

The Ultimate Guide to Social Media Marketing

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Who Is This Guide For?

This guide is a comprehensive overview of all things social media: for business owners, marketers, social media managers, strategists, interns — *anyone* in charge of social media for a business or brand, or anyone with an active interest in social marketing, its history, and best practices.

This guide encompasses best practices for both B2B and B2C businesses, across a number of different industry sectors. We're also going to dip into social media for creators and influencers.

This is intended to be your one-stop, **always** up-to-date, impeccably-researched and referenced, comprehensive guide to understanding the world of social media, and using it to successfully meet your business goals.

Part handbook, part history lesson, part inspiration — it's intended to equip you with all the necessary tools, templates, skills, strategies, and ideas to smash your targets and upskill you (and your team).

Let's get started.

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The History of Social Media

Mark Zuckerberg may not have realized it at the time, but when he launched 'The Facebook' back on February 4, 2004, he would be setting the wheels in motion for a dramatic change in the way we communicate across the globe. Not only that, but a dramatic change in questions around the law, freedom of information, privacy, propaganda...

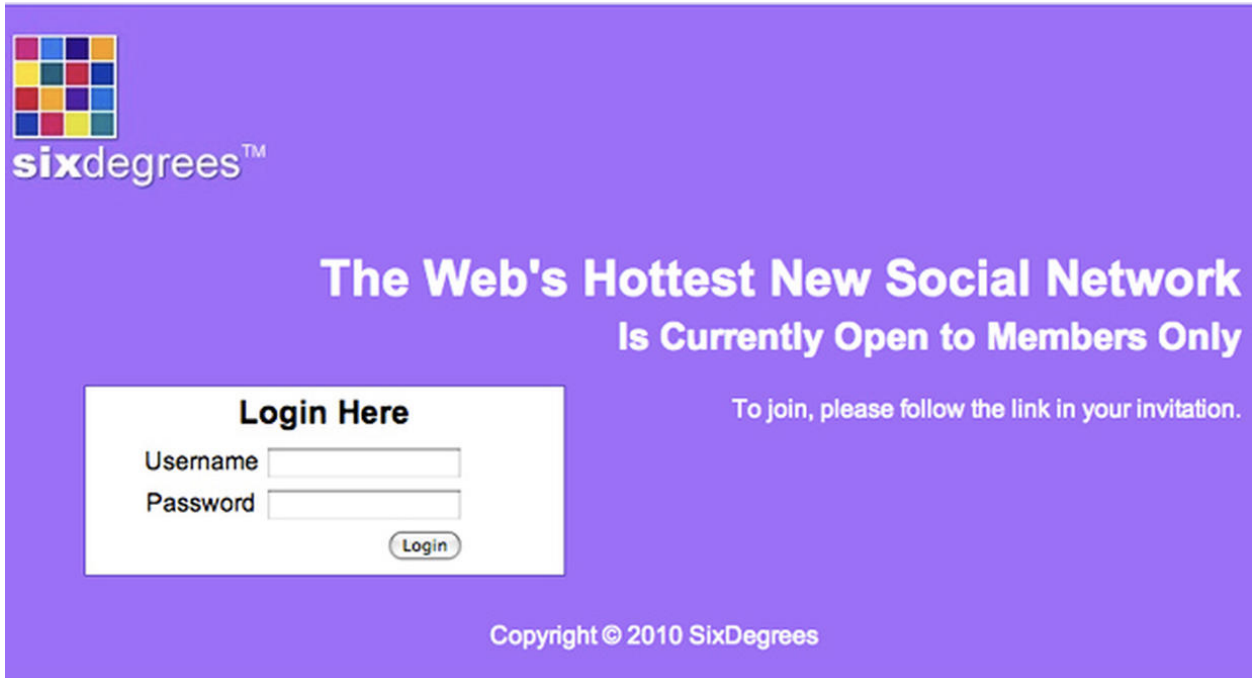


But was he the first to come up with the idea of a social network?

Not quite. (And we're not just alluding to the Winklevoss twins.)

Six Degrees, named after the six degrees of separation concept, is a social media site that was founded by Andrew Weinreich in 1996, officially launching in 1997.

You could register a profile, make friends, and find old classmates – but while the site had millions of registered users, networks were limited due to the infancy of the internet and limitations in connectivity.



Internet 2.0 web design 🍷

When blogging and instant messaging took off in 1999, facilitated by sites like Blogger and Livejournal; and programs like MSN Messenger and AOL Messenger; it paved the way for social networking to gain traction as a concept.

Here's a rundown of the major messaging services, blog sites, and social networks by year of launch:

1997:

- Six Degrees

1999:

- MSN Messenger
- AOL Messenger
- LiveJournal
- Blogger

2000:

- Habbo

2002:

- Friendster

2003:

- Skype
- LinkedIn
- MySpace

2004:

- Facebook

2005:

- YouTube
- Bebo
- Reddit

2006:

- Twitter

2007:

- Tumblr

2010:

- Pinterest
- Instagram
- Quora

2011:

- Snapchat
- Google+

2013:

- Vine

2016:

- TikTok

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and Pinterest remain six of the most popular social networking sites in the world currently.

What makes a social networking site gain – and maintain – popularity?

The fact that Facebook has been around for over 16 years speaks volumes about its enduring popularity, which few other networks have quite able to replicate.

1. Its simplicity may be one reason it's still so popular – and why it gained popularity among all age groups. Unlike Twitter, it didn't require people to understand @ tags or hashtags from the get-go.
2. It constantly iterates and tests new features, and uses user feedback to improve the product.
3. It's **addictive**. We've seen this trick replicated across many platforms: the dopamine hit is real. We're not just chasing likes now, we're chasing laughs, love, hugs...



Like



Love



Haha



Wow



Sad



Angry

4. Facebook was quick to move to mobile, ensuring they didn't waste any time meeting their users there.
5. It's diversified. Not only is there your news feed, there's Marketplace, there's Messenger, there's even Dating.
6. Facebook made smart acquisitions. They've bought 77 in total, the two headline stars being Instagram and Whatsapp.
7. It's global. Facebook has around 2.3 billion users, approximately 85% of whom are outside the US and Canada.
8. Facebook is not designed for anonymity, so it feels like a safe space. Of course, this doesn't stop determined hackers, but the spirit of Facebook is openness and authenticity.
9. Facebook Connect: this novel way of logging in to other apps or websites was another way of cementing Facebook's longevity as a way of moving seamlessly through the web with one identity.

Benefits

On a human level, social networks have clear benefits: finding old friends, staying connected to loved ones around the world, accessing education or like-minded communities, even finding love.

Others have even built careers on social media, building huge and loyal followings.

For businesses, the benefits are enormous.

During the 'glory days' (pre-advertising), social networks provided an inexpensive and effective way to reach your customers, and plenty of brands capitalized on this early on.

Gradually, though, the landscape changed, and it became harder to gain organic reach.

Still, there are many benefits of using social media for business, especially as technology has advanced.

- **Increase brand awareness** With billions of people on social media every day, it's a no-brainer to keep a brand presence on there. 60% of Instagram users say they discover new products on the platform.
- **Humanize the brand** Social media is a chance for brands to be more creative with their voice. Humans seek connection, so social is the perfect place for brands to be able to show their human side and create stronger connections with their customers.
- **Stay top of mind** With most people checking their social accounts daily, being active and present with entertaining and engaging content allows you to remain present in your customers' daily lives.
- **Increase website traffic** The reason we're all here is to ultimately drive traffic and win new customers, right? So social is a great place to share all your great blog content or offers, that'll send people right where you want them.
- **Generate leads** Social offers an easy and low-commitment way for people to express interest in your brand. Lead generation is such an

important benefit of social media for business that specific ad formats exist in order to collect leads.

- **Drive sales** No matter what your product is, chances are, you can sell it on social, or at least funnel your customers through social media.
- **Collaborate with influencers** Influencer marketing is booming, so you need to ensure your social presence is there to take advantage of it.
- **Viral opportunities** It's the holy grail of social media marketing and can't be guaranteed, but you've got to show up to be in with a chance!
- **User-generated content** Imagine if your fans just generated their own awesome content on your behalf? Well, it happens! Visual eCommerce brands usually enjoy the benefits of UGC on platforms like Instagram.
- **Customer service** It's never been easier to provide swift and efficient customer service – and it's never been more of an opportunity to show off how helpful and awesome you are!
- **Reputation management** By using social media monitoring, you can quickly divert crises or communicate PR messages.
- **Social listening and engagement** Surprise and delight customers, leads, or influencers with proactive outreach.
- **Gain insights into customer behavior and trends** By monitoring conversations on social media, you'll be able to understand what makes your audience tick, what they're looking for, and what problems they need solving.
- **Keep an eye on the competition** You can see exactly what your competition is doing, what their brand sentiment is, and their latest launches or products.
- **Highly targeted advertising** From retargeting customers with ads for your products they have already browsed, to laser-focused demographic targeting, the possibilities of social advertising are endless.

Importance

Despite some brands shunning third-party methods of customer engagement (see Lush's riposte to the ever-dwindling organic reach debacle below), social media remains important for most businesses across multiple industries.

“As a business, we don’t pay for advertising. The same applies when it comes to social media. Over the years we have created, published and cross-promoted organic content and conversations with the Lush community across multiple platforms and accounts. However, it has become more and more apparent that these genuine conversations with the Lush Community cannot grow without us paying for the reach and engagement. We are proud of what we have built organically using borrowed platforms, but it is time for a change.”

Ultimately, it is your decision as to how important social media is for your business.

But as we’ve seen from the exhaustive benefit list above, there are many, many reasons your brand should be on social media, as long as you are committed to dedicating time, energy and creativity to making your social media marketing the very best it can be.

And so, that brings us to our next section.

What is Social Media Marketing?

Simply put, social media marketing is *the use of social media platforms and websites to promote a product or service.*

Social media marketing has evolved *a lot* over the years. What used to be a fairly low-cost (often free) form of promotion, has become another paid media channel that has, in many industries, overtaken print and TV as the advertising medium of choice.

Primarily, brands use social media marketing to connect with their customers, increase brand awareness, drive traffic, and drive sales.

Generally, it is accepted that social media is more effective at a consumer engagement and awareness raising channel, though it does contribute directly and indirectly to sales, especially as networks have made it easier for brands to sell products directly through their platforms.

Common social media marketing objectives include connecting with your audience, driving engagement and traffic, creating buzz, generating leads, and driving sales.

Organic Social Media Marketing

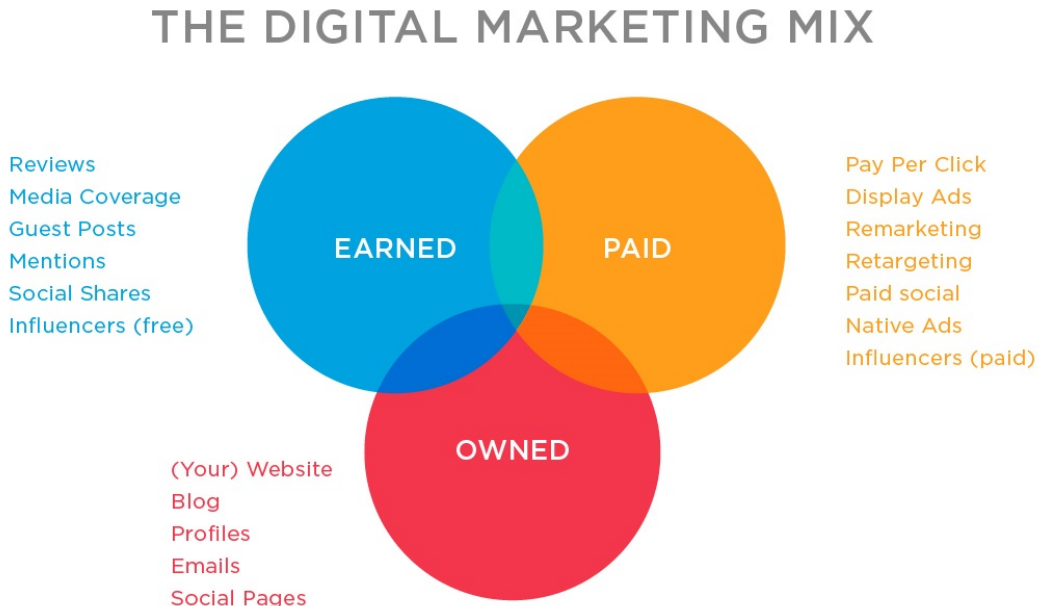
This is any form of social media content that is *not* promoted or paid for.

For example, any posts that make up the day-to-day publishing of your social media channels: the foundational content.

Paid Social Media Marketing

You guessed it – this is any form of social media content that is paid-for, including sponsored posts or brand partnerships on influencer accounts (influencer marketing).

You may have heard of the terms *owned*, *earned*, and *paid* media.

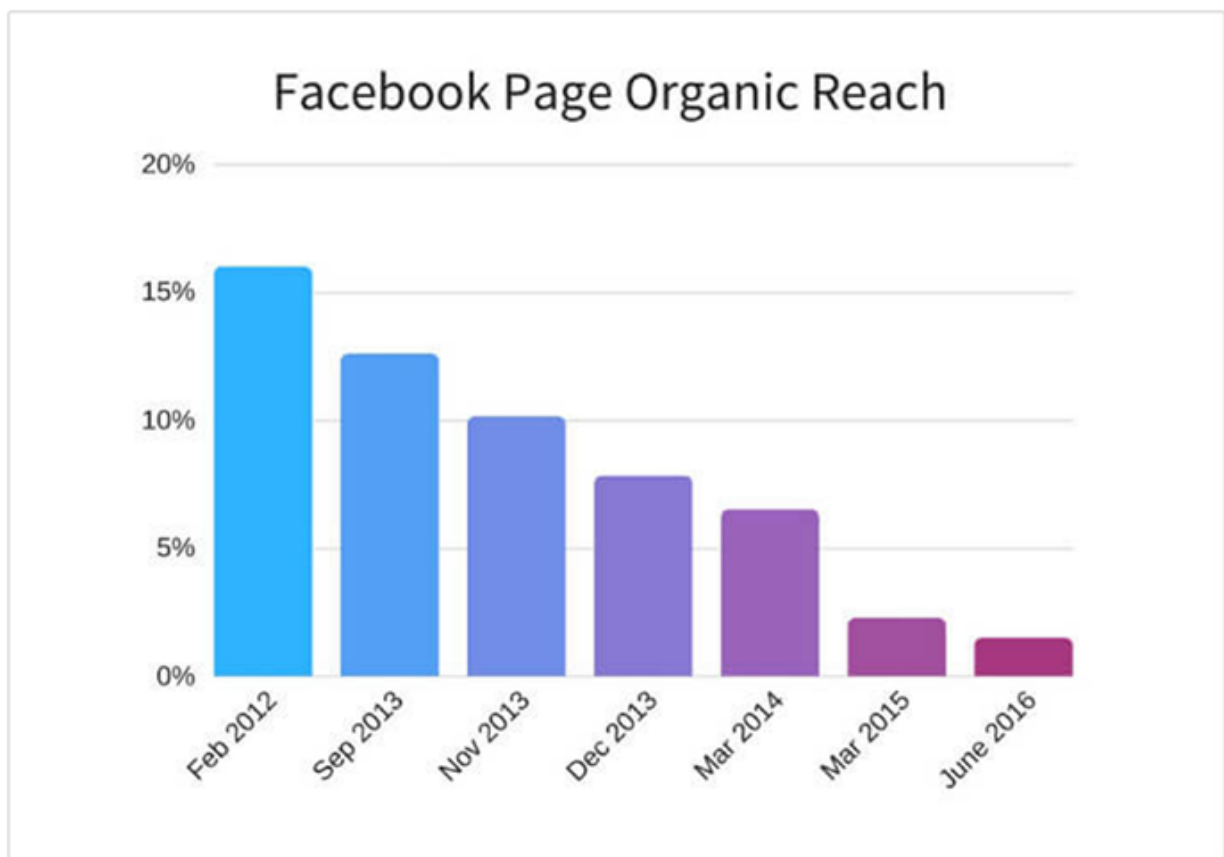


The thing is, you don't "own" your social media audiences the same way that you would, say, your email database. When you send an email newsletter to your subscribers, your email marketing software will automatically deliver

that email to the addresses you supply, unless it is flagged as spam, or it bounces.

When you publish an organic social post, not all your fans or followers will see the post. In fact, as little as 2% might see it, with the average organic reach of a post being **6%**.

This has been in decline for some years now:



Social media algorithms are used by social platforms to determine what content its users see. This is for a few reasons:

1. Content saturation. There is so much content now, that it's simply impossible to show every post to everyone.
2. Advertising \$\$\$\$. Social networks can make a fortune from brands wanting to get their message in front of their target audience.

3. Quality control. The algorithm ranks posts based on several factors like engagement, clicks, and audience behavior, and determines a general 'quality score' that determines if it will appear in newsfeeds or not.

So what does this mean?

You can't just 'hope for the best' with social media anymore.

In order to cut through the noise and be successful as a brand on social media, you need a plan.

In marketing terms, you need a **social media strategy**.

What is a Social Media Strategy?

A social strategy is an actionable, documented blueprint for how you will achieve your business goals using social media.

It's the **what, when, how, why**, and **who**.

Not only will a solid social media strategy give you a clear sense of direction, it will also keep you accountable and on track, helping you know whether you're succeeding or not in your social marketing efforts.

A social media strategy varies but a good one typically has these components:

- [Business objectives](#) (to keep you on track)
- [Social media goals and KPIs](#)
- [Audience personas](#)
- Competitor analysis
- Social media audit
- Channel purpose
- Inspiration
- Content themes
- Editorial calendar
- Assess results and optimize

How to Create a Social Media Strategy

OK, let's go through each of the stages of building a social media strategy one-by-one.

#1. Your business objectives

These are the specific and measurable targets your company will want to achieve as it grows. It's important to know these for your social strategy, as they'll act like a compass and make it easier for you to define your social goals in step 2.

Examples of Business Objectives

- **Revenue objectives:** Arguably the most important objective of all — increasing profits.
- **Operational objectives:** This is around keeping a company running smoothly. For example, improving IT software to enable more efficient processes.
- **Productivity and performance objectives:** Measuring employee satisfaction and setting departmental goals and KPIs helps to increase efficiency and productivity.
- **Customer satisfaction objectives:** Keeping customers happy and satisfied should be at the cornerstone of a good business strategy. Monitoring ratings, reviews or surveying customers for their feedback helps you keep track.
- **Growth objectives:** This can include things like traffic, subscribers, leads, followers, downloads, etc.

When you set your social media goals and KPIs in the next section, it's important to keep referring back to your business objectives to ensure that your social media objectives relate to the bigger picture.

#2. Social media goals and KPIs

1. Increasing brand awareness
2. Driving traffic
3. Generating leads
4. Driving sales
5. Boosting engagement
6. Building a community
7. Providing quality customer service

Increasing Brand Awareness

With the average user spending 2 hours and 24 minutes per day on social media per day, it's no wonder that brands want to cash in on this opportunity to catch their attention.

Brand awareness is one of the most popular reasons for businesses to maintain a social media presence.

But how do you measure it?

Social media KPIs that help measure brand awareness:

- **Reach** – How many people actually saw your post
- **Mentions** – How many people are talking about your brand
- **Shares, Retweets** – How many people are amplifying your brand
- **Saves (Instagram)** – How many people value your messaging
- **Community size/following** – How many people you can potentially reach

Driving Traffic

Obviously, you want your audience to take action from social media — a visit to your website is one step closer to your goal. This one is fortunately fairly straightforward to track.

Social media KPIs that help measure traffic:

- **Link clicks** – How many people actually clicked the link you shared
- **Share of overall traffic** – How does social traffic compare to other channels?
- **Bounce rate of social media traffic** – Are your landing pages what your audience expected?
- **Clicks on your social media posts** – Different to link clicks: are they clicking to read more, to scroll through images, to zoom in or click on hashtags?

Generating Leads

Leads are potential customers that are 'warm' to your product or service. This is essentially the first step of your sales funnel. There are many ways you can attract leads through social media, so we're sharing a few of the most common methods.

Social media KPIs that help measure lead generation:

- **Custom Audiences** – How many people have been collected in your Facebook pixel tracking? (Don't worry, more on this later).
- **Email addresses** – How many email addresses have you collected through lead gen ads, competitions, or gated content promoted through social?
- **Conversions of leads from social media:** Are these leads converting well compared to other avenues?

Driving Sales

If you have an eCommerce store, you may be able to integrate it with Instagram and Facebook, allowing you to directly measure your sales driven by social media promotions.

Social media KPIs to measure sales and revenue:

- **Direct sales** – How many people bought a product directly by clicking Buy Now?
- **Revenue from ads** – How many people are buying after seeing your social ads?

Boosting Engagement

Engagement gives you a good idea of how invested people are in your brand – whether your messaging resonates with them, whether you are coming across well, whether you're hitting the right note. High engagement can lead to increased brand awareness, loyalty, reach, and word of mouth recommendations.

Social media KPIs to measure engagement:

- **Likes, comments, shares** – How many people are interacting with your posts?
- **Engagement rate** – What percentage of your audience is interacting with your content?
- **Saves** – How many people are saving your content to refer back to?

Building a Community

Closed communities are an increasingly popular way to reach targeted groups of people: Facebook groups, Slack communities, even Twitter chats can be classified under communities.

Social media KPIs to measure community:

- **Community size** – How many people are joining your group or Slack community?
- **Group engagement** – How many people are active participants?
- **Hashtag use** – How many people participate in your Twitter chat?

Providing Quality Customer Service

Customer service is one of the top reasons brands – and customers – use social media. It's often the fastest, most direct route to solving a problem.

Social media KPIs to measure customer service efficiency:

- **Response time**: How quickly are you getting back to your customers?
- **CSAT** (Customer satisfaction score): How happy were your customers with the solution provided?

#3. Audience Personas

It's time to really think about your customer. Who are they? Where are they? What are their interests? What are their deepest desires?

If you don't have any idea, you need to do some work on personas. If you have *some* idea, you need to get your thoughts down on paper.

The more specific can you be, the better you'll be able to communicate with them.

Questions to ask yourself:

- What do my existing customer demographics look like?
- Do they differ per platform?

- What's the gender split?
- When are they online?
- How do they interact with my content currently?

That helps paint a picture of your existing customers. Now, you can get creative and start building up more details.

- Are they a student/in work?
- Are they educated to degree level?
- Do they have a family?
- Do they live in a city?
- What are their goals?
- What are their biggest challenges and frustrations?
- What brands do they like?

You'll be able to get this information from social media, your website data, CRM data, or you could even run a customer survey to really get to know your audience.

#4. Competitor analysis

It's essential to keep track of how you're performing against your competitors: you want to be sure you're the best of the bunch, right?

To do this, you'll need to perform a social media competitor analysis.

1. **Make a list of your competitors.** Chances are, you'll have an idea of your main competitors, but spend a little time digging: use Google to unearth other competitors you may not have been aware of. Track them all in a spreadsheet.
2. **Gather some data.** In your competitive analysis spreadsheet, start noting down your competitors social media handles, follower counts, most popular channel, commonly-used hashtags, examples of ads you might notice (you may start seeing retargeting ads after browsing their websites: make a note of that if you do, and screenshot the content!)
3. **Analyze the data.** Use a tool like SmarterQueue to run competitive analysis reports on your competitors. See how their engagement varies with images, links, and hashtags. Discover their top hashtags and mentions, and the best times to post on Facebook and Twitter. You can browse all of their posts, or search for specific keywords or content.



ENGAGEMENT BY CONTENT

1.4x more likes **without** a link
1.3x more retweets **with** a link

Content	Posts	Likes/Post	Retweets/Post
Link	1.7k	1.8	1.3
No Link	91	2.6	1

1.7x more likes **with** an image
2x more retweets **with** an image

Content	Posts	Likes/Post	Retweets/Post
Image	731	2.4	1.8
No Image	1.0k	1.4	0.9

ENGAGEMENT VS NUMBER OF HASHTAGS

Hashtags	Posts	Likes/Post	Retweets/Post
0	182	0.9	0.5
1	261	1.5	1
2	1,219	2	1.5

4. You can also use social listening to track mentions of your competitor brands. SmarterQueue's 'Engage' lets you track hashtags, keywords, Facebook Pages, Twitter accounts and Lists, to see relevant competitor information all in one place.
5. Assess each competitor's activity:
 - How often are they posting on each platform?
 - What's the engagement like?
 - What percentage of posts are promotional (with a link to buy), vs. engagement-driven?
 - Do they respond quickly to customer questions and queries?
 - What's their tone of voice like?
 - Which content is most popular?
 - Which content doesn't seem to work?
 - Any great ideas you're inspired by?
6. Storing this information will make it easier to come back and add to later. This should be an activity you check in with every six months or so, with a view to improving your own strategy, taking inspiration from competitors, and learning from their mistakes.

#5. Social media audit

OK, now that you've got your competitor analysis sorted, time for an audit of your own social media presence.

Thankfully, performing a social media audit doesn't have to be a long and drawn out process. All you need is a spreadsheet and you're on your way to auditing euphoria!



For our purposes, a social media audit is a procedure you perform annually to gauge if your strategy is working. Essentially, figuring out if your social media efforts are bringing you closer to meeting your business goals.

Doing an in-depth audit matters because it helps you identify your strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and challenges the business may face. Plus, your audit will tell you if your brand is being represented as it should be.

Auditing your social media is not so different from auditing your annual finances: it'll take a bit of work, but you'll feel SO good when it's done.

1. Find and claim all of your social media accounts.

The first step in your audit process is to know what you're working with.

That means starting with identifying and claiming all company social media accounts, including those that are no longer in use. Make sure to look out for profiles that may have been created long ago and forgotten about.

You don't have to do this manually; use a tool like Namechk.com to find the sites where your company username is taken. Once you've found all of your accounts, record them along with their username into your social media audit spreadsheet. For security purposes, don't record your passwords into your spreadsheet – use a tool like LastPass or 1Password to store them securely.

2. Optimize each profile.

The next step in your auditing journey is to make sure each of your profiles is optimised for its respective social network. You'll want to make sure your brand is coming across cohesively on every profile you own.

To make sure each profile can maximise results, make sure to check the following:

- Each profile has its own vanity URL.

- Profile and cover photos match brand guidelines.
- Accounts are verified (where applicable).
- Bios are up-to-date.
- Links are working correctly.
- There is no information missing.
- Who has access to the account.

3. Analyze your performance.

The next step in your audit procedure is to analyze the performance of each of your social accounts. At a minimum, you'll want to include data on:

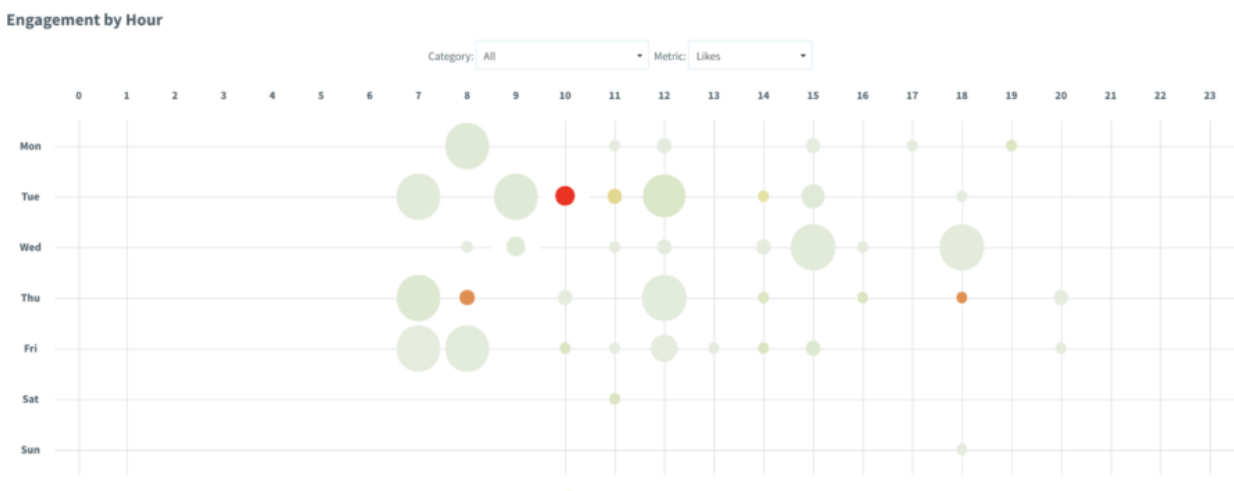
- Engagement rate
- Click-through rate
- Mentions
- Shares
- Impressions

4. Review your posting times.

Now, you need to determine if your content is posting at the right times.

SmarterQueue reports lets you see this exact information:

Social Media Engagement by Hour



The size of the circle represents how many posts were published at a certain time. The bigger the circle, the higher the number of posts. You'll see the numbers in the legend below your chart. The colour of the circle shows how much engagement your posts got at that time. The darker the colour, the more engagement was seen.

Use this chart to determine the best posting times for each profile. We recommend changing your posting times every few weeks so that when audit time comes around, you'll have lots of data to inform your next year's strategy.

5. Compare results against business goals.

Review your goals from last year and determine if they've been met, missed, or exceeded. If you've met your targets, well done! Take a moment to celebrate your achievements and set the bar even higher next time.

Missed them? Take time to consider why that is. Did you set unrealistic goals? Were there blockers that prevented you from meeting them? What were they, and how can you avoid these cropping up next time?

#6. Channel purpose

Using the data from your social media audit will help you set your channel purpose for each platform.

Can you see trends in content performance for each platform? Take your top 10 posts of the last year for each platform.

What insights can you glean from analysing these posts? Write them down.

For example:

- Video content outperformed other mediums on Facebook.
- Short and concise tips performed better on Twitter.
- Blog articles drove more comments on LinkedIn than Instagram

These insights will help you build your channel purpose.

Here's an example of a set of channel purposes:

1. Our **Facebook Page** is where our customers come for high-quality videos, product updates, thought leadership, promotions and tutorials.
2. Our **Facebook Group** is where customers can build relationships with likeminded people, ask questions, share tips and gain advice.
3. **Twitter** is where our customers can get speedy customer service, quick social media tips, and take part in Twitter chats.
4. Our **Instagram Grid** is like our storefront: beautifully designed imagery that builds our brand and tells our story.

5. Our **Instagram Stories** are where we show our informal side: behind the scenes content, videos and quick tips and insights.

#7. Content themes

Now you've got your channel purposes, it's time to set your content themes.

Think of these like the 'pillars' of your content strategy. For example...

- Thought leadership
- Questions
- Tutorials
- Testimonials/Case Studies
- Promotions
- Behind the Scenes

You can use SmarterQueue to categorize your content by theme, which helps you balance out your content through the week.

Think about the different mediums you can use for each theme: gifs, videos, blog posts, photos, carousels, infographics... the possibilities are endless.

#8. Editorial calendar

An editorial calendar, or content calendar, is a way of mapping out future content across your social channels. It can take many forms, such as a Trello board, spreadsheet, [Asana](#) board, or [Google Doc](#). Using a collaborative, cloud-based system means you can have multiple editors working on the calendar in real-time. A well-maintained editorial calendar is the social marketer's secret weapon.

You can use one record specific calendar dates and national days to enable you to think ahead and pre-plan your calendar as far in advance as possible, utilizing it to create marketing assets like blog posts, images, infographics, and videos.

If you spend just 30 minutes at the beginning of the week or month to fill an editorial calendar out for the week or month ahead, trust us – it'll save you time in the long-run.

If you do all your research on a Monday morning, then you're set for the week and can simply consult the editorial calendar each time you need to create a piece of content – no more frantic browsing or panicked searches for keywords. It's all there

for you. In a perfect world, you'd have this set up for the following week or month, so you're not working day-to-day.

We've created a downloadable [Content Calendar Template](#) that you can duplicate for your own business.

[Your Brand]'s Editorial Content Calendar											
Due Date	Publish Date	Topic	Title	Type	Content Details	Keywords	Design Needed?	Objective(s)	Target Audience	Link to Task	Completed?
8/21/2019	8/28/2019	Social Media	The Ultimate Guide to Running a Social Media Audit	Longform blog	An in-depth run-through of a social media audit from scratch, with screenshots and downloadable template	social media audit	1 x Template	Leads	SM Managers	Project Management Task Link	☐
8/22/2019	8/29/2019	Content Marketing	How to Kickstart Your Content Strategy for 2020	Longform blog	Detailed guide to rebooting your content strategy for a new year	content strategy 2020		Leads	SM Managers/Entrepreneurs		☐
8/23/2019	8/30/2019	Email Marketing	11 Effective Email Subject Line Formulas To Boost Your Open Rates	Listicle	11 quick formulas for effective email headlines, with examples from our own data and others	amazing email subject line ideas		Leads	Content Marketers		☐
8/24/2019	8/31/2019	Social Media	VIDEO: How to Use SmarterQueue Analytics to Supercharge Your Social Strategy	Video	Loom video run-through of analytics	social analytics	Video	Trial	SM Managers		☐
8/25/2019	9/1/2019	Influencer Marketing	7 Things to Know About Working With Influencers	Listicle	Simple listicle with examples of influencer dos and don'ts	influencer marketing		Leads	Marketers		☐
8/26/2019	9/2/2019	News Roundup	This Week in Social: The Latest News	Shortform blog	Curated reads from social media news landscape	social media news		Leads	SM/Business		☐
8/27/2019	9/3/2019	Content Marketing	Five Minutes with... Suzie Ryan, Content Marketer at SmarterQueue	Q&A	10 - 15 questions and answers	content marketing	Headshot	Trial	Marketers		☐
8/28/2019	9/4/2019	Social Media	How [Brand] Went from 2% Engagement to 35%	Case Study	In-depth dive into success of customer, with quotes, screenshots and results	SmarterQueue review	Quote, graph	Trial	Startup Founders, SM Managers		☐
8/29/2019	9/5/2019	Email Marketing	This is Why Your Emails Aren't Converting	Longform blog	In-depth look at various test cases, with real examples from our own email marketing and others	Improve email conversions		Leads	Marketers		☐
8/30/2019	9/6/2019	Social Media	The Five-Minute Social Media Audit	Shortform blog	Quick and dirty tips on how to run a social media audit	Social media audit	Graph	Trial	SM Managers		☐
8/31/2019	9/7/2019	Social Media		Interview							☐
9/1/2019	9/8/2019	Social Media		Video							☐
9/2/2019	9/9/2019	Social Media		Longform blog							☐
9/3/2019	9/10/2019	Social Media		Longform blog							☐
9/4/2019	9/11/2019	Social Media		Listicle							☐
9/5/2019	9/12/2019	Social Media		Video							☐
9/6/2019	9/13/2019	Social Media		Listicle							☐
9/7/2019	9/14/2019	Social Media		Shortform blog							☐

Here's what the columns are for:

Due Date: The date you need to have the content finished. Even if you're a one-man-band, it's important to stick to deadlines for your content, so you have enough time to pass it over to other departments (like design, for any supporting graphics), or for proofing.

Publish Date: This is the date you want your content to go live. Imagine that, having content ready in the pipeline ahead of time!

Topic: Here, you can choose a drop-down to assign your piece of content a topic. You can easily change the preset topics to your own (instructions are in the template). Haven't thought about your topics? Well, now is the time. Use our presets as inspiration, and adjust them for your own niche.

Title: This is a working title – when you draft your content, this may well change, but it's good to have an idea of what your content title will be when you're in the planning stage.

Type: Another dropdown for you to choose from: longform, shortform, Q&A, interview, video, whitepaper, listicle – again, you can adjust the options to better match your options. Or, perhaps these will give you some inspiration!

Content Details: This is where you can document your idea in a little more detail. For example, if you've just had a bolt ⚡ of inspiration for an article, instead of scribbling it down in your Mac notes, just write it down here. For example: A long-form article about kickstarting your content strategy, with a downloadable editorial calendar.

Keywords: This is where you include the SEO keywords you're planning to use for the content.

Design Needed: A way of preplanning design resources. Think about whether you'll need supporting imagery that you'll need an expert to create. For example, an infographic, or making graphs come to life.

Objective: What's your goal with this piece of content? Is it signups to try your product? Is it lead generation? Or are you driving traffic to a landing page of some sort for a campaign? It helps to have that focus when you're writing your content so you can ensure you don't go off-track.

Target Audience: Similarly, it helps to have the target audience in mind when you're writing. If it's a whitepaper on in-depth data analytics, the audience will likely be different from a listicle on influencer marketing dos and don'ts.

Link to Task: If you use a project management tool like Asana or Trello, you can link to the task here.

And finally – the checkbox! Because we ALL love ticking things off to-do lists. Don't even pretend that you don't!

#9. Assess results and optimize

It's important to check in with your social media performance on a regular basis to compare against your objectives and KPIs.

Set yourself a monthly reminder to fill in your results and see how they're tracking against your goals.

Creating a social media report isn't just about looking at what content performed the best. **You need to turn the numbers into actionable insights.**

It's also important to remember that you shouldn't make decisions based on just a few data points. Engagement rates can be quite random and are influenced by many different factors. Only when you've posted similar content a few dozen times, or tried different timings over a couple of months, can you begin to draw any meaningful conclusions.

[[Reporting template in progress]] Slides

