The Smart Business Owner’s Guide to Social Media
Feel like you’re being left behind?

Every day you’re online you see more and more of your competitors leveraging social media for their businesses and you don’t even know where to start. “What networks should I be using? What should I be posting? How do I get more people to see my pages?” It’s hard to keep up.

However, where there is struggle there is great potential for success. With 93% of social marketers generating more exposure for their businesses with their social media efforts¹, there’s a lot of opportunity for you to leapfrog over your competitors in the social media marketing space.

That’s where this guide comes in! We’ll explore the most common challenges that small business owners are experiencing and give you tips on how to compete and win in the social ecosystem we’re living in now.
Where to start

One of the main challenges many small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) face when they’re starting off on social media is the intimidating number of platforms that they’re expected to be on. From Facebook to TikTok, it seems like every day new options sprout up or an old favorite goes away.

Though it can be overwhelming, the benefits of having your business on social media far outweigh the tough choices you have to make.

A recent study shows that:

77% of consumers are more likely to buy from brands they follow on social — and who wouldn’t love more customers?
Time to get selective

The key to solving the social media network problem lies in the fact that you don’t have to be everywhere. In fact, spreading yourself too thin is a pitfall many small business owners stumble into. When you’re choosing which social networks to be involved with, it’s okay to be picky.

**Ask yourself these questions:**

- How popular is this network?
- Do potential customers spend time on it?
- Are my competitors there?
- Does it make sense for my business?
Finding the right fit

Here’s some data on three of the most popular networks out there and how they could potentially work for your business. Take some time to research each platform and think about your answers to the questions from before.

**69% of U.S. adults actively use Facebook**³
If your customers use the Internet, they’re very likely to be on Facebook. The first thing you’ll need is a business page which will work as an extension of your business on Facebook. In addition to making your business discoverable, it’s an easy way for you to share updates and more with the people who matter most— your customers.

**Twitter has 145 million daily active users**⁴
An account on Twitter would give you a chance to interact with your customer-base in a real-time and fast paced way. The most successful brands on Twitter are using it to not only promote their own messages but to also quickly address the interests and needs of their customers.

**37% of online adults use Instagram**
And with over 200 million Instagram users visiting at least one business profile daily, there’s a staggering amount of potential business on the platform.³ You can get ahead of the curve and create an account for your business now, giving you and your business a visual way to connect with people.
The content conundrum

If you’ve taken our advice so far, you’re all set up with accounts on the platforms that you feel will be the most beneficial to your business. Congratulations! You’ve taken the first step. Now what? Just having a presence isn’t enough. You need to reach the right customers at the right time and maintain an active presence on the different platforms. That means it’s time to start posting.

A lot of social media marketing plans collapse at this stage. But that doesn’t have to be your story. Filling your pages with interesting and engaging content doesn’t have to take up all of your time. It’s all about knowing the most efficient ways to produce your own content while also sourcing useful content from other places online.

Among the 1.3 billion Twitter accounts out there, 44% made an account and left before ever sending a tweet.\(^6\)
Change things up

As you create and post content, think about what your customers find interesting and inspiring.

**Experiment with different kinds of posts:**

- Photos of your products or work
- Useful or interesting links
- Inspiring quotes

A great idea is to use your "Sent" email folder as a content source. Anytime you answer a customer question, you're flexing your expertise - why not use it as content for a potential social post?

Along with your original content, you can use relevant content you come across online to bolster your offerings. This is referred to as **curated content** and it is wildly popular on social media. By sharing curated content from relevant and popular sources, small businesses can gain the trust of their audience with ease and build credibility.

Make sure the final piece of content you publish is of high value. If you land on some questionable content, discard it; it's part of what curation is!
Keep the conversation going

One of the primary benefits of having your business on social media is that it works as a new channel of communication between you and your customers (both actual and potential).

While the opportunities in social customer service are tremendous, there are also significant challenges for SMBs. The fact of the matter is that people on social media can be quite demanding when it comes to interacting with businesses. A good rule of thumb to follow is: if people took time out of their day to interact with you or your business in some way, they probably expect you to do the same for them. If the phone was ringing at your business, you wouldn’t just let it ring without answering it, right?

**Treat social interactions the same way.**

84% of US online shoppers review at least one social media site before making a purchase.7
Almost all of the networks offer the ability to boost the reach of your posts by paying. The tools they offer as part of their paid advertising option let you drill down into the details and send your message directly to the types of customers you want.

The challenge most businesses face is that they don’t know how or who to target. Or they don’t know how to measure the effectiveness of their paid campaigns in order to optimize them.

The truth about organic reach

One of the final hurdles most small business owners never clear is the “If you build it, they will come” fallacy – the belief that creating a profile and posting is enough to get the word out about your business.

With some recent algorithm changes, publishers on Facebook have reported a 52% decline in organic reach on their posts.⁸

That is where paid advertising comes in.
Get the word out

Getting the most out of your paid content on social media requires a few steps. The first step is understanding what your goals are. What actions would you like the people who see your content to take? The more specific your goal is, the better.

Some potential goals include:

- Building awareness about your business and social page
- Driving traffic to your website
- Gathering information from prospects

Once you decide what you hope to achieve, you need to come up with a plan to find your most effective messaging. The most successful marketers consistently follow one rule that keeps them ahead of the game in this regard — ABT, Always. Be. Testing. Spend time testing your approaches, devote some of your budget to figuring out which one is producing more results (based on the goals you chose) and then put the bulk of your budget behind that option.

The last thing you have to do is keep your eye on how your paid content is performing. Platforms like Facebook offer tracking pixels that allow you to track how people behave once they’ve clicked on your content. Using the data gained from these pixels will allow you to make the necessary changes when your results start lagging. That way, you ensure that your content is helping you achieve the goal you laid out for it. Your most successful campaigns will probably arise from the result of continual optimization.
A social media presence for your business is a must

If you hope to compete, you need to have accounts on the networks where your consumer base is looking for you. Simply having an account is just the beginning. You need to fill those pages with posts that your customers would find relevant or interesting, while also monitoring your pages and communicating with your audience when they reach out to you.

Then, you need to do what you can to get those posts seen by as many people as possible, including buying paid advertising. It sounds like a lot, but that’s because it is. However, if you follow the advice in this guide you’ll be one step ahead and can start seeing the benefits that social media marketing can bring to your business.

There’s no shame in asking for help:

If it all becomes too much or too overwhelming, don’t let it all just fall apart. Partner with an expert to handle your social media marketing efforts for you. Having a team of social media specialists handle this critical aspect of marketing for your business can help to ensure that you are maximizing opportunities to create awareness for your brand, using the right social media channels, and getting results.
Better results working together

Why work harder when you could market smarter? At Hibu, our goal is to help you achieve your goals, by building you a complete digital marketing “solution” — a custom, interconnected digital marketing campaign that works to maximize your results and deliver what you want. Tell us what you want to achieve – more visibility, more visitors, more leads… or all three — and we’ll build you a smart, easy digital marketing solution designed to deliver the results you want.

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Hibu makes it easy for you to get everything you need to advertise your business online – all from a single partner – saving you time, money and frustration. Hibu is a Facebook Marketing Partner, Google Ads Premier Partner, Google My Business Partner, and Microsoft Advertising Select Channel Partner. Hibu – Smart Digital Marketing Made Easy.