

# Social media

Social media is a phrase used to describe platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. While many people use social media for sharing personal information, it can also be a powerful tool for a business as it's a great way to reach and engage with customers. There are a few different platforms, each with a different way of sharing information; for example, some are more visual, like Instagram, Snapchat and Pinterest, whereas Twitter and Facebook use text and links to webpages to put across messages.

## Social platforms

Some of the most frequently used social media platforms are: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat and YouTube. All of them encourage users to share information with others but each has a slightly different approach.

**Facebook** is a great place to start with digital marketing through a social media platform, especially if you already have a Facebook page that you use personally. You can set up a business page that links directly to your website. Not only can this be a place where you share news and company information, but you also have the ability to allow people to make a booking, leave reviews, and interact directly with you.

**Twitter** is a platform where people typically share breaking news and opinion pieces in the form of 'Tweets' which are posts that only contain up to 280 characters. Most contain hashtags # as using these allows users to follow specific topics and conversations.

**Instagram** allows users to edit and share photos as well as videos. It's primarily used on mobile devices because it requires you to have a camera phone. You create a profile,

then upload pictures with captions underneath. The app allows you to put 'filters' on the images or change the lighting or focus etc. to make them more attractive, making it a great platform for creative industries. You don't need Facebook to run an Instagram account; however, Facebook owns Instagram, which allows for some integration between the two platforms, especially when running advertising on either of the two platforms.

**Like every aspect of digital marketing, social media takes time.**

**Pinterest** allows you to create virtual pin boards with images that often link through to other websites or places that you can buy products. You can categorise the boards and name them however you like. People often go to Pinterest for inspiration, so this could be a great way to share pictures of your venue, hotel or attraction and make sure it links to your website to drive traffic.

**LinkedIn** is possibly the least consumer-facing platform and probably isn't the best



## Case Study

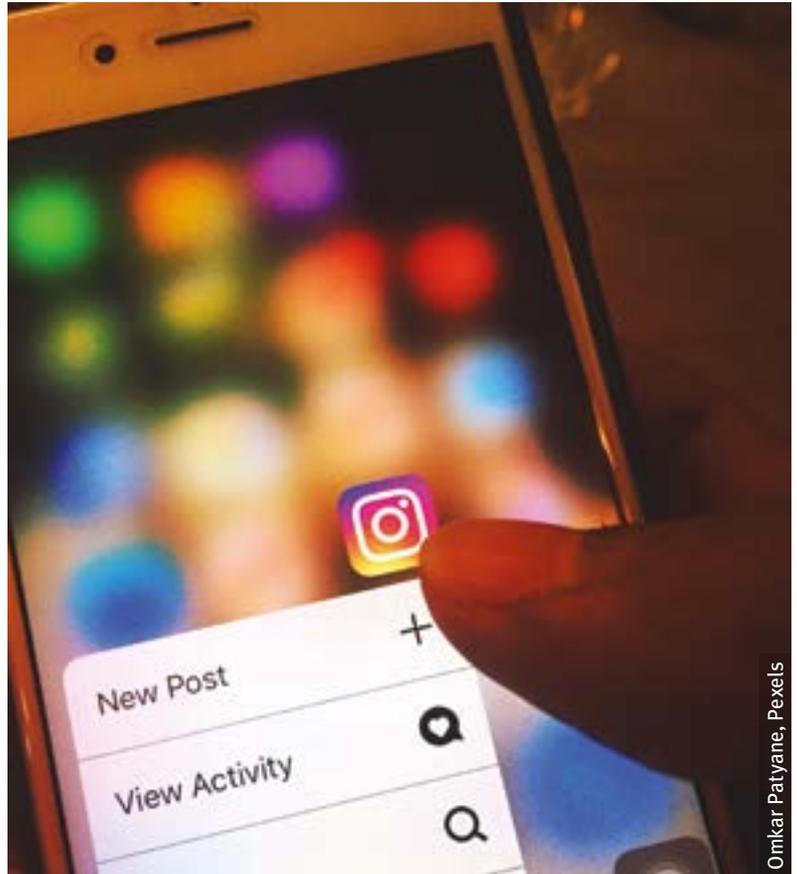


### Go Ape

For Go Ape social media is a vital component of their digital marketing strategy.

“Go Ape’s ‘digital jungle’ includes Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat and TripAdvisor. In terms of content for these social platforms, we find it incredibly easy. We’re inundated with user generated content – video and photography – which lends itself to being shared on social media.

From a reach/engagement point of view, video content always works incredibly hard for us. Historically, ticket giveaways have allowed us to expand our marketing across the UK market and always have strong reach via comments and shares, but with recent changes to Facebook algorithms, the objective of this will move from gaining visibility to customer surprise and delight. Using data insights from the different social tools, as well as other data analysis and business intelligence, we know that not all content is fit for all channels, so the aim of social is to diversify and appeal to key target audiences.”

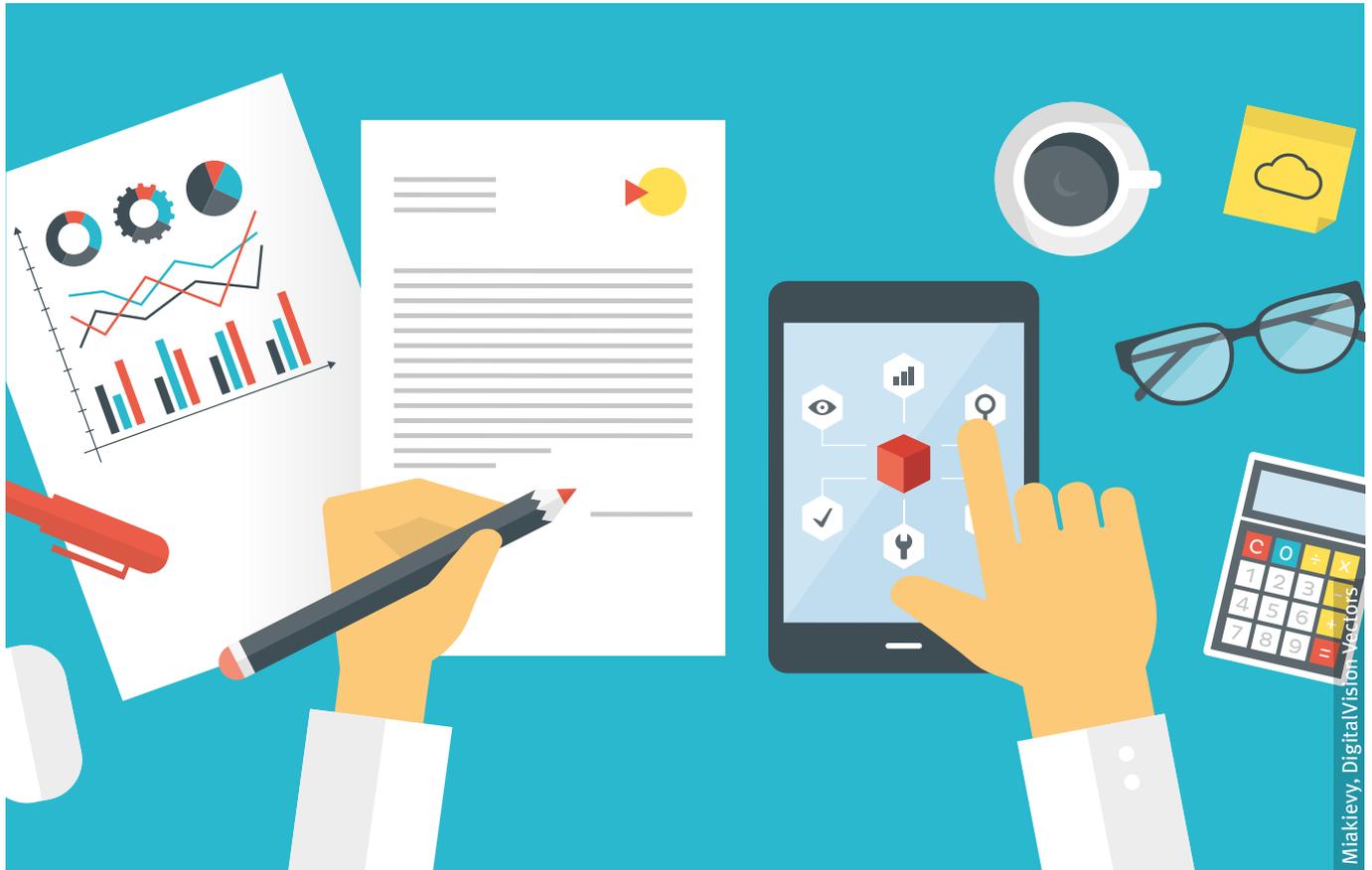


Omkar Patyane, Pexels

way to connect with customers. However, it is a great way to talk with other businesses and share the more corporate aspects of your business.

**Snapchat** is an app that lets you share images and videos with other users, much like Instagram; however, one of its core concepts is that any pictures, videos or messages you send are only available for a short time before they become inaccessible. The temporary nature of what you send is thought to encourage a more natural flow of interaction.

According to Hootsuite, Snapchat has over 100 million daily active users and is the most frequently used platform for 12-24 year olds. If a younger demographic is part of your target audience, increasing your social media presence using Snapchat for business could help you reach them.



Larger businesses with greater budget for advertising have used Snapchat's Snap Ads. These are 10 second video ads that appear between stories on Snapchat. These help build brand awareness and promote businesses to users of the platform.

**YouTube** is where users can upload video content to their own channel. This channel would be useful for showing off locations for tourist attractions, behind the scenes footage of new developments in your business and generally showcasing what your business has to offer. YouTube is a subsidiary of Google and using this platform can often contribute to your [SEO](#) ranking if Google sees your content as relevant to users. However, it can be time consuming as editing footage and uploading it may not be a quick process.

Using any (or all) of these social media channels can potentially help you reach

digital marketing goals in a lot of ways:

- The platforms are usually free to use and have simple setups, making them a cost-effective method of reaching customers.
- You can place ads within your social media feeds on platforms like Facebook and Twitter and include links to your site or calls to action to drive traffic and leads.
- Including links from your business account on social media to your website can help to boost your website's SEO potential.
- Customers can interact with you by 'tagging' your company name or sending you a message to ask questions or give feedback.

- Using a visual platform like Instagram can help people understand more about your brand, see your location and tell a story about your business.
- Engaging social media content is often shared widely, exposing your business to new audiences and increasing brand awareness.
- The audience potential is huge: Statista reports that [Facebook has over 1.7 billion users](#) and that [Twitter has 300 million users](#).

Like every aspect of digital marketing, social media takes time. It's best to choose one or two platforms that best fit your business and focus on them, rather than attempting to use all of them, at least to start with. If you have limited time, it might be best to start with Facebook as it is simple to setup and use, especially as you might already be using it personally and have a grasp of its features.

Anyone can view your entire business Facebook page without having to 'like' it, as business pages are completely open. This means the page is indexed by search engines, meaning anything you post can appear in search results (this does not happen with personal profile pages). You can share videos and images onto the platform too, making it a good all-round platform to begin with.

Because of the social aspect of these platforms, people view Twitter and Facebook as social networks, not marketing machines. That may mean that they're less likely to see what you post as an advertisement and will be more likely to hear what you have to say. This can translate to serious web traffic when you link to your site and posts that



## Checklist

- ✓ Choose the most suitable platform for your business and focus your attention there. Each platform has its own setup guide and help section to guide you through.
- ✓ Remember that some platforms are faster paced than others, for instance Twitter users expect answers from a company quickly, so be aware of your time constraints.
- ✓ Imagery and video makes posts stand out in newsfeeds and can be more engaging than text alone. Refer to your checklist for including [visual content](#) on your website.
- ✓ People often use the more visual platforms like Pinterest and Instagram for inspiration, so this could be a great way to share pictures of your venue, hotel or attraction and make sure it links to your website to drive traffic.
- ✓ LinkedIn might not be considered consumer friendly but could be useful if you were looking to hire more staff or gain information on what competitors are doing.

market themselves as your friends and followers share what you've posted.

Social media also allows highly customisable ads. Facebook ads, for example, allow you to target users by things like location, interests, industry and even purchase history and the



## Case Study



### Jimmy's Farm

Jimmy's Farm is a visitor attraction based in Ipswich, Suffolk, that has been running for 15 years. It currently hires around 30 full time staff, plus more during holidays and busier seasons. Alistair McMillan, Head of Marketing & Events explains how they approach social media.

“Jimmy's Farm has an account on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Our marketing team of two sets aside three days a week to dedicate to digital marketing, including updating the website and promoting events and offers across these social media platforms. It's a really easy way to promote the business. For us, cute animal photos work and long boring posts that aren't useful to our customers do not!”

pages they've liked. You can target a suitable audience for your service.

### Resources

If you want a full breakdown of social media, what it is and what it can do, read '[What Is Social Media? Explaining the Big Trend](#)' by LifeWire—it's an extensive



Roman Carey, Pexels

piece. MOZ frequently update their [social media blog](#) on a wide range of related topics.

Facebook Business covers the basics with their '[How to set up a Facebook Page for Your Company](#)' guide. If you are already set up, and want to how to build an active and engaged audience for your business, read Facebook's [Promote Your Page section](#).

Read '[Getting Started on Social Media](#) from HM Government' to cover the basics, plus see links on most of the platform's set up guides aimed at small business owners.

'[How to Start A Successful YouTube Channel for Your Business](#)' from Wix covers the basics of getting started on the platform from a business perspective.

# Paid advertising

The social media platforms we have looked at so far are free to use if you want to use them to connect and engage with customers. But it is also possible to use paid social advertising as a digital marketing tactic to reach customers and get your message out there. This is similar to using paid search instead of organic as we explained in the [Google AdWords section](#).

Paid social advertising uses sponsored content or advertising to boost your website presence, products or services in third party feeds and pages. You are paying to display adverts and a cost is incurred depending on the type of ad you use. Many of them incur a cost per click (CPC). By choosing the specific audience you want to reach using a range of demographic tools, paid social can be a way to get your message to your customers or potential customers effectively, inexpensively, and efficiently.

Some important information about paid social advertising:

- Paid social advertising targeting options allow you to reach a highly targeted audience, so is a great option if you're looking to market to a specific group of potential or previous customers.
- You can set a budget beforehand to ensure you manage the cost of your ads.
- Due to the way platforms like Facebook control the content users see when they log on (called an algorithm), using paid social is becoming more necessary to reach people with your brand's message than by simply posting as normal.



## Checklist

- ✓ Make sure you set a goal for your paid campaign before you start. The most common are: Increased traffic, increased visibility, higher engagement rates, lead generation or sales.
- ✓ Select the social platform that is most likely to help you achieve this goal by checking that the format of your ad fits or asking yourself if the people more likely to be using a specific platform fit your brand's demographic.
- ✓ Make sure you can measure the performance of your set goal. Some social platforms have tools already in place to help you track your goals (e.g. Facebook), but it's important to make sure you have the right ones in place to measure your success.

It's important to consider the type of ads that will do well on specific platforms. For example, the wide variety of Facebook ad formats make it perfect for business-to-consumer (B2C) campaigns, whereas highly visual content will do better on Instagram for increasing web traffic sales and driving awareness.

Twitter ads help grow awareness and drive clicks to your website from

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## Case Study



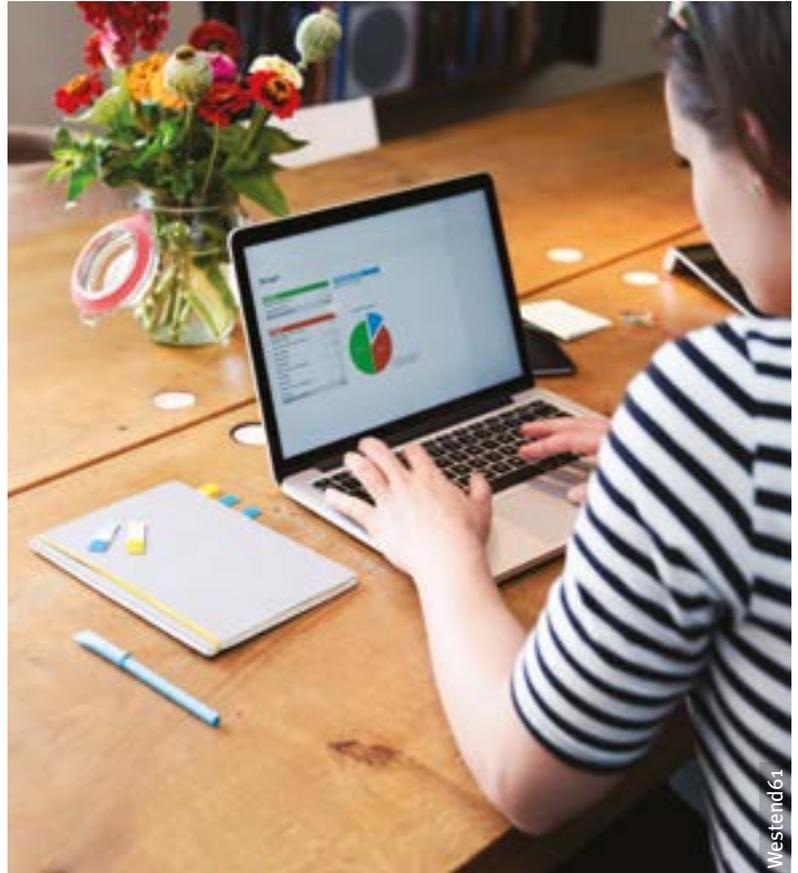
### GoApe

Paid social media campaigns are utilised by Go Ape. Sophie explains:

“Paid social works well, allowing us to target new and existing customers by location, demographic and interest.

Social media is a hugely personal space so generic brand campaigns never stand out. Experian Mosaic data is an extremely useful tool in being able to identify key groups of consumers vs our current core customer database. For example, looking at a regional level, we have created campaigns that focus on specific areas and specific demographics, such as the North of England.

We also occasionally target customer groups we'd like to increase visibility with using an offer, for example '20% off Tree Top Adventure,' focused around particular Go Ape sites in their vicinity for a short period. Using Facebook Insights, Google Analytics and in-house data, we can then track and measure the impact of highly segmented paid social campaigns.”



Westend61

consumers, but LinkedIn is more ideal for business-to-business (B2B) interactions than reaching your customers. The ads on Pinterest are often used to generate immediate sales of your product or services. Your paid content blends with other pins, allowing your brand to work as another way for people to visit your site. Snapchat works best with younger audiences for engagement purposes.

### Resources

Read Facebook Business's [Facebook Ads guide](#) for setting up and using paid ads. Most social media platforms will have a similar guide available through their site or app.

If you're already using some paid ads on social media platforms, but want to expand your knowledge or try something new, read '[Paid Social for Content Marketing Launches](#)' from MOZ that suggests four tactics to try.

# Scheduling tools

If you have numerous social media accounts for your business, you might want to consider using a scheduling tool to help you manage them in a more efficient way. These are online tools that gather together your various accounts and put them into one dashboard, so you can see the separate feeds all in one place, plus you can schedule Tweets, posts and ads to go out at specific times that you choose. This way, you can plan your social campaigns when you have time in your schedule and take the time to ensure they reach the right audience at the right time.

There are a few different tools available, and some platforms have their own version - for example Twitter has TweetDeck - but the most commonly known are Buffer, Hootsuite and Sprout Social. Each one has a different look and feel, so choose the one that feels the easiest to use for your business. They have various priced plans to choose from, so factor this in to your digital marketing budget.

The benefits of scheduling your social media posts:

- It saves you time and can help social media from becoming a distraction. Once it's scheduled you can focus your attention elsewhere, knowing that it's covered.
- It keeps your business visible to your audience and potential customers at all times.



## Checklist

- ✓ Social media is a more instantaneous way of connecting and invites conversation with customers, so be aware that some posts may not be suitable for scheduling.
- ✓ Make sure you use your scheduling tool's full capabilities as many come with analytic components, so you can measure the performance of your posts.
- ✓ Avoid scheduling questions or posts that are likely to get a greater response from your customers at a time when you won't be available to answer or respond.
- ✓ Analyse your post schedule to see if the timing can be better to achieve your set goals.

- It's useful for when you want to reach your customers outside of business hours (weekends and public holidays etc), but don't want to have to log in yourself outside of business hours to set posts or ads live.
- Your posts can be more spread out as opposed to sporadic bursts that might be lost in your customers' social feeds.

**If you have numerous social media accounts for your business, you might want to consider using a scheduling tool to help you manage them in a more efficient way**



As time can be precious when running a business, it makes sense to explore your options with scheduling. If you know that you want to post a certain number of times a week across two or more platforms but that you might not have time during the week to do so in the moment, you could schedule all messages for the coming week on a Sunday night for instance and then shift your focus to another area of running your business.

Some posts will not be suited to a schedule. Posts that require you to engage with your audience in a timely manner are better if you are available to be on the platform at that time. However, you can use a schedule to build excitement around a certain occasion, or a deal that will be live on a set date. You can still post valuable and shareable content but have time to

manage other aspects of your business while it gets seen by your audience.

### Resources

We mentioned TweetDeck, Lifewire also have an informational post [What is TweetDeck and Is It Only for Twitter?](#) all about this specific tool.

For more on scheduling in general, try '[A Reference Guide for Social Media Scheduling – Tools and Tactics](#)' from Razor Social. It covers the reasons it could benefit you, plus takes a look at the tools available.