing helpful information for your connections to see that they may not have seen otherwise, but you're building goodwill with the owner of the content. (Be sure to properly attribute it!)
- » **Links to thought leadership content on your company blog:** Chances are you have some really compelling content on your blog. Even if it's a little older (though still relevant), you can drive some new traffic to it by featuring it on your Page.

Taking advantage of LinkedIn's collaborative articles

LinkedIn knows that two of the most challenging aspects of writing blogs and articles is thinking of topics and getting started, so they took away all that guesswork with their Collaborative Articles feature! It's a way to team up with other experts to co-create insightful content within the platform (see [Figure 3-10](#)).

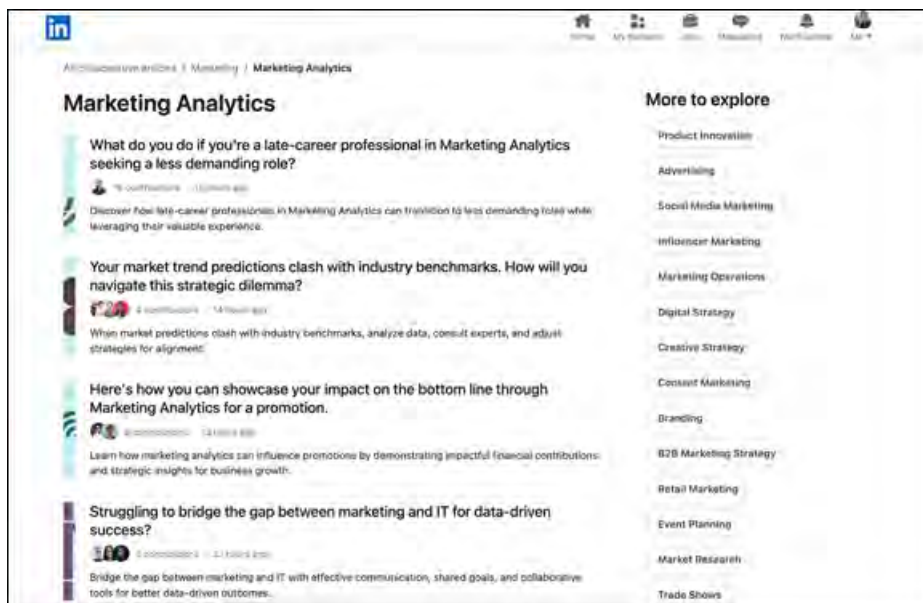


FIGURE 3-10: LinkedIn collaborative articles are a great way to showcase expertise.

Unfortunately, LinkedIn doesn't make it very easy to find the Collaborative Articles section. In other words, there's no direct link to it. To navigate to it, you can use one of the following methods:

- » Search for skill-related keywords or specific "how-to" questions in the LinkedIn search bar to find a relevant skills page or collaborative articles.
- » See collaborative articles in your feed and notifications when people in your network make contributions or when a new collaborative article is published to the skills pages you follow.
- » Search for collaborative articles on any external search engine.

At the time of this writing, being able to contribute to collaborative articles is on an

invitation-only basis. But that exclusivity is what makes this such a special opportunity to showcase your knowledge and build your brand!

So how do you score an invite to the party? According to LinkedIn themselves, “To be considered, you can engage with the articles by liking or reacting to them.” Seems easy enough, right? Once you’re invited, you’re notified via email and any time you check out a collaborative article in the future (or receive emails inviting you to add responses), all you have to do is click “Add your perspective,” write your response, and voila! You’ve joined the club!

LinkedIn is for making professional connections, but it recognizes that part of making those connections is sharing relevant, helpful information with your network (and vice versa). If your LinkedIn connections see you as a go-to source for interesting and pertinent information, they’ll start to trust you and could eventually become a paying customer.

Book 7

Getting Visual

Contents at a Glance

Chapter 1: Pinning Down Pinterest

[Understanding Pinterest](#)

[Getting Started](#)

[Pinning on Pinterest](#)

[Building Your Pinterest Community](#)

[Using Tools for Pinterest Marketing](#)

Chapter 2: Snapchatting It Up!

[Getting Started with a Snapchat Business Account](#)

[Taking Your First Snap](#)

[Telling Your Snapchat Story](#)

Chapter 3: Getting Started with Instagram

[Promoting Your Brand on Instagram](#)

[Creating and Using Your Instagram Business Account](#)

[Determining What Is Photo-Worthy for Your Brand](#)

[Using Hashtags in Your Instagram Posts](#)

[Using Instagram Stories](#)

[Going Live with Instagram Live](#)

Chapter 4: TikTok(ing) Around the Clock

[Using TikTok for Brand Promotion](#)

[Creating and Personalizing Your TikTok Account](#)

[Determining What Videos You Should Create](#)

[Selling on TikTok Shop](#)

Chapter 5: Watching and Listening: Videos, Podcasts, and Your Brand

[Deciding if Video and Podcasts Are Right for You](#)

[Determining What Content to Create](#)

[Creating Your Content](#)

[Publishing Your Content](#)

Chapter 1

Pinning Down Pinterest

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding Pinterest
 - » Getting started with your Pinterest account
 - » Creating boards, saving Pins, and growing your Pinterest community
 - » Driving sales with Pinterest
-

What is it about Pinterest that's so attractive? Is it the mouthwatering food images, the inspiring island-getaway shots, or the humorous jokes?

The answer is all the above. Pinterest is a social network that enables you to share content, but with a twist: You can't see the text beyond the caption that Pinners add when saving the images to their boards. Because Pinterest pulls only the images from blog posts and web articles, the site is very visually appealing. It's not an eye-catching headline that pulls you in, but rather colors and creativity.

One complaint people have about the various social networks is that everyone is sharing the same things across all the networks. They're making the same comments and sharing the same links and videos. Pinterest takes that sharing to a new level. It's not the same old, same old. Instead of seeing nothing but links, you're seeing vibrant, enticing images.

Pinterest is the perfect place to plan a vacation, redesign a kitchen, or landscape a backyard. By creating boards for all your interests, you're also saving images you might want to refer to later.

In this chapter, you find out about Pinterest, why it's so popular, and how you can use it to grow your online community and drive sales.

Understanding Pinterest

Pinterest is a social network based on images. Users upload photos (called *Pins*) to create *boards*, or groups of images centered on a common theme. Members of the Pinterest community use Pinterest for different reasons. Some just like to share pretty photos or recipes, and others share images in hopes that those viewing the photos will click through and drive traffic to their blogs or website. Because it's a visual site, it's perfect for product-based retailers who are hoping to drive sales.

Pinterest is the perfect social network for clothing retailers, interior designers, foodies, landscapers, travel professionals, and members of any profession who can benefit from telling a story with an image. Although the U.S. user base is primarily female, men are also using Pinterest to share funny images, sports-related photos, gadgets, and the great outdoors.

Knowing how the different demographics are using Pinterest is important, especially if you're reaching out to a global market.

Before you dive into the Pinterest deep end, be familiar with these common Pinterest terms:

- » **Pin:** An image or a video that you or someone else has uploaded to a board on Pinterest, such as the one shown in [Figure 1-1](#), is a *Pin*. When you enter a URL or upload an image to one of your boards, you're saving it to that board.

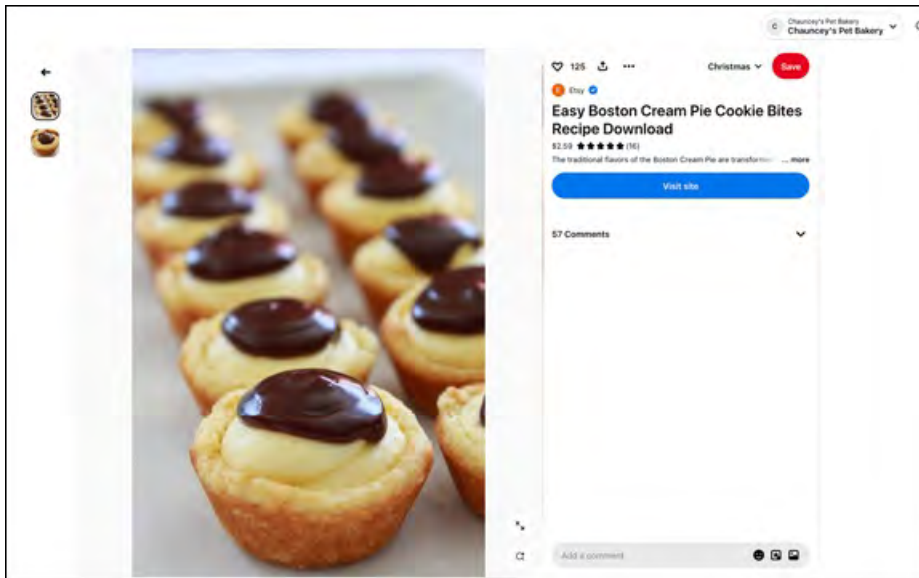


FIGURE 1-1: The Pin is the heart and soul of Pinterest.

- » **Boards:** Each time you add a Pin, you assign it to a category of your creation called a *board*. In essence, you're creating virtual Pin boards. For example, [Figure 1-2](#) shows the author Michelle's dog treat recipe board, but you can also save images that make you laugh, or you can make a board named Knitting Patterns to save images from relevant how-to articles.
- » **Pinner:** Someone who uses Pinterest.
- » **Re-pin:** When you *re-pin* something, you add something saved by someone else to one of your boards. (The Save button appears at the top right of a Pin.)
- » **Comment:** You can discuss Pins by commenting in the area to the right of the Pin.
- » **Send:** If you want to send someone a particular Pin, you can do so by clicking the icon that looks like a sideways bracket with an up arrow on top (see [Figure 1-3](#)). That opens a window where you can send the Pin to WhatsApp, Facebook, X, or you can email the Pin or even copy the link to send it however you decide.

You can also enter a person's name or email address into the search box to see if they have a Pinterest account. If they don't have one, they'll be invited to join in order to see the Pin you sent them.



TIP If you're connected with people on Pinterest, they'll show up on the bottom of the window, and Pinterest makes it easy to share it with them simply by clicking the red Share button next to their name.

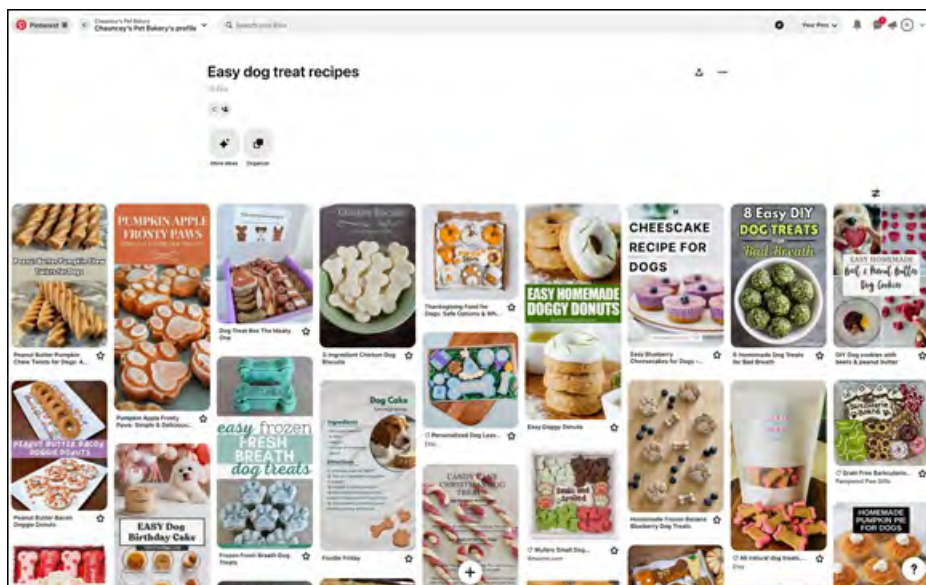


FIGURE 1-2: Boards are made up of a collection of Pins.



FIGURE 1-3: Sharing is caring.

Getting Started

Before launching your Pinterest account, take some time to see what a few brands are doing on Pinterest to get a better idea of the images they're showing, the captions they're using, and so on. Whole Foods Market is a great example of a business that effectively uses Pinterest. Its boards tell the story of who it is without being overly promotional.

To search for a specific brand on Pinterest, follow these steps:

1. **In the search box at the top of the page, type any company name and then press**

Enter.

As you type, a drop-down menu appears with suggestions and items with that brand's name. You can choose the brand itself from the drop-down menu. Or you can choose one of the keyword options. If you do this, a results page appears, displaying every Pin that uses that search term (see [Figure 1-4](#)).

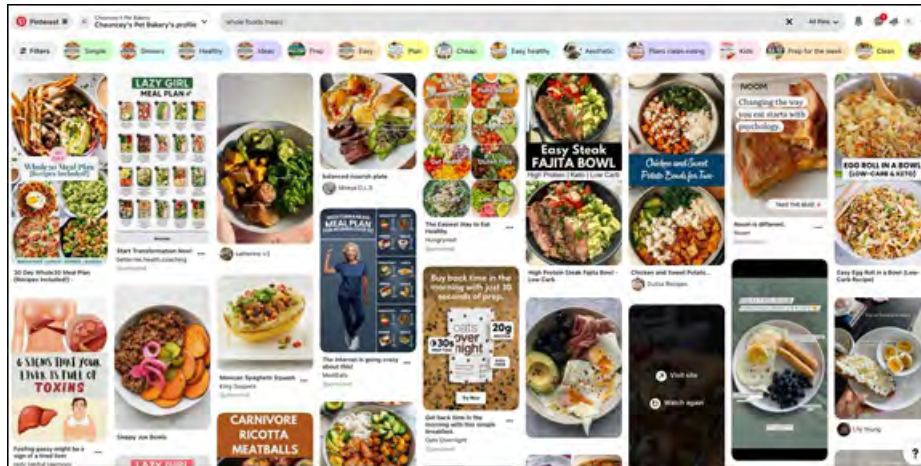


FIGURE 1-4: The results page after I selected a keyword from the search results.

2. **Click the drop-down button that appears next to the search box to focus your search (by default it says All Pins and has a down arrow):**
 - *All Pins:* Shows all Pins that contain the search term. This is the page you land on by default.
 - *Your Pins:* Shows Pins you added to Pinterest that fall within the search term.
3. **Click the Filters button on the left to narrow the search results even more.**
 - *All Pins:* Shows all Pins that contain the search term. This is the page you land on by default.
 - *Videos:* Shows just the Pins that contain videos.
 - *Boards:* Shows only boards whose name contains the keyword you searched for.
 - *Profiles:* Shows the profiles of other Pinterest accounts that contain the search term.
 - *Products:* Shows Pins of products with the search term in the name.

Business hub

Consider the Business hub to be the nervous system of your Pinterest account. When you create a free business account at www.pinterest.com, you're prompted to select the type of business you have and install the Pinterest tag, which is a way to track how well your advertising is performing.

You can access your Business hub at any time by clicking the Pinterest link in the top left of the page and selecting Business Hub from the drop-down menu. When you're taken to the

Business Hub home page, you'll see the following sections:

- » **Data & Analytics:** A quick glance at the stats showing how your Pins are performing.
- » **Share Your Brand:** You can create pins by clicking the +Create Pin box on the left side, or create an ad from an existing Pin by clicking the +Create Ad box on the right side.
- » **Track your performance:** After you claim your domain (your website address), then you'll be able to import the performance of your Pins directly into the existing website analytics tool that you use. Installing the Pinterest tag lets you measure the effectiveness of your Pinterest advertising. Again, this data will be imported into the analytics tool that you use.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

The steps you'll have to take to claim your website domain and add the Pinterest tag are out of the scope of this book. I recommend you work with your developer to set these up.

Setting up your Pinterest profile

As with any social network, first impressions are important. They're especially important if you're using the social network as a marketing tool. Your Pinterest profile is where users stop by to find out more about you; it contains your profile image and a few words about you, links to drive traffic to your website and social networking accounts, and your Pinterest boards.



REMEMBER You can adjust anything in your profile at any time by navigating to the Settings menu; click on the down arrow at the top right of the page and select Settings from the drop-down menu. Alternatively, you can click on your profile picture at the top right of the page (to the left of the down arrow) and then click the Edit Profile button on the left, underneath your profile picture.

Before you get started on filling out your profile, get to know the elements of the Pinterest Settings page.

- » **Edit Profile:** This is where you'll set your profile image (typically your brand's logo), add a bit of information about your company, and add your website address, email address, physical location (if applicable), and telephone number.
- » **Profile Visibility:** Here is where you change your profile to be private so you have to approve all followers (not recommended) or hide it from the Pinterest search function (also not recommended).
- » **Tune Your Home Feed:** Pinterest gives you the opportunity to add your interests to see content that's relevant to those interests or remove interests to stop seeing that type of content.

- » **Claimed Accounts:** When you claim an account, you can monitor analytics and ensure your brand name appears on every Pin created from your sites.
- » **Bulk Create Pins:** You can auto-publish Pins by connecting an RSS feed or use a .csv file to bulk create videos and image Pins.
- » **Social Permissions:** This is where you choose how others can interact with you on Pinterest to, for example, send you messages, like or re-pin your content, @Mention your account in their Pins, and so on.
- » **Notifications:** Choose if, how, and when Pinterest notifies you if anyone @Mentions you, messages you, comments on a Pin of yours, and more.
- » **Privacy and Data:** Manage the data Pinterest shares with advertisers and uses to improve the ads and recommendations they show you.
- » **Security:** This is where you'll go if you want to turn on two-factor authentication, to choose whether or not to use your Google account to log in, and so on.
- » **Branded Content:** Pinterest's Branded Content program connects creators with brands for sponsorship opportunities. If this is something you're interested in, click the sign-up button under this section.

Pinning on Pinterest

Saving Pins can be addictive. Many Pinnerers admit to spending hours saving and finding items to like and re-pin. From a brand perspective, it may not look or feel like marketing because you're not doing, say, creating eye-catching headlines. (You *will* need a way with words for your descriptions, however.) But instead of those attention-grabbing headlines, you're using images and videos to capture the attention of the Pinterest community. That's why your content has to be appealing and colorful, and it needs to make folks want to learn more.

Creating your Pin and board

To create a Pin and board, follow these steps:

1. **On any Pinterest page, click the Pinterest logo on the top left and select Business Hub from the drop-down menu.**
2. **Click the + Create Pin box.**
This opens the Create Pin detail box.
3. **Add a title and description for the Pin.**
Choose a name and type in a description for the Pin. Be creative, so it entices other Pinnerers to click!
4. **(Optional) Add Alt text.**
This is where you'd add more descriptive text for the Pin.
5. **Add the destination link.**
Paste the URL where you want the Pin to send anyone who clicks on the Pin. Double-

check to ensure it's the correct link!



REMEMBER Don't try to trick people by describing the Pin in one way but sending them to something completely different. That's called *click-bait* and is a sure-fire way to get you labeled as a spammer or scammer!

6. Drag and drop or upload an image file into the space on the left.

Pinterest recommends using JPEG files under 20MB files for images or MP4 files no larger than 2GB for videos.

7. Decide if you want to publish the Pin immediately or schedule it for later.

Click the appropriate button at the bottom of the Pin details box. If you schedule it for a later date, select the date from the calendar that appears.

8. On the top right of the Pin details box, click the button that says Select With a Down Arrow.

From the drop-down menu, choose the board to which you want to add this new Pin. If you want to add a board, choose the + Create Board option at the bottom of the menu.

9. (Optional) If creating a board, type the board's name into the box that appears, check the box if you want the board to remain secret, and click Create.

Again, I don't recommend you make the board secret because the reason you're on Pinterest in the first place is to get your name and content out there!

10. Click the red Publish button when you've updated all your Pin's information to your liking.

Congratulations! You created your first Pin and board! Now go add some more Pins!

Pinning the right images

At first glance, Pinterest might seem like a random bunch of images. On a typical Pinterest feed, most users see dozens of photos, and many of the same Pins are re-pinned over and over.

Being random and repetitive might be okay for personal users, but a brand must make sure its Pins are well thought out. Keep these points in mind when selecting an image to save:

- » **Images shouldn't conflict with the message you're trying to send.** You want the viewer to be clear, not confused, about what you save. For example, it wouldn't make sense for a ravioli manufacturer to post pictures of vehicles — unless they were delivery trucks or made out of ravioli.
- » **Images should make people feel good or evoke emotion.** You want people to see the images and react with a comment, a like, or a re-pin. Just like with Facebook or X posts, you want to know your Pinterest community is paying attention.
- » **Images must be eye-catching, engaging, and unique.** You want your content to stand out, and you have only a few seconds for your Pin to catch someone's attention. If a

viewer's response isn't positive and immediate, chances are your Pin won't get a second look.

- » **Images should support your goals.** If you want to drive sales, create Pins with sales in mind. Create a board of images showing happy people using your product or the result of using your service.



WARNING If you want to drive traffic to a particular website, create one board with Pins that link to the site. If every board you create and every image you Pin is a link to your blog or website, you'll lose followers — fast — because they want to view wonderful images without feeling like they're being sold to all the time.

The rest of your boards should represent what you do without pushing sales or traffic.

Pinning the wrong images

You can come up with many ideas for what to save, but there are plenty of types of Pins you need to avoid. Because Pinterest is visual and Pins appeal to emotions, saving one of the following can lead to unfollows:

- » **Out-of-focus photos:** Images should be sharp and vivid.
- » **Photos that have no rhyme, reason, or purpose:** Although not every Pin should be about your brand, if you have too many Pins that are off topic, you might confuse your followers.
- » **Re-pins that everyone is re-pinning:** If you save the same Pins everyone else is saving, Pinterest users have no reason to follow you.
- » **Rude and offensive photos:** Be considerate of your community. Leave swearing and vulgarity out of it, lest folks get the wrong message about you and your brand. If you wouldn't say something to a customer in person, don't say it on Pinterest.
- » **Constantly spamming with sales messages:** Few people use Pinterest to receive sales messages. Avoid pitching to the Pinterest community. Instead, let your images be your pitch. If you're known for making it all about the sale, no one will want to follow you.
- » **Bait-and-switch images:** Don't mislead your followers. If you save an image and it refers to an article called "10 Reasons to Paint Your Bedroom Purple," that's what people should see. Don't reference one thing on Pinterest only to have users click through to something different, such as a sales page.



TIP Whenever you re-pin someone else's Pin, make sure the Pin is legitimate: Test the Pin by clicking through to the website. There's nothing worse than to re-pin something only to find out later that it's one of those hated bait-and-switch Pins.

When you first start with Pinterest, it may be frustrating to wait for people to comment on

your Pins. It takes a while to grow a community and start receiving comments. Use the following tips to create the types of Pins people feel inclined to comment on:

- » **Appeal to emotion.** Whether it's laughing out loud or choking back tears, people talk about Pins that inspire emotion. Before you save a Pin, ask yourself how you feel about it. If the answer is indifferent, consider finding something more thought-provoking.
- » **Save Pins your target audience can relate to.** It's important for you to stay on topic with your Pinterest community. For example, if you're marketing to parent bloggers, your Pins should reflect items of interest to parents. If you're an automotive dealership, consider posting photos of cars or funny street signs. You want your community members to relate to you. If you go off topic, that only confuses people. If they're relating to your Pins, they'll comment to tell you why.
- » **Nothing is wrong with controversy from time to time.** Don't post negative Pins, but don't shy away from discussion-worthy topics simply because they're hot topics.
- » **Be different.** There may be times when you look at your feeds and notice that everyone is re-pinning the same thing. It's great for the original Pinner if something goes viral, but after a while, seeing the same image over and over gets boring. Go against the grain and find something different. Search Pinterest for compelling or unique Pins, or create unique content and share that.
- » **Find out what people are responding to.** Take a ride around Pinterest. Which types of Pins are getting the most comments and why? Is it the type of Pin? The types of friends? How is the Pinner interacting? Take notes.

Being descriptive but brief

The descriptions you include with Pins are just as important as the images. The words you use to describe an image, not the image itself, brings in search traffic.

If you're a travel agent and are posting a photo taken in Bora Bora, for example, you should let the viewer know where the image was taken, but you also need to tell the viewer that you can arrange vacations there. Write a description such as, "This gorgeous vista is Bora Bora. Now doesn't it make you want to plan your next tropical getaway there?" With this description, you also appear in searches for *Bora Bora*, *tropical*, and *getaway*. (Did you notice that I didn't state directly that I can plan the vacation for the viewer, though?) Drive traffic with your Pin but avoid appearing too "selly" to the viewer. You want the viewer to come to you.

Pinterest doesn't allow descriptions to break text into paragraphs, which means descriptions can become one long-winded block of text if you're not careful. Make sure your message comes across in a few clear, concise sentences.

Finding the right words

Because you're using Pinterest as a sales or marketing tool, you want to be visible to search engines. You also want to create a description so enticing that Pinner click through to your website when you save your own items.

What follows are a few best practices for creating the best descriptions for your Pins:

- » **Use search engine optimization (SEO).** This book talks about SEO a lot because it's so important to catch the attention of the search engines. By all means, use search terms in your Pin descriptions, but don't make it obvious. The terms you use should flow naturally. Think about what words people use, or words you want them to use, to land on your brand in Pinterest. Use those words or terms in a way that doesn't look silly.
- » **Use words that paint a picture.** A description should, well, describe. If you saved an image of a hen holding a flag, avoid stating the obvious. *This is a hen holding a flag* is descriptive but kind of boring. Calling the hen *patriotic* is less boring and describes the hen without insulting the intelligence of the reader.
- » **Use words that stimulate discussion.** Try to phrase sentences so they're open-ended. When you ask questions, request more information, or make a statement that leaves room for interpretation, you're more likely to receive comments.
- » **Use titles if they benefit you.** If you're saving Pins from a link to an article or a blog post, nothing is wrong with using the original title as your description. However, there's also nothing wrong with *not* using the title and instead describing the image using words that benefit your brand and bring searchers to your board or Pin.
- » **Let your personality show.** Don't be afraid to be funny, perky, or anything else that helps you and your brand shine. Avoid bland, general terminology and Internet slang. Use words that show your personality instead.
- » **Avoid negativity.** Don't use words that evoke negative images or connotations. Always go for a positive point of view. But be appropriate and authentic. If your business sells Goth items, for example, dark words might be expected by the audience.



REMEMBER People use social media for many different reasons, none of which are to become mad and depressed. Besides, who wants to do business with a brand that's all doom and gloom?

Finding Pinner to emulate

You can get help from the top Pinner in your community to see which Pins are receiving the most attention. Just select a category at the top of any search results page and then select the Pins that will best suit your needs. Each Pin shows how many people follow the Pinner. If a Pinner has a lot of followers, chances are they put out great content.

Using keywords

After you find the top Pinner (discussed in the preceding section), read a sampling of their Pins. Think about the descriptive words and phrases you would use to find them. Are they using the same keywords? For example, if a bedroom set has gone viral, read the description to note if it's a *girl's bedroom set* or a *blue bedroom set*. Those descriptive terms are keyword phrases. Consider the words and phrases people are using to find Pins and use those words

and phrases in your own Pins.

What follows are some best practices when using keywords on Pinterest:

- » **Keywords and phrases should sound natural.** People don't type information into search engines in the same way they speak. For example, they would type *wet iPhone* rather than *How to dry a wet iPhone*. When saving Pins, use phrases that sound natural. Pinterest is a visual platform, but the words should be as pleasing as the photos.
- » **Avoid creating Pins with keywords in mind.** Write for the people, not the platform. Definitely use keywords in your Pins, but don't put up any old photo just because you want to use a keyword.
- » **The keyword or phrase should match the Pin.** Don't use a keyword unless it describes the Pin. You'll lose followers if you're known to bait and switch.
- » **Use keywords for board titles.** Instead of using Pinterest-suggested titles for your boards, use your own titles that include keywords. This way, both boards and Pins will appear in a search.

Tagging

Tagging on Pinterest is similar to tagging on Facebook or X. You *tag* people or type their name so it links to their account, to call their attention to your Pins. For example, you can tag people if they're in the photo you're saving or if the topic is of interest to them. When you call someone's attention to your photos through tagging, they might be inclined to share your Pins with their communities too.

Here's how you tag someone on Pinterest: In the description area of the Pin, put an @ symbol in front of the name of the person you want to tag. If that person is a friend (see the following section for a discussion of following people on Pinterest), a menu of Pinners' names appears from which you can select. If that person isn't a friend, you can't tag them.

When a person is tagged, they're notified that you've tagged them in a Pin. Tagging is a great way to call a person's attention to a particular Pin. For example, suppose you have a client who loves Italian food. If you're connected on Pinterest, you can let your client know you posted a delicious recipe for them to consider. You'll be appreciated for your thoughtfulness!

Sharing other people's Pins

When you share another person's Pin in your feed, you *re-pin* it. Similar to a Facebook share or X repost, a re-pin tells the original Pinner you liked the post so much, you also wanted to share.

To re-pin a Pin that you like, follow these steps:

1. **Hover your mouse pointer on the Pin that you want to share, and click the red Save button that appears in the top right of the Pin.**

The Choose Board window pops up with the Pin on the left and board options on the right.

2. **From the Select drop-down list, select the board to which you want to re-pin the**

image.

You have the option to select a board you already have or create a new board.

3. Click Save.

That's it! You're well on your way to building up quite the Pin collection!

Note: You can also click the Pin, which takes you to the Pinner's page and to the Pin itself. You can like the Pin from there in the same manner. Click the Pin image one more time to be taken to the original website where the image came from.

Building Your Pinterest Community

Even though you're using Pinterest as a marketing tool, make no mistake: Building a community on any of the social networks is more about others than it is about you. Your Pinterest community is made up of people who share like-minded interests. They visit Pinterest for their own reasons. They may be saving Pins to promote books, learn about particular topics, or market their own businesses. They want you to be part of their communities, too. That's why interaction and participation are so important.

A variety of people make up your Pinterest community. As with the other social networks, you follow and are followed by friends, co-workers, family, new friends whom you met online, and strangers. When you harness the power of your community, you're turning online friends into loyal customers and creating word-of-mouth marketing. To see who makes up your Pinterest community, click the Community tab on your company's profile page.



REMEMBER Driving traffic isn't about typing *CLICK MY LINKS* in big, bold letters. It's about giving people a reason to want to learn more about you. Driving traffic is more about creating the right types of content and building your community than it is using a sales pitch. When you take on a warm tone over marketing speech, you have a better chance of winning them over.

Following friends

Because you're representing a brand, you definitely want to appeal to the people who already follow your brand on Facebook, X, and other social networks. However, you don't want to solely rely on your loyal existing online community to make up your Pinterest community. The reason you join any social network is to grow your community, and you can't grow it by following (and being followed by) the same people on every platform.

Definitely announce on your blog, X, Facebook, and other social media services that you've started a Pinterest page. But to build up the number of Pinner's you follow and who follow you, also contact social networking connections directly and let them know you want to connect on Pinterest.

Following folks you don't know

After you exhaust all your known contacts, it's time to branch out to make new friends to follow. To find new friends to whom you aren't already connected, use the search box located at the top of any of your Pinterest pages. Type in a keyword and click the Filter button on the left side to open the different filtering options (shown in [Figure 1-5](#)). Click the Profiles option, then the red Apply button at the bottom of the page, and click through all the results to find different accounts that interest you.

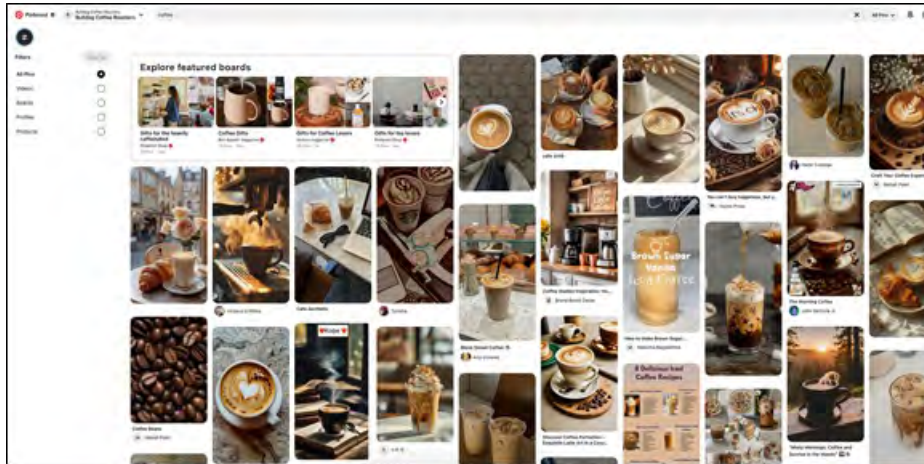


FIGURE 1-5: Filter to find friends!

Commenting on Pins

You may think the fun is in saving Pins, but that's not it at all. The fun is in the conversation.

Don't wait for people to make remarks on your Pins to engage with your community. Go ahead and comment on other people's Pins. Do you have an opinion on a particular image? Tell the Pinner how you feel! Does an image evoke emotion? Share that emotion with the person who saved the Pin. Do you have questions or concerns? Share those, as well. Conversations ensue when others comment.

To comment, click the Pin. That Pin now fills your entire window. Scroll down to the center of the page where you see the words Add a Comment with an empty box next to it. Click on that box, write a comment, then click the red Send button (a sideways triangle) to post your comment.



REMEMBER Always be polite in your comments. Some people on the Internet are looking to start fights by posting rude and negative comments. Don't give them the pleasure of knowing they've gotten under your skin by responding in kind. Take the higher road.

Playing nice

Every social network has its own set of etiquette rules, and Pinterest is no exception. Most social networking etiquette is in place so you don't annoy others, but most of it is common sense and courtesy.

Keep in mind that etiquette isn't made up of hard-and-fast rules; rather, it's a series of best

practices most Pinners follow to keep Pinterest free of spammers, trolls, and people who make the experience more difficult by causing arguments. Here's a list of Pinterest etiquette tips:

- » **Give credit where credit is due.** If you're sharing another person's Pin, always give a shout-out to the original source. For example, after uploading a Pin and sharing it in your feed, type **via @name** at the bottom of your description.

When sharing online content, some photographers or websites want you to ask permission before posting their images on Pinterest. You may feel you're doing a third party a favor by linking to that party's work, but because Pinterest pulls the image and you gave Pinterest permission to use your content, the original source may want compensation or recognition.



TIP

Be safe; follow the intellectual property rules laid out in the About Pinterest page, <https://help.pinterest.com/en/article/copyright>.

- » **Fill out descriptions for all your Pins.** It's not always easy to tell what the Pin is about. For example, not everyone will know the name of a recipe or the location of an island scene. It's a courtesy to your friends to let them know what you're saving.
- » **Avoid over-Pinning.** I know that Pinning is addictive. However, don't flood your friends' streams with dozens of photos at once. Pace yourself. If they see only your Pins all the time, and everyone else's Pins are lost, your friends are going to stop following you.
- » **Don't spam.** Mix up your Pins so they provide a variety of content. For example, share other people's blog posts, web articles, and images (if you have permission). Don't make everything link back to your own website or sales page.
- » **Keep your Pin descriptions brief.** If your description is filled with all the details that are in the Pin's original link, why would anyone click through to the Pin's site for more information? See the earlier "[Being descriptive but brief](#)" section for tips on writing a tantalizing Pin description.



REMEMBER Most rules of etiquette are good common sense. If you think something you do might make others uncomfortable, it probably will. Also, take some time to test other people's links before sharing to make sure they are still active and lead to appropriate content.

Using Tools for Pinterest Marketing

Since Pinterest has more than 522 million monthly active users, it's clearly a social media platform that marketers need to pay attention to. Because the interest and usage of Pinterest has grown considerably in the decade since it was released, it's only natural that companies would develop applications to help marketers maximize their Pinterest activities. Here are

some helpful ones to check out.

Scheduling and automation

Some key sites for scheduling and automation include

- » **Tailwind** (www.tailwindapp.com): Tailwind can be used for both Pinterest and Instagram and features a helpful bulk-scheduling feature to publish Pins at the best times for more engagement, reach, and website traffic. Tailwind starts at \$15/month per account.
- » **SocialPilot** (www.socialpilot.co/social-media-scheduling/Pinterest): SocialPilot is another Pinterest tool that, in addition to scheduling and automation features, also has a built-in content calendar, URL shortener, and visual content-creation tool. Prices start at \$43/month.
- » **dlvr.it** (dlvr.it/pinterest-automation): This versatile tool lets you tailor your Pins with custom text, images, auto-hashtags, and short links. In addition to automatically posting to your account, the app also makes sure your posts are SEO optimized and posted at the specific time of day where they will perform the best. Plans start at \$10/month.

Growing your audience

For growing your audience, be sure to look into the following:

- » **MiloTree** (<https://milotree.com>): MiloTree is an app specifically for growing your social media audience, including Pinterest. The service provides premade pop-ups that you can put onto your website to drive people to your Pinterest account. It includes analytics so you can track your growth. It costs \$19/month after a 30-day free trial (see [Figure 1-6](#)).
- » **Woobox** (<https://woobox.com/Pinterest>): Woobox is a tool that lets you install a Pinterest app on your Facebook page, allowing you to take advantage of the audience you have on that social network. You can show all your Pinterest boards or select just one board to feature. All users have to do is click on an individual board to view the Pins for that board. The free version has limited features; otherwise, prices start at \$37/month.

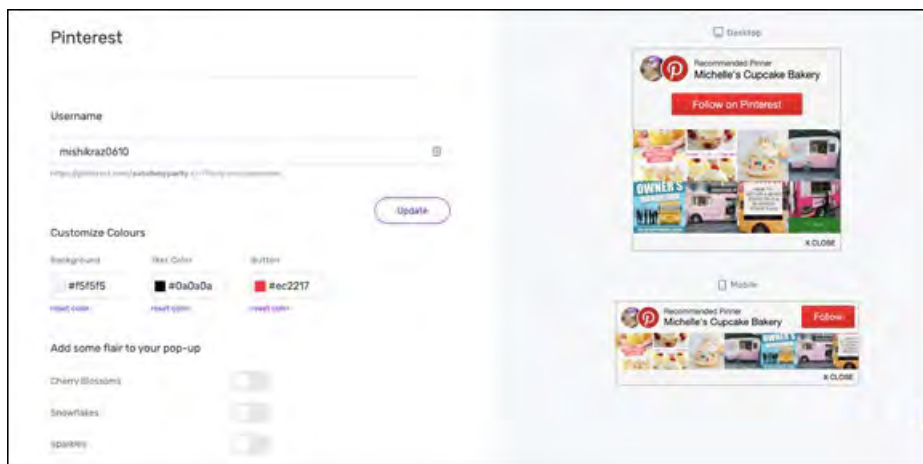


FIGURE 1-6: A sample pop-up created with MiloTree.

Creating content

You may want to check out these sites for ideas on content creation:

- » **loop88** (www.loop88.com): Although a number of tools in this list serve multiple purposes, loop88 is a very targeted service whose sole purpose is to help you create original visual Pinterest content. They start from the beginning — strategizing — and take you through the process from start to finish.
- » **Vistacreate** (<https://create.vista.com/create/pinterest-graphic>): With Vistacreate you can create eye-catching Pinterest graphics quickly and easily when you use one of their 100,000+(!) templates. They offer a free subscription that is everything you need to get started creating awesome Pins, but their \$10/month Pro subscription throws in extras like access to 70 million+ videos and animations.

Chapter 2

Snapchatting It Up!

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Setting up a Snapchat account
 - » Telling your brand's story
 - » Engaging with your Snapchat community
-

Snapchat is taking social business by storm and many brands are finding benefits from having an account and sharing their Snapchat stories with their online communities. Unlike other platforms, Snapchat isn't about sharing links and directing people to a specific page with a text call to action. Instead, brands use Snapchat to share photos and brief videos called *Snap*s with their Snapchat community.

This chapter covers how to join Snapchat and also discusses the basics, giving you a better idea of how your audience uses Snapchat so you can more effectively target your marketing efforts. It'll also give you some tips on how to grow and engage with your audience.

Getting Started with a Snapchat Business Account

Though Snapchat started as an app available only for smartphones, you can now sign up for a business account, your *Public Profile*, and even post to your account via your computer. In fact, that may be the most convenient method, because the sign-up process takes a little bit longer for a business account than it does for an individual account. Plus, chances are you're probably more likely to have your logo file on your computer instead of saved on your smartphone.



TIP

For more information on Public Profiles (or Business accounts in general), check out <https://businesshelp.snapchat.com/s/topic/0T00y000000YklvGAC/public-profiles-for-businesses>.

Then, to set up your account and build your Public Profile, follow these steps:

1. **Navigate to <https://forbusiness.snapchat.com> and click the Get Started button.**
2. **Enter your business name, email address, password, and birthday as shown in [Figure 2-1](#), and then click Next.**
3. **Enter a username and your website address, and decide whether or not you want**

Snapchat to import your brand assets by unchecking the box or keeping it checked. Click Create Account.

Your username should be the same as or as close to your other social network account usernames as possible; however, it can't be longer than 15 characters.

4. Upload your company's logo, type in a company bio, and click Confirm.

Again, keep it as close as possible to the bios on your other social accounts, but you only have 150 characters, so use them wisely!

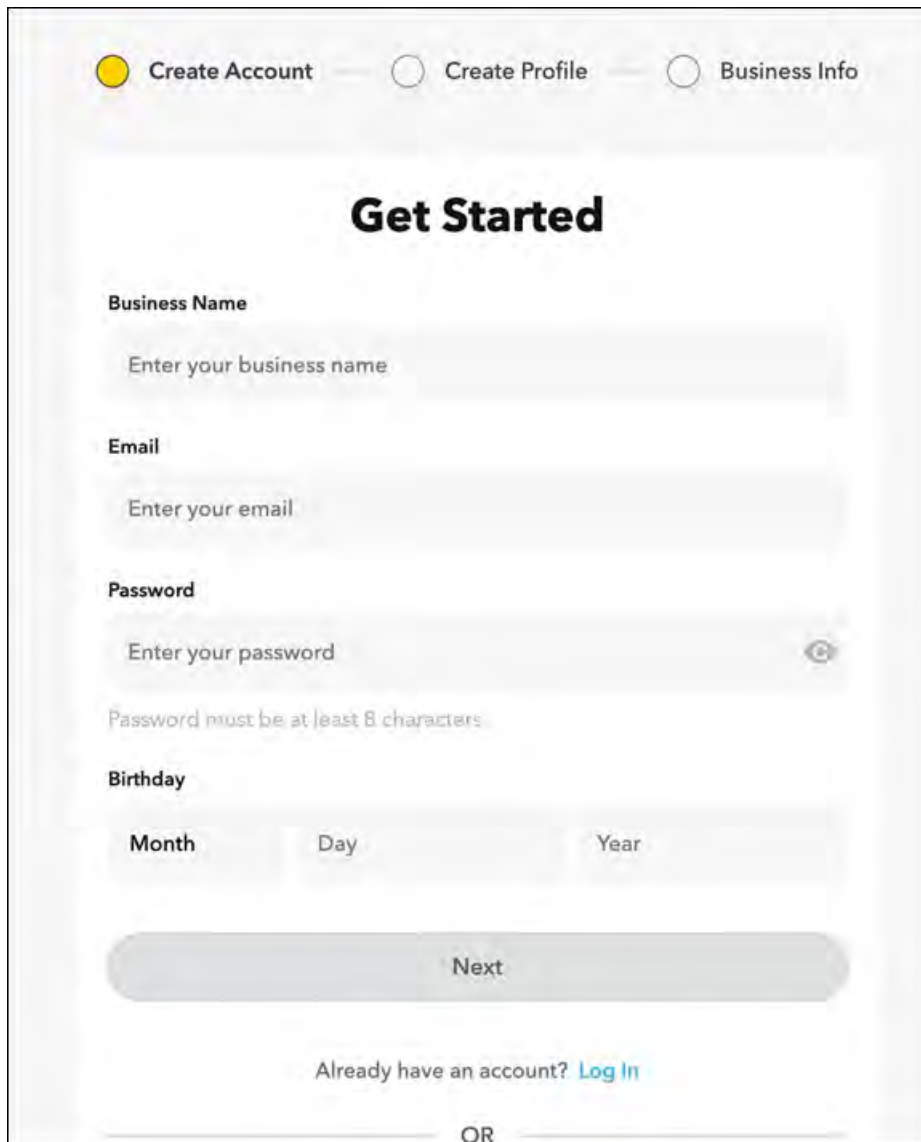
The image shows the 'Get Started' screen for creating a Snapchat account. At the top, there are three radio buttons: 'Create Account' (selected with a yellow dot), 'Create Profile', and 'Business Info'. Below this is the heading 'Get Started'. The form contains several input fields: 'Business Name' with a placeholder 'Enter your business name', 'Email' with a placeholder 'Enter your email', and 'Password' with a placeholder 'Enter your password' and a small eye icon to toggle visibility. Below the password field is a note: 'Password must be at least 8 characters'. Underneath is the 'Birthday' section with three input fields for 'Month', 'Day', and 'Year'. At the bottom of the form is a large 'Next' button. Below the button, it says 'Already have an account? Log In'. At the very bottom, there is an 'OR' separator.

FIGURE 2-1: Start adding your company information.

5. Add in your country, currency, phone number (optional), and check the box agreeing to receive promotion text messages from Snapchat. Click Next.

You don't have to check the box agreeing to receive promotional texts to move to the next step.

6. **(Optional) Commit to some level of advertising spend and click Next, or click Maybe Later to decline the offer.**

Snapchat tries to entice you to sign up for advertising credits right away by giving you different “by some, get some free” levels to choose from. If you’re not ready to spend money on advertising, simply click the Maybe Later link.



REMEMBER Snapchat makes its money via advertising, but it’s free to have a business account on the site, so don’t feel pressured to commit to any advertising right from the get-go.

7. **On the following screen, click the Create Ads drop-down menu on the top left and select the Public Profiles option all the way in the right column.**

You’ll see the profile you created in the previous steps listed on this page, but this is also where you’ll return to if you want to create additional profiles for your business. This is helpful in cases where you have multiple locations, for example.

8. **Click on the profile you want to edit and click the Edit Profile button under the header image in the middle of the page.**

You’ll get a pop-up box like the one shown in [Figure 2-2](#).

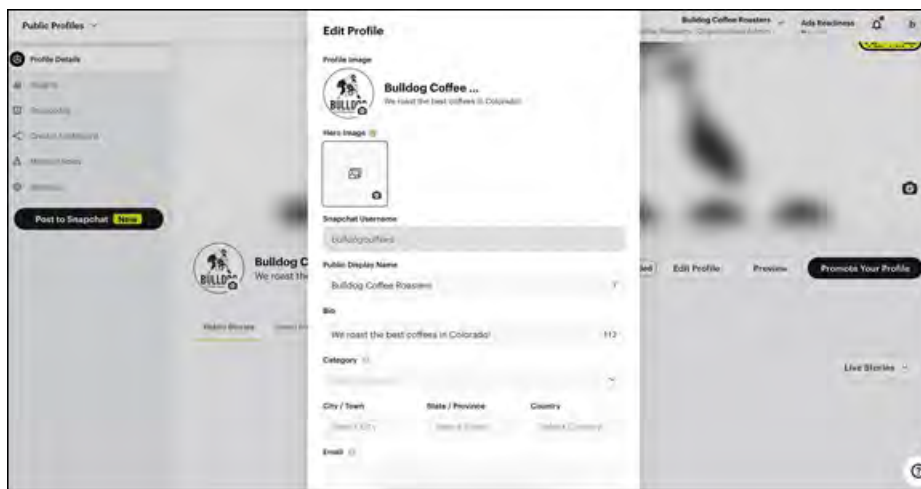


FIGURE 2-2: Edit your Public Profile here.

9. **Click the Hero Image box on the top left, upload your preferred hero image in the box that appears, and click Update Profile.**

The recommended upload dimensions are 375 x 569 pixels, but Snapchat crops hero images to 375 x 358 pixels when displaying on your profile.

10. **Click through the other account management options available in the left menu to familiarize yourself with what you can do with your account.**

Congratulations! You’ve taken the first step to creating a successful Snapchat account!

Using Snapchat Business Dashboard

If the day ever comes when you’ve decided to start investing some cold hard cash into advertising on Snapchat, then the Business Dashboard (see [Figure 2-3](#)) will be the nervous system of the whole thing. Found at <https://business.snapchat.com>, this is where you’ll come to manage everything from your ad spend to creating product catalogs to feed your ads to billing and payments. Book 8, [Chapter 5](#) gets into the ins and outs of advertising on Snapchat.

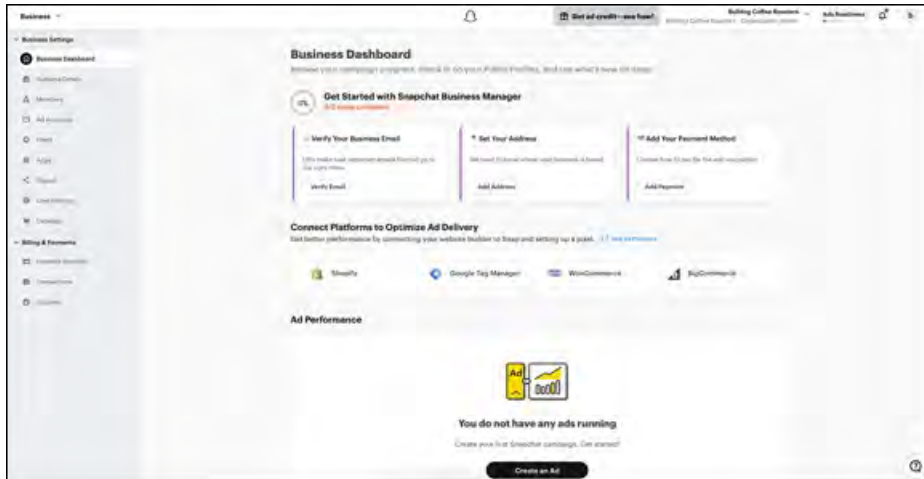


FIGURE 2-3: Your account page.

Understanding the lingo

Before you get any further along in the process, it’s time to learn the lingo. Here are some of the terms you should know if you want to use Snapchat:

- » **Snap:** Snaps are either a photo or videos that can be up to 60 seconds long but can only be posted in 10-second chunks.
- » **Story:** A collection of Snaps that play in the order they were taken over the previous 24 hours. Some stories are live and say “LIVE” on them.
- » **Snapstreak:** A consecutive daily exchange of Snaps between friends.
- » **Chat:** Comments back and forth with you and other members of your community. You can text, video chat, call your friends, and send photos and stickers.
- » **Stickers:** These can be added to chats and only sent to someone you’re a friend with.
- » **Score:** The number under your profile photo. According to Snapchat, your score is “the number of Snaps you’ve sent and received, the Stories you’ve posted, and a couple other factors.”
- » **Lens:** Similar to filters but specifically for selfies.
- » **Memories:** Published Snaps saved to a special place, so they live longer than the 24-hour viewing period.
- » **Replay:** If your friends sent you a video that went too quickly, you can immediately replay it. You get one free replay a day, then you have to pay for additional ones.

- » **Screenshot:** I don't recommend doing this, because one of the main features for Snapchat is that the content quickly disappears, so why don't you let it ... um ... disappear? By the way, the person gets notified if you screenshot their Snap.
- » **Filter:** Add to Snaps to commemorate an event, such as a frame of garland to adorn your picture for a holiday Snap. This includes the time, temperature, and so on.
- » **Snap Map:** A feature allowing users and businesses to share their location on a map. (I discuss Snap Maps later in this chapter.)
- » **Snap Map Actionmoji:** Bitmoji representations indicating a user's activity on the Snap Map.
- » **Snap Store:** Snapchat's in-app merchandise store.
- » **Snapchat Discover:** A platform for publishers to share content.
- » **Snapcode:** Similar to a QR code, it's used to add friends with the touch of a button.

Touring the Snapchat screens

Now let's talk about some of the bells and whistles you can find in Snapchat. From the Snap screen, shown in [Figure 2-4](#), you see the following:

- » **Location button:** A map showing where you and your Snapchat friends are currently located (if Location is enabled).
- » **Chat button:** Have a private conversation with your friends.
- » **Image/Video button:** Use the round button to take a photo or a video.
- » **Stories:** See a variety of options for adding friends, such as by Snapchat username (if you know it), contacts, or Snapcode.
 - *Your Stories:* A chronological display of all your stories available for viewing.
 - *Your Friends' Stories:* Stories from your friends that are available for viewing.
 - *Subscriptions:* Updates from friends and brands you follow.
 - *Discover:* A place where you can discover new people and brands to follow.
- » **Spotlight:** Snapchat provides a curated selection of Snaps based on popularity and content you've previously engaged with.

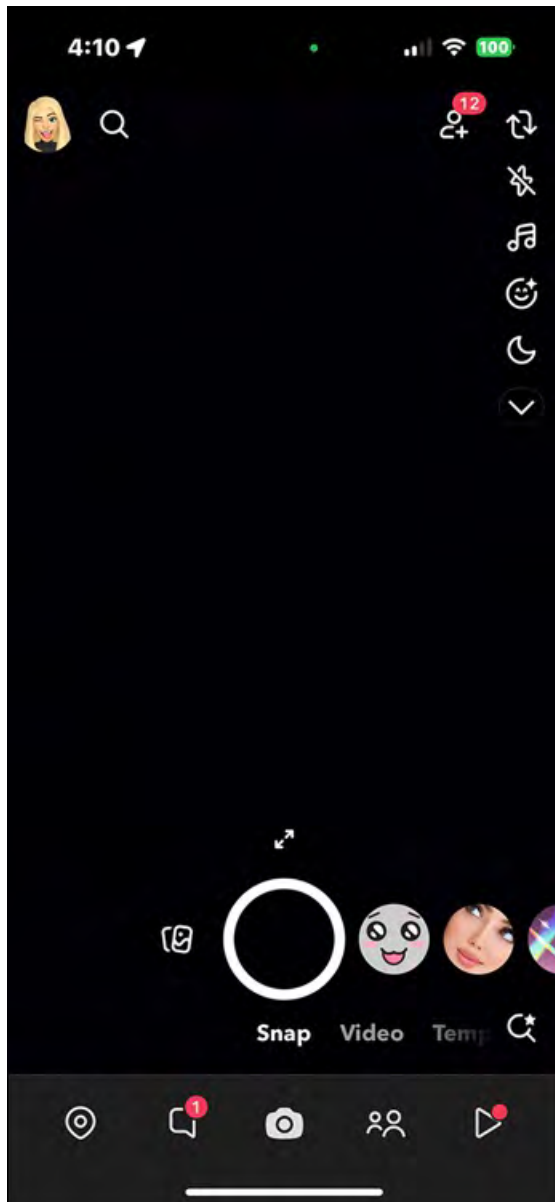


FIGURE 2-4: The Snap screen is where you take photos or video or access Chat and Discover sections.

- » **Profile image:** Tapping your profile image on the top left opens a screen where you can do things like see all your friends and add some, add to your story, access your Snapcode, and edit your Bitmoji (or create one).
 - *Gear icon (on the Profile image page):* Tapping the gear icon on the top right opens the main account dashboard where you can change settings such as your name and birthday, create or edit Snapcode, and so on. This screen is like the nervous system of your Snapchat account.
 - *My Friends (on the Profile image page):* Get a list of all your friends.
- » **Search:** Search for other users or popular Snap stars.
- » **Add Friends:** See a variety of options for adding friends, such as by Snapchat username

(if you know it), contacts, or Snapcode.

- » **Flip icon:** On the top right is an icon that looks like an arrow going around in a circle. Tapping this button toggles between the front-facing camera and the selfie camera.
- » **Lightning bolt:** Underneath the flip icon is a lightning bolt where you can turn the camera flash on and off.
- » **Sounds:** Add sound effects or music to your Snap.
- » **Night Mode:** Changes the appearance of your app screens to be more comfortable to view in dark environments.
- » **Down arrow:** Beneath the lightning bolt is a down arrow that expands to allow you to access a few options. (Not all the options are shown in the figure.)
 - *Multi-snap:* The icon of two rectangles stacked allows you to take multiple images or videos to send them at the same time. Toggling this to off limits you to sending one at a time.
 - *Dual Camera:* Activating both your front and back cameras at the same time.
 - *Timer:* The stopwatch icon is a countdown timer to give you three seconds before taking the photo.
 - *Video Stability:* Helps control camera shake when taking videos.
 - *Green Screen:* When your live camera is activated, this replaces your existing background with an image of your choice.
 - *Tone:* Corrects areas of your photos that are either over- or underexposed.
 - *AI Snaps:* Available only to Snapchat+ users (\$4/month), this lets you create, edit, and enhance Snaps using Generative AI.
 - *Grid:* The box of squares forms a grid over the front of the camera to help you line up the shot, to make sure everything is centered and the camera is straight, and so on. The grid does not show up on the actual photo.
- » **Images:** To the left of the white button is an icon showing two vertical rectangles. Tapping on this will take you to your existing Snaps.
- » **Filters:** The line of circles to the right of the big white button is where you access all the filters you can use to change the photo or video you're about to take.

Adding followers

What's the point of sharing all your wonderful stories if no one is around to view them? Snapchat doesn't have a public feed. You share either with individuals or with everyone who follows your account. And your Snaps can't be viewed by someone who doesn't have the Snapchat app and whom you haven't approved.

To add or find friends to grow your Snapchat community, do the following:

- » **Use the Snapcode.** At public events, encourage your customers to use the Snapcode so you add each other to Snapchat (see [Figure 2-5](#)).

- » **Use the Add Friends feature.** Tap the silhouette with a plus sign icon at the top of your screen to find friends. You will now see a variety of ways to add friends as well as suggestions for people to follow.



FIGURE 2-5: Use your Snapcode to add followers.

One more thing before you take your first Snaps. Notifications tell you things like when people comment on your Snaps, send you chats, when someone tags you in a Snap, or when someone wants to be your friend. When you have notifications, a red dot appears on the top right of the Chat icon. At the top of that screen are the notifications, for example, if someone sends you a new chat or a Snap.

Taking Your First Snap

You can take two types of Snaps: a photo or a video. The steps are almost identical:

1. **On the main Snapchat screen (refer to [Figure 2-4](#)), set your smartphone to face the subject.**

For example, for a selfie, point the camera at yourself using the circle-with-arrow button at the top of the screen. For a different subject, turn the camera away from you. Tap it again to change direction.

2. **To take a photo, tap the round button at the bottom of the screen. To take a video, press and hold down on the button for up to 10 seconds.**



TIP You can continue to hold the button down and it will keep recording in separate 10-second Snaps.

3. (Optional) Add comments to your Snap or video before publishing (see [Figure 2-6](#)):

- *To type text:* Click the T icon.
- *To draw or write text:* Click the pencil icon.
- *To add a sticker:* Click the square sticky note icon or click the scissor icon to create your own sticker.
- *To add music:* Click the music note icon to select a music or sound clip to add to your Snap.
- *To add a filter:* Click the magnifying glass icon to add a create filter to your image.
- *To retouch something:* Click the magic wand icon and swipe over a part of the image to retouch it.
- *To attach a URL:* Click the paper clip icon and type in (or copy and paste) a URL to attach to your Snap.
- *To crop:* Click the icon that looks like two right angles facing each other and pinch your fingers on the screen until you get the image to where you want it, and then tap the blue check mark button on the bottom right.
- *To loop:* Click the stopwatch icon to select how long the snap or story plays before it loops to the beginning.

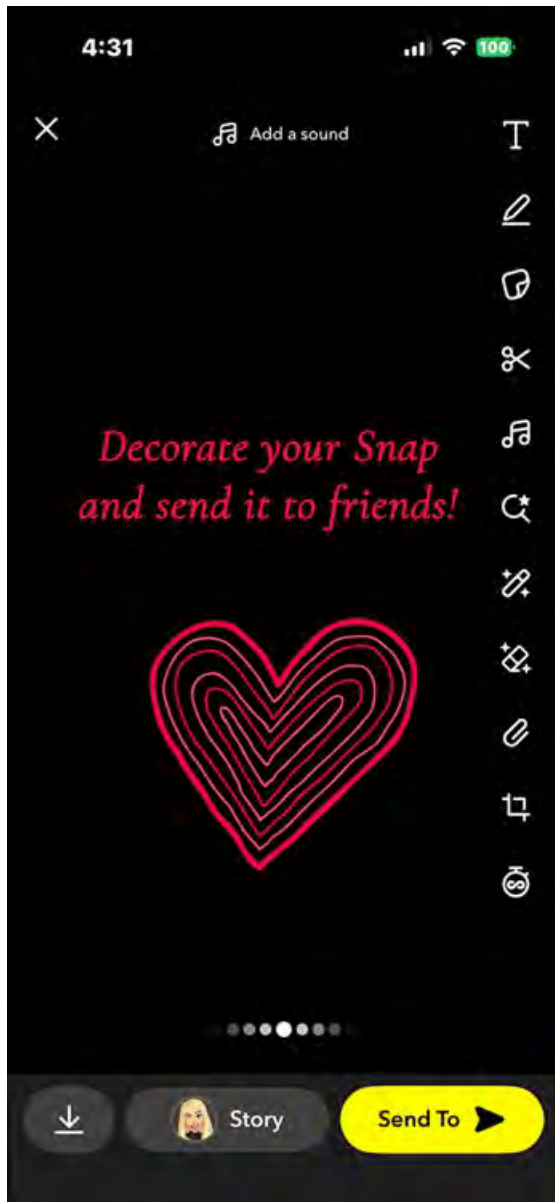


FIGURE 2-6: Add some witty text or cute stickers to your Snap here!

4. **Tap Send To.**
5. **Decide what to do with the Snap or video:**
 - Send it to an individual.
 - Add it to your story, so everyone can see it for up to 24 hours.
 - Download it to your device.
6. **Tap the Send To button, at the bottom right of the screen.**



TIP

To delete a Snap, tap on the profile icon in the top left of the screen, open the Snap

you want to remove, hold your finger down on the screen, and tap the garbage can icon or tap Delete Snap.



TIP Have fun with Snapchat! Inject some personality into your Snaps. Take advantage of the tools, filters, and embellishments to put a fun spin on your images (see the later section “[Using Snapchat’s Embellishment Features](#)” for details).

Congratulations! You’re now snapping!

Telling Your Snapchat Story

Now that you’re on Snapchat, how will you tell your brand’s story? As a brand, you’ll probably want to use Snapchat differently than an individual does. For example, if you share only selfies and personal messages, your Snapchat community will be bored. Snaps should be representative of your brand, while still appealing to the people who prefer to use Snapchat over other social networks.



REMEMBER You have to have a Snapchat business account in order to advertise. We discuss Snapchat advertising in Book 8, [Chapter 5](#).

The following list shares some of the ways brands are using Snapchat to reach their customers and online community:

- » **Product launch:** Snapchat is the perfect platform for a product launch. Think about doing a series of quick reveals before the product launch date to pique interest.
- » **Behind-the-scenes update:** Go backstage at the theater, a concert, or a sports or keynote-speaking event. Or give a tour of the parts of your business that people don’t usually get to see.
- » **Home tour:** Realtors can share photos of available homes in their areas.
- » **Product demo:** Show how your products work or offer life hacks using your products.
- » **Live update from an event:** Report live from parades, rock concerts, football games, high school sports, and more.
- » **Exclusive content for the Snapchat community:** Share images and video your customers don’t see on Facebook, X, and Instagram. Give them a reason to follow you.
- » **Target specific followers:** If you think that a member of your Snapchat community would benefit from your product or service, reach out privately with an offer. For example, if you’re promoting a spa brand and you notice a harried mother among your Snapchat followers, you could privately reach out and say, “You could probably use a break! Here’s a 50 percent discount at our spas.”
- » **Call to action:** Create Snaps that encourage users to sign up for your newsletter, read an

article, or shop at your website.

- » **Announcement:** Announce new hires, new products, new fashion colors, events, or other noteworthy items.
- » **Job opportunities:** GrubHub once had a job opportunity for someone with Snapchat skills. People could apply by sharing innovative Snapchat doodles — a creative way to find applicants with a particular set of skills.
- » **Guest introduction:** Will you be interviewing a guest on your podcast or YouTube show? Use Snapchat to reveal your latest guest.
- » **Recipe or tantalizing food item:** Use food items to direct snappers to your restaurant or food blog. Taco Bell is a good example of a Snapchat account that uses Snaps to introduce new menu items.
- » **Photo, video, or other contest:** Encourage your Snapchat community to get creative and send you fun video, photos, doodles, or other Snaps. Provide a prize and choose a winner.
- » **Animations and a series of video:** Use a series of photos to create an animation or show movement beyond a regular Snap by adding several photos, one after another, to your Snapchat story. Or make several 10-second videos and share to your story one after another, to tell a longer story.
- » **Coupons:** Use the Doodle feature to create coupons and share codes and discounts.
- » **Directions to your website, blog, or sales page:** Share a URL to drive traffic back home.



REMEMBER Don't share content for the sake of sharing content. Like all platforms that your brand uses, add Snapchat to your marketing strategy so you can plan thoughtful content that your Snapchat community will enjoy. Quality is better than quantity.

Knowing who is viewing your stories

You can see who is viewing your stories. This capability gives you a good indication of how well people are responding to your content, and whether certain types of content receive more views than others. You can also see which time of day gets you the most or least amount of views.

Knowing who is viewing your stories (and how many are doing so) helps you create a better content strategy and target your community. Moreover, it enables you to reward the people who view your Snaps the most.

Follow these steps to see who is viewing your stories:

1. **Go to your story by tapping on your profile icon on the top left of the screen.**
Under each image or video under your story, you'll see an eye icon.
2. **Tap the story for a list of everyone who viewed your story.**



TIP

When you share several Snaps to your story, you might notice that certain people stop viewing your Snaps after a while. Knowing where viewership drops off can help you determine when people get bored or when you're sharing too much. For example, if your story features ten Snaps, people don't have to view them all. They can swipe away at any time.

The beauty of Snapchat is that users don't have to commit a lot of time for Snaps. If your story is too long, people begin swiping away. If you're planning a call to action, make sure you place it where your viewers are least likely to swipe away.

Engaging with Snapchat

Sharing on Snapchat is fine, but it's not a one-sided platform. Snapchat is set up for engagement so you can have conversations with individual members of your Snapchat community.

At the bottom of someone's Snap, you see the Send a Chat box, where you can type your comments. These comments are viewed only by the original snapper. Say you share a Snap that shows the office cat sleeping under a desk. People might ask about the cat's owner and the cat's name, whether anyone in the office is allergic to cats, who takes care of the cat on weekends, or who vacuums the cat hair from the office furniture.

A picture of a cat probably doesn't have anything to do with your product or service, but showing an office pet does add a human side to your company. Moreover, people appreciate it when you take time to answer questions and Snap back. You didn't make a direct sale, but now you're on the radar, word will spread about your engagement, and more people will follow your Snaps. People will begin to feel like they know the people behind the brand, which makes them trust you. When it's time to buy, they'll come to you.

Here are a few best practices for engaging with your Snapchat community:

- » **Share content that prompts a response.** Poll your co-workers. What kind of content makes them want to respond? See how other brands are sharing and the type of content that gets the biggest response. Don't just share content because you can. Share content because you want to talk to people.
- » **Ask open-ended questions.** Ask questions that go beyond a simple yes-or-no answer and require a thoughtful response.
- » **Encourage your community to Snap responses.** When you share a Snap, encourage your community to respond. Sometimes you have to put the idea in their head so they'll do more than just view.
- » **Encourage different types of responses.** Ask a question and encourage your community to respond with a sticker, a doodle, or a special filter. Make engagement fun!
- » **Respond to every comment and Snap.** Why encourage conversation when only one person is taking time to talk? If someone cares enough to respond to your Snap, show

them it means something to you and respond in kind.

- » **Use humor when possible.** People aren't on Snapchat for deep, meaningful conversation. Keep it light and fun.
- » **Reward those who reach out with Snaps.** When people comment with a thoughtful response or clever Snap, reward them with a freebie or a discount code.



TIP

What type of content provokes the most engagement? Keep a spreadsheet and log the types of content you post, the amount of views the content receives, and the amount of and types of engagement you receive. Knowing how your community reacts and responds can help you plan future content.

Using Snapchat's embellishment features

Snapchat allows snappers to use different lenses and filters to add whimsy and personality to Snaps. Lenses can illustrate a mood, show holiday spirit, or add life and color to an image. Filters can display causes, show attendance at events, and promote a business.

Lenses

A lens adds special effects to your face, such as cat ears or a Santa hat. You set the lens in place before taking your selfie Snap:

1. **In the main Snap screen, just before taking your selfie Snap, tap any of the circles to the right of the camera button.**

Each circle contains a lens that provides a different effect or looks.

2. **Select the lens you'd like to use.**
3. **You may have to drag the image around to position the filter to fit a face or head.**
For example, you might need to raise your eyebrows — or in the case of the vomiting rainbow, open your mouth. Follow instructions and adjust your position as needed.
4. **Take your Snap and share as you normally would.**

Filters

Unlike lenses, filters are added after you take your Snap. For example, you can add the temperature, or a holiday garland to frame your Snaps.



REMEMBER

Many filters are available for a limited amount of time. If you love a certain filter, make sure to Snap a screenshot or save it to your Memories. You might not be able to find it again later!

To use a filter, do the following:

1. **Make sure location services is enabled on your smartphone.**

You can't use filters without it.

2. **Take your Snap as usual.**
3. **Tap the magnifying glass icon on the right of the Snap.**
4. **Select the filter you'd like to use.**
5. **Tap Send To to share it with another user, Story to share it to your Stories, or Download to save it to your device.**



TIP

To jazz up your Snaps, try using both a lens and a filter. But be careful about over-embellishing. You don't want your Snap to look so busy that it loses its essence.

Considering Snapchat+

Snapchat+ is a premium subscription service that offers users exclusive, experimental, and pre-release features to enhance their Snapchat experience.

Key features of Snapchat+ include:

- » Pin #1 Best Friend: Keep your top friend easily accessible by pinning them as your #1 Best Friend.
- » Story Rewatch Indicator: Know when friends rewatch your stories.
- » Custom App Icons and Themes: Personalize the Snapchat app with exclusive icons and themes.
- » Snapchat+ Badge: Display a special badge on your profile to indicate your subscription status.
- » Friend Solar System: Visualize your closest friendships as a solar system, with each friend represented as a planet.
- » Priority Story Replies: Have your replies to community stories prioritized, increasing visibility.
- » Post View Emoji: Choose a custom emoji to appear after friends view your snaps.
- » Bitmoji Backgrounds: Access exclusive backgrounds for your Bitmoji.
- » Custom Story Expiration: Set your stories to expire at intervals ranging from 1 hour to 1 week.
- » Custom Notification Sounds: Assign unique notification sounds for different friends or groups.
- » Chat Wallpapers: Customize chat backgrounds for individual conversations.
- » Story Boost: Increase the visibility of your stories to more friends.
- » Replay Again: Replay snaps you've sent and receive an extra replay for snaps you receive.
- » Extended Best Friends List: Expand your Best Friends list to include up to 16 friends.

- » One Free Monthly Snapstreak Restore: Restore a Snapstreak once per month without losing your streak.
- » Custom Chat Colors: Personalize the color of your chat messages.
- » AI Features: Utilize AI tools for generating captions, creative content, and more.

Subscription pricing varies by country and device. In the U.S., Snapchat+ is available for \$3.99 per month, \$21.99 for six months, or \$39.99 per year.

To subscribe, open the Snapchat app, go to your profile, tap on the Snapchat+ banner, and choose your subscription plan.

For more information and to explore all available features, visit the Snapchat+ page at www.snapchat.com/plus.

Getting on the map with Snap Map

Snap Map is a personalized feature within Snapchat that allows you to share your location with friends, discover local events, and explore activities worldwide. Your location is only visible to friends when you both have added each other, and if you don't open the app for 24 hours, your location becomes invisible until you access Snapchat again (unless you've opted to share your live location indefinitely.)

You can manage your location-sharing preferences in Snap Map settings, or activate 'Ghost Mode' to hide your location from everyone except those with whom you're sharing your live location. To stop sharing your live location, adjust the separate setting provided.

When you submit Snaps to Snap Map or tag them with a place, they may appear on the Map; however, not all submissions are displayed because selection is primarily automated.

Snap Map also features 'Places,' enabling easy interaction with local businesses. By tapping on a Place, users can view its Public Profile listing, and using the search function at the top of the Map screen allows them to find specific Places, enhancing a Snapper's personalized Map experience.

For more information on using Snap Map, refer to Snapchat's support resources at <https://values.snap.com/privacy/privacy-by-product/snap-map>.

Chapter 3

Getting Started with Instagram

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Using Instagram for branding
 - » Getting set up with Instagram
 - » Choosing photos to share
 - » Making your photos searchable with hashtags
 - » Creating a community on Instagram
-

Have you ever noticed how people tend to react more to imagery than text on the social networks? That's because they see photos before they read text. So, it's always in a brand's best interest to accompany great text with a great photo. Many times, though, the photo speaks for itself, and few words are needed. In fact, brands can find their community is receptive to hanging out with them on a more visual platform, and that's where Instagram comes in.

Instagram is a social network based on photos, not words — although Instagram still allows hashtags, likes, and comments, so there are various ways to engage with your audience. Both individuals and brands alike let their photographs do the talking. In fact, many people prefer Instagram to other social platforms because there's less chatter.

Instagram gives you an opportunity to show your brand's creative side and think outside the box. Instead of attracting people with written stories, you're presenting a more visual experience.

This chapter talks about how to set up an Instagram account and share photos and video with your community.

Promoting Your Brand on Instagram

Instagram is a mobile platform. Although you can view Instagram photos online with your regular web browser, you're limited in what you can do. The majority of people using Instagram to view photos and interact are doing so with smartphones and tablets.



WARNING You can't set up an Instagram account or upload photos to your Instagram account from your computer; you can only view and like photos from your computer. If you want to sign up for an Instagram account or share photos with your community on Instagram, you must use a mobile device.

Here are a few examples of how brands use Instagram in creative ways, while still staying in their comfort zones:

- » The Starbucks account shares images of its customers, its baristas, and even members of the executive team trying new flavors and blends.
- » Red Bull Energy Drink uses its Instagram account to appeal to adrenaline junkies by posting photos of skydivers or skateboards high in the air.
- » Nike shares photos of athletes doing what they do best.
- » King Arthur Flour shares recipes with mouthwatering photos.
- » Jimmy Choo shares stunning images of its shoes.
- » Home Goods shares home-decorating options and tips.
- » The Paris Opera Ballet shares behind-the-scenes images and scenes from performances.



REMEMBER Be creative with your Instagram photos. The best Instagram strategy is to keep it simple. You don't need to take a trip to Europe to take photos to share with your community, because your brand has enough interesting things going on in your own backyard.

Almost every brand can present a more visual side to its community by using Instagram, although you might not immediately see what your brand should highlight. The section "[Determining What Is Photo-Worthy for Your Brand](#)," later in this chapter, throws out some suggestions for photogenic moments.

Creating and Using Your Instagram Business Account

Is your mobile device in hand? Good. The following sections discuss how to set up an Instagram account, upload photos, and control notifications.

Setting up your account

Follow these steps to set up an Instagram account:

1. **Locate the Instagram app in the App Store or Google Play and download it to your mobile device.**
2. **Choose to register with your phone or email account.**
3. **Do one of the following:**
 - *Phone number:* Enter your phone number, the confirmation code the platform texts to you, and a password. Tap Next.
 - *Email account:* Enter your email address and the password you want to use for the

site and select Next.

4. Enter your birthday and tap Next.

Even if this will be a business account, you still have to enter your birth date.

5. Type your full name. Tap Next.

You can use your business name here.

6. Create your username and tap Next.

Either choose the one Instagram suggests or create your own.

7. Read through Instagram's terms and policies and tap the I agree button.

8. (Optional) Add a profile picture or skip for now.

If you opt to add a profile image now, I recommend uploading your company logo.

9. (Optional) Search your phone contacts for friends on Instagram.

Think carefully because Instagram will access your contacts periodically to sync up and ensure they have the most up-to-date information.

10. (Optional) Search your Facebook account for friends on Instagram.

11. (Optional) Decide whether or not you want Instagram to remember your account login information.

12. (Optional) Scroll through the next screen to "Discover People" and tap the Follow button if you want to follow their accounts, or tap the X to remove them from suggestions.

I recommend giving this list a quick glance and following anyone that catches your eye. At this point, they may not be completely relevant to your business goals.

13. Tap the Next link to be taken to your (very empty) feed.

14. Tap the silhouette icon on the bottom right of that screen and then tap the Edit Profile button.

The screen shown in [Figure 3-1](#) appears.

15. Tap the blue Switch to Professional Account link at the very bottom of the page.

Now it's time to turn this into a business account.

16. Tap the blue Continue button to cycle through the intro messages.

Instagram is touting the benefits of having a professional account (but you already know that!).

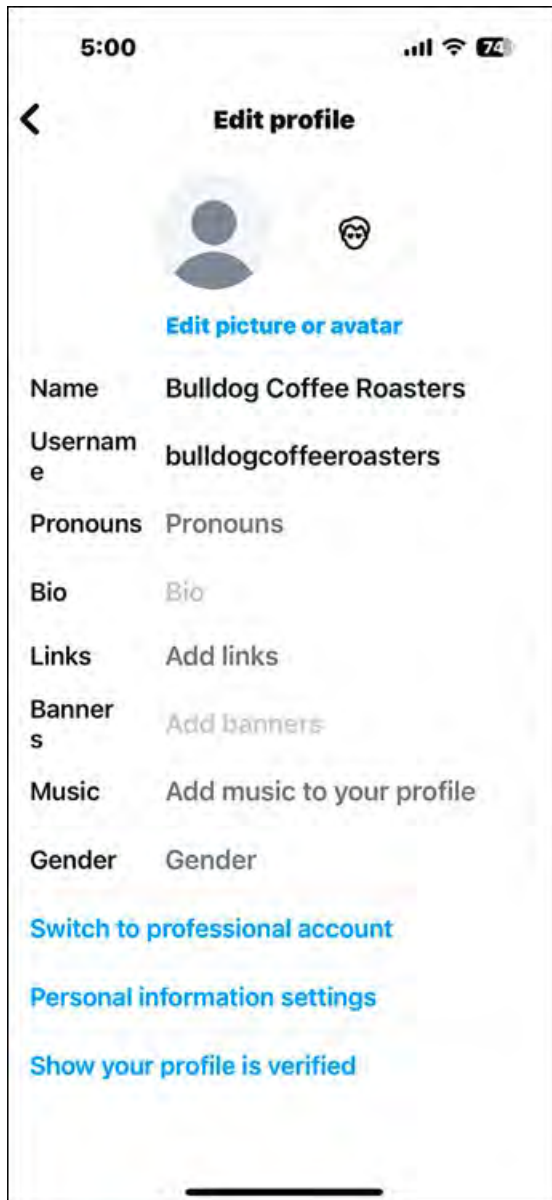


FIGURE 3-1: The Edit Profile screen.

17. **Select the category of business you have and tap Done.**
Pick the one that most closely matches your business. For the purpose of this example, I chose Product/service.
18. **Select whether you're a Business or a Creator and tap Next.**
Instagram gives a brief description for each to help you decide.
19. **You'll be prompted to verify your public business information including your email address, phone number, and business address.**
This information will be publicly visible, and you can remove or change it at any time. If you don't want to provide any information, tap the "Don't Use My Contact Info" link at the bottom of the page.

20. **(Optional) Connect your business Facebook page.**

If you want to connect your company's Facebook page, tap the Login to Facebook button and follow the prompts. Alternatively, you can skip connecting to Facebook by tapping the Skip link.



TIP

If you don't have a Facebook page for your business, now is a great time to head over to Facebook and create one! Meta (the parent company of Facebook and Instagram) makes it easy to manage your accounts by having things like ad manager accounts and analytics in one convenient dashboard.

21. **Welcome to Instagram! Instagram will walk you through eight steps to get up and running.**

The first step is completing your profile, and the following section takes you through that process. After you complete this part of the orientation, you move on to Get Inspired, Get Meta Verified (the little blue check mark next to your username), Grow Your Audience, Introduce yourself, Explore Tools and Insights, Tell Us Your Goals, and finally Learn About How Ads Work.

Completing your profile

It's important that you have a completed profile before you start posting photos and videos. Otherwise, you run the risk of looking like a spam account.

To get started filling in the rest of your profile, follow these steps:

1. **From your profile page, tap the Edit Profile button, and then tap the blue Edit Picture or Avatar link at the top.**

2. **Import the photo from Facebook, take a new photo, or select a photo from your mobile device's image library.**

Alternatively, you can tap the icon to the right of the silhouette icon to create an avatar (cartoon-ish representation of yourself). Because this is a business account, I recommend you only upload your logo.

3. **Position your photo to fit in the profile photo window.**

4. **Tap Done.**

You're back at your Edit Profile screen.

5. **(Optional) Scroll through the remaining options and fill out as much information as you feel comfortable showing publicly.**

Some options include your preferred pronouns, gender, website (or other social media) links, and a representative music clip.

6. **(Optional) Tap on the section that says Bio to add your business's bio and tap Done.**

This is the most important part of your profile, so if you don't want to fill it in now, make a note to return to it soon. You have only 150 characters to work with, so be creative —

and brief!

Instagram saves all your changes automatically, so whenever you're finished adding information, simply tap the back arrow icon on the top left of the screen to return to your profile page.



TIP Make sure you use some of your most important keywords in your bio so people can find your account! Be sure to tell your Facebook, X, and blog communities that you're now on Instagram. If people follow you on one social media site, they'll likely follow you on another.

Sharing images

Okay, it's time! You've finally gotten to the fun part of being on Instagram: posting photos and videos! All you have to do is follow these steps:

1. **Open the Instagram app on your mobile device and select the New Post button (square with a plus sign).**
2. **Decide what kind of post you want to create. (For the purpose of these steps, I selected Post.)**
 - *Post: Your “traditional” Instagram post consisting of one or more photos or videos.*
 - *Story: A temporary (lasting 24 hours) post featured at the top of your Instagram page.*
 - *Reel-Short-form videos: Similar to TikToks (see [Chapter 4](#) of this minibook)*
 - *Live: A real-time, interactive broadcast.*
3. **Perform one of the following and then tap Next.**
 - *Select a photo from your smartphone's library.*
 - *Tap the multiple photos icon and then select all the photos/videos you want to post (up to 20), or tap the camera icon to snap your photo or record video using the round button at the bottom of the screen.*
4. **(Optional) Select one or more enhancements to apply.**

You can add music, text, another image on top, apply a filter, or adjust photo settings like brightness or contrast.



TIP Take the time to familiarize yourself with Instagram's different options because you might find some that make your photos look awesome.

5. **Tap Next.**
6. **Write a caption and add hashtags, if needed.**

For more on hashtags, see the later section “[Using Hashtags in Your Instagram Posts](#).”

7. **(Optional) Tag people, check into a location, add music, and select other social networks on which you’d like to share your photo.**

You can upload your Instagram photos to Facebook or Threads (discussed later in this chapter) at the same time you’re Instagramming. Your photo gets increased visibility when you share it on multiple channels, which means more opportunities for others to like, share, comment, and recognize your brand.



WARNING When you post the same content on every platform, people may not feel the need to follow you on every platform. You may gain more Instagram followers if you don’t share the same images on Facebook and other platforms.

If you’re not logged into these social networks, you may be taken to a screen at those social networks so you can log in.

8. **Tap Share, located at the top right of the screen.**

Determining What Is Photo-Worthy for Your Brand

You may be thinking your brand isn’t as visual as an energy drink or a coffee brand. The truth is few brands can tell their stories in photos. Most, however, can find some ways to present photos while staying true to their brand’s focus and mission.

Here are some of the ways brands can share on Instagram:

- » **Teamwork:** Fans love to see the behind-the-scenes workings of a brand. Don’t shy away from showing the team at meetings, in the cafeteria, or chatting it up in the hallway.
- » **Test kitchens and factories:** Who doesn’t love to see how products are made or served to the public? Unveiling the mystery (without giving away company secrets) will endear you to fans (see [Figure 3-2](#)).



Courtesy of Field & Main

FIGURE 3-2: The Field & Main chef working hard in the kitchen.

- » **Products and ingredients:** Show what goes into a product. For example, if yours is an organic food brand using only wholesome ingredients, share photos of some of your suppliers, such as farms and farmers markets. Showing what goes into a product is also a great tool for selling (see [Figure 3-3](#)).
- » **Outings:** Share photos of the team picnic or conference.
- » **Get to know individual team members:** Share photos and information about specific team members so customers can get to know you better! (See [Figure 3-4](#).)
- » **Ideas for using the product or service:** What are some of the things people make with your products? Share how others use what you sell.
- » **Sightings in the wild:** If you spot people using your products on the street, share photos

on Instagram, but get permission first.

With Instagram, the possibilities are endless. You don't need expensive equipment or a degree in photography. You need only the ability to understand what your community responds to.



Courtesy of Field & Main

FIGURE 3-3: Ingredients straight from the garden!



Courtesy of Field & Main and Julie Gray

FIGURE 3-4: Everyone meet Julie!

Using Hashtags in Your Instagram Posts

Hashtags help to make a photo searchable. For example, if you post a photo of shoes on Instagram and use the hashtag #shoes, #style, or #fashion (or a combination), that photo will show up in the streams of others who are looking for items by using the same hashtag. When someone clicks the hashtag, public images labeled with that hashtag will appear.



REMEMBER Hashtagged content has a limited shelf life, especially content with a popular hashtag.

If the topic is trending or popular, your content may be visible at the top of the search for only a few minutes or hours. Play around with both popular and less trendy hashtags to see where you receive the most engagement.

Here are some hashtag best practices:

- » **Use two or three hashtags at most.** Using too many hashtags makes a post too busy. Sure, your post appears on many different searches now, but most people prefer to look at photos with less clutter.
- » **Make up your own hashtag.** Create a hashtag that suits your brand and share it with your community. Now when they use your product or take part in a related activity, they use your brand's hashtag, giving you more visibility and prompting others to try the same.
- » **Keep an eye out for trending hashtags.** Hashtags don't have to be brand related. Plenty of hashtags relate to holidays, current events, and television shows. Don't spam a hashtag with irrelevant content, but if you have an image appropriate for trending hashtags, don't be afraid to use it.
- » **Think of popular things people like to do or buy.** Some popular hashtags on Instagram are #food, #shoes, and #cats. Familiarize yourself with popular hashtags, but keep in mind that content with a popular hashtag won't stay at the top for long.
- » **Take part in hashtag memes.** Try having fun with your Instagram account by taking part in a meme. For example, you can use #ThrowbackThursday or #TBT to share photos of your business in its early stages or #outfitoftheday to show what your staff is wearing.



WARNING People come to Instagram for the visuals. Although you should give the photo a brief caption or description, you'll lose people if you only write captions containing hashtags.

Using Instagram Stories

Instagram has a stories feature that enables users to share rapid-fire images and video and they're available for only 24 hours. Similar to Snapchat stories (see [Chapter 2](#) in this minibook), Instagram stories give a place to add a sequence of photos or a video to illustrate a story. In this way, prolific Instagram posters can share a group of photos without hogging their friends' feeds. Due to the fact that it expires after 24 hours, it's a great way to post something you want your followers to see, but you don't necessarily want it posted to your account.

Take these steps to use Instagram stories:

1. **On your home screen, tap the square with a plus sign at the bottom of the screen and then tap the Story link at the bottom of the New post screen.**
2. **Select the type of photo or video you want to take.**
 - *Create:* Colorful images featuring things like text, images, polls, and so on.

- *Boomerang*: A short 3-second video clip that continuously repeats or “boomerangs.”
 - *Layout*: Select different ways to showcase multiple photos into a collage.
 - *Hands-free*: Tap the record button once and the video will keep recording until you tap it again to stop. It will record in continuous 10-second clips.
3. **For the purpose of this example, I’ll take a straight photo or video by tapping or holding down the round button at the bottom.**
- To add filters and effects while recording, swipe left and select the one you want to use.
4. **(Optional) Enhance your photo or video:**
- *Save*: Tap the three dots icon all the way to the right and select Save.
 - *Add a silly filter*: Tap the circle button with the three stars.
 - *Add a sticker*: Tap the square button with the smiley face.
 - *Add music*: Tap the sound icon and search for the song that you want.
 - *Draw*: Tap the three dots icon all the way to the right and select the squiggly line.
 - *Add text*: Tap the Aa button.
- For more on enhancements, see Instagram’s Help Center at <https://help.instagram.com>.
5. **Save the photo, add it to your story, send it to close friends, or click the Send To button to share to your story or with specific users.**

Going Live with Instagram Live

Instagram has a feature called Instagram Live that allows you to stream live to your followers and engage with them in real time. When someone broadcasts live video on their account, a ring highlights their profile picture in the Instagram Stories section to let followers know that they can view the live stream.

With Instagram Live you can:

- » Save a replay of video to your Instagram Stories.
- » Engage with followers as they send likes or comments.
- » Pin follower comments to top of the video so they stay at the top of the comment stream.

There are a few ways to utilize Instagram Live for your social media marketing, such as

- » For product demos, tutorials, or announcements
- » Showing your followers a behind-the-scenes look into your office or workstation
- » Letting followers know when you’re running a flash sale
- » Answering audience questions live

Follow these steps to use Instagram Live:

1. **On your home screen, tap the square with a plus sign at the bottom of the screen.**
2. **Swipe to the left at the bottom of the screen and select the Live option.**
3. **(Optional) Add a title to your video by tapping on the Title icon on the bottom.**
4. **(Optional) To add filters and effects while recording, swipe left and select the one you want to use.**
5. **Tap the record button.**

Instagram checks your Internet connection, then starts recording. When you are live, your followers receive a notification that you've gone live.

6. **When you're done recording, tap End on the top right of the screen.**

Instagram verifies that you want to stop recording. Tap End Now.

7. **Select an option for saving or posting your video.**

Your options are Share to IGTV, Download Video, or Delete Video.



TIP

Instagram and Snapchat stories and Instagram Live share many of the same features. For example, video and photos uploaded to Instagram stories are temporary, whereas photos posted to Instagram on your regular feed stay put. You can also see who viewed your Instagram stories. If you're using Instagram to share stunning one-off images rather than a story, don't feel you need to use the additional features. Use Instagram in a manner that best suits you and your community.

Exploring Threads

Threads is one of the newest social media apps developed by Instagram that enables users to share text updates and engage in public conversations. Launched on July 5, 2023, it allows posts up to 500 characters, supporting links, photos, and videos up to 5 minutes long.

Users can log in with their existing Instagram accounts, maintaining the same username and verification badge, though profile customization is available. The app focuses on real-time conversations and features include the ability to share threads to Instagram Stories or direct messages, and control over who can reply to posts.

Threads has experienced significant growth, with over 300 million monthly active users as of December 2024. There have been several recent updates like post scheduling, analytics for follower demographics and content performance, and enhanced customization of the home page, making it a lot more social-media-marketing friendly.

The app is accessible via iOS, Android, and web platforms, providing flexibility in how users engage with the service. Read more at: <https://about.instagram.com/threads>.

Reeling in followers with Instagram Reels

Instagram Reels started off as a feature for creating and discovering short, entertaining videos

on the platform. Instagram's answer to TikTok's, Reels allow users to record and edit 15-second multi-clip videos with audio, effects, and various creative tools.

As expected, you can “dress up” your video clips with various enhancements like:

- » **Audio:** Users can select songs from the Instagram music library or use their own original audio.
- » **AR Effects:** A variety of augmented reality effects are available to enhance videos.
- » **Timer and Countdown:** This feature enables hands-free recording with a countdown timer.
- » **Align:** Users can align objects from previous clips to create seamless transitions.
- » **Speed:** You can adjust the speed of videos or audio for creative effects.

Each user has a dedicated Reels tab on their profile where shared Reels appear (see [Figure 3-5](#)). Additionally, Reels can be shared to Stories, close friends, or via direct message; in these cases, they behave like regular Stories and disappear after 24 hours.

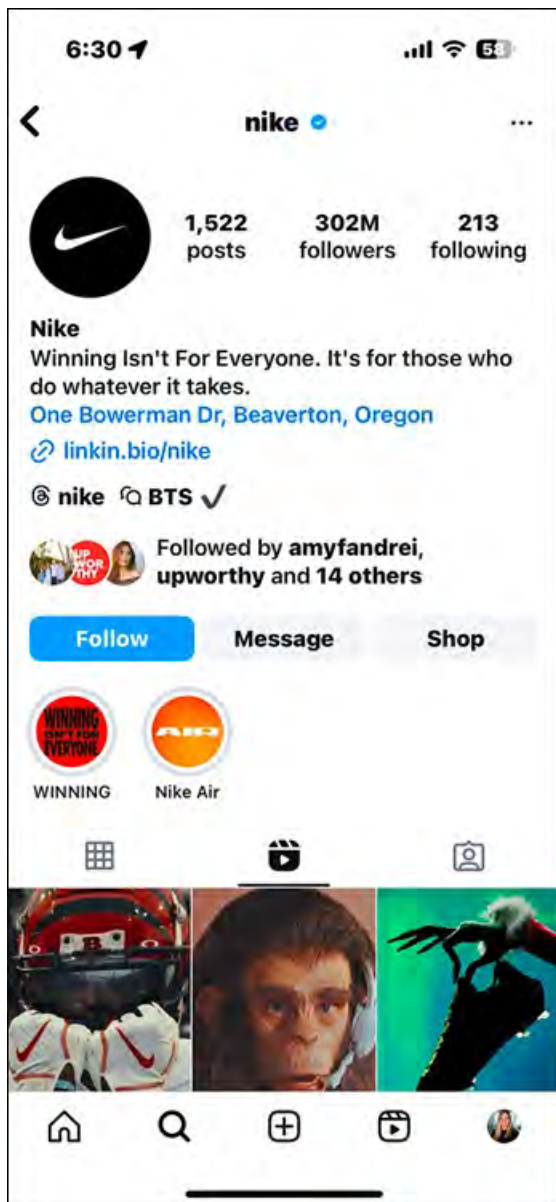


FIGURE 3-5: Nike's Reels tab is full of creative videos.

You can share Reels on your main feed, and for public accounts, they can also be featured in the Explore section, providing an opportunity to reach a broader audience.



TIP

The Explore section showcases a selection of trending Reels, allowing users to discover content from the wider Instagram community. Some Reels may be labeled as “Featured,” indicating Instagram has chosen them to help users discover original content. Be sure to check out how other featured businesses are utilizing Reels to set yourself up for success!

Going all in with broadcast channels

Instagram introduced broadcast channels in February 2023 as a public, one-to-many messaging tool that enables creators and businesses to engage directly with their followers at scale. Through these channels, creators can share text, photos, videos, voice notes, and polls to keep their audience updated and share behind-the-scenes moments. Although only creators can send messages, followers can react to content and participate in polls.

Initially available to select U.S. creators, Instagram expanded broadcast channels globally in June 2023, allowing millions of creators worldwide to engage with their followers in real time.

Broadcast channels offer features such as:

- » **Replies:** Respond to messages and interact with each other within the channel, fostering more dynamic conversations.
- » **Prompts:** Creators can initiate discussions by posting questions or prompts, encouraging follower engagement through text or photo responses.
- » **Insights and Best Practices:** New metrics, including total interactions, story shares, and poll votes, help creators assess content performance. Personalized guidance and best practices are also provided to assist creators in achieving their goals.

Broadcast Channels are a great way to connect more directly with your followers. Because they're live, interactions and engagement tend to be more authentic and natural, something that followers appreciate. After all, it's called *social* media, with the idea that users build a sociable community.

Exploring different revenue streams on Instagram

One of the benefits of utilizing Instagram for your social media marketing activities is that it offers a few different ways to make money directly on the platform. Where it used to be that creators made their money only through product endorsements and businesses by sending people to their website, now people can get creative with different ways to monetize their product or services.

Attract a regular fanbase with subscriptions

Instagram Subscriptions enable businesses to earn recurring monthly income by offering exclusive content and experiences to their most engaged followers.

This offering makes sense only if you have a product or service that can deliver fresh, relevant, and helpful content on a monthly basis. Some examples that make great subscription services are wellness programs, language tutoring, small business consulting, life coaching, astrology services, and more.

There are several features and benefits that draw business owners to this revenue generating model, including:

- » **Exclusive Content:** Sharing subscriber-only Stories, Lives, Posts, Reels, and Broadcast Channels provides unique experiences to subscribers.
- » **Subscriber Badges:** Subscribers receive a distinctive badge next to their username,

making them stand out in comments and direct messages.

- » **Custom Pricing:** Business owners can set their own monthly subscription rates, choosing from preset amounts starting at \$0.99/month and going all the way up to \$99.99/month. It's a great way to have a predictable (and reliable) income.
- » **Strengthened Community:** Subscriptions foster deeper connections between creators and their most dedicated followers.

You can read more about offering subscriptions at <https://creators.instagram.com/earn-money/subscriptions>.

Partnering with influencers on the Creator Marketplace

Influencer marketing (Book 8, [Chapter 5](#)) leverages individuals with significant social influence (influencers) to promote products, services, or brands. These influencers typically have a dedicated following on social media platforms, blogs, or other digital spaces, and their audience trusts their opinions and recommendations.

Instagram's Creator Marketplace is a platform designed to facilitate collaborations between brands and influencers. Companies can utilize this tool to discover influencers by applying filters such as gender, age, follower count, interests, and audience demographics. Additionally, they can identify people who have shown interest in their brand, tagged them, or are followers.

Once potential collaborators are identified, businesses can initiate projects through the marketplace, detailing campaign objectives, desired deliverables, compensation, and other pertinent information. Communication is streamlined via a dedicated "Partnerships Messages" inbox within the Instagram app, allowing for direct coordination between brands and creators. Learn more at <https://help.instagram.com/337707278243327>.

Selling on Instagram

These days you'd be hard-pressed to find a social media user that hasn't made at least one purchase on a social networking platform. And it makes sense: Business 101 tells us to "go where your customers are." And where is seemingly everyone these days? On social networking sites!

Instagram Shopping offers businesses a dynamic platform to showcase products directly within the app. Features like tappable product tags and a streamlined checkout process enhance the shopping experience, making it easy for customers to discover and buy products they love. By integrating these tools, brands can effectively reach and engage with a vast audience, turning casual browsing into tangible sales.

Setting up your Instagram Shop

Instagram Shopping is a suite of features that enables businesses to showcase and sell products directly within the Instagram app, providing users with a seamless shopping experience. This eliminates the need to send followers off the platform, which can cut down on abandoned shopping carts as well as capitalize on the "instant gratification" that many get from online shopping! You can learn more about Instagram Shops at

<https://about.instagram.com/features/shopping>.

Here are a few features that make having an Instagram Shop a worthwhile endeavor:

- » **Product Tags:** Businesses can tag products in their posts and stories, allowing users to tap for more details and make purchases.
- » **Instagram Shop:** A dedicated storefront on a business's profile where users can browse products, explore collections, and purchase items without leaving the platform.
- » **Produce Collections:** Businesses can organize products into themed groups, making it easier for users to discover items of interest, encouraging additional sales.
- » **Checkout on Instagram:** In the United States users can purchase products directly within the app using Meta Pay, streamlining the transaction process.
- » **Shopping from Creators:** Brands can collaborate with influencers who tag content, enabling users to shop directly from creator posts.

These features enhance product discoverability and simplify the purchasing process, benefiting both businesses and consumers. To set up Instagram Shopping, businesses need an Instagram business or creator account, a connected Facebook Page, and a product catalog managed via Commerce Manager or an integrated e-commerce platform such as Shopify.

Learning the tricks of the trade (also known as best practices)

With over 2 billion monthly active users, Instagram offers a unique platform to showcase products, engage with potential customers, and build brand loyalty. Here are a few tips to get you started:

- » **Optimize your shop's profile:** Ensure your profile picture, username, bio, and website link are engaging and fully optimized to make a strong first impression. Make good use of your most important keywords.
- » **Utilize the Instagram product catalog:** Create a comprehensive product catalog within Instagram, providing detailed information to facilitate a seamless shopping experience.
- » **Experiment with various content formats:** Leverage different formats such as stories, posts, IGTV, and Reels to determine which resonates most with your audience.



REMEMBER Don't go overboard and *only* post items from your shop. Be sure to continue posting your usual Instagram content so your followers don't get annoyed with what could be construed as heavy-handed selling.

- » **Offer promotional deals:** Implement contests, giveaways, and special offers to attract and retain customers.
- » **Effectively use product tags:** Incorporate product tags in your content to direct potential buyers to specific product pages, enhancing visibility and engagement.

- » **Leverage user-generated content (UGC):** Feature content created by customers to build trust and authenticity with your audience.
- » **Convert tagged stories into highlights:** Save product-tagged stories as highlights to ensure they remain accessible beyond the 24-hour story lifespan.
- » **Develop a clear hashtag strategy:** Use relevant hashtags strategically to attract and engage your target audience effectively.
- » **Run ads with product tags:** Promote tagged product posts through sponsored ads to expand reach and drive sales.
- » **Enhance influencer marketing efforts:** Collaborate with influencers to tap into their follower base and boost brand awareness.
- » **Measure, analyze, and adjust:** Regularly assess the performance of your Instagram Shop strategies and make data-driven adjustments to optimize results.

Chapter 4

TikTok(ing) Around the Clock

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Using TikTok for branding
 - » Getting started with TikTok
 - » Creating your very own videos
 - » Determining the types of content to create
-

It's a well-known fact that visual content performs the best on social media. Whether it's images, gifs, or videos, if people can take a quick look or hit the play button and watch a funny 10-second video clip, they'll choose that over written content any day.

TikTok is one of the most popular social networking platforms with a large worldwide audience of 1 billion monthly active users. TikTok videos can be up to 10 minutes long and they capture the attention of viewers because of how easy it is to get creative with videos by adding in special effects, music, voice-overs, and even “duets” which are two videos running side by side.

The draw of TikTok is the casualness of it. There's no need to get fancy or spend a lot of money. Being funny, friendly, and approachable is what will gain you an audience without a lot of investment on your part. Just be yourself.

This chapter talks about how to set up a TikTok account and get started creating TikTok videos that will keep people entertained.

Note: As this book was nearing completion, the United States government banned TikTok from operating in the country due to privacy concerns with the app's Chinese parent company ByteDance. As of this writing, the Supreme Court of the United States was gearing up to hear arguments against the ban; however, the outcome of the case would not be available prior to the book being sent to the publisher.

Using TikTok for Brand Promotion

TikTok is a video-sharing platform where users create video clips from 15 seconds all the way up to 10 minutes long. It started in China in 2016, but didn't become popular in the United States until 2018. Despite its fledgling status, the app has over 170 million members in the United States alone. As of Q1 2025, TikTok has been downloaded nearly 5 *billion* times. Needless to say, those audience numbers have caught the attention of marketers.

Compared to the other social networking platforms discussed in this book, TikTok has the youngest user base; nearly 36 percent are 16- to 24-year-olds (Gen Z) and 34 percent are 25-34 years old. That means the remaining 30 percent are 35+ years old. If your target market is

the latter, don't write off TikTok just yet. Younger generations adopt technology earlier than older generations, but older users eventually catch up. Marketers would be wise to strike while the iron is hot and build up a following sooner rather than later.

So what's the appeal? Are there fancy bells and whistles that enable users to create mind-blowing video clips filled with special effects? Hordes of celebrities making videos in exotic locations? Well, no. Neither of those is the case. What draws users into TikTok is the exact opposite; namely, the fact that the content depicts everyday people in everyday locations doing everyday things. The most popular influencers on TikTok are teenagers making videos in their kitchens and living rooms. They're *relatable*. (I talk about influencers later in this chapter, as well as in [Book 8](#).)

Creating and Personalizing Your TikTok Account

Okay, so now that you've decided to give marketing on TikTok a try, let's go ahead and get started!

Setting up your account

Follow these steps to set up a TikTok account:

1. **Locate the TikTok app on iTunes or Google Play and download it to your mobile device.**
2. **Choose to register with your email address/phone number, Facebook account, Apple account, or Google, as shown in [Figure 4-1](#).**
3. **Do one of the following:**
 - *For Facebook, Google, or Apple accounts:* Tap the appropriate button and use that particular site's credentials to create an account on TikTok.
 - *Email account or phone number:* You will be prompted to enter your birthday on the following screen to ensure you're over 13 years of age and then enter your phone number or email address to receive a verification code.
4. **Create a nickname (username).**

Either choose the one TikTok suggests or create your own. I recommend creating one that reflects your brand's name.

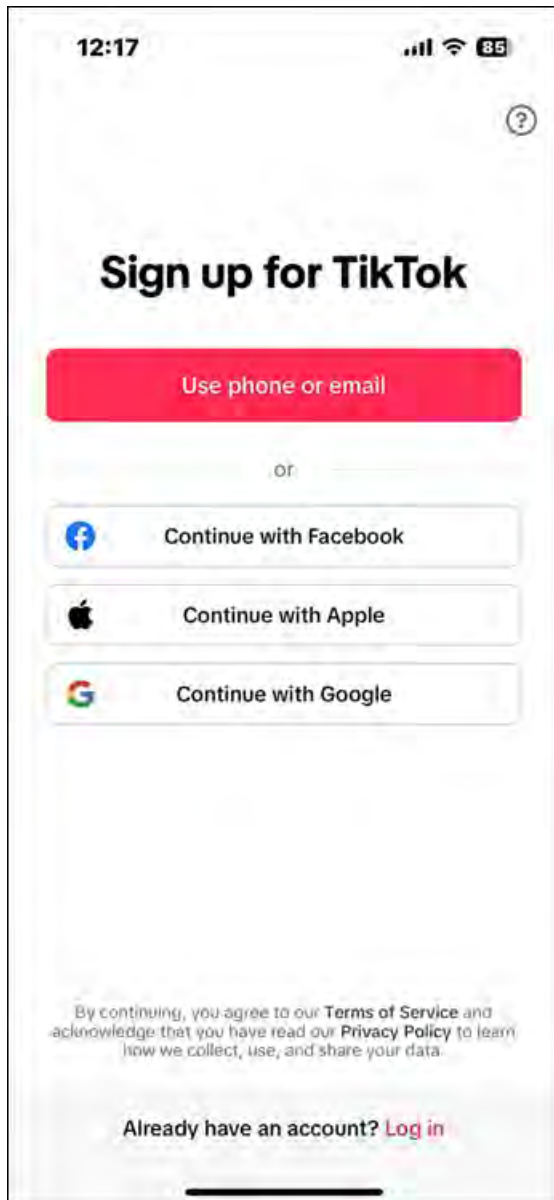


FIGURE 4-1: Select one of these methods to open your TikTok account.

And that's it! You're now on your brand-new profile page as shown in [Figure 4-2](#).

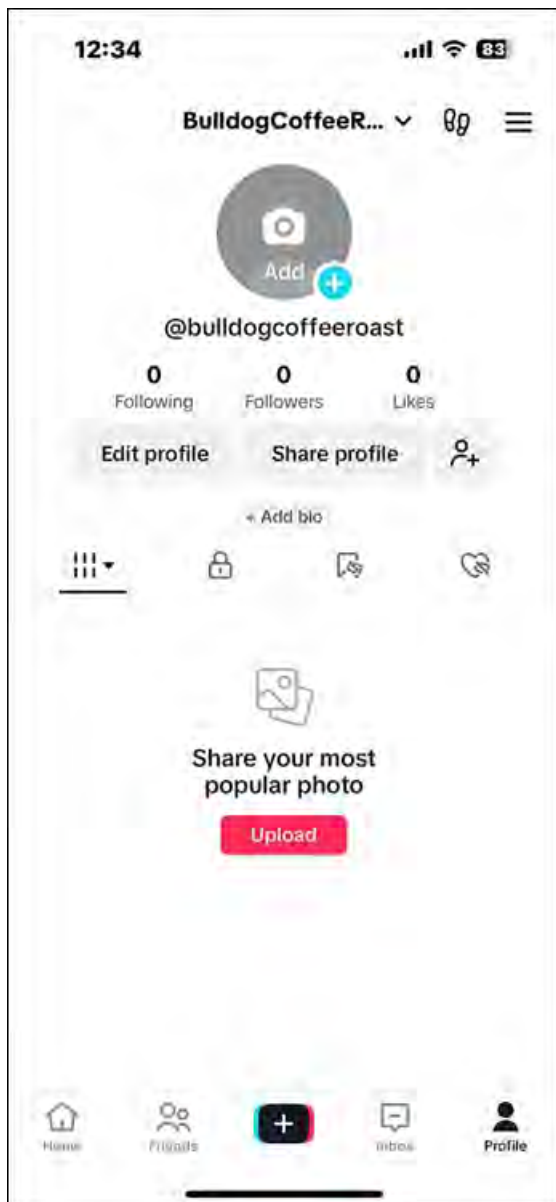


FIGURE 4-2: Welcome to your new profile!

Note: If you used anything other than your email address or phone number to sign up for your new TikTok account, then that account information will automatically be brought over and used for TikTok. Depending on the information that you filled in, you may want to go back and change it, which the next section gets into.

Completing your profile

It's important that you have a completed profile before you start videos. Otherwise, you run the risk of looking like a spam account. Also, as I mention in the previous section, if you utilized one of the sign-up methods other than an email address or phone number, whatever personal information you entered into that account was brought over. Chances are you'll want to change some settings for your TikTok account.

To get started filling in the rest of your profile, follow the steps below:

1. **Tap the Edit Profile button in the center of the page.**
2. **To update or add a new profile photo, tap the photo icon in the circle at the top.**
You have the option to take a new photo, upload an existing photo, or create an avatar (a cartoon-ish representation of yourself). If you're replacing the existing profile photo, then you also have the option to view the existing one.



TIP As with all the other social networks, I recommend you use your company's logo as your profile photo.

3. **Tap on the Name area to change your name.**
If you want to change the name that may have been imported when you created your account, now's your chance. You have 30 characters to work with and you can only change it once every seven days.
4. **Tap Save.**
You're back at the Edit Profile screen.
5. **(Optional) Tap on the space that says Username if you want to change it.**
You just created your username, but if you change your mind and want to update it, here's where you do it.
6. **(Optional) Tap on the space that says Pronouns if you want to add them.**
You can add up to four pronouns and can edit or remove them at any time.
7. **(Optional) Tap on the section that says Bio to add your business's bio and tap Done.**
This is the most important part of your profile, so if you don't want to fill it in now, make a note to return to it soon. You have only 80 characters to work with, so be creative — and brief!
8. **(Optional) Add your Lemon8, Instagram, and/or YouTube profiles.**
This is a great way to cross-promote your other social media accounts, so take advantage of it!

Touring the TikTok screens

Now let's talk about the features you'll be using when creating your videos. From the Profile screen, shown in [Figure 4-2](#), you see the following:

- » **New video button:** This black square with the plus (+) sign is what you tap to record videos.
- » **Friends:** Tap the people icon to find new videos that your friends and other accounts that you follow have posted.

- » **Inbox:** This is where you'll send and receive direct messages (DMs) from others on TikTok.
- » **Profile:** Takes you back to your profile page.
- » **Home:** This is where all the videos from the accounts you follow show up, as well as videos from accounts that TikTok suggests based on your interests.
- » **Your videos:** Videos that you start creating show up on this main screen, which is represented by the three vertical, dashed lines.
- » **Private:** The lock icon next to the heart is where the videos that you've marked private are kept.
- » **Favorites:** Tapping the icon that looks like a ribbon (next to the private lock icon) takes you to a screen where you can see all the videos, hashtags, sounds, and effects that you've favorited.
- » **Liked:** The heart icon next to the lines are the videos that you've liked. These are private by default, but you can change that in your Privacy settings.
- » **Following, Followers, Likes:** Pretty self-explanatory, the numbers underneath your username at the top show you the number of accounts you're following, the number of people that follow you, and the total number of likes you've received.
- » **Add friends:** On the top right of the screen is a silhouette with a plus (+) sign. Tap that to invite friends using the contacts on your phone, as well as the options to invite via text, QR code, and other social media platforms such as Facebook.
- » **Settings and Privacy:** Tapping the icon that looks like three lines in the top right opens a menu where you can access the Settings and Privacy screen that is essentially the nuts and bolts of your account. You can adjust things like the notifications you receive, the language your account displays in, and privacy and safety features like who can send you DMs and whether or not your videos can be downloaded.

Note: There are too many settings to cover in this book; I recommend you go through them all to ensure you're making the most of your TikTok experience.

Following (and getting followers) on TikTok

Now's where you go looking for accounts to follow! The idea is that when you follow similar accounts, you'll see the types of content they share and how they engage with their audience. This is especially important when you're first starting out on TikTok because you're still learning the etiquette that comes along with this unique platform.

To get started, tap on the magnifying glass icon at the top right of the home screen. Now, in the search box at the top of the page, type a search term associated with your business. [Figure 4-3](#) shows the results when you type the word **coffee** and tap the Search button. At the top the results are categorized into Top (what's trending), Users, Videos, Shop, LIVE, Places, Hashtags, and Photos.

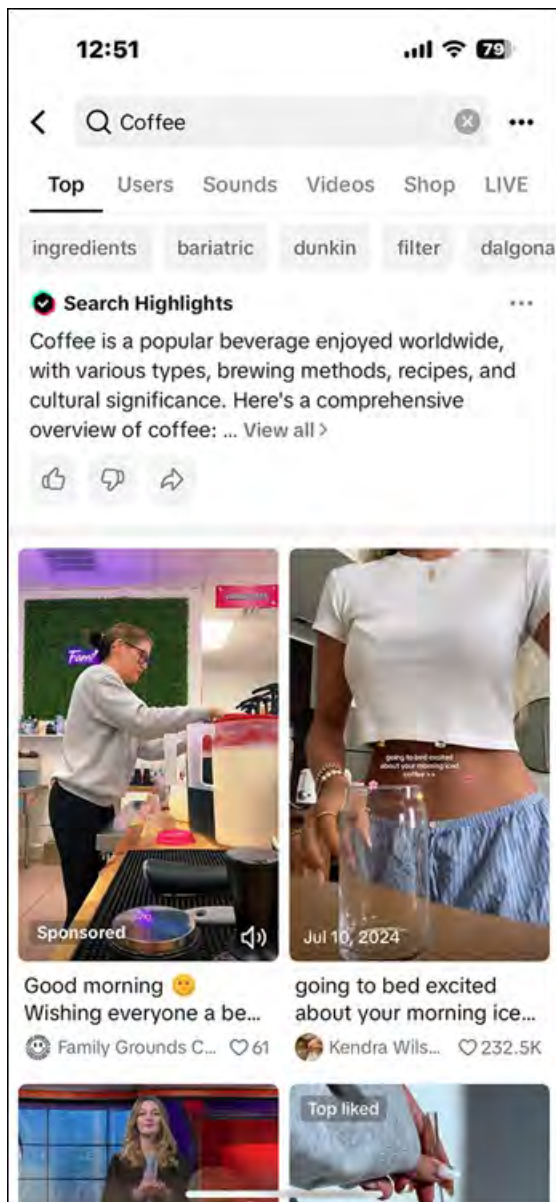


FIGURE 4-3: The search results when you type **coffee**.

Scroll through all the content, watch different videos from various users, and look at the different hashtags you can incorporate into your own videos. When something catches your eye, tap on it to open it and you'll see the options shown in [Figure 4-4](#).

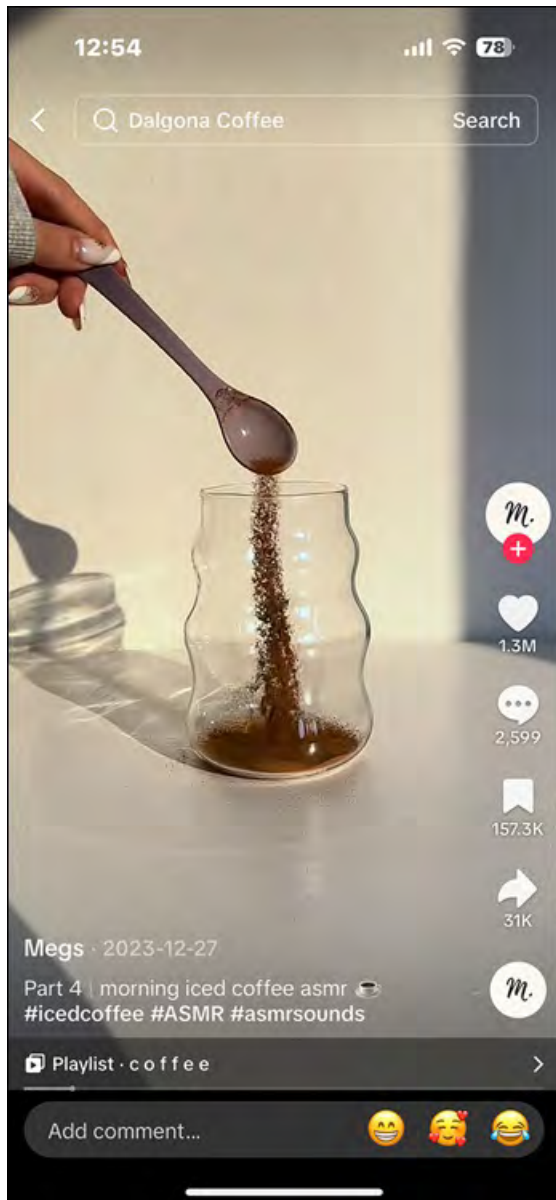


FIGURE 4-4: The different actions you can take on a TikTok video.

Here are the different parts of the video screen:

- » **Follow:** On the right side of the screen is the user's profile photo with a plus (+) sign in a pink circle. Tap the button to follow this account.
- » **Liked:** The heart icon underneath the Follow icon shows the number of likes this video has received. Tap on the heart to like the video.
- » **Favorite:** The ribbon icon saves the video under your Favorites tab.
- » **Comments:** The conversation bubble icon represents the comments the video has. Tap on it to read the comments and add one of your own.
- » **Send:** The right-pointing arrow icon lets you share this video with someone else via

TikTok message, text message, through Snapchat, Instagram, and a number of other options.

You also may see options to repost the video to your own followers or view the video's captions (if available).

- » **Music:** The circle icon on the bottom right is the specific music clip that accompanies the video. Tap on it to get the details of the sound and save it to your favorites if you'd like to utilize it in your own videos.



TIP

The music is all free to use, so take advantage of the wide variety!

Sharing videos

Note: There are so many different combinations and features that go into creating TikTok content that I can't cover them all here. But play around with the different options and see how creative you can get!

Now it's time to create your first TikTok video! All you have to do is follow these steps:

1. **Open the app on your mobile device and select the new video button (square with a plus sign). You see the fresh canvas like the one shown in [Figure 4-5](#).**

You may have to give the app access to your camera and microphone first.

2. **Select either 10m, 60s, or 15s for video length.**

Alternatively, you can tap Templates and utilize one of the premade video templates with all the effects built right in or select Text to create a text-only image.

3. **(Optional) Tap on Effects to select a fancy effect to have on your video.**

You can choose from multiple categories of effects including Trending, Interactive, Beauty, Funny, and Animal.

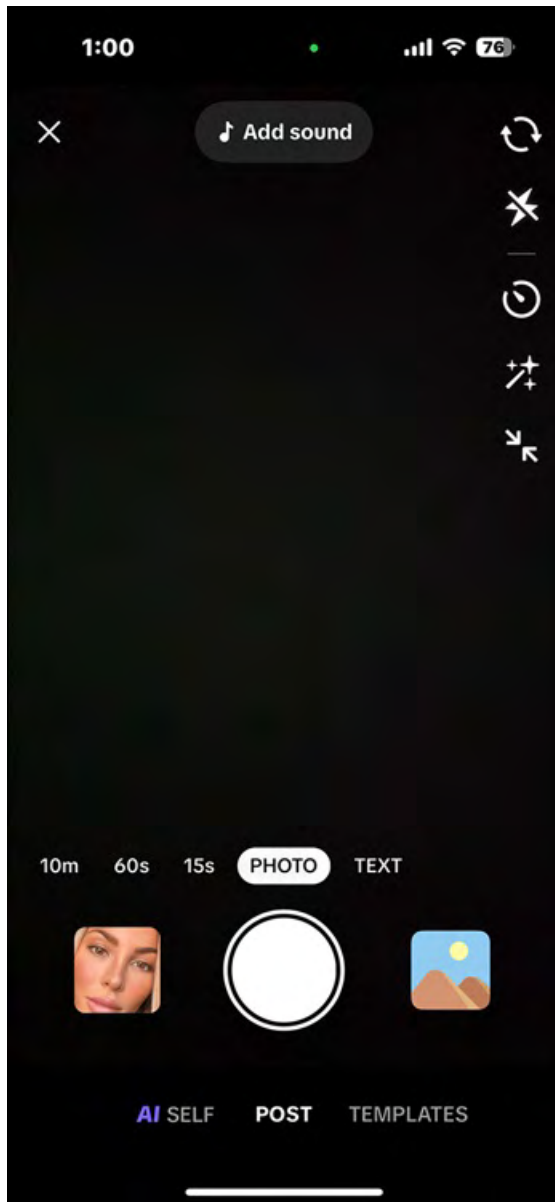


FIGURE 4-5: It's time to get creative!



TIP

Although every video of yours shouldn't have an effect, definitely use them sometimes to give your content some pizzazz.

4. (Optional) Utilize the options on the top right of the screen:

- *Flip the camera to film out.*
- *Camera flash on or off.*
- *Timer to set a 3- or 10-second countdown before the recording starts.*
- *Retouch to smooth out skin texture.*

- *Make the recording screen full-sized or shortened.*
5. **(Optional) Tap Add Sound at the top of the screen to select music to add.**
 6. **Tap the white record button (large white circle) and get creative!**
Tap the button again to pause and once you're finished, tap the red circle with the check mark to finish the recording and play back your masterpiece!



TIP The fun doesn't have to stop there! After you're done recording you can add voice effects, text, stickers, additional sounds, and more!

7. **Tap the red Next button.**
There are several options to choose from, including add a description of your video, include hashtags to help others find your video, and decide if you want to keep it public or make it private, allow comments on it, and allow people to make it into a duet. You can also specify whether people can save your video to their devices, and more.
8. **Once you've changed all the settings to your liking, tap the red Post button to post it immediately to your account or Draft if you want to return to work on it later.**
Congratulations! You've made your first TikTok video! That was fun, wasn't it?

Determining What Videos You Should Create

You may be wondering what kind of fun and interesting videos you can make for your brand. The good news is, as long as it's ... er ... fun and interesting, it doesn't have to directly showcase your brand. Just something *related* to your brand.

Here are some examples of how to showcase your brand's personality on TikTok.

- » **Trending Content:** Take advantage of trending content like hashtags or dances. Are you or someone on your team a great dancer (or at least a good sport)? Throw on a branded t-shirt and try to re-create one of the trending dances. You'll have a lot of fun and your audience will as well!
- » **Test Kitchens:** Who doesn't love to see how products are made or served to the public? If you have a bakery, give a behind-the-scenes peek at decorating a fancy cake set to some grand music.
- » **Kids and Pets:** Kids and pets are the two top draws on TikTok. After all, the audience does tend to be younger generations. Enlist the help of your adorable bouncing puppy to get some likes.
- » **Challenges:** Take part in a trending challenge. Remember the Ice Bucket Challenge where people tossed buckets of ice water over each other's heads to raise money for ALS? There are always a number of challenges going on throughout TikTok. Pick one and get creating!
- » **User-generated Content:** Run a contest and ask fans and followers on your other social

networks to put together TikTok videos representing your brand, post them, and ask people to vote for the winner.

The only limit is your imagination! Try out a few different ideas and see what your audience responds to the best.

Selling on TikTok Shop

TikTok Shop is an integrated e-commerce solution within the TikTok platform, enabling businesses to showcase and sell products directly to the TikTok community. It offers features such as live shopping, shoppable videos, and an in-app shop page, facilitating seamless discovery and purchase experiences for users.

Selling on TikTok Shop has several benefits, including

- » **Expanded Reach:** Access to a broad audience, particularly among Gen Z and millennial users.
- » **Enhanced Engagement:** Utilize creative content formats like videos and live streams to interact with potential customers.
- » **Integrated Shopping Experience:** Customers can discover and purchase products without leaving the app, reducing friction in the buying process.

To determine your eligibility for a TikTok Shop and to kick off the registration process, visit: <https://seller-us-accounts.tiktok.com/account/register>.

TikTok Shopping Ads

TikTok Shopping Ads are designed to integrate e-commerce into TikTok's social and entertainment experience. They allow brands to promote and sell products directly to users in a seamless and engaging way, reducing friction in the shopping process.

Advertising on TikTok is discussed in more detail in Book 8, [Chapter 5](#), but I'll briefly outline the three most popular types of TikTok Shopping Ads here:

Video Shopping Ads

Video Shopping Ads enable brands to feature one or more products within TikTok's in-feed video ads. They are typically product cards or clickable links integrated into the video ad that, when clicked, take users to TikTok's in-app store or an external e-commerce site to complete the purchase. This ad type combines TikTok's short-form content with an easy path to purchase.

Catalog Listing Ads

Catalog Listing Ads promote a range of products in an immersive format without requiring video content because products appear as a scrollable catalog, enabling discovery through TikTok's algorithm.

This format is ideal for showcasing multiple items at the same time, appealing to users who are still exploring their buying options. But because they leverage TikTok's personalized

recommendation system, it helps by connecting the right products to interested users.

LIVE Shopping Ads

LIVE Shopping Ads facilitate live selling events on TikTok because brands host live streams to showcase products in real time. During the live stream, users can interact with the brand, ask questions, and purchase products directly from the stream. This ad type combines real-time interaction, engagement, and purchasing, creating a dynamic and immersive shopping experience.

Chapter 5

Watching and Listening: Videos, Podcasts, and Your Brand

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Determining if audio/visual content is right for you
 - » Recording content that resonates with your audience
 - » Posting content for the world to enjoy
-

Audio/visual content is a hot topic these days. Whether it's short-form video clips highlighting a product feature, or longer form video demos, businesses all over the world (and in all industries) regularly post audio content such as podcasts as well as video content.

One of the big draws for this type of content is that it works well for both B2B and B2C purposes. You have to tailor your content to your audience, of course (see Book 1, [Chapter 3](#) for information on how to locate your target audience). But with a little research, practice, and this book (of course!), you can be well on your way to calling yourself a successful podcaster and/or video creator.

This chapter starts at the beginning and takes you through the steps of determining if creating audio/visual content is a right fit for your audience and strategy. It then rounds it off by giving you options for where to publish your content so you can start growing (or building) your target audience even more.

Deciding if Video and Podcasts Are Right for You

Yes, audio/visual content performs extremely well on social media. More and more people are starting to prefer watching a video tutorial or listening to a podcast while driving or exercising than ever before. And one reason could be that it requires less effort on their part.

But, as the case would be, audio and visual content requires more effort on *your* part to create. Sure, you do a live stream on Facebook, TikTok, or Instagram, for example, and that doesn't require a lot of planning or post-production work. But chances are that won't be the only type of audio/visual content you post, which means there will be work both before creation and after.



REMEMBER As is the case with any social media platform, it's important to know that your target

audience is utilizing the social network. After all, why would you be putting time and effort into perfecting your video strategy (and abilities), if you're not going to see any return on your investment. (See Book 1, [Chapter 3](#) to learn how to identify your target audience.)

Here are a few other things to take into consideration when deciding if audio/visual content creation is right for your business:

- » **Time:** I mention previously that unless you're doing an impromptu livestream video, regular audio and visual production takes time. How much time depends on a number of factors such as the type of content (videos generally take longer to create than podcasts), the subject matter, and the experience level of the creator. If you don't have a content creation team at your disposal, you should think about how much time you personally have to create this type of content. Be sure to take into consideration the time it takes to plan the podcast or video, sourcing guests or the supplies you need, the actual recording time and re-takes needed, and post-production time. It's rare that anything turns out perfectly with one take, so chances are you're going to have to edit out some mistakes after the fact.

Also take into consideration that the more time you have to spend on creating audio/visual content, the less time you'll have to devote to other social media marketing activities. So, if you're a one-person show, you may find you won't have the bandwidth to maintain activity on other social networking platforms (unless all you do is cross-post this content, which I don't recommend doing as your sole social media market strategy).

- » **Equipment:** Although you don't have to purchase expensive equipment in order to create great quality content, it helps to have things such as external microphones and separate cameras when recording. Sure, live streams are done via your cellphone cameras, but if you're doing something like a video tutorial or interview with a guest, you should make sure the content is well-produced and that viewers can see and hear everything. Built-in microphones are fine for video conferences and taking voice notes for yourself, but they don't work well for social media content. A quality (standalone) mic will help cut down on things such as echoes and background noise. It's also a good idea to invest in a tripod, especially if you're going to be the one on camera. If you'll be doing the recording yourself, a tripod will eliminate common video issues like shakiness.
- » **Location:** Regardless of if you're doing a podcast or a video, you need a quiet location to record it. It's not necessary to have a dedicated recording studio set up with soundproofing and other fancy stuff (although that would be nice!), but you do need a place where you won't be interrupted by doorbells, barking dogs, or honking horns. It's also a good idea to record in a carpeted room with plush furniture because that will help muffle outside noises and also cut down on any echoes.

Determining What Content to Create

Audio and video content you create should meet one or more of these criteria, which the following sections discuss in more detail:

- » Informative
- » Company-related
- » Attention-catching
- » Competitive
- » Fun!



TIP I say *one or more* because sometimes you have a great content idea that is timely and fun, but not necessarily informative or on brand. And that's okay! Although it's quite possible to create content that checks all those boxes, don't feel like you have to every time.

Informative

Informative content is related to your product or service in some way. It doesn't have to be *only* about your company or brand, but viewers should be able to connect the dots. Examples of informative content include how to roast your own coffee if you sell green coffee beans, or tips for getting stains out of carpets if you sell flooring. It's still relevant to the business but not about the company itself.



TIP Even though the content itself may not be about your company, if you happen to be doing a video, for example, you should wear some branded items like a company t-shirt or hat. You may not be selling directly, but you're definitely representing!

Company-related

Company-related content is directly connected to your business and could be a product demo, an interview with the CEO telling the story of the evolution of your company, or even a "day in the life" of an employee or department. This is the type of content where your company, product, and/or service is the star.



TIP If you're creating company-related content, it's a good idea to keep it light and personable. No one wants to sit through a 30-minute video of a monotoned narrator doing a hard sell.

Attention-catching (and keeping)

The first part of this — attention-catching — has more to do with writing catchy titles and descriptions and effective search engine optimization than it does with the actual content. The content should still fall into one of the categories in this list in order to keep the audience's attention, but how will you pull viewers in if you don't have a snazzy title and description that utilizes your keywords? (Book 2 [Chapter 3](#) talks about optimizing YouTube for searches.)

Competitive

What kind of content are your competitors creating? It's good practice to peruse their video and/or podcast channels to check out not only what they're talking about, but whether or not what they're talking about is getting good audience engagement. If you hear the metaphorical crickets chirping, that topic or format may not be the best ones to pursue. On the other hand, if the audience is engaged and reacting positively, consider creating a similar type of content to see if it resonates the same way.



WARNING Don't ever steal or plagiarize anyone's content! It's perfectly okay to get ideas from others and do something similar, but always put your own spin on it. Not only is it bad form to steal (and potentially illegal), but it's also not in your own brand's voice.

Fun!

Have you ever started listening to a podcast or watched a video and suddenly found your mind wandering — or worse? Chances are, the video or podcast was a snooze-fest! If the hosts don't seem like they're having fun and enjoying themselves, what makes you think the audience will? If you're not creating content that requires the audience to pay close attention (like a how-to video or a podcast with an interesting story arc), then you have to keep the audience's attention some other way. This type of content could be a video of some of your employees trying out the latest dance challenge (in branded clothing, of course!), or having a comedy "open mic" contest on your podcast where listeners call in and tell their best jokes in an attempt to win a prize. Whatever the content is, make sure everyone involved is having a good time!



TIP Whether employees or listeners, make sure you lay the ground rules of what they cannot say ahead of time. Even if the video or podcast isn't live, it can ruin the flow of the content if you have to edit out someone saying or doing something that's either inappropriate or otherwise paints your brand in a negative light.

Creating Your Content

Now it's time to create your content! Whether you're looking to record podcasts or videos for YouTube, there are a number of best practices to keep in mind to ensure your content is top notch. Here are a few to get you started:

- » Give yourself plenty of time, especially when you're first starting out. Prepping content, recording, editing, and posting can take a lot longer than you may anticipate.
- » Smile every once in a while. Yes, this applies to podcasts, too! You don't want to be grinning so much it starts to become unnerving, but enough to keep it natural and make yourself seem personable.

- » Practice! Practice! Practice! Don't expect to record perfect audio/visual content right out of the gate. It may only mean that your first couple podcasts or videos don't make the cut for whatever reason, and that's perfectly okay. Take what you learned from those and get better!
- » Write a script but don't read it. Huh? What I mean is write up everything you want to say, but don't read it straight off the page because you'll likely sound unnatural and robotic. Memorize as much of it as you can. In the case of podcasts with co-hosts or other guests, creating an outline of the discussion and giving the other participants a heads-up on the content will help prepare everyone and make things go more smoothly.
- » When recording video, look at the camera, not down at a script or off to the side. This probably means you'll have to memorize much of what you want to say, but I recommend doing that, anyway! An alternative is to use a teleprompter. There are inexpensive ones that connect directly to your camera or even smartphone.
- » Record in chunks, because it's much easier to memorize one paragraph of a script than it is to memorize the entire thing and expect to get through the entire video or podcast without any mistakes. It'll save you time in the editing chair, as well.
- » For videos, pay attention to the lighting. Natural light and fluorescent lighting work best, but don't be afraid to use artificial lighting. Watch where shadows are falling; the last thing you want is to record a video and find out after the fact that there's a shadow across your face. It's a good idea to record some test video to make sure everything looks okay.
- » If you're recording a podcast or video content indoors, make sure you have a small, quiet room, preferably without windows, and if you're in the office, avoid a high traffic area. If there is a carpet and furniture in there, all the better, because those help cut down on sound echoes.
- » If possible (and appropriate), record your video in front of an empty wall. If there are objects like bookshelves, artwork, or your refrigerator in the background, it may distract your viewers.
- » Consider using a pop filter that attaches to the front of your microphone. A pop filter eliminates the moving air that's a result of saying words starting with letters such as *p* and *b*. These letters create forceful air — or a pop — when you say them.
- » Be cognizant of your breathing. Breathing directly into the microphone causes harsh “wind” noises that can be off-putting. When speaking, sit up straight, take smaller breaths, or completely move your mouth away from the mic when you need to take a big breath.
- » Try to keep still because if you fidget, it's distracting on camera, and although it may not be obvious to you, it creates background noise the mic may pick up.



REMEMBER Yes, it's good practice to move around as little as possible, but when you're on video, you *do* want to come across as a living, breathing human being, so don't think you have to be a mannequin!

- » Give sound or visual markers for places where you want to edit something. It could be a

sharp clap of the hands or simply speaking a note to yourself to edit this section and then waiting a few seconds. Whatever method you use, it'll show up when you're editing so you'll be able to find the section quickly.

- » This may be an obvious one, but you'd be surprised at how often people don't bring something to drink in with them and end up with a dry mouth. Take regular *small* sips of your beverage to keep your mouth and vocal cords moistened. Don't take large gulps! If small amounts of liquid get stuck in the back of your throat, you could start choking.

Publishing Your Content

Okay, the time is here! You've worked hard creating amazing audio/visual content, and now you're ready to show it to the world!

First of all, congratulations on getting to this point! Creating this type of content, although time-consuming and challenging at times (especially for the beginner), is some of the best-performing content you can put out there. You've leveled up in the content game, and that's something to be proud of!

But before you can reap the benefits of your efforts, you have to post your content to the appropriate sites. Here are a few of the most popular options for podcasts:

- » **Buzzsprout:** Buzzsprout is one of the few podcasting platforms out there that offers a free version (with limitations) and paid versions starting at \$12 per month. The dashboard is user-friendly, and the platform offers helpful analytics so you can keep tabs on the performance of your content. There's a publishing workflow to take the guesswork out of how to get your content posted. When you use Buzzsprout, your podcast gets listed on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, YouTube, Stitcher, iHeartRadio, TuneIn, Alexa, Overcast, PocketCasts, Castro, Castbox, and Podchaser, meaning it gets exposure to a very wide audience!
- » **Captivate (www.captivate.fm):** For \$19 a month, you get up to 30,000 downloads, and there's a 30-day free trial to start with, to make sure it's the platform for you. A few of the cool features include built-in calls to action (CTAs) to direct people back to your website or a landing page, advanced analytics that give you details into listener behavior, an intuitive interface, and batch processing that's convenient if you're someone who records a number of audio/visual content pieces at the same time. There are also scheduling capabilities and WordPress integration.
- » **Podbean:** Podbean is one of the original podcasting platforms and it's just gotten better with age. There's a free version with a five-hour cap and simple analytics, and paid versions that start at \$9 per month when paid annually. The Podbean interface is intuitive enough for beginners and lets you publish a podcast with a few clicks of the mouse. You get a free podcast website with both free and paid accounts, and you can publish your podcasts directly to your social media accounts from the platform.

And here are a few of the most popular options for videos:

- » **YouTube:** YouTube is probably the first video platform that comes to mind when you think about publishing video content, and for good reason. With 2.70 billion logged-in users active on the site every month, it's by far the largest. YouTube is best suited for businesses who want to use video to drive more traffic to their website and reach new audiences through video content. With free unlimited cloud storage for video files and the ability to upload single 256GB video files of up to 12 hours, YouTube is a great option when it comes to posting your video content to the masses. One of the downsides, however, is the ads. In order to keep your videos ad-free, you have to turn off the setting on each individual video, which shouldn't be too heavy of a lift if you don't batch upload your videos. Even so, there are a lot of great features (including advanced analytics based on Google Analytics) for free.
- » **Facebook:** Facebook probably isn't the first video-hosting platform people think of, but it's one to keep in mind nonetheless, especially if you already have a Facebook presence. Facebook has more monthly active users than YouTube — 3.07 billion monthly as of this writing — so there's more potential for building a loyal audience. Facebook offers unlimited free video hosting and the file size limit is only 10GB, which is considerably smaller than YouTube's 256GB. In any case, this shouldn't be a huge issue if you're uploading shorter videos. One downside is that ads play automatically on all videos, and branding options for video players are limited.
- » **Wistia:** Wistia is the only paid video platform I'm including in this list, but it made the cut because of its robust digital marketing capabilities. For \$230/year, it's not exactly inexpensive for those starting out in video content creation, but you get what you pay for. Some Wistia features include no ads, a 100 percent customizable embed player, the ability to embed lead capture forms or other CTAs within the video player itself, and its integration with the most popular Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) platforms.

If you want even more guidance on how to create awesome audio and visual content, check out *Podcasting For Dummies*, 5th Edition, by Tee Morris and Chuck Tomasi or *YouTube Channels For Dummies*, 3rd Edition, by Rob Ciampa, Matt Ciampa, Rich Murphy, and Jackie Swansburg Paulino.

Book 8

Other Social Media Marketing Sites

Contents at a Glance

Chapter 1: Weighing the Business Benefits of Minor Social Sites

[Reviewing Your Goals](#)

[Researching Minor Social Networks](#)

[Assessing the Involvement of Your Target Audience](#)

[Choosing Social Sites Strategically](#)

Chapter 2: Maximizing Stratified Social Communities

[Making a Bigger Splash on a Smaller Site](#)

[Taking Networking to the Next Level](#)

[Selecting Social Networks by Vertical Industry Sector](#)

[Selecting Social Networks by Demographics](#)

[Selecting Social Networks by Activity Type](#)

[Finding Yourself in the Real World with Geomarketing](#)

[Spacing Out with X](#)

[Finding Your Business on Facebook](#)

[Making Real Connections in Meetup](#)

[Making Deals on Social Media](#)

[Setting Terms for Your Coupon Campaign](#)

Chapter 3: Profiting from Mid-Size Social Media Channels

[Deciding Whether to Invest Your Time](#)

[Entertaining Your Audience with Streaming Content](#)

[Turning Up New Prospects with Tumblr](#)

[Promoting Video with Vimeo](#)

Chapter 4: Integrating Social Media

[Thinking Strategically about Social Media Integration](#)

[Integrating Social Media with E-Newsletters](#)

[Integrating Social Media with Press Releases](#)

[Integrating Social Media with Your Website](#)

Chapter 5: Advertising on Social Media

[Integrating Social Media with Paid Advertising](#)

[Advertising on Facebook and Instagram](#)

[Advertising on X](#)

[Advertising on LinkedIn](#)

[Advertising on Pinterest](#)

[Advertising on YouTube \(and Google\)](#)

[Advertising on Snapchat](#)

[Advertising on TikTok](#)

[Interfacing with Influencers](#)

Chapter 1

Weighing the Business Benefits of Minor Social Sites

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Reviewing goals for social media marketing
 - » Conducting social media marketing research
 - » Assessing audience involvement
 - » Choosing minor social communities strategically
-

Without a doubt, Facebook, X, LinkedIn, and Instagram are the elephants in the social marketing zoo, at least in terms of the largest number of visits per month. But this is one big zoo, as shown in [Figure 1-1](#), which displays only 36 of the hundreds of social sites. Among these sites, you'll find lions and tigers and bears, and more than a few turtles, trout, squirrels, and seagulls.

You have to assess your business needs, research the options, and select which (if any) of these minor social marketing sites belongs in your personal petting zoo. This chapter looks at methods for doing just that.



REMEMBER With the exception of blogs (which can become your primary web presence if you use your own domain name), these smaller sites are best used to supplement your other social marketing efforts.



FIGURE 1-1: The zoo of social media sites is vast. Your time, however, is limited.

Reviewing Your Goals

[Book 1](#) suggests that you develop a strategic marketing plan. If you haven't done so yet, there's no time like the present. Otherwise, managing your social networks can quickly spin out of control, especially when you start to add multiple smaller sites for generating or distributing content.



REMEMBER Marketing is marketing, whether offline or online, whether for search engine ranking or social networking. Obviously, your primary business goal is to make a profit, but your goals for a particular marketing campaign or social media technique may vary.

As [Book 1](#) discusses, social media marketing can serve multiple goals. It can help you

- » Cast a wide net to catch your target market.
- » Brand.
- » Build relationships.

- » Improve business processes.
- » Improve search engine rankings.
- » Sell when opportunity arises.
- » Save money on advertising.

Your challenge is to decide which goal(s) apply to your business and then to quantify objectives for each one. Be sure that you can measure your achievements. You can find additional measurement information in [Book 9](#).

Researching Minor Social Networks

Doing all the necessary research to choose the right mix of social networks may seem overwhelming, but, hey, this is the web — help is at your fingertips. [Table 1-1](#) lists many resource websites that have directories of social networking sites, usage statistics, demographic profiles, and valuable tips on how to use different sites. The selection process is straightforward, and the steps are quite similar to constructing an online marketing plan, as described in Book 1, [Chapter 3](#).

TABLE 1-1 Social Network Research URLs

Site Name	URL	What It Does
Brandwatch	www.brandwatch.com/blog/5-social-media-news-stories-you-need-to-read-this-week	Top 5 social media news stories per week
Google Rank Checker	https://chromewebstore.google.com/detail/google-rank-checker/ehgbmeaekkaejmapeefcolejlaamdip?pli=1	A free extension that provides real-time insights into your website's ranking on Google
Goodwall.io	www.goodwall.io/blog/niche-social-media-sites	Describes more than ten attractive niche social media sites
Mashable	http://mashable.com	Presents social media news and other web tips
	http://mashable.com/category/social-media	Lists stories and resources about social media
Moz	https://moz.com/blog/category/social-media	Provides the latest social media news
Quantcast	www.quantcast.com	Compiles traffic and demographic data by site
SimilarWeb	www.similarweb.com	See your competitor's website traffic among other strategic analytics capabilities
Statista	www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users	An annual list of the most popular social networks worldwide
Wikipedia	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites	Directory of more than 200 social networking sites

Follow these general steps to get your research under way:

1. **Review the strategy, goals, and target markets for your social marketing campaign, as described in [Book 1](#).**

If your B2B business needs to target particular individuals during the sales cycle, such as

a CFO, buyer, or project engineer, be specific in your plan.

2. **Decide how much of your, your staff's, or a third party's time, and possibly budget, you want to commit to minor social networking sites.**



WARNING Don't underestimate how much time social media marketing can take. After you're comfortable with Facebook and (if they fit) X or LinkedIn, it's okay to start with just one or two minor sites and slowly add services over time.

3. **Skim the directories and lists of social media (refer to [Table 1-1](#)) to select possibilities that fit your goals.**

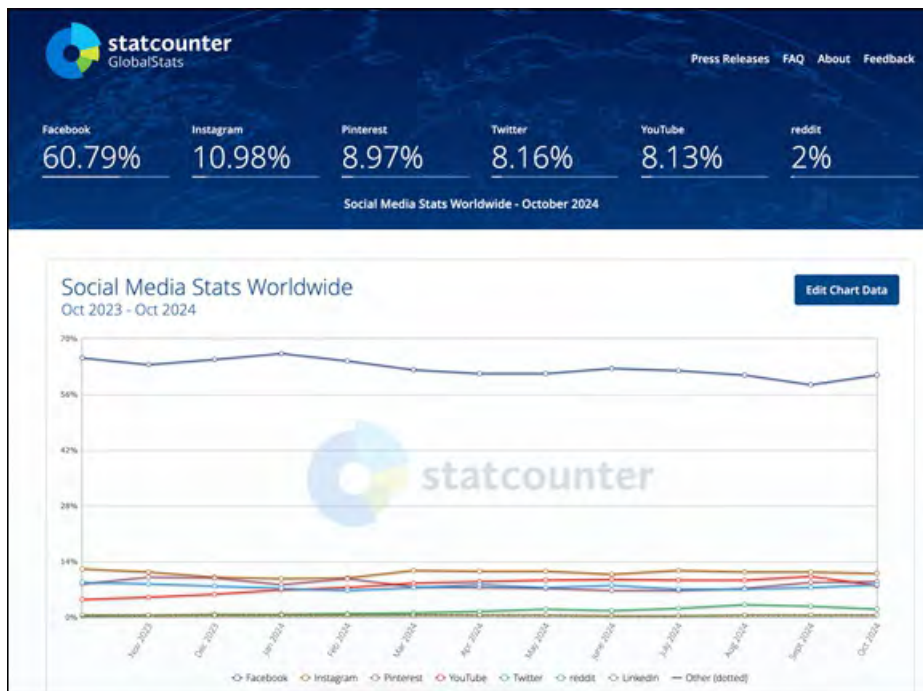
For more ideas, simply search using terms for your business area plus the words *social network* or *social media* (for example, *fashion social network*).

4. **Review the demographics and traffic for each possibility by using a site such as Quantcast (as discussed in Book 1, [Chapter 3](#)), and then cull your list to keep only those that fit your target market and marketing objectives.**

[Figure 1-2](#) displays the relative market share, according to StatCounter Global Stats (<https://gs.statcounter.com/social-media-stats>), for the seven top-ranked social media services worldwide from November 2023 to October 2024. Market share is ranked not by traffic to the sites themselves, but rather by the amount of traffic they refer to other sites. This approach may be valuable for business analysis because it discounts personal users who stay on social media sites to communicate with their friends. The Other category in this figure encompasses LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok, and many more sites.

5. **Review each network (see suggestions in the following bullet list) to make sure you feel comfortable with its web presence, user interaction, Google Page Rank, features, ease of use, and ability to provide key reports. Prioritize your sites accordingly.**
6. **Enter your final selection in your Social Media Marketing Plan (described in Book 1, [Chapter 3](#)), and set up a schedule for implementation and monitoring on your Social Media Activity Calendar (see Book 1, [Chapter 4](#)).**
7. **Implement your plan. Modify it as needed after results come in.**

Wait at least a month before you make changes; gaining visibility in some social network sites can take time.



StatCounter Global Stats/<http://gs.statcounter.com/> last accessed on February 12, 2025.

FIGURE 1-2: Factor in relative market share, using data such as that from StatCounter Global Stats.



TIP For leads to other social networks that appeal to your audience, look for a section named Other Sites Visited (or similar wording) on one of the statistical sites.

Keep in mind these words of caution as you review statistics for various minor social networks in Steps 3 and 4 of the preceding list:

- » **Not all directories or reports on market share define the universe of social media or social networks the same way.** Some sources include blogs, social-bookmarking sites such as [Mix.com](http://mix.com) (formerly StumbleUpon), or news aggregators. Small social networks may come and go so quickly that the universe is different even a few months later.
- » **Confirm whether you're looking at global or U.S. data.** What you need depends on the submarkets you're trying to reach.
- » **Determine whether the site displays data for unique visitors or visits.** A unique visitor may make multiple visits during the evaluation period. Results for market share vary significantly depending on what's being measured.
- » **Repeat visits, pages per view, time on-site, and number of visits per day or per visitor all reflect user engagement with the site.** Not all services provide this data, whose importance depends on your business goals.
- » **Decide whether you're interested in a site's casual visitors or registered members.** Your implementation and message will vary according to the audience you're trying to reach.

- » **Check the window of measurement (day, week, month, or longer) and the effective dates for the results.** These numbers are volatile, so be sure you're looking at current data.



TIP

Regarding social media or everything else, consider online statistics for relative value and trends, not for absolute numbers. Because every statistical service defines its terms and measurements differently, stick with one source to make the results comparable across all your possibilities.

Assessing the Involvement of Your Target Audience

After you finish the research process, you should have a good theoretical model of which minor social networks might be a good fit for your business. But there's nothing like being involved. Our advice in the preceding section recommends visiting every site to assess a number of criteria, including user interaction. If you plan to engage your audience in comments, reviews, forums, or other user-generated content, you *must* understand how active participants on the network now interact.

Start by signing up and creating a personal profile of some sort so that you can access all member-related activities. The actual activities, of course, depend on the particular network.

Lurking

Spend time watching and reading what transpires in every interactive venue on the site, without participating. In the olden days of Internet forums and chat rooms, you were *lurking*. You can make a number of qualitative assessments that can help you determine whether this site is a good fit for you:

- » **Quality of dialog:** Do statements of any sort float in the ether, or does interaction take place? Does a moderator respond? The site owners? Other registered members? Is there one response or continual back and forth? If you intend to establish an ongoing business relationship with other participants on the network, you want to select a site where ongoing dialog is already standard practice.
- » **Quality of posts:** Are posts respectful or hostile? Do posts appear automatically, or is someone reviewing them before publication? Do they appear authentic? Because you're conducting business online, your standards may need to be higher than they would be for casual, personal interaction. Anger and profanity that might be acceptable from respondents on a political news site would be totally unacceptable on a site that engages biologists in discussion of an experiment.
- » **Quantity of posts compared to the number of registered users:** On some sites, you may find that the same 20 people post or respond to everything, even though the site

boasts 10,000 registered members. This situation signals a site that isn't successful as a social network, however successful it might be in other ways.

Responding

After you have a sense of the ethos of a site, try responding to a blog post, participating in a forum, or establishing yourself as an expert on a product review or e-zine listing. Assess what happens. Do others respond on the network? Email you off-site? Call the office?

Use this side of the lurk-and-response routine to gain a better understanding of what you, as a member and prospective customer, would expect. Will you or your staff be able to deliver?



TIP

If a site requires more care and feeding than you have the staff to support, consider dropping it from your list.

Quantifying market presence

In addition to assessing the number of unique visitors, visits, and registered members, you may want to assess additional components of audience engagement. Sites that provide quantitative information, such as Quantcast, help you better understand your audience's behavior, learn more about their lifestyles and brand preferences, and target your message. You can learn about these concepts:

- » **Affinity:** A statistical correlation that shows the strength of a particular user behavior, such as visiting another site, relative to that of the U.S. Internet population as a whole — for example, whether an Instagram user is more or less likely than the general Internet population to visit YouTube
- » **Index:** The delivery of a specific audience segment, such as women or seniors, compared with their share of the overall Internet population
- » **Composition:** The relative distribution of the audience for a site by audience segment, such as gender, age, or ethnicity
- » **Addict:** The most loyal component of a site's audience, with 30 or more visits per month
- » **Passer-by:** Casual visitor who visits a site only once per month
- » **Regular:** A user partway between Addict and Passer-by; someone who visits more than once but fewer than 30 times per month

Choosing Social Sites Strategically

It may seem ridiculously time-consuming to select which minor social marketing sites are best for your business. Why not just throw a virtual dart at a list or choose randomly from social sites that your staff likes to visit? Ultimately, you save more time by planning and making strategic choices than by investing time in a social media site that doesn't pay off.



TIP

If you're short of time, select sites that meet your demographics requirement but on which you can easily reuse and syndicate content, as described in Book 2, [Chapter 1](#).

You can replicate blog postings, for example, almost instantly on multiple sites.

If you truly have no time to select one of these sleek minor critters, stick to one of the elephants and add others later.

Even the smallest social network sites can be valuable if they have your target market. All the averages mean nothing. It's about *your* business and *your* audience. Niche marketing is always an effective use of your time. Fish where *your* fish are!

Chapter 2

Maximizing Stratified Social Communities

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Valuing stratified social communities
 - » Making business connections online
 - » Searching for networks by industry, demographics, and activity type
 - » Examining geolocation services
 - » Organizing meetup
 - » Starting a social coupon campaign
-

Social networking communities, like other marketing outlets, can be sliced and diced many ways. They can be sorted vertically by industry or horizontally by demographics, such as age, gender, ethnicity, education, or income. By doing a little research, you can *stratify* (classify) them according to other commonly used marketing segmentation parameters, such as life stage (student, young married, family with kids, empty nester, retired) or *psychographics* (beliefs or behaviors).

If you want to delve even further into niche sites, you can find social media channels that are driven by type of activity, geographical location, or by types of social offers. This chapter discusses how you can find these smaller niche sites and how you can get value from them.

Making a Bigger Splash on a Smaller Site

Stratified sites may have much smaller audiences than sites such as Facebook, TikTok, or X. If you choose correctly, however, the users of these sites will closely resemble the profile of your typical client or customer, making them better prospects. Compare it to the difference between advertising at the Super Bowl versus distributing a flyer at a local high school football game. It all depends on where your audience is.

Your business can also make a much bigger splash on smaller sites. Frankly, it's so difficult to gain visibility and traction on a large social networking site that you almost need a marketing campaign just for that purpose (for example, to acquire 2,000 likes on Facebook).

On a smaller site, your business becomes a big fish in a small pond, quickly establishing itself as an expert resource or a source of great products or services.

Taking Networking to the Next Level

From your own experience, you know the importance of offline networking to find vendors, employees, and customers. Social media marketing is, first and foremost, a method of networking online.

Business connection sites have proliferated in the past several years. These sites are generally appropriate for soft selling, not for hard-core marketing. Although referrals are used primarily for making business-to-business (B2B) connections, especially when targeting those with a specific job title, you never know when a referral will bring you a customer.



TIP Make a habit of including a link to your primary website on every profile and using some of your preferred search terms in your profile title and text. These techniques increase your inbound links and may help with search engine ranking, as described in Book 2, [Chapter 2](#).

[Table 2-1](#) lists cross-industry directories. Visit the ones that seem appropriate, using the tactics described in [Chapter 1](#) of this minibook to make your selections.



TIP Be selective. Participating in multiple sites productively is time-consuming. Keep clear records of all sites that have your business profile. If your situation changes, you probably have to update your profiles individually.

TABLE 2-1 Business Networks

Website	URL	What It Is
Wellfound	wellfound.com	Focused on startups, includes networking opportunities as well as investing, and job opportunities
Chief Financial Officer Network	www.linkedin.com/groups/51826	Network of high-level CFOs, financial executives, and accounting leaders (requires LinkedIn account)
CareerCircle	www.careercircle.com/job-seeker/career-community	Career community for professionals seeking new jobs
Medium	www.medium.com	Community for publishing articles and commenting on and sharing published articles
REX Roundtables	rexroundtables.com	Video network and roundtables for high-level business leaders
LetsLunch	letslunch.com	Platform for networking with other professionals and finding jobs over lunch
Angel Investment Network	www.angelinvestmentnetwork.us	Community of entrepreneurs who rate and compare investors and funding sources
Library of Congress	guides.loc.gov/entrepreneurs-reference-guide/databases	Entrepreneurs free reference guide for small businesses
StartupNation	www.startupnation.com	Entrepreneurial article-based business advice and networking platform
Slack	slack.com	Free networking tool for networking within a company

Selecting Social Networks by Vertical Industry

Sector

Whether you're marketing B2B (business-to-business) or B2C (business-to-consumer), you can find dozens of industry- or interest-specific social networks. Search online for communities in your industry, using the strategies described in [Chapter 1](#) in this minibook. As long as the social network is large enough to support your time investment and continues to attract new users, you should enjoy enough of a payback to make your effort worthwhile.

Vertical industry sites, other than shopping, are particularly appealing for B2B marketers. If you use some adroit maneuvering, you can intersect with the sales cycle, reaching the appropriate decision maker with the right message.

For the retail community, the growth of social-shopping sites is a new avenue to reach consumers who want to spend after they see what everyone else is buying. Users flock to these sites for the latest product reviews, real-time deals, and news about the hottest items.

Track results so that you can decide which sites work best for you. If a site doesn't produce leads or sales after a few months, find another.



REMEMBER If you want to promote your products or services to more than one online community, customize your profiles and messages accordingly. For example, a sporting goods store might promote camping gear on a social network for backpackers and running gear on one for joggers.

The list of vertical market social networks seems endless and ever changing. [Table 2-2](#) provides a sample of some of these networks just to give you an idea of the range. This list does not include blogs, bookmarking sites, or news aggregators.

TABLE 2-2 Vertical Market Social Networks

Website	URL	Description
Art		
DeviantArt	www.deviantart.com	Post and share original artwork
Auto		
CarGurus	www.cargurus.com	Automobile community with reviews, photos, and opinions
Books		
Goodreads	www.goodreads.com	Book recommendations to share
LibraryThing	www.librarything.com	Book recommendations and online catalog
Design		
Design Float	www.designfloat.com	Web design–related content sharing, advertising, digital art, and branding
Environment		
Care2	www.care2.com	Eco-friendly lifestyle site
Make Me Sustainable	www.makemesustainable.com	Environmental community

TreeHugger	www.treehugger.com	Environmental topics at interactive community
Entertainment, Film, and Music		
Fanpop	www.fanpop.com	Network of fan clubs for television, movies, music, and more
Flixster	www.flixster.com	Movie lovers community
Last.fm	www.last.fm	Music community
Mediabistro	www.mediabistro.com	Careers and community for media professionals
Myspace	www.myspace.com	Social networking site for music entertainment
Pandora	www.pandora.com	Music community
Spotify	www.spotify.com	Music community
Medical		
PatientsLikeMe	www.patientslikeme.com	Patients, healthcare professionals, and industry organizations making connections
Sermo	www.sermo.com	Physician community
Legal		
BigLaw	https://biglaw.org	International social networking community for lawyers and law students
Philanthropy and Nonprofits		
ChangingThePresent	www.changingthepresent.org	Nonprofit giving community
Pets		
Petzbe	https://petzbe.com	Social networking for all types of pets and their owners
Cuteness	www.cuteness.com	Social pet community with helpful information
Shopping, Fashion, and Collecting		
Gilt	www.gilt.com	Flash sales on women's apparel
Rue La	www.ruelala.com	Flash sales
ShopStyle	www.shopstyle.com	Shopping, with the ability to add items to "stylebooks" for future reference
Ssense	www.ssense.com	Luxury products and news
Sports		
Athlinks	www.athlinks.com	Database with all types of sports race results and athlete community
BeRecruited	https://new.berecruited.com	Connecting high school athletes and college coaches
Science and Technology		
ResearchGate	www.researchgate.net	Social network for scientists to connect and make their work more visible



REMEMBER As always, include a link to your primary website and use some of your preferred search terms in your postings and profiles. If these sites have blogs or accept photos, video, or music, you can syndicate that type of content to many sites simultaneously.

Selecting Social Networks by Demographics

No one ever has enough staff and time to do everything. You already know that the more tightly you focus your marketing efforts, the better the payoff from your investment. If you created a strategic plan in Book 1, [Chapter 3](#), return to it to analyze and segment your markets

demographically into smaller, niche markets that you can reach with a coordinated campaign.



TIP Think online guerrilla marketing. Go after one niche market online at a time. After you conquer one, go after the next. If you scatter your efforts across too many target markets at one time, your business won't have enough visibility in any of them to drive meaningful traffic your way.

[Table 2-3](#) describes some sites that are primarily demographically and geographically stratified. You can find many, many more. As usual, qualify the sites for your business by following the concepts described in [Chapter 1](#) of this minibook.

As usual, customize your message and profile for the audience you're trying to reach. Be sure to include a link to your primary website and some of your key search terms in any profile or posting.

TABLE 2-3 Demographically and Geographically Stratified Sites

<i>Website</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Description</i>
Ethnic		
Black Business Women Online	www.mybbwo.com	A social network for black women in business, women entrepreneurs, and bloggers
BlackPlanet.com	www.blackplanet.com	African American network that includes a job section by way of Monster.com
High School and College		
Classmates	www.classmates.com	Networking with members of your high school graduating class at all levels
Generational		
My Boomer Page	https://myboomerplace.com	Social networking and news site for those 60+ years old
Rocking Over 40	www.rockingover40.com	Community for women over 40
Local		
CitySearch	www.citysearch.com	Localized directory with reviews and comments
Manta	www.manta.com	Local business directory for small businesses
MerchantCircle	www.merchantcircle.com	Enables you to find, review, and comment on local businesses
Nextdoor	https://nextdoor.com	Private social network for neighborhoods
SuperPages	Superpages.com	Information and insights on local businesses and retailers
TripAdvisor	www.tripadvisor.com	Reviews of flights, hotels, vacation rentals, restaurants, and things to do
Lightspeed	www.lightspeedhq.com/blog/restaurant-review-sites	The Top 11 Restaurant Review Sites
Yelp	www.yelp.com	Local business reviews and comments
International		
Badoo	http://badoo.com	Popular international social networking and dating site
Moms		
CafeMom	www.cafemom.com	Largest social networking, blogging, and community site for moms and parenting

Wealthy

ASMALLWORLD www.asmallworld.com

Private international community of culturally influential people

Selecting Social Networks by Activity Type

I can imagine what you're thinking. Why in the world would you want more than one service of a particular type, such as video sharing or blogging? The answer is simple: to improve search engine rankings and inbound links from high-ranking sites. When your content appears on multiple sites, such as those listed by activity in [Table 2-4](#), you're simply casting a wider net and hoping to catch more fish.

TABLE 2-4 Social Networks by Activity Type

Website	URL	Description
Networking and Profiles		
hi5	www.hi5.com	Social entertainment for the youth market over 18 worldwide with personal profiles
MocoSpace	www.mocospace.com	Smartphone-compatible online community
Image Sharing		
Flickr	www.flickr.com	Well-known photo-sharing site
500px	https://500px.com	Photographer-centric social network with photo-sharing, contests, and licensing opportunities
Photobucket	http://photobucket.com	Free image hosting, and photo and video sharing
SlideShare	www.slideshare.net	Presentation sharing site
FoodGawker	https://foodgawker.com	Food and recipe image-sharing site; a visual potluck
Unsplash	https://unsplash.com	Free image hosting and download site
Video Sharing (YouTube Alternatives)		
Dailymotion	www.dailymotion.com	Video-hosting and -sharing community
TechSmith Capture	www.techsmith.com/jing-tool.html	Video-hosting and -sharing tool
TikTok	www.tiktok.com/en/	Short-form video platform
Ustream	www.ustream.tv/live-streaming-video-platform	Smartphone app for live, interactive broadcast video, available for Apple and Android devices
Vimeo	http://vimeo.com	Video-hosting and -sharing community
Unique Services		
eHow	www.ehow.com	Content submissions on how to do things
HubPages	http://hubpages.com	Publish content on thousands of topics on which you happen to be an expert
Inside	https://inside.com	Content curation "newsletters" you can subscribe to
Meetup	www.meetup.com	Local-group organizing for face-to-face meetings
Quora	www.quora.com	Group-sourced answers to questions

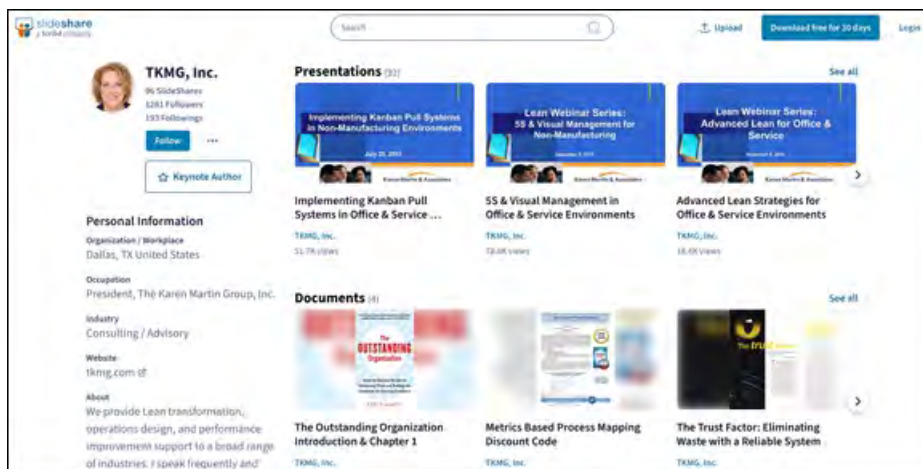


TIP The secret to keeping this situation manageable is syndication, via a dashboard such as Hootsuite or Netvibes, or by using Really Simple Syndication (RSS), as discussed in Book 2, [Chapter 1](#). You post an image, a video, or a blog entry to your primary site, and your distribution service automatically updates other services with the same content.

Even with syndication, use some common sense. It doesn't help to drive the wrong fish to your website and dilute your conversion rate. Of course, if you've monetized your site by showing ads by the impressions, then the more eyeballs, the merrier.

Because setting up multiple accounts can be time-consuming, you may want to stagger the process. By now, you automatically include in any profile or posting a link to your primary website and some of your key search terms.

For example, The Karen Martin Group (<https://tkmg.com>) takes advantage of SlideShare (see [Figure 2-1](#)) to establish credibility and provide evidence of its expertise. By viewing any of her 96 SlideShares, prospective clients can get a very good sense of the skills and services her company provides. The company profile on the left links to her website and displays a number of relevant tags (keywords) for search.



Reproduced with permission of Karen S. Martin

FIGURE 2-1: The Karen Martin Group uses SlideShare to establish credibility, experience, and expertise.

Finding Yourself in the Real World with Geomarketing

Location, location, location: It's the mantra of real estate and yet another feature of successful social media marketing. The convergence of mobile devices with GPS and social media offers a great opportunity for marketers. You can inform potential customers that you offer exactly what they're looking for, when they're looking for it, and provide directions to get them there from their current location.

This book uses the term *geomarketing tools* to refer to social media services that incorporate knowledge of users' locations or that bring people together in a specific, real-world space.

Several location-based services, including *social mapping* (identifying where people are) and location-based marketing games, are available for geomarketing, though the number of independent vendors has diminished in favor of check-in and location-tagging options on Snapchat, Facebook, X, and Instagram.



REMEMBER Before you undertake geomarketing, follow the directions for local optimization in Book 2, [Chapter 2](#) to improve your success rate.

Going geo for good reason

The techniques described in this section apply to businesses that exist in the physical world with their own storefront or that offer events that bring people together face-to-face. Pure cyber-businesses may not find these ideas as useful, but you never know what creative idea will hit you. Although geolocation services are particularly appropriate for business-to-consumer (B2C) operations, some intriguing business-to-business (B2B) applications are offered in this chapter.

For most businesses, geomarketing involves a teaser deal that attracts residents or out-of-town visitors who check in online or with a mobile device when they arrive at the establishment. This concept is particularly attractive for events, tourist sites, restaurants, and entertainment venues. Almost all these services notify their subscribers by email or text message, or on their mobile apps, whenever an offer is available nearby.

Deciding whether geomarketing is right for you

Geomarketing isn't for every business. Whether you should use a geomarketing service depends on the nature of your business, whether your customer base is already using it, and which location-based activities consume your prospective customers' time. Mull over these factors before you take the leap:

- » **Don't reinvent the wheel.** Many smartphone apps already offer a location-specific tool — for example, a weather report, road conditions, a list of gas prices at stations around town — and then add a sponsor. If all you're trying to do is reach the on-the-go consumer who is ready to buy, do you need more than that? Maybe a pay-per-click (PPC) ad on a mobile search engine solves your needs.
- » **Numbers matter.** Enough people living near or planning to visit your location have to use a particular geomarketing application to make it worth the effort. This issue is nontrivial because most services don't publicize this data. Try to research the number of users in your area with both the service provider and a third-party source, such as Alexa. The numbers can fluctuate widely and are difficult to find.

After you estimate the size of the potential audience (the *reach*), remember that only a small percentage of the audience is likely to become customers. Your best bet: Ask existing customers whether they use Swarm, Facebook check-ins, or other services.



TIP

To get an idea of the number of members, try creating a user account. Then scan the list of places in your area (sometimes called places, locations, or venues) for the inclusion of neighbors and competitors, and look at the maximum number of check-ins at those locations. For example, even if you don't ordinarily serve Foursquare fanatics, a high-tech conference that draws a huge number of users may be a one-time opportunity worth taking advantage of.

- » **Prospective customers must be willing to participate.** You must take privacy issues into account. Although about 30 percent of all users include location tagging on their posts (so their friends know where they are), the percentage declines with age.
- » **Local is not always enough.** No matter the size of the total user base for your neighborhood, you may draw a large audience of Foursquare users only if you happen to own the pizza place across the street from the computer science building at the local college, not if you offer a deal to seniors at a local retirement community who show up for early-bird specials.
- » **Demographics are fluid.** Be cautious: The demographics and statistics of users may fluctuate.
- » **The temptation is great to “go geo.”** Don't jump into geomarketing just because it's cool or trendy.

For a summary of geolocation services, see [Table 2-5](#).

TABLE 2-5 Geolocation Services

Geolocation	Site URL for Businesses	Number of User Accounts & Notes
Everplaces	https://everplaces.com	A mash-up of Pinterest and Foursquare
Findery	https://findery.com	A place-sharing site and travel community
Instagram	https://help.instagram.com/408972995943225	2.11 billion monthly active users, many of whom share locations from Instagram to Facebook, X, Tumblr and other sites; location is not automatically tagged
X Geolocation	https://support.x.com/articles/78525-about-the-tweetlocation-feature	611million monthly active users; geotags available on all posts but turned off by default
Yelp	https://biz.yelp.com/support/what_is_yelp	80+ million monthly unique visitors

Spacing Out with X

The importance of integrating social media with location hasn't been lost on X.

Checking in on X

Like many other social networks, X offers users the ability to check in to specific locations when they post. To use this feature, click the More link in the left sidebar on your X home page and select Settings and Privacy. Scroll down to Data sharing and Personalization and click on Location Information to adjust your settings.

Searching real space with X

The search function can help you estimate the number of local X users in a city or within a certain radius. Navigate to your X home page and type a search term into the search box on the top right and press return. You can then sort the results by Anywhere, meaning the post could come from a user in any location, or Near you, which narrows the results down to the general area you listed when you signed up for your X account.

Finding Your Business on Facebook

Facebook offers its users four ways to relate to the real world: geotagging, places, check-ins, and offers.

Geotagging on Facebook

On both its desktop and mobile app versions, Facebook allows users to add a location to any post, whether text, image, or video. If someone else tries to tag a post that names another Facebook user who isn't a friend, the second person must approve the geotag before it appears. For more information, see www.facebook.com/about/location.

Getting close with places nearby

Places appears as an option only when you use the Facebook app on mobile devices with location turned on. Users find places by typing in a search term (a keyword, for example) in the search bar at the top of the page and either selecting the <search term> *Near Me* option in the drop-down menu ([Figure 2-2](#), left) or by tapping the blue Search button on the bottom right of the screen and then scrolling all the way to the right and selecting Places from the tabs at the top of the results page ([Figure 2-2](#), right).

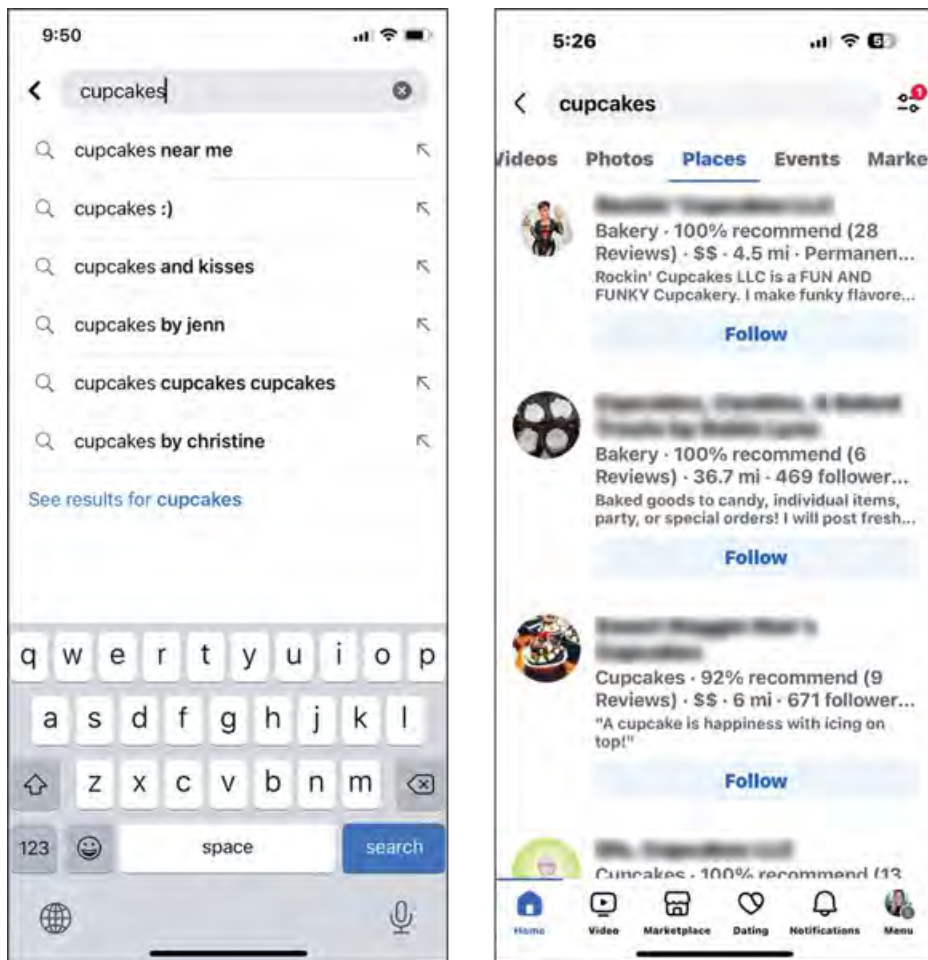


FIGURE 2-2: Selecting the *Near Me* option to find nearby places (left); then completing a search using the *Places* tab to get a list of places close to you (right).

Checking in on Facebook

To enable check-ins at your business, you must add your business address to the *About* section (left menu bar) of your business page. Once your address is added, search for your business name from your mobile device. Scroll all the way to the bottom of the list of existing locations, tap the “+ Add a New Place,” then follow the instructions on the following screens.



REMEMBER You must do this from a mobile device with Location Services turned on. For more information about Location Services, see www.facebook.com/help/275925085769221.

Once you have your business’ location set up, users can now check into your business. From their news feeds, users must tap the *Check-in* icon and select their location. They can add a description of what they’re doing and then tap *Publish* to share their location with their friends.



TIP

Post a counter card at your business to remind people to check in. For more information on check-ins at your business, see

www.facebook.com/help/374794869276912.

Results for check-ins are visible on your Facebook Insights page (see Book 5, [Chapter 2](#)) but only after 30 people have checked in at your business. To understand any of these Facebook geomarketing options in more detail, see [Book 5](#) or read *Facebook Marketing For Dummies*, 6th Edition, by Stephane Diamond (Wiley).



REMEMBER

The local review site Yelp (www.yelp.com) has a location-based check-in feature on its Android and iOS devices. Instagram and Snapchat also offer optional geotags. Users must always turn on geotags; geotags default to Off on all social media for security and privacy reasons.

Making Real Connections in Meetup

Meetups bridge the gap between the cyberworld and the one we live in. These services make it easy for people who have similar interests to organize meetings for fun, advocacy, learning, or simply to meet one another.

Meetup (www.meetup.com), which has been around since 2002, bills itself as “the world’s largest network of local groups,” claiming that more than 60 million registered members participate in more than 330,000 local groups located in 190 countries and 10,000 cities.

Meetup charges organizers a fee of \$45 per month or \$300 per year for using its platform Meetup pages (as shown in [Figure 2-3](#)) to help people find or start a group located near them. The system includes an easy-to-use interface to identify either groups or meetups (via calendar view) within a certain distance.

Click a group or a meetup to find directions to future meetups and check out the history of a Meetup group. Meetup lets you easily invite your Facebook friends to join you at a meetup or see whether you have friends participating in other Meetup groups.

Meetups offer you an exquisite opportunity to reach out to new customers, even if they’re only complementary to your primary business. Contact meeting organizers to see whether you can

- » Host an event at your restaurant or another event location. For example, a company selling kitchen countertops could offer to hold cooking classes in its showroom.

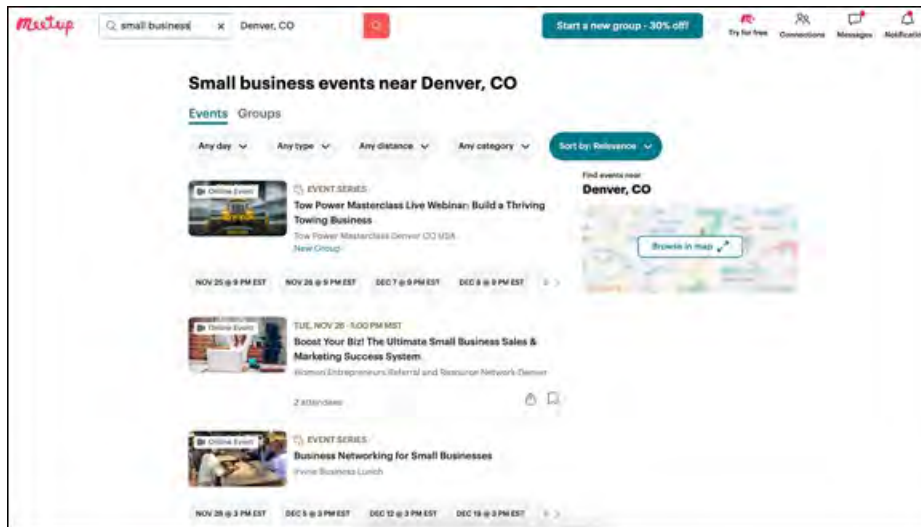


FIGURE 2-3: A Meetup search for small-business activities near Denver produces several results.

- » Offer a discount to members for the event.
- » Give a presentation or teach a class at a future meeting, which is an excellent way for a B2B or service provider to establish expertise in an area.
- » Provide information to members.

Attending a meeting first is helpful (but not required) to make sure that the makeup of the group fits your target audience and to meet the leaders.

You can gauge interest by using Meetup to estimate the number of members in similar groups in your location(s).

Making Deals on Social Media

A group of friends hitting the mall is the offline definition of *social shopping*. Online, though, social shopping means something quite different: A group of folks (sometimes, strangers) saves money by volume-buying with a group coupon. The group coupon emerged several years ago as a way to aggregate new buyers, usually in specific cities, by offering a half-off, one-day promotion online or by email. The underlying assumption was that by attracting a high volume of customers, a business could still make money on a highly discounted deal, buy goodwill and exposure, or fill their businesses during off-times or off-season.

The best-known and oldest of these coupon services is Groupon (www.groupon.com), which went public in fall 2011. Back in 2016, Groupon purchased the other popular daily deal site, LivingSocial, for an undisclosed amount of money. Over the years, Groupon has expanded to offer everything from specific tourism-related deals, to carpet cleaning, as well as deals on goods, tickets, and national brands.

Seeing an opportunity for profit, dozens of other companies — some national, some regional or local — have entered the group-coupon frenzy. The competition has had several consequences:

- » With more coupon vendors to choose from, merchants have more leverage negotiating deals on favorable terms.
- » Familiarity has taken the bloom off the discount rose.
- » Some customers, who have come to expect major discounts as a matter of course, pressure merchants to bend the rules in their favor by threatening bad online reviews.

Using high-discount coupons can indeed bring new and repeat customers. On the downside, businesses may be exposed to significant financial risk and bad publicity. Many companies are now rethinking the shared coupon experiment or taking advantage of less costly local sites, offering daily deals.

In the following sections, which primarily address the needs of business-to-consumer (B2C) companies, you can assess the risks and benefits of high-discount group deals. With this information, you can decide whether a deal strategy makes sense for your particular business.

Offering savings, gaining customers

Offering a discount to attract customers is an obvious B2C technique used for ages by service and product companies: bars and restaurants, tourist destinations, health and beauty salons, events, recreation, personal services, and more.

Generally, customers who sign up for a deal service receive a daily email offering some product or service for an average 57 percent off, though deals may range from 30 to 90 percent off.

In the past, a minimum number of deals had to be purchased during a specific time period. If the minimum wasn't reached, the deal didn't go through. Most of the deal sites have now eliminated the minimum requirement, finding that they were able to sell enough deals without any problem.

So that's how it works for users. To see how online coupons affect your end of the rope as a business, see the section "[Making an attractive offer](#)," later in this chapter.

Consider these points before you decide whether to pursue a high-discount deal strategy:

- » **Ultimately, the coupon companies select which businesses participate at which time and set the schedule for featuring offers.** You may not get the timeframe that you want.
- » **A link to your site will appear in the offer.** In preparation, you should be willing to create a separate landing page on your website for the offer.
- » **Some sites offer national deals, particularly for large, web-based retailers, online shopping, and travel.** For a national reach, you might target multiple individual cities within your national audience with separate offers. This approach works for participating franchises or branches in several cities.
- » **Confirm that the deal service you select reaches your city.** Because tourists and local residents are your primary audience, a service must have enough email subscribers interested in a specific geographic area to make your deal workable.

You can make online couponing work for a business-to-business (B2B) audience, but it's a little more complicated. A successful B2B deal depends on the size and quality of the email list that the coupon service maintains, an attractive offer on a product or service of wide interest (payroll services or office supplies, perhaps), and recommendations from employees to employers.

Making an attractive offer

Sometimes, you just want people in your door, virtual or otherwise. If you offer a *loss leader* (a sale below cost), try not to sell too far below cost. Selling hundreds of \$4 ice-cream cones for half-price is one thing as long as you cover your cost of goods and service; discounting hundreds of \$40 haircuts at half-price may leave you short on the rent.

If you're in a position to handle a potential loss, there are some viable reasons to consider online deals as a tool in your marketing arsenal:

- » **There are no upfront payments.** That's a good thing for your cash flow (if you get paid promptly by the coupon service).
- » **There are backloaded payments.** You can set the minimum and maximum number of coupons sold (more on that in a bit).
- » **Coupon deals often provide a stream of new customers in a relatively short length of time.** Compare the result to how long it takes other forms of advertising to produce new business. If you just opened a new business, coupons may be a good technique.
- » **Word-of-mouth works.** Buyers might bring their friends to share the experience.
- » **Factor estimated add-on purchases, as well as lifetime customer value, into your calculation.** The lifetime customer value is the value of estimated repeat purchases from the same customer. Obviously, new customers who make multiple, repeat purchases are more valuable than customers who buy only once — for example, tourists. Try to make your offer something worth a repeat buy or set the offer low enough that you can generate an up-sale from most buyers.

Setting Terms for Your Coupon Campaign

You have many ways to refine and tailor your coupon campaign, within limits. You do want customers, but you don't want to lose your shirt, either. To limit your discount exposure, you may be able to tweak the coupon vendor's share of revenue, the timeframe during which the offer will be honored, the maximum number of deals, and more.



WARNING Be sure to read the fine print before you sign with a coupon service. Each company has different rules.

The depth of the discount

Typically, the buyer receives 30 to 50 percent (or more) off the standard price. Then the

coupon service gets its slice: sometimes as high as an additional half of how much the buyer pays. So, as the merchant, you receive only 25 percent of your list price. For example:

30-minute parasailing adventure	\$100
Customer coupon discount (50% off)	\$50
Coupon service's cut	\$25
Merchant's final take	\$25

The percentages vary by company and by the nature of the offer, but thanks to the competition for deals, you may sometimes be able to negotiate better terms on the coupon service's cut, especially with some of the smaller deal companies (or if you're a huge multinational corporation).

The scope of the deal

Consider how you will establish the parameters of an offer to best meet your goals and objectives:

- » **Assess your net return.** The coupon company takes its cut off the revenue first. The coupon firm collects payments from customers by credit card and sends you a check for your share afterward. The schedule of payments varies by coupon company.



WARNING Watch the schedule of payments carefully. Delayed payments from the coupon service can create an unnecessary cash flow crisis for your company.

- » **Set the maximum number of deals you will offer.** Set a maximum number of deals to limit both your financial and service exposure. A cap makes sense, especially for event organizers and service providers. For example, your small theater company may have a fixed number of seats, you may have room for only a certain number of people in a dance class, or you may have enough stylists to handle only a certain number of haircuts per day.
- » **Determine how long the offer will last.** You specify the timeframe over which buyers can exercise a deal, usually several months to a year. Keep in mind how much product, space, and staff you'll need to fulfill your end of the deal.



WARNING Some deal companies require you to honor a group deal forever.

- » **Timing is everything.** Schedule the term of your offer so you don't have buyers showing up on your doorstep all at one time — unless the offer is for a scheduled event or you intentionally set a short period for redemption. Most merchants see a peak in redemptions the first 30 days after an offer and the last 30 days before expiration.

Grappling with the gotchas

Watch for landmines like these before signing up for a deal:

- » **Late customers:** The fine print on some deals (and the law in some states) allows buyers to receive a discount equal to the amount they paid for their coupon — even if the deal itself has expired. For example, suppose someone saved \$6 on a pound of coffee costing \$14 with a deal that expired on 12/31/24. Even if that person comes into your store a year later, you may have to honor the discount of \$6 off a pound of coffee, whose price has now increased to \$16. However, you don't have to honor the original discounted net price on the product that gets bought. In this case, you wouldn't have to sell the \$16 pound of coffee for \$8 (its price with the original deal), but you would have to sell it for \$10.



WARNING Be cautious when making offers that include a percentage discount; a fixed-dollar discount is better.

- » **Special package deals:** Many companies create a unique package or service just for their deal offer. You are usually not required to continue to offer that product or service beyond the term of the deal. For example, say your company usually offers only hour-long dance lessons for couples and prices them at \$40 per hour. For the deal only, you offer a half-hour dance lesson for couples valued at \$20 but sold at \$10. After the offer has expired, coupon buyers may be able to get \$10 off the \$40 price, but you aren't required to offer the half-hour lesson anymore.
- » **Bookkeeping nightmares:** These deals can leave you with a record-keeping headache, from tracking outstanding and redeemed offers at the register to holding potential entries on your books, even for expired coupons. Talk to your accountant about the impact on your financial statements for these ongoing liabilities.
- » **Waiting for payment:** Payment isn't swift, either. Some coupon services divide your payments into three installments paid over 60 days, which could create cash flow problems for you if large numbers of buyers redeem their coupons quickly.
- » **Price-gouging customers:** Nasty deal-seekers may threaten to write bad reviews if you don't meet their demands to provide more than the deal offered. They may demand a higher-priced product or service at the same discount, a greater quantity than you offered, or a deeper discount.
- » **Being unprepared:** If you can't provide high-quality service to meet the demand with the staff or space you have, you may lose not only the customer but also your reputation, if poor reviews appear online. Depending on the deal you're offering, protect yourself from unhappy customers by requiring appointments, stating "subject to availability" (say, for a massage or a haircut), and allowing adequate time to redeem the offer.

Measuring success

Good coupon sites offer detailed analytics, similar to newsletters, stating the number of offers emailed, number and percent of offers opened, number and percent of viewers who clicked for details, and the number and percent of viewers who purchased the deal. Additionally, they

can provide how many viewers purchased more than one deal, total number of deals sold, and total dollar value received.

Copy this information to a spreadsheet so that you can do the following:

- » Assess whether the offer was financially successful for your business.
- » Obtain clues about what factors might have affected an offer that didn't draw buyers.
- » Compare the success and parameters of offers that you have sent out through the same company to see which offers are the most successful.
- » Compare what happens with the same offer distributed through different companies.



REMEMBER Do the math. What percentage of customers might convert or upgrade their purchase? What's a reasonable lifetime customer value for each one? How does it compare to the cost of acquisition? Get help from your accountant, if needed.



WARNING Seller beware! Small businesses with shallow pockets sometimes can't handle the pressure of serving so many customers. Many companies, especially restaurants, now report a loss in revenue whenever existing customers snap up their coupon deals.

Further leveraging your deal

Many companies offer extra options to their coupon buyers in the hope that deals will go viral:

- » **Opportunities to share opinions and photos:** Coupon buyers, for example, may have the opportunity to share on Facebook or X, entering comments about a company that's offering a deal. Other sites encourage participation in a social activity, such as ranking a service or posting photos. These actions are often perceived as testimonials by other prospective buyers and encourage them to purchase coupons. Almost all deal sites provide share buttons that facilitate users sharing deals with others on their own social media pages.

- » **Easy-to-share links to send deals to friends:** Create a deal such as if three or more friends share a deal, the referrer receives a freebie. Include this element as an allowance in your revenue calculations. If someone organizes a share campaign, total revenues may decline.

This share-this-deal functionality encourages people who receive a daily coupon email, or people who visit your site, to tell their friends about the deal on social media and by email.

- » **Affiliate options:** Recommending a deal to others or signing up to promote offers on a commission basis usually generates internal *deal bucks* (additional discounts, not cash). Groupon, for example, offers Groupon Bucks to first-time buyers who make referrals, and

a 10-percent commission for members of Groupon's affiliate programs.

- » **Easy integration with Facebook, X, Pinterest, and email to share deals:** Most services offer mobile apps for iPhone, iPad, and Android devices.



TIP After the offer appears, you can promote the deal in your newsletter, on your social media outlets, and elsewhere, although you may not have much notice.

More upsides and downsides

As a merchant, you gain brand awareness, a direct appeal to locally targeted markets, word-of-mouth advertising, and high visibility to a new customer stream. The low-cost offer supposedly reduces customers' perceived risk of trying something new. It's your job to turn these one-time experimenters into loyal repeat customers.

In theory, compared with how long it takes other forms of advertising to produce new business, your business benefits from this approach by obtaining a stream of new customers in a relatively short length of time. The concept assumes (but this assumption doesn't always prove to be true) that when an offer brings prospects in the door, satisfied customers will proceed to spend more money through these avenues:

- » **Impulse buys and add-ons:** Hey, you got them in the door, right? Time to exploit customers' good moods for your deal. See whether you can get them to cough up a little more cash. Say your buyers get 50 percent off a specialty cupcake. You can then entice them to spend their savings on drinks, sides, or a take-home purchase: "This cupcake from the offer was so good that I'm buying a dozen to take home."
- » **Repeat customers:** This is worth repeating (pun intended). Deliver quality on your discount deal, and you'll likely build a solid client base. One great massage, and that client may be yours every two or three weeks for years.
- » **Word-of-mouth:** Worth repeating, too. Buyers might bring friends.

Human nature being what it is, customers cashing in your deal don't always generate gold:

- » **One-hit wonders:** Many people who use these deals are there only for the discount and have no intention of returning. That's life — and why you have to remember to price your deal with a profit margin/loss you can live with.
- » **Cannibalizing existing customers:** Loyal patrons who would have paid full price or happily taken a 5- or 10-percent discount are now receiving a product or service at half-off, causing a loss in regular revenue.
- » **Customer service versus aggressive customers:** An ugly side of human nature is that some deal redeemers, regardless of the deal's conditions, can be unreasonable and sometimes unpleasant. They demand to use more than one coupon per purchase, want to buy an item that's not on the offer, or otherwise take advantage of merchants who don't want to have anyone making a scene in their business.

» **Succumbing to greediness:** An overwhelmed business that can't meet the demand of a deal's sales is toast. When a business is pressured into selling more deals than it can manage, everyone — staff, customers, and business owners — has a bad experience. Unhappy customers threaten to post negative reviews on sites such as Yelp, and some actually do.

To be fair, Groupon is aware of the criticisms and has tried to address them by offering fewer price-driven deals and additional, pro-business tools. It launched Groupon Merchant, a listing directory for local businesses that offers merchants an additional online presence to increase reach and sales.

Chapter 3

Profiting from Mid-Size Social Media Channels

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Building business with streaming channels
 - » Topping off a rich-media blog with Tumblr
 - » Vying for video with Vimeo
-

New social media channels and apps seem to spring up faster than weeds. Minor channels may burst on the scene and die quickly, or grow up to become the next blockbuster innovation in social marketing. This chapter looks at some of the mid-size social media channels.

These channels aren't quite large enough to justify their own chapters yet, but their user bases qualify them as reaching more than niche markets, discussed in [Chapter 1](#) of this minibook.

Take a look to see whether any of them make sense for your business. With adroit marketing, you can gain an edge in brand visibility and reach, long before the channel becomes crowded with marketing copycats. In particular, if you're looking for younger audiences, you can establish your social credibility by being there first.

Deciding Whether to Invest Your Time

Consider each of these social media channels through the lens of your business. Just like any other social channel, it takes time and effort to grow a following. When you look at your entire social media plan, is there space for any more? If you're unsure, ask yourself the following questions:

- » Is there enough online buzz about the channel for you to leverage publicity for your own benefit?
- » Does the channel reach your desired audience?
- » Is the social space (whether music, images, blogs, or communities) a good fit for your company and its marketing goals?
- » Do you have an innovative spirit and the ability to act quickly?
- » Can you think of a clever way to use the technology to get attention, grow your brand, or gather leads while you're still a big fish in a small pond?
- » Can you experiment for a reasonable price or level of effort?
- » Can you extricate yourself quickly if something doesn't work without damping your enthusiasm for trying something else new another time?

If the answers are yes, go for it! See if you can become the equivalent of the first company to accept a tweeted takeover order or the first company to reply to a disappearing photo with a disappearing coupon.

Entertaining Your Audience with Streaming Content

According to Hypebot.com, there are 90 million paid music streaming subscribers in the U.S., and music streaming services make up 89 percent of total music industry revenue. In the last few years, the music-stream services market has exploded, with Spotify leading the pack with 615 million monthly active users, China's Tencent Music coming in second place with 576 million monthly active users, and the third largest music streaming service, iHeartRadio, with 250 million monthly active users. There are several more, like Apple Music and Amazon Music, that hold their own in terms of subscribers, but I'm only going to talk about one here, though: Spotify.

The reason is simple. Whereas Apple has diversified in products like computers, phones, and watches, Spotify has diversified in streaming content. Where Apple offers music and podcasts, listeners on Spotify can stream music, podcasts, audiobooks, video (a brand-new feature), comedy, poetry and short stories, radio drama, famous speeches, language learning, self-help techniques (think meditation), and *NASA space recordings*. That's right, you can listen to original NASA space mission recordings. How cool is that?

But because chances are good that you're not in the business of space missions, I'll stick with the more popular streaming entertainment types: audio and podcasts.

With Spotify you have access to more than 100 million songs and 6 million podcast titles, with 25 percent of Spotify's listeners tuning into podcast content on a regular basis (I talk about podcasts throughout this book, but in detail in Book 7, [Chapter 5](#)). One of the big draws to Spotify is playlists, both user-generated and Spotify-created. Because Spotify playlists are easy to share with other social media channels, its influence extends beyond the site itself.

Founded in 2008 in Sweden and available in the U.S. since 2011, Spotify has more than 615 million active users per month, of which 246 million are paid subscriptions. Demographically speaking, Spotify appeals to younger users — about 73 percent are under 35 years old — and its mobile user base is growing rapidly.

If you're in a creative business or trying to reach users who enjoy certain types of music or podcasts, Spotify may be a valuable social media channel for you.



TIP Consider running contests or starting a collaborative playlist to interact with prospective customers.



REMEMBER A recent comScore study found that people who stream music are more likely to be strong brand advocates than those who don't. According to the study, Spotify users are especially likely to recommend something to friends and pay more for brands they value.

Spotify offers a few different advertising options, one of which is shown in [Figure 3-1](#). All ad types are detailed on <https://ads.spotify.com/en-US/ad-experiences>:

- » **Podcast:** Ads delivered by either the podcast host or one of the creative options offered by Spotify.
- » **Video takeover:** An advertising break dedicated to your brand, including video and display ads. The ads include a companion banner with a customizable call to action to help drive engagement.
- » **Audio:** A cross-platform ad that includes an audio spot, cover art, and a link or clickable CTA (call to action) card.
- » **Opt-in Video:** Delivered on the Now Playing View (NPV) when the app is in view, Opt-In Video showcases brands alongside the music that listeners are streaming.

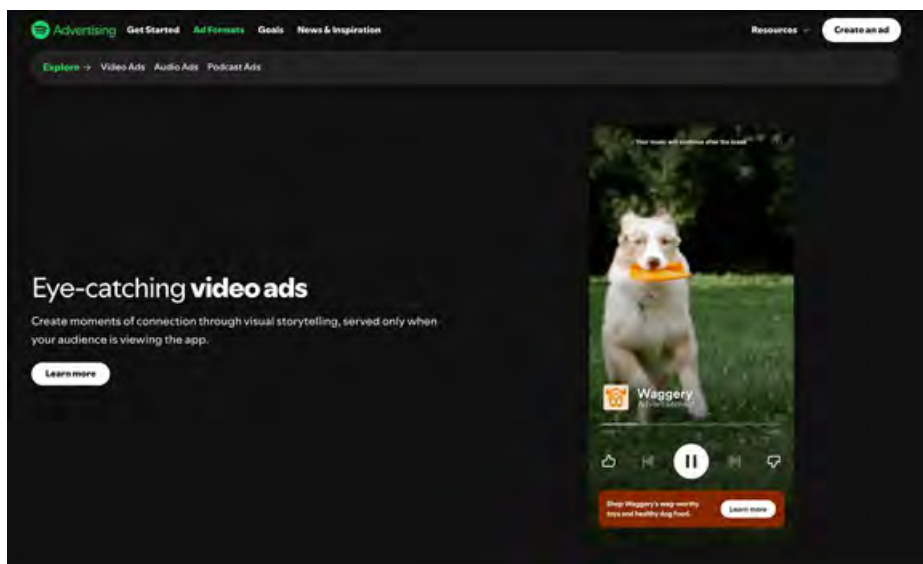


FIGURE 3-1: One of four popular ad types available on Spotify.

Turning Up New Prospects with Tumblr

Tumblr is a microblogging platform and social networking website that allows users to post multimedia and other content to a short-form blog from a desktop or a mobile app. Many users take advantage of the Tumblr dashboard to reblog content they find there (see [Figure 3-2](#)).

Founded in 2007 and acquired by Yahoo! in April 2024, Tumblr boasted more than 518 million blogs and more than 12.8 million posts per day. Like many of the channels in this

chapter, Tumblr has great appeal to a younger audience (40 percent of users are millennials — 28 to 43 years old), fairly evenly divided by gender.

With 135 million active users per month, the site may well be worthwhile for branding, mining for prospects, and increasing customer loyalty with content and customers.

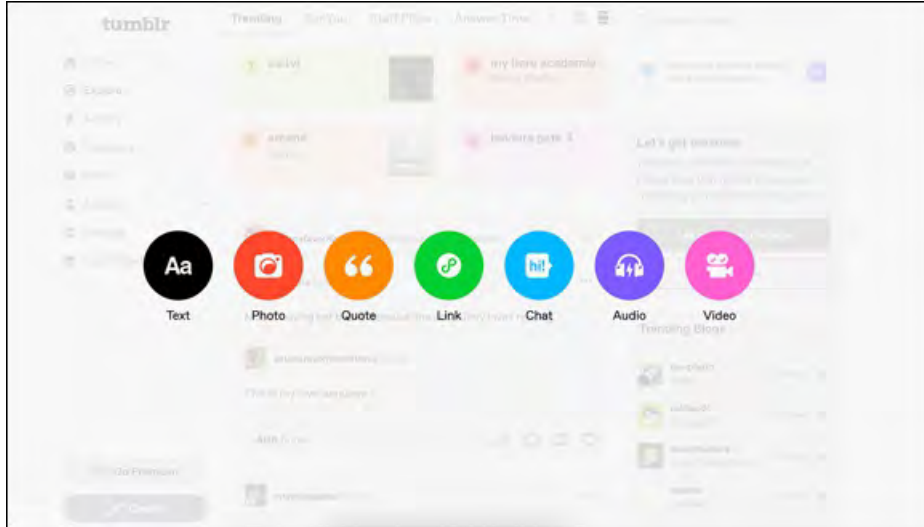


FIGURE 3-2: An easy-to-use blogging platform, Tumblr allows you to post virtually any content under the sun.

Setting up an account

Getting started as a contributor is easy. At [Tumblr.com](https://www.tumblr.com), follow these steps:

1. **Click the purple Sign Me Up button at the bottom of the screen and select your method for signing up.**

Your choices are to sign up with your email address, Google account, or Apple account. For the purposes of these instructions, I'll select email address.

2. **Enter your email in the box that appears, then click Next.**
3. **Enter (then re-enter) a password and click Next.**
4. **On the next screen, use the dropdowns to enter your birth date, then click Next.**

By clicking Next you agree to Tumblr's Terms of Service and Privacy Policy.

5. **Whew! Next, type your blog's name, then click Sign up.**

I recommend you give your blog a name that's related to your company name. For example, if your company's name is *Bulldog Coffee Roasters*, then you could name your blog something like *A Perfect Blend*. Don't spend too much time wracking your brain for the perfect name, however. You can always change it later.

6. **Now's your chance to select five topics of interest. Click Next.**

Try to select topics that are closely related to your industry.

7. **You're not done yet! Now you get to choose three fellow bloggers to follow. Click Next after doing so.**

Clicking on the blog's tile opens a preview of the blog so you can scroll through and see if

their content is of any interest. Clicking anywhere outside the preview window takes you back to the selection screen.

Success! Welcome to your new blog's dashboard! Click around and get acquainted with the different features and publishing options.

Advertising on Tumblr

Tumblr offers a wide variety of advertising options, all native to the channel. (Scroll down and fill out the form at www.tumblr.com/business.) According to one study, "Tumblr is ranked #1 in social sentiment toward brands," with users highly likely to recommend brands they follow to others. Options include the following:

- » **Sponsored posts:** Promoted on a cost per engagement (CPE) basis (*engagement* means when a viewer likes or shares the post); targeting offered by interest, location, or gender.
- » **Sponsored video posts:** Charged on a cost-per-view (CPV) basis. These posts auto-play with muted audio on user dashboards; you can reuse videos from other sources, such as Instagram.
- » **Sponsored day:** Enables a brand to pin its logo to the top of the dashboard for an entire day, which links to a branded tab on Tumblr's popular Explore page. Content is selected by you, so you can highlight blog posts, images, and more.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

In order to track your blog's analytics, be sure to select a blog theme that will allow you to paste a Google Analytics ID number into the Appearance section of the Edit Theme page. (See Book 9, [Chapter 1](#) for more on Google Analytics.) You'll need to set up your Google Analytics account first to get the ID number. If your blog is already set up, try connecting it to Google Analytics by clicking Edit Appearance on the right of your dashboard. Next, click Edit Theme and then the Edit HTML link at the very top of the page. Paste the ID number just before the `</head>` tag, click the Update Preview button, then click the Save button.

If editing HTML isn't your thing, it's best to ask your developer to help you out with it to make sure everything is set up correctly.

Promoting Video with Vimeo

Vimeo, shown in [Figure 3-3](#), is a social media community geared toward visual artists, filmmakers, and videographers. It was created in 2004 as an outlet for creative work, compared to the more popular, trending, and commercial use of YouTube. Users can upload, view, share, and comment on videos.

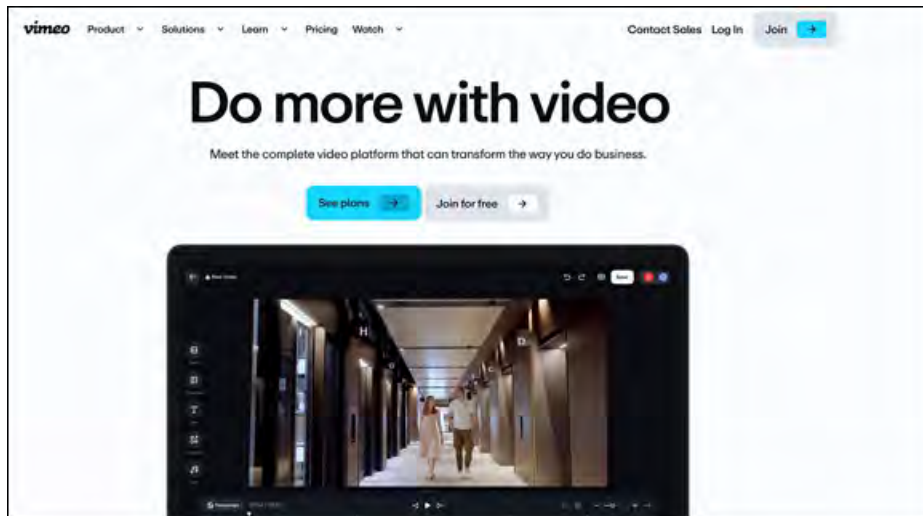


FIGURE 3-3: Showcase your brand's talent and creative side with Vimeo.

The demographics are attractive: 260 million registered users as of fall 2024. The audience skews to a college-educated, high-income population with a 2:1 ratio of men to women.

If you're in a creative profession (graphic arts, advertising, music, dance, theater, comedy, or other performance arts), Vimeo is an excellent and cost-effective showcase for promoting the quality of your work to an appreciative audience and maybe picking up a few gigs!

Vimeo has some downsides. Vimeo obviously has less traffic than YouTube, and it may be at risk of being eliminated from Google search results pages. (Nothing keeps you from posting your videos in both locations, however.)

Signing up for a Vimeo account

To sign up for a free Vimeo account, simply go to <https://vimeo.com> and click the Join for Free Button in the center of the page and then click the Sign Up button underneath the free account tier box.

Enter your first and last name, your email address, and password and click the Join with Email button. Alternatively, you can click the Join with Google button and log in with your Google credentials. That's it!

In addition to a free Basic account, Vimeo has four levels of paid accounts ranging in price from \$12 per year all the way up to \$65+ per year. If you're just starting out in video creation, the basic level account may be enough, as it gets you a number of features including the following:

- » 2TB bandwidth/month
- » 3 video uploads/month
- » Up to 1GB of video storage
- » One user login
- » Basic analytics tools

- » The ability to publish videos natively to social and e-commerce accounts
- » The ability to download converted video files

For a list of all of the features for the different levels of paid accounts, see their upgrade page at <https://vimeo.com/upgrade>.



TIP Go for community and relationship building on Vimeo by interacting with the people who leave comments. This interaction may encourage your fans to return to view future work. Good relationships are like planting seeds. You never know when they may sprout into qualified leads, or even a collaborative effort.



TIP If you're unsure that Vimeo is right for you, take advantage of their 30-day free trial before purchasing a subscription.

Monetizing content on Vimeo

Vimeo has one option for monetizing your content on the platform: Vimeo OTT.

Vimeo OTT (over-the-top) is a suite of tools that enables you to launch a subscription service. It includes a customizable video player, payment process technology, the ability to run ads to further monetize your content, and more. Plans start at \$1 per subscriber/month as well as a profit share of 10 percent of one-time purchases. Other fees and upgrades are available for purchase, as well. Learn more at <https://help.vimeo.com/hc/en-us/articles/12425768622481-Vimeo-OTT-pricing-breakdown>.

Chapter 4

Integrating Social Media

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Integrating social media with e-newsletters
 - » Incorporating social media into press releases and public relations
 - » Leveraging social media with website features
-

A volatile debate rages in marketing circles: Has social media become so prohibitively popular — and social media companies so desperate to monetize their sites and satisfy their investors — that it's no longer possible to be successful with only free posts and content?

Statistical analysis by wordstream.com shows a steady decline in organic reach for brands. Instead, promoted posts, ads, and posts from friends squeeze out your attempts to communicate for free.

You can address this problem in two ways: Beat 'em or join 'em. This chapter talks first about beating 'em by combining social media with email, press releases, or websites to increase reach.

If those methods don't work, you can always join 'em by paying to promote your posts and pins to reach the audience you want. [Chapter 5](#) discusses a range of advertising possibilities on four primary social media channels: Facebook, X, LinkedIn, and Pinterest.

Thinking Strategically about Social Media Integration

For many businesses, social media marketing adds to the richness of the company's marketing mix with a purpose of its own. Others see it as a low-cost boost to standard press-release distribution, email newsletter subscribers, loyalty programs, or other forms of marketing.

These more traditional marketing efforts can go viral when you take advantage of social media integration to do the following:

- » Increase newsletter subscriptions.
- » Broaden the audience for event announcements.
- » Maximize the distribution of press releases and other news.
- » Drive traffic to your hub website to encourage users to take advantage of special features.
- » Cross-post content in all these venues to increase reach.

Book 2, [Chapter 4](#) discusses simple integration techniques, such as displaying chiclets to invite people to follow your company on social media outlets and implementing share buttons to encourage viewers to share your pages with others.



WARNING Keep in mind that a social media campaign may take six months to a year to reach maturity. Don't stop using other tactics that now reach your target markets successfully. Wait for results from metrics showing that social media perform at least as well before you abandon a current technique. And you can't know what to measure unless you first set goals for your integration efforts, which I discuss in Book 1, [Chapter 1](#). Sometimes you're after sales, sometimes leads, sometimes brand recognition, or sometimes just your 15 minutes of fame.

Whatever you're planning, take advantage of the measurement tools [Book 9](#) discusses to establish baselines for traffic, click-through rate (CTR), conversion rates, and return on investment (ROI) for existing marketing methods so that you can detect any lift (or drop) that integration brings.

According to [Synup.com](#), 76 percent of local businesses integrate social media into their marketing strategy, and 41 percent rely on social media to help drive revenue. Consider their experiences while you move forward with your own plans for social media integration.



REMEMBER Include your integrated marketing tactics on your Social Media Marketing Plan (see Book 1, [Chapter 3](#)) and schedule activities on your Social Media Activity Calendar (see Book 1, [Chapter 4](#)).



TIP To define the specific form your integration methods will take, who will execute them and when, and how you will measure the results, create a block diagram showing how content will flow as part of your integration plans (see Book 1, [Chapter 3](#)).

Integrating Social Media with E-Newsletters

Marketers spend a good portion of their time on different social networking platforms to best reach their customers. However, there are still good reasons for maintaining and cross-posting between social media and your e-newsletter campaigns.

With so many people using social media to consume content, why are marketers even using newsletters? Many marketers have found targeted email campaigns to be more effective than social media when it comes to sales and messaging. Popular newsletter services include Mailchimp (see [Figure 4-1](#)), Constant Contact, AWeber, Brevo (formerly Sendinblue), and SendGrid.

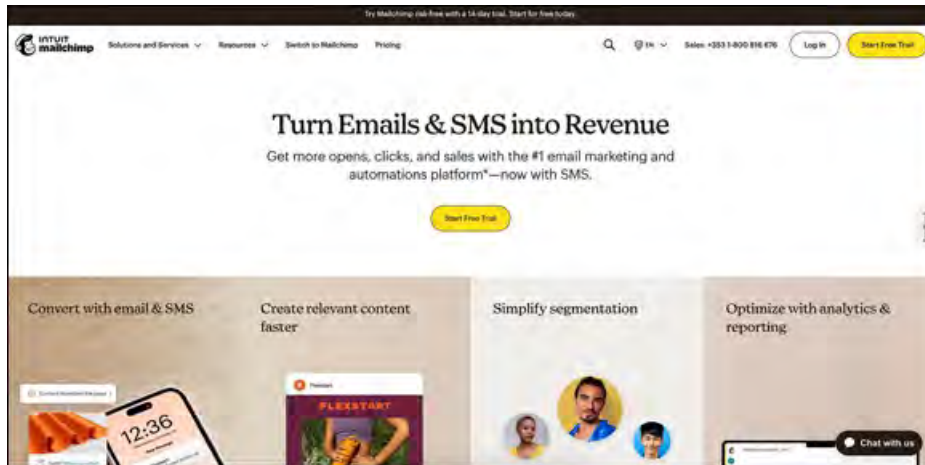


FIGURE 4-1: A newsletter service such as Mailchimp gives you the tools you need to integrate social media.

What follows is a look at some of the reasons to take advantage of email newsletter campaigns:

- » **Target customers.** With email, you can send campaigns to everyone on your list or to specific groups of people. You can target people by age, location, income range, and other demographic information.
- » **Reach more people.** With social media campaigns, you're reaching the people who are online at the moment. Emails, however, can be opened at any time.
- » **Share different forms of content at once.** Rather than strategically timed, one-at-a-time post drips, emails enable you to outline and link to a variety of content at once.
- » **Update your customers.** Your customers can learn what's new with your company, including new hires, product launches, what events you'll be attending, and other milestones.
- » **Share discounts, coupons, and sales messages.** If people know you're sharing coupons, discounts, and other perks, they're more likely to sign up for and open your emails in the future.
- » **Direct traffic to your website.** Email newsletters are another way to drive people to targeted pages on your website.
- » **Personalize your messages.** Emails are more personal than a social media post in that you can use names and other information to appeal to every individual on your list.
- » **See how content performs.** Newsletter platforms provide analytics so you can see how many people opened your emails, which links were clicked, and how your emails convert to sales.
- » **Everyone checks email.** With social media, not everyone will see your content. However, email is delivered to every mailbox. (Whether or not people open that mail is another story.)



REMEMBER According to Campaign Monitor, twice as many people have email accounts than X and Facebook accounts combined. Email open rates, which average in the 20 percent to 25 percent range, make an email message more likely to be seen than the same post in Facebook.

With numbers like these, you have every reason to integrate social media with email to attract new subscribers, promote your newsletter, obtain content ideas, and identify issues to address in your email newsletters, not to mention increasing the reach for your social media posts.

Gaining more subscribers

Wherever and whenever prospects discover your presence on social media, try to provide them with other opportunities to find out how you might be able to solve their problems. Your online newsletter is certainly one of those opportunities. Follow these guidelines to gain more newsletter subscribers:

- » **Include a link for newsletter subscription on your blog, in all your other social media pages, and in your email signature block.** Mailchimp (<https://us6.admin.mailchimp.com/facebook>), among others, have apps you can add to your Facebook page to allow individuals to sign up for your newsletter. You never know — you might reach dozens, hundreds, maybe thousands of new prospects.
- » **Treat your newsletter as an event on social media networks.** Add a preview of topics or post an announcement of your newsletter a day or so in advance. Include a linkable call to action to subscribe in both cases.
- » **Post a teaser line in your social media outlets with a linkable call to action.** You might say, for example, “To learn more about healthcare reform for small businesses, sign up for our newsletter.”
- » **Post newsworthy findings.** Use material from your newsletter on social news services such as Reddit (see Book 2, [Chapter 4](#)) to attract more readers.
- » **Include edited versions of social media posts in your newsletters.** This tactic increases reach for important items.
- » **Link to a sample newsletter or newsletter archive from your blog, your website, or the About section or a tab on your Facebook page.** Prospective subscribers can see your newsletter’s usefulness. Of course, also indicate the frequency with which you email newsletters.

Finding more followers and connections

Email integration with social media works both ways: You can drive people from your newsletter to social media services or use social media services to gain subscribers. Here are some guidelines for finding more followers and connections:

- » Include share buttons in every issue of your newsletter.

- » Add options for signing up for social media on the email registration page on your website (if possible).
- » Use your e-newsletter to make an offer or run a contest for social media participants.



REMEMBER Cross-promote your email newsletter on all your social media channels. Remember to post all your social venues, not just your hub website, in your email signature block.

Finding and sharing content

Writing content continuously for newsletters and social media is always a challenge. However, you can exploit the easy interaction between the two to lighten your writing burden:

- » **Take advantage of social marketing capabilities from your email service provider.** Many companies now let you easily send your email directly to Facebook and other social networking pages.
- » **Mine social media for content.** Read related information on social news sites, listen to hot topics that come up in LinkedIn and Facebook groups, and watch for trending topics. Pay attention to comments on your own and other people's forums, message boards, and social communities. Those comments may clue you in to concerns, trends, or industry news.
- » **Use Google Alerts, SocialMention, X Search, and other search functions for mentions of your company.** You can turn positive comments into testimonial content on your newsletter, social media outlet, or website (with permission), or respond to many people at a time who may have read a negative comment.
- » **Create a Q&A section in your regular newsletter.** Respond to questions that are common across social media venues.
- » **Use keywords and tags to identify social news and content related to your industry.** In turn, be sure to include keywords in any newsletters or newsletter announcements that may be reposted on the web.
- » **Pursue market intelligence even further by using the advanced X Search features.** Sort posts geographically through an advanced search to see which topics are of interest locally, in locations where you have offices, or wherever large clusters of your customers or prospects live or work. Then segment your mailing list accordingly, if appropriate.



TIP Use Google Trends (www.google.com/trends) to figure out the day of week and time of year when users are most likely to use specific search terms, such as *Christmas tree ornaments* in November or December. Use that information to schedule your topical email blasts. There's nothing like having information show up in people's inboxes just when they're looking for it!

Integrating Social Media with Press Releases

The reasons for dealing with public relations and press-release distribution haven't changed since the explosion of social media — just the methodology and relative prominence. Where once you worried only about the care and feeding of a small covey of journalists, now you must nourish a veritable horde of bloggers, individual influencers, authors of e-zine articles, editors of online publications, and individuals who will recommend your article on a social news service.



TIP

In companies that view social media primarily as a public relations vehicle, the public or community relations person (or contractor) may be the one who coordinates the social media marketing strategy.

All these venues, not just standard media, open a door to public attention. Take advantage of them all as a cost-effective way to achieve these goals:

- » **Broadcast announcements of products, appearances, and events.** Alerting target markets to new products and services is one of the most traditional uses of publicity.
- » **Build brand recognition.** Whether it's acknowledgment of your participation in community events, awareness of your position in your industry, or simply the frequent repetition of your name in front of your audience, press coverage brings you publicity at a relatively low cost.
- » **Ask journalists, authors, or bloggers to write about your company.** Stories about your firm — at least, the positive ones — boost your credibility, extend your reach, and provide you with bragging destinations for links from your site. Trade press is especially critical for business-to-business (B2B) companies.
- » **Drive traffic to your website.** Online press releases almost always have at least one link to your central web presence, and often more. Social media offers a mechanism for distributing linkable press content around the web that others may embed. The accumulation of long-lasting inbound links obviously has a greater effect than a one-time release.
- » **Improve search engine ranking.** You can gain many inbound links to your site when your release posts on multiple press outlets. Press sites generally transfer their high page rankings to your site; Google, in particular, weighs mentions in blogs and press sites (and other rich content) highly. Your visibility on preferred search terms may also rise, especially if you optimize your press releases and subheads for keywords (within reasonable constraints).

Cultivating influencers

Identifying influencers is one key way to get into a conversation. Influencers are people whose blogs, posts, or social media pages drive much of the conversation in a particular topic

area. They often have a loyal following of readers who engage in dialog, and repeat and amplify discussions the influencer began. In the olden days, press folks would cultivate public relations and press contacts the same way you now cultivate influencers.

Here's a quick checklist for finding these key figures to approach with a request for coverage:

- » **Find conversations on blogs, X, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, forums, message boards, communities, and industry-specific social media.** To do so, use keywords relevant to your company, brand, product, industry, and competitors. Check out this blog from Ahrefs for some free keyword research tools: <https://ahrefs.com/blog/free-keyword-research-tools>.
- » **Use search tools on particular networks and aggregator searches, such as SocialMention.** Those who post most often, or who have a lot of connections or followers, may be the experts or influencers you seek. Monitor the conversations for a while to be sure that you identified the right folks.
- » **Use standard search techniques to locate trade publications or related newsletters.** Publication sites may include links to their own social media sites. Or you can identify specific writers and editors whose interests sync with yours and search for their individual blogs and social networking accounts.
- » **Become a contributor who answers questions on related subjects in various social media venues.** You can (and should) identify yourself, without promoting your company or products in your comments. Before you ask for anything, engage in the conversation and offer links to related posts and articles. Because links are the currency of social media, link from your site to influencers' sites, blogs, and posts, and become a connection or follower.



TIP To track your contacts, bookmark the conversations you find, organizing them in subfolders by the name of the influencer.

Distributing your news

Frankly, the more sites, the merrier. Although you'll pay a penalty for duplicate website content in search engines, press releases don't seem to suffer.



REMEMBER Place identifying tags on links in different press releases so that you can tell which releases generate click-throughs to your site. If you create only one release a month, this isn't essential; however, if you have an active campaign with numerous press mentions or other types of postings on the same source sites, these identifying tags are absolutely critical.

[Table 4-1](#) shows a partial list of press and PR online resources.

TABLE 4-1 Publicity and PR Resources

Name	URL	Description
24-7 Press Release	www.24-7pressrelease.com	Disseminates news to online media, print media, journalists, bloggers, and search engines.
Business Wire	www.businesswire.com/files/whitepapers/press-release-optimization-guide.pdf	"A Guide to Press Release Optimization."
BuzzStream	www.buzzstream.com/social-media	Fee-based outreach list builder.
ClickPress	www.clickpress.com	Free and premium press-release posting on-site.
iNewsWire	www.i-newswire.com	Submits press releases and other content to news, social media, and media outlets. Prices start at \$350 for one press release.
Press About	www.pressabout.com	Paid press-release distribution in the form of a blog.
PRLog	www.prlog.org	Free basic distribution for press releases; paid versions with wider distribution. Prices start at \$29 and go up to \$339 per release.
Reddit	www.reddit.com	Social news site that accepts links to releases.
Prezly.com	www.prezly.com/academy/best-press-release-distribution	"13 Best Press Release Distribution Sites and Services".
eReleases	www.ereleases.com	Touts themselves as "the only nationwide press release distribution partner for Cision PR Newswire." Distribution package prices start at \$399 and go up to \$699.

Posting on your own sites

Post your release, at minimum, on your own website and blog. You can, however, easily add releases to your other social networking profiles, if it's appropriate. For example, an author might post a release for each book they write but wouldn't necessarily post a press release for everyone hired at their company.



TIP

To simplify your life, use syndication tools such as Hootsuite, X Pro, Netvibes, or Sprout Social (see Book 2, [Chapter 1](#)) to post press releases and newsletter content on your blog, Facebook page, and elsewhere. Of course, then the content will be identical.

Using standard press distribution sources

Many paid online press-release distribution sources exist. Among the most well-known are Business Wire, Cision PRWeb, PR Newswire, and GlobeNewswire. Sometimes, distribution services offer levels of service at different prices depending on the quantity and type of distribution, geographical distribution, and whether distribution includes social media, multimedia, offline publications, or other criteria.

[Table 4-1](#), presented in the preceding section, includes several options for free distribution. Many free services don't distribute your releases — except perhaps to search engines — but, rather, simply post them on their sites for finite periods. Whether they're free or paid, be sure to read carefully what you're getting. Perhaps the most straightforward example of integrating press releases with social media is the distribution of a release announcing your social media activities.



REMEMBER Post linkable event announcements on calendars all over the web, as well as event pages on Facebook and other social media. Calendars may be an old-fashioned, pre-social media technique, but many high-ranking calendar pages feed page-rank value until your event occurs and the listing expires.

Using bloggers as a distribution channel

You've laid the groundwork by identifying appropriate bloggers and other influencers and participated on their publications. The next step is to get them to post your news. The most discrete way is to email it (or a link to it) with a cover note to see whether the recipient wants to share the article with readers or comment on its content.

Because you're pitching the bloggers, include in your cover note why you think readers of the blog would be interested and also a descriptive paragraph about your company. It's considered bad form to submit your press release as a post on most blogs — bad enough that a moderator probably would exclude it.

Using social news services and other social networks

You can send similar emails to individuals and influencers you have identified as participating in key discussions about related products or issues, including a short notice about a press release on X and a mention to groups and professionals on sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn.

You can submit your release to the few social news services that permit you to submit your own link to your press release, such as Reddit. In other cases, you may need to submit to social news and bookmark services from another identity, or wait until the story appears on a blog and submit the blog post instead.

Pressing for attention

One possible way around the mash-up between social media and publicity is to create a socially friendly press announcement that you can post easily on multiple social media and encourage engagement.

Measuring results

The same social-monitoring tools that you use to find influencers can be applied to track key performance indicators for your press efforts, such as Google Alerts, SocialMention, and X Search. Assessing results from your publicity is a good place to use all that qualitative data, as well as advertising measurements, for online brand awareness and equity.



REMEMBER Measure baselines before you begin your press campaigns and be sure that before-and-after results span comparable timeframes. Here are a few key performance indicators that you might find relevant:

» Number of online mentions of company, brand, product or service line, or individual

products or services anywhere online, including social media, during a specific timeframe.

- » Number and location of media placements; where and when mentions occurred, a press release was published, or an article about your company or product appeared on a recognized media outlet — whether online or offline.
- » Site traffic generated from press releases and other linkable press-related mentions; see referrer logs in your web stats software for number of inbound links from each source. Include comparative click-through rates (CTRs) and conversion rates, if available. To make this process easier, tag links with identifiers related to the topic or date of the press release.
- » Social media campaign participation and sentiment using monitoring tools; see Book 2, [Chapter 1](#).
- » Average frequency of the product, company, or brand conversations related to the release compared to the frequency of conversations before the release.
- » Estimated costs (hard dollars and labor) that were spent. Be sure to include costs for paid distribution, if used. To compare ROI for publicity to other methods, you compare costs to the value of sales that can be traced back to the release (if any). If you can't trace back sales, you might be able to compare brand engagement.

Integrating Social Media with Your Website

Any website can incorporate a myriad of features that integrate with social media, going well beyond the obvious and oft-repeated reminders to include Follow Us On and share buttons everywhere, including product pages in stores. You can get clever: Include links to your help forum or YouTube video tutorials as part of the automated purchase confirmation email you send to buyers.

And, of course, this integration can work the other way: integrating your social media with your website.

In some cases, old-fashioned versions of social media — on-site forums, chat rooms, product reviews, and wikis — effectively draw repeat visitors to the hub site, avoiding any integration with third-party social media sites.

More advanced sites have already implemented social media techniques on-site, including blogs, communities, and calls for user-generated content — photos and videos of people using your product or suggesting creative new designs and applications, as well as ratings.

Several strategic factors may affect your decision whether to implement such techniques on-site or off:

- » The cost of development, storage, support, and ongoing maintenance versus costs off-site
- » SEO and link strategies
- » Plus-and-minus points of managing a more centralized and simplified web presence

A few on-site techniques, such as loyalty programs, work just as well on social media (for

example, special offers for those who like you on Facebook). Three other popular methods practically cry out for integration: coupons, discounts, and freebies; games and contests; and microsites (more about these methods in the following sections).



TIP

Brainstorm ways that an integrated website and social media campaign might succeed for you. Diagram it and figure out what you'll measure to assess your accomplishments.

Coupons, discounts, and freebies

It doesn't take much monitoring of Facebook, LinkedIn, and X, as well as social news, bookmarking, and shopping streams, to see how frequently they're used to offer time-limited deals, coupons, special promotions, discounts, and free samples.

The sense of urgency in certain social media environments catches viewers' interest. Just like the competitive energy of an auction may cause bidders to offer more than they intend, the ephemeral nature of real-time offers may inspire viewers to grab for a coupon they might otherwise have passed up.

The upside and downside of real-time social media is precisely the immediacy of these offers and how quickly a chain of other posts extinguishes them from awareness. You have a chance to move overstock quickly, bring in business on a slow day, or gain new prospects from a group you might not otherwise reach without making a long-term, and perhaps too-expensive, commitment.

Here are some points to keep in mind when offering coupons, discounts, and freebies:

- » Pin your offer and contest posts to the top of your Facebook timeline to make sure they continue to be seen. Consider paying to boost these posts to promote your specials.
- » Preplan and schedule your posts, repeating them frequently enough throughout the day to appear in real-time search results and near the top of chronologically organized posts on any social media site that doesn't permit pinning them to the top.
- » Always link back to your primary website or blog, not only to explain the details of the offer but also to enjoy the inbound link value, offer additional goods and services, and capture prospect information.
- » Be sure to use a unique promotion code for each offer and tag your links with identifiers to track the source of click-throughs and conversions.

Most of the hundreds of online coupon sites already have a presence on X, Facebook, and elsewhere. You can use their services or simply create a coupon of your own.



REMEMBER

Whether you offer a discount through your website, social media, or any other form of advertising, be sure to include the impact of the discount in your cost analysis. Giving away a free soda may cost a business only 10¢ (mostly for the cup!), but if it gives away

1,000 drinks, the discount costs \$100.

[Chapter 2](#) of this minibook discusses the group-purchasing model for coupons, which is dependent on volume use reaching a critical mass.

Contests and games

Your imagination is the only limit to contests and games that you can post on your site and cross-promote via social media. As usual, make sure that viewers link back and forth among your sites, ensuring that an inbound link to your primary web presence exists. The goals of your contest may vary:

- » Branding and name recognition
- » Building relationships through entertainment
- » Obtaining feedback and building community through customer-generated content
- » Locating hard-to-find resources, clients, or vendors
- » Cross-promoting
- » Acquiring testimonials
- » Getting input into your own brainstorming process about where your product or service should go



TIP Like with special offers, be sure to include the cost of prizes and the labor involved in running the contest in your analysis of ROI. Depending on the goal of the contest, you may be looking for new visitors, repeat visitors, leads, or sales.

You can find ideas for creating more effective contests and games at www.sprinklr.com/blog/social-media-contest.

Microsites

Microsites are branded environments specific to a particular product, line, or brand. Created like any other freestanding websites with their own domain names and only a few pages, microsites are usually dedicated to a specific product or service. Often used with a new product introduction or special promotion, microsites may facilitate social media-style activities specific to that project. Often, user conversations or user-generated content contributions are incorporated into the site.

Many microsites incorporate highly focused presentations to launch a new product, turn a sale into an event, provide how-to instruction, or target specific demographic groups.

A microsite is an excellent way to branch out from the design of your main site and show off your style and skills. It might portray your brand in a new light — one that connects more closely to users and makes a creative impact on them. And beyond the aesthetic design, an easy and engaging interaction will make the experience more enjoyable and beneficial for your users.

Private membership sites

Private membership sites are subscription-based sites whose content is visible only to subscribers. Private membership sites can be free or paid, but they're a way to offer something of value to your online community. Private membership sites can be forums where online communities interact and share ideas, places to receive exclusive content, or opportunities for learning and teaching experiences such as online courses.

Because people sign up to join private membership sites (especially if they're paying for the experience), they're more invested in the content and in participation.

Community forums

All throughout the book I talk about how social media is all about community. Having an online community to consume your content and support your brand is why you're on social media in the first place, right?

Community forums, also known as Customer Communities, are sites where customers and brand advocates can gather to bond and build relationships with both you and other customers. It gives customers a place to hang out and to talk about their experiences with your product and other interests. If nurtured, the community will grow organically over time, and your customers will feel valued and heard. People keep coming back and make purchases from brands that pay attention and work to build relationships with their customers.

Another benefit of building a community forum is crowd-sourced support and Q&A. As you already know, social media takes time, and cultivating a strong online community is probably one of the more time-consuming parts of social media marketing (albeit, one of the most rewarding). If you're not able to provide 24/7 support in the forum, chances are, other forum members will chime in with answers to questions being asked. If you see this happening, always confirm or correct the answer that was given and thank the person who answered for helping out. People like to be recognized for their good deeds!

There's also the search engine optimization (SEO) benefit. Because search engines *crawl* community forums, whatever conversations are taking place will be scanned and depending on the appearance of your keywords, the community content can help with your search engine rankings.



REMEMBER When you're communicating with people in forums, try to utilize keywords, but naturally. Using too many or *keyword stuffing* makes you sound unnatural, and it will become obvious that providing actual support isn't necessarily your priority.

For more information on how to build your community forum, Wix has a blog post that takes you through the different technological aspects of setting one up at www.wix.com/blog/best-forum-software.

Chapter 5

Advertising on Social Media

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Using paid advertising on social media
 - » Promoting your content with advertising
 - » Engaging through ads
-

Many social media sites offer the capability to advertise. You might be wondering why you should pay for advertising on social media sites when you can just publish a post and send it off to the masses. Well, posting to social media doesn't necessarily mean you're getting as many views as you should. Some sites, for example Facebook and Instagram (parent company Meta), don't make it easy for consumers to see posts from brands — even if those people liked the brand's page. When you pay for advertising on social media sites, you're paying for the ability to reach more people.

Integrating Social Media with Paid Advertising

Social media has the advertising world in ferment. As applications from social media companies mature, audiences grow, and technology improves, the companies expand their advertising opportunities to make money for their investors — everyone is just trying to make a buck, especially through mobile advertising.

Advertising on social media sites

Many social media sites, especially blogs, have long accepted advertising that you can incorporate into your plans for paid advertising (if any). Some large channels (such as Blogger and YouTube) and many smaller social media venues display standard PPC, banner, and multimedia ads from Google Ads or Yahoo! Ads. Other social media channels offer their own advertising programs.

The increased advertising offerings on social media channels could be interpreted as attempts to overcome consumers' acquired *banner blindness* to ads appearing in predictable online locations — and a deep desire to cut into Google's share of total online advertising revenue.

But there's more than Google envy at play. The growth in social advertising is also driven by the greater reach, better analytics, higher click-through rates, and higher degree of engagement with social media advertising.

Later in this chapter, I discuss the major ones: Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, Snapchat, and TikTok. [Table 5-1](#) includes additional popular social media sites offering paid advertising; I encourage you to explore these on your own.

TABLE 5-1 Social Media Sites Offering Paid Advertising

Name	URL for Media Kit or Advertising Information	Resources
Facebook and Instagram	https://www.facebook.com/business	www.facebook.com/business/products/ads https://www.facebook.com/business/help/458369380926902
LinkedIn	https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/ads	
Pinterest	https://ads.pinterest.com	
Reddit	www.reddit.com/advertising	www.reddit.com/wiki/selfserve
Snapchat	forbusiness.snapchat.com	https://storage.googleapis.com/snapchat-web/success-stories/pdf/overview/pdf_snap_ads_overview_en.pdf
Spotify	https://ads.spotify.com	
TikTok	https://ads.tiktok.com/business	https://ads.tiktok.com/business/en-US/how-it-works
X	https://business.x.com/en/advertising	https://business.X.com/en/help.html
YouTube	https://www.youtube.com/ads	



TIP

All the major social media advertising channels review and approve ads before allowing them to post. Allow at least 24 hours for turnaround, although sometimes it takes much less time, and occasionally it takes much longer.

Maximizing your advertising dollars

You can and should take advantage of targeting your audience as closely as the tools allow, selecting by geography, demographics, education, and interest area whenever possible. Some folks object to the targeting: Older women seem to receive a disproportionate number of ads for skin creams and diets; those who change their status to Engaged are quickly deluged with ads from wedding service providers.

You can evaluate advertising placements on these sites just as you would evaluate advertising placed anywhere else. Using the advertising metrics discussed in Book 9, [Chapter 6](#), consider cost per click (CPC), cost per 1,000 (CPM) impressions, click-through rate (CTR), and the resulting conversions to decide whether any of these ads pay off for you.



WARNING

Sometimes, social media advertising is less expensive than traditional pay-per-click (PPC), banner, or retargeting ads through search engines, but not always.

CPC refers to the measure of how one will pay for an ad; PPC is more about the system of buying the ads.



REMEMBER

So many variables affect CTR — ad size, placement, quality of the ad, match to audience, and value of the offer — that it's hard to predict exactly how your ad will

perform.



REMEMBER Averages are averages. The range at both ends may be extreme. Like so much material on the web, the only metrics that matter are your own.

Although you can test the same ad in several places at the same time to see which publishers yield the most bang for your advertising buck, also take into consideration whether the audiences on different social channels respond to a different message.

Advertising on Facebook and Instagram

In October 2021, Facebook, who at the time owned Instagram and WhatsApp as well, rebranded to be under one parent company they named Meta. There were several reasons why this was a very smart (and strategic) move, and both users and advertisers have reaped the rewards.

That's because you can kill two birds with one stone when it comes to advertising on Meta sites, which makes it very convenient! In other words, you only have to go through the process of setting up advertising accounts and creating your ads once, and you'll be able to run your ads on both Facebook *and* Instagram. Not to mention being able to manage ad spend and monitor performance from one dashboard.

Learning ad buying types

Meta uses two types of ad buying types: Reservation and Auction. The one you choose depends on a few different factors:

- » **Reservation:** Allows you to plan and purchase campaigns ahead of time, ensuring predictable performance targets and greater control over ad frequency. Ads can run on Facebook and Instagram.
- » **Auction:** Provides increased flexibility, efficiency, and options, though results may vary. Ads can appear across Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, and the Meta Audience Network.

When you're just starting out with Meta advertising, it's worth starting with the Auction option, simply because you don't (yet) have a lot of experience with what ad types, frequency, timing, and so on will work best with your target audience. For that reason, the rest of this section will be from the perspective of using the Ad Auction option.



REMEMBER You can always switch buying types after you get a better idea about performance. You're not stuck with one type or another!

Ad auctions

Every time there's a chance to display an ad to a user, an *ad auction* is held to decide which ad will be shown. As you can imagine, billions of auctions occur daily across Meta-owned web properties!

When advertisers create their campaigns, they specify the audience they want to reach by defining a target group. An individual can belong to multiple target groups. For example, one advertiser might target pet owners who love hiking, whereas another focuses on people who own dogs and live in Colorado. A person who is a dog owner and hiking enthusiast in Colorado could fit into both target groups.

To ensure the winning ad provides the most value to both people and the businesses paying, the ad with the highest *total value* wins the auction. This total value is determined by three

things:

- » **Bid:** This is the amount an advertiser is willing to pay to achieve their desired outcome. Advertisers can choose from various bidding strategies (discussed next) to manage their bids effectively.
- » **Estimated Action Rates:** This is a prediction of how likely a specific person is to interact with or convert from a particular ad and is based on the likelihood that the ad will achieve the advertiser's goal.
- » **Ad Quality:** This is an evaluation of the ad's quality, informed by feedback from users (such as whether they hide or engage with the ad) and an analysis of low-quality elements, such as misleading content, sensational language, or click-bait.

Estimated *action rates* and ad quality together measure *ad relevance*. Because relevance plays a role in the auction, an ad that resonates more with the viewer can win over ads with higher bids.

Meta bidding strategies

Just when you thought you had a handle on how this whole auction thing works, you learn about *bidding strategies*.



REMEMBER Selecting the right strategy is key to achieving measurable business outcomes, such as increasing total sales, acquiring new customers, or expanding brand visibility. To choose the most effective strategy, you should first define how you'll be measuring success and aligning your choices with your specific business goals.

Meta provides three primary types of bidding strategies:

- » **Spend-Based Bidding:** This strategy is designed to focus on fully utilizing the budget to achieve maximum results or value.
 - **Highest Volume:** Aims to deliver the highest number of conversions or results within the allocated budget. For example, an event organizer might use this approach to maximize attendance for a music festival, prioritizing volume over cost-per-attendee.
 - **Highest Value:** Focuses on spending the budget to drive the most valuable outcomes. For example, a florist could use this strategy to sell premium bouquets, optimizing for higher-value purchases while utilizing the entire budget.
- » **Goal-Based Bidding:** This approach allows you to target specific cost or value benchmarks.
 - **Cost Per Result Goal:** Works to maintain costs close to a defined target, regardless of market fluctuations. For example, a retailer might set a cost-per-purchase goal that ensures profitability on average.
 - **ROAS Goal (Return on Ad Spend):** Focuses on achieving a target return on ad

spend over the course of the campaign. For example, if you spend \$100 and want to generate \$110 in revenue (a 110-percent return), you would set their ROAS goal at 1.1. Achieving the exact ROAS target is not guaranteed, however.

» **Manual Bidding:** This option provides you with direct control over the maximum bid placed in auctions.

- **Bid Cap:** Sets a maximum bid for all auctions instead of relying on dynamic bidding. This strategy is best suited for those who have a strong understanding of their audience's conversion rates and can calculate optimal bid amounts.

Getting started

Whew! Now that all of that (somewhat) complicated — but important — stuff is out of the way, you can start your Meta advertising journey!

To start developing a Meta ad campaign, follow these steps:

1. **Go to** www.facebook.com/ads/create.

If you're not yet signed into your account, you will be prompted to do so at this time.

2. **On the screen that appears after you log in, establish an objective for your ad campaign by selecting an option from the Choose a Campaign Objective list and click Continue.**

Choose the goal that comes closest to your needs. Don't worry — you can always change your mind later. The goals you are shown depend on the category of business you selected when you created your page, but here are the main ones:

- *Awareness:* This option show your ads to people who are most likely to remember them; in other words, your target audience.
- *Traffic:* With this option you can send people to a destination, like your website, app, Instagram profile, or Facebook event.
- *Engagement:* Select this objective if you want to get more messages, purchases through messaging, video views, post engagement, Page likes, or event responses.
- *Leads:* Includes a short form with qualifying questions for people to fill out.
- *App Promotion:* Encourages downloads and usage of your apps.
- *Sales:* This objective will help you find people likely to purchase your product or service.

After you select a goal, you are sent to the Campaign Creation page. The fields you're asked to fill out depends on the goal of your ad. For the purpose of this example, I chose the Engagement option.

3. **In the Campaign Name box, enter a name for your ad campaign.**

You can give it any name you want, but make sure you can easily identify it from your ads manager dashboard. Some good options would be to use the name of the holiday (if the campaign is for Black Friday, for example) or the name of a specific product or service.

4. **(Optional) If your business is related to financial products and services, employment, housing, social issues, elections, or politics, you may need declare a *Special Ad Category*.**

Not all locations require this, and you can read more at

www.facebook.com/business/help/298000447747885.

5. **In the Campaign Details section, click the link with a down arrow that says Show More Options.**

The Campaign Spending Limit option appears.

6. **Hover your pointer over that section and click the Edit link with the pencil icon that appears.**

A checkbox that says Add Campaign Spending Limit appears.

7. **Click the checkbox and enter a dollar amount into the box that appears.**

The smallest amount you have to spend is \$100, but it depends on your personal budget.

You can always start off small (for example, \$100) and increase the limit when (or if) you see success.

8. **(Optional) If you plan to create multiple ads for a campaign, click the button next to Advantage Campaign Budget to turn the feature on.**

If you turn this feature on, your entire ad budget is distributed across all ads that you create in order to get more results. You can customize the spending for each individual ad.

9. **(Optional) Click the button next to A/B Test to activate this option.**

If you want to test between two different ad taglines, for example, you may want to turn on this feature to see which tagline is more effective.

10. **Click the blue Next button on the bottom right of the screen to move to the next step.**

If all your selections meet Meta's criteria, you'll be taken to the next page. If not, you'll receive an error message on the right side of the page, telling you where you need to adjust your information.

11. **In the Conversion section of this next page, hover your mouse over the words Conversion Location and click the Edit link that appears.**

This is where you decide where people who click on your ad are taken to. The default Conversion Location shown depends on your Campaign objective; however, you can change it to one of the other several options in this section. Whenever you click on an option, the Audience Definition box appears on the right side of the page showing your estimated audience size and estimated daily results. For the purpose of these instructions, I selected Facebook Page.



REMEMBER The option you select for your Conversion Location determines the remaining customization fields you have access to for the rest of the process. As mentioned, I selected Facebook Page as my Conversion Location, so the remainder of the instructions are written from that perspective.

12. Next, select your Performance Goal from the drop-down menu.

This is how you'll measure the success of your ads. The options you have to choose from depend on your Conversion Location and some Conversion Locations — for example, a Facebook Page — only have one Performance Goal available.

13. (Optional) Select the Facebook Page you want to send people to from the drop-down menu.

14. (Optional) Enter in your Cost Per Result goal.

This tells Meta that you want to keep a consistent cost for each individual conversion instead of leaving it up to the bidding auction and market conditions. Meta will keep the Cost Per Result as close to your number as possible, up until your budget runs out.

15. In the Budget & Schedule section, enter a Daily Budget Amount and select a Start Date.

If you want your ad campaign to stop after a certain date, click the checkbox next to End Date, and select the date you want.

16. (Optional) In the Budget Scheduling section, click the Schedule Budget Increases checkbox if you want to increase your budget during specific days or times.

This would be applicable if you want to increase your ad spend during busy shopping times — for example, Black Friday.

17. Under the Audience Controls section, click through the different customization options to select your target audience.

This is where you can limit your ads to be shown to people in certain countries, specific age groups, languages, and so on. As you make your suggestions, the Audience definition numbers on the right-hand side update.

18. (Optional) If you want to take advantage of Meta's AI-powered selections, click through the Advantage+ Audience and the Advantage+ Placements sections and make your adjustments.

There are several more customization options to decide on under these headings, including publisher block lists (ensuring your ads aren't run near brands that may conflict with yours) and topic exclusions.



TIP

If you've never worked with Facebook ads before, it's better to go with the default options. When you get the hang of Meta advertising, you can play around with advanced options.

19. Click the Next button after you've selected all your customizations.

20. On the following page, scroll down to the Ad Creative section, click the Set up Creative dropdown, and select either Image Ad or Video Ad.

Once you adjust your video or image to your liking, click the Next button to return to the main ad page.

21. **(Optional) Scroll through the remaining customization options.**

Whew! They told us the Ad Auction allows for more customization, but who knew there would be *this* many?!

22. **When all settings are to your liking, click the green Publish button (finally)!**

If this is the first time you've created an Ad campaign, you may be taken to a page where you'll enter your payment information. After you complete that, your ad will be submitted for review.

Advertising on X

Like the other social networks, X offers you the ability to reach more people through advertisements. By using X ads, you can create campaigns to meet specific goals, gain followers, and drive engagement.

In this section, you explore how to get started with X ads and how to use them to achieve your goals.

Determining the right ad type for your needs

X offers businesses a very robust suite of ad types to choose from. Whether you're looking to promote specific posts on X or eye-catching video ads with clickable calls to action (CTAs), you're sure to find the right ad type to meet your marketing objectives. Here are the formats available to you:

» **Promoted Ads:** Promoted Ads support various media formats across the following categories:

- *Image Ads:* Highlight your product or service with a single captivating photo.
- *Video Ads:* Bring your brand to life, drive traffic to your website or app, or inspire engagement with a dynamic video message.
- *Carousel Ads:* Showcase multiple products or promotions with up to six swipeable images or videos. Explore the possibilities with Carousel Ads.
- *Text Ads:* Designed to blend seamlessly with native content, these ads expand the reach of your posts beyond followers to target your ideal audience.



REMEMBER Don't let the number of ad formats overwhelm you. As with mostly everything else in social media marketing, start off small, and then after you get more comfortable and realize some success, you can expand the types of ads that you test out.

» **Vertical Video Ads:** These are full-screen, sound-on video ads that provide an engaging experience to drive users to your website or app. They feature full-screen visibility, sound automatically enabled, and an optional call-to-action button to drive users directly to your website or app.

» **X Amplify:** With X Amplify, advertisers can align their ads with premium video content

from top publishers for maximum relevance and impact. These come in two formats:

- *Amplify Pre-roll*: Advertisers can choose from 15+ content categories to ensure their video ads are served alongside the most relevant video content.
 - *Amplify Sponsorships*: This format offers a one-to-one partnership with a single publisher, granting exclusive alignment with a specific moment and post-level control throughout the campaign. Note: As of this writing, Amplify Sponsorships are currently unavailable for self-serve advertisers.
- » **X Takeovers**: These ads provide brands with exclusive ownership of X's most coveted real estate on both desktop and mobile, maximizing reach and driving performance. Takeover options include:
- *Timeline Takeover*: Selecting this ad type positions your brand as the first ad people see when they open the platform.
 - *Trend Takeover*: Align your brand with trending topics by placing your message and video on the Explore tab.
- » **X Live**: X Live lets advertisers livestream significant moments with a global audience. This format is great for events like unveiling a new product, hosting a conference, or organizing a watch party.
- » **Dynamic Product Ads**: Dynamic Product Ads (DPA) on X enable advertisers to connect with customers by showcasing the most relevant products at the perfect moment. This ad type offers two helpful features:
- *DPA Retargeting*: Re-engage consumers who have interacted with your website — such as adding items to their shopping cart — but haven't completed their purchase, by serving ads featuring those specific products.
 - *DPA Prospecting*: Expand your reach to new audiences who haven't visited your website by displaying personalized ads with products from your catalog that best match their interests.
- » **Collection Ads**: Collection Ads let you showcase several products in one ad format, with a hero image at the top and a smaller thumbnail below that.

Creating your first X ad



WARNING There is a comprehensive set of eligibility requirements to advertise on X. Before you decide that X advertising is right for you, be sure you check all the necessary boxes. Find the requirements here: <http://business.x.com/en/help/ads-policies/campaign-considerations/about-eligibility-for-twitter-ads>.

Once your account becomes eligible to place ads on X, follow these steps:

1. **When logged into your X account, go to**
<https://business.X.com/en/advertising.html>.

2. **Click the Advertise on X button in the center of the screen, and then click the Create Campaign button on the right side of the screen.**
3. **On the Campaign Type pop-up that appears, Select Simple or Advanced and click Next.**

X recommends going with the Simple campaign type if you're new to X advertising; so for the purpose of these instructions, I selected Simple.

4. **Select your campaign objective from the four choices on the list and click Next.**

The choices are

- *Reach*: Maximizes your ad's reach to grow awareness.
- *Engagements*: Geared toward encouraging reposts, likes, and conversation.
- *Website Traffic*: Directs people to your website or specific sales pages.
- *Keywords*: Target an audience that shows high intent signals for your chosen keywords.

5. **On the next screen, enter your ad text.**

Because this ad type shows up as a regular post, you get 280 characters for your ad message. You can also allow specific users to @reply to your ad by adding their @username to the ad text.

6. **Click the Add Media button and upload your selected file to the ad, or scroll towards the bottom of the page to select media you've already uploaded to your X account and click Confirm.**

You can use images or videos. For photos, use JPG or PNG. For videos, use MP4 or MOV.

7. **On the next screen, preview your ad and make sure it looks and sounds the way you want it to and click Next.**

Beware of spelling or grammatical errors!

8. **Here's where you'll select the target demographics (gender, age, location, and so on) and targeting features (device type, interests, keywords, and so on).**

Keep an eye on the right side of your screen to get an idea of your audience size.

9. **Scroll down to set your ad campaign's budget, schedule, and payment method.**

Enter the dates that you want your ad to run as well as your maximum daily budget. As you enter that information, you'll notice your reach potential updates on the right side of the screen.

10. **Click Launch Campaign.**

Congratulations! Within 24–48 hours your ad will be reviewed, and you'll be notified when it's live!

Advertising on LinkedIn

Without a doubt, LinkedIn is the best social media channel for reaching professionals and business-to-business prospects. Although its user population is smaller than many of the other, broader B2C social media channels, LinkedIn still offers opportunities for advertising to reach targeted populations.



WARNING Be cautious about creating too narrow a target market for your advertising in LinkedIn. You can quickly exhaust the potential reach for your ad if the base is too small.

Like Meta, LinkedIn offers a combination of externally focused ads that appear in the right column of various pages and promoted posts that appear in viewers' news feeds to drive people to a specific post you've created.

Ads may appear on the profile pages of other LinkedIn members, on a user's own home page, in a user's message inbox, on a search results page, or on LinkedIn group pages.

Follow these steps to create an ad on LinkedIn:

1. **Go to <https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/ads> and click Create Campaign located at top right. Log in using your LinkedIn password.**

If it's your first time logging into Campaign Manager, you'll have to create an account by entering your account name, the currency you want to use, and the URL of your business LinkedIn Page. Click the Create Account button when you've finished.

2. **From the Campaign Manager dashboard, click the blue Create button and select Campaign from the dropdown.**

A Campaign is a standalone ad run. A Campaign Group is a way to keep your ads organized based on whatever criteria you choose; for example, you could create a Campaign Group for ads you run only during the summer months.

3. **Select your ad objective.**

There are seven options to choose from:

- Brand Awareness
- Website Visits
- Engagement
- Video Views
- Lead Generation
- Website Conversions
- Job Applicants

For the purpose of this example, I will choose the Website Visits option.

4. **Select Accelerate or Classic on the Campaign Builder window and click Next.**

Accelerate is a streamlined ad creation process, whereas Classic takes you through it step-

by-step. For the purpose of these instructions, I selected Accelerate.

5. Select your Campaign Group or click Create Group to start a new one.

Verify the Campaign Group details on the next screen and adjust by clicking the Change link or click Next.

6. Enter the name of the product or service you're advertising in the first box and the URL you want people to be sent to in the second box and click Draft Campaign.

You have 200 characters to work with for the product name, so use them wisely!

7. On the next screen, LinkedIn's AI writer will create a product description for you to review and edit. Once you're satisfied with the results, click Draft Campaign.

I highly recommend you read the description closely and make edits so it's in your own words (as much as possible) and reads as if it was written by you — or, at the very least, by a human!

8. Review the Forecasted Results section at the top of the next page, and if they meet your expectations, scroll down to the Ads section to begin creating your ad.

If anything with the Forecasted Results doesn't look right, scroll down to the applicable section(s) and adjust the numbers listed. These could be things like budget, schedule, or goal.

9. Once you are happy with the Forecasted Results, click Create New Ad and fill in all the required sections and click Save.

Depending on the ad objective you selected, you'll enter introduction text and a headline, upload or select images, add a CTA and a website address, and more. You can preview your ad on the right side of your screen.

10. Scroll down to the Payment Details section and click Add Business Information.

You'll be asked to add information such as your business name, address, and telephone number. Click Save & Continue to then add your payment information.

11. Enter your credit card information and click Add Card.

You'll then be taken back to your Ad Creation page.

12. Give all the information you've entered and all the settings selected another once over, and if you like what you see, click Launch Campaign.

That's all, folks!



REMEMBER I selected the Accelerate option, so several of the customization options were preselected for me. If you want more control over every part of your ad campaign, then opt for the Classic ad creation approach.

For more information, see <https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions>. (For more about LinkedIn in general, see [Book 6](#).)

Advertising on Pinterest

As [Book 7](#) discusses, Pinterest has now accumulated 522 million monthly active users, and based on information provided by its users, Pinterest lets you target your audience by things like geography, demographics, interests, device, and search-term use.

To place ads on Pinterest, you need to have a business account. You can get a business account by navigating to <https://business.pinterest.com> and clicking the Sign Up button on the top right of the page. On the following screen you can sign up for a new account.

Once you're logged into your business account, follow these steps to create an ad:

1. Click Create Ad in the center or on the top right of the screen.

You're taken to your Create Campaign Page. If this is your first time creating an ad, you may be prompted to set up your account by adding an account name and country.

2. Select if you want the Automatic or Manual option.

You're given the option to use the Automatic Campaign Creation option or the Manual Campaign Creation option. For the purposes of these instructions, I'll select Automatic. Click Get Started.

3. Select your main objective from the two options and click Next.

The options provided are Conversions or Consideration. To select Conversions, you have to have the Pinterest tag installed on your website. If you don't have it installed, reach out to your developer for assistance because that is outside the scope of this book.



REMEMBER Like with other social media platforms, the objective options you're given depends on if you choose the Automatic or Manual ad creation process. To help streamline the process for users, the Automatic process typically provides fewer options and customization capabilities.

4. Select or create the Pins that you want to promote and click Next.

If you opt to create a Pin, you can choose between standard, video, collections, or carousel Pins. Read more on each of these options at <https://help.pinterest.com/en/business/article/pinterest-product-specs>.

5. If you opt to select an existing Pin or Pins, choose them on the next screen, click Add Pins, and click Next.

If you select multiple Pins, that's the number of ads you'll be creating. For example, if you select two Pins, you'll be creating two ads in the next step.

6. (Optional) Enter the names of your ads in the first box and the URLs to which you want to send people in the second box. Click Next.

If you selected multiple Pins in the previous step, scroll down to see the other ads. The URLs can be anything from your website to special landing pages you created for an upcoming event or product launch.

7. **(Optional) Review your selections on the left side of the screen, and then click the pencil icon next to any section you want to edit and click Save Changes.**
Pinterest sets them for you automatically, but you may want to update some settings like the location of your audience and the campaign's daily budget amount.
8. **You're taken back to the Campaign Summary screen where you click the red Set Up Billing button.**
9. **Click Add Account Information, fill in the required information, and click Save.**
They ask for things like your business name, street address, city, state, and zip code.
10. **Click Add Billing Information, fill in the required information, and click Save.**
In addition to your credit card information, they ask for the same address information as they did in the previous step, so if everything is the same, click the Copy Ad Account Information box at the top to autofill those fields.
11. **Give your selections one final review on the Campaign Summary page, then click Publish.**
Congratulations! You've joined the ranks of Pinterest advertisers!

Advertising on YouTube (and Google)

Owned by Google, YouTube has one of the largest user bases, with nearly 2.5 billion logged-in users visiting each month. Technically that number is higher because not everyone logs in to watch videos. That's quite the potential audience! Of course, you're not going to (or going to want to) target all those users, because that would be a waste of precious advertising dollars. But you are going to potentially have a larger audience than you would on the other social networks. In fact, according to Social Shepherd, 62 percent of Internet users in the U.S. use YouTube on a daily basis, with 92 percent logging in on a weekly basis.

Like is the case with Meta, when you sign up for an advertising account on Google, you get the option to place your ads on web properties other than just YouTube. Now, if you *only* want to advertise on YouTube, then that's certainly an option! But you are also given the opportunity to get more bang for your advertising buck! For more information on advertising on Google, check out <https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/6146252>.



REMEMBER The instructions below are just an example and will differ depending on the selections you make at each step. Google walks you through everything step-by-step, but if you get lost, just click the Back link on the bottom left and try again!

To create an ad on YouTube/Google, follow these steps:

1. **Point your browser to www.youtube.com/ads/signup and log into your Google account.**

You must have a Google account to advertise on YouTube. If you're already logged in,

you may be prompted to select the account you want to use for your Google Ads account. If you don't have one yet, click <https://accounts.google.com/signup> to sign up for one.

2. If you have a Google Ads account, you'll be taken to your Google Ads dashboard.

If you do not have a Google Ads account, follow Steps 3 to 5 to create one. If you have an account, skip to Step 6.

3. Click the New Google Ads Account button in the center of the page and then the Create Your First Campaign button on the pop-up that appears.

4. Add your business name in the box that says What's Your Business Name? and then decide where you want people to go after clicking your ad; click Next.

Your choices are your website, your business phone number, or your app download page. For this example, I selected the *Your Website* option.

5. (Optional) Google does a quick scan to see if you have other Google-owned accounts, and if you do, they show up on the next page.

For example, if you have a YouTube channel, that will show up here and you'll get the option to link the accounts to save time. Otherwise, you can manually link other options such as your mobile app, a Google Business Profile, or your phone number, and click Next. Alternatively, if you don't want to link any accounts, you can click the tiny Skip link on the bottom left of this screen.

6. Now it's time to *actually* start building your Ad! On the following screen, enter your business name and click Next.

7. You're once again asked for where you want people to go after clicking on your ad.

The good news is, if you entered it already in Step 4, this is already filled in for you. If you didn't just create your Ad account and this is where you're starting your campaign creation journey, then you'll have to paste the destination in the box.

8. Google scans your URL and then takes a snapshot to confirm it's where you want people to go. If everything looks good, click Next.

If, for some reason, you change your mind about that URL, click Back and replace the URL.

9. Next, select your advertising goal and click Next.

The available options are Get More Calls, Get More Website Sales or Leads, Get More Visits to Your Physical Location, or Get More Views and Engagement on YouTube. I selected Get More Views and Engagement on YouTube for this example.

10. Google then does a magic scan again and pulls some image or video options for your ad. Select one, put in your destination URL again, and click Next.

I know, I know. Much of this is repetitive. But stick with me! You're almost there, I promise.

11. Choose the location and language of your target audience and click Next.

Your home country is selected by default. Click the +Add Location link to add additional

places. Note the estimated weekly performance numbers on the right side as you make changes to these items.

12. Select the gender, age, and parental status of your audience, then click Next.

All options are checked by default. You can keep those selections, or uncheck some boxes to keep those demographics from seeing your ad. Again, the Estimated Weekly Performance Numbers on the right will change depending on what you check or uncheck.

13. Decide if you want to target people with specific interests and type those in the box. Click Next.

Google makes suggestions based on what you're advertising, but if you don't agree with those, click the X next to the word or phrase. If you don't see the interests you're targeting, type it into the search box and select the correct option(s) from the dropdown.



TIP This is another place where you can use some of those target keywords you came up with in Book 2, [Chapter 2](#)!

14. Finally, it's time to talk time and money! Enter a daily budget, select the date you want your ad to run, and click Next.

The number can be as high or as low as you want to go. Seriously ... I typed in \$.01, and I was told my ad would get up to 10 impressions! Obviously, I don't recommend you play games like that because you want to make all these steps worth your while! Starting with \$5-\$10 is always a safe bet until you start seeing some success.

15. It's review time! If you like what you see, click Go To Billing.

Take a few minutes to look through all your selections, and if you like what you see, head over to billing. If not, click the pencil icon next to the section you want to change and update the information to your liking.

16. If it's your first time setting all this up, you'll be prompted to set up a Payment Profile and add a credit card. Complete all the steps and then click Submit!

Wow! That was quite the journey, I know. But the good news is, you have to go through a good portion of those steps only once. And when you have an account set up, it'll be a breeze!

Advertising on Snapchat

Book 7, [Chapter 2](#) talks about the how of using Snapchat, but it doesn't talk about why you should not only utilize Snapchat for your business, but also advertise on it. Snapchat is one of the fastest-growing social networks. As of Q2 2024, Snapchat had over 800 million users around the world, nearly four times the number of users they had four years ago.

According to Sprout Social, Snapchat is used equally by males and females, and 38.6 percent of people ages 18 to 24, which is the largest age group percentage to use the social network (<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/#SC-demos>).

Because of this, advertisers have taken notice of the purchasing power that Snapchat users now yield and have responded accordingly. If your target audience is in the age groups that use Snapchat, it may be a good place to consider investing some advertising dollars.

Here are some more reasons why:

- » **You can target a new audience.** Snapchat is the social media platform of choice for millennials and teens. If you're looking for a way to reach a younger, hipper demographic, try Snapchat.
- » **Sharing is visual.** The only content you have to write is a caption, so you don't have to commit a big block of time to creating content.
- » **Posts and stories are brief and appeal to those with short attention spans.** Snaps are either a photo or video that can be up to 60 seconds long but can only be posted in 10-second chunks. Sharing with your community is quick, so you can free up your time for other campaigns and platforms.
- » **Chat with individuals.** Snapchat makes it easy to have a private conversation with the members of your brand's Snapchat community.
- » **Snaps aren't permanent.** Snaps and stories are permanently deleted after 24 hours or 7 days, depending on the user's preferences. Snapchat servers are designed to automatically delete unopened one-on-one Snaps after 31 days and unopened Snaps sent to a Group Chat after 7 days.
- » **Snaps are real time.** You can't upload to Snapchat. Photos and videos are spontaneous and in the moment.
- » **There's no public feed for brands.** People can't access your Snaps unless they have the Snapchat app. Moreover, they have to subscribe to your Snaps to see them.
- » **Branded filters are available for occasions and events.** Snapchat enables brands to use Lenses, company-branded frames for their Snaps, events, launches, and more.
- » **Snapchat has 432 million daily active users.** With so many active users, it makes sense to go where all the people are.



TIP

As with other social media platforms, take some time to see how other businesses are using Snapchat. Doing so will not only give you a sense of what Snapchat is all about but also inspire creative ideas for your own business.

In order to utilize Snapchat for your business, you have to set up a business account after you create your general Snapchat account. This will allow you to do things like create ads and filters. To set up a business account, navigate to the website <https://accounts.snapchat.com>, and log into your general Snapchat account. This is the URL you'll go to when you want to manage your Snapchat account information.



TIP Once you log into Snapchat, your business account has been established. In the future, if you want to access your ads account, head straight to the website <https://ads.snapchat.com>.

To place ads on Snapchat, follow these steps:

1. **Point your browser to <https://ads.snapchat.com> and log into your Snapchat account.**

The first time you go to that URL, the site prompts you to enter your name as well as your business name, email address, and phone number in order to access your Ads Manager account. Once you do so, you're taken to your Ads Manager home page which will look slightly different from your subsequent logins.

2. **(Optional) If this is your first time logging into a business profile, you may be prompted to create a Public Profile.**

This basically flags your personal account as now being attached to a business account. Fill out the requested information such as your business name, and upload a picture that represents your brand.



TIP This is a great place to showcase your brand's logo!

3. **On the Create Ads page, select your campaign objective and click Next.**

Your options are Awareness & Engagement, Traffic, Leads, App Promotion, and Sales. For this example, I chose Awareness & Engagement.

4. **You're then asked How Would You Like to Create Your Campaign? After you choose, click Next.**

You can choose from Automatic, where Snapchat creates the campaign for you, or Manual, where you go step-by-step to create the campaign. I'm going to go with Automatic.

5. **Here's the fun (and last) part! On the Ad Design page, proceed down the page, filling out the different sections as you go, and then click Publish.**

You're asked to select the profile you want attached to your ad, then type a headline, call to action, and destination URL into the boxes. Then you can upload or select media for your ad (images or videos), and choose the audience (location and age) and, finally, your daily budget and campaign duration.



TIP As you're filling out the information on this page, keep an eye on the right side of the page, where you get to preview your ad before it goes live.

Advertising on TikTok

TikTok is one of the fastest-growing social networking apps ever, and it's one of the most popular with a large worldwide audience of 1 billion monthly active users. One of the draws is that TikTok videos, which range in length from 3 seconds to 30 minutes, grab the attention because of how easy it is to get creative by adding special effects, music, and voice-overs, and even creating "duets" which are two videos running side by side.

TikTok is available in over 150 countries and has been downloaded nearly 5 billion times, 220 million times in the United States alone. The user base tends to skew younger, with just over 32 percent of users being between the ages of 10 and 19 years old and nearly 30 percent being in the 20 to 29 age range.

At the time of this writing, TikTok is nine years old overall, and seven years old in the United States.

Brands have taken notice of the app's popularity and more and more companies (of all sizes) are showing up in the feeds of TikTok users. Why not jump on the train?



REMEMBER As is the case with all advertising opportunities, be sure to do your research to determine if your target audience is on TikTok. Otherwise, you'll be spending money to get in front of an audience that isn't interested in your product.

To get started advertising on TikTok, follow these steps:

1. **Point your browser to www.tiktok.com/business/en and click the red Get Started button in the top right if you don't have a TikTok Business account, or click Log In if you do.**

The Ads Manager login page appears if you already have an account. Otherwise, you'll need to create an Ads Manager account even if you already have a TikTok user account.

2. **Click Continue underneath the login box and follow the instructions to get an account.**

Be sure to use the same email address and/or phone number you used for your regular TikTok account to make sure the Ads Manager account is connected.

3. **On the next page, enter all your business information and click Continue.**

Fields include Business Name, Industry, Country, Currency, and Telephone Number.

4. **You're now on the Ads Manager dashboard; select your advertising objective from the list and click Continue.**

Your options are Reach, Traffic, Video Views, Community Interaction, App Promotion, Lead Generation, Website Conversions, or Product Sales. I chose Reach for this example.



TIP To learn more about the objectives, click on the respective option and read the information that appears to the right.

5. **Name your campaign, indicate whether yours is a Special ad category, add a budget, and click Continue.**

The minimum daily or lifetime spend allowed is \$50.

6. **Give your ad group a name, select where you want your ad placed (In feed or Search feed), and scroll through the different demographic settings and customize as needed. Click continue.**

Some targeting options include age, gender, language, spending power, and interests. This is also where you'll set any content restrictions (content types where you don't want your ad to show), campaign duration, as well as Bidding & Optimization settings. I recommend you keep the default settings for now. If you want to learn the ins and outs of TikTok's Bidding strategies, check out <https://ads.tiktok.com/help/article/bidding-strategies>.



TIP As you're customizing the different settings, keep an eye on the Available Audience Size Numbers on the right of the screen to ensure enough people will see your ad.

7. **On the following screen, fill out all the information and click Publish Selected Ads.**
This is the screen where you'll do the bulk of your ad creation including Ad text, images or video uploading, your call to action, the destination URL where you want to send people, and any ad performance tracking pixels (optional).
8. **If it's the first time you're publishing an ad, you'll be prompted to set up your billing information; click Submit when you're finished.**

Your options are to do manual payments, where you enter credit card information, or automatic, where you add money to an account, and your ad runs until either that balance is exhausted or your campaign duration runs out.

9. **Follow the prompts for whichever option you select, and after you've set that up, click Publish Selected Ads Again.**

Congratulations! You placed your first ad on TikTok! You will receive an email when your ad has been approved.

Interfacing with Influencers

Influencer marketing has been around since the dawn of time. Okay, so maybe not *that* long. But it's been around quite a while under the term *endorsements*. You're probably familiar with that term, right? But, in the past, endorsements were only done by celebrities and other

famous folks like athletes. Nowadays, however, influencer marketing is done by anyone with a social media following. You can go big and work with celebrities with millions of followers, or you can choose to work with *microinfluencers*, people with fewer than 2,000 followers. Whichever avenue you choose, expect the cost to reflect that.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when deciding to work with influencers:

- » Does the influencer have an engaged following? In other words, are their followers liking and commenting on posts and does the influencer respond? How much of a community does the influencer cultivate?
- » Has the influencer worked with brands such as yours in the past? For example, you don't want to necessarily work with a home improvement influencer if you sell all natural beauty products. Their endorsement will be less believable, and their audience doesn't follow them for beauty advice.
- » How long has the influencer been doing this? Are they skilled at creating engaging and eye-catching posts? Do you have the option of creating the posts for them or do they create their own?
- » What posting frequency are you looking for? Do you want the post to stay up, or are they allowed to take them down after a certain amount of time?
- » What is the goal of your campaign? Do you want to sell product, push people to a website, build brand awareness?
- » What does a successful campaign look like? How will you gauge whether or not the campaign was successful?

Influencer marketing is still a pretty new marketing strategy, but it's one that's proving to be successful if done correctly. For more information on utilizing influencers in your social media marketing, this article by Single Grain is a great start:

www.singlegrain.com/content-marketing-strategy-2/guide-influencer-marketing.

Book 9

Measuring Results and Building on Success

Contents at a Glance

Chapter 1: Delving into Datas

[Planning a Measurement Strategy](#)
[Selecting Analytics Packages](#)
[Reviewing Analytical Options for Social Media](#)
[Getting Started with Google Analytics](#)
[Integrating Google's Acquisition Analytics](#)

Chapter 2: Analyzing Content-Sharing Metrics

[Measuring the Effectiveness of Content Sharing with Standard Analytics](#)
[Visualizing Video Success](#)
[Understanding Podcast Metrics](#)
[Measuring Your Results from Pinterest](#)
[Comparing Hard and Soft Costs versus Income](#)

Chapter 3: Analyzing X Metrics

[Using X Analytics](#)
[Using X Pro](#)
[Using Third-Party X Analytics Applications](#)
[Tracking Account Activity with the Notifications Tab](#)
[Using the Hashtag as a Measurement Mechanism](#)
[Calculating the X Follower-to-Following Ratio](#)

Chapter 4: Analyzing Meta Metrics

[Monitoring Facebook and Instagram from Meta Business Suite](#)
[Using Insights](#)
[Exploring the Insights Dashboard](#)

Chapter 5: Measuring LinkedIn Performance

[Measuring LinkedIn Success](#)

Chapter 6: Comparing Metrics from Different Marketing Techniques

[Establishing Key Performance Indicators](#)
[Comparing Metrics across Social Media](#)
[Integrating Social Media with Web Metrics](#)
[Using Advertising Metrics to Compare Social Media with Other Types of Marketing](#)
[Juxtaposing Social Media Metrics with Other Online Marketing](#)

[Contrasting Word-of-Web with Word-of-Mouth](#)

[Chapter 7: Making Decisions by the Numbers](#)

[Using Metrics to Make Decisions](#)

[Knowing When to Hold and When to Fold](#)

[Diagnosing Problems with Social Media Campaigns](#)

[Fixing Problems](#)

[Adjusting to Reality](#)

Chapter 1

Delving into Datas

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding the difference between monitoring and measuring
 - » Setting up your measurement plan
 - » Selecting analytics packages that meet your marketing objectives
 - » Learning to use Google Analytics
 - » Discovering Google Social Analytics
-

Web analytics is the practice of analyzing performance and business statistics for a website, social media marketing, and other online-marketing efforts to better understand user behavior and improve results. Some might call web analytics more art than science; to others, it's black magic.

The amount of data that can be acquired from online-marketing efforts vastly exceeds the amount available using traditional offline methods. That statement alone makes online marketing, including social media, an attractive form of public relations and advertising.

In the best of all possible worlds, the results of your marketing efforts should appear as increased profits — in other words, as an improved bottom line with a nice return on investment (ROI). You're more likely to achieve this goal if you make analytics part of a process of continuous quality improvement.



TIP Before getting mired in the swamp of online-marketing data, assess the performance of your hub website. If you aren't making a profit from that core investment, it doesn't matter whether you fill the conversion funnel (see Book 1, [Chapter 1](#)) with fantastic traffic from social media, exhibit a soaring click-through rate, or tally revenues through the roof. If you aren't sure how your hub site is performing, use the tools in this chapter and ask your web developer and bookkeeper for help.

Planning a Measurement Strategy

The basic principle “You can't manage what you don't measure” applies doubly to the online universe. Do you know whether Facebook or LinkedIn drives more traffic to your site? Whether more people buy after reading a blog post about pets than after reading a blog post about plants? If not, you're simply guessing at how to expend your precious marketing dollars and time.

To make the most of your effort, return to the goals and objectives you established on your

Social Media Marketing Goals statement (see Book 1, [Chapter 1](#)).

Ask yourself what you need to measure to determine your accomplishments. Would interim measurements help you decide whether a particular aspect of a social media campaign is working?

For example, if one of your goals is to substitute social media marketing for paid advertising, compare performance between the two. If you initiated social media activities to improve a ranking on search engine results pages (SERPs), you must measure your standing by keywords at different times. In either case, of course, you might want to track visitors to the site who arrive from either a social media referral or from natural search to see whether they continue to a purchase.

Fortunately, computers do one thing extremely well: count. Chances are good that if you have a question, you can find an answer.



WARNING Because computers count just about everything, you can quickly drown in so much data that you find it impossible to gather meaningful information, let alone make a decision. The last thing you need is a dozen reports that you don't have time to read.

Unless you have a very large site, monitoring statistics monthly is usually sufficient. You might check more often when you first initiate a specific social media campaign or another online-marketing activity, if you invest significant amounts of money or effort into a new campaign, or if you support your site by way of advertising (in which case, monitoring traffic is the sine qua non of your existence).



REMEMBER In your Social Media Marketing Plan (see Book 1, [Chapter 3](#)), add your choice of measurement parameters and analytical tools, as well as the names of the people who will be responsible for creating reports. Schedule the frequency of analytical review on your Social Media Activity Calendar (see Book 1, [Chapter 4](#)).

Monitoring versus measuring

For the purposes of this book, I discuss only quantitative data as part of the measurement process. Use monitoring tools to review such qualitative data from social media as

- » The degree of customer engagement
- » The nature of customer dialog, sometimes called sentiment
- » Your brand reputation on a social network
- » The quality of relationships with your target market
- » The extent of participation in online conversations
- » Positioning in your industry versus your competitors

If you have no monitoring tools in place yet, turn to Book 2, [Chapter 1](#).



REMEMBER “Real people” usually review subjective monitoring data to assess such ineffable qualities as the positive or negative characteristics of consumer posts, conversational tone, and brand acknowledgment. Notwithstanding Hal in the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*, we don’t yet have analytical software with the supple linguistic sophistication of the human brain.

Setting aside the squishy qualitative data, you still have two types of quantitative data to measure:

- » **Internal performance measurements:** Measure the effectiveness of your social media, other marketing efforts, and website in achieving your objectives. Performance measurements include such parameters as traffic to your social pages or website, the number of people who click through to your hub presence, which products sell best, and *conversion rate*, or the percentage of visitors who buy or become qualified leads.
- » **Business measurements:** Primarily dollar-based parameters — costs, revenues, profits — that go directly to your business operations. Such financial items as the cost of customer or lead acquisition, average dollar value per sale, the value assigned to leads, the break-even point, and ROI fall into this category. For more about measuring ROI, see Book 1, [Chapter 2](#).

Deciding what to measure

Most of the key performance indicators (KPIs) and business criteria you measure fall into one of the following categories:

- » **Traffic:** You must know the number and nature of visitors to any of the sites that are part of your web presence.
- » **Leads:** Business-to-business (B2B) companies, service professionals, and companies that sell expensive, complex products often close their sales offline. Online efforts yield prospects, many of whom — you hope — will become qualified leads as they move down the conversion funnel.
- » **Financials:** Costs, sales, revenue, and profits are the essential components of business success. Analytics let you track which sales arrive from which sources and how much revenue they generate.
- » **Search marketing:** As discussed in Book 2, [Chapter 3](#), optimizing social media can improve visibility in search engine results. Not only do many social media sites appear in search results, but your hub site also gains valuable inbound links from direct and indirect referrals.
- » **Other business objectives:** You may need customized analytics to track goals and objectives that don’t fall into the other categories.

[Chapter 6](#) in this minibook discusses KPIs in depth.

Don't plan on flying to the moon based on the accuracy of any statistical web data. Definitions of parameters differ by tool. Does a new visitor session start after someone has logged off for 24 minutes or 24 hours? In addition, results in real-time tools sometimes oscillate unpredictably.



TIP If a value differs from what you expected, try running your analytics again later or run them over a longer period to smooth out irregularities.

Relative numbers are more meaningful than absolute ones. Is your traffic growing or shrinking? Is your conversion rate increasing or decreasing? Focus on ratios or percentages to make the data more meaningful. Suppose that ten percent of a small number of viewers to your site converted to buyers before you started a blog, compared to only five percent of a larger number of viewers afterward. What does that tell you?

Most businesses measure the following:

- » Likes
- » Engagement
- » Followers growth
- » Traffic conversions
- » Social interactions
- » Social sentiment
- » Social visitor goals
- » Social shares
- » Social visitors conversion rates
- » Web visitors from social channels

You can find a lot of research about typical performance on different statistical parameters. Though it's nice to know industry averages for benchmarking purposes, the only statistics that matter are your own.



TIP Regardless of how you go about the measurement process, you must define success before you begin. Without some sort of target value, you can't know whether you've succeeded. Keep your handy, dandy Social Media Marketing Goals statement (see Book 1, [Chapter 1](#)) accessible while you review this chapter.

A good measurement strategy determines how much data to leave out, as well as how much to measure. Unless you have a huge site or quite a complex marketing campaign, you can focus

on just a few parameters.

Establishing responsibility for analytics

Chances are good that your business isn't large enough to field an entire team whose sole responsibility is statistical analysis. Even if you aren't running an employment agency for statisticians, you can still take a few concrete steps to ensure that the right data is collected, analyzed, and acted on:

1. Ask your marketing person (is that you?) to take responsibility for defining what needs to be measured based on business objectives.

Consult with your financial advisor, if necessary.

2. Have your programmer, web developer, or go-to IT person select and install the analytics tools that will provide the data you need.

Make ease of use, flexibility, and customizability important factors in the decision.

3. If a *dashboard* (a graphical executive summary of key data) isn't part of the analytical package, ask your IT person to set one up.

Try the Google Analytics dashboard (see [Figure 1-1](#)) or the HubSpot dashboard for multiple media (see [Figure 1-2](#)). Dashboards display essential results quickly, preferably over easy-to-change timeframes of your choice.

4. Let your marketing, IT, and content management folks work together to finalize the highest priority pages (usually landing pages and pages within your conversion funnels). When possible, set up tracking codes for links coming from social marketing pages. IT should test to ensure that the data collection system works and adjust it as needed.
5. Your marketing person can be responsible for regularly monitoring the results, adjusting marketing campaigns, and reporting to you and other stakeholders. Have your IT person validate the data and audit tracking tags at least twice a year — they can easily get out of sync.
6. Always integrate the results of your social media and online-marketing efforts with offline marketing and financial results for a complete picture of what's happening with your business. Compare against your business goals and objectives and modify as needed.

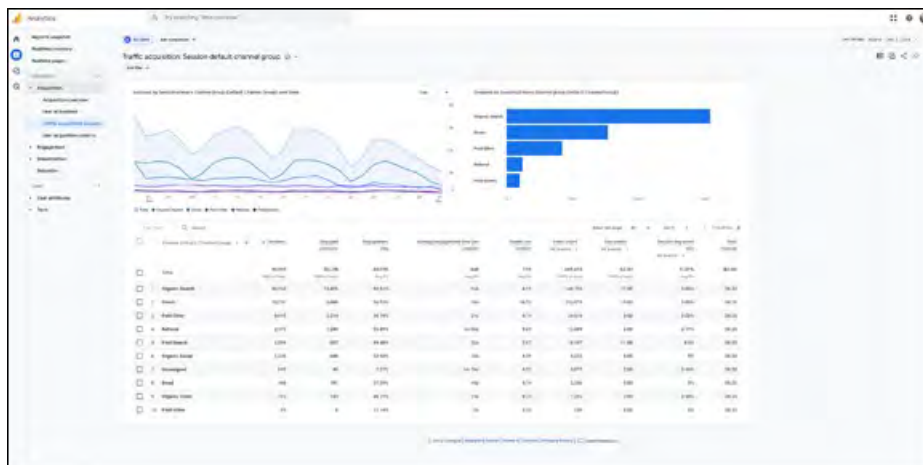


FIGURE 1-1: A typical Google Analytics dashboard displays key web statistics.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Aggregate all analytics in one place. You're unlikely to find a premade dashboard that includes everything you need to measure for your specific campaigns. Your programmer may have to export data into Excel, PDF, or email format; save it all in one place; and then build a custom spreadsheet to generate combined reports for your review.

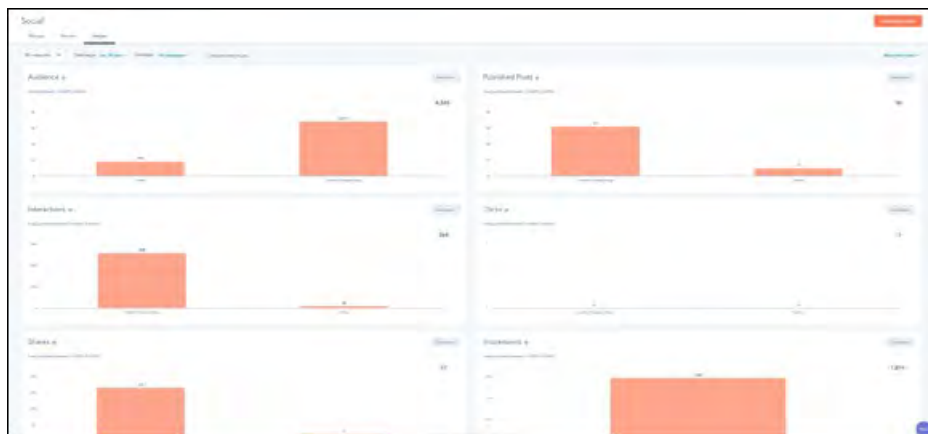


FIGURE 1-2: A HubSpot page showing details about social media activity.

Selecting Analytics Packages

Ask your developer or web host which statistical packages are available for your site. After all, many website builder tools have their own analytics integrated into their platform. Unless you have a fairly large site or need real-time data, either the built-in one or one of the free packages in [Table 1-1](#) should work well. Review your choices to select the best fit for your needs. In many cases, Google Analytics is the best answer.

TABLE 1-1 Free Analytics Packages

Name	URL	Notes
AFS Analytics	https://www.afsanalytics.com	Graphical display; real-time, adjustable timeframe
AWStats	http://awstats.org	Log analysis tool
Clicky	http://clicky.com	All the basics for a single website; 3,000 daily page view max; offers paid options
eXTReMe Tracking	http://extremetracking.com/?free	Free version limited to one tracker on one page per site
Google Analytics	https://marketingplatform.google.com/about/analytics	Can include social media
Matomo	https://matomo.org	Analytics that prioritizes data privacy and safety
StatCounter	www.statcounter.com	Accepts and analyzes traffic from many blogs and other social-networking websites
		Free version limited to one day's worth of data;



WARNING If your developer or web host tells you that you don't need statistics, find another provider. It's nearly impossible to measure success without easy access to statistics.

The specific suite of statistical results that a package offers may influence your choice of tools. Unfortunately, you can't count on getting comparable results when you mix and match different tools. Each one defines parameters differently (for example, what constitutes a repeat visitor). Consequently, you need to watch trends, not absolute numbers.

If you have a large site with heavy traffic or extensive reporting requirements, free packages — even Google Analytics — might not be enough. You can find dozens of paid statistical programs in an online search; [Table 1-2](#) lists nine of them. Several are fairly inexpensive, but the ones marked *enterprise-level solution* in the Cost column of [Table 1-2](#) can escalate into real money.

TABLE 1-2 Paid Statistical Packages

Name	URL	Cost
Adobe Analytics	www.adobe.com/solutions/digital-analytics.html	Enterprise-level solution; includes social media.
Chartbeat	http://chartbeat.com	Provides a multi-site view, can access up to three months of data. Contact Sales for pricing.
Clicky	http://clicky.com/compare	Paid options start at \$79.99/yr for 1 million page views/month.
eXTReMe Tracking	http://extremetracking.com	\$9.75 per month for 100,000 page views/month.
Hootsuite	https://hootsuite.com/products/insights	Prices start at \$99/month and go up to Enterprise pricing; 30-day free trial.
Sawmill LITE	www.sawmill.net/lite.html	Lite version \$99 for one profile; \$199 for five profiles. Professional level starts at \$199; Enterprise level starts at \$599 based on the number of profiles.
Mixpanel	https://mixpanel.com	Visualize where your users drop off by building retroactive funnels and measuring conversion rates; free version and paid versions start at \$24/month.
Webtrends Social Measurement	http://webtrends.com	Enterprise-level solution; includes social media.
Woopra	www.woopra.com	Starts at \$49 per month. Also has a free version.



REMEMBER Not all marketing channels use the same yardstick — nor should they. Your business objectives drive your choice of channels and therefore your choice of yardsticks.

Some paid statistical packages are hosted on a third-party server. Others are designed for installation on your own server. Generally, higher-end paid statistical solutions offer several benefits:

- » Real-time analytics (no waiting for results)
- » Sophisticated reporting tools by domain or across multiple domains, departments, or enterprises
- » Customizable data-mining filters
- » Path-through-site analysis, tracking an individual user from entry to exit
- » Integrated traffic and store statistics
- » Integrated qualitative and quantitative analytics for multiple social media services
- » Analysis of downloaded PDF, video, audio, or another file type
- » Mapping host addresses to company names and details
- » Clickstream analysis to show which sites visitors arrive from and go to



REMEMBER Don't collect information for information's sake. Stop when you have enough data to make essential business decisions.

Reviewing Analytical Options for Social Media

Depending on what you're trying to measure, you may need data from some of the analytical tools available internally from a particular social media channel or statistics from social-bookmarking sites such as AddToAny (www.addtoany.com).

[Table 1-3](#) summarizes which social media services integrate with Google Analytics for traffic monitoring and which also offer their own internal performance statistics. See [Chapters 2](#) through [5](#) in this minibook for a detailed discussion of analytics on specific social media services or check out www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-use-google-analytics-track-social-media-here-5-quick-crestodina.

TABLE 1-3 Analytics for Specific Social Networks

Website	URL	Integrates with Google Analytics?	Own Analytics Package?
Facebook Page Insights	www.facebook.com/help/336893449723054	Yes	Yes
LinkedIn Analytics Tab	www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/4499	Yes- Limited to Ads	Yes
Meetup Group Stats	https://help.meetup.com/hc/en-us/articles/360002862532-How-do-I-see-my-Meetup-group-s-stats	Yes	Yes
X Analytics	https://analytics.X.com	Yes	Yes (need X Premium)
YouTube Analytics	www.youtube.com/analytics	Yes	Yes (must have an account with a channel)



REMEMBER Register for free optional statistics whenever you can.

Getting Started with Google Analytics

Google Analytics is so popular that it justifies some additional discussion. This free, high-quality analytics tool works well for most website owners.



TIP Start with the free Google Analytics and switch to an enterprise-level solution when and if your web effort demands it.

Among its many advantages, Google Analytics offers

- » More in-depth analysis than most other free statistical packages
- » Plenty of support, as shown in [Table 1-4](#)
- » Easy-to-set specific timeframes to compare results to other years
- » Many of the more sophisticated features of expensive software, such as path-through-site information
- » Customization of the dashboard display
- » Conversion funnel exploration, shown in [Figure 1-3](#)
- » Analysis by *referrer* (where traffic to your site has linked from) or search term
- » Tracking of such key performance indicators as returning visitors and *bounce rate* (percentage of visitors who leave without visiting a second page)
- » Customizable reports to meet your needs that you can have emailed automatically to you
- » Some social analytics capabilities
- » Seamless integration with Google Ads

TABLE 1-4 Helpful Google Analytics Resource URLs

Name	URL	Description
"25 Google Analytics Tips To Cut Your Mistakes In Half"	www.klientboost.com/analytics/google-analytics-tips	Useful Google Analytics tips and tricks.
Traffic-source dimensions- Channel Groups	https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/9756891	Learn how Analytics classifies your traffic.
Analytics Help Center	https://support.google.com/analytics/?hl=en#topic=3544906	Google Analytics support.
Google Analytics Products	https://www.blog.google/products/marketingplatform/analytics	Google blog for all things analytics.
"Enroll in Analytics Academy courses"		Online Google

on Skillshop"

<https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/3424288?hl=en>

Analytics training.

Create calculated metrics

<https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/14166471>

Create metrics using existing and other custom metrics.

Google Analytics 4: A Beginner's Guide

<https://neilpatel.com/blog/google-analytics-resources>

Collection of Google Analytics guides.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Google provides steps for setting up Analytics at <https://marketingplatform.google.com/about/analytics>. This task definitely isn't for anyone who is faint-of-programming heart. Get help from your developer. For detailed information on setting up Google Analytics, refer to the help sites listed in [Table 1-4](#) or go to <https://support.google.com/analytics/topic/14088998>.



FIGURE 1-3: A sample conversion exploration page for Google Analytics.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

You must tag each page of your website with a short piece of JavaScript. The tagging task isn't difficult. If your site uses a template or a common Server Side Include (for example, for a footer), you place the Analytics code once, and it appears on all pages. You should start seeing results within 24 hours.

Integrating Google's Acquisition Analytics

You can still identify traffic arriving at your site from social media services simply by looking at Traffic Acquisition: Session default channel group under Acquisition in your Google Analytics account.

Start by clicking Acquisition in the left navigation and select Traffic Acquisition: Session

default channel. As shown in [Figure 1-4](#), Google Social Analytics lists where all your traffic originates from, including Organic Social.

Some social media services, such as Facebook, make it easy to integrate their data with Google Analytics by enabling you to place Google Analytics tracking code on your social media pages. Of course, Google-owned Blogger, and YouTube, as well as the RSS service FeedBurner, are already compatible with Analytics.



REMEMBER Web analytics, from Google or anywhere else, are valuable only if you use them to improve users' experience on your site and your bottom line.



FIGURE 1-4: The Traffic Acquisition section of Google Analytics makes it easy to collect and compare referrals from across the Internet.

Chapter 2

Analyzing Content-Sharing Metrics

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Using standard analytics to evaluate content-sharing success
- » Evaluating internal metrics for blogs, videos, podcasts, and photos
- » Estimating ROI for content sharing

You've built a blog, updated hundreds of photos, created a podcast, or shot a series of videos. You've nurtured and fed your effort with multiple posts and episodes. You've promoted your creative endeavor, and now you want to know how many people have visited, how engaged they were, and most of all, whether they shared your content with others, giving your efforts maximum exposure.

Developing good content is hard work. Like with any of your other marketing efforts, you need to understand your return on investment (ROI). This chapter shows you how to figure out your ROI and evaluate the effectiveness of your content-sharing social channels.

Measuring the Effectiveness of Content Sharing with Standard Analytics

If you use content as a marketing tool, how do you know whether your message is getting out there? How do you measure your results? How viral is your content? Are viewers or readers recommending your content to people other than those you reached directly through your own efforts? Your website stats reveal the most information, but you can also glean effective information from specific statistics for each type of content sharing.

Maximizing website stats

You can find an amazing amount of information about the effectiveness of your content simply by using the program that tracks your website statistics, whether that's Google Analytics or any other program mentioned in [Chapter 1](#) of this minibook. [Table 2-1](#) summarizes which of the primary content-sharing sites integrate with Google Analytics or offer their own.

TABLE 2-1 Analytics Availability on Content-Sharing Sites

Website	URL	Description	Google Analytics Integration?	Own Analytics Package?
Image Sharing				
Flickr	www.flickr.com	Well-known photo-sharing site	No	No

Instagram	http://instagram.com	Popular app used to share photos and videos from mobile device on social media sites	Yes	Yes
Pinterest	www.pinterest.com	Share and collect photos on visual scrapbooks	Yes	Yes
Video/Audio Sharing				
Medium	http://medium.com	Write and share blog posts	Yes	Yes
Spotify	www.spotify.com	A digital music service where you can listen to millions of songs	No	Yes
IBM Video Streaming	https://video.ibm.com	Platform for live, interactive broadcast video	No	Yes
Vimeo	https://vimeo.com https://vimeo.com/upgrade?v=c	Created by filmmakers and videographers to share creative work; commercial accounts available on Pro version	Yes	Yes
YouTube	www.youtube.com	Well-known video-sharing site	Yes	Yes
Blogs				
Blogger	www.blogger.com	Google's blog platform	Yes	Yes
Tumblr	www.tumblr.com	Share text, photos, links, music, videos, and more	Yes	Yes
Typepad	www.typepad.com	Inexpensive blog platform	Yes	Yes
WordPress.com	https://wordpress.com	Blog/website platform with hosting	Yes	Yes
WordPress.org	https://wordpress.org	Blog/website platform without hosting	Yes	Yes



TIP Always check to see if the social platform has a Google Analytics integration or if it's already built-in.

Review your general statistics to find the following types of information:

- » **The number of visitors who land on the home page of your blog or other content site:** Watch for variations in the number and timing of visits, as well.
- » **The number of visitors seeking specific posts, videos, or podcasts:** This information tells you that visitors found the post through an external link or perhaps a specific set of keywords in a search engine. Most analytics enable you to search content results to the page level.
- » **How visitors arrived at your content-sharing site:** Someone might have used a search engine, entered the URL for your social-sharing presence, or linked from another website.
- » **How long visitors remain on a specific post page:** If the duration of a visit is shorter than the potential length of time spent reading the post and pondering its contents, the post wasn't effective. You can infer the effectiveness of a post from the bounce rate.



REMEMBER Capitalize on effective posts by creating similar posts. When you analyze your web statistics, you'll know which posts are effective.

- » **The number of unique visitors to your content-sharing site compared to the number of visitors to your website:** For example, content posts can consist of unique information about your products or services. The more unique visitors you have to specific content posts — or to your content, in general — the better your information is received. If your blog attracts more unique visitors than your site does, consider creating links in your blog posts to related information on your website. If your site receives more hits than your blog, add some links from the specific products or services you offer to blog posts about these specific items.
- » **The number of people who linked to your website from one of your content-sharing pages.** The more people link from a content-sharing site, the more effective that channel is for your marketing.
- » **The geographical location of your content visitors:** If the majority of visitors are from a country or an area other than your target market, change your message.
- » **The direction of traffic:** After you have an established content-sharing presence, your traffic rate and number of incoming links to your website should increase. If they aren't increasing, consider shaking things up a bit by offering different content. Look at which posts have been popular in the past. Expand on those topics or put a new spin on them, and carefully monitor the results.
- » **Which pages are most frequently used to enter or leave the site:** If visitors are entering and exiting the home page and spending only a short length of time on your site, they're skimming only one or two posts before getting out of Dodge. If you're facing this situation, it's time to rethink your message. Visitors entering your site on a specific page, however, have honed in on a specific post from either a search engine result or an incoming link. If you have a lot of these kinds of visitors and they're spending a fair amount of time on your site and exiting from a different page, you have an effective content-sharing site.

Tracking comments

Beyond statistics, one of the most valuable ways to assess the success of your content-sharing sites is by tracking how many and what type of comments people leave. Look for the following information in the Comments section on blogs, YouTube, podcasts, and any other content-sharing sites that permit comments, reviews, rankings, or likes and dislikes.



TIP Third-party social alert and monitoring sites may help you analyze comments for sentiment (an assessment of the positive or negative feelings found in comments). See Book 2, [Chapter 3](#) for helpful tools to use when the number of comments becomes

overwhelming.

Here are some metrics to watch when assessing comments:

- » **Number of comments on each blog post:** This information is important if your goal is to stimulate interaction with potential customers. If certain blog posts are drawing more comments than others, the information in those posts is more relevant to your subscribers.
- » **Comment length:** If you've written a lengthy post and you receive lengthy comments, you've struck a chord with subscribers and presented useful information. If comments are sparse, however, which indicates that you haven't given your user base food for thought, consider changing the nature of your posts or the type of information you post.
- » **The tone of comments on your posts:** If comments on the majority of your posts sound positive and you receive a lot of comments, you're sending the right message. You can be somewhat controversial at times and stir up provocative comments, but unless you're a shock jock, make it the exception and not the rule. If, on the other hand, the comments aren't flattering, you know what you need to do.



TIP

If the number of comments for new posts is decreasing, you're losing your audience — and you probably need to review your messages. Be sure that you're inviting responses with an open question like, "What do you think?" You may need to provide explicit directions about where to click to make a comment.

If you're receiving comments on individual podcast episodes, people are downloading the podcast from your website rather than using a subscription. Analyze which episodes reward you with the most comments — and then include that type of information in future podcasts.

- » **Number of visitors versus the number of comments:** If you have a fairly high ratio of comments to visitors, you're creating interesting material that gets visitors thinking. Also keep an eye on repeat visitors/commentators because that means you're building a fanbase!

Visualizing Video Success

After you post a video to a third-party site (such as YouTube or Vimeo), you can look there for some stats about views, click-throughs, and more.

After logging into YouTube (using your Google credentials), type studio.youtube.com into the address bar and click the Analytics link in the left sidebar to get to the screen shown in [Figure 2-1](#). The Overview tab shows how many subscribers you have, the total watch time your videos have gotten, and the total number of views for your channel.

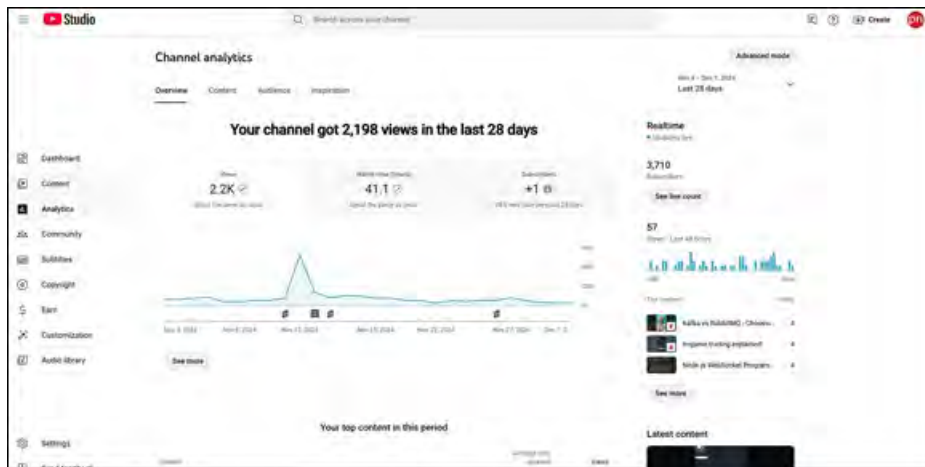


FIGURE 2-1: Viewing statistics for YouTube videos.



TIP Clicking the See More button under any of the charts in the center of the page takes you to a screen with even more metrics you can use to determine how your channel and videos are performing (see [Figure 2-2](#)). Take some time to go through each of the screens to familiarize yourself with the available data.



REMEMBER Because YouTube is owned by Google, YouTube analytics have many of the same metrics as Google Analytics. In other words, the analytics data available to you are pretty robust and can tell you quite a bit about your audience. Best of all, it's free!

On Vimeo, basic analytics are included, but to get more detailed information you have to upgrade to a paid account. To access the analytics data on your free account, go to your Vimeo dashboard and click Analytics in the left sidebar. On your Vimeo analytics dashboard, you can see things such as how many views your videos got, the number of unique viewers, how many times viewers watched an entire video, geographical region, and average watch time.



FIGURE 2-2: A plethora of metrics to gauge the performance of your video content.

To assess the performance of your video content, watch the following important metrics:

- » **Number of subscribers:** At YouTube, you find this information in the left sidebar of your YouTube channel page. If you're creating relevant videos, you should notice a steady increase in subscribers with each new video you upload.
- » **Growth in the number of subscribers:** You should experience steady growth as you regularly add new videos to your channel. If you notice a significant spurt after you post a video, analyze its content to determine why the video caused the growth spurt. Chances are good that you did something different or found a topic of particular interest to your subscribers. If, on the other hand, you notice a decline in new subscribers or a decrease in subscribers after posting a video, figure out what you did wrong and refrain from posting similar videos.
- » **Average viewing time:** If people are watching your videos all the way through, that's a good indicator that they're enjoying the content. If most viewers are dropping off a few seconds into a 30-second video, for example, you may want to take a closer look at that particular video to determine what the issue could be. Is it an interesting topic? Is it easy to understand? Is it entertaining? These are a few questions to keep in mind.
- » **Engagement:** Are people liking the video and leaving comments? Are they sharing the video or tagging friends in the comments to call attention to the video?



REMEMBER Always keep an eye on the comments section of your channel. Not only should you acknowledge comments (as appropriate), but you can also make sure people aren't leaving spam comments or other inappropriate messages. If a person leaves a negative comment, use your best judgment before you delete it. Responding to negative comments shows your community that you're listening and gives you an opportunity to clarify something or answer for something that may have been poorly communicated in the video. On the other hand, if the person leaving the comment is just being a troll and name-calling or cursing, go ahead and delete the comment.

- » **Number of people viewing individual videos:** You can find this information by visiting the analytics dashboards of your video platform.

Understanding Podcast Metrics

Like with blogs, you need to watch several primary statistics on your podcasts:

- » **The number of people listening to your live podcast:** This tells you the effectiveness of your marketing efforts. When you have a lot of visitors, you've created informative media that's in demand.
- » **The number of streams and episode listen duration for your podcast:** Streams tell you how many people pressed Play on your podcast, and listen duration shows how long you can keep the attention of your average listener.
- » **The number of people who subscribe to and download your podcast:** This measure of engagement indicates whether your content is helping you develop a loyal following of listeners.
- » **The number of people who rate your podcast highly or refer it to others or both:** High ratings and referrals indicate that others are helping share your message.



TIP Include a social media share button (see Book 2, [Chapter 4](#)) whenever possible to encourage your readers, viewers, and listeners to post the link to your material on their own social media pages.

YouTube is the most popular directory, accounting for around 33 percent of all podcast downloads, but at the time of this writing, they're still working out some kinks with how to separate out their video analytics from their podcast analytics.

Apple Podcasts, who was a trailblazer when it came to everything podcasting, has fallen to third in the ranks, but is still a great option for any podcaster who wants a platform that has already gone through its growing pains. For more information on Apple Podcasts and Podcasts Analytics, check out Apple's documentation at <https://itunespartner.apple.com/podcasts>.

In general, you should keep an eye on these metrics:

- » How many people are listening to the podcast?
- » Are people skipping over your episode intro or any ads you have?
- » How have the episodes (and podcast in general) been performing over time?
- » Where are listeners located geographically?

Measuring Your Results from Pinterest

When it first launched, Pinterest offered only the briefest of statistics on the number of boards, Pins, likes, followers, and following, running across the page horizontally below your header image, as shown in [Figure 2-3](#).

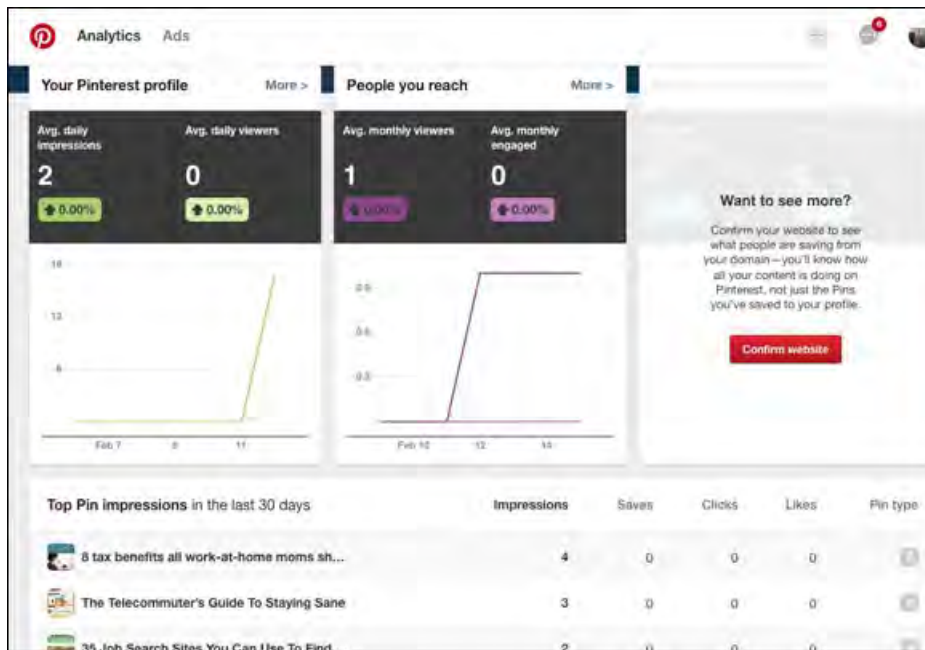


FIGURE 2-3: Basic statistics on Pins and followers were visible to everyone who visited your Pinterest site.

Now Pinterest offers useful, private analytics that show how users interact with your Pins, your profile, and your website. You can also use Pinterest Analytics to find out more about the demographics of your audience.

To access Pinterest Analytics, you must first create a business account, as described in Book 7, [Chapter 1](#). From your business account, go to your profile page and click Analytics in the top menu bar.



REMEMBER You can easily convert a personal account that you've been using for your business into a business account, as described in [Book 7](#).

After you're in Analytics, the screen shown in [Figure 2-4](#) appears, where clicking the drop-down menu under the Performance Over Time section lets you pull up a wealth of data about your Pins for the past 30 days, including impressions, engagements, and link clicks.

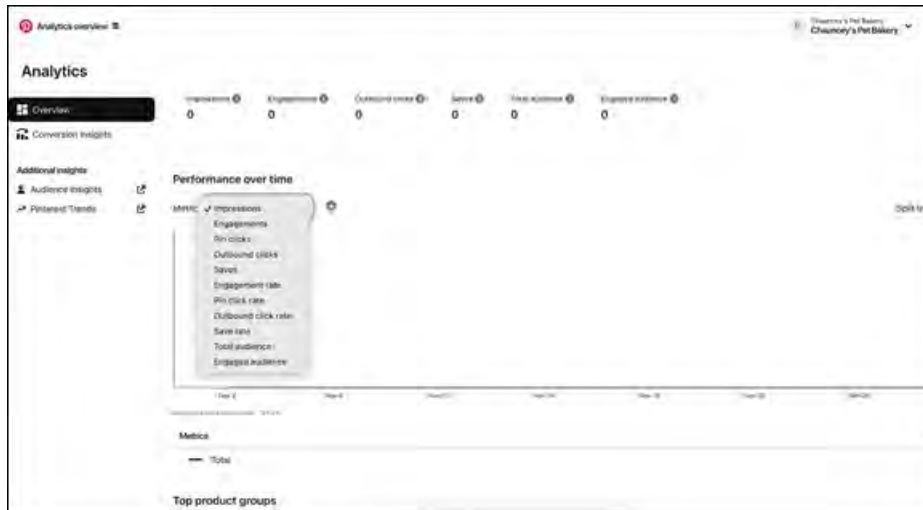


FIGURE 2-4: Pinterest's analytics provide valuable information about users and how they interact with your Pins and profile.

The available metrics are

- » **Impressions:** The total number of times your Pins were shown to viewers
- » **Engagements:** The total number of engagements on your Pins including saves, closeups, link clicks, and carousel card swipes
- » **Pin Clicks:** The number of times people viewed a close-up version of your Pin
- » **Outbound Clicks:** The number of times people clicked on your Pin to be taken somewhere on or off Pinterest
- » **Saves:** The number of times people saved your Pins to a board
- » **Engagement Rate:** The total engagements with your Pins divided by the total number of times your Pins were seen
- » **Pin Click Rate:** The total number of clicks from your Pin or ad to content on or off Pinterest divided by the total number of times your Pins or ads were onscreen
- » **Outbound Click Rate:** The total number of clicks to the destination URL associated with your Pin divided by the total number of times your Pins were onscreen
- » **Save Rate:** The total saves of your Pins divided by the total number of times your Pins were onscreen
- » **Total Audience:** The total number of people who have seen or engaged with your Pins
- » **Engaged Audience:** The number of people who have engaged with your Pins

For more information, see <https://business.pinterest.com/blog/> and <https://help.pinterest.com/articles/pinterest-analytics>.

Finding out about your Pinterest audience

As with all marketing, it's helpful to understand the demographics of your audience and to compare the demographics of Pinterest users to those of your desired target market and also to

users on your other social media channels. After you log in and click the Analytics link at the top of the page, select Audience Insights from the left-hand menu.

The Audience Insights page offers details about what your existing and potential customers are interested in, based on their behavior on Pinterest. You can view data from just your own page's audience (just engaged audience or total audience), from Pinterest as a whole, or you can compare the two. Additional audience information is further divided into five sections: Categories and Interests, Age, Gender, Location, and Device.

Learning more details about what your audience is engaging with while on Pinterest can help you develop your Pinterest content strategy, because you'll now have a better idea about the topics that will perform the best.

Third-party Pinterest analytics

You can obtain more robust Pinterest information from Tailwind (www.tailwindapp.com/pinterest-analytics), a third-party provider of Pinterest tools.

As part of its Pinterest marketing and management suite, Tailwind measures the progress of Pins and boards over time, helping you assess the value of Pinterest in terms of ROI. It offers a free trial, with paid versions starting at \$14.99 per month. Among its metrics, Tailwind allows you to do the following:

- » Archive historical data.
- » Analyze Pin performance by hashtag, keyword, board, or category, including changes in the performance of specific Pins over time.
- » Compare the viral value and engagement levels of your Pinterest content against that of your competition.
- » Integrate with Google Analytics.
- » Analyze revenue and site traffic generated from Pinterest.



REMEMBER Look at referrers to your primary website in Google Analytics to compare how much traffic to your site comes from Pinterest or other image-sharing sites versus traffic that arrives from websites, other social media, advertising, or search engines.

Comparing Hard and Soft Costs versus Income

Smart business people don't spin their wheels. If something doesn't gain traction, they do something else. After analyzing the number of visitors that your content-sharing effort receives, consider your ROI to see whether the effort is really worthwhile. (For more on ROI, see Book 1, [Chapter 2](#).)

Unless you're selling your content, this is a subtle number to figure out. You need to derive sales results indirectly.

Remember to consider two types of costs in your evaluation:

- » **Hard:** The number of man-hours needed to create content for your podcast, blog, photos, or videos. Also, the cost to host any media online, which would be web-hosting fees and any fees you pay to a designer to get your media online. If you're paying for premium video hosting such as Vimeo Pro, factor in this cost, as well.
- » **Soft:** The amount of time you personally spend creating content. Did that time take you away from any other profitable activities, such as hobnobbing with the rich and famous, or other potential clients?



TIP

Include a question at your online checkout that asks buyers which forms of social media they use. If you aren't using a social media network that attracts your customers, you may want to modify your social media efforts to see whether you can increase your business.

Chapter 3

Analyzing X Metrics

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Checking inbound website referrers and followers
 - » Using X's own analytics programs
 - » Following your X metrics with third-party options
 - » Keeping tabs on your X presence
 - » Getting the right follower-to-following numbers
-

After your X marketing campaign has been rolling for a while, you need to check out both your performance metrics and the return on your time investment. You can do this in many ways:

- » By using X Analytics (<https://analytics.X.com/about>)
- » By using a X analytics tool such as X Pro
- » By looking at the information on your X page

This chapter discusses all these methods.

Using X Analytics

In June 2024, X made analytics a Premium subscription-only feature, so in order to access the data, you have to pay \$8/month. But one may argue that X Analytics offers more than merely statistics on post activity, engagement, and followers. By paying attention to these statistics, you can learn how to make your posts more successful, while discovering essential marketing information about your followers, such as demographics, geographic location, and interest areas.

The X Analytics dashboard displays how your posts perform in real time, as shown in [Figure 3-1](#). You can compare month-over-month results for impressions, profile visits, followers, and more. Clicking an individual post displays a details page with additional information about engagement for that post: reposts, likes, detail expands, link clicks, and profile clicks (see [Figure 3-2](#)). For additional information, see <https://business.X.com/en/help/campaign-measurement-and-analytics/post-activity-dashboard.html>.



FIGURE 3-1: The X Analytics dashboard displays post activity.



FIGURE 3-2: Individual post metrics.

Using X Pro

X Pro (formerly TweetDeck) is X's application for managing and analyzing account activity on the platform. Although it used to be a standalone application anyone could download and use, it's now a part of the X Premium subscription suite of features. For more information, see <https://pro.twitter.com>. Here are the most useful applications for X Pro:

- » Monitor multiple X accounts with one interface, including posting and following from one, some, or all accounts. [Figure 3-3](#) shows all the activity you can track with X Pro.
- » Schedule posts for the future on multiple accounts.
- » Set up alerts.
- » Filter searches on multiple accounts.

» Create multiple custom timelines from various accounts to insert on your website(s).

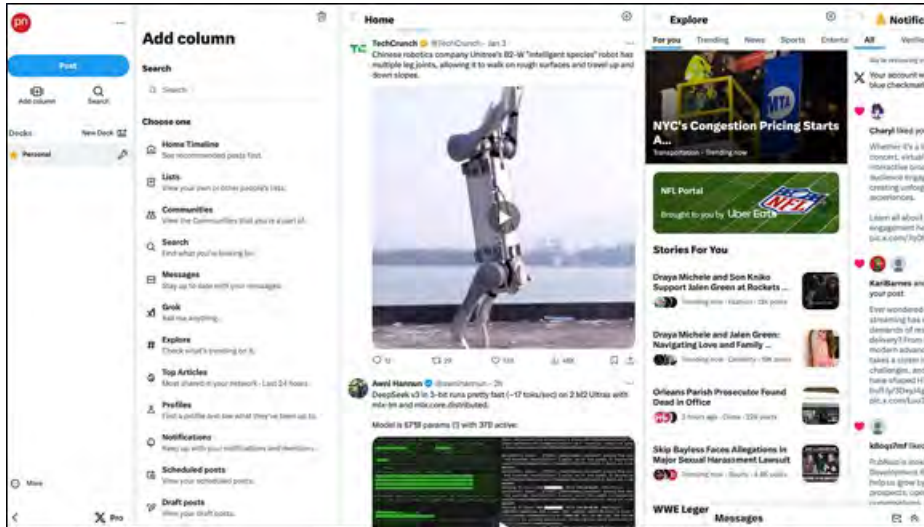


FIGURE 3-3: You can track all these activity types by adding columns to your X Pro dashboard.

Using Third-Party X Analytics Applications

Several good third-party applications are devoted to X analytics. Enter your username to find all sorts of information, such as the subjects you posted about, the hashtags you used, the number of posts per day, and the extent of your reach. Here are a few analytic programs you might want to try:

- » **Twitonomy** (www.twitonomy.com) is a free tool and is great if you're looking to build (or clean up) your follower and following lists, learn more about the accounts that follow you, track your follower growth over time, and more.
- » **TweetBinder** (www.tweetbinder.com) lets you create free X hashtag analytics of up to 200 posts from the previous week. It's a great tool to measure the effectiveness of any campaign hashtags or keywords you're using. [Figure 3-4](#) shows only a small portion of the data displayed for any public X profile.

You can find more X tools at www.brandwatch.com/blog/X-analytics-tools and <https://blog.wishpond.com/post/115675438033/free-X-analytics-tools>.



FIGURE 3-4: TweetBinder showing the top 200 results for the hashtag #coffee.

Tracking Account Activity with the Notifications Tab

Your X account's Notifications tab provides a running review of reposts and favorites. To view this tab, log in to your X account and click Notifications in the left sidebar. All shows you notifications for account activity such as new followers, reposts, mentions, and likes. Mentions shows you notifications only for posts that mention your username.



TIP One of the most important things to track is the number of messages that are *reposted* (copied by others and sent to their followers), compared to all the messages you've sent yourself. That's the best metric for assessing whether your messages are going viral. No hard-and-fast rule applies to what constitutes a good ratio, but a high percentage of reposts means that you're sending the right stuff. You'll find this information under the Content tab on your X Analytics dashboard.



TIP Use X Analytics (refer to [Figure 3-1](#)), X Pro, or another X management tool to find aggregated information about reposts, mentions, and replies in statistical format during a specified time period.

Monitoring mentions

The Mentions tab filters out the stream to display only replies and mentions. You access the Mentions tab just as you do the Notifications tab described previously. Any post that's created as an @reply to one of your posts will appear in the Mentions stream with @username at the beginning of the post.



REMEMBER When you start a post with *@username*, that post's reach is limited to only your own and the addressee's followers. If you want a broader audience to see the post, start a new post with the X username and not the *@username* method using the reply button.

By comparison, a *mention* is defined as a post that includes *@username* anywhere in the body of the post.



TIP To see other users' mentions (perhaps a competitor's), navigate to that user's account and click the Posts & Replies tab above their post stream.

Gleaning meaning from direct messages

Hmmm. I know what you're thinking: Why would you want to analyze your direct messages? After all, you know to whom you send direct messages — but which of your followers sent direct messages to you, and what was the subject matter of those messages? The answer to this two-part question tells you which followers are engaging you as a source of information as well as the type of information they're requesting. If the same topic shows up in several direct messages, you can post about it and write blogs about it.

To review your direct messages, click Messages (envelope icon) in the left sidebar. Note which subjects prompted direct messages and expand on those subjects in future posts. Whenever you receive a direct message regarding one of your posts, it's a good sign that the topic is worthy of further embellishment.



REMEMBER Only people that you follow can send you direct messages.

Using the Hashtag as a Measurement Mechanism

As I discuss in [Book 4](#), when people want to make sure the word they're searching for is the main subject of the post and not just randomly added, they use the hashtag symbol (#).

The use of hashtags with your X username is another way to measure your popularity on X. If a lot of people, including those who don't follow you, take the time to precede your username with a hashtag, you're being directly referenced in a X post.

You can easily find out whether your username or brand is hashtagged. Go to <https://x.com/search-advanced> and scroll down to the These Hashtags section. Enter your username and the X search engine returns a list of posts with your username preceded by the hashtag. In the results, you'll probably see some other usernames you recognize and some you don't for people who have hashtagged you in their posts. You may also see some bad

press. Monitoring hashtags is a wonderful way of finding out who's talking about you and what they're saying. You may also find some people you want to follow.



TIP

FollowFriday, or #FF, is an X hashtag tradition. Users incorporate this hashtag in their Friday posts to give someone a shout-out by recommending a company or an individual that others might want to follow. Fridays are a good day to check the use of your name or brand as a hashtag.

Calculating the X Follower-to-Following Ratio

The X follower-to-following (TFF) ratio is calculated by dividing the number of followers of your username by the number of people you follow. This valuable information is public for any X user who stops by your piece of the X Universe. If you're following a lot of people and not many people are following you, it may look like you're simply trying to sell something, especially if almost all your posts are about your own company, brand, or products.

There's no official number for TFF, but as a rule of thumb, your marketing goal is to have at least one and a half times the number of followers as the number of people you follow. Strive for a ratio of two or three! This ratio should provide a good balance for generating, receiving, and sharing content.



WARNING Don't go on a following spree and follow anyone and everything, thinking they'll follow you back. If you follow too many accounts at one time, and don't have a sufficient number of followers to balance your TFF ratio, X may suspend or close your account, thinking you're a spam account.



REMEMBER Include linkable calls to action on your website and other social media to remind visitors to follow you on X.

Chapter 4

Analyzing Meta Metrics

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Keeping tabs on users with Insights
 - » Using Insights to improve content
 - » Downloading Insights data
 - » Understanding the Insights Overview dashboard
 - » Diving into Insights detail pages
-

You've created a spiffy Facebook page, added a couple of bells and whistles, posted regularly to your timeline, responded to comments, and recruited likes. One of your goals was probably to drive more traffic to your website. But how do you calculate the fruits of your efforts?

This chapter shows you some ways to measure the effectiveness of your Facebook and Instagram presence using Meta's own analytics package, called Insights. For more information on Facebook for marketing, see [Book 5](#) and see Book 7, [Chapter 3](#) for more information on Instagram.

Monitoring Facebook and Instagram from Meta Business Suite

The Meta Business Suite shows the performance of your Facebook and Instagram pages, including engagement, reach, and demographics. The data you receive is the same regardless of the type of business you identified as having.

Using Insights

If you're looking for standard measurements for regular timeline posts, the recently expanded page insights feature provides valuable, free, content-focused metrics. By analyzing user growth, demographics, and engagement with content, you can better focus on content that helps you hold onto people in your audience and encourage them to share your material with their friends.



REMEMBER Gathering data for data's sake doesn't make sense. You need to take advantage of the data to modify your content stream. The principle is the same as with all marketing: If it works, keep doing it; if it doesn't work, stop.

Accessing Insights

First, log in as administrator; then follow one of these two methods to access Insights for a particular page (see [Figure 4-1](#) for the Insights Dashboard Overview page that appears):

- » When on your page, in the left navigation, click the Meta Business Suite link, then the Insights link.
- » Type www.facebook.com/insights in the address bar of your browser. In the Page Insights section, click the thumbnail for the page that has the insights you want to see.

The default view is for Facebook analytics, but click the dropdown to the left of the date selector to switch to Instagram analytics.

Exporting Insights

Meta lets you download Insights data for only two categories: Audience and Content. To download the data for either of those, click the Export button in the top right corner of the dashboard, as shown in [Figure 4-2](#). (This may not work with all browsers.) You can click either the Facebook or Instagram tab at the top of the box and specify the following:

- » The date range for which you want to get data
- » Metric presets like video performance, audience metrics, video earnings, or data based on the published tab

- » Whether you want lifetime data or just selected days
- » Whether you want to see data at the page level or for each post or video

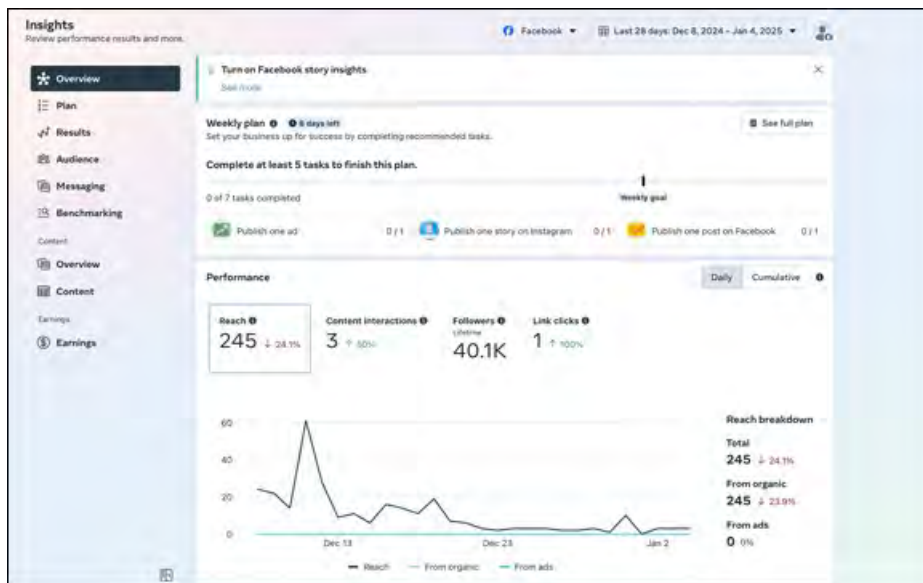


FIGURE 4-1: The Insights Dashboard Overview page provides basic traffic, content, and follower information.

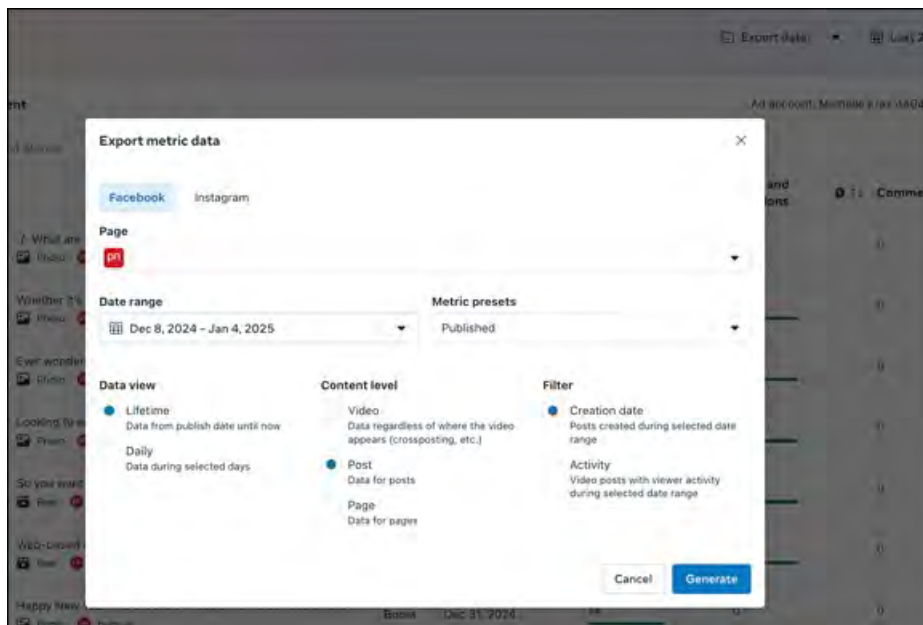


FIGURE 4-2: The pop-up window for exporting Insights.

Exploring the Insights Dashboard

You can find the following insights on the Insights Overview Dashboard at the Page level (refer to [Figure 4-1](#)):

- » **Reach:** The number of people who saw your Facebook content, stories, or ads.

- » **Content Interactions:** The number of likes, reactions, saves, comments, shares, and replies your page received.
- » **Followers:** The total number of followers your page has. Clicking on this number will break that down into new follows and unfollows your page received within the selected timeframe.
- » **Link Clicks:** The number of times someone clicked or tapped a link in your content.

Plan

Meta wants to set you (and your social media initiatives) up for success, so they devised a seven-step plan to guide you through how to make the most of your Facebook and Instagram accounts. Tasks include publishing an ad, publishing a story on Instagram, maintaining a response rate of one percent, and visiting the Insights page.

There's a section for page performance highlights as well as badges you can earn when you meet certain milestones. I recommend you take advantage of this roadmap because it's a great way to kick off a successful social media marketing initiative!

Results

The Results tab (see [Figure 4-3](#)) is where you go when you want to set and track goals for your page performance, specifically increasing reach and growing your follower count. You can set goals for just your Facebook account, your Instagram account, or both, and you can customize the goal for each site. Once you set your goal, you can return to this tab to track how you're performing against that goal and adjust as needed.

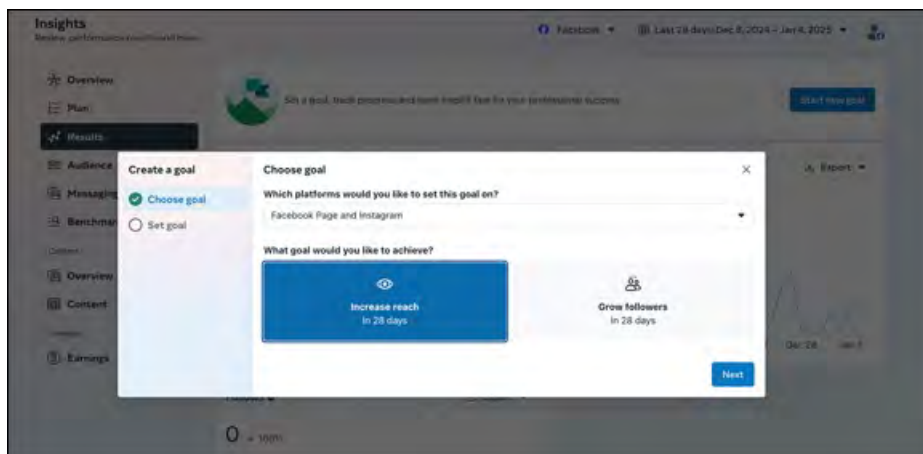


FIGURE 4-3: Set your performance goals here.

Audience

The Audience detail page ([Figure 4-4](#)) breaks down the demographics of who visits your pages by age, gender, top cities, and top countries. Meta takes it a step further and provides a tab for the *potential* audience you could have if you decide to spend some advertising dollars with them. It's worth a peek! As I mention in the previous section, this is one of the two locations where you can export the data out of the platform.

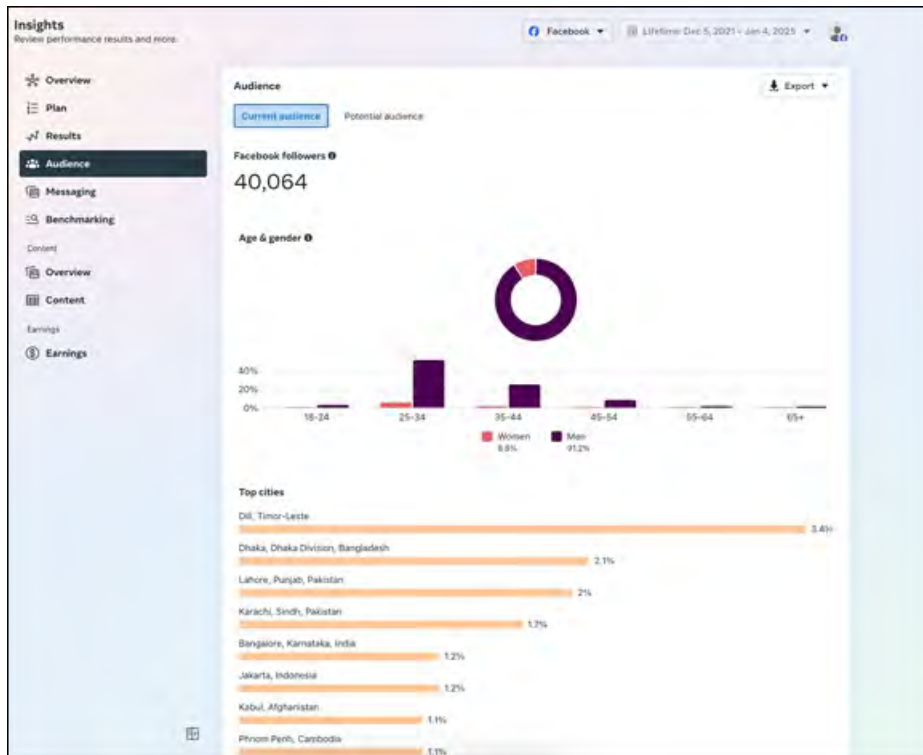


FIGURE 4-4: The Audience detail page.



TIP

Take a close look at where the majority of your followers are located, and consider scheduling your posts to go live when they're most likely to be online.

Messaging

The Messaging detail page shows the frequency at which people reach out to you via direct message, whether they're new or returning contacts, your response rate and time, and whether or not any purchases or leads resulted from the contact.

Benchmarking

The Benchmarking detail page used to be called Competitors, and it's your opportunity to compare your page's performance against businesses in the same industry you're in. It breaks it down by the number of followers they have versus what you have, posting frequency, and content interactions.

There's a second tab called Businesses to Watch that breaks down the previous metrics for competitors that Meta has identified as being in the same industry as you. You can customize this list by adding or removing the companies they have on there, and you can also opt out of having your company be featured at any point. The caveat is that you'll no longer be able to view any data about your competitors either.

Content Overview

The Content Overview detail page (see [Figure 4-5](#)) is the heart and soul of the Insights suite

(at least I think so!). This is where you'll go to see how well your different posts performed, down to an impressively granular level.

You can view performance as an aggregate of all content types, or break it down by Posts, Stories, Reels, Videos, or Live Broadcasts. For each of these categories it provides the following metrics:

- » **Reach:** The number of people who saw your Facebook content, stories, or ads
- » **3-second views:** The number of times your Videos or Reels were viewed for at least three seconds
- » **1-minute views:** The number of times your Videos or Reels were viewed for at least a minute
- » **Content Interactions:** The number of times someone clicked or tapped a link in your content
- » **Watch Time:** The total length of time your videos were played
- » **Top Content by Reach:** Your best-performing posts
- » **Top Content Formats:** The types of content that performed the best, broken out by reach and interactions

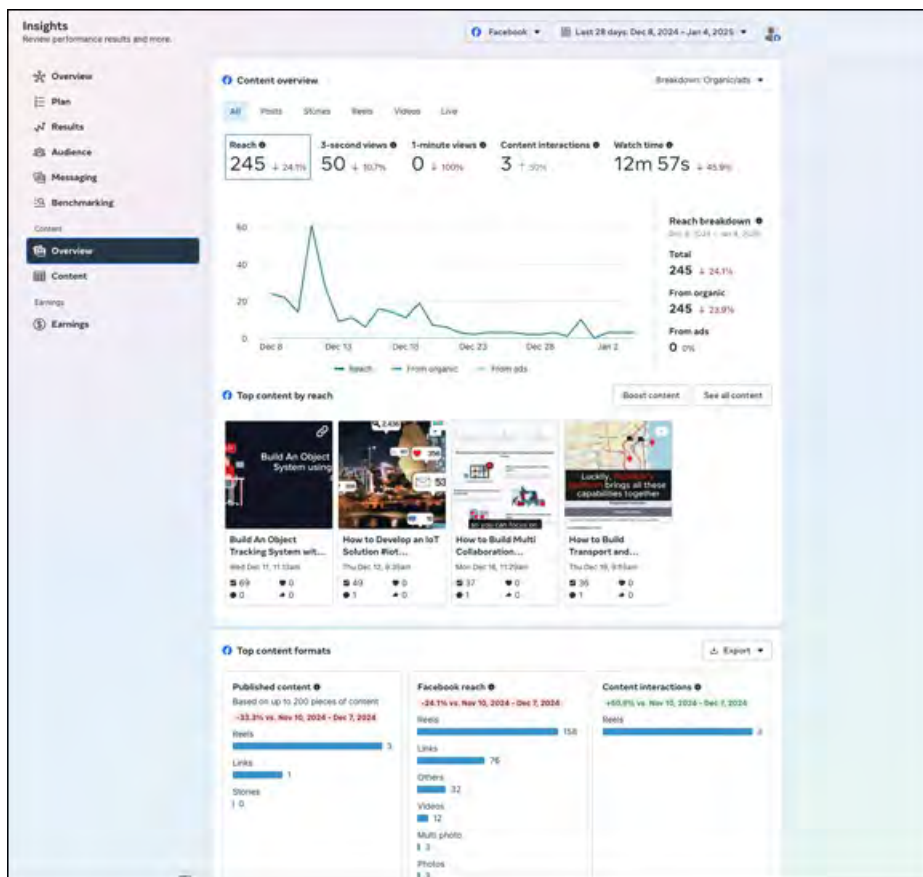


FIGURE 4-5: The Content Overview detail page.

Content Calendar

The Content Calendar page is a detailed, chronological list of all your posts. It tells you the date it was published, the content type, and the platform where it was published to. It also provides a snippet and gives you the option to Boost the post. You can sort and filter the list by any of those metrics, making it easy to find the one you're looking for.

Video Earnings

As a business or content creator, you could be eligible to monetize your content through a program called Facebook Stars where viewers can buy and send you *stars* to show their appreciation for any of your public reels, live videos, photos, and text posts.

You have to meet eligibility requirements to participate (you can find them here:

<https://www.facebook.com/business/help/1061366960881079?id=2514811085399429>)

but if you do start participating in the program, you'll click on the last tab on the left, the Video Earnings tab, to get all the details about how your content is doing.

Chapter 5

Measuring LinkedIn Performance

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » **Measuring LinkedIn success**
 - » **Utilizing metrics to determine content performance**
-

At this point, social media performance metrics are probably dancing in your head, having replaced sugar plums as your objects of desire. While most social media sites provide you with the same (or similar) performance metrics to view, LinkedIn is a bit of an outlier simply due to its professional networking focus. In this chapter, I'll take you through the most common LinkedIn metrics to track as well as ones specific to the business side of the social-networking platform.

Measuring LinkedIn Success

LinkedIn is a helpful place to meet professionals and extend your network. However, if you aren't getting referrals or if people aren't viewing your profile or asking you to connect to their networks, do some analysis to see what is happening.

To see LinkedIn performance metrics, log in to LinkedIn as an administrator and navigate to your company page. Click the Analytics tab on the left side of the screen and select one of the following options from the top menu:

- » **Content:** This tab shows metrics like the numbers and types of engagements your updates have had as well as the top performing posts.
- » **Visitors:** This tab shows metrics such as how many page views you've had on your business page, how many of those were unique visitors, and the top job functions of your visitors.
- » **Followers:** On this tab, you can see things like your total number of followers, how many you've gained in the last 30 days, and a list of all your followers.
- » **Leads:** This tab shows metrics about who has filled out a Contact Us form on any of your LinkedIn pages (main company page, Showcase pages, or Product pages).
- » **Competitors:** Head to this tab to gain some insight into how your competitors' LinkedIn pages are performing; for example, their average engagement rate, how many times they've posted in a time period, and their follower growth.

Content

The Content section, shown in [Figure 5-1](#), provides you with a high-level view of how your LinkedIn content is performing, as well as giving you the option to view various content

performance metrics in graphical format (broken out by organic and sponsored posts). By clicking the drop-down menu that shows the default Impressions metric, you can change the graph to show:

- » Impressions
- » Members Reached
- » Clicks
- » Reactions
- » Comments
- » Posts
- » Engagement Rate

Below that graph is a list of each individual post, along with metrics showing Post Type, Audience, Impressions, Views, Clicks, and Click-Through-Rate (CTR).

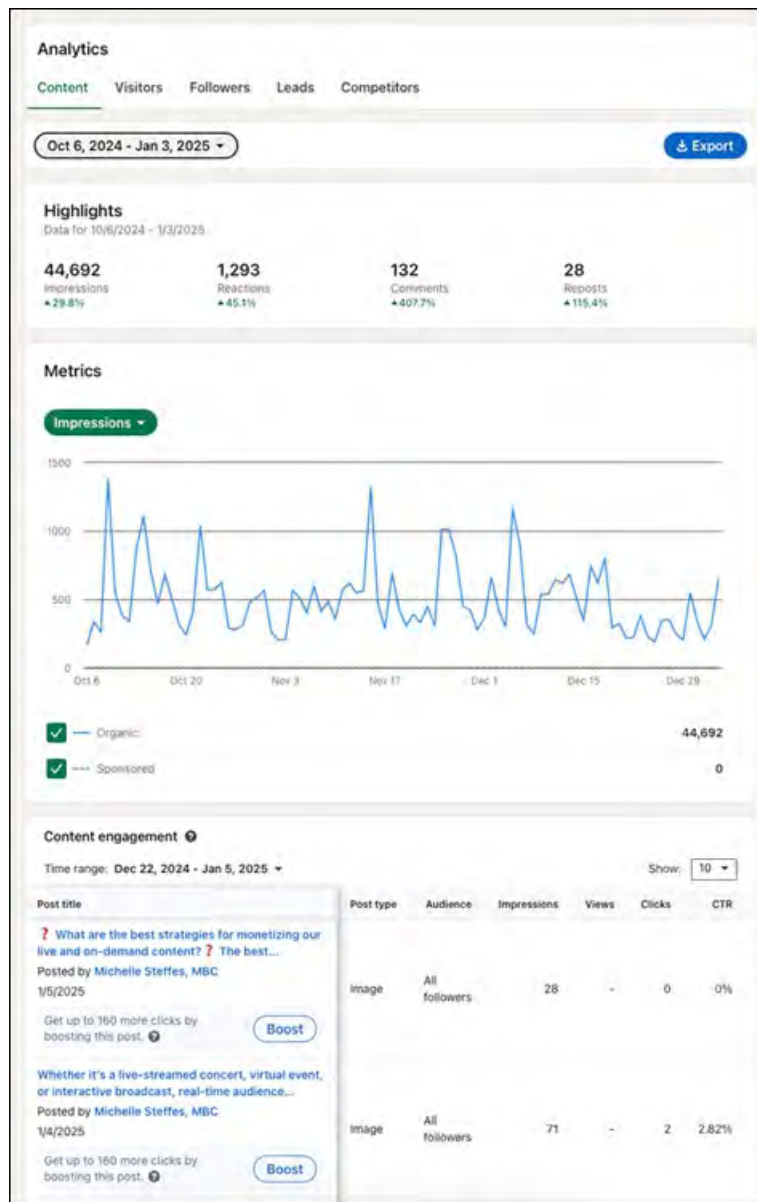


FIGURE 5-1: Get a bird's-eye view of content performance here.

Visitors

The Visitors section, shown in [Figure 5-2](#), contains a graph that shows how many visitors have visited your page (and sub-pages) over a time period. The information you can view includes

- » **Page Views:** The total number of views of your pages.
- » **Unique Visitors:** Aggregate traffic metrics for your LinkedIn Pages over time.
- » **Custom Button Clicks:** The total number of clicks on your page's custom buttons — for example, the Contact or Visit Website button.
- » **Visitor Metrics:** A graphical view of traffic metrics for unique visitors and page views

over a certain period of time. They are split up by desktop visitors and mobile visitors, and the default timeframe is the last 30 days. The default view is All Pages, but you can view metrics for the individual sections of your page by clicking the All Pages drop-down menu to the right of the Page Views drop-down menu.

- » **Visitor Demographics:** The aggregate demographic information of visitors that visit your page over a certain time period. The default view is Job Function, but you can view metrics for other demographics such as Company Size and Seniority by clicking the Job Function for drop-down menu.



TIP LinkedIn lets you download Visitor and Updates data into an XLS (Microsoft Excel) file. If you're keeping a master spreadsheet of the different social media metrics you're tracking, this is a very helpful shortcut. Simply click the blue Export button on the right side of the page. You cannot download Followers data, however.

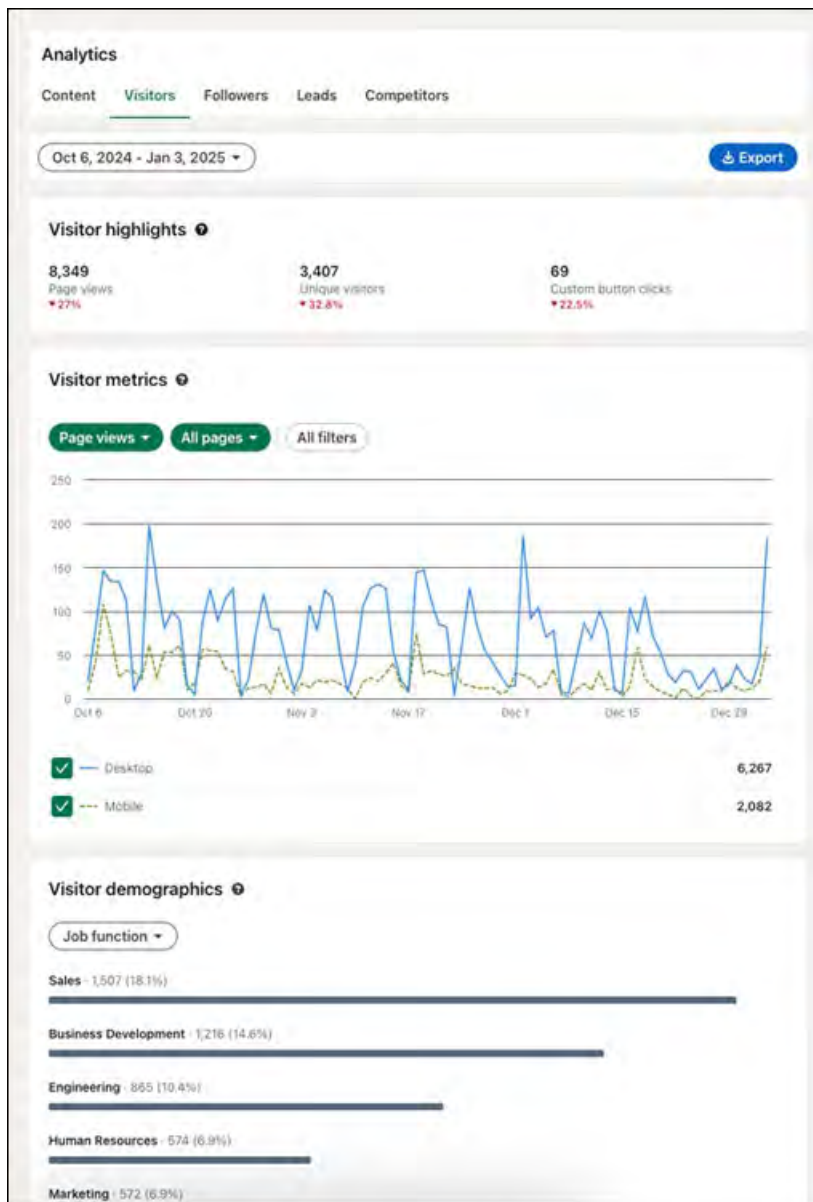


FIGURE 5-2: LinkedIn offers analytical detail for Visitors.

Followers

The Followers section, shown in [Figure 5-3](#), is divided into four areas. It offers data on metrics such as follower demographics, acquisition (and decrease) trends over time, and competitive comparison:

- » **Follower Highlights:** The number of LinkedIn members following your company page and how many you've gained over the last 30 days.



REMEMBER The percentage to the right of the followers gained number isn't how many followers you've *lost*. It's showing the percentage of change from the previous time

period. For example, in [Figure 5-3](#), the 40.6 percent with the down arrow says that your follower growth was 40.6 percent lower than it was in the previous 90 days.

- » **Follower Metrics:** A graphical representation of the number of new followers you've gained.
- » **Follower Demographics:** The profiles of every person who follows your page. The default view is Locations, but you can view metrics for other demographics by clicking the Location dropdown.
- » **All Followers:** The profiles of every person who follows your page.



TIP

Remember, you can download the data from this page into an Excel file, but the specific follower profiles list won't be included.

Leads

The Leads tab shows you how many times someone has filled out a Contact Us form on one of your company's pages or sub-pages. It shows you the date the form was created, how many people have filled it out (leads), and how many of those were in the last 30 days, and it provides a button for you to download the lead's contact information.

Competitors

The Competitors tab (see [Figure 5-4](#)) is split into five different sections that provide insights into your competitors' (as identified by you) activity on the platform.

- » **Highlights:** This is where you can track how your posts and engagement rate compare to your competitors.



FIGURE 5-3: LinkedIn offers analytical detail for Followers.

- » **New Follower Metrics:** These are ranked by net new followers gained within the last 90 days.
- » **Total Post Metrics:** This section shows your competitors ranked by total post updates in the last 90 days.
- » **Total Engagement Metrics:** This metric shows you and your competitors ranked by total engagements in the last 90 days.
- » **Trending Competitor Posts:** Just as the name suggests, these are well-performing posts that your competitors had within the last 30 days.

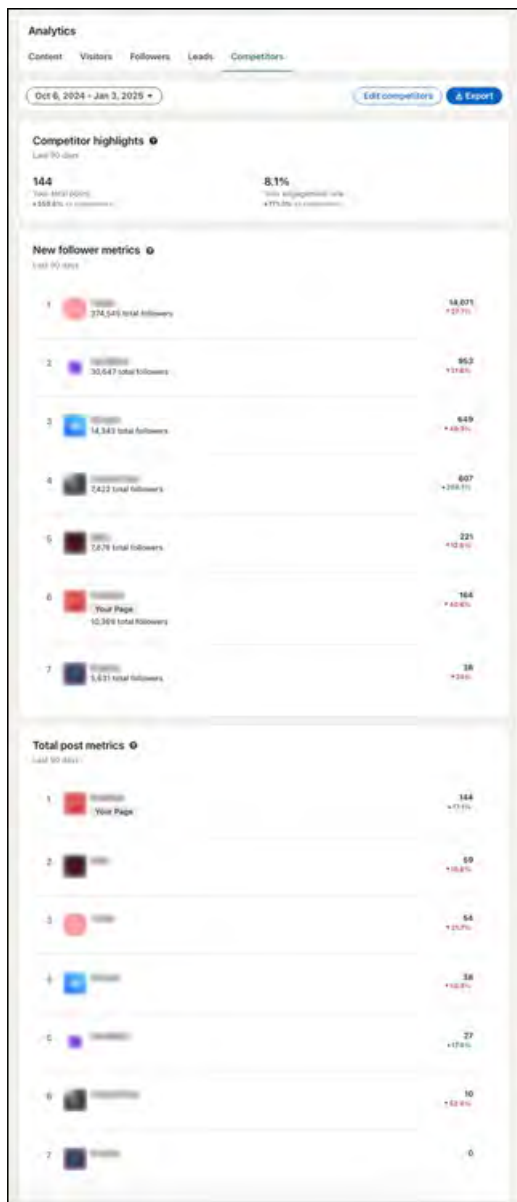


FIGURE 5-4: Keep an eye on your competition with the Competitors tab.

Chapter 6

Comparing Metrics from Different Marketing Techniques

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Comparing metrics among social media
 - » Integrating social media metrics with web metrics
 - » Analyzing social media with advertising metrics
 - » Comparing social media with other online marketing
-

By now, you may be asking yourself whether web *metrics* (the science of measurement) are worth the trouble. They certainly matter if you have a business with a finite amount of time, money, or staff — which covers just about every business.

Metrics aren't about determining whether your company is the best in any particular marketing or advertising channel. They're about deciding which channels offer your company the best value for achieving your business objectives. Not to denigrate your instinct, but metrics are simply the most objective way to optimize your marketing effort.



REMEMBER Marketing isn't rocket science. If your metrics show that a particular tactic is working, keep doing it. If they show it isn't working, try something else. Don't be afraid to experiment with different methods.

Establishing Key Performance Indicators

The most important items to measure — the ones that reflect your business goals and objectives — are *key performance indicators* (KPIs). They may vary by type of business, but after they're established, they should remain consistent over time.

An e-retailer, for example, may be more interested in sales by product category or at different price points, though a business-to-business (B2B) service company might want to look at which sources produce the most qualified prospects. The trick is to select five to ten relevant metrics for your business.



REMEMBER If something isn't measured, it can't be evaluated. If it can't be evaluated, it isn't considered important.

While you read this chapter, you can establish your own KPIs. Then you can combine them with other information about how your various marketing efforts contribute to sales and leads, your bottom line, and your return on investment (ROI). Armed with this information, you'll be in a position to make strategic business decisions about your marketing mix, no matter what size your company.



TIP Enter at least one KPI for each business goal on your Social Media Marketing Plan (see Book 1, [Chapter 3](#)). Some business goals share the same KPI. Schedule a review of the comparative metrics on your Social Media Activity Calendar (discussed in Book 1, [Chapter 4](#)) at least once per month or more often if you're starting a new endeavor, running a brief, time-constrained effort, or handling a large volume of traffic.

Overcoming measurement challenges

Measuring success among forms of social media, let alone between social media and any other forms of marketing, is a challenge. You're likely to find yourself comparing apples to not only oranges but also mangoes, pineapples, kiwis, pears, and bananas. In the end, you have to settle for a fruit salad or smoothie.



TIP Install the same statistical software, whether it's Google Analytics or another package, on all your sites. Your sites may not have identical goals (for example, users may not be able to purchase from your LinkedIn profile or request a quote from your wiki), but using the same software will ensure that metrics are consistently defined. In fact, the availability of compatible analytics packages may influence your selection of a host, development platform, or even web developer.

Using A/B testing

You may want to apply *A/B testing* (comparing a control sample against other samples in which only one element has changed) to your forays into social media. Just as you might use A/B testing to evaluate landing pages or emails, you can also compare results between two versions of a blog post or compare performance of two different headlines for an update on a social media service, while keeping all other content identical.

If you're comparing performance (click-throughs to your site) of content placed in different locations — for example, on several different social-bookmarking sites or social news services — use identical content for greater accuracy.



REMEMBER Don't rely on absolute measurements from any online source. Take marketing metrics with a shaker full of salt; look more at the trends than at the exact numbers. Be forewarned, though, that the temptation to treat numbers as sacrosanct is hard to resist.

To no one's surprise, an entire business has grown up around web metrics. If you have a statistical bent, join or follow the discussions on the resource sites listed in [Table 6-1](#).

TABLE 6-1 Online Metrics Resources

Site Name	URL	What It Offers
Marketing Analytics Summit	www.emetrics.org	Events and conferences on marketing optimization
HubSpot	http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/how-to-run-an-ab-test-ht	A/B testing how-to FAQs article
Keyhole Blog	https://keyhole.co/blog/measuring-social-media-roi-calculate-actionable-insights-for-your-business	Guide to calculating social media ROI
VWO	https://vwo.com/ab-testing	A/B testing guide
Analytics Demystified Blog	https://analyticsdemystified.com/blog	Digital measurement techniques
Web Analytics World	www.webanalyticsworld.net	Current news on the web analytics and digital marketing front
WebProNews	www.webpronews.com	Breaking news blog for web professionals, including analytics topics
Webtrends	http://webtrends.com/resources	Resources for analytics and other marketing topics

Comparing Metrics across Social Media

I talk throughout this book about various genres of social media services. Each genre has its own arcane measurements, from hashtags to comments, from posts to ratings, from membership numbers to sentiment.



TIP Use medium-specific metrics to gauge the efficacy of different campaigns within that medium or to compare results from one site within a genre to another.

However, to assess the overall effectiveness of social media efforts and your total marketing mix, common metrics cross boundaries. Surprise! These common metrics look a lot like the statistics discussed in [Chapter 1](#) of this minibook. By using the right tools, or by downloading analytics to a spreadsheet and creating your own graphs, you can compare data for various social media.



REMEMBER Online traffic patterns may vary for all sorts of reasons and for different businesses. Watch for cyclical patterns across a week or compare the same timeframes a year apart. Merchants often do this for same-store sales to compare how a store is performing compared to past years.

Carefully aggregate measurements over exactly the same timeframe and dates. You obviously

don't compare weekly data from a blog to monthly data for a website. But neither should you compare Tuesday traffic on one source to Saturday traffic on another, or compare November and December clicks for an e-commerce site that sells gift items (which is probably quite high) to January and February clicks (which are probably low). Compare, instead, to the same timeframes from the preceding year.

In most cases, these metrics become some of the KPIs on your list:

- » **Traffic (visits):** The overall measure of the number of visits (not visitors) made to your site or to a particular social media presence over a set period. Facebook offers page administrators traffic data in its free analytics at www.facebook.com/insights (you must be logged in).
- » **Unique users:** The number of different users (or, more specifically, IP addresses) who visited. Depending on your business model, you may want to know whether you have ten visits apiece from 100 ardent fans (multiple repeat users) or 1,000 users, each of whom drops in once. This type of detail is available for some, but not all, social media services.
- » **Keywords:** The list of search terms or tags used to find a particular web posting. Phrases are often more useful than individual words.
- » **Referrers:** A list of traffic sources that tells you how many visitors arrive at your web entities from such sources as search engines, other websites, paid searches, and many, but not all, other social media services. Some even identify referrers from web-enabled cellphones.

You can find a section like this in most analytics programs. Those traffic sources may be aggregated and displayed graphically for easy review.

Keeping track of users' paths among many components of a complicated web presence isn't easy, but it's worth it. You may find that your marketing strategy takes B2B prospects from LinkedIn to your blog and then to a microsite. Or you may watch business-to-consumer (B2C) clients follow your offers from a social news service to a store widget on Facebook before they conclude with a purchase on your site. The following section talks more about tracking your links.

- » **Click-through rate (CTR):** The number of click-throughs to your site from a particular source divided by the number of visitors (traffic) that arrived at that source. If 40 people view your Facebook stream in one day, for example, and 4 of them click through to your primary site, the CTR is 10 percent ($4 \div 40$). You may need to derive this data by combining traffic measurements from particular social media services with information from the Referrers or Entry Pages sections of your analytics program. In some cases, the CTR becomes the conversion measure for a particular social media service.

[Table 6-2](#) suggests some useful KPIs that can track by genre and social media platform.

TABLE 6-2 Social Media by Genre and KPI

Social Genre	Site Examples	Useful KPIs to Check
Bookmarking	Mix.com	Traffic, keywords, CTR

Community	Facebook Groups, LinkedIn Groups, forums	Traffic, users, time, keywords, CTR
Information	Blogs, webinars, wikis	Traffic, users, time, keywords, referrers, CTR
Media sharing	Podcasts, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube	Traffic, users, time, keywords, CTR, number of views, Likes, Followers
Network	Facebook, LinkedIn, X, Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram	Traffic, users, time, keywords, CTR
News	Reddit	Traffic, keywords, CTR
Review	Angi, TripAdvisor, Yelp	Traffic, CTR, user ratings, leads

Integrating Social Media with Web Metrics

In addition to creating your hub website, you may have developed sites either as subdomains within your primary domain name or with auxiliary domain names. These sites may take several forms:

- » **Microsites:** These small, dedicated sites that have their own domain names are usually developed for a specific event, product, product line, service, or another promotion, or as specialized landing pages for an advertising campaign. Whether the microsite is permanent or temporary, you must make a strategic choice to create one, judging cost, branding needs, search engine optimization (SEO), and other marketing efforts against potential benefits.
- » **Blogs:** All blogs and other information-sharing sites, such as webinars and wikis, can be fully tracked with analytical software. Some sites, such as Blogger (<https://support.google.com/blogger/answer/7039627?hl=en>), offer Google Analytics integration, but not all hosted solutions do so. Although you can obtain statistics from certain hosted communities or third parties, you may not be able to customize them or integrate them with your other statistics.
- » **Communities:** All online communities, for example forums, social network groups, chat rooms, and message boards, fall into this category. Although they may have their own internal statistics, also investigate whether you can customize those statistics to meet your needs before you select software or a hosted platform. For example, LinkedIn Groups (www.linkedin.com/groups), Facebook Groups (<https://www.facebook.com/groups>), and Google Groups (<https://groups.google.com>) are inexpensive community alternatives, but they provide only limited statistics.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

For statistical purposes, as well as SEO, own the domain names of microsites, blogs, and communities pages, rather than host them on another server (<http://myblog.wordpress.com>). Sites can almost always be tracked with your preferred analytics package if they're separately registered domains (www.mymicrosite.com), were created as subdomains (<http://blog.yourdomain.com>), or live within a directory (www.yourdomain.com/blog/blog-title).

The use of KPIs at these additional sites makes it easier to integrate user activity on your social media channels with what happens after users arrive at your primary website. To complete the analysis, add a few more comparative indicators, each of which you can analyze independently:

- » **Conversion rate:** You're already computing the percentage of visitors who complete tangible goals on your primary website, whether they purchase a product or complete a request form. Now compare the conversion rate (for the same available goal) by traffic source to the average conversion rate across all sources for that goal.
- » **Sales and lead generation:** These numbers may come from your storefront package or be based on measurements tracked offline.
- » **Downloads:** Track the number of times users download video or audio files, slide-show PDF files, white papers, or application forms from your sites.
- » **Pages per view, pages viewed:** Microsites, communities, and blogs usually offer enough content to make these parameters reasonable to measure. Tracking this information by social source can be valuable. Page views are available for most blogs but not necessarily for all other services.
- » **Time per visit:** The average length of time spent viewing material is a good, but not exact, proxy for the number of pages per view. Naturally, users spend less time reading a single tweet than they might spend on your blog or website, but fractions of a second are indications of trouble everywhere.
- » **Bounce rate:** For another indication of interest in your content, determine the percentage of visitors who leave without visiting a second page (related to time per visit). Like with pages per view or time per visit, the bounce rate may be a bit misleading. If many people have bookmarked a page so that they can immediately find the information they want, your bounce rate may be higher than expected, although pages per view or time per visit may be low. You may want to sort bounces by upstream source.

Using Advertising Metrics to Compare Social Media with Other Types of Marketing

Because you generally don't pay social media services, social media marketing is incredibly appealing as a cost-effective substitute for paid ads. You can convert the advertising metrics in the following sections to compare the cost-effectiveness of your various social media efforts or to analyze social media outlets versus other forms of promotion, online and off.

Obtaining metrics for paid advertising

With the exception of pay-per-click advertising, which exists only online, the metrics used for paid advertising are the same whether you advertise online or offline. Most publishers offer advertisers a *media kit* that includes demographics, ad requirements, and ad rates based on one or more pricing models.

Advertising costs vary over time based on demand and availability, as well as the overall economy. Ad prices are generally based on what the market will bear — that is, the most that an advertiser is willing to bid. New, real-time bidding schemes for online advertising may make prices even more volatile. Life is negotiable in many advertising marketplaces, except for those that operate as self-service networks. It never hurts to ask for what you want.



REMEMBER Many social media sites don't charge for posting content because their true goal is to sell either premium services or advertising. Your content generates what they sell: an audience. The more user eyeballs a social media service can deliver to its advertisers, the greater its own advertising revenue. In essence, you manufacture their product in exchange for getting some of that traffic for yourself.

CPM

Cost per thousand (CPM) impressions, one of the most consistently used metrics in advertising, works across all forms of media. CPM is based on the number of times an ad is viewed, whether it's calculated for ads on TV, billboards, or in print magazines; received as dedicated emails; or viewed on web pages.

CPM is simple to calculate: Divide the cost by (.001) of the number of impressions (views). The more narrowly defined the audience, the higher the CPM. You can find a handy CPM calculator at www.marketingdive.com/cpm-calculator-app.

For example, one year, the CPM for a 30-second broadcast Super Bowl ad averaged almost \$45, but the actual dollar cost — \$5 million — was high because the audience was 111.3 million TV viewers. By contrast, CPM for a small, highly targeted audience of CEOs in high-tech companies may run \$100 or more.

Because you may have difficulty tracking from impression to action in some channels, CPM models are often used to measure branding campaigns.

Compare CPM with a *cost per action* (CPA) advertising model and its subset, *cost per click* (CPC) ads. CPA advertising triggers payment only when a user takes a specific action, such as downloading a white paper; signing up for a newsletter; registering for a conference; or becoming a fan, friend, or follower. At the far end of the CPA spectrum, when CPA is based on a user purchase, it approaches a sales commission model.



TIP In the classic definitions of CPA, CPC, and CPM, rates don't include the cost of producing an ad, the commission paid to an agency, or your own labor to research and review ad options. From a budget point of view, you need to include all these factors in your cost estimates.

A web-only metric, CPC (or sometimes *PPC*, for pay-per-click) falls within the CPA model because advertisers are charged only when a viewer clicks a link to a specified landing page. The CPC model is often used for ads in the rightmost columns of search engines and also for

clicks obtained from banner, video, and online classified ads, and from shopping comparison sites and paid directory listings. For additional resources for paid online advertising, consult [Table 6-3](#).

TABLE 6-3 Online Advertising Resources

Name	URL	What You Can Find
Google Marketing Platform	https://marketingplatform.google.com/about/enterprise	Ad management and solutions
Internet Advertising Competition	www.iacaward.org/iac	Annual Internet ad competition produced by the Web Marketing Association
The Webby Awards	www.webbyawards.com	Interactive advertising competition
Association for National Advertisers	www.ana.net	Membership group, resources, events



REMEMBER Always ask which statistics a publisher provides to verify the results of your ads. Some confirm impressions, as well as clicks or other actions (check against your own analytics program); some provide only impressions; and some publishers can't — or won't — provide either one.

Even if you pay a flat fee, such as for an annual directory listing, you can compute CPC and CPM after the fact, as long as the publisher provides you with the number of impressions and you can identify click-throughs.

Reach

Reach is the estimated number of potential customers (qualified prospects) you can target in a specific advertising medium or campaign. You can apply the concept of reach, by extension, to specific social media channels, anticipated traffic on your website, or other populations, such as the addresses on your email list. Reach is sometimes expressed as a fraction of the total audience for an advertising campaign (for example, potential customers divided by total audience).

The number of potential customers may be the total number of viewers in a highly targeted campaign, or only a segment of them. In the case of the Super Bowl example in the earlier section "[CPM](#)," for instance, a beer ad may be targeted at males ages 25 to 64; only that demographic percentage of the audience should be calculated in reach.



TIP For the best results, identify advertising venues where the number of potential customers (reach) represents a large share of potential viewers (impressions). Return to your early market research for viewer demographics from Quantcast, or review media kits to estimate the reach of each publication or social media site you're considering.

Applying advertising metrics to social media

Because publishers receive no payments for most social media appearances, comparing free social media marketing to paid advertising requires a little adjustment. How can you compare the CPM or CPC for something that's free versus something you pay for? Although you can acquire information about page views (*impressions*), clicks, and other actions (conversion goals) from your analytics program, cost requires a little thought.

One possibility is to modify the cost of advertising to include labor and hard costs for production, management, and commission, and any fees for services, such as press-release distribution. Then estimate the hard costs and the amount of work in labor dollars required to create and maintain various elements of your social media presence. If you outsource the creation of ads or social media content to contractors such as copywriters, videographers, photographers, or graphic designers, include those expenses.

Don't go crazy trying to calculate exact dollar amounts. You simply estimate the relative costs of each medium or campaign to compare the cost-effectiveness of one form of promotion to another. Social media marketing may be relatively inexpensive, but if you see only one action or impression after 20 hours of labor, you need to decide whether it's worth it.

Juxtaposing Social Media Metrics with Other Online Marketing

Regardless of any other online techniques you use, you can combine links with source tags, analytics program results, and advertising metrics to compare social media results to results from other online techniques.

Refine your list of KPIs for these elements:

- » **Email newsletters:** Whether you use your own mailing list or rent one, you measure
 - *Bounces:* Bad email addresses
 - *Open rate:* The percentage of good addressees that open your newsletter, roughly equivalent to reach as a percentage of impressions
 - *Click-through rate (CTR):* The percentage of people who click through to a web page after opening a newsletter
 - *Landing pages:* Where newsletter recipients "go" when they click a link in a newsletter

Well-segmented, targeted lists result in better reach. If you rent lists, be sure to include the acquisition cost per thousand names, as well as the transmission cost, in your total cost for CPM (cost per thousand) comparison. Most newsletter services and list-rental houses provide all these metrics.

- » **Coupons, promotion codes:** Online coupons can be tracked similarly to regular banner ads. However, for both promotion codes and coupons, track which offers produce the best results, which are almost always sales or registrations.

- » **Press releases:** Sometimes press releases are hard to track online because many free press distribution services don't provide information on page views or click-throughs. By contrast, most paid distribution services tell you the click-through rate and the number of impressions (or number of times someone viewed your release) on their servers. Although these services can tell you where the release was distributed, they don't know what happened afterward.
- » **Product placement in games and other programs:** Advertisers can place the equivalent of banner ads, video ads, or product images within online video games. If the ads are linkable, you can find the CTR and impressions to calculate CPM and CPC (cost per click). Offline games with product placement must be treated as offline marketing elements.
- » **Online events:** Track live concerts, chats, speeches, and webinars with KPIs for registration — request an email address, at minimum — even if the event is free. Though not everyone who registers attends, this approach also provides a helpful set of leads and a built-in audience to notify of future events. Of course, you can also check referrers and entry pages.
- » **Disaggregated components, such as third-party blogs, chat rooms, RSS feeds, regular email, or text messaging:** Tagged links that pass through from these forms of communication are probably your best bet.



TIP Be sure to register for optional analytics when you install a Share function from sites such as ShareThis, which integrate with Google Analytics. Then you can see where and how often users forward your link through these services.

Contrasting Word-of-Web with Word-of-Mouth

Word-of-mouth is, without a doubt, the most cost-effective form of advertising. Ultimately, that force powers all social media, with its peer-to-peer recommendations and referrals.



REMEMBER Try to keep your expectations in check. According to Microsoft research, less than one percent of social media content goes viral. In this case, *viral* is defined as reaching a much larger audience via peer-to-peer sharing compared to the audience reached by the original post. (See Sprout Social's post on viral marketing for information: <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/viral-marketing>.)

Relevant research on the effect of social media as a form of word-of-mouth is both intriguing and contradictory:

- » McKinsey & Co. found that word-of-mouth influences about 20 to 50 percent of all buying decisions.
- » According to Nielsen, 92 percent of consumers believe a recommendation from friends and family over any other type of advertising.
- » Nielsen also found that 68 percent of consumers trust online reviews from other consumers.

Keep these points in mind while you consider the positive and negative effects of participation in social media. Review sites can have a significant effect on your marketing, but the effect of individual recommendations may be overrated except in special cases.



REMEMBER You can monitor mentions of your company online and the tone of those responses, as discussed in [Book 2](#).

Your analytical task here is to compare the efficacy of “word-of-web” by way of social media to its more traditional forms. Tracking visitors who arrive from offline is the trickiest part. These visitors type your URL in the address bar of their browsers either because they’ve heard of your company from someone else (word-of-mouth) or as a result of offline marketing.

Offline marketing may involve print, billboards, radio, television, loyalty-program key-chain tags, promotional items, packaging, events, or any other great ideas you dream up.

By borrowing the following techniques from direct marketing, you can find ways, albeit imperfect, to identify referrals from offline sources or other individuals:

- » **Use a slightly different URL to identify the offline source.** Make the URL simple and easy to remember, such as <http://yourdomain.com/tv>; <http://yourdomain.com/wrapper>; <http://yourdomain.com> or <http://yourdomain.com/radio4>. These short URLs can show viewers a special landing page — perhaps one that details an offer or a contest encouraged by an offline teaser — or redirect them to an existing page on your site. Long, tagged URLs that are terrific for online sourcing and hard-to-remember shortened URLs are not helpful offline.
- » **Identify referrals from various offline sources.** Use different response email addresses, telephone numbers, extensions, or people’s names.
- » **Provide an incentive to the referring party.** “Tell a friend about us. Both of you will receive \$10 off your next visit.” This technique can be as simple as a business card for someone to bring in with the referring friend’s name on the back. Of course, the card carries its own unique referral URL for tracking purposes.
- » **Stick to the tried-and-true method.** Always ask, “May I ask how you heard about us?” Then tally the results.

You can then plug these numbers into a spreadsheet with your online referral statistics to

compare offline methods with online social media.

Chapter 7

Making Decisions by the Numbers

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Making decisions based on metrics
 - » Diagnosing and fixing problem campaigns
 - » Keeping your online marketing grounded
-

It's probably safe to say that all professionals whose companies use social media want to be able to measure their return on investment (ROI). By using the tools for assessing qualitative and quantitative results, including ROI, they can certainly count themselves among those who do!

However, there's no point in collecting metrics just to save them in a virtual curio cabinet. The challenge is to figure out how to use the numbers to adjust your online-marketing campaigns, whether they need fine-tuning or a major overhaul. This chapter shows you how to analyze problems, see what your data reveal, and then use the results to modify your marketing approach.

Using Metrics to Make Decisions

In spite of the hype, social media is, at its core, a form of strategic marketing communications. As a business owner, you must balance the subjective aspects of branding, sentiment, goodwill, and quality of leads with the objective performance metrics of traffic and click-through rate (CTR) and the business metrics of customer acquisition costs, conversion rate, sales value, and ROI. The balance point is unique to each business at a specific time. Alas, no fixed rules exist.

As part of your balancing act, you'll undoubtedly also tap your instincts, incorporating casual feedback from customers, the ever-changing evolution of your market, your budget, and your assessment of your own and your staff's available time and skills.

Even after you feel confident about your marketing program, keep watching your metrics as a reality check. Data has a funny way of surprising you.



TIP Don't become complacent. Continue to check your performance and business metrics at least monthly. How do they compare to what your instinct is telling you?

Knowing When to Hold and When to Fold

Watch for a few things in your metrics. As always, you evaluate comparative results, not absolute numbers. Keep an eye on these characteristics:

- » Negative and positive trends that last for several months
- » Abrupt or unexpected changes
- » No change in key performance indicators (KPIs), in spite of social media marketing activities
- » Correlations between a peak in traffic or sales with a specific social marketing activity

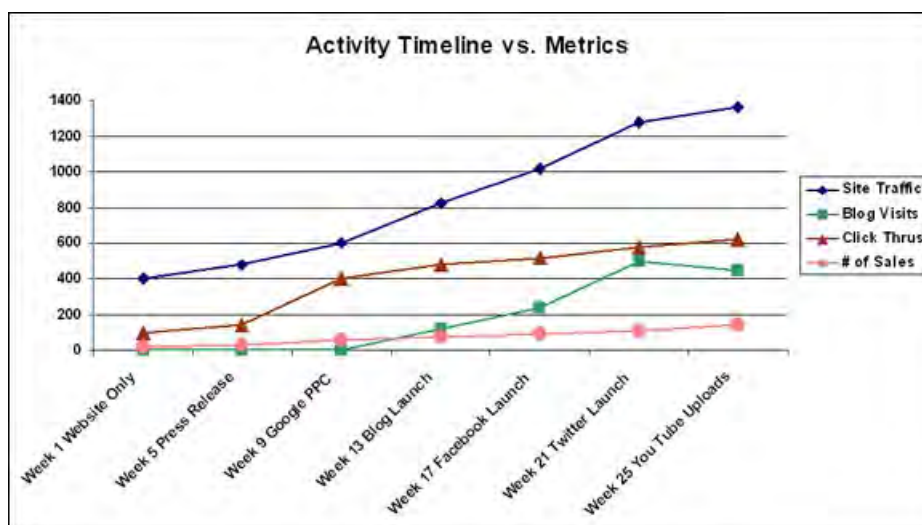
Layering activity timelines with metrics, as shown in [Figure 7-1](#), is a simple, graphical way to spot this type of correlation. Establishing baseline metrics for your hub presence first truly helps in this process. It also helps if you add social media techniques one at a time — preferably with tracking codes.



TIP Don't make *irreversible* decisions based on one event or from an analytical timeframe that's too short for the marketing channel you're trying to implement. There are no rules for a timeframe that is too short or too long. Your overall campaign may be designed to take off like a rocket in less than a week, or it may be set up to take 6 to 12 months to bear fruit. Be patient. Monitor your social media campaigns and rely on your business instincts.

You may find a time delay between the initiation of an effort and its effect on metrics, for these reasons:

- » Viewers may wait to see a history of posts before engaging, let alone clicking through to your main hub.



Watermelon Mountain Web Marketing, watermelonweb.com/Watermelon Mountain Web Marketing

FIGURE 7-1: Correlating an activity timeline with key performance indicators provides useful information.

- » By definition, establishing a relationship with viewers or prospects takes time, just as it does in real life.
- » Our brains haven't changed in spite of the Internet: As every brand marketer knows, most people still need to see something seven times to remember it.
- » Many types of social media display a greater cumulative effect over time as viral marketing takes hold.
- » Your mastery of a new medium usually improves as you climb the learning curve.

With positive results, the answer is simple: Keep doing what you're doing, and even more so. After you identify the elements responsible for your success, repeat them, amplify them, multiply them, and repurpose them.

Neutral or negative results force you to evaluate whether you should drop the activity or invest the effort needed to identify the problem and try to fix it. Ultimately, only you can decide whether you want to continue sinking time and effort into a social marketing method that doesn't produce the results you want.

Make a chart for yourself like the one from Social Media Examiner shown in [Figure 7-2](#). It shows how 2,800 marketers rank their accomplishments from using social media. How do your efforts stack up?



Reproduced with permission of Social Media Examiner

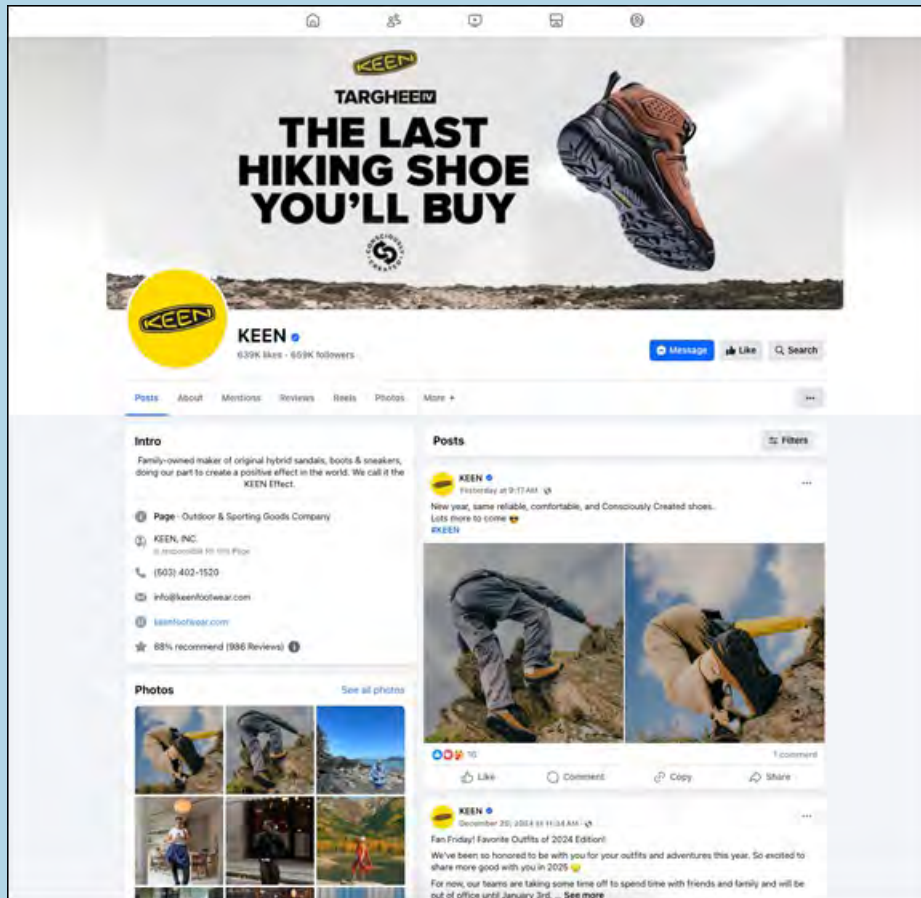
FIGURE 7-2: Compare the benefits you receive from social media with the benefits identified by marketers in other businesses.

TREKKING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Inspired by a love of the outdoors, KEEN, Inc., manufactures hybrid outdoor and casual footwear with an

innovative design that supports the lifestyles and outdoor adventures of active people around the world. Founded in 2003, KEEN is one of the fastest-growing brands in the outdoor industry and has quickly become a well-respected brand, with a loyal following. Through its Hybrid.Care giving program, KEEN has partnered with nonprofit organizations around the world that are working toward building stronger communities and a healthier planet, and stands behind those partners that are actively working to inspire responsible outdoor participation and land and water conservation.

According to Eric King, the former social media manager, the company's social media presence evolved to "meet our fans wherever they are." KEEN started with Facebook in 2008 as part of a sustainability campaign targeting college students, and added other channels incrementally. "Since social marketing is constantly evolving, it can be tricky to know exactly what to plan for, but we tried to do everything possible to stay on top of the latest tools and trends and be nimble enough to take advantage of the right opportunities that came along," King says.

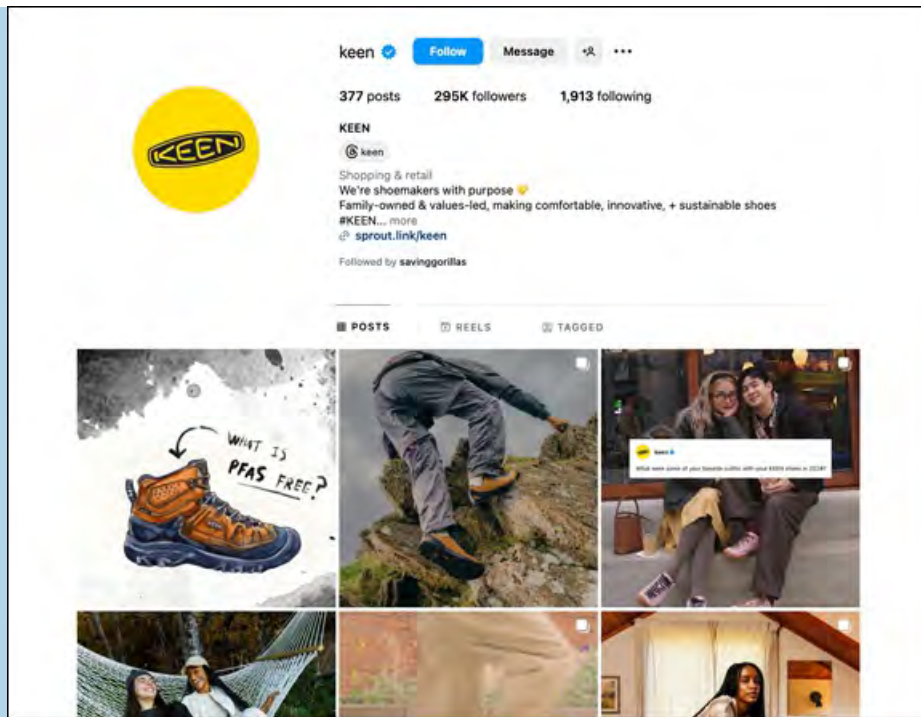


Reproduced with permission from KEEN FOOTWEAR

King's approach was driven by content. "We decided which content we needed first, created that content, and then determined the most appropriate posting dates and times by looking at our analytics. We scheduled most of our content in advance, but also left some slots open for opportunities that came up in real-time."

KEEN aimed for a broad range of content, including product photography, brand storytelling, Ambassador and Hybrid Care partner updates, sneak peeks, and fan photos.

King tailored content for each social media channel separately, considering everything from age demographics to topic affinities. He then researched which themes or content mediums worked best for each channel. "For example," he found, "Instagram and Tumblr are ideal for posting lookbook-style inspirational images, while Facebook and X are better suited for asking our community questions and then responding to their suggestions."



Reproduced with permission from KEEN FOOTWEAR

To keep track of all this social media traffic, KEEN used a sophisticated analytics program called Crimson Hexagon for “social listening.” KEEN managed the analysis in-house, going beyond just the numbers to understand the why. As King explained, “We studied what was being said about KEEN online, how much of the conversation was positive or negative, how it compared to what was being said about our competitors, and then how we could use all this information to inform future strategy.”

King’s advice to other marketers is straightforward: “Know exactly what your goals are and how you plan on tracking them at the start of every year and every campaign. Be consistent with your tracking and set clear KPIs [key performance indicators] that can be tied back to definitive numbers. Finally, make sure that everyone who is involved is on the same page and working toward one common goal.”

KEEN’s goals, which are to increase brand awareness and engagement, have evolved over time as KEEN has “placed more priority in listening to what our fans have to say ... so we can be more intentional with how we’re communicating with them We wanted to make it clear that we’re listening and that we care about what the community has to say.”

KEEN’s web presence follows:

- www.keenfootwear.com
- <http://www.facebook.com/KEEN>
- <http://X.com/keen>
- <http://pinterest.com/keenfootwear>
- <http://instagram.com/keen>
- www.youtube.com/user/keenoutdoor
- www.keenfootwear.com/blog

Diagnosing Problems with Social Media

Campaigns

Put on your business hat when you detect a problem. Some techniques may be worth modifying and trying again, but others should be dropped. Ultimately, the decision is a business one, not a technological one.

Be patient when assessing cost of customer acquisition and ROI, although a few trend lines in your metrics might give you pause:

- » Traffic to a social media service never picks up, or falls and remains low after an initial burst.
- » Traffic to the social media site holds steady, but the click-through rate (CTR) to your master hub or other sites is low.
- » Follow-through on intermediate calls to action is low in performance metrics.
- » Traffic and click-throughs increase, but the leads aren't well qualified.
- » Traffic and engagement, which had been increasing for quite a while, fall and continue to fall; small dips and rises are natural.
- » A conversion rate tracked back to a social media service is unintentionally lower than from other sources, and average sales value is lower. (Good strategic reasons for these results might exist, of course. You might deliberately target the younger student audience on Swarm with less expensive options than those offered to an older, more affluent audience on Facebook.)
- » The cost of customer or lead acquisition is much higher than for other channels, making the ROI unattractive. For example, a high-maintenance blog might generate a few leads but be relatively expensive compared to prescheduled posts that drive more traffic successfully.

Fixing Problems

Underlying problems with low traffic on social media usually can be slotted into a few categories:

- » Problems locating your social media presence
- » Mismatch between channel and audience
- » Poor content
- » No audience engagement
- » Problems with the four Ps of marketing: product, price, placement or position (distribution), and promotion

After these problems are diagnosed, they can be handled in roughly the same way, regardless of the social media venue used.

Before you panic, make sure that you've set reasonable expectations for performance and business metrics. Research the range of responses for similar companies or view your competitors' social media sites to see how many responses, comments, and followers they have. Although you can't foretell their ROI, you can assess their traffic and inbound links. Your results from social media may be just fine!



TIP Use the social-monitoring tools described in Book 2, [Chapter 1](#) to discover how your competitors are doing on social media compared to your business. Many of these tools enable you to check any domain name.

Be careful with interpretation, however; if your competitors began working on their social media campaigns long before you did, they are likely to have very different results.

Remember that the social media audience is fickle. A constant demand exists for changes in content, approach, tools, and tone to keep up.

Your social presence can't be found

Driving traffic to your social media presence is as challenging as driving people to your site. If traffic is still low after about four weeks, ensure that all your social media sites are optimized for external search engines such as Google and internal (on-site) search tools used by different social media services. Turn to Book 2, [Chapter 2](#) for optimization techniques.

The source of the problem may be poorly selected search terms or tags, a headline or description that contains no keywords, or content that hasn't been optimized. Unless your hub presence, whether it's a blog or website, is well optimized itself, your social media presence may suffer, too.



TIP Be sure that posts occur often enough for your social media page to appear in real-time search results.

Inappropriate match between channel and audience

The symptoms for a mismatch usually show up quickly: People take little or no interest in your social media postings, you suffer from low CTR, and your bounce rate is high whenever visitors do click through.

To start with, you may have chosen an inappropriate social media service or the wrong group within a network. For example, young tech males like Reddit, but if you want a social site about weddings and interior decor, try Pinterest instead.

The solution: Return to your Social Media Marketing Plan (see Book 1, [Chapter 3](#)). Review the demographics and behavioral characteristics for the social media service you're using. They may have changed over time; for example, Facebook is still enormously popular with 18- to 29-year-olds, in spite of recent growth in older users, but that may not last. The youngest of social media users are already migrating toward TikTok and Snapchat! Find a

social venue that's a better fit, revise your plan, and try again.



REMEMBER Use sites like Quantcast to check demographics on social media sites if you aren't sure.

Poor content

Content problems are a little harder to diagnose than visibility problems, especially if the problem appears with your first posts. In that case, the problem may also look like a channel mismatch, with content that simply doesn't appeal to your target market or is inappropriate for the channel.

However, if you experience a persistent dip in traffic, comments, or CTR from your blog, Facebook, Pinterest, podcast, YouTube, or any other social media account, you have other difficulties. Perhaps the content isn't timely, or isn't updated frequently enough.

Or perhaps content quality itself has degraded. Content creators are commonly enthusiastic at the beginning of a project but may lose interest after a period of time. Or they may have a backlog of media and ideas that can be repurposed and posted initially; after that's depleted, they may run out of ideas. As a result, later content may not be as valuable to your market, lack appropriate production values, or simply become boring.



REMEMBER Watch for burnout. After the backlog of media is used up, the insistent demands for new content can easily become a burden. Creators often lose interest, or they focus on quantity rather than on quality.

Compare the individual posts that produced an increase in traffic, responses, or CTR to ones that are failing. Tally posts by the names of their creators and what the posts were about. Start by asking previously successful creators to develop new material along the lines of older, successful content. If that doesn't work, watch the most popular tags to see what interests visitors and try to tie new content into those topics, if appropriate.

Finally, try assigning fresh staff members, recruiting guest writers and producers, or hiring professionals for a while. If this change produces better results, you have indicators for a long-term solution.

Lack of audience engagement

If you see traffic to the social media service holding steady but lack follow-throughs from calls to action, or you have an unusually low CTR to your hub site, you may not be engaging your audience. Watch especially for engagement parameters that never take off or that dip persistently.

Review user comments, reposts, and other interactions on each service. You can use the internal performance metrics for X, Facebook, and your blog to assess numerical results of engagement. Then review the chain for interaction between social media visitors and your

staff. Are visitor responses being acknowledged? Is there follow-up? One of the biggest challenges in social media is establishing a relationship with your visitors and maintaining a back-and-forth conversation. A lack of engagement may presage a lack of brand recognition, loss of customer loyalty, and reduced referrals from visitors to their friends or colleagues.

The four Ps of marketing

Perhaps you're getting traffic and click-throughs to your hub site and generating plenty of leads but still not closing or converting to sales. It might be time to go back to the basics.



TIP

Review a web analytics report generated before you started your social media marketing efforts. Make sure your website is well optimized for search, your online store (if you have one) is working well, and your conversion rate is solid. Fix any problems with your website before you try to adjust your social media campaign.

Product, price, placement or position (distribution), and promotion — the four Ps — are considered the basic elements of traditional marketing. These terms apply to social media and other forms of online marketing, as well.

Product

Your *product* is whatever good or service you sell, regardless of whether the transaction takes place online or off. Product also includes such elements as performance, warranties, support, variety, and size. Review your competition to see which features, benefits, or services they offer, and which products they're featuring in social media. If you have an online store, look at your entire product mix and merchandising, not just at individual products. Ask yourself these questions:

- » Are you selling products that the people you're targeting with social media want to buy?
- » Do you have enough products or services to compete successfully in this environment?
- » Are you updating your offerings regularly and promoting new items often?

Price

Price comparison sites such as Shopping.com and discount stores online already put price pressure on small businesses. Now social media shopping sites, with the rapid viral spread of news about special offers and price breaks, have put cost-conscious shoppers firmly in the driver's seat.

No longer can you check only competitors' websites and comparison-shopping sites for prices. Now you must check to see what they offer visitors to their Facebook, X, or LinkedIn Pages; their blog readers; those who receive their e-newsletter; and social-shopping page customers to gain new customers and hold onto them as loyal, repeat buyers. Any single product or service may now have multiple prices, depending on who's buying.



TIP

Use social shopping and other sites to assess your prices against your online competition. Are yours significantly higher or lower, or are they price competitive?

Your small business can have difficulty competing in the market for standard manufactured goods such as baby clothes or cellphones unless you have excellent wholesale deals from manufacturers or distributors. But you can compete on price on customized goods or services or by offering unique benefits for buying from your company.

If you must charge higher prices than your social media competitors, review your value proposition so that people perceive an extra benefit. It might be a \$5 promotional code for a discount on another purchase, a no-questions-asked return policy, exclusivity, or very accessible tech support.



WARNING

Be careful not to trap yourself into matching prices against large companies with deep pockets. Make tactical financial decisions about loss leaders and discounts for users of particular social media. Consider a less-than-full-featured product or service package for social media users if needed (sometimes called the *freemium* business model).

Placement or position

Placement or position refers to how products and services are delivered to consumers (distribution channels). Where and how are your products and services available? Your website needs to serve as a 24/7 hub for customer research, support, and sales online, but social media offers new opportunities to serve your clients. For example, T-Mobile has a dedicated customer service account on X (@TMobileHelp), where they field questions from customers.



TIP

With multiple social marketing outlets, you must be alert for the effects of *channel cannibalization* (the use of multiple distribution channels that pull sales from each other). Products or services sold directly from social media outlets may depress the sales numbers on your website.

Promotion

Your online and social media marketing plans fall into the *promotion* category, which includes all the different ways you communicate with customers and prospects, both online and offline. This also includes making people aware of your multiple points of visibility online, almost as though you're marketing another product. Careful cross-promotion among all your online venues is now as critical as integrating online and offline advertising. Are people aware of all your social media pages? Are you using the right calls to action on those pages to get people to buy?



TIP

Don't continue investing in a social media technique just because everyone else is doing it.

Adjusting to Reality

Many times, expectations determine whether a marketing technique is seen as a success, a waste of time, or something in between. It isn't possible for a particular social media service to produce extraordinary changes in traffic or conversions. In most cases, though, your victories will be hard-won, while you cobble together traffic from multiple social media sources to build enough of a critical mass to gain measurable sales.

Achieving that goal usually involves many people, each of whom may become a committed champion of the method they have been using. When you decide to pull the plug on one of your social media techniques — or just decide to leave it in a static state — try to still keep your employees engaged.

Unless social media participants have proved themselves to be nonperformers, try to shift them into another channel so that they can retain a direct relationship with customers.

Avoid the temptation to recentralize your social media marketing in one place, whether it's PR, marketing communications, management, or customer support. Instead, try to maintain the involvement of someone from each of those functional areas, as well as subject area experts from such diverse departments as manufacturing, sales, and research and development (R&D).



REMEMBER

Marketing is only part of a company, but all of a company is marketing.

As wild a ride as social media may seem, it's more of a marathon than a sprint. Given that it may take months to see the return on your marketing efforts, you may need to nourish your social media sites for quite a while.

Feeding the hungry maw of the content monster week in and week out isn't easy. You need to not only keep your staff engaged and positive, but also keep your content fresh. Take advantage of brainstorming techniques that involve your entire team to generate some new ideas each month. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- » Create unique, themed campaigns that last one to three months. Find an interesting hook to recruit guest posts or writers, perhaps letting a few people try your product or service and write about it.
- » Distribute short-term deals using some of the social media channels described in [Book 8](#), such as providing location-based coupons on cellphones or distributing offers to Meetup attendees.

- » Write a Wikipedia entry about your product or business from a consumer's point of view.
- » Make friends on Facebook by incorporating an interactive application, such as a poll or sweepstakes entry.
- » Reach one or more of your discrete niche markets by using some of the smaller alternative social media services listed in Book 8, [Chapter 3](#), or in Book 2, [Chapter 3](#).
- » If you aren't gaining traction with groups on LinkedIn or Facebook, post on someone else's old-fashioned forum, message board, or chat room on a relevant topic.
- » Tell a story about your product or service in pictures or video and upload it to Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Pinterest, YouTube, or another image service.



REMEMBER Every marketing problem has an infinite number of solutions. You have to find only one of them!

Index

Symbols

- # symbol. *See also* [hashtag jacking](#)
- @ symbol versus, [284](#)
- best practices, [340](#)
- discussion, [127](#)
- on Facebook, [340](#)–341
- in Instagram, [484](#)–485
- as measurement tool, [634](#)
- for social media optimization, [150](#), [150](#)–151
- in TikTok, [505](#)
- @ symbol
- # symbol versus, [284](#)
- on Pinterest, [449](#)
- on Twitter, [278](#)–279
- on X, [280](#), [633](#)
- @username, [633](#)

A

- A/B testing, [655](#)
- Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP), [155](#)
- accomplishments, [385](#), [392](#)
- account creation
 - Instagram, [477](#)–480
 - Pinterest, [442](#)–443
 - Snapchat, [457](#)–459
 - TikTok, [496](#)–498
- Accounting for Management, [31](#), [37](#)
- activity days, selecting, [72](#)–73
- ad auctions
 - ad quality and, [576](#)

- bids, [576](#)
- discussion, [576](#)
- estimated action rates, [576](#)
- goal-based bidding, [578](#)
- manual bidding, [578](#)
- spend-based bidding, [577](#)–578
- Ad Center, [356](#)–357
- add-ons, [547](#)
- AddtoAny, [189](#), [190](#)
- Adobe Analytics, [608](#)
- advertising
 - auctions, [576](#)–578
 - CPE, [554](#)
 - CPV, [554](#)
 - discussion, [573](#)
 - on Facebook
 - boost a post, [354](#)
 - changes to algorithms, [352](#)
 - considerations, [353](#)
 - extended fan reach, [352](#)
 - get more leads, [354](#)
 - get more messages, [354](#)
 - get more page likes, [354](#)
 - get more visits, [354](#)
 - get more website visitors, [354](#)
 - goals, [353](#)–355
 - measuring ROI, [359](#)–360
 - overview, [351](#)
 - targeting fans, [358](#)–359
- FTC regulations, [87](#)
- paid
 - analyzing performance of, [575](#)–576
 - Facebook, [574](#), [575](#)–581
 - influencers and, [596](#)–597

- Instagram, [574](#), [575](#)–581
- LinkedIn, [574](#), [585](#)–587
- overview, [573](#)
- Pinterest, [574](#), [587](#)–589
- Reddit, [574](#)
- Snapchat, [574](#), [592](#)–594
- social media sites, [574](#)–575
- TikTok, [575](#), [594](#)–596
- X, [575](#), [582](#)–585
- YouTube, [575](#), [589](#)–592
- on Pinterest, [441](#)
- reservation, [576](#)
- resources, [661](#)
- social media, [18](#)–19
- on Spotify, [551](#)–552
- on Tumblr, [554](#)
- word-of-mouth, [7](#), [543](#), [547](#), [664](#)–665

advice, [427](#)

affiliate pages, [409](#)

affinity, [523](#)

affinity groups, [56](#)

AFS Analytics, [607](#)

age, [496](#)

aggressive customers, [548](#)

AI (artificial intelligence) content

- dos and don'ts of using, [249](#)–250
- overview, [249](#)
- search engine rankings, [251](#)
- SEO implication of, [147](#)–148
- tools, [251](#)–252

AIO SEO Pack plug-in, [154](#)

Albuquerque Economic Development, [10](#)

algorithms

- Facebook's changes to, [352](#)
- Google modification of search, [132](#)
- keeping updated on changes to, [132](#)
- All Rights Reserved license, [218](#)–219
- Alltop, [179](#)
- <alt> tags
 - blogging and, [152](#)
 - and images, [130](#)–131, [136](#)
 - for multimedia, [157](#)
 - for social media optimization, [151](#)
- Amazon Music, [550](#)
- American Bar Association, [88](#)
- AMP (Accelerated Mobile Pages), [155](#)
- amusing content, [339](#)
- Analytico, [77](#)
- analytics
 - for audio/visual, [616](#)
 - combining, [663](#)–664
 - content-sharing
 - for blogs, [617](#)
 - comment tracking, [618](#)–619
 - measuring effectiveness, [615](#)–618
 - Pinterest, [623](#)–626
 - podcasts, [622](#)–623
 - videos, [619](#)–622
 - decision-making based on
 - adjusting, [679](#)–680
 - characteristics to watch, [668](#)–670
 - diagnosing problems, [673](#)–674
 - fixing problems, [674](#)–677
 - four Ps of marketing, [674](#)–677
 - overview, [667](#)–668
 - discussion, [601](#)–602, [653](#)
 - establishing KPIs in

A/B testing, [655](#)

challenges, [654](#)

overview, [653](#)

Facebook Insights

accessing, [638](#)

Audience detail page, [641](#)

Benchmarking detail page, [642](#)

Content Calendar page, [643](#)

Content Overview detail page, [642](#)–643

dashboard, [640](#)

exporting, [638](#)–639

Messaging detail page, [642](#)

Plan tabs, [640](#)

Results tabs, [640](#)–641

Video Earnings tabs, [644](#)

hard and soft costs versus income, [626](#)–627

for image sharing, [616](#)

integrating social media with, [658](#)–659

LinkedIn Analytics Tab

Competitors tab, [649](#)–651

Content section, [646](#)–647

discussion, [645](#)–646

Followers section, [649](#)

Leads tab, [649](#)

Visitors section, [647](#)–648

for paid advertising

application, [663](#)

CPM, [660](#)–661

overview, [660](#)

reach, [661](#)–662

planning measurement strategy for

deciding what to measure, [604](#)–605

monitoring versus measuring, [603](#)

- overview, [602](#)–603
 - responsibility, [605](#)–606
- software
 - free packages, [607](#)
 - Google Analytics, [610](#)–613
 - overview, [607](#)–608
 - paid packages, [608](#)–609
 - social media-specific options, [609](#)–610
- X-specific
 - account activity, [632](#)–633
 - hashtags, [634](#)
 - overview, [629](#)
 - third-party applications, [632](#)
 - X Analytics, [629](#)–630
 - X Pro, [631](#)
- Analytics Demystified Blog, [655](#)
- analytics programs, [256](#)–257
- anchor text
 - discussion, [135](#)
 - for multimedia, [157](#)
- Angel Investment Network, [527](#)
- animations, [468](#)
- announcement
 - on LinkedIn, [430](#)
 - on Snapchat, [467](#)
- appeal to emotion, [446](#)
- Apple, [497](#)
- Apple Music, [550](#)–551
- Apple Podcasts, [623](#)
- applets, [113](#)
- apps, [12](#)
- Archibeque Law Firm, [133](#), [134](#)
- Array Technologies, [10](#), [13](#)
- art projects, [377](#), [528](#)

- articles, [408](#), [427](#)–428
- artificial intelligence (AI) content
 - dos and don'ts of using, [249](#)–250
 - overview, [249](#)
 - search engine rankings, [251](#)
 - SEO implication of, [147](#)–148
 - tools, [251](#)–252
- ASMALLWORLD, [532](#)
- Association for National Advertisers, [661](#)
- assumptions, in this book, [2](#)–3
- Athlinks, [530](#)
- Attentio, [91](#), [115](#)
- attention-catching content, [510](#)
- audio/visual content. *See also* [podcasts](#); [videos](#)
 - business advertising and, [507](#)
 - considerations in creating, [508](#)–509
 - content types
 - attention-catching, [510](#)
 - company related, [510](#)
 - competitive, [510](#)–511
 - fun, [511](#)
 - informative, [510](#)
 - overview, [509](#)
 - creating, [511](#)–513
 - discussion, [507](#)
 - equipment for, [508](#)–509
 - location and, [509](#)
 - platforms for, [513](#)–514
 - publishing, [513](#)–514
 - time and, [508](#)
- authors, [563](#)
- auto direct messages (DMs), [268](#), [278](#)
- auto-follow program, [266](#)

automobile website listing, [528](#)

avatar

Instagram, [479–480](#)

Snapchat, [460](#)

TikTok, [499](#)

X, [292](#), [295](#)

average variable costs, [39](#)

awards, [430](#)

AWStats, [607](#)

B

B2B (business-to-business) markets

audio/visual content and, [507](#)

discussion, [30](#)

networking, [526–527](#)

online couponing and, [542](#)

researching, [58–59](#)

SEO and, [118](#)

B2C (business-to-customer) markets

audio/visual content and, [507](#)

discussion, [30](#)

segmenting

affinity groups, [56–57](#)

behavioral segmentation, [56](#)

demographic segmentation, [52](#), [530–533](#)

geographic segmentation, [52–54](#), [530–533](#)

life stage analysis, [54–56](#)

overview, [50–52](#)

psychographic segmentation, [56](#)

social shopping and, [540–543](#)

Backlinko, [96](#)

backlinks, [228](#)

backloaded payments, [542](#)

- Badoo, [531](#)
- banner blindness, [574](#)
- Basecamp, [73](#)
- behavioral segmentation, [56](#)
- behind-the-scenes
 - blogs, [211](#)
 - Facebook Live for, [377](#)
 - on Instagram, [482](#)
 - Snapchat for, [467](#)
- BeRecruited, [530](#)
- bid cap, [578](#)
- Big Cartel, [108](#)
- BigCommerce, [36](#), [108](#)
- BigLaw, [529](#)
- Bigstock, [221](#)
- Bing Places for Business Portal, [144](#)
- Bing Webmaster Tools, [140](#)
- Birdeye, [91](#)
- Bitly, [100](#), [101](#), [146](#)
- Bitmoji, [1](#), [463](#)
- Black, Rachel, [68](#)–69
- Black Business Women Online, [531](#)
- black hat techniques, [136](#)
- BlackPlanet.com, [531](#)
- blog post, [213](#)
- blog rolls, [152](#), [153](#)
- Blogger, [9](#), [612](#), [617](#)
- Blogging Wizard, [344](#)
- blogs
 - analytics, [617](#)
 - bookmarks for, [184](#)
 - building, [208](#)
 - content marketing via
 - benefits, [209](#)

- considerations, [211](#)
- overview, [199](#)–200, [208](#)
- podcasts, [214](#)–217
- setup, [211](#)–214
- tips for success, [213](#)–214
- videos, [214](#)–217
- content-posting sites, [9](#)
- controversial content, [248](#)
- domain names and, [151](#)
- for establishing expertise, [238](#)
- Facebook and, [160](#)
- Facebook content creation and, [338](#)
- Facebook invites on, [328](#)–329
- Facebook Live on, [368](#)
- Follow Us button on, [188](#)
- guest
 - for driving traffic, [235](#)
 - establishing expertise with, [238](#)
 - finding relevant blogs, [229](#)
 - overview, [227](#)–229
 - pitching to another blogger, [230](#)
 - post promotion, [230](#)–231
- on LinkedIn, [408](#), [424](#)–427
- microblogging, [262](#)
- monitoring tools, [115](#)
- optimizing
 - multimedia, [157](#)–158
 - overview, [151](#)–153
 - permalink assignment, [153](#), [155](#)–156
 - Squarespace, [154](#)–155
 - Wix, [155](#)–156
 - WordPress, [153](#)–154
- Pinterest and, [163](#)

- press releases and, [563](#)
- publishing press releases on, [566](#)
- Snapchat and, [468](#)
- social media integration with, [658](#)
- submission sites, [153](#)
- tools, [9](#)
- BlogSearchEngine, [115](#)
- BlogTalkRadio, [9](#)
- Bloomberg Law, [83](#)
- Bluehost, [155](#), [212](#)
- boards
 - creating, [443](#)–444
 - discussion, [438](#)–439
- body text, [135](#)
- book readings, [376](#)
- bookmark swapping, [187](#)
- books
 - establishing expertise with, [238](#)
 - website listings for, [528](#)
- bots, [120](#)
- bounce rate, [257](#), [611](#), [659](#), [663](#)
- Brand 24, [111](#)
- brand advocates, [304](#)
- The Brand Grader, [90](#)
- brand loyalty, [239](#), [312](#)
- brand recognition, [234](#), [563](#)
- brand sentiment
 - discussion, [89](#)–90
 - resources, [91](#)
- brand visibility
 - analytics programs for measuring, [258](#)
 - content marketing and, [198](#)
 - discussion, [15](#), [19](#)
 - domain names and, [147](#)

- on Facebook, [312](#)–313
 - advertising, [351](#)–360
 - content strategy, [335](#)–337
 - overview, [328](#)–329
- on Instagram, [476](#), [481](#)–484
- on smaller sites, [526](#)
- on Snapchat, [467](#)–468
- social bookmarking/news campaign and, [176](#)
- via Facebook, [314](#)
- via LinkedIn, [403](#)–404, [408](#)
- via X, [263](#)
- brandjacking, [89](#)
- Brandwatch, [519](#)
- breadcrumb trail, [139](#)–140, [152](#)
- break-even point, [39](#)
- Brevo, [559](#)
- brick-and-mortar storefront, [30](#)
- bricks-and-clicks sales method, [30](#), [35](#)
- broadcast channels, [489](#)–490
- Brooklyn Kitchen, [145](#)
- BuddyBoss, [190](#)
- budget, [225](#)
 - in content marketing, [199](#)–200
- Buffer, [98](#), [168](#)
- business measurements, [603](#)
- business metrics. *See also* [analytics](#); [KPIs \(key performance indicators\)](#); [ROI \(return on investment\)](#)
 - combining, [663](#)–664
 - comparing across social media, [656](#)–657
 - decision-making based on
 - adjusting, [679](#)–680
 - characteristics to watch, [668](#)–670
 - diagnosing problems, [673](#)–674
 - fixing problems, [674](#)–677

- four Ps of marketing, [674](#)–677
- overview, [667](#)–668
- discussion, [653](#)
- establishing KPIs in
 - A/B testing, [655](#)
 - challenges, [654](#)
 - overview, [653](#)
- integrating social media with, [658](#)–659
- for paid advertising
 - application, [663](#)
 - CPM, [660](#)–661
 - overview, [660](#)
 - reach, [661](#)–662
- performance analysis and
 - blogs, [617](#)
 - comment tracking, [618](#)–619
 - measuring effectiveness, [615](#)–618
 - Pinterest, [623](#)–626
 - podcasts, [622](#)–623
 - videos, [619](#)–622
- resources for
 - analytics programs, [256](#)–257
 - Facebook Insights, [348](#)–350
 - online sites, [30](#)–31
- ROI
 - break-even point, [39](#)
 - CAC, [31](#)–34
 - CRM, [37](#)
 - determining, [40](#)–43
 - overview, [29](#)
 - profit margin, [40](#)
 - sales KPIs, [34](#)–37
 - valuing, [27](#)

- software
 - free packages, [607](#)
 - Google Analytics, [610](#)–613
 - overview, [607](#)–608
 - paid packages, [608](#)–609
 - social media-specific options, [609](#)–610
- strategy
 - deciding what to measure, [604](#)–605
 - monitoring versus measuring, [603](#)
 - overview, [602](#)–603
 - responsibility, [605](#)–606
- uses for, [261](#)–263
- business networks, [526](#)–527
- Business Wire, [565](#), [566](#)
- business-to-business markets. *See* [B2B \(business-to-business\) markets](#)
- business-to-customer markets. *See* [B2C \(business-to-customer\) markets](#)
- BuzzFeed, [179](#)
- Buzzsprout, [513](#)
- BuzzStream, [565](#)
- ByteDance, [495](#)

C

- CAC. *See* [customer acquisition cost \(CAC\)](#)
- CafeMom, [532](#)
- calendar. *See also* [editorial calendar](#)
 - event postings to website, [20](#)
 - putting Facebook events on, [330](#)–332
 - social media marketing, [73](#)–74
 - software, [73](#)–74
- call to action (CTA)
 - bookmarking and, [187](#)
 - content marketing strategy and, [236](#), [237](#), [243](#)
 - on Facebook, [316](#), [370](#)

- to gain newsletter subscribers, [561](#)
- on LinkedIn, [391](#)
- on Snapchat, [167](#)
- Snapchat for, [467](#)
- on Spotify, [551](#)–552
- on X, [582](#)
- on YouTube, [166](#)
- Campaign Monitor, [560](#)
- campaigns
 - brand protection, [89](#)–91
 - legal considerations, [84](#)–88
 - marketing policy, [82](#)–84
 - marketing team
 - content marketer, [80](#)–81
 - hiring experts, [81](#)–82
 - inside inputs, [81](#)
 - overview, [78](#)–79
 - social media director, [79](#)–80
 - overview, [71](#)–72
 - problems with
 - diagnosing, [673](#)–674
 - fixing, [674](#)–677
 - scheduling
 - calendars, [73](#)–74
 - dashboard, [74](#)–78
 - overview, [71](#)
 - time management, [72](#)–73
 - social bookmarking/news, [177](#)–179
 - social news, [177](#)–179
- CAN-SPAM Act, [240](#)
- Canva, [222](#)
- Captivate, [513](#)
- Care2, [528](#)
- CareerCircle, [527](#)

- CarGurus, [528](#)
- carousel ads, [582](#)
- case studies, [238](#)
- category pages, [124](#)
- challenges, [505](#)
- ChangingThePresent, [529](#)
- charitable events, [368](#)
- charity auctions, [377](#)
- Charle, [174](#)
- Chartbeat, [607](#), [608](#)
- chat rooms, [664](#)
- ChatGPT, [250](#), [252](#)
- chats
 - Snapchat, [461](#)
 - X chats, [263](#)
- cheat sheet, [4](#)
- check stand providers, [103](#)
- CheckMoz, [169](#)
- chiclets, [188](#)
- Chief Financial Networks, [527](#)
- Ciampa, Matt (author), [514](#)
- Ciampa, Rob (author), [514](#)
- Cision PRWeb, [566](#)
- CitySearch, [531](#)
- Classmates, [531](#)
- Claude, [252](#)
- Clay, Bruce, [119](#)
- clickbait, [204](#), [444](#)
- ClickPress, [565](#)
- click-through rate (CTR)
 - comparing sources of, [656](#)
 - discussion, [558](#), [663](#)
 - for email, [560](#)

- for paid advertising, [575](#)
- Clicky, [607](#), [608](#)
- CMS (content management system), [127](#), [138](#)
- coaches, [368](#)
- Coca-Cola, [314](#)
- collaborative articles, [433](#)–434
- Collection Ads, [583](#)
- collector website listing, [529](#)
- college website listing, [531](#)
- comments
 - blogging and, [209](#), [213](#)
 - on Facebook content, [337](#)–338
 - on LinkedIn, [427](#)
 - on Pinterest, [439](#), [451](#)–452
 - tracking, [618](#)–619
 - on X, [266](#)
- CommentSold, [109](#)
- Commerce Manager, [363](#)–364
- community building
 - blogging and, [209](#)–211
 - on Facebook
 - brand visibility, [328](#)–329
 - creating events, [330](#)–332
 - interaction best practices, [376](#)
 - like invites, [327](#)–328
 - liking other brands, [329](#)–330
 - overview, [327](#)
 - on Pinterest
 - commenting on pins, [451](#)–452
 - etiquette tips, [452](#)–453
 - following folks you don't know, [451](#)
 - following friends, [450](#)–451
 - overview, [439](#)
 - on Snapchat, [464](#)

- via X, [262](#), [304](#)
- community engagement
 - assessment of, [89](#)
 - defined, [16](#)
 - Facebook Live for generating, [369](#)–371, [375](#)
 - on LinkedIn, [402](#), [409](#)
 - on Snapchat, [469](#)–470
 - via Facebook Live, [369](#)–371, [375](#)
- community forums, [571](#)–572, [658](#)
- community-building services, [11](#)
- community-building sites, [11](#)
- company related content, [510](#)
- company-related content, [408](#), [430](#)
- competitive content, [510](#)–511
- competitors, [304](#)
- complaints, [304](#)
- composition, [524](#)
- comScore, [118](#), [551](#)
- Connect Daily calendar, [74](#)
- connections, [382](#)–383. *See also* [community building](#)
- Constant Contact, [559](#)
- Consumer Reports, [184](#)
- content
 - addressing known issues through, [201](#)
 - multimedia, [157](#)
 - poor, [675](#)–676
 - repurposing, [198](#)–199
 - and team creativity, [199](#)
- content creation
 - on Facebook, [226](#), [337](#)–338
 - on Instagram, [226](#)
 - on LinkedIn
 - articles, [427](#)–428

- blogging, [408](#), [424](#)–427
- collaborative articles, [433](#)–434
- deciding what to post, [429](#)–433
- ideas, [226](#)
- multimedia, [427](#), [428](#)
- overview, [423](#)
- posts, [424](#)–426
- professionalism in, [426](#)–427
- sharing content, [427](#)–428
- tips, [426](#)–427
- on Pinterest, [226](#)
- on Snapchat, [226](#)
 - brand story, [467](#)–468
 - community engagement, [469](#)–470
 - filters, [471](#)
 - lenses, [470](#)
 - monitoring, [468](#)–469
 - overview, [465](#)–466
 - Snap Map, [472](#)–473
 - Snapchat+ premium subscription service, [471](#)–472
- on TikTok, [226](#)
- on X, [226](#)
- content management system (CMS), [127](#), [138](#)
- content marketer, [80](#)–81
- content marketing. *See also* [social media marketing](#)
 - analytics
 - for blogs, [617](#)
 - comment tracking, [618](#)–619
 - measuring effectiveness, [615](#)–618
 - Pinterest, [623](#)–626
 - podcasts, [622](#)–623
 - videos, [619](#)–622
 - audio/visual content and
 - attention-catching content, [510](#)

- best practices, [511](#)–513
- business advertising and, [507](#)
- company related content, [510](#)
- competitive content, [510](#)–511
- considerations in creating, [508](#)–509
- creating, [511](#)–513
- discussion, [507](#)
- equipment for, [508](#)–509
- fun content, [511](#)
- informative content, [510](#)
- location and, [509](#)
- overview content, [509](#)
- platforms for, [513](#)–514
- publishing, [513](#)–514
- time and, [508](#)

benefits of, [198](#)–199

blogs for

- benefits, [209](#)
- considerations, [211](#)
- overview, [199](#)–200, [208](#)
- podcasts, [214](#)–217
- setup, [211](#)–214
- tips for success, [213](#)–214

defined, [196](#)

evergreen content in, [198](#)

on Facebook

- brand visibility, [334](#)–335
- community building, [341](#)–346
- content creation, [337](#)–338
- content creation ideas, [226](#)
- content sharing, [338](#)–340
- contests, [344](#)
- discounts, [345](#)–346

- editorial calendar, [337](#)
- goals, [334](#)–335
- groups, [346](#)–348
- hashtags, [340](#)–341
- Insights section, [348](#)–350
- livestreaming, [369](#)–371, [508](#)
- overview, 206, [333](#)
- polls, [343](#)
- quizzes, [343](#)–344
- selling, [341](#)–342
- sharing content, [254](#), [255](#)
- strategy, [334](#)–335

image sharing and

- finding images online, [220](#)–222
- legalities, [218](#)–220
- overview, [217](#)–218
- photo-sharing sites, [221](#), [222](#)–223

on Instagram

- account creation, [477](#)–480
- brand visibility, [476](#)
- brand visibility on, [476](#), [481](#)–484
- broadcast channels, [489](#)–490
- business account, [477](#)–480
- Checkout on Instagram, [492](#)
- content creation ideas, [226](#)
- Creator Marketplace, [491](#)
- hashtags in, [150](#), [484](#)–485
- Instagram Shop, [492](#)
- Live, [486](#)–487, [508](#)
- notifications, [477](#), [487](#)
- overview, 206
- partnering with influencers, [491](#)
- photo-sharing, [480](#)–481
- Produce Collections, [492](#)

- Product Tags, [492](#)
- Reels, [488](#)–489
- revenue streams on, [490](#)–493
- selling on, [104](#), [491](#)–492
- Shopping from Creators, [492](#)
- Snap Map, [472](#)–473
- stories in, [485](#)–486
- subscriptions, [490](#)–491
- Threads, [487](#)–488

on LinkedIn

- content creation ideas, [226](#)
- overview, 206
- sharing content, [254](#), [255](#)

on mid-sized social media

- considerations in, [550](#)
- overview, [549](#)
- Spotify, [550](#)–552
- streaming content, [550](#)–552
- Tumblr, [552](#)–554
- Vimeo, [555](#)–556

on minor social media sites

- brand visibility, [526](#)
- goals, [518](#)–519
- involvement of target audience, [522](#)–524
- overview, [517](#)–518
- researching, [519](#)–521
- strategic use, [524](#)

offline marketing versus, [664](#)–665

overview, [195](#)–196

on Pinterest

- boards, [438](#), [439](#), [443](#)–444
- Branded Content program, [443](#)
- Business Hub, [441](#)–442

- community building on, [450](#)–453
- content creation ideas, [226](#)
- conversion tracking tool, [37](#)
- discussion, [437](#)–438
- marketing tools, [453](#)–455
- practices to avoid, [444](#)–446
- Rich Pins, [163](#)
- searching brands on, [440](#)–441
- selling, [104](#)
- SEO, [164](#)
- sharing, [254](#), [449](#)–450

platforms for

- blogs, [207](#)–214
- choosing right platforms, [224](#)–225
- factors in choosing, [199](#)–200
- guest blogging, [227](#)–231
- images, [207](#), [217](#)–223
- overview, [207](#)
- podcasts, [214](#)–217

problems

- adjusting, [679](#)–680
- characteristics to watch, [668](#)–670
- diagnosing, [673](#)–674
- fixing, [674](#)–677
- four Ps of marketing, [674](#)–677
- overview, [667](#)–668

purpose of, [196](#)–197

selling brand via, [200](#)–201

on Snapchat

- brand story, [467](#)–468
- community engagement, [469](#)–470
- content creation ideas, [226](#)
- filters, [471](#)
- followers, [463](#), [467](#)

- lenses, [470](#)

- monitoring, [468](#)–469

- overview, 206,[465](#)–466

- Snapchat+ premium subscription service, [471](#)–472

- social media and

- benefits, [224](#)

- choosing right platform, [224](#)–225

- creating and sharing content, [226](#)–227

- overview, [223](#)–224

- X, [263](#)

- on TikTok

- account creation, [496](#)–498

- brand visibility on, [496](#)

- Catalog Listing Ads, [506](#)

- content creation ideas, [226](#), [504](#)–505

- hashtags, [505](#)

- influencers and, [496](#)

- LIVE Shopping Ads, [506](#)

- overview, 206,[505](#)

- profile setup, [498](#)–499

- screens in, [499](#)–500

- selling on, [505](#)–506

- sharing videos on, [503](#)–504

- TikTok Shopping Ads, [506](#)

- Video Shopping Ads, [506](#)

- tips for, [202](#)–204

- on X

- content creation ideas, [226](#)

- overview, 206

- sharing content, [254](#)

- Content Marketing Institute, [58](#), [83](#), [205](#)

- content marketing strategy

- artificial intelligence (AI)-generated content in

- dos and don'ts of using, [249](#)–250
 - overview, [249](#)
 - search engine rankings, [251](#)
 - tools, [251](#)–252
- content marketing strategy and, [237](#)–238
- content-sharing in, [253](#)–256
- developing
 - determining goals, [234](#)
 - driving traffic, [235](#)–237
 - establishing expertise, [238](#)
 - lead generation, [239](#)–240
 - online community, [239](#)
 - sales conversions, [237](#)–238
- editorial calendar
 - benefits, [246](#)–247
 - creating, [246](#)–248
 - items to include, [247](#)–248
 - overview, [241](#), [245](#)–246
- evergreen content in, [248](#)–249
- executing, [253](#)
- measuring success of, [256](#)–258
- outlining
 - elements, [240](#)–241
 - inventory, [241](#)–242
 - sample, [242](#)–244
 - on spreadsheet, [242](#)
- timely content in, [248](#)–249
- X in, [287](#)–289

content swaps, [254](#)

content-distribution tools, [97](#)–98

contests, [344](#), [468](#), [570](#)–571

controversial content

- comment tracking and, [619](#)
- content marketing and, [248](#)–249

- on Facebook, [338](#)
 - on Pinterest, [446](#)
- conversational marketing. *See also* [social listening](#)
 - communication tips, [264](#)–265
 - defined, [262](#)
 - do's and don'ts, [265](#)–271
 - quality over quantity, [272](#)–273
 - researching other brands, [271](#)–272
- conversion funnel, [15](#)
- conversion rate, [558](#), [659](#)
- Copy.ai, [252](#)
- copyright infringement, [85](#)–86, [163](#)
- copywriting, [426](#)–427
- cost of goods, [39](#)
- cost per action (CPA), [660](#)–661
- cost per click (CPC), [575](#), [660](#)–661
- cost per engagement (CPE), [554](#)
- cost per result goal, [578](#)
- cost per thousand (CPM), [14](#), [575](#), [660](#)–661
- cost per view (CPV), [554](#)
- coupons
 - affiliate options, [547](#)
 - B2B markets and, [542](#)
 - bookkeeping nightmares, [545](#)
 - campaigns, overview, [543](#)–548
 - depth of discounts, [543](#)–544
 - e-newsletters and, [560](#)
 - integrated marketing and, [569](#)–570
 - KPIs, [663](#)
 - late customers and, [554](#)–555
 - links to deals, [546](#)–547
 - measuring success of, [545](#)–546
 - mobiles apps for, [547](#)

- opinion sharing, [546](#)
- payment, [545](#)
- photo-sharing, [546](#)
- preparation, [545](#)
- price-gouging customers and, [545](#)
- scope of deal, [544](#)
- in Snapchat, [468](#)
- special package deals, [545](#)
- upsides and downsides of, [547](#)–548

cover photo, [315](#), [319](#)–320, [405](#)

CPA (cost per action), [660](#)–661

CPC (cost per click), [575](#), [660](#)–661

CPE (cost per engagement), [554](#)

CPM (cost per thousand), [14](#), [575](#), [660](#)–661

CPV (cost per view), [554](#)

crawlers, [120](#)

Creative Commons license, [85](#), [163](#), [219](#), [221](#)

Creator Marketplace, [491](#)

CRM (customer relationship management), [38](#)

cross-postings, [98](#)

cross-promotional marketing, [562](#)

CTA. *See* [call to action \(CTA\)](#)

CTR. *See* [click-through rate \(CTR\)](#)

custom button clicks, [647](#)

customer acquisition cost (CAC)

- comparing, [31](#)–32
- customer definition in, [31](#)–32
- defined, [31](#)
- formula, [32](#)
- and lifetime customer value, [33](#)
- vs. customer retention costs, [34](#)

customer communities, [571](#)–572

customer relationship management (CRM), [38](#)

customer relationship manager (CRM), [514](#)

customer service, [304](#), [548](#)
customer support, via X, [262](#)
customers
 feedback, [16](#)
 finding via X, [262](#)
 focusing on needs of, [237](#)
 loyalty, [234](#)
 social media platforms and, [225](#)
 updating, [560](#)
Cuteness, [529](#)
cybersocial campaigns. *See* [campaigns](#)

D

DailyMotion, [184](#), [533](#)
dances, [132](#)
dashboard, [74–78](#), [213](#)
DashThis, [77](#)
data charts, [163](#)
Databox, [77](#)
DateEQ, [91](#), [115](#)
deal bucks, [547](#)
demographic information, [304](#)
demographic segmentation, [52](#), [530–533](#)
demographics
 and content marketing, [200](#)
 discussion, [525](#)
 LinkedIn, [427](#)
 social networking by, [530–532](#)
 TikTok, [496](#)
Design Float, [528](#)
design website listing, [528](#)
DeviantArt, [528](#)
dialog, [522–523](#)

Diamond, Stephanie (author), [21](#), [538](#)–539
Digg, [10](#), [174](#), [175](#)
Digital Branding Institute, [31](#)
Digital Marketing All-In-One For Dummies (Diamond), [21](#)
direct messages (DMs), [268](#), [278](#), [285](#), [306](#), [633](#)–634
DisclosurePolicy, [88](#)
Discord, [96](#)
discounts, [239](#), [312](#), [339](#), [345](#)–346, [560](#), [569](#)–570
diversifications, [453](#)
dlvr.it tool, [453](#)
DMs (direct messages), [268](#), [278](#), [285](#), [306](#), [633](#)–634
do-it-yourself (DIY) projects, [377](#)
domain names
 acquiring, [151](#)
 blogging and, [151](#)
 bookmarking services and, [180](#)
 brand value and, [151](#)
 brand visibility and, [147](#)
 Facebook and, [160](#)
 professionalism and, [151](#)
 registering, [118](#)
 social media integration and, [658](#)
download time, minimizing, [141](#)–142
downloads, [659](#)
Dreamstime, [221](#)
Dynamic Product Ads (DPA), [583](#)

E

earnings, [176](#)
eBay, [109](#)
e-books, [234](#), [238](#), [240](#), [431](#)
eCairn, [115](#)
e-commerce

- badges, [103](#)
- ROI calculation, [30](#)
- tools for, [101](#)–110
- Ecwid, [36](#), [108](#)
- editorial calendar
 - attaching to content strategy, [243](#)
 - benefits, [246](#)–247
 - creating, [246](#)–248
 - items to include, [247](#)–248
 - overview, [241](#), [245](#)–246
 - for planning Facebook content, [337](#)
- Editorial license, [219](#)
- education, [392](#)
- educators, [368](#), [377](#)
- eHow, [533](#)
- 80/20 rule in, [178](#)
- E-junkie, [109](#)
- Elad, Joel (author), [399](#), [421](#)
- Electronic Frontier Foundation, [88](#)
- Elegant Themes, [189](#), [190](#)
- Elyash, Michael, [106](#)–107
- email address, [151](#), [560](#)
- email marketing, [240](#), [254](#), [560](#)
- eMarketer, [118](#)
- emotion, [446](#)
- employee-related posts, [430](#)
- endorsements
 - of influencers, [596](#)–597
 - LinkedIn, [382](#), [393](#), [395](#)–398
- e-newsletters
 - cross-promotion, [562](#)
 - discussion, [18](#), [559](#)–560
 - integrated marketing and, [559](#)–562
 - content sharing, [562](#)

- finding followers, [561](#)
 - subscriptions, [561](#)
- KPIs, [663](#)
- subscriptions, [561](#)
- engagement
 - analytics, [621](#)–622
 - assessment of, [89](#)
 - defined, [16](#)
 - Facebook Live for generating, [369](#)–371, [375](#)
 - lack of, [676](#)
 - on LinkedIn, [402](#), [409](#)
 - on Snapchat, [469](#)–470
 - via Facebook Live, [369](#)–371, [375](#)
- engagement objects, [528](#)
- entertainment venues, [368](#)
- entertainment website listings, [529](#)
- environment website listings, [528](#)
- eReleases, [565](#)
- ethnic website listings, [531](#)
- Etsy, [18](#), [109](#)
- events
 - discussion, [330](#)–332
 - on Facebook brand page, [336](#)
 - Facebook Live use by, [369](#)–371, [377](#)
 - Instagram for showing, [481](#)–484
 - KPIs, [664](#)
 - LinkedIn for announcing, [430](#)–432
 - Snapchat for, [467](#)
- evergreen content, [198](#), [248](#)–249
- Everplaces, [536](#)
- experience, [392](#)
- expertise
 - AI-generated content and, [251](#)

- blogging and, [209](#)
- content marketing and, [200](#)
- content strategies and, [234](#)
- establishing, [16](#), [198](#), [238](#)
- liking other brands for establishing, [330](#)
- photos for establishing, [223](#)

Extensible Markup Language (XML), [158](#)

eXTReMe Tracking, [607](#), [608](#)

F

Facebook

- About page, [160](#)
- active user statistics, [1](#), [14](#), [118](#), [514](#)
- administrative functions
 - Professional Dashboard, [323](#)–[324](#)
 - settings, [321](#)–[322](#)
- advertising on
 - Ad Center, [356](#)–[357](#)
 - boosting posts, [354](#), [355](#)
 - changes to algorithms, [352](#)
 - considerations, [353](#)
 - extended fan reach, [352](#)
 - get more leads, [354](#)
 - get more messages, [354](#)
 - get more page likes, [354](#)
 - get more visits, [354](#)
 - get more website visitors, [354](#)
 - goals, [353](#)–[355](#)
 - measuring ROI, [359](#)–[360](#)
 - Meta Business Suite, [356](#)
 - overview, [351](#)
 - targeting fans, [358](#)–[359](#)
- best time to post to, [185](#)

- bookmarking and, [180](#)
- branding on, [312](#)–314
- business name, [160](#)
- changes to algorithms, [352](#)
- checking in on, [538](#)–539
- community building on
 - brand visibility, [328](#)–329
 - creating events, [330](#)–332
 - interaction best practices, [376](#)
 - like invites, [327](#)–328
 - liking other brands, [329](#)–330
 - overview, [327](#)
- content marketing on
 - brand visibility, [334](#)–335
 - community building, [341](#)–346
 - content creation, [337](#)–338
 - content sharing, [338](#)–340
 - contests, [344](#)
 - discounts, [345](#)–346
 - editorial calendar, [337](#)
 - goals, [334](#)–335
 - groups, [346](#)–348
 - hashtags, [340](#)–341
 - ideas for content creation, [226](#)
 - Insights section, [348](#)–350
 - livestreaming, [369](#)–371, [508](#)
 - overview, 206,[333](#)
 - polls, [343](#)
 - quizzes, [343](#)–344
 - selling, [341](#)–342
 - sharing content, [254](#), [255](#)
 - strategy, [334](#)–335
- conversion tracking tool, [37](#)
- coupon campaigns and, [547](#)

- discussion, [1](#), [8](#), [10](#), [311](#), [514](#)
- establishing expertise on, [335](#)
- Follow Us button on, [188](#)
- geolocation in, [54](#), [537](#)–[539](#)
- groups, [658](#)
- hashtag support, [150](#)
- integration with
 - Instagram, [479](#)–[480](#)
 - TikTok, [497](#)
- likes on
 - ad's ROI and, [359](#)–[360](#)
 - brand visibility, [328](#)–[329](#)
 - branding, [312](#)–[314](#)
 - like invites, [327](#)–[328](#)
 - liking other brands, [329](#)–[330](#)
 - measuring, [348](#)–[350](#)
- Live Producer, [370](#)
- livestreaming on
 - business and professional users, [368](#)
 - community engagement, [375](#)
 - ideas, [376](#)–[377](#)
 - overview, [367](#)–[368](#)
 - setup, [371](#)–[374](#)
- Messenger, [354](#), [357](#)
- notifications, [318](#), [321](#)
- optimizing, [160](#)
- page components
 - About section, [315](#), [325](#)
 - call-to-action (CTA) button, [316](#)
 - contact info, [315](#)–[316](#)
 - cover photo, [315](#), [319](#)–[320](#)
 - Intro section, [315](#)
 - Manage page, [316](#), [317](#)

- mentions, [316](#)
- notifications, [318](#)
- overview, [314](#)
- pins, [318](#), [320](#)
- private messaging, [318](#)
- Professional Dashboard, [316](#)
- profile photo, [315](#), [318](#)–319
- tabs, [316](#), [321](#)
- timeline, [316](#), [317](#)
- paid advertising on, [574](#), [575](#)–581
- pixels, [358](#)
- Professional Dashboard, [316](#), [323](#)–324
- selling on
 - Commerce Manager, [363](#)–364
 - Facebook Marketplace, [361](#)
 - Facebook Shops, [363](#)–364
 - Live Shopping, [363](#)–364
 - overview, [104](#), [360](#)–361
 - shopping button, [361](#)–362
- Unique Visitor Table score, [118](#)
- usernames, [160](#), [325](#)–326

Facebook Ad Center, [356](#)–357

Facebook Insights

- accessing, [638](#)
- Content Calendar page, [643](#)
- dashboard, [640](#)
- detail page
 - Audience, [641](#)
 - Benchmarking, [642](#)
 - Content Overview, [642](#)–643
 - Messaging, [642](#)
- determining ROI via, [349](#)–350
- discussion, [610](#)
- exporting, [638](#)–639

learning through, [348](#)–349

tabs

Plan, [640](#)

Results, [640](#)–641

Video Earnings, [644](#)

Facebook Live

benefits of, [369](#)–371

business and professional users, [368](#)

community engagement, [375](#)

ideas, [376](#)–377

notifications, [369](#)

overview, [367](#)–368

selling on, [363](#)–364

setup, [371](#)–374

Facebook Marketing For Dummies (Diamond), [538](#)–539

Facebook Marketplace, [342](#), [361](#)

Facebook Shops, [342](#)

Fanpop, [529](#)

Fark, [175](#)

fashion

on Instagram, [484](#)

life stages and, [51](#), [56](#)

website listing for, [529](#)

Federal Trade Commission (FTC), [87](#), [88](#)

feedback

discussion, [16](#)

negative, [307](#)

via Facebook, [312](#), [335](#)

via X, [263](#), [307](#)

FeedBurner, [612](#)

Feedly, [10](#), [184](#)

Field and Main restaurant, [161](#), [188](#), [205](#), [482](#)

filenames, [157](#)

- film website listing, [529](#)
- filters, Snapchat, [461](#), [471](#)
- Findery, [536](#)
- FindLaw, [88](#)
- fitness coaches, [368](#), [376](#)
- 500px, [9](#), [532](#)
- fixed costs, [39](#)
- Flickr, [9](#), [221](#), [532](#), [616](#)
- Flixster, [529](#)
- Fluid IT Services, [21](#)
- FolkD, [173](#)
- Follow Us buttons, [188](#)–190
- follower highlights, [648](#)
- follower metrics, [648](#)
- followers. *See also* [community building](#)
 - blogs, [188](#)
 - Facebook, [188](#)
 - Instagram, [188](#)
 - Pinterest, [450](#)–451
 - Snapchat, [463](#), [467](#)
 - TikTok, [500](#)–502
 - TripAdvisor, [188](#)
 - X, [188](#), [276](#)–277, [463](#)
 - Yelp, [188](#)
- follower-to-following (TFF) ratio, [634](#)–636
- FollowFriday, [634](#)
- FoodGawker, [532](#)
- forms, [658](#)
- forum-monitoring tools, [115](#)
- forums, [571](#)–572
- 404 File Not Found messages, [176](#)
- Foursquare, [11](#)
- free content, [201](#)
- freebies, [569](#)–570

FreeImages, [85](#), [221](#)
freemium tools, [90](#)
Freerange Stock, [85](#)
frequently asked questions, [126](#), [201](#)
Freshsales, [38](#)
full networks, [10](#)
funny content, [339](#), [408](#), [511](#)

G

games, [570](#)–571
GanttProject, [73](#)
gated content, [254](#)
Gen Z, [167](#), [496](#), [505](#)
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), [240](#)
generational website listings, [531](#)
geographic segmentation
 discussion, [52](#)–54
 marketing by, [534](#)–536
 website listings, [530](#)–533
geolocation services, [536](#)
geomarketing
 considerations in, [535](#)–536
 overview, [534](#)–535
 reasons for using, [535](#)
GIFs, [408](#)
Gilt, [529](#)
Global Positioning System (GPS) applications, [11](#)
GlobeNewswire, [566](#)
goal-based bidding, [578](#)
goals, in content marketing, [199](#)
GoDaddy, [155](#)
Goodreads, [528](#)
Goodwall.io, [519](#)

Google

- paid advertising on, [589](#)–592

- Unique Visitor Table score, [118](#)

Google AdPreview tool, [144](#)

Google Ads, Keyword Planner Tool, [122](#), [123](#), [153](#)

Google Alerts, [12](#), [44](#), [111](#), [111](#)–112

Google Analytics

- advantages of, [610](#)–611

- dashboard, [606](#)

- discussion, [36](#), [45](#), [514](#), [607](#)

- for measuring content marketing, [256](#)–257

- resource URLs, [611](#)

- traffic acquisition session, [612](#)–613

Google Calendar, [74](#), [75](#), [248](#)

Google Groups, [658](#)

Google Image Search, [164](#)

Google Index Status page, [141](#)

Google Marketing Platform, [661](#)

Google My Business, [144](#)

Google News, [115](#)

Google Play, [497](#)

Google Rank Checker, [519](#)

Google Search Console, [132](#)

Google Search engine

- optimizing for, [168](#)

- People Also Ask box, [125](#)–126

- Pinterest and, [168](#)

Google Sites, [14](#)

Google Trends

- keyword selection resources from, [123](#)

- main categories, [57](#)–58

- mining, [562](#)

- social media monitoring tool, [112](#)

Google+, [96](#)

GPS (Global Positioning System) applications, [11](#)

grammar, [264](#), [384](#)

Grammarly, [252](#)

greediness, [548](#)

gross margin, [39](#)

Groupon, [541](#)

groups

- Facebook, [346](#)–348

- on LinkedIn

 - approving or preapproving members, [418](#)

 - benefits of, [414](#)

 - guidelines, [416](#)–417

 - invites, [417](#)–418

 - manager, [420](#)

 - moderation, [419](#)–420

 - overview, [413](#)

 - owner, [420](#)

 - pinning posts, [421](#)

 - private, [415](#)

 - public, [415](#)–416

 - setup, [414](#)–415

 - standard, [416](#)

 - subgroups, [414](#)

 - unlisted, [416](#)

GrubHub, [468](#)

guest blogging. *See also* [blogs](#)

- for driving traffic, [235](#)

- establishing expertise with, [238](#)

- Facebook Live for, [376](#)

- finding relevant blogs, [229](#)

- overview, [227](#)–229

- pitching to another blogger, [230](#)

- post promotion, [230](#)–231

guest introduction, [468](#)

H

hard costs, [626](#)–627

Harvard Business School Toolkit, [30](#), [39](#)

hashtag jacking, [281](#), [284](#), [290](#), [340](#)

hashtags

- best practices, [340](#)

- defined, [127](#)

- discussion, [150](#)

- on Facebook, [340](#)–341

- in Instagram, [161](#), [484](#)–485

- as measurement tool, [634](#)

 - TFF ratio calculation, [634](#)–636

- in TikTok, [505](#)

- X, [159](#), [280](#), [283](#)–284

HCSS, [43](#)–47

header photo, [293](#)–294, [386](#)–389

headings, [135](#)

headlines, [151](#), [182](#), [427](#)

heartwarming stories, [339](#)

heat map, [46](#), [257](#)

hi5, [532](#)

high school website listing, [531](#)

Home Goods, [476](#)

home page, [120](#)

- home page, [129](#)

home tour, [467](#)

Hootsuite

- content-distribution tool, [99](#)

- dashboard, [77](#), [77](#)–78

- discussion, [30](#), [45](#)

- marketing policy resource from, [83](#), [84](#)

- prices, [608](#)
- scheduling tweets on, [168](#)
- for updated content distribution, [566](#)
- URL snipping tool, [100](#)
- for X, [304](#)

how-to-content

- discussion, [248](#)
- for driving traffic, [236](#)
- Facebook for sharing, [339](#)
- LinkedIn for sharing, [408](#)

HTML (hypertext markup language)

- blog analytics and, [554](#)
- blog optimization and, [153](#)
- headings, [135](#)
- <nofollow> tag, [153](#)
- SEO and, [118](#)

HubPages, [533](#)

hubsite

- discussion, [21](#)
- SEO and, [118](#)

HubSpot

- adding Facebook pixel to, [358](#)
- analytics resources, [655](#)
- article on creating social media buttons, [190](#)
- B2B marketing tools, [59](#)
- content marketing advice from, [205](#)
- discussion, [31](#), [38](#), [46](#)
- page showing social media activity, [607](#)
- ranking of social media networks marketer, [32](#)
- resources from, [96](#)
- on timing posts to social media, [184](#)
- YouTube optimization guide, [166](#)

human resources professionals, [382](#)

HypeAuditor, [60](#)–61

Hyperbot.com, [550](#)

I

I Build America, [44](#)

i Fratelli Pizza, [67](#)–69

IBM Video Sharing, [616](#)

Ice Bucket Challenge, [505](#)

Iconosquare, [44](#)

icons

- in social media, [188](#)

- in this book, [3](#)

- X, [261](#)–262

If This Then That (IFTTT), [113](#)

iHeartRadio, [550](#)–551

image ads, [582](#)

images. *See also* [photographs](#)

- and alt tags, [136](#)

- alt text, [130](#)–131

- business-oriented, [408](#)

- content marketing and

 - legalities, [218](#)–220

 - overview, [217](#)–218

 - photo sharing, [222](#)–223

 - stock images, [220](#)–222

- content marketing via, overview, [207](#)

- cover photo, [315](#), [319](#)–320, [405](#)

- image packs, [131](#)

- on Instagram, [480](#)–481

- on LinkedIn

 - background, [389](#)–390

 - choosing, [386](#)–387

 - overview, [385](#)

 - profile, [386](#)–389

- uploading, [388](#)–389
- out-of-focus, [445](#)
- on Pinterest, [163](#), [444](#)–446
- rude and offensive, [445](#)
- search optimization for, [157](#)
- on Snapchat, [468](#)
- website listings for, [532](#)–533
- without descriptions, [136](#)

Imgur, [9](#)

impressions, [662](#)

Improvado, [77](#)

impulse buys, [547](#)

inbound links

- search engine rankings from, [171](#)
- SEO and, [118](#), [144](#)–146
- social bookmarking/news campaign and, [176](#)
- from social sharing, social bookmarks, and social news services, [144](#)–146
- syndication and, [146](#)–147

Indeed, [83](#)

index, [524](#)

indexing

- multimedia, [158](#)
- site, [139](#)–141

industry news, [408](#)

iNewsWire, [565](#)

influencers

- cultivating, [564](#)
- for driving traffic, [236](#)
- endorsements of, [596](#)–597
- identifying, [60](#)–61
- Instagram and, [491](#)
- microinfluencers, [596](#)
- partnering with, [491](#)
- sharing content via, [256](#)

- social bookmarking/news services and, [176](#)
- TikTok and, [496](#)
- infographics
 - on LinkedIn, [429](#)
 - sales conversion and, [237](#)
 - tool, [163](#)
- informative content, [510](#)
- informed decisions, [198](#)
- infringement, [85–86](#), [163](#)
- ingredients, [210](#)
- Inside, [533](#)
- Instagram, [9](#)
 - account creation, [477–480](#)
 - active user statistics, [493](#)
 - analytics, [616](#)
 - best time to post to, [185](#)
 - brand visibility on, [476](#), [481–484](#)
 - broadcast channels, [489–490](#)
 - business account, [477–480](#)
 - business name, [161](#)
 - Checkout on Instagram, [492](#)
 - connecting Facebook account to, [479–480](#)
 - content marketing on
 - content creation ideas, [226](#)
 - livestreaming, [486–487](#), [508](#)
 - overview, [206](#)
 - Creator Marketplace, [491](#)
 - discussion, [485](#)
 - Facebook invites on, [328](#)
 - Follow Us button on, [188](#)
 - geolocation in, [536](#), [539](#)
 - hashtag support, [150](#)
 - hashtags in, [484–485](#)

- Live, [486](#)–487
- mobile image sharing via, [223](#)
- notifications, [477](#), [487](#)
- optimizing, [160](#)–161
- paid advertising on, [574](#), [575](#)–581
- Produce Collections, [492](#)
- Product Tags, [492](#)
- profile setup, [479](#)–480
- Reels, [488](#)–489
- revenue streams on
 - overview, [490](#)
 - partnering with influencers, [491](#)
 - selling, [491](#)–493
 - subscriptions, [490](#)–491
- selling on
 - Instagram Shop, [492](#)
 - overview, [104](#), [491](#)–492
- sharing photos on, [480](#)–481
- Shopping from Creators, [492](#)
- stories in, [485](#)–486
- Threads, [487](#)–488
- usernames, [161](#)

Instagram Live, [486](#)–487

Instagram Reels, [488](#)–489

Instagram Shopping, [492](#)

integrated marketing

- e-newsletters
 - content sharing, [562](#)
 - cross-promotion, [562](#)
 - finding followers, [561](#)
 - overview, [559](#)–560
- overview, [557](#)–559
- press releases
 - analytics, [567](#)–568

- announcement, [567](#)
- influencers, [564](#)
- news distribution, [564](#)–568
- overview, [563](#)
- social media and, games, [570](#)–571
- on websites
 - community forums, [571](#)–572, [658](#)
 - contests, [570](#)–571
 - coupons, [569](#)–570
 - discounts, [569](#)–570
 - freebies, [569](#)–570
 - microsites, [571](#), [658](#)
 - overview, [568](#)–569
 - private membership sites, [571](#)
- interior design, [377](#)
- internal performance measurements, [603](#)
- International Technology Law Association, [88](#)
- international website listing, [531](#)
- Internet Advertising Competition, [661](#)
- Internet Legal Research Group, [88](#)
- interviews
 - blogging and, [210](#)
 - Facebook Live for, [377](#)
- iStockphoto, [85](#), [221](#)
- iTunes, [215](#), [497](#)

J

- Jackson, David, [216](#)
- Jasper, [252](#)
- Jimmy Choo, [476](#)
- job openings
 - Facebook for sharing, [377](#)
 - LinkedIn for sharing, [382](#), [402](#), [431](#)

Snapchat for sharing, [468](#)
Jones, Kristopher, [119](#)
journalists, [563](#)

K

The Karen Martin Group, [533](#)
KEEN Inc., [670](#)–[673](#)
Keep & Share calendar, [74](#)
Key performance indicators. *See* [KPIs](#)
Keyhole Blog, [655](#)
keyword stuffing, [135](#)
keywords
 analytics programs and, [257](#)
 blogging and, [152](#)
 choosing right, [122](#)
 comparing sources of, [656](#)
 in content marketing, [240](#)–[241](#)
 on Facebook, [160](#)
 on Instagram, [161](#)
 on LinkedIn, [164](#), [385](#)
 long-tail, [121](#)
 in newsletters, [562](#)
 on Pinterest, [163](#), [448](#)–[449](#)
 resources on, [123](#)
 site placement of
 discussion, [124](#)
 readability, [124](#)
 tags, [150](#)
 for social media optimization, [150](#)
 on X, [158](#)–[159](#)
 in X posts, [289](#)
 on YouTube, [165](#)–[166](#)
Khoros, [115](#)

kids, [505](#)
King, Eric, [670](#)–672
King Arthur Flour, [476](#)
KPIs (key performance indicators)
 discussion, [34](#)–37
 establishing, [654](#)–655
 measuring, [604](#)

L

landing pages, [663](#)
Last.fm, [529](#)
lead generation, [235](#), [239](#)–240, [354](#), [604](#), [659](#)
lede, [183](#)
legal website listing, [529](#)
legalities
 copyright permission, [85](#)–86
 FTC advertising regulations, [87](#)
 overview, [84](#)
 privacy, [87](#)
 resources on, [88](#)
 when using images, [85](#)–86, [218](#)–220
lenses, Snapchat, [461](#), [470](#)
LetsLunch, [527](#)
Library of Congress, [285](#), [527](#)
LibraryThing, [528](#)
life hacks, [377](#)
life stages, [51](#), [54](#)–56, [525](#)
lifetime customer value, [33](#)
lighting, [512](#)
Lightspeed, [531](#)
likes
 on Facebook
 ad's ROI and, [359](#)–360

- brand visibility, [328](#)–329
- branding, [312](#)–314
- like invites, [327](#)–328
- liking other brands, [329](#)–330
- measuring, [348](#)–350
- on TikTok, [503](#)

link juice

- discussion, [144](#)
- <nofollow> tag, [153](#)

LinkedIn

- About section, [164](#)
- affiliate pages, [409](#)
- Analytics tab
 - Competitors tab, [649](#)–651
 - Content section, [646](#)–647
 - discussion, [645](#)–646
 - Followers section, [649](#)
 - Google Analytics integration with, [610](#)
 - Leads tab, [649](#)
 - Visitors section, [647](#)–648
- for B2B marketing, [58](#)
- benefits of, [382](#)–383
- best time to post to, [185](#)
- bookmarking and, [180](#)
- business name, [164](#)
- company page on
 - administrators, [407](#)
 - benefits, [402](#)
 - brand visibility, [402](#)–403, [408](#)
 - company description, [406](#)–407
 - cover photo, [405](#)
 - optimizing, [405](#)–407
 - overview, [401](#)
 - setup, [402](#)–403

- company pages, [164](#)
- connections, [382](#)–383
- content creation on
 - articles, [427](#)–428
 - blogging, [408](#), [424](#)–427
 - collaborative articles, [433](#)–434
 - deciding what to post, [429](#)–433
 - multimedia, [427](#), [428](#)
 - overview, [423](#)
 - posts, [424](#)–426
 - professionalism in, [426](#)–427
 - sharing content, [427](#)–428
 - tips, [426](#)–427
- content marketing via
 - ideas for content creation, [226](#)
 - overview, 206
 - sharing content, [254](#), [255](#)
- discussion, [381](#)
- endorsements, [382](#), [393](#), [395](#)–398
- Facebook invites on, [328](#)
- geolocation in, [54](#)
- groups on
 - approving or preapproving members, [418](#)
 - benefits of, [414](#)
 - guidelines, [416](#)–417
 - invites, [417](#)–418
 - manager, [420](#)
 - metrics, [658](#)
 - moderation, [419](#)–420
 - overview, [413](#)
 - owner, [420](#)
 - pinning posts, [421](#)
 - private, [415](#)

- public, [415](#)–416
- setup, [414](#)–415
- standard, [416](#)
- subgroups, [414](#)
- unlisted, [416](#)
- indicating accomplishments on, [385](#), [392](#)
- links, [164](#)
- marketing policy resource from, [83](#)
- messages, [398](#)–399
- multimedia on, [385](#)
- notifications, [385](#), [403](#), [419](#)
- online resumes
 - creating, [383](#)–392
 - updating, [382](#)
- optimizing, [164](#)–165
- paid advertising on, [574](#), [585](#)–587
- photos
 - background, [389](#)–390
 - choosing, [386](#)–387
 - profile, [386](#)–389
 - uploading, [388](#)–389
- Premium, [398](#)
- privacy settings, [385](#), [386](#)
- private mode, [385](#)
- Product Pages, [411](#)–413
- profile on
 - background photo, [389](#)–390
 - endorsements, [395](#)–398
 - filling out, [390](#)–392
 - overview, [383](#)–384
 - profile photo, [386](#)–389
 - recommendations, [393](#)–395
 - sections, [391](#)–392
 - skills, [396](#)–397

- tips, [384](#)–385
- recommendations, [393](#)–395
- Recruiter account, [398](#)
- Sales Navigator, [398](#)
- Showcase Pages
 - highlighting products and services, [409](#)–410
 - overview, [402](#), [408](#)–409
 - setup, [410](#)–411
- Social Media Marketing Group, [97](#)
- usernames, [164](#), [384](#)
- LinkedIn For Dummies* (Elad), [399](#), [421](#)
- LinkedIn Profile Optimization for Dummies* (Serdula), [385](#)
- Linkroll, [173](#)
- links
 - to blog posts, [231](#)
 - discussion, [135](#)
 - for product or service, [201](#)
 - on X, [266](#)
- listening parties, [376](#)
- lists
 - for driving traffic, [236](#)
 - Facebook for sharing, [248](#)
- The Little Dabbler, [103](#)
- Live Producer, [370](#)
- Live Shopping, [363](#)–364
- Live365, [9](#)
- livestreaming
 - discussion, [367](#)
 - on Facebook
 - benefits of, [369](#)–371
 - business and professional users, [368](#)
 - community engagement, [375](#)
 - ideas, [376](#)–377

- overview, [367](#)–[368](#), [508](#)
- setup, [371](#)–[374](#)
- on Instagram, [486](#)–[487](#), [508](#)

Living Royal, [106](#)–[107](#)

local optimization, [143](#)–[144](#)

local website listings, [531](#)

logos

- avoiding as profile photo, [386](#)
- discussion, [86](#)
- on Facebook, [315](#), [318](#)–[319](#), [336](#)
- marking images with, [159](#)
- on Snapchat, [458](#)
- on X, [159](#), [263](#), [292](#), [294](#)

long-tail keywords, [121](#), [156](#)

loop88, [454](#)

loss leader, [542](#)

lurking, [522](#)–[523](#). *See also* [monitoring](#)

Lyst, [184](#)

M

MailChimp, [559](#), [561](#)

mailing list, [239](#)–[240](#), [335](#)

Make Me Sustainable, [528](#)

Manta, [531](#)

manual bidding, [578](#)

MapMyFitness, [11](#)

market segmentation

- affinity groups, [56](#)–[57](#)

- behavioral segmentation, [56](#)

- demographic segmentation, [52](#)

- geographic segmentation, [52](#)–[54](#)

- life stage analysis, [54](#)–[56](#)

- overview, [50](#)–[52](#)

- psychographic segmentation, [56](#)

Marketing Analytics Summit, [655](#)

marketing policy, [82](#)–[84](#)

marketing team

- content marketer, [80](#)–[81](#)

- hiring experts, [81](#)–[82](#)

- inside inputs, [81](#)

- overview, [78](#)–[79](#)

- social media director, [79](#)–[80](#)

marketing tools

- automation, [453](#)

- content creation, [454](#)–[455](#)

- growing audience, [453](#)

- overview, [453](#)

- scheduling, [453](#)

MarketingProfs, [97](#)

MarketingSherpa, [97](#)

markets

B2B

- audio/visual content and, [507](#)
- discussion, [30](#)
- networking, [526](#)–527
- online couponing and, [542](#)
- researching, [58](#)–59
- SEO and, [118](#)

B2C

- affinity groups, [56](#)–57
- behavioral segmentation, [56](#)
- demographic segmentation, [52](#)
- geographic segmentation, [52](#)–54
- life stage analysis, [54](#)–56
- overview, [50](#)–52
- psychographic segmentation, [56](#)

conversational

- communication tips, [264](#)–265
- defined, [262](#)
- do's and don'ts, [265](#)–271
- quality over quantity, [272](#)–273
- researching other brands, [271](#)–272

online, [20](#)–21

stratified social

- activity type, [532](#)–534
- brand visibility on, [526](#)
- coupon campaigns and, [543](#)–548
- cross-industry directories, [526](#)–527
- demographics, [530](#)–532
- discussion, [525](#)
- Facebook, [537](#)–539
- Meetup, [539](#)–540
- smaller sites, [526](#)
- social shopping, [540](#)–543
- vertical industry sector, [527](#)–530

X, [537](#)

target

- active user statistics, [14](#)–15
- affinity groups, [56](#)–57
- assessing involvement of, [522](#)–524
- behavioral segmentation, [56](#)
- demographic segmentation, [52](#)
- geographic segmentation, [52](#)–54
- identifying, [26](#)
- life stage analysis, [54](#)–56
- locating online, [50](#)
- market segmentation, [50](#)–52
- psychographic segmentation, [56](#)
- social media used by, [508](#)
- valuing ROI on, [27](#)

Marleylilly, [101](#)–102

MarTech, [96](#)

Mashable, [519](#)

Matomo, [607](#)

McKinsey & Co, [664](#)

measurement, monitoring versus, [109](#)

Mediabistro, [529](#)

medical website listings, [529](#)

Medium, [9](#), [527](#), [616](#)

MeetEdgar, [45](#), [77](#)

Meetup, [11](#), [533](#), [539](#)–540, [610](#)

Meltwater, [91](#), [115](#)

membership, [176](#)

memes, [226](#), [408](#)

memories, Snapchat, [461](#)

Mention, [91](#), [111](#), [113](#)

Mentionlytics, [112](#)

Mention.net, [12](#)

- mentions, [633](#)
- MerchantCircle, [531](#)
- Messenger, [354](#), [357](#)
- Meta, selling on, [104](#)
- Meta Business Suite, [356](#), [637](#)
- metadata, [126](#)
- MetaFilter, [175](#)
- metatags
 - CMS for inserting, [127](#)
 - discussion, [126](#)–127
 - for images, [157](#)
 - page description, [129](#)–130
 - social media optimization and, [151](#)
 - viewing, [127](#)
- microblogging, [262](#). *See also* [blogs](#)
- microinfluencers, [596](#)
- microphones, [512](#)
- microsites, [571](#), [658](#). *See also* [websites](#)
- Microsoft, Unique Visitor Table score, [118](#)
- mid-sized social media
 - considerations in, [550](#)
 - examples of
 - Spotify, [550](#)–552
 - Tumblr, [552](#)–554
 - Vimeo, [555](#)–556
 - overview, [549](#)
 - streaming content, [550](#)–552
- Mighty Networks, [11](#)
- MiloTree, [454](#)
- minor social sites
 - assessing target audience involvement
 - lurking, [522](#)–523
 - overview, [522](#)–524
 - quantifying market presence, [523](#)–524

- responding, [522–523](#)
- brand visibility on, [526](#)
- goals, [518–519](#)
- involvement of target audience, [522–524](#)
- overview, [517–518](#)
- researching, [519–521](#)
- strategic use, [524](#)

Mix, [10](#), [172](#), [173](#)

Mixpanel, [608](#)

mobile devices

- accessing Facebook via, [14](#)
- content compatibility with, [204](#)
- Instagram optimized for, [476](#)
- optimizing website for, [137](#)
- sharing images via, [223](#)
- voice search optimization and, [143](#)

mobile websites, [137](#)

MocoSpace, [532](#)

moderators, [375](#), [419–420](#)

mom website listings, [531](#)

Money Saving Mom, [532](#)

monitoring

- competitors, [304](#)
- measurement versus, [109](#)
- measuring versus, [603](#)
- mentions on X, [633](#)
- overview, [109–110](#)
- reasons for, [110](#)
- Snapchat, [468–469](#)
- social bookmarking/news campaign, [179](#)
- tools for
 - blog- and forum-monitoring tools, [115](#)
 - choosing, [111](#)

- fee-based, enterprise-level monitoring tools, [115](#)
- free/inexpensive, [111](#)–113, [114](#)–115
- search engine ranking, [169](#)
- social news and RSS tools, [115](#)
- by type of service, [114](#)–115
- X, [115](#), [278](#)–279

Morguefile, [221](#)

Morris, Tee, [514](#)

Moss, Skyler, [43](#)–47

movie website listings, [529](#)

Moz, [132](#), [519](#)

MozBar, [132](#)

Mozilla Lightning Calendar, [74](#)

mozRank Pro Checker, [169](#)

multimedia, on LinkedIn, [385](#)

Murphy, Rich (author), [514](#)

music, [503](#)

music streaming, [550](#)–552

music website listings, [529](#)

musicians, [368](#)

My Boomer Page, [531](#)

Myspace, [529](#)

N

National Retail Federation, [30](#)

natural search, [120](#)

navigation, [135](#)

negativity

- avoiding, [307](#), [377](#), [448](#)

- controversy and, [338](#), [348](#)

net profit margin, [40](#)

Netvibes, [76](#)–77, [566](#)

networking

- blogging and, [210](#)
- cross-industry directories, [526](#)–527
- on LinkedIn, [402](#)
- website listings for, [532](#)

Networking for Professionals, [58](#)

new follower metrics, [650](#)

news organizations, [368](#)

newsletters

- free content, [201](#)
- guest blogging and, [228](#)
- linking to guest blogs, [234](#)
- sales conversions and, [237](#)
- sharing blog posts in, [231](#)
- sharing content via, [254](#)

Nextdoor, [531](#)

niche markets

- brand visibility on, [526](#)
- by categories
 - activity type, [532](#)–534
 - demographics, [530](#)–532
 - vertical industry sector, [527](#)–530
- coupon campaigns and, [543](#)–548
- cross-industry directories, [526](#)–527
- discussion, [525](#)
- by location
 - Facebook, [537](#)–539
 - Meetup, [539](#)–540
 - X, [537](#)
- smaller sites and, [526](#)
- social shopping and, [540](#)–543

Nielsen, [664](#)

Nielsen PRIZM system, [54](#), [55](#)

Nike, [476](#), [489](#)

Ning, [11](#)

- <nofollow> tag, [153](#)
 - HTML and, [153](#)
 - X, [159](#)
- Nolo, [88](#)
- nonprofit website listing, [529](#)
- notifications
 - blogs and, [211](#)
 - Facebook, [318](#), [321](#)
 - Facebook Live, [369](#)
 - Google Alerts, [111](#)–112
 - If This Then That tool for, [113](#)
 - Instagram, [477](#), [487](#)
 - LinkedIn, [385](#), [403](#), [419](#)
 - Pinterest, [442](#)
 - Snapchat, [464](#), [472](#)
 - TikTok, [500](#)
 - X, [632](#)–633
- Notifications tab, [632](#)–633
- nutrition, [376](#)

O

- offline marketing, [664](#)–665
- Olivier Blanchard Basics of Social Media ROI, [30](#)
- 1-minute views, [642](#)
- 123RF, [221](#)
- one-hit wonders, [548](#)
- one-percent rule, [237](#)
- online charity auctions, [377](#)
- online community
 - growing, [239](#), [304](#)
 - sharing content with, [226](#)
- online marketing, discussion, [20](#)–21
- online reports, [238](#)

online resumes. *See also* [LinkedIn](#)

creating, [383](#)–392

updating, [382](#)

OnlyWire, [99](#)

open rate, [663](#)

OpenSky, [10](#)

Oracle CX Marketing, [91](#)

organic search, [120](#)

outings, [483](#)

Ow.ly, [100](#), [146](#)

P

page description metatags, [129](#)–130

page title metatag, [127](#)–129

page views, [258](#), [647](#)

pages per view, [659](#)

paid advertising

analytics

application, [663](#)

CPM, [660](#)–661

overview, [660](#)

reach, [661](#)–662

analyzing performance of, [575](#)–576

hard-selling in, [17](#)

influencers and, [596](#)–597

overview, [573](#)

social media and

Facebook, [574](#), [575](#)–581

Instagram, [574](#), [575](#)–581

LinkedIn, [574](#), [585](#)–587

Pinterest, [574](#), [587](#)–589

Reddit, [574](#)

Snapchat, [574](#), [592](#)–594

- TikTok, [575](#), [594](#)–596
- X, [575](#), [582](#)–585
- YouTube, [575](#), [589](#)–592
- social media sites, [574](#)–575
- paid search results, [120](#)
- Pandora, [9](#), [529](#)
- parallax scrolling, [136](#)–137
- Paris Opera Ballet, [476](#)
- party photos, [386](#)
- passer-by, [524](#)
- PatientsLikeMe, [529](#)
- Paulino, Jackie Swansburg (author), [514](#)
- PayPal, [109](#)
- pay-per-click (PPC) ads, [104](#), [120](#), [143](#), [575](#)
- Pennington Builders, [129](#)–130
- People Also Ask (PAA), [125](#)–126
- Periscope, [96](#)
- perks, via X, [263](#)
- permalinks
 - assigning, [155](#)–156
 - discussion, [153](#)
- permission request, [85](#)–86
- pets
 - videos, [505](#)
 - website listings for, [529](#)
- Petzbe, [529](#)
- Pew Research Center, [52](#)
- philanthropy website listing, [529](#)
- Photobucket, [9](#), [532](#)
- photographs. *See also* [images](#)
 - <alt> tags and, [127](#), [136](#)
 - avoiding infringement with, [85](#)–86
 - bait-and-switch, [446](#)
 - content marketing and

- legalities, [218](#)–220
- overview, [217](#)–218
- photo sharing, [222](#)–223
- stock images, [220](#)–222
- cover, [315](#), [319](#)–320, [405](#)
- on Facebook brand page, [336](#)
- Facebook for sharing, [339](#)
- header, [293](#)–294
- on Instagram, [480](#)–481
- on LinkedIn
 - background, [389](#)–390
 - choosing, [386](#)–387
 - overview, [385](#)
 - profile, [386](#)–389
 - uploading, [388](#)–389
- metatag insertion, [127](#)
- out-of-focus, [445](#)
- on Pinterest, [444](#)–446
- privacy, [87](#)
- rude and offensive, [445](#)
- search optimization for, [157](#)
- on Snapchat, [468](#)
- stock images, [220](#)–223
- website listings for, [532](#)–533
- on X, [293](#)–294
- photo-sharing sites
 - discussion, [220](#)–222
 - popular, [221](#)
 - sharing images on, [222](#)–223
- physical fitness professionals, [368](#), [376](#)
- Piktochart.com, [163](#)
- pinners, [439](#)
- Pinterest, [616](#)

- account creation, [442](#)–443
- active user statistics, [174](#), [453](#)
- advertising on, [574](#), [587](#)–589
- analytics
 - audience insights, [625](#)
 - metrics, [624](#)–625
 - overview, [623](#)–624
 - third-party, [626](#)
- best time to post to, [185](#)
- boards
 - creating, [443](#)–444
 - overview, [438](#), [439](#)
- Branded Content program, [443](#)
- Business Hub, [441](#)–442
- business name, [162](#)
- claimed accounts, [442](#)
- community building on
 - commenting on pins, [451](#)–452
 - etiquette tips, [452](#)–453
 - following folks you don't know, [451](#)
 - following friends, [450](#)–451
 - overview, [439](#)
- content marketing on
 - analytics, [623](#)–626
 - ideas for content creation, [226](#)
 - sharing content, [254](#)
- conversion tracking tool, [37](#)
- coupon campaigns and, [547](#)
- description, [221](#)
- discussion, [9](#), [10](#), [437](#)–438
- driving traffic with, SEO, [164](#)
- Facebook invites on, [328](#)
- Google search engine and, [168](#)
- hashtag support, [150](#), [161](#), [168](#)

- home feed, [442](#)
- keywords, [163](#), [448](#)–449
- marketing tools
 - automation, [453](#)
 - content creation, [454](#)–455
 - growing audience, [453](#)
 - overview, [453](#)
 - scheduling, [453](#)
- metabookmarking function of, [173](#)–174
- notifications, [442](#)
- optimizing, [161](#)–164, [162](#)–164
- paid advertising on, [574](#)
- pinning
 - brief descriptions, [447](#)–448
 - creating pin and board, [443](#)–444
 - emulating other Pinners, [448](#)
 - good practices, [444](#)–445
 - overview, [438](#)–439, [443](#)
 - practices to avoid, [444](#)–445, [444](#)–446
 - right words, [447](#)–448
- privacy, [443](#)
- profile, [442](#)–443
- Rich Pins, [163](#)
- searching brands on, [440](#)–441
- security, [443](#)
- selling on, [104](#)
- sharing on, [449](#)–450
- social permissions, [442](#)
- tagging on, [449](#)
- terminologies, [438](#)–439
- usernames, [162](#), [442](#)

Pixabay, [221](#)

pixels, [358](#)

- placement, [678](#)
- plagiarism, [511](#)
- plug-ins, [153](#)–154, [214](#)
- Pocket, [172](#), [173](#)
- Podbean, [514](#)
- Podcasting For Dummies* (Morris/Tomasi), [514](#)
- podcasts. *See also* [audio/visual content](#)
 - analyzing performance of, [622](#)–623
 - best practices, [511](#)–513
 - content marketing via
 - considerations, [214](#)–216, [508](#)
 - overview, [207](#)
 - sales conversions, [217](#)
 - creating, [511](#)–513
 - overview, [216](#)
 - platforms for, [513](#)–514
 - search optimization for, [157](#)–158
 - on Spotify, [551](#)
- point-of-sales (POS), [35](#)
- PolicyTool for Social Media, [83](#)
- polls, [343](#)
- pop filter, [512](#)
- popularity, [187](#)
- portable devices
 - accessing Facebook via, [14](#)
 - content compatibility with, [204](#)
 - Instagram optimized for, [476](#)
 - optimizing website for, [137](#)
 - sharing images via, [223](#)
 - voice search optimization and, [143](#)
- posts
 - quality of, [523](#)
 - quantity of, compared to number of registered users, [523](#)
 - sponsored, [556](#)

PPC (pay-per-click) ads, [104](#), [120](#), [143](#), [575](#)

PR Newswire, [566](#)

Precedence Research, [34](#)

Press About, [565](#)

press releases

- announcement, [567](#)

- discussion, [563](#)

- distributing, [566](#)

 - analytics, [567](#)–568

 - blogs, [566](#)

 - discussion, [563](#)–568

 - other social networks, [567](#)

 - resources, [565](#)

 - social news services, [567](#)

 - standard services, [566](#)

 - website, [566](#)

- e-newsletters, subscriptions, [561](#)

- influencers and, [564](#)

- KPIs, [663](#)

- overview, [563](#)

Prezi, [427](#)

Prezly.com, [565](#)

prices, [677](#)–678

privacy

- on Facebook, [346](#)

- on Facebook Live, [371](#)

- geomarketing and, [536](#)

- legalities, [87](#)

- on LinkedIn, [385](#), [385](#)–386, [386](#)

- photographs and, [87](#)

- on Pinterest, [443](#)

- on Snapchat, [473](#)

- on TikTok, [495](#), [500](#)

- on Tumblr, [553](#)
 - on X, [268](#), [306](#)–307
 - on Yelp, [539](#)
- private groups, [415](#)–416
- private jokes, [290](#)
- private membership sites, [571](#)
- PRLog, [565](#)
- problems
 - adjusting, [679](#)–680
 - characteristics to watch, [668](#)–670
 - diagnosing, [673](#)–674
 - fixing, [674](#)–677
 - overview, [667](#)–668
- product demos, [376](#), [467](#)
- product endorsements, [87](#)
- product launches
 - blogging about, [211](#)
 - Snapchat for, [467](#)
- product manufacturers
 - Facebook Live use by, [368](#), [376](#)
 - on Instagram, [483](#)
- product news, [211](#)
- product placement, [663](#)
- ProductCart, [36](#)
- product-oriented brands, blogging and, [210](#)–211
- products, [677](#)
- profanity, [290](#)
- professional groups, [382](#)
- professional networks, [10](#)
- professionalism, [264](#)–265, [283](#)–284, [384](#)–385, [426](#)–427
- profiles
 - discussion, [150](#)
 - on Facebook, [315](#), [318](#)–319
 - on Instagram, [477](#)–480

- on LinkedIn
 - background photo, [389](#)–390
 - endorsements, [382](#), [395](#)–398
 - filling out, [390](#)–392
 - overview, [383](#)–384
 - profile photo, [386](#)–389
 - recommendations, [393](#)–395
 - sections, [391](#)–392
 - skills, [396](#)–397
 - tips, [384](#)–385
- on Pinterest, [442](#)–443
- on Snapchat, [457](#)–459
- on X, [159](#)
- profit margin, [40](#)
- project management software, [73](#)
- ProjectLibre, [73](#)
- promoted ads, [582](#)
- promotional codes, [18](#), [239](#), [663](#)
- promotions, [678](#)–679
- proofreading
 - Facebook content, [337](#)–338
 - on LinkedIn, [384](#), [426](#)
 - on X, [264](#)–265
- psychographic segmentation, [56](#), [525](#)
- public groups, [415](#)–416
- punctuation, [264](#)
- pure-play sales method, [30](#)

Q

- Q&A. *See* [questions and answers](#)
- qualified leads, [354](#)
- Quantcast, [57](#), [177](#), [519](#), [523](#)
- quantified sites, [57](#)

- questions and answers
 - from customers on X, [304](#)
 - on Facebook, [312](#)
 - Facebook Live for, [376](#)–377
 - forum-supported, [572](#)
 - on LinkedIn, [409](#)–410
 - in newsletters, [562](#)
- quizzes, [343](#)–344
- Quizzes for Pages, [344](#), [345](#)
- Quora, [10](#), [533](#)

R

- ramp-up time, [72](#)–73
- Rank Tracker, [169](#)
- Rankwatch, [164](#)
- reach, [661](#)–662
- readership, [176](#)
- real estate, [377](#)
- Really Simple Syndication. See [RSS \(Really Simple Syndication\)](#)
- Rebrandy, [100](#)
- recipes
 - blogging about, [211](#)
 - Facebook Live for demonstrating, [376](#)
 - Snapchat for demonstrating, [468](#)
- recommendation services, [10](#)
- recommendations
 - on Facebook, [312](#)
 - on LinkedIn, [384](#), [393](#)–395
- recording studios, [377](#)
- recruiters, [382](#)
- Red Bull Energy Drink, [476](#)
- Reddit
 - description, [565](#)

- discussion, [10](#), [174](#), [175](#)
- local, [186](#)
- newsletter materials posted on, [561](#)
- paid advertising on, [574](#)
- subreddits, [181](#)
- Reels, [488](#)–489
- referrers, [611](#), [665](#)
- registered users, [523](#)
- registration, [234](#)
- regular users, [524](#)
- relatable content, [339](#)
- relationship building, discussion, [16](#)
- relationship selling, [9](#)
- repeat customers, [547](#)
- re-pins, [439](#), [445](#), [449](#)–450
- replays, Snapchat, [461](#)
- @reply
 - DM versus, [285](#)
 - in X, [280](#)
- reposts, [159](#)
- ResearchGate, [530](#)
- resources, business networks, [527](#)
- restaurants, [368](#)
- retail chains, [368](#)
- Return on ad spend (ROAS Goal), [578](#)
- return on investment. *See* [ROI](#)
- revenue, [40](#)
- ReverbNation, [17](#)
- review sites, [11](#)
- reviews
 - bookmarks for, [184](#)
 - of third-party products, [104](#)
- REX Roundtables, [527](#)
- Rich Pins, [163](#)

- RiteTag, [115](#)
- ROAS Goal (return on ad spend), [578](#)
- robots, [120](#)
- Rocket Lawyer, [83](#)
- Rocking Over 40 website, [531](#)
- ROI (return on investment)
 - calculating
 - break-even point, [39](#)
 - CAC, [31](#)–34
 - CRM, [37](#)
 - profit margin, [40](#)
 - sales KPIs, [34](#)–37
 - determining, [40](#)–43
 - determining through Facebook Insights, [349](#)–350
 - example of, [43](#)–47
 - Facebook ad, [359](#)–360
 - overview, [29](#), [558](#)
 - valuing, [27](#)
- rolling averages, [32](#)
- Royalty-Free license, [219](#)
- RSS (Really Simple Syndication), [12](#)
 - content-distribution tools on, [98](#)
 - monitoring tools, [115](#)
 - for multimedia, [158](#)
 - for multiple services, [533](#)
- Rue La, [529](#)

S

- Sabin-Wilson, Lisa (author), [213](#)
- safety tips, [377](#)
- sales
 - analytics programs for measuring, [256](#)–258
 - content strategies and, [234](#)

- directly on social media, [103](#)–104
- displaying products on social media channels, [103](#)
- on Facebook
 - Facebook Marketplace, [342](#), [361](#)
 - Facebook Shop, [342](#)
 - Facebook Shops, [363](#)–364
 - overview, [104](#), [334](#), [341](#)–342, [360](#)–361
 - shopping button, [361](#)–362
- on Instagram, [104](#)
- KPIs for, [34](#)–37
- on Meta, [104](#)
- on Pinterest, [104](#)
- social media integration and, [659](#)
- in social media marketplace, [17](#)–18
- through links, [101](#), [101](#)–102
- tracking, [29](#)
- sales cycle, [30](#)
- Salesforce Marketing Cloud, [115](#)
- Sawmill LITE, [608](#)
- scams, [136](#), 170, [444](#)
- school events, [377](#)
- School of Podcasting, [216](#)
- science and technology website listing, [530](#)
- score, Snapchat, [461](#)
- screenshot, Snapchat, [461](#)
- script, [512](#)
- search bar, [213](#)
- Search Customer Experience, [31](#)
- Search Engine Genie, [189](#)
- Search Engine Journal, [60](#)–61
- search engine marketing (SEM), [120](#)
- search engine optimization. *See* [SEO](#)
- Search Engine Optimization All-in-One For Dummies* (Clay/Kent), [119](#)
- search engine ranking

- content strategies and, [234](#)
- finding relevant blogs, [229](#)
- improving, [17](#)
- from inbound links, [171](#)
- press releases and, [563](#)
- social bookmarking/news campaign and, [147](#)
- social news services and, [176](#)
- tools for monitoring, [169](#)

Search Engine Rankings, [169](#)

search engine result pages (SERPs), [118](#), [124](#)–125

Search Engine Watch, [132](#), [166](#)

search engines, resources, [130](#)

search phrases

- choosing right, [121](#)–124
- length of, [121](#)
- long-tail keywords, [121](#)
- overview, [120](#)–121
- People Also Ask box, [125](#)–126
- placement on website, [124](#)

search terms

- keyword selection and, [121](#)–124
- placement, [124](#), [150](#)–151
- search engine optimization and, [124](#)
- X search, [281](#)

selfies, [386](#)

SEM (search engine marketing), [120](#)

SEMrush keyword tool, [122](#), [123](#)

SendGrind, [559](#)

Sendinblu, [559](#)

sentiment monitoring, [1](#)

SEO (search engine optimization). *See also* [social media optimization \(SMO\)](#)

- bookmarking and, [172](#)
- defined, [120](#), [132](#)

discussion, [17](#), [20](#), [117–118](#), [149](#)

forums and, [572](#)

keyword selection

- first paragraph, [133](#)

- overview, [120–121](#)

- resources, [123](#)

- search terms, [121–124](#)

- term placement, [124](#)

metatags

- alt text, [130–131](#)

- page description, [129–130](#)

- page title, [127–129](#)

metatags in, overview, [126–127](#)

optimizing website for

- AI content, [147–148](#)

- avoiding unhelpful elements, [136–138](#)

- first paragraph, [133](#)

- inbound links, [144–146](#)

- local optimization, [143–144](#)

- minimizing download time, [141–142](#)

- overview, [132](#)

- search term placement, [124](#)

- site indexing, [139–141](#)

- updating often, [133–136](#)

- URL configuration, [138–139](#)

- voice search optimization, [142–143](#)

on Pinterest, [447](#)

resources on, [132](#)

search phrases

- choosing right, [121–124](#)

- length of, [121](#)

- long-tail keywords, [121](#)

- overview, [120–121](#)

- People Also Ask box, [125–126](#)

- placement on website, [124](#)
- statistics on, [118](#)–119
- tactics, [119](#)–120
- terminology, [120](#)

SEOWind, [252](#)

SERank, [169](#)

Serdula, Donna (author), [385](#)

Sermo, [529](#)

SERPs (search engine result pages), [118](#), [124](#)–125

Server Side Include (SSI), [139](#)

The Shade Store, [173](#)–174

Share buttons

- on blogs, [209](#), [214](#)
- content marketing and, [256](#)
- discussion, [147](#), [189](#)–191
- on Facebook, [339](#)
- on Facebook Live, [373](#)
- inbound links and, [147](#)
- on Pinterest, [439](#)
- social bookmarking services, [189](#)–191
- social news services, [189](#)–191

Shareaholic, [189](#)

ShareThis, [190](#)

Shift4Shop, [36](#)

Shopify

- adding Facebook pixel to, [358](#)
- discussion, [36](#)
- e-commerce with, [108](#)

shopping

- bookmarks for, [184](#)
- website listing for, [529](#)

shopping buttons, [361](#)–362

ShopStyle, [529](#)

- short message networks, [10](#)
- Shutterstoc, [85](#)
- Shutterstock, [221](#)
- sidebar, [213](#)
- signups, [234](#), 259
- SimilarSites, [59](#)
- SimilarWeb, [519](#)
- Single Grain, [597](#)
- site indexing, [139](#)–141
- sitemap (XML), [140](#), [158](#)
- SiteProNews, [97](#)
- skills, [385](#), [392](#), [396](#)–397
- Slack, [527](#)
- Slashdot, [175](#)
- SlideShare, [427](#), [532](#)
- smartphones
 - accessing Facebook via, [14](#)
 - content compatibility with, [204](#)
 - Instagram optimized for, [476](#)
 - optimizing website for, [136](#)
 - sharing images via, [223](#)
 - voice search optimization and, [143](#)
- Smartsheet, [73](#)
- SMO (social media optimization), [120](#)
- snap, [460](#)
- Snap code, [461](#)
- Snap Map, [461](#), [472](#)–473
- Snap Map Actionmoji, [461](#)
- Snap Store, [461](#)
- Snapchat
 - account creation, [457](#)–459
 - business account, [457](#)–459
 - Business Dashboard, [460](#)
 - content creation on

- brand story, [467](#)–468
- community engagement, [469](#)–470
- filters, [471](#)
- lenses, [470](#)
- monitoring, [468](#)–469
- overview, [465](#)–466
- content marketing on
 - ideas for content creation, [226](#)
 - overview, 206
- discussion, [1](#), [9](#), [465](#)
- followers on, [463](#), [467](#)
- geolocation in, [539](#)
- mobile image sharing via, [223](#)
- monitoring, [468](#)–469
- notifications, [464](#), [472](#)
- optimizing, [167](#)
- paid advertising on, [574](#), [592](#)–594
- profile, [457](#)–459
- screens in, [462](#)–464
- Snap Map, [472](#)–473
- Snapchat+ premium subscription service, [471](#)–472
- stories in, [461](#), [463](#), [467](#)–469
- terminologies, [460](#)–461
- uses for, [467](#)–468
- Snapchat Discover, [461](#)
- SnapFiles, [184](#)
- snapstreak, [461](#)
- social bookmarking services
 - avoiding automated, [187](#)
 - avoiding to spam with multiple submissions, [180](#)–181
 - benefits of, [176](#)–177
 - bookmarking and, [172](#)
 - discussion, [10](#), [171](#), [172](#)–174

- 404 File Not Found messages and, [176](#)
- inbound links from, [144](#)–146
- popular, [173](#)
- researching
 - monitoring, [179](#)
 - overview, [177](#)–178
 - plan execution, [178](#)–179
- sharing and
 - Follow Us buttons, [188](#)–190
 - overview, [188](#)
 - Share buttons, [189](#)–191
- submitting to
 - encouraging bookmarking/rating of site, [186](#)–187
 - overview, [180](#)–181
 - specific applications, [183](#)–184
 - timing, [184](#)–186
- social commerce, [34](#)
- social geolocation and meeting services, [11](#)
- social listening
 - defined, [304](#)
 - example of, [670](#)–673
- X for
 - customer complaints and questions, [303](#)–306
 - new customers, [307](#)–308
 - Notifications tab, [632](#)–633
 - overview, [278](#)–279, [303](#)
 - tools, [115](#)
- social mapping
 - discussion, [52](#)–54, [534](#), [534](#)–536, [541](#)
 - with Facebook, [54](#), [537](#)–539
 - LinkedIn and, [54](#)
 - with Meetup, [539](#)–540
 - stratified social markets and, [537](#)–540
 - with X, [54](#), [536](#), [537](#)

social media

- benefits, [13](#)

categories

- community-building services, [11](#)
- social bookmarking services, [10](#)
- social geolocation and meeting services, [11](#)
- social news services, [10](#)
- social-content sharing services, [9](#)
- social-networking services, [10](#)

content marketing via

- benefits, [224](#)
- choosing right platform, [224](#)–225
- creating and sharing content, [226](#)–227
- overview, [207](#), [223](#)–224
- X, [263](#)

- defined, [7](#)

- by genre and KPI, [657](#)

- keeping track of, [96](#)

- overview, [7](#)

profiting from mid-sized

- considerations in, [550](#)
- overview, [549](#)
- Spotify, [550](#)–552
- streaming content, [550](#)–552
- Tumblr, [552](#)–554
- Vimeo, [555](#)–556

smaller

- assessing target audience involvement, [522](#)–524
- goals, [518](#)–519
- involvement of target audience, [522](#)–524
- overview, [517](#)–518, [518](#)–519
- researching, [519](#)–521
- strategic use, [524](#)

- timing posts to, [184](#)–185
- used by target markets, [508](#)
- user worldwide, [55](#)

Social Media Activity Calendar

- discussion, [74](#), [559](#)
- downloadable, [95](#)
- scheduling analytical reviews on, [604](#)
- scheduling SEO updates on, [168](#), [169](#)
- updating, [133](#)

social media button

- discussion, [188](#)
- Follow Us buttons, [188](#)–190
- Share buttons, [189](#)–191
- sources for, [189](#)

social media channels. *See* [social media services](#)

social media director, [79](#)–80

Social Media Examiner, [97](#)

social media marketing. *See also* [content marketing](#)

benefits of

- alternative advertising opportunities, [18](#)–90
- branding, [15](#)
- improved business processes, [16](#)–17
- improved search engine rankings, [17](#)
- lower costs, [13](#)
- market targeting, [14](#)–15
- overview, [13](#)–14
- relationship building, [16](#)
- selling, [17](#)–18

campaigns

- activity calendars, [73](#)–74
- brand protection, [89](#)–91
- dashboard, [74](#)–78
- legal considerations, [84](#)–89
- marketing policy, [82](#)–84

- marketing team, [78–82](#)

- overview, [71–72](#)

- scheduling, [72–78](#)

- time management, [72–73](#)

- defined, [9](#)

- developing plan for

- establishing goals, [22–25](#), [518–519](#)

- estimating costs, [26](#)

- goals, [518–519](#)

- identifying target markets, [26](#)

- overview, [22–25](#)

- ROI, [27](#)

- setting quantifiable objectives, [26](#)

- disadvantages of, [13](#), [19](#)

- example of analyzing ROI of, [43–47](#)

- integrated

- analytics, [567–568](#)

- announcement, [567](#)

- community forums, [571–572](#), [658](#)

- contests and games, [570–571](#)

- coupons and discounts, [569–570](#)

- e-newsletters, [559–562](#)

- influencers, [564](#)

- microsites, [571](#), [658](#)

- news distribution, [564–568](#)

- overview, [20–21](#), [557](#), [557–559](#), [563](#), [568–569](#)

- press releases, [563–568](#)

- private membership sites, [571](#)

- as a long-term commitment, [8](#)

- offline marketing versus, [664–665](#)

- overview, [8](#)

- plotting strategy for

- affinity groups, [56–57](#)

- B2B markets, [58](#)–59
- behavioral segmentation, [56](#)
- demographic segmentation, [52](#)
- geographic segmentation, [52](#)–54
- identifying influencers, [60](#)–61
- life stage analysis, [54](#)–56
- locating target market, [50](#)
- market segmentation, [50](#)–52
- overview, [49](#)
- psychographic segmentation, [56](#)
- Social Media Marketing Plan, [61](#)–66
- understanding why people use social media services, [61](#)

problems

- adjusting, [679](#)–680
- characteristics to watch, [668](#)–670
- diagnosing, [673](#)–674
- fixing, [674](#)–677
- four Ps of marketing, [674](#)–677
- overview, [667](#)–668

resources, [96](#)–97

via smaller sites

- assessing target audience involvement, [522](#)–524
- goals, [518](#)–519
- involvement of target audience, [522](#)–524
- overview, [517](#)–518
- researching, [519](#)–521
- strategic use, [524](#)

Social Media Marketing Goals statement

- downloadable, [22](#)
- establishing goals, [25](#)
- estimating costs on, [26](#)
- example of, [23](#)–25
- identifying target markets on, [26](#)
- setting quantifiable objectives on, [26](#)

Social Media Marketing Plan

- developing, [22](#)–27

- downloadable, [95](#)

- establishing KPIs on, [654](#)–655

- integrated marketing in, [559](#)

- measurement strategy, [602](#)–603

- SEO tools and, [169](#)

- setting up, [61](#)–66

- social bookmarking/news campaign and, [179](#)

social media monitoring. *See* [monitoring](#)

social media optimization (SMO)

- for blogs

 - overview, [151](#)–153

 - permalink assignment, [153](#), [155](#)–156

 - Squarespace, [154](#)–155

 - Wix, [155](#)–156

 - WordPress, [153](#)–154

- defined, [120](#)

- for Google search engine, [168](#)

- for multimedia, [157](#)–158

- overview, [147](#)–148

- search engine ranking and, [169](#)

- search term placement for, [150](#)–151

- for specific platforms

 - Facebook, [160](#)

 - Instagram, [160](#)–161

 - LinkedIn, [164](#)–165

 - Pinterest, [162](#)–164

 - Snapchat, [167](#)

 - TikTok, [166](#)–167

 - X, [158](#)–159

 - YouTube, [165](#)–166

social media platforms. *See* [social media services](#)

social media services

- community-building services, [11](#)
- overview, [9](#)
- social geolocation and meeting services, [11](#)
- social news services, [10](#)
- social-bookmarking services, [10](#)
- social-content sharing services, [9](#)
- social-networking services, [10](#)
- understanding why people use, [61](#)

social media site, [9](#)

Social Media Today, [97](#)

social networking

by categories

- activity type, [532](#)–534
- demographics, [530](#)–532
- vertical market, [527](#)–530

discussion, [10](#)

by location, overview, [534](#)–536

services for, [10](#)

- full networks, [10](#)
- professional networks, [10](#), [382](#)
- short message networks, [10](#)

using X for

- @reply versus direct message, [285](#)
- blocking people, [286](#)–287
- campaigns, [287](#)–289
- finding followers, [276](#)–277
- finding people to follow, [276](#)–277
- finding topics, [277](#)–278
- overview, [275](#)
- reposting and being reposted, [286](#)
- responding to posts, [279](#)–280
- rules of etiquette, [289](#)–290
- sharing, [284](#)–285

- tips, [283](#)–284
- via LinkedIn, [382](#)
- social networks, [236](#)
- social news services
 - avoiding to spam with multiple submissions, [180](#)–181
 - benefits of, [176](#)–177
 - for content distribution, [567](#)
 - disci, [171](#)
 - discussion, [10](#), [174](#)–175
 - 80/20 rule in, [178](#)
 - inbound links from, [144](#)–146
 - monitoring tools, [115](#)
 - researching
 - monitoring, [179](#)
 - overview, [177](#)–178
 - plan execution, [178](#)–179
 - sharing and
 - Follow Us buttons, [188](#)–190
 - overview, [188](#)
 - Share buttons, [189](#)–191
 - submitting to
 - content selection, [181](#)–182
 - encouraging bookmarking/rating of site, [186](#)–187
 - overview, [181](#)
 - specific applications, [183](#)–184
 - successful preparation, [182](#)–183
 - timing, [184](#)–186
- Social Searcher, [91](#), [179](#)
- social sharing
 - blogging and, [209](#)
 - inbound links from, [144](#)–146
- social shopping, [540](#)–543
- social-bookmarking services

- recommendation services, [10](#)
- social-shopping services, [10](#)
- social-content sharing services, [9](#)
- SocialFlow, [99](#)
- SocialMention, [12](#), [562](#), [564](#), [567](#)
- social-networking services
 - full networks, [10](#)
 - short message networks, [10](#)
 - specialty networks, [10](#)
- SocialOomph, [115](#)
- SocialPilot, [60](#), [453](#)
- social-shopping services, [10](#), [18](#)
- soft costs, [626](#)–627
- software
 - analytics, [256](#)–257, [607](#)–613
 - auto-follow, [266](#)
 - calendar, [73](#)–74
 - project management, [73](#)
- Soldsie, [109](#)
- Some Right Reserved license, [219](#)
- SoundCloud, [17](#), [215](#)
- Sovrn, [115](#)
- spamming
 - blogs and, [153](#)
 - bookmarking and, [180](#)–181, [187](#)
 - content marketing and, [237](#)
 - Facebook and, [330](#), [342](#)
 - LinkedIn and, [419](#)
 - Pinterest and, [444](#), [445](#), [452](#)
 - search engine ranking and, [17](#)
 - via hashtag jacking, [281](#), [284](#)
 - on X, [266](#), [267](#), [290](#), [293](#)
- speaking engagements, blogging and, [210](#)
- specialty networks, [10](#)

- spelling, [384](#)
- spend-based bidding, [577](#)–578
- spiders, [120](#)
- splash pages, [137](#)
- SplendidCRM, [38](#)
- spoken language, [385](#)
- sports coaches, [368](#)
- sports website listings, [530](#)
- Spotify, [529](#), [550](#)–552, [574](#), [616](#)
- Sprinklr, [83](#)
- Sprout Social, [83](#), [113](#), [174](#), [566](#), [592](#), [664](#)
- Squarespace, [156](#)
 - AMP (Accelerated Mobile Pages), [155](#)
 - mobile-friendly sites from, [137](#), [154](#)–155
 - optimizing, [154](#)–155
 - sales statistics offered by, [36](#)
- Ssense, [529](#)
- SSI (Server Side Include), [139](#)
- SSL (Secure Socket Layer) certificates, [155](#)
- standard groups, [416](#)
- Starbucks, [476](#)
- StartupNation, [527](#)
- StatCounter, [607](#)
- State of SMB Marketing survey, [18](#)
- static page, [213](#)
- Statista, [52](#), [53](#), [519](#)
- Statusphere, [88](#)
- stickers, [461](#)
- stock images, [220](#)–222
- Storenvy, [10](#)
- StoreYa, [105](#)
- stories
 - on Facebook, [369](#)–371

- on Snapchat, [461](#), [463](#)
- stories in, on Instagram, [485](#)–486
- stratified social markets
 - brand visibility on, [526](#)
 - by categories
 - activity type, [532](#)–534
 - demographics, [530](#)–532
 - vertical industry sector, [527](#)–530
 - coupon campaigns and, [543](#)–548
 - cross-industry directories, [526](#)–527
 - discussion, [525](#)
 - by location
 - Facebook, [537](#)–539
 - Meetup, [539](#)–540
 - X, [537](#)
 - smaller sites and, [526](#)
 - social shopping and, [540](#)–543
- streaming content
 - discussion, [367](#)
 - on Facebook
 - benefits of, [369](#)–371
 - business and professional users, [368](#)
 - community engagement, [375](#)
 - ideas, [376](#)–377
 - overview, [367](#)–368, [508](#)
 - setup, [371](#)–374
 - on Instagram, [486](#)–487, [508](#)
 - on Spotify, [550](#)–552
- Stylehive, [529](#)
- subreddits, [181](#)
- subscribers
 - average viewing time, [621](#)
 - engagement, [621](#)–622
 - growth in number of, [621](#)

- number of, [621](#)
- subscriptions, [234](#), 259
- SuperPages, [531](#)
- Supreme Court, [495](#)–496
- SVN/Walt Arnold Commercial Brokerage, Inc., [12](#)
- syndication, [78](#), [98](#), [146](#)–147, [533](#)
- Synup.com, [558](#)

T

- tablets
 - content compatibility with, [204](#)
 - Instagram optimized for, [476](#)
- Taco Bell, [468](#)
- tag clouds
 - bookmarking and, [180](#)
 - discussion, [122](#)
- tags
 - bookmarking and, [173](#), [180](#)
 - defined, [127](#)
 - for images, [157](#)
 - on Pinterest, [449](#)
 - for social media optimization, [150](#)
- Tailwind, [453](#), [626](#)
- talent, in content marketing, [200](#)
- Talkwalker, [113](#)
- target audience, [241](#)
- target market
 - active user statistics, [14](#)–15
 - affinity groups, [56](#)–57
 - assessing involvement of, [522](#)–524
 - behavioral segmentation, [56](#)
 - demographic segmentation, [52](#)
 - geographic segmentation, [52](#)–54

- identifying, [26](#)
- life stage analysis, [54](#)–56
- locating online, [50](#)
- market segmentation, [50](#)–52
- psychographic segmentation, [56](#)
- social media used by, [508](#)
- valuing ROI on, [27](#)

task delegation, [241](#)

teachers, [368](#), [377](#)

team members, [483](#)

TechCrunch, [97](#)

TechHive, [97](#)

Techmeme, [97](#)

TechSmith Capture, [533](#)

telethons, [377](#)

Tencent Music, [550](#)

test kitchens, [482](#)

testimonials, [382](#)

text ads, [582](#)

text links, [135](#)

text messaging, [664](#)

text speak, [264](#)–265, [283](#)

theaters, [368](#), [377](#)

ThirdAGE, [531](#)

third-party content, [433](#)

Threads, [96](#), [487](#)–488

3-second views, [642](#)

TikTok

- account creation, [496](#)–498
- active user statistics, [496](#), [594](#)
- ban on, [495](#)–496
- best time to post to, [185](#)
- brand visibility on, [496](#)
- Catalog Listing Ads, [506](#)

- content marketing on
 - content creation ideas, [226](#), [504](#)–505
 - overview, 206
- demographics, [496](#)
- description, [533](#)
- discussion, [1](#), [8](#), [9](#), [495](#)–496
- followers on, [500](#)–502
- hashtags, [505](#)
- influencers and, [496](#)
- LIVE Shopping Ads, [506](#)
- notifications, [500](#)
- optimizing, [166](#)–167
- overview, [505](#)
- paid advertising on, [575](#), [594](#)–596
- profile setup, [498](#)–499
- Reels as Instagram's answer to, [488](#)
- screens in, [499](#)–500
- selling on
 - benefits of, [505](#)–506
 - Catalog Listing Ads, [506](#)
 - LIVE Shopping Ads, [506](#)
 - overview, [505](#)
 - TikTok Shopping Ads, [506](#)
 - Video Shopping Ads, [506](#)
- sharing videos on, [503](#)–504
- TikTok Shopping Ads, [506](#)
- usernames, [497](#), [499](#)
- Video Shopping Ads, [506](#)
- time management, [72](#)–73
- time per visit, [659](#)
- TinyURL, [100](#), [146](#)
- tips, Facebook for sharing, [339](#)
- <title> tags, [158](#)

titles, [157](#)

social media optimization and, [151](#)

Tomasi, Chuck, [514](#)

tools

for alternative content-distribution services, [98](#)–100

content-distribution, [97](#)–98

discussion, [95](#)–96

e-commerce, [101](#)–110

marketing

automation, [453](#)

content creation, [454](#)–455

growing audience, [453](#)

overview, [453](#)

scheduling, [453](#)

for monitoring

blog- and forum-monitoring tools, [115](#)

choosing, [111](#)

fee-based, enterprise-level monitoring tools, [115](#)

free/inexpensive, [111](#)–113

search engine ranking, [169](#)

social news and RSS tools, [115](#)

by type of service, [114](#)–115

X, [115](#)

URL snipping, [100](#)–101

TopRank Online Marketing Blog, [97](#)

total engagement metrics, [650](#)

total post metrics, [650](#)

town events, [377](#)

trackbacks, [153](#)

traffic. *See also* [SEO \(search engine optimization\)](#)

analytics programs for measuring, [256](#)–258

comparing sources of, [656](#)

content marketing strategy and, [235](#)–237

content strategies and, [234](#)

- e-newsletters to direct, [560](#)
- Facebook and driving, [335](#), [338](#), [360](#)
- finding relevant blogs, [229](#)
- measuring, [604](#)
- press releases and, [563](#)
- social bookmarking/news campaign and, [176](#)
- top referrers, [257](#)

transcriptions, [157](#)

TreeHugger, [528](#)

trending competitor posts, [650](#)

TripAdvisor

- discussion, [11](#), [531](#)
- Follow Us button on, [188](#)
- FTC regulations and, [87](#)

Tripadvisor, [184](#)

Trumba calendar, [74](#)

TrustPilot, [11](#)

Tumblr

- account setup, [553](#)–[554](#)
- advertising on, [554](#)
- discussion, [9](#)
- Google Analytics integration with, [617](#)
- hashtag support, [150](#)
- sponsored day, [554](#)
- sponsored posts, [556](#)
- sponsored video posts, [554](#)
- user statistics, [552](#)

TweetBinder, [632](#)

TweetDeck. *See* [X Pro](#)

tweets, daily worldwide statistics, [14](#)

24-7 Press Release, [565](#)

Twitonomy, [632](#)

Twitter. *See* [X](#)

Twitter Blue. *See* [X Premium](#)

Type.ai, [252](#)

Typepad

discussion, [9](#)

Google Analytics integration with, [617](#)

U

Ubbersuggest, [123](#)

UberSocial, [99](#)–100

uniform resource locators. *See* [URLs \(uniform resource locators\)](#)

unique services website listings, [533](#)

unique users, [656](#)

Unique Visitor Table, [118](#)

unique visitors, [647](#)

University of Mississippi, [131](#)

unlisted groups, [416](#)

Unsplash, [85](#), [221](#), [222](#), [533](#)

UpCounsel, [83](#)

upfront payments, [542](#)

Upstrack, [179](#)

URLs (uniform resource locators)

configuring, [138](#)–139

duplicate content, [137](#)

LinkedIn articles and, [428](#)

SEO and, [135](#)

short, [665](#)

Snapchat for sharing, [468](#)

snipping tool, [100](#)–101

UrlTrends, [132](#)

U.S. Copyright Office, [88](#)

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, [88](#)

U.S. Supreme Court, [495](#)–496

Uscreen, [533](#)

user-generated content, [505](#)

usernames

Facebook, [160](#), [325–326](#)

Instagram, [161](#), [477](#)

LinkedIn, [164](#), [384](#)

Pinterest, [162](#), [442](#)

Snapchat, [458](#)

TikTok, [497](#), [499](#)

X, [158](#)

V

vacation photos, [386](#)

vanity metric, [225](#)

Verizon Media, [118](#)

vertical industry sector, [527–530](#)

vertical video ads, [582](#)

video streaming

discussion, [367](#)

on Facebook

benefits of, [369–371](#)

business and professional users, [368](#)

community engagement, [375](#)

ideas, [376–377](#)

overview, [367–368](#), [508](#)

setup, [371–374](#)

on Instagram, [486–487](#), [508](#)

videos. *See also* [audio/visual content](#)

analyzing performance of, [619–622](#)

best practices, [511–513](#)

business-oriented, [408](#)

content marketing via

considerations, [214–216](#)

overview, [207](#), [508](#)

- creating, [511](#)–513
- for driving traffic, [236](#)
- establishing expertise with, [238](#)
- on Facebook brand page, [336](#)
- Facebook for sharing, [339](#)
- on Facebook Live
 - business and professional users, [368](#)
 - community engagement, [375](#)
 - ideas, [376](#)–377
 - overview, [367](#)–368
- lighting, [512](#)
- on LinkedIn, [385](#), [429](#)
- platforms for, [514](#)
- recording, [512](#)
- search optimization for, [157](#)–158
- on Snapchat, [468](#)
- on TikTok, [500](#), [503](#)–504
- on Tumblr, [554](#)
- on Vimeo, [555](#)–556
- website listings for, [533](#)

Vidyard, [9](#)

Vimeo

- account signup, [555](#)–556
- analytics, [616](#), [619](#)–622
- discussion, [9](#), [533](#)
- monetizing content on, [556](#)
- promoting videos with, [555](#)–556

Vine, [96](#)

viral marketing, [664](#)

visitor demographics, [648](#)

visitor metrics, [647](#)–648

Vistacreate, [455](#)

voice search optimization, [142](#)–143

volunteering, [385](#), [392](#)

VWO, [655](#)

W

Walt Arnold Commercial Brokerage, [12](#)

watch time, [642](#)

Watermelon Mountain Web Marketing, [62](#)

wealthy website listing, [531](#)

web analytics, [601](#), [612](#), [677](#). *See also* [analytics](#)

Web Analytics World, [655](#)

Webby Awards, [661](#)

WebProNews, [655](#)

websites

- analyzing statistics on, [616](#)–618

- bookmarking to recommend, [172](#)

- cheat sheet, [4](#)

- e-newsletters to direct traffic to, [560](#)

- Facebook invites on, [328](#)–329

- linking to, [101](#)–102

- linking to guest blogs, [234](#)

- mobile friendliness, [137](#)

- page title, [127](#)–129

- promoting guest blog posts, [231](#)

- publishing press releases on, [566](#)

- SEO for

 - AI content, [147](#)–148

 - avoiding unhelpful elements, [136](#)–138

 - first paragraph, [133](#)

 - inbound links, [144](#)–146

 - local optimization, [143](#)–144

 - metatags, [126](#)–131

 - minimizing download time, [141](#)–142

 - overview, [117](#)–118

 - resources, [132](#)

- search terms, [124](#)
- site indexing, [139](#)–141
- statistics, [118](#)–119
- tactics, [119](#)–120
- terminology, [120](#)
- updating often, [133](#)–136
- URL configuration, [138](#)–139
- voice search optimization, [142](#)–143
- Snapchat and, [468](#)
- social media integration with
 - community forums, [571](#)–572
 - contests, [570](#)–571
 - coupons, [569](#)–570
 - discounts, [569](#)–570
 - freebies, [569](#)–570
 - games, [570](#)–571
 - microsites, [571](#)
 - overview, [568](#)–569
 - private membership sites, [571](#)
- Webtrends Social Measurement, [608](#), [655](#)
- wedding photos, [386](#)
- Wellfound, [527](#)
- WhatIs, [31](#)
- white papers
 - establishing expertise by writing, [238](#)
 - lead generation and, [240](#)
 - LinkedIn for offering, [431](#)
- Whole Foods Market, [440](#)–441
- widgets, [12](#), [78](#)
- WikiHow, [11](#)
- Wikimedia Commons, [221](#)
- Wikipedia, [11](#), [519](#)
- wikis, [11](#)
- Wishpond, [109](#)

Wistia, [9](#), [514](#)

Wix

- Marketplace, [155](#)

- mobile-friendly sites from, [137](#)

- optimizing, [155](#)–156

Woobox, [454](#)

WooCommerce, [105](#)

Woopra, [608](#)

word-of-mouth advertising, [7](#), [543](#), [547](#), [664](#)–665

WordPress

- discussion, [9](#)

- Google Analytics integration with, [617](#)

- optimizing, [153](#)–154

- permalink assignment, [156](#)–157

- plug-ins, [153](#)–154

- self-hosted blogs on, [212](#)–213

- social share buttons, [190](#)

WordPress All-in-One For Dummies (Sabin-Wilson), [213](#)

words, [338](#)

WordStream, [123](#), [557](#)

Wordtracker, [123](#)

Writesonic, [252](#)

writing, [337](#)–338, [426](#)–427

X

X

- Analytics, [610](#), [629](#)–630

- analytics specific to

 - account activity, [632](#)–633

 - hashtags, [634](#)

 - overview, [629](#)

 - TFF ratio calculation, [634](#)–636

 - third-party applications, [632](#)

- X Analytics, [629](#)–630
- best time to post to, [185](#)
- business name, [158](#)
- communication tips, [264](#)–265
- content marketing on
 - ideas for content creation, [226](#)
 - overview, 206
 - sharing content, [254](#)
- conversion tracking tool, [37](#)
- coupon campaigns and, [547](#)
- discussion, [1](#), [10](#), [12](#), [261](#)
- embedding posts on, [299](#)–301
- Facebook invites on, [328](#)
- Follow Us button on, [188](#)
- geolocation in, [54](#), [536](#), [537](#)
- hashtag support, [150](#), [159](#), [283](#)–284
- icon, [261](#)–262
- mining, [562](#)
- monitoring activity on, [632](#)–633
- monitoring tools, [115](#)
- as networking tool
 - @reply versus direct message, [285](#)
 - blocking people, [286](#)–287
 - campaigns, [287](#)–289
 - finding followers, [276](#)–277
 - finding people to follow, [276](#)–277
 - finding topics, [277](#)–278
 - overview, [275](#)
 - reposting and being reposted, [286](#)
 - responding to posts, [279](#)–280
 - rules of etiquette, [289](#)–290
 - search function, [280](#)–283
 - sharing, [284](#)–285
 - tips, [283](#)–284

- <nofollow> tag, [159](#)
- notifications, [632](#)–633
- offering subscriptions on, [298](#)
- optimizing, [158](#)–159
- paid advertising on
 - creating first ad, [583](#)–584
 - determining right ad type, [582](#)–583
 - overview, [575](#), [582](#)
- paid subscription services
 - features, [296](#)–297
 - overview, [295](#)–296
 - pricing, [296](#)
 - pros and cons of, [297](#)–298
 - types of, [296](#)–297
- pinning or highlighting posts on, [299](#)
- Professional Accounts, [296](#)–297
- profile page
 - avatar, [295](#)
 - customizing, [291](#)–295
 - elements, [292](#)
 - header photo, [293](#)–294
 - overview, [291](#)
- promoting brand via
 - do's and don'ts, [265](#)–271
 - overview, [265](#)
 - quality over quantity, [272](#)–273
 - researching other brands, [271](#)–272
- rules of etiquette, [265](#)–268, [289](#)–290
- searching on
 - filtering results, [281](#)–283
 - overview, [280](#)–281
- sharing on
 - @reply versus direct message, [285](#)

- overview, [284](#)
 - reposting and being reposted, [286](#)
- social listening with
 - customer complaints and questions, [303](#)–306
 - new customers, [307](#)–308
 - overview, [278](#)–279, [303](#)
 - tools, [115](#)
- 280-character limit, [264](#)–265, [283](#)
- user statistics, [14](#)
- usernames, [158](#)
- X Ads, [297](#)
- X Amplify, [582](#)–583
- X Analytics, [629](#)–630
- X Basic, [296](#)
- X Business, [296](#)–297
- X chats, hosting, [263](#)
- X Live, [583](#)
- X Marketing Blog, [97](#)
- X Premium, [296](#)
- X Premium+, [296](#)
- X Pro, [99](#), [115](#), [304](#), [566](#), [631](#)
- X Search, [115](#), [562](#)
- X Shopping, [297](#)
- X Takeover, [583](#)
- Xenu’s Link Sleuth, [141](#)
- XML (Extensible Markup Language), [158](#)

Y

- Yahoo!
 - Calendar, [74](#), [75](#)
 - Local, [144](#)
 - News, [115](#)
 - Toolbar, [173](#)

Unique Visitor Table score, [118](#)

Yelp

discussion, [11](#), [531](#)

Follow Us button on, [188](#)

FTC regulations and, [87](#)

geolocation in, [536](#), [539](#)

Yext.com, [144](#)

Yoast SEO plugin, [154](#)

YouTube

active user statistics, [514](#)

analytics, [610](#), [616](#), [619](#)–622

discussion, [1](#), [8](#), [9](#), [514](#)

hashtag support, [150](#)

optimizing, [165](#)–166

paid advertising on, [575](#), [589](#)–592

podcast downloads on, [622](#)

YouTube Channels for Dummies (Ciampa et al), [514](#)

Z

Zapier, [100](#)

About the Author

Michelle Krasniak helps clients all over the world develop and execute successful content and social media marketing strategies. With over 20 years of experience as a content creator, she brings to the table a unique combination of creativity and business acumen. Since 2010, Michelle has worked as an author, technical editor, and contributor to numerous social media and digital marketing–related *For Dummies* books.

Author's Acknowledgments

Michelle Krasniak: I dedicate this work to MS. You sacrificed so much without even realizing it, but your resilience is inspiring to many ... please don't forget that. It's your time now, and I know you'll go on to do great things with even greater people.

A big thank-you to the Wiley team that made all of this possible! It's your hard work and dedication that made this book the great resource that it is.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

Acquisitions Editor: Elizabeth Stilwell

Project and Copy Editor: T-Squared Services

Technical Editor: Patti Louise Ruby

Managing Editor: Murari Mukundan

Production Editor: Tamilmani Varadharaj

Cover Images: © ImageFlow/Shutterstock, LueratSatichob/Getty Images