

PICKING THE RIGHT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

Half the battle in creating a successful social media strategy is to select the correct social media platform(s) for your business. Going to where your clients *are* and not where you *want them to be* is a huge step in the right direction. Here’s a breakdown of the most popular social media sites and who they broadly appeal to:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Who You’ll Find There</i>
Facebook	<p>Still the most popular social network. Used by both businesses and individuals. Has the ability to create personal profiles and business pages plus the ability to create an interest <i>group</i> in a public or private capacity. Facebook algorithm restrictions on Business pages in the last year have resulted in some downturn of popularity with small business owners. It can now be challenging for Business pages to get their posts onto the “walls” of individuals thus restricting their ability to be <i>liked</i> and <i>shared</i> without the business first investing in some paid advertising or “post boosting”. Facebook has admitted that their goal is to share each page post with only 1-2% of that page’s followers unless the post is boosted (there is a charge). However, the benefits of having a page for small business still remain: helps create good SEO for website (Google likes to see social media links to and from your website), increases web visibility during a search, provides integrated analytics, can be effective as part of an overall marketing plan, can still get a good number of likes and shares if the business understands how, and clients can still be directed there. Worth remembering that Facebook fans check their <i>walls</i> around 15 times per day using their phones.</p>	<p>Everyone apart from youth audiences ie under 25s. Though currently new features are being developed in an effort to entice them back.</p>
LinkedIn	<p>Networking platform for professionals, entrepreneurs and businesses. LinkedIn is the oldest social network (listed here) but because of the specialized nature of its participants, it is less popular than Facebook. Tends to be best for established businesses and professionals who already have a solid reputation. Has a very distinct purpose – to promote yourself or your business to other business owners mainly to obtain/advertise new employment or professional opportunities. Has useful group features and the ability to post blogs/articles online or link to your own website. Those who put more effort into the platform and fully utilize all the features find it very effective in terms of networking. Google loves LinkedIn and a profile will often outrank a website in search results. Unless your target audience is other businesses (ie you have a business to business model) usually, other social media platforms will suit you better in terms of finding clients.</p>	<p>Professionals, Entrepreneurs, Business Owners, Business to Business sales model.</p>

Name	Description	Who You'll Find There
Twitter	<p>After Facebook, Twitter is the most popular social network. The initial 140 character text post <i>tweet</i> has now been enhanced to 280 and to include the ability to add pictures, video and website links increasing its appeal and flexibility to the business community. Topic searching is based on hashtags. Live tweet conversations are a popular way to have a more extensive discussion amongst a business audience. Has a reputation as being one of the most “relaxed” of the networks where the character of the individuals tweeting tends to dominate. From that perspective it is indispensable for showing the human side of a brand. Conversations can be fast and there are multiple opportunities to connect with clients or potential clients in a single conversation. Users of Twitter act quickly, checking their feeds mostly on their phone multiple times an hour.</p>	<p>Everyone in the teen to 50 age bracket. Teenagers though tend to congregate around the celebrity accounts.</p>
YouTube	<p>Now included as a social network and search engine in its own right – not just a video sharing platform. User accounts are in the form of <i>channels</i> which can be branded and described in a similar way to other social media account pages. YouTube is probably one of the most versatile of the big networks as it can promote a business in a number of ways ie advertising/promotional videos, training videos, slide based presentations, interview format (question and answer), guest interviews and pure informational material. Videos from other channels can also be shared to your own, adding variety to your offerings. Hyperlinks can now also be shared within the video itself to encourage viewers to visit the website. Videos can also be shared across other social media platforms. The ability for viewers to rate and comment on the videos facilitates all-important social proof and conversation. Recent changes to the platform’s advertising policy (as of November 2018) are making it more difficult for small accounts to advertise. It can still be used to engage with your audience however, in a multitude of ways.</p>	<p>Everyone</p>
Instagram	<p>Just like Pinterest, Instagram is another social platform focused on more visual content. Businesses should take this fact into consideration particularly when planning their content posting campaigns. Now owned by Facebook, advertising has become a prominent part of the platform, as has the video and story element. Suitable for all business types, but has niches identified by hashtags. Still currently an underused platform for businesses, and worth investigating for most business types. App only.</p>	<p>Youth to adult orientated audience. 17% of adults in the United States using this site as well as 43% of mobile users aged between 18 and 29.</p>

<i>Name</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Who You'll Find There</i>
<i>Pinterest</i>	Pinterest has only 70 million active users on a monthly basis but it can generate more referral traffic than other social networks combined, including Google+, LinkedIn, Twitter and Reddit. Pinterest was originally known as a site where housewives can share recipes, photos of bags, dresses and cosmetics on pin boards during the early days of its conception. Since then, the network has evolved into one of the fastest growing site for sharing visual content that includes photos, images, and videos. Pinterest has now integrated advertising into their platform, and many people use the site as their preferred search engine, although it was not initially designed for that purpose.	Currently has a 4:1 female user ratio but this is changing to include businesses which will appeal to multiple demographics. Up to 21% of US adults are using the platform.
<i>SnapChat</i>	Still popular for the youth audience. Businesses are using SnapChat to appeal to that demographic. Known as the first social media platform to emphasize communication via images (was predominantly responsible for building the "selfie" generation.) App only.	Youth targeting. 60% of users are under 25.