

Intro

Marketers love a buzzword, and social media marketing is one that has been around for a number of years and it shows no sign of disappearing soon.

In a nutshell, “social media marketing refers to the process of gaining traffic or attention through social media channels”, [Searchengineland](#).

Traffic refers to the people who visit your website, landing page, ecommerce store or other online sites. These visitors have been directed to your site from social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram or Pinterest.

Around 91% of businesses use social media marketing as it is a quick way to market your business to a growing global audience.

Research published in February 2017 by [Brandwatch](#) shows that:

- there are 2.3 billion social media users
- 1 million new active social media users are added each day
- Facebook and Youtube are the biggest social media channels with 1.71 billion & 1 billion users respectively.

How do you know if you and your business are ready for marketing on social media platforms? Aidem Media have put together this comprehensive guide that will help you decide if you are ready to take on the world of social media marketing.

Do your customers use social media?

Before you start marketing your business on social media, it is important to determine if your customers use social media.

Finding where your ideal customer hangs out socially may seem like finding a needle in a haystack. It could be, but there are methods that make finding your customers online, easy. These include:

1. **Asking:** survey your existing customers on what social media channels they use. Online tools like SurveyMonkey or SmartSurvey enable you to create online surveys for free.
2. **Analysing your existing customer demographics:** are your customers male or female, what age band do they fall into, where do they live, what are their interests...
3. **Using social media analytical tools:** knowing who your customers are will make it easier to find them online. All social media channels have analytical tools that can tell you the number of people who have profiles based on factors such as; age, gender, geographical areas, interests, job titles and much more.

Once you have found which social media channel(s) your ideal customer uses, you then need to decide what you want to gain from social media marketing.

What are your main goals for social media?

Some businesses think they should have a social media presence because everyone else does. These businesses often don't see a ROI (return on investment) from social media as they are not using it strategically.

They haven't planned out what they want to achieve from engaging with social media and don't tailor their content accordingly. If you are unsure what you want to achieve from social media marketing, consider the following:

- **Increase your brand awareness:** getting your name known
- **More traffic:** directing online visitors to a specific site or landing page
- **Talk directly to your customers:** send targeted messages to your customers
- **Increase brand loyalty:** build a relationship with your customers
- **Give your business personality:** differentiate yourself from your competitors by creating a brand persona for your business

Building a strong brand on social media is extremely important. Customers who feel they can relate to a brand are; more loyal, will recommend you to friends and family and will repeatedly buy from you.

If you want to achieve measurable results from social media marketing you have to put time and money into it.

Ask yourself 'Do I have the resource(s) to do this?'

Do you have time and budget?

Research published by [nextweb.com](https://www.nextweb.com) shows that on average a business dedicates 10% of its revenue to marketing. For large organisations this can be anything from £3200 to £5600 per month.

These figures are not realistic for smaller businesses whose revenue will be smaller.

Instead, smaller businesses must focus on marketing efforts that will give them the largest return possible per £ spent. As social platforms become more sophisticated, social media marketing is proving to give the greatest return.

The best advice we can give is to spend your money wisely:

- Focus your marketing efforts on the channels where your customers hang out
- Use promoted adverts or boosted posts for key business messages
- Use quality, royalty free images
- Invest in original, informative and well-written content that is tailored to each social media channel

Social media marketing should be viewed as a long term marketing strategy and adequate time has to be set aside for it. [Industry research](#) shows that people who are new to social media spend on average 5 hours per week on social media marketing. This figure increases as they become more confident on it.

A key point to consider is: Do I have the time and money to spend on social media marketing?

Should I hire or outsource a social media manager?

If you've decided that you don't personally have the time to oversee social media marketing, you have 2 options: hire a social media manager or outsource it.

Bringing a social media manager into the business comes with its own challenges; advertising the post, interviewing candidates, training... If this is something you are not ready to do, outsourcing your social media marketing will be the best option.

When outsourcing your social media marketing you need to consider:

- Who will handle the social media marketing for your business
- How many hours per week you want them to work on it
- If they will be responsible for handling the entire social media marketing process
- Or, if you want them to handle the initial set-up and work with you on a consultancy basis after that

How you decide to work with a social media manager depends on how comfortable you are with someone else being in control of your brand's voice.

Most businesses find that working in collaboration with a social media manager works best for them as they have control over what messages are sent out but the process of posting, engaging and replying is handled for them.

Have you defined your 'brand voice'?

In the previous section we mentioned 'brand voice'. [Contently](#), defines brand voice as "the traits that make up the brand's personality". These personality traits are what make the brand unique.

It's not just big brands that can define their brand voice; smaller brands can create one as well. To define your brand voice:

1. Critically review your current content and marketing messages. Ask yourself: Do they sound too generic? Are they similar to a competitor's?
2. Pick pieces of content that you feel represent your brand and pin them in a prominent position so you can refer back to them when writing new pieces
3. Create a set of words that you feel describe your brand and refer to these in your messages
4. Create a brand voice chart outlining what you would say and what you wouldn't say
5. Give a copy of the brand voice chart to everyone involved in crafting the brands communication
6. Monitor all content to see if it is consistent with the brand voice

At the end of each quarter, review all the content and see which aspects of the brand voice worked better and revise the next quarter's content accordingly.

What will your social media strategy be?

If you want to see measurable results from your social media activity you have to create a social media strategy based around your goals.

A social media strategy should contain:

- Details of who your customers are
- Information on which social media channels they use
- Types of messages they engage with
- What social media channels your brand will focus on
- Summary of topics you will cover on social media
- Examples of imagery or video that can be used
- Pointers on how messages should be written
- Name(s) of who will be responsible for creating and posting the content
- Number of posts or tweets that need to be scheduled each day
- What action you want the customer to take i.e. call to action

For many small businesses, developing a social media strategy can be time consuming and confusing. If not done correctly, it can end up being costly and damaging to the brand.

Working with a marketing agency to create a social media strategy will ensure that your brand voice and social media messages are reaching the right people on the right social media channels at the most optimised time.