

NetElixir™ presents:

X= SOCIAL MEDIA

A Guide To Organic Social Media Best Practices



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On behalf of NetElixir

INTRODUCTION

Prepare to make your mark on social media. Whether your company already has a social media presence or you're just getting started, we know you will find value in this ebook. We provide tips for those just getting started and also share insider knowledge to keep your pages optimized.

Throughout this ebook, you'll find insights about all the major social media networks, from heavy-hitter Facebook to newbie TikTok. We walk you through the best practices for each channel so you can make your posts the most effective. We help you find your audience, develop your post style, and share effective content. Using our advice, you're sure to grow your following.

This ebook will teach you the 10 best practices for social media:

- Chapter 1 helps you find your audience by providing statistics about the users of each social channel.
- Chapter 2 explains the nuances of each channel and why you need to change your posts for each platform.
- Chapter 3 walks you through optimizing your profile on each social channel for the best results.
- Chapter 4 asks you to think about the best way to speak to your audience and define your voice and style.
- Chapter 5 tells you about creating a posting schedule and optimizing it as you gain insights.
- Chapter 6 provides the most recent learnings about using hashtags and emojis in your posts.
- Chapter 7 helps you find unique ways to engage that take your audience and your brand into account.
- Chapter 8 gives you tips for turning your fans into ambassadors organically.
- Chapter 9 encourages you to stay nimble and reactive to keep up with current trends.
- Chapter 10 advises you develop a plan for dealing with negative feedback.

Our best practices can be put into place whether your company is retail or hospitality, or if you provide goods or services. They are widely applicable, so you can use them whether you're running your own small business or you work on the e-commerce or social team at a larger business.

As you develop your social media pages, one of the most important things you can do is create valuable and shareable content. Here at NetElixir, we use the VAST Methodology to define all of our content.

- V stands for Voice, or how you want to speak to your audience. See Chapter 4 for more about this.
- A is for Audience: who you're speaking to with that voice. We'll cover finding your audience in Chapters 1 and 2.
- S stands for Storytelling. What is your brand's story, and how do you want to tell that story? Chapter 3 is the start of defining your brand, but storytelling weaves throughout all of your posts.
- T is for Testing. Test different kinds of posts at different times and optimize as you gain insights. We'll discuss this in Chapter 5.

As you go through the ebook and begin crafting your brand's content, keep the VAST Methodology in mind.

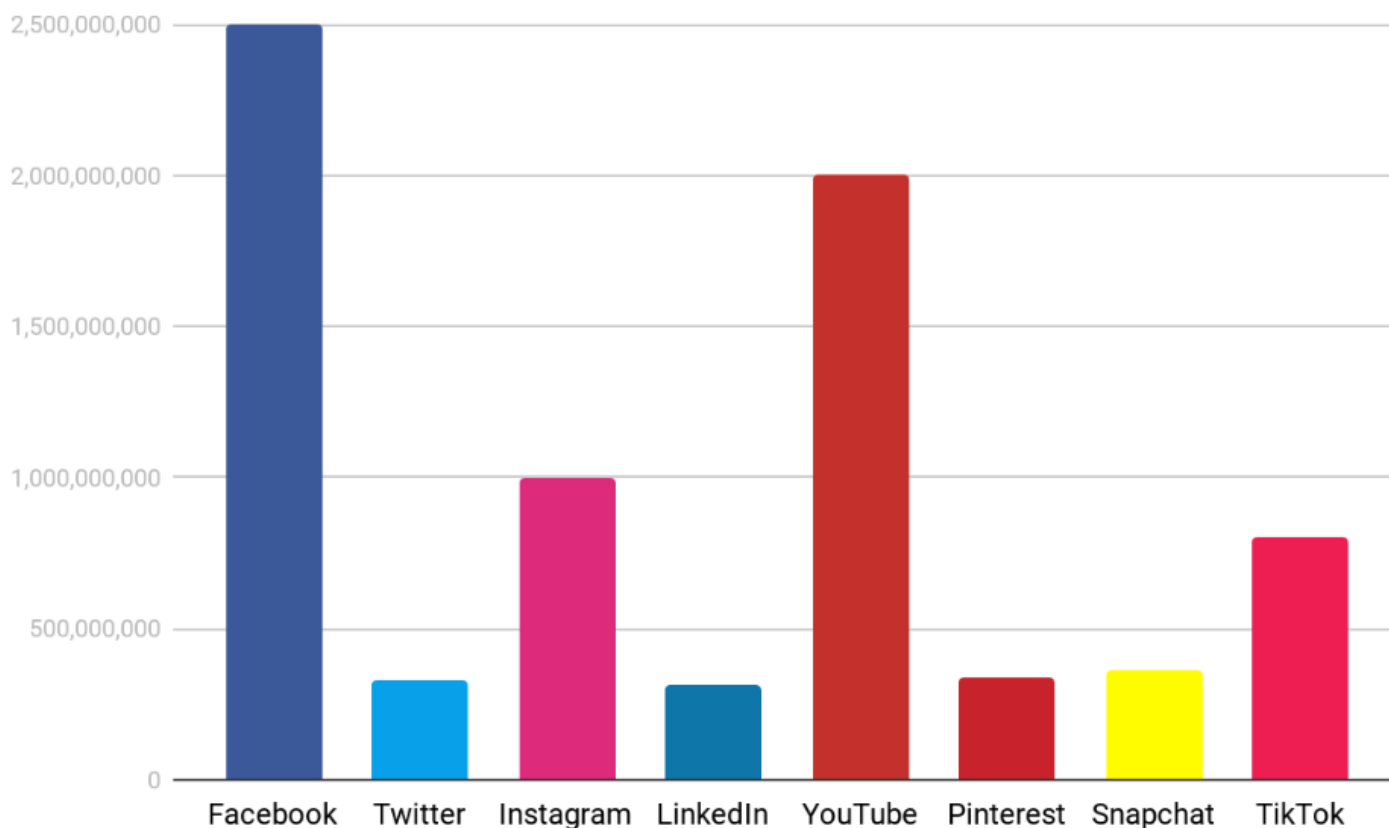
NOW: GET READY TO MAKE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE THE BEST IT CAN BE!

CHAPTER 1: FIND YOUR AUDIENCE

“If you build it, he will come.” — *Field Of Dreams*

To get the most value out of your organic [social marketing](#), it's vital to go where your target audience is. You don't want to waste valuable resources on developing pages if your prospective customers won't see them. If your target audience is over 50 years old, for example, there is little point in building a profile on a channel that's made for Gen Z. In this chapter, we'll break down the major players in the social media game. We will discuss what they're typically used for and [who uses them](#). Remember the VAST Methodology? Let's define your “A” — Audience!

Social Channels By Active Users



This chart provides a quick overview of all of the social channels we'll cover in this chapter and their monthly active users globally. You can clearly see which channels are more popular and which are more niche. That doesn't mean, however, that you should discount the less popular channels. It all depends on who you're trying to reach.

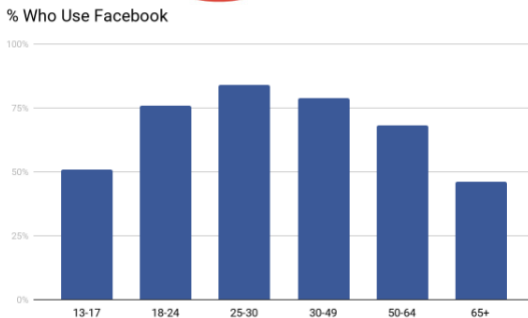
FACEBOOK

Facebook is the world's biggest social media platform, with 2.5 billion monthly active users. It's the #4 most visited site on the internet according to alexa.com, an Amazon company. If you're looking to market your product on social media, Facebook is the place to start.

Businesses typically use Facebook for everything from engaging fans to sharing discounts to posting business updates. It's a catch-all platform and truly something every business should have. Your Facebook page is easier to update than your website and allows for direct interaction with your customers.



Nearly everyone is represented on Facebook. 69% of US adults use the site, and there's a roughly even male/female user base (46% men, 54% women).

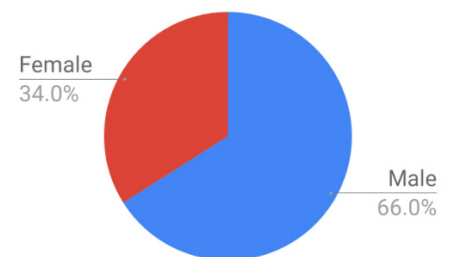


No matter which age group you're trying to reach, you'll be able to find your audience on Facebook. This chart shows the breakdown of demographics by age group as the percentage of that group that uses Facebook. Nearly every group has over 50% presence, and 18-49 are all over 75% presence. The 25-30 age group sees a whopping 84% Facebook usage.

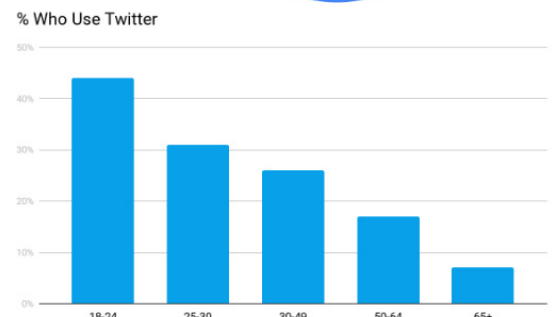
TWITTER

Twitter has been around for nearly as long as Facebook, but its usage is much more niche. The site is typically used for posting news and as a customer service outlet. Twitter moves very quickly and it's difficult for general postings to be seen. Twitter chats are discussions that take place on a hashtag at scheduled times. They are a great way to build your community on Twitter and share your expertise on a subject.

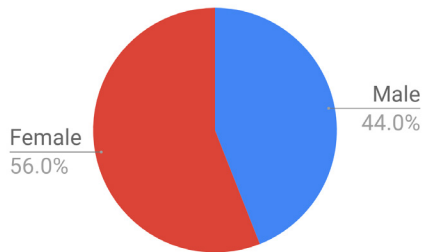
Twitter has 330 million monthly active users worldwide and 64.2 million in the US. Just 22% of US adults use Twitter, and demographics skew heavily male (66% male vs. 34% female). Users tend to have high incomes (32% of those who make \$75K+ are on Twitter) and are well-educated (32% of those with a college degree or higher degree are on Twitter).



This chart shows the breakdown of demographics by age group as the percentage of that group that uses Twitter. Twitter is a young person's game, with user numbers declining with age.



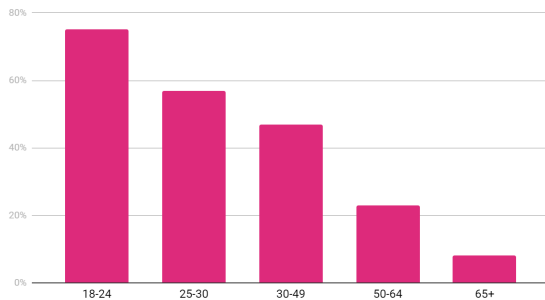
INSTAGRAM



[Instagram](#) is an app for sharing pictures and videos with captions. This app is huge with 1 billion monthly active users and 120 million in the US. 63% of US users log in daily. Instagram is especially popular with teenagers. 35% of US teens rate Instagram as their favorite social network, and 73% say Instagram is the best way for brands to reach them. Instagram skews slightly female (56% female/44% male users).

Because it is a photo-sharing app, Instagram is perfect for showing off your products in a visually creative way. Instagram also offers “Stories,” which are posts that disappear after 24 hours. You can add music, stickers, GIFs, polls, and more to stories. Stories are a great way to engage with your fans. Many companies also work with Instagram influencers as well. Influencers are individuals with lots of followers who will post about your products for a fee.

% Who Use Instagram

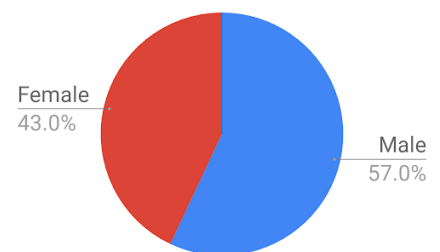


This chart shows the breakdown of demographics by age group as the percentage of that group that uses Instagram. While 18-24 is the most popular age group with a whopping 75% usage, almost half of 30-49 year olds are on Instagram as well. This makes Instagram a good place to have a presence if your target audience is anywhere under 50, particularly if you can share your products in a visually appealing way.

LINKEDIN

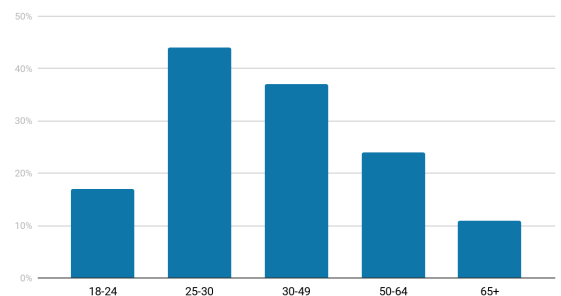
LinkedIn is a business networking platform that can be used for sharing business news and industry expertise. It's ideal for B2B marketing. In fact, 80% of B2B leads come from LinkedIn vs. 13% on Twitter & 7% on Facebook.

There are 310 million monthly active [LinkedIn](#) users worldwide. Of the 160 total US users, 57% are male and 43% are female. As one would expect, LinkedIn users tend to be highly educated (51% of those with a college degree or advanced degree are on LinkedIn) and highly paid (49% of those making \$75K+ are on LinkedIn).

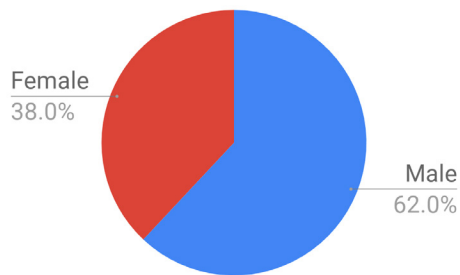


This chart shows the breakdown of demographics by age group as the percentage of that group that uses LinkedIn. The age groups with the most users are those who are likely to be in the beginning to mid-stages of their careers — those who would likely benefit most from networking.

% Who Use LinkedIn



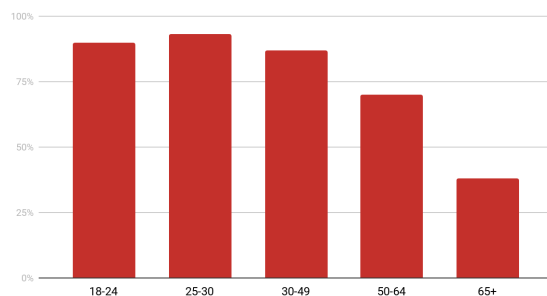
YOUTUBE



YouTube is extremely popular. It's the #2 site on the internet, just after Google. This video streaming site has 2 billion monthly active users. 73% of US adults use [YouTube](#). Users skew heavily male: 62% men/38% women.

Due to its massive user base, companies should consider having a presence on YouTube if appropriate. Think of creative ways to use video, like showcasing several products, demonstrating a product's features, or interviewing stakeholders.

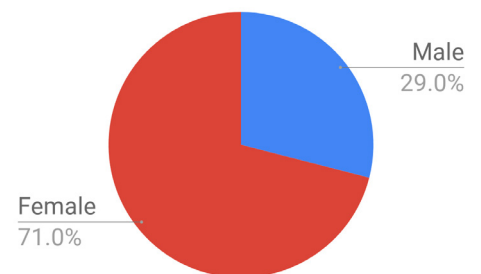
% Who Use YouTube



This chart shows the breakdown of demographics by age group as the percentage of that group that uses YouTube. Usage is massive, with over 85% of everyone 18-49 on the site. The fastest-growing demographics are the 35+ and 55+ age groups.

PINTEREST

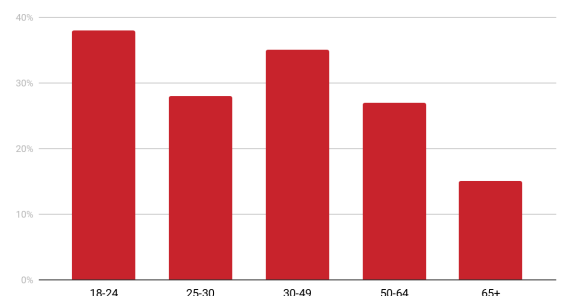
Pinterest is a virtual bulletin board. Users curate boards of linked images. It is often used for recipes, look books, project ideas, and curriculum building. [Pinterest](#) has 335 million monthly active users worldwide and 88 million total US users. The site skews heavily female, with 71% of users women and 29% men. Pinterest is particularly popular among moms; 80% of US mothers who use the internet use Pinterest.



Pinterest is ideal for sharing product photos and links. 83% of weekly Pinner have made a purchase based on content they saw from brands, and nearly 2 million people daily share product-rich pins.

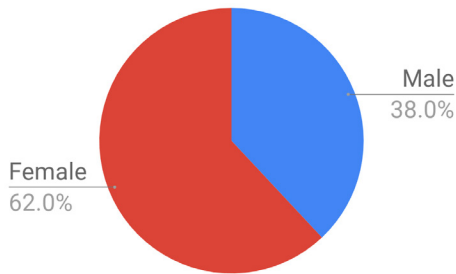
This chart shows the breakdown of demographics by age group as the percentage of that group that uses Pinterest. Usage is about the same across age groups, so targeting on this site depends more on your product than the target age group.

% Who Use Pinterest

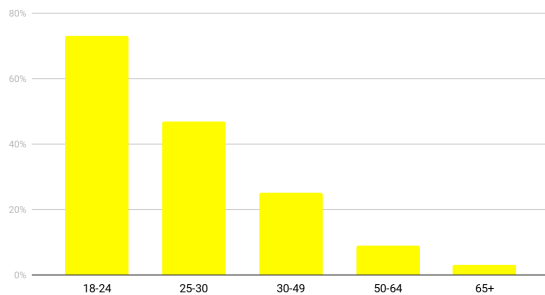


SNAPCHAT

Snapchat is an app used for sharing pictures that disappear after 10 seconds. They were the first app to have Stories, which are pictures that last 24 hours. Snapchat has commercials and branded stories as well as offering brand filters on pictures.



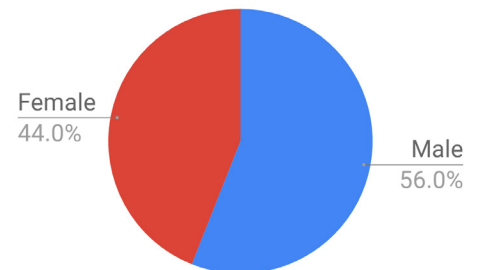
Snapchat has 360 million monthly active users and 97.5 million total US users. It skews female, with 62% female users and 38% male users. Snapchat is very popular with teens, with 41% of US teenagers saying it's their favorite social media platform. It's also used often, with 71% of Snapchat users aged 18-24 opening the app several times a day.



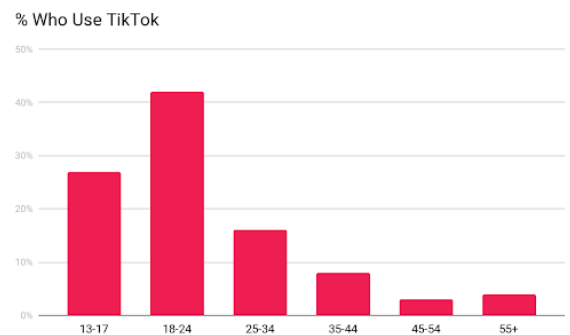
This chart shows the breakdown of demographics by age group as the percentage of that group that uses Snapchat. This app skews heavily towards younger users. While 73% of 18-24 year olds are on Snapchat, just 9% of 50-64 year olds are.

TIKTOK

TikTok is the newest social media channel to gain popularity. It debuted in 2017; in 2019, it became the 7th most downloaded app of the decade. **TikTok** is used for sharing short videos. It has 800 million monthly active users, with 30 million monthly active users in the US. User split is 56% male, 44% female. 90% of TikTok users open the app more than once per day.



This chart shows the breakdown of demographics by age group as the percentage of that group that uses TikTok. This app skews young, with the highest percentage of users being 18-24.



HOW TO USE THESE STATISTICS TO FIND YOUR AUDIENCE

When considering where to have a social media presence, think about who uses your product. What is the typical gender of your audience? How old are they? Then, think about the best ways to showcase your product. Can you create videos for it? Can you photograph it? Can you share expertise about it? It is also wise to research your competitors and see where they have successful accounts. Also, spend some time on channels you aren't familiar with to see first-hand what works and what doesn't.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Decide on your target audience, then use demographic data to find the best social media channel to reach them.
- » Determine the best way to showcase your product, and consider new ways (like video, for example) if it means a better way to reach your audience.

CHAPTER 2: UNDERSTAND EACH PLATFORM

“I am in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing.”
— Louise Hay

Since Facebook bought Instagram in 2012, they’ve made it as easy as checking a box to share your post on both social platforms at once. This sounds great — it minimizes your work time and gets your post out to two groups. Unfortunately, it’s not quite as wonderful as it seems.

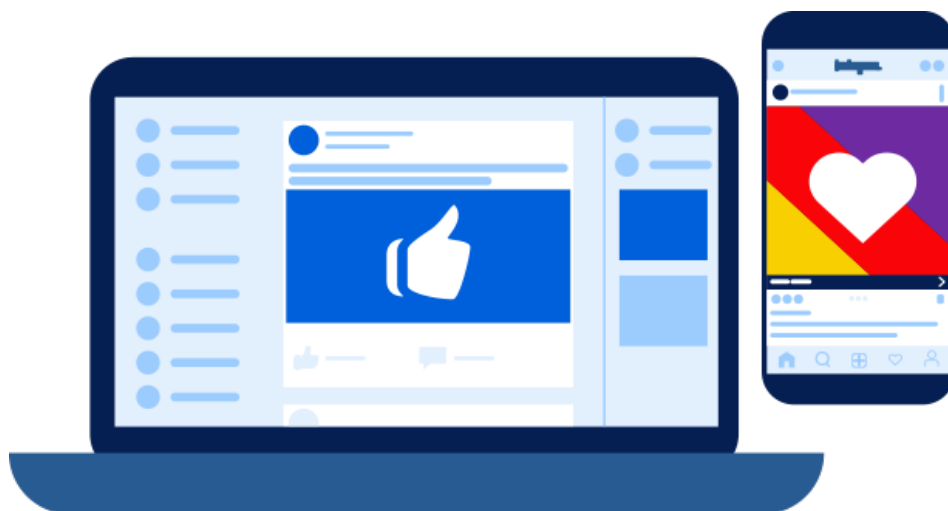
In the last chapter, we shared the demographics of each social platform. We learned that there is a significant difference between

Instagram and Facebook — and all platforms, for that matter. Each one is used by different people at different ages for different things. While cross-posting the same content to every channel is easy, it’s not a good idea.

Consider what each channel does best and how people use it. Think about the VAST Methodology and how you’re telling your Story to your Audience.

Facebook is sort of a catch-all. It tries to do everything: text, video, images, friends, groups, pages, chat. The main thing that people use Facebook for is connection. From its beginning, Facebook has been about friends and sharing. When you post something on Facebook, you want it to be something that your audience will see and want to share it with their friends. Whether it’s a sale, a funny picture, or an inspirational quote, your goal is to create quality content that your audience will want to pass on.

Twitter is largely text-based, but the use of images and GIFs has picked up in recent years. The conversation on Twitter moves fast. It works best for breaking news, commenting on a TV show while it’s on, and participating in designated chats. Twitter is all about engaging in conversations with others. You shouldn’t post in a vacuum; either start a conversation of your own or find one to join. Be prepared to reply and continue conversations; don’t just post and leave right away.



Instagram is (mostly) image-based. Users do post short videos and share blocks of text, but it is first and foremost an image platform. People care about visuals and things looking pretty on Instagram, so take the time to determine your aesthetic. Some brands curate their whole grid to include the same color patterns or create a larger image. Since most of what users are looking at on Instagram is the picture you share, keep your text short and sweet.

LinkedIn is for sharing business knowledge. Your LinkedIn posts should be significantly different from any other social network. The channel is built for connecting with other business professionals and sharing examples of thought leadership. You can also use LinkedIn to promote an event your business is hosting, like a webinar or conference, and invite your connections.

YouTube is a video platform. Not only is it a social media network, but it's also the largest search engine after Google. Because of its size, it's important to develop a plan for using YouTube. Some options are how-to videos, product demonstrations, virtual tours, interviews, or behind-the-scenes videos. Think of creative ways to leverage video for your brand and build a YouTube presence.

Pinterest is, like Instagram, mostly image-based. Users pin images that link to websites. What works well on Pinterest are things like recipes, fashion pieces, and lesson plans — things users would perhaps pin onto a bulletin board in their kitchen or office in real life. Pinterest is huge for all types of planning, especially wedding planning. Consider ways that your content could be shared on Pinterest, but remember that it isn't ideal for every industry.

Snapchat is a platform for short videos. Brands tend to use Snapchat for sharing quick how-tos, short and funny stories, and Top 10 type videos. Celebrities also use it to give a behind-the-scenes look at their lives. However, since Instagram developed its own Stories platform, many users have migrated to that instead. Some major brands still use Snapchat, and it does have 360 million monthly users, so investigate if and how your competitors are using the channel before making a decision.



TikTok is the newest social media platform, and it has the youngest users. It launched TikTok For Business in June 2020 that allows for ad campaigns and takeovers. On the organic side, TikTok provides businesses with the opportunity to show off their playful and fun side. TikTok videos are all about what's popular, so follow the trending hashtags and see if there's anything your brand can contribute without seeming forced. This channel will require you to be a bit more nimble and reactive than others, but it's a great way to show off your brand's personality and connect with younger users.

Once you've considered all these nuances, it's clear why you shouldn't post the same thing to all of your channels and call it a day. Think about the kind of content that would truly resonate on each channel and with its users. In doing this, you'll connect with the right people in the right place, and you'll also show off your adaptability.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Don't come up with one post and share it everywhere. You have to write something for each channel.
- » Think about what kind of content works best for your brand and what works best on each channel, and let that determine your posts.

CHAPTER 3: OPTIMIZE YOUR PROFILE

“To thine own self be true.” — Shakespeare

Once you have your social media networks chosen, the next step is getting them set up the right way. This is your opportunity to showcase your brand and also make it discoverable. Tell the story of your brand; define the “S” your VAST Methodology. Think about what you want to say and how you want to say it. Make it easy for the people you want to reach to find you and understand who you are.

SIGN UP AS A BUSINESS — AND THE RIGHT KIND OF BUSINESS

When you’re registering your brand on social networks, it’s important to sign up as a business user. This gives you access to analytics and insights about your page’s performance. You’ll be able to see which posts are working well and which aren’t as well as overall information about your page’s growth and engagement. You’ll also be able to run ads if you’re signed up as a business account.

In its most recent update, Facebook has streamlined page creation. You no longer need to select a type of business from 6 choices. Instead, you type in the category of your business. Facebook’s category list is extensive. The easiest way to find the best fit for your business is to scroll through [the entire category list](#) to find the right one for you, then type that exactly in the category field on the page setup. Using the right category helps users searching for that topic find your page.

KEEP YOUR NAME CONSISTENT ACROSS CHANNELS

In order to make yourself easily discoverable and also maintain your brand, you want to aim for consistency in your social profiles. The first step here is using the same handle on all of your social channels. Make sure the name you want to use is available on all of the networks you want to use, then set them up. If your company name is Joey’s Pizza, you want your name to ideally be @joeyspizza on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and anywhere else. You don’t want one to be @joeyspizza, one to be @joeysitalianfood, and one to be @joeyspizza1994. If someone follows you on Facebook and wants to find your Instagram, the first thing they will try is the same name you use on Facebook. If that’s not your name, you may lose them to another brand.

On Facebook, when you sign up for a page, you should also give your page a username. This is a separate step from registering. To get a username, go to your published page while logged in as the page’s admin and you should see a link on the left side to “Create Page @Username.” Again, make sure your name is consistent between all of your channels.

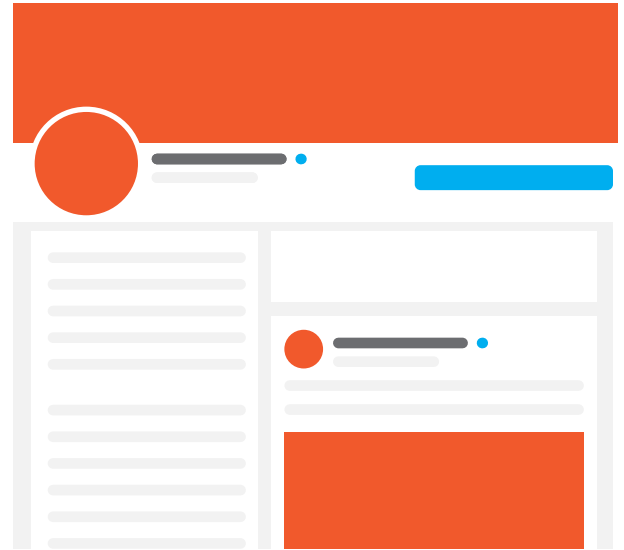


FILL OUT YOUR COMPLETE PROFILE TO HELP CUSTOMERS FIND YOU

Social media pages act as mini web pages for you and, if optimized correctly, will show up in search results. Many times, users will click onto one of your social media profiles instead of your official website. Therefore, it's vital to keep your profiles up-to-date and complete.

If you are a business, fill out your address, hours, and contact information on Facebook and Instagram. Both sites will let users click on the address for a map and directions; this is especially useful for mobile users. Make sure you keep your hours updated, especially around the holidays or other times when your hours change. Also, be sure that your Instagram/Facebook hours match those listed on your website to limit confusion. Provide all of the information possible to make your customer experience easy and convenient.

Your profile also includes space to talk about your brand. On Instagram, you only have 150 characters and one link to convey what you want to say, so make it short and sweet — and informative! Share the essence of your brand and include a call-to-action that will entice users to click on your link. On Facebook, you have much more space to write. Share an “About” that not only talks about your brand and company but also incorporates keywords. Your Facebook About is an opportunity to reach new customers from search engines, so take advantage of the space for SEO.



POST REGULARLY AND KEEP YOUR PAGE UPDATED

Social media pages are not “set-it-and-forget-it.” It doesn’t look good for your business if the most recent post is a “Hello!” post from years ago. All of your social media channels need to be updated regularly, and this means multiple times per week. This is critical! Keep this in mind when setting them up and don’t over-extend yourself. Read on to find out more about what kind of content you should be posting, and how.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

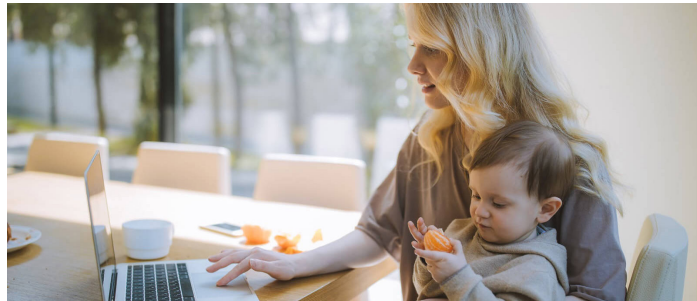
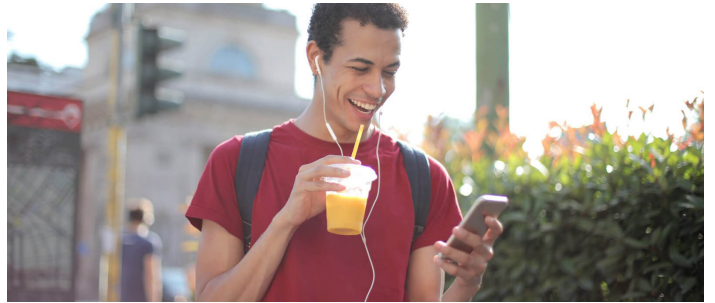
- » Fill out your profile page with as much information as possible.
- » Provide accurate contact information, hours, and more to make your customer experience easy and convenient.

CHAPTER 4: DEFINE YOUR VOICE & STYLE

“Finding a voice is speaking and living the truth.” — John Grisham

When you're deciding how to write your social media posts, consider who you're speaking to. Come up with your ideal customer and define their attributes. You can even find a picture and make a document to help you focus.

Maybe your ideal customer is James, a guy in his young 20s in a city. He's constantly on his phone and following the latest trends. James is very connected to his friends and also to the brands he likes. He spends his commute scrolling through social media to keep up with what's going on and is looking for something to keep him entertained. He keeps an eye on trending hashtags.

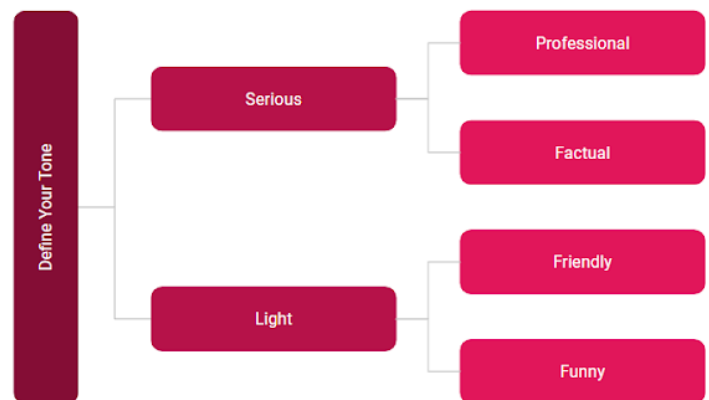


Or perhaps you are targeting Sarah, a young mother who is juggling work and parenting. She wants to make her life easier and needs products to make things more efficient. She also cares about herself and her family in terms of looking good and staying healthy. Sarah doesn't have much downtime, so when she's online, she's looking for the things she needs and nothing else.

Go through this practice for your brand. Who are you talking to? What are their wants and needs? Remember the VAST Methodology here. You are defining your Voice and also considering your Audience.

Then, think about your role. What information do they need from you? How do they want to hear it? Do you want them to see you as a close friend or a business partner? Do you want to give them advice like you're an older sibling or like you're a doctor?

You also have to decide on your tone of voice. Consider this short flowchart on the right to help break this down.



Once you've defined all of these things, it's time to write. Imagine you are writing a personal message to James or Sarah or whoever your ideal customer is. Tell them what they want to hear, how they want to hear it.

Most importantly, offer value to your audience with every post. Whether that value is a sale announcement, an important piece of information, or just a laugh, provide something your targeted audience wants and needs. Valuable content is shareable content, and that leads to success on social media.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Define your ideal customer. Give that person a name, a picture, and a personality.
- » Decide on your tone of voice and personality.
- » Direct all of your content to your ideal customer like you're speaking directly to them.
- » Offer value to your customer in every post.

CHAPTER 5: CREATE A POST SCHEDULE

“[The] right timing is in all things the most important factor.” — Hesiod

The most important thing you can do to manage your social media presence is to create a social media calendar. Not only will this help you prepare your content for weeks to come, but your audience will also learn what to expect. Creating standard posts also provides a baseline from which you can run tests to see what is performing best and when.



The first step in creating a content calendar is to decide on posts for every day of the week. Throwback Thursday is a popular one, but you can create your own. They don't have to be official hashtag days, but simply things you decide to post on that specific day.

Perhaps you run a clothing company or store. You could post pictures of new clothes every Sunday, a clothing-related user poll every Wednesday, and a weekend style inspiration picture every Friday.

When you develop a schedule, your fans know what to expect when. They'll know to come back every Wednesday to answer that poll and to visit on Sundays to see what new clothes you have.

The next step in creating your calendar is deciding on timing. Consider when your ideal customer, as defined in Chapter 4, is browsing social media. If your audience is teachers, you could post something to inspire them for the workday at 6 am, or share something fun for them to respond to in the evening. You wouldn't want to post at 9 am, because your whole audience will be at work.

On the right, you'll see an example of a basic post schedule for one day, showing the different channels and content:

Date	Theme	Time	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Friday, September 4	Pizza Night	9:00 AM			Pizza night tonight means cold pizza for breakfast tomorrow. #winwin
		12:00 PM		Tonight: You. Joey's Pizza. SVU reruns. Pre-order now on @slice. #pizzanight	
		5:00 PM			
		6:00 PM			Order #pizza now for fast delivery & start the weekend right. 555-1212

Once you have your posts for every day at a specific time, the next step is reviewing your analytics. After you've been posting according to your plan for about a month, take a step back and see what's working and what's not. Log into the business manager of your profile and you'll be able to review information like what days and times your fans are actually interacting with your posts. You can also review each post and see which ones have the most engagement.

From here, it's time to use your learnings to make adjustments. You're Testing, as per the VAST Methodology, and you're adapting to the results of the tests. Perhaps you've been posting at 11 am every Monday, but it turns out that most of your audience is engaging with these posts at 7 pm. Shift your post time to later in the day when your fans are actually online. Or maybe you look at your post engagement and you are only getting a handful of votes on that Wednesday poll. It's time to switch it up and develop a new idea for Wednesday.

Just like social media as a whole, your post schedule is not static. As you build your audience and learn what resonates with them and what doesn't, you have to make changes. Keep testing and optimizing to continue to grow your audience.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

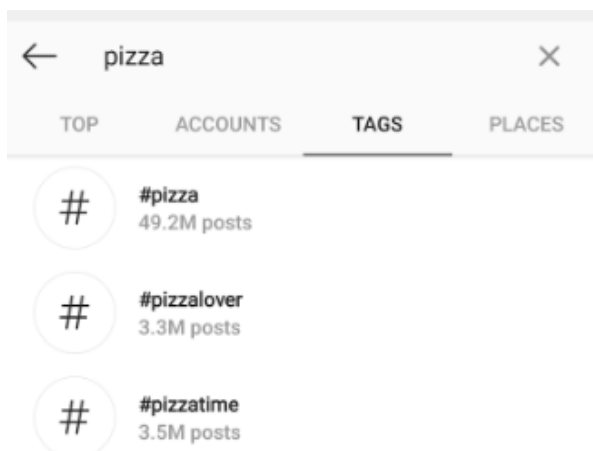
- » Create a content calendar to keep track of when and where you are posting.
- » Post consistently at a decided-upon time and on a chosen theme.
- » Analyze the results of your posts, make adjustments, and optimize.

CHAPTER 6: USE HASHTAGS AND EMOJIS

“Social media is changing the way we communicate and the way we are perceived.” — Amy Jo Martin

HASHTAGS

Hashtags are a great way to get discovered by users searching for topics — as long as you use them correctly! (A quick note about hashtags: they don't work with symbols, spaces, or punctuation. If you try to use the hashtag #joey'spizza, it will just link #joey.)



On Instagram, a key strategy is to utilize hashtags that are active, but not the most popular. If you post something with #pizza, it will only appear on the “Recent” page for a few minutes. #pizzatime, on the other hand, still has lots of uses, but several million less than #pizza. Your post is more likely to be seen and will spend more time on the #pizzatime “Recent” page. Use the search feature to browse hashtags for your keywords and find the ones that are right for you.

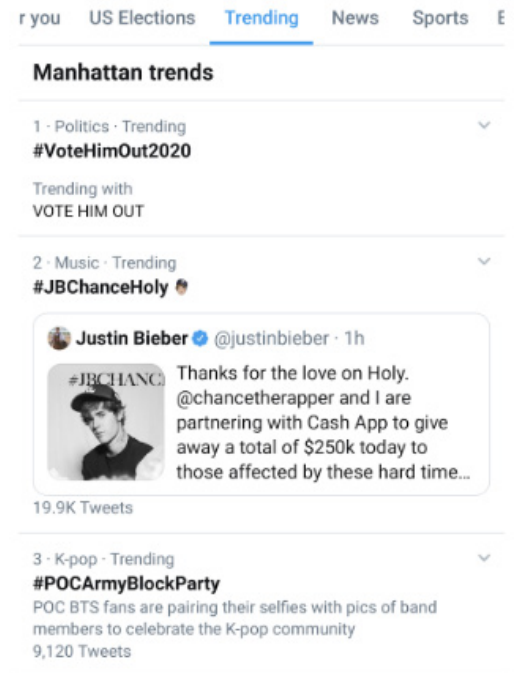
In terms of numbers, a [study by Buffer](#) found that users saw optimal engagement when they used 11 hashtags. So feel free to use all the trending pizza hashtags and more!

Twitter, on the other hand, is driven by trending hashtags. You want to use the same hashtags everyone else is so you can have a place in the conversation. Browse the Trending section to see what users are talking about.

However, be sure to keep your tweet and corresponding hashtags focused. [Analysis by Linchpin](#) found that tweets with hashtags garner double the engagement compared to tweets without hashtags, but tweets with more than two hashtags saw engagement drop.

While you *can* use hashtags on Facebook, don't. Users don't search Facebook for hashtags, and by using them, you can come off seeming inexperienced and not savvy.

Other social channels where you can use hashtags include TikTok, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and YouTube. TikTok and Pinterest work like Instagram and using hashtags will get your content seen by users browsing that category. LinkedIn lets users follow hashtags, so it's most helpful to use popular ones like #hiring. On YouTube, add a few hashtags above your title to categorize your video with keywords.



EMOJIS

Everyone ♥s emojis. They're fun to use and a great way to express yourself. Did you know that emojis are useful for marketing, too? Through testing, [Sprout Social](#) found that their posts with emojis in the text and headlines were much more successful than those without. If your brand voice is casual, consider adding emojis to your social posts. They add character and personality to your text.

Make sure, like with hashtags, that you don't overdo it with emojis. Two to three emojis is enough to get your message across in a colorful way. Using emojis every other word isn't a good look, and it can lead to confusion.



In 2015, Chevrolet sent out a Press Release entirely written in emojis. While it definitely made a statement, it was difficult to read. Unless you're sharing a fun puzzle with your users, don't do this with your social postings!

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Use lots of hashtags on Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest. Use key hashtags on Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Don't use hashtags on Facebook.
- » Use emojis to add personality to your social posts, but use them sparingly.

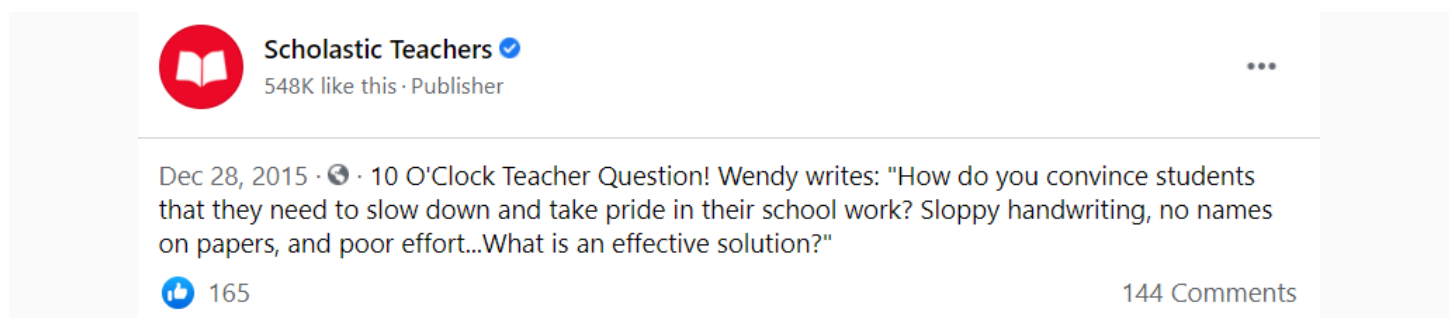
CHAPTER 7: FIND UNIQUE WAYS TO ENGAGE

“In order to be irreplaceable, one must always be different.”

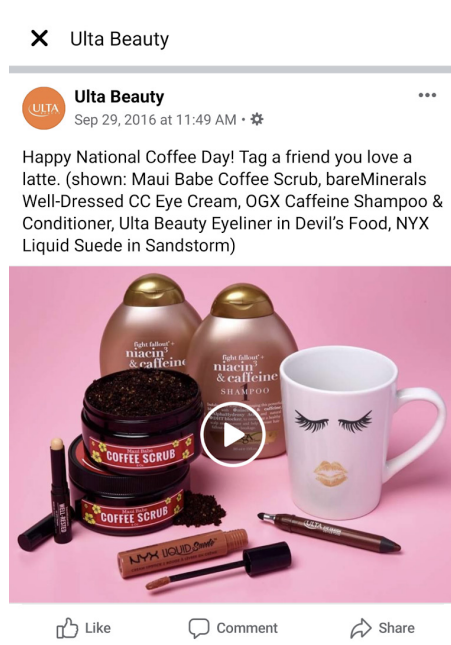
— Coco Chanel

Keep your followers coming back by creating unique content they can't find anywhere else. Develop an idea that sets your brand apart and pursue it.

Here's an example from a teacher-focused brand. Every day at 10 pm, they shared a “10 O’Clock Teacher Question” where they shared posts from followers and asked the community for feedback. Followers knew to come back every day at 10 to see the new post and participate.



Another idea is to find a creative way to tie a holiday into your brand. There's a holiday for nearly every day of the year, from National Best Friends Day (June 8) to National Pecan Day (April 14). These holidays provide content ideas as well as unique opportunities.



Ulta is a beauty brand, but they still found a way to post on National Coffee Day. Ulta highlighted some products that had coffee as an ingredient and others that were coffee-colored. Despite the holiday not being clearly related to their brand, they used it as an opportunity to create unique content and earned over 3K likes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Keep your followers coming back with unique content.
- » Create posts that will engage the type of people who follow you.
- » Develop opportunities from holidays or other trending topics.

CHAPTER 8: TURN FANS INTO AMBASSADORS

“The purpose of a business is to create a customer who creates customers.” — Shiv Singh

The best thing that can happen for your brand is for your fans to become ambassadors — that is, sharing your content, telling others about your products, and promoting your brand on their own.

In a study, [Nielsen](#) found that 82% of consumers trust recommendations from people they know. Getting your fans to organically share your brand posts and products will not only generate more views from their social circle, but also encourage those viewers to become your fans as well.

The best way to accomplish this is to create quality content that your followers will want to share and engage with. Perhaps it's a funny post that your fans will find relatable, or a thoughtful blog piece that readers will want to pass along. You can also ask open-ended questions that encourage discussion or ask users to tag their friends who would relate to your post.



Support fans who do share your content or your products. Search for your brand tag or hashtag on Instagram and like and reply to your fans' posts. Reshare Instagram Stories fan content in your brand's story. Retweet and reply to posts about your brand on Twitter. Your fans will appreciate that you've noticed their support, which will drive them to support you even more.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

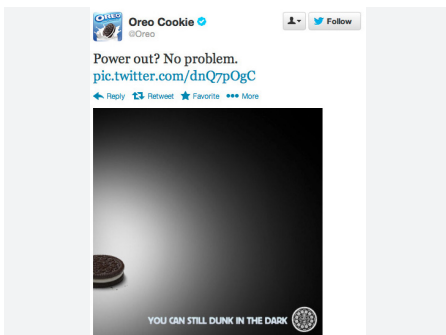
- » Create quality content that your fans will want to share.
- » Support your fans who share your posts or write about you organically.

CHAPTER 9: STAY NIMBLE AND REACTIVE

“Change almost never fails because it’s too early. It almost always fails because it’s too late.” — Seth Godin

Social media moves quickly. Trends develop and die in a matter of days. If you don’t react quickly enough as a brand, you’ll miss them.

Following trends and being a part of the conversation is very important. While you already have your regular post schedule planned out (as we discussed in Chapter 4), you must be willing and ready to make adjustments as needed.



One of the best examples of a brand reacting quickly is Oreo during the 2013 Super Bowl. The stadium was hit with a blackout during the game. Within minutes, Oreo tweeted a funny picture and message. Their post was retweeted nearly 14K times and generated huge engagement.

This post involved the Oreo social team watching the Super Bowl and noticing the blackout, coming up with a funny idea, creating the image and writing the message, and posting it — all in a matter of minutes. This is the definition of being nimble and reactive on social media.

Another example of nimbleness involves brands reacting to each other. In 2018, IHOP briefly changed its name to IHOB to promote the fact that they were now serving burgers. Many burger brands made quick remarks on Twitter, including White Castle and Whataburger. One notable one came from Wendy’s.

Note, too, that the official IHOP page responded right away with their own comment. They were ready to play along, and for that they earned 1,000 likes on their post. Make sure you respond to all comments on your page — even negative ones. Find out more about dealing with negativity in the next chapter.



Being nimble also means following and responding to what’s going on in the world. In June 2020, Blackout Tuesday spread across the United States. It was a collective action to silence regular messaging to give voice to Black businesses, artists, and communities. Many users posted all-black images or otherwise shared their support with the Black community. If your business wasn’t monitoring current trends, you might have missed this and posted whatever your scheduled post for the day was — and you would have looked out-of-touch at best.

As Blackout Tuesday progressed, unfortunately, the number of shared all-black images took over feeds and drowned out key voices. Many users posted their black images with #blacklivesmatter and ended up making it

hard to find resources for those that needed them. By the end of the day, the new tactic was to share links to the profiles of Black creators, share resources, and otherwise show more support than just a black square. Brands and users who stayed updated all day were able to pivot as the day progressed.

If something is happening in the world, take the time to check your scheduled messaging. While summer “white parties” are trendy and popular among fashion brands, you don’t want to promote one the same week as Blackout Tuesday. You don’t want to advertise a “Fire Sale” while wildfires are raging in California. Take a moment to consider your post and how it will resonate today.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » React quickly to trends and happenings so you have a place in the conversation.
- » Be aware of the news and edit your posts if necessary.

CHAPTER 10: DEAL WITH NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

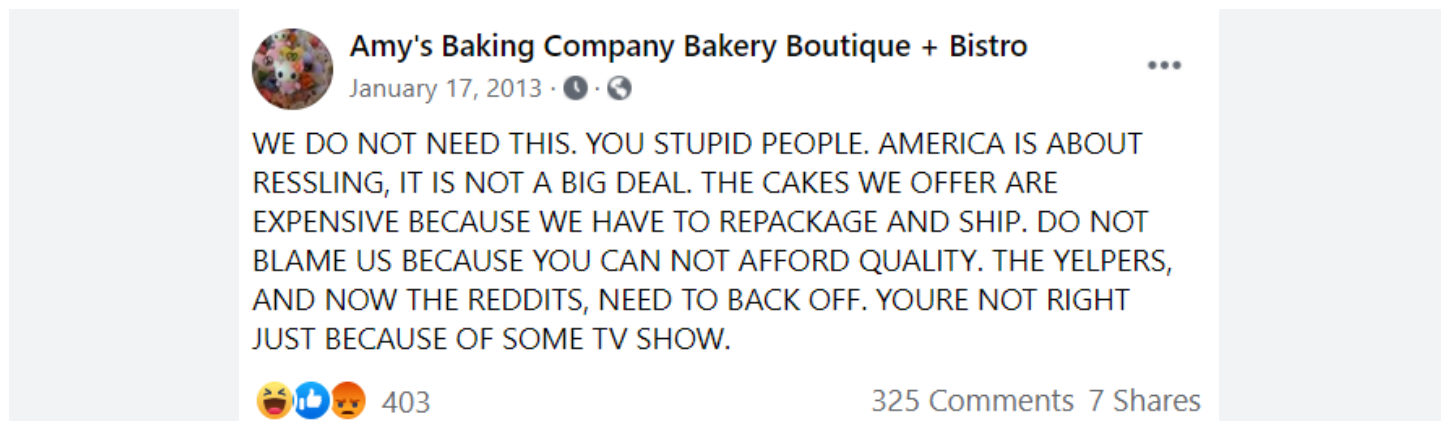
“Failure is just the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently.”

— Henry Ford

All brands make mistakes sometimes. Whether your post didn’t go over as well as you hoped, a user is posting negative reviews, or something happened outside of your control, you need to be prepared to handle the situation.

A classic example of how not to deal with negative feedback is Amy’s Baking Company. The business was featured in an episode of the TV show Kitchen Nightmares, where some of their bad business practices were exposed. Many viewers took to their Facebook page to ask questions or make negative comments.

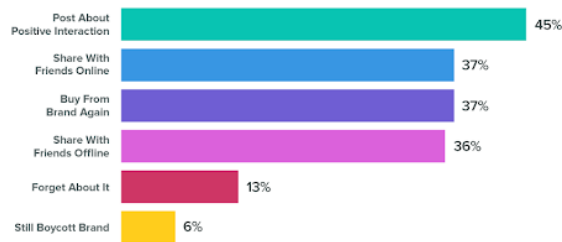
Amy’s Baking Company tried to get ahead of the story by making a post with their side of the story. However, within days, they broke down against the negativity.



It goes without saying that this is not the right response to negative feedback from your customers.

Consumer Reaction if a Brand Responds Well to Their Social Complaint

Q3 2017



sproutsocial

sproutsocial.com/index

What you should be doing — always — is apologizing and trying to make things right. Have a customer service plan and procedure in place, and reply quickly to complaints. A good system is to ask users to contact you directly, either via phone, email, or direct message, so you can make the conversation private. If your business faces a larger PR issue, develop a statement and direct users to that.

Research by [Zendesk](#) found that 97% of consumers say that they will stop buying from a brand if they experience bad customer service, and 46% continue their boycott over 2 years later. Conversely, [Sprout Social](#) found that, when a brand responds well to a complaint, consumers are happy. Often, they will even share their positive experience with others. It's worth your time to make things right with someone who complains, as it can turn them into a brand ambassador.

Finally, don't be afraid to laugh at yourself if you make a mistake. In 2017, the McDonald's social team forgot to update their scheduled post for Black Friday with the actual copy.

Rather than delete their post and pretend it didn't happen, they made a joke about it. Instead of the mistake being a big deal, it became something to laugh about and build an affinity for the brand.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Always apologize for mistakes.
- » Reply to complaints quickly and move the conversation somewhere private.
- » Laugh at yourself when appropriate.

CONCLUSION

By now, you should be well on your way to managing your organic social media presence with panache. You've found the right channels to reach your audience. You understand who you're speaking to, and you've figured out how to speak with them. You've readied your content calendar, but you're monitoring trends and world happenings and you're ready to change your post at any moment. In case something bad happens, you're prepared with a plan.

But if you need it, there's no shame in asking for more help. NetElixir has been helping businesses find and engage high-value customers for 16 years. Our social media team is here to build your social media presence with everything from creating posts to connecting with customers to developing paid advertising.

[Learn more today about how we can help you on social media!](#)

