



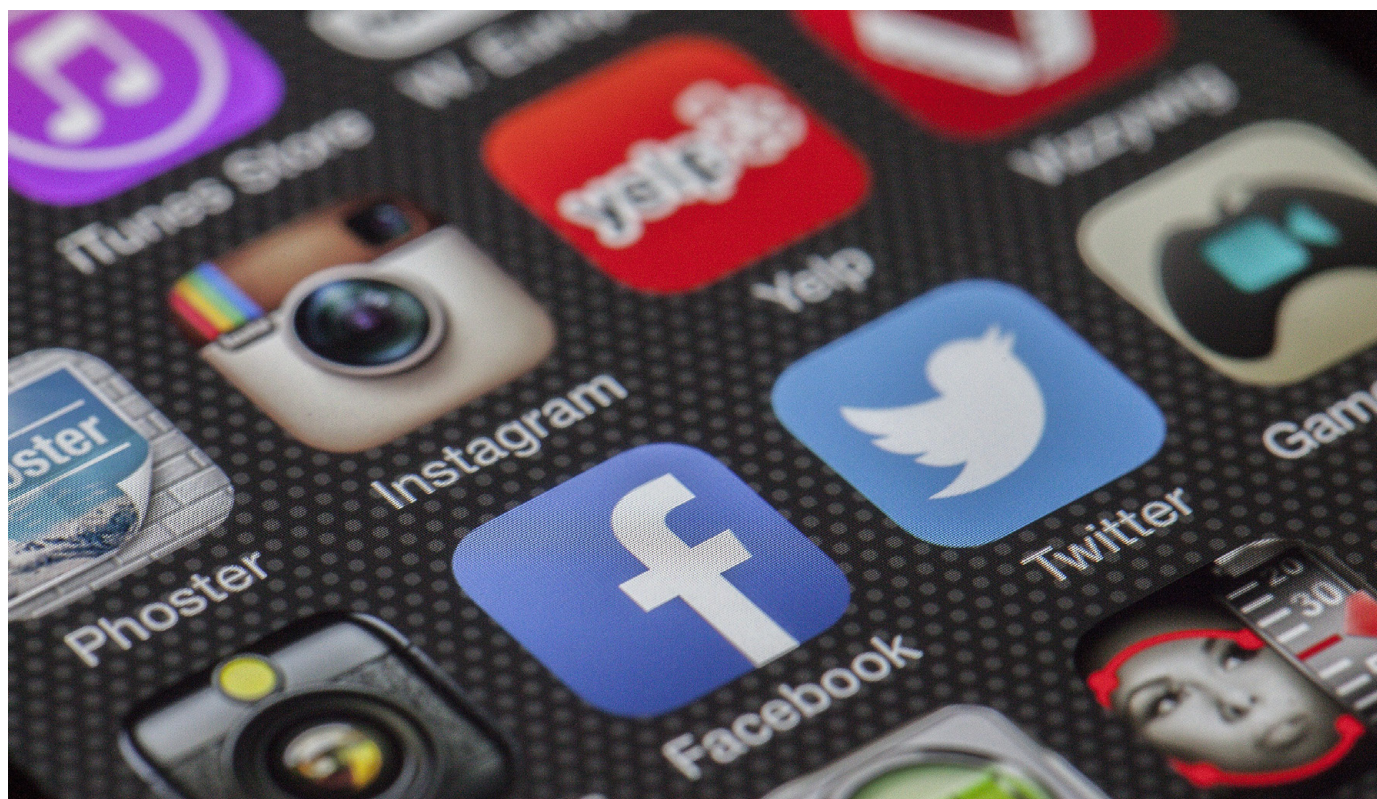
**A how-to guide to  
boosting your brand  
on social.**







# Optimise your social presence.



Social media is a small business must-do; it's a powerful way to get out in front of your audience, build your brand and stand out from the competition.

Of course, you can only tap into these benefits if you're thoughtful about your social presence. This means getting the basics right, getting to know your competition and being strategic about your content planning.

In this guide we look at key steps to help you optimise your social presence – from setting up your profiles, to scoping out your competitors, to creating a strong strategy and creative content.



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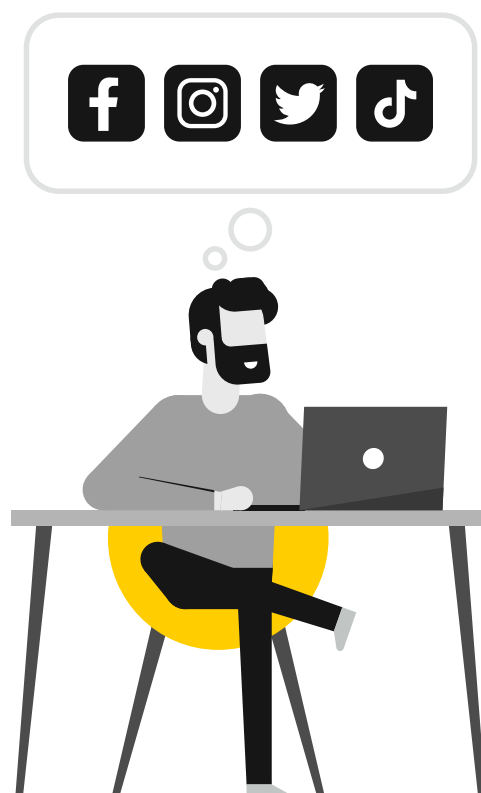
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# Get your house in order.



It's important to set up a strong social foundation for your business before you start brainstorming content ideas and segmenting your audience. Setting up profiles and getting the details right are essential to building a social presence that works for your business.

You don't have to be on every platform, but you'll probably want to establish a profile on Facebook and Instagram at the very least. Depending on your audience and your social goals, LinkedIn, Twitter, TikTok and other platforms could also be useful.

**Related:** [Choosing the right social platforms for your business.](#)



## Setup basics.

Most social platforms have a relatively simple setup process – just make sure to double-check the little details when you start.

- **Display name** – use the same name across platforms to make it easy for your customers to find you.
- **Email address** – simplify by using the same email address for all your social platforms.
- **Password** – use strong passwords or a password manager to secure your social platforms.
- **Profile image** – use a clean, simple version of your brand name or logo as your profile picture, and again, keep it consistent across platforms.
- **Background image** – if you can set a background image, use the larger space to showcase branding, product shots or even images of your store.
- **Business bio** – a bio or 'about' page should be short and sweet, with a clear summary of your purpose, a link to your website and the best contact number or email address.
- **Contact details** – make sure you include contact details in your social profile – you want to make it easy for customers to contact you.





# Get your house in order.



Social guidelines; it's easy to post on social media, but that doesn't mean it should be taken lightly. Everything you post reflects your business, so it's smart to avoid issues by putting guidelines in place early on.

Think about:



## Visual standards.

Use a standard template or set of visual elements for every post to establish a consistent look across your social platforms.



## Tone of voice.

Similarly, set a tone of voice to use in your social content. It should fit with your overall brand whether funny and irreverent, serious and thoughtful, or friendly and straightforward.



## Accuracy and accountability.

Don't share posts or information if you're not sure they're accurate. Take responsibility if you make a mistake or offend your audience. If you go back to edit a post after the fact, note that you've made a change – otherwise, it could look like you're trying to mislead people.



## Privacy.

It goes without saying that you should only share customer details or personal information on social if the person in question has given their permission.



# Scope out the competition.

To stand out from the competition you need to know exactly who they are and what they're doing. The more you understand, the better you'll be able to carve out your own space on social media.



## Identify the competition.

Do you know who you're competing against? Look beyond businesses that sell the exact same product or service.

Plenty of brands are seeking attention from the same demographic groups – for example, make-up and skincare brands will target similar groups, and meal-kit delivery and takeaway restaurants will have overlapping audiences. The more you can learn about how these parallel brands are using social, the better.



## Follow, watch, learn.

Step one? Follow the brands you've identified as competitors and then spend some time watching the way they use social media.

This should help you develop some insight into their goals, demographics and approach to social, to help you shape your own. You're not trying to copy or replicate your competitors' strategy – quite the opposite. It's about finding a unique space that suits your business and helps you stand out.



Questions to ask:

- What platforms are they using?
- How often do they post?
- What topics do they focus on?
- What hashtags are they using?
- What content formats do they use – for example, more videos, images, text posts or a mixture of formats?
- What type of content do they post – for example, do they focus just on sales or share thought-leadership and brand-building content as well?
- How much engagement are they getting – you can't see their internal stats but you can look at likes, shares and comments to get an idea of how their content is landing.



# Create a content plan.



A good content plan helps you align your social content with your marketing goals and includes granular details around what, when and where to post.



## Getting to know your audience.

How do you decide what to post? It starts with understanding what matters to your audience. Spending time researching your audience – their behaviour, preferences, interests and demographics – can help you work out how to connect with them on social media.

Here's how:

- **Competitor research** – your competitor research should be helpful here, as you'll be able to see the topics that resonate with their audience.
- **Internal data** – analysing customer information and sales data can help you build up a picture of your typical customer, their purchasing behaviour and preferences.
- **Customer research** – you could survey current customers, asking them to share feedback and product or service preferences.
- **Browsing data** – browsing data helps you work out which product or service categories are most popular with your customers.



## Build content pillars.

Your content pillars are the broad categories that social posts fall into. Most brands pick three to five content pillars and cycle between them to give customers variety. You don't need to use every single pillar – for example, a business that's just starting out might choose not to use customer-focused content at first, as they won't have a lot of feedback to work with.

Examples of pillars:

- **Brand** – content designed to strengthen your brand without pushing a specific product or service.
- **Educational** – thought leadership articles, how-to guides and other useful content related to your product or service category.
- **Sales** – straightforward sales or promotional content.
- **Values-driven** – this showcases your company culture or values through behind-the-scenes content, staff profiles, or posts about the history of your brand.
- **Customer-focused** – this includes customer feedback, case studies and other content highlighting the customer experience.



# Create a content plan.



## Find your frequency.

On social media, regular updates are crucial, otherwise it's far too easy to get lost in the scroll. On the other hand, posting too often can turn customers off.

This means posting a maximum of once per day on most social platforms. It's also important that you're not just posting for the sake of posting – make sure every piece of content you post or share is engaging, relevant to your customer and aligned with your brand goals.

**Related:** [How to time, schedule and manage your social media content.](#)



## Brainstorm content topics.

Before you start creating content, you need a list of topics to work with. Think beyond your product or service to find related topics that will appeal to your audience – for example, if you're an eco-friendly haircare brand, you might talk about haircare for different hair types, hairstyling, clean beauty ingredients, the impact of packaging on the environment, haircare for children or hair products in history.

The key is finding topic areas that connect with your customer, your brand and your marketing goals.

- **Look at content your competitors are sharing** – can you put your own spin on their ideas or find gaps in their content?
- **Review your past posts** – what type of content has performed best in the past? Are there specific topics that seem to engage your customers?



## Sharing content.

Struggling to fill content slots? You can re-share other people's content, making sure it's relevant to your audience, related to a content topic and aligned with your marketing goals. For example, a chocolate brand might share a feel-good news story about chocolate as a mood-booster.

It pays to be thoughtful before you click share – don't share content from your competitors, pick reputable sources and do a quick Google to check out shared content – is it accurate and up-to-date? It's not a good look to share content from a controversial writer or platform, or to put your name behind shoddy research or misinformation.





# Get creative with content.



Once you've brainstormed topics and chosen content pillars it's time to create some posts. While every post should include your logo and brand elements as well as a strong call to action, there's plenty of scope for creativity.

In fact, with thousands of posts popping up in customer feeds every day, generic content doesn't have much chance of cutting through.

**This is where a bit of creativity and bravery can help you stand out from the competition.**

Try:

- **Mixing up post lengths** – from short one-sentence posts to longer, more informative articles.
- **Asking questions** – asking for feedback or ideas from your audience is an excellent way to drive engagement.
- **Trying a new format** – experiment with videos or images or try your hand at making a story or reel on Instagram or Facebook.
- **Competitions or giveaways** – ask your audience to tag a friend or share your post to enter the competition and you're instantly in touch with more potential customers.
- **Include emojis** – emojis are almost a language unto themselves these days, so don't be afraid to use them to get the message across in your text posts.
- **Use humour** – humour can be a great way to make your brand feel friendly and personable. Share a funny (and relevant) meme, write about something silly going on behind the scenes or use jokey language in your next text post. Of course, it's also important to tread carefully – get a friend or colleague to read through posts before they go live, to make sure you're not offending or alienating customers with your humour.
- **Share facts and data** – interesting stats about your industry, news articles about your product category or even a list of fun facts about the history of your product.

**Related:** [How to run a social media competition.](#)



# Spend time with your audience.

Because many businesses take a set-and-forget approach to social content, engaging with your audience is another way to help you stand out against competing brands.

Being open to feedback and interested in customer insights helps build trust with your audience – and helps you create those closer, more personal connections. Dedicate some time to your audience daily by checking direct messages (DMs), mentions and comments so you can engage with as many customers as possible.

Here's how to engage on social:



## Be responsive.

If a customer sends a DM, comments on one of your posts or tags or mentions your brand in their post, try to reply as quickly as possible – preferably within 24 hours.



## Prioritise direct messages and comments.

Of course, if you're being tagged in hundreds of posts every day, you may not be able to write a full response to each one. If that's the case, prioritise DMs and customer feedback.



## Keep it positive.

Keep your language friendly and positive even if you're responding to a rude complaint or nasty feedback. Most importantly, acknowledge and validate the customer's concerns, keep replies factual and offer a clear solution to show that you're keen to resolve the problem.



## Redirect if needed.

Struggling to resolve an issue in comments? Try redirecting the customer to direct messaging to take the interaction off your public page, then resolve the issue in private.



# Be strategic about social spending.



While social media doesn't have to cost you a cent, it can be smart to spend some of your ad budget on boosted posts or promoted hashtags. These approaches can help you maximise the impact of your social content.

- Keep an eye on your competition to see how they use boosted and promoted posts.
- Use social analytics tools to identify posts with strong organic reach and use that information to make decisions around boosting posts.
- Focus social spending on revenue-generating content – for example, boost posts promoting your latest sale or discount or use a promoted hashtag to amp up a product launch.

**Related:** [Boosted posts vs sponsored ads – what's the difference?](#)



## Smart, strategic, stand-out social media.

Is your social media standing out or stagnating? While social can be a great way to differentiate your brand from your competition, it's also easy to get lost in a sea of similar content.

**The key to getting it right? Scoping the competition, being thoughtful about your strategy and not being afraid to get creative with your content.**

How strong is your social presence? Take our free Social Checkup to find out how your social media is performing and what you can do to boost your online profile.