



SOCIAL MEDIA QUICKSTART GUIDE



What is Social Media?

Definition:

Social Media is the blending of technology and social interaction that allows people to share content in real time- quickly and efficiently. It is used to connect, to communicate, and to generate value- both by businesses and by individuals.

Why is it Important?

- **It's here to stay!**
 - *With more than 3 billion people using it worldwide, social media is not a passing trend. Keep up or get left behind!*
- **It gives you the opportunity to connect with your customers directly**
 - *People like to be able to connect with companies where they might spend their money, and social media is the easiest way for you to encourage that engagement.*
- **It will help you show brand authenticity**
 - *Most consumers look online before making a purchase, and giving them knowledge of your brand may help sway their decision in your favor.*
- **Direct connection with customer base**
 - *Consumers generally find social media to be a more approachable way of communicating with a business than going through their website/call center. You're more likely to achieve an open dialogue this way!*

What are the Benefits?

- **It will help you increase brand awareness**
 - *Being visible online will make your organization more well-known; the more you post, the more visible you'll be.*
- **There are millions of consumers in one place**
 - *Research shows that a user spends an average of 2 hours and 22 minutes on social media account every day- making it an ideal place to advertise.*
- **Free to use and customize**
 - *Social media is a no-cost way to reach potential customers.*
- **Quick, creative content**
 - *Social platforms are ideal for posting quickly, and are great for things that might not have a place on your website.*
 - *Need to post a quick update on your hours? Start a photo contest for your viewers? Post a funny image for your followers? Your social page is the perfect place!*



Facebook

Allows people to create completely customized profiles and connect with others and share pictures, videos, links, and text.

- Best for sharing:
 - *Company Information* (Contact, address, message, etc.)
 - *Photos*
 - *Videos*
 - *Links*



Twitter

Focuses on quick communication ("Tweets") that use fewer than 280 characters to quickly share text, links, or photos with followers.

- Best for sharing:
 - *Short Updates*
 - *Links*
 - *Teasers*



LinkedIn

Business networking forum used to connect with industry professionals, share company updates, and recruit new employees.

- Best for sharing:
 - *Company Info*
 - *Business Trends*
 - *Links*



Instagram

App that allows people to upload photos or videos and share them with their followers or with a select group of friends.

- Best for sharing:
 - *Photos*
 - *Short videos (<1 minute)*



Pinterest

Visual search engine for finding ideas like recipes, home and style ideas, and DIY/hobby inspiration.

- Best for sharing:
 - *Photos (Required for a post)*
 - *Links - Recipes, food info, etc.*
 - *Short videos*



YouTube

Video-sharing website that allows people and businesses to share videos and presentations.

- Best for sharing:
 - *Videos*

The Five W's of Social Media

1. Who

- Who is your target audience? Operators, Suppliers, customers on the street? Knowing who you are trying to reach will help you craft an appropriate message.

2. What

- What type of content do you want to post? Photos, links, general information?

3. Where

- Where are you going to post, and where are you getting your content? Reliable sources are more important than ever, and posting unreliable content will make you look untrustworthy.

4. When

- When is the best time to start, and when should you post?

5. Why

- Why start a social page? Identify your reasons for starting social media and you'll have a better idea of how to begin crafting your messages.



Who?

Your **target audience** includes anyone you want to have visiting your page.

- If you're a food distributor, that probably includes your target customer base: Operators.
 - *Most likely, you'll reach an individual who will be running their social accounts- possibly the owner - so focus on what you want that person to see.*
- If you're a restaurant operator, your target is whoever you want to bring in to your location.
 - *This could include restaurant diners, people picking up take-out, people who want you to cater their events, etc. These groups can be segmented to make them easier to target- likely by geographic location, but age is also common way to target consumers.*
- Make sure your account has things you want them to see. If your target operator is running a school, highlight things your company does in the neighborhood, or why you're a good choice for their business. If you're targeting young people in the neighborhood to bring them into your restaurant, have nice photos of your food and include snippets of menu specials. **Show, don't tell.**
 - **Note:** *You can have more than one audience; just keep in mind as you post who you are trying to reach so you craft your posts accordingly.*

Not sure where to start? Check out your competitors' pages and see who follows them; this will give you an idea of who you should be targeting.

Once you have an idea of your target audience, **figure out where they hang out online.** If your target audiences tend to be from a younger demographic, check out Twitter and Instagram! If your audience tends to be less active online overall, try Facebook- it is where people tend to get started if they're not generally dedicated to social media.

- If you have an existing customer base that you want to target, try sending out a survey to see what social platforms they use. This will give you the opportunity to adapt to their needs, and to directly tell them where to find you online.



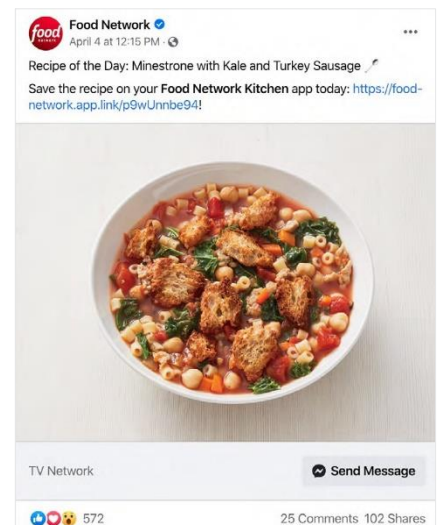
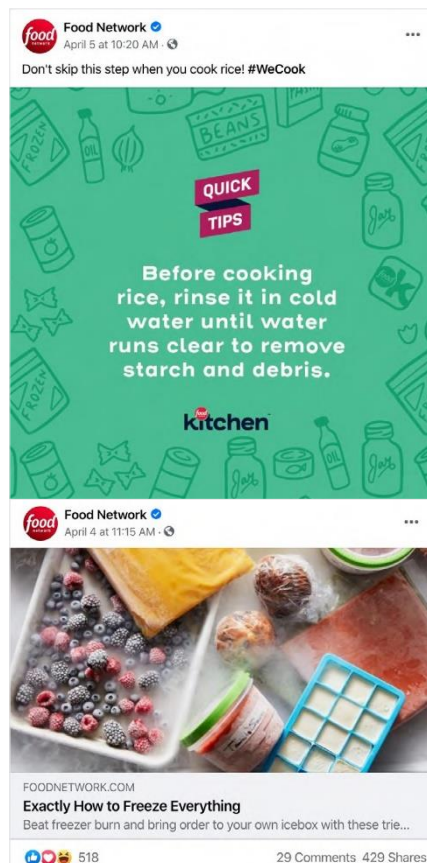
What?

What kind of content you post will decide what the identity of your page will be? Will it be helpful and informative, funny and amusing, interesting and insightful? If your primary focus is on your food quality, you'll want to post lots of food photos. If your focus is more on information, you'll likely be posting more links to external websites with the information you want to share.

- *Note: it's okay to have more than one focus; just make sure the variety is right for you!*

Examples of content include:

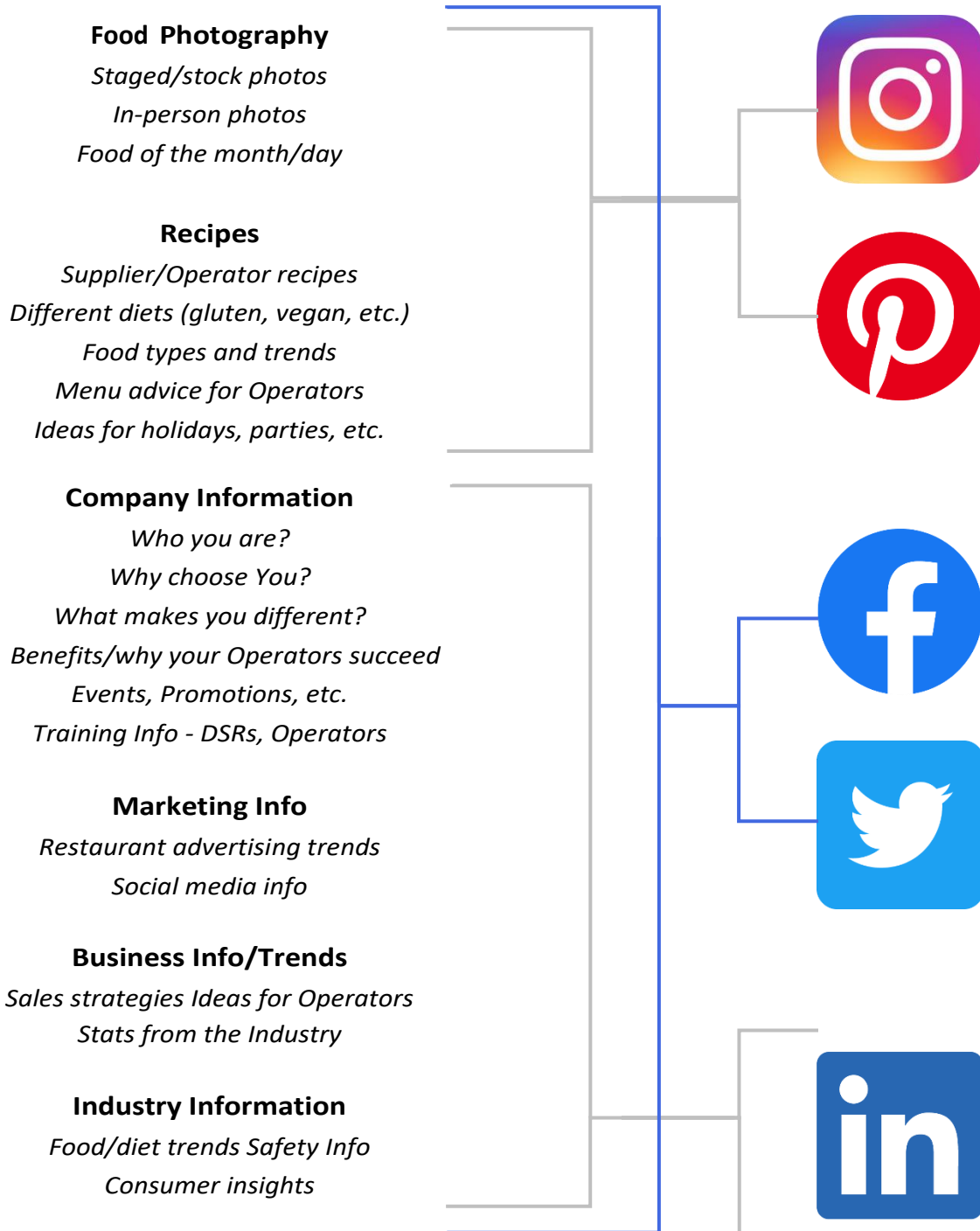
- Photography
 - *A picture is worth a thousand words- and sometimes even more impressions!*
- Recipes
 - *Your in-house recipes, or ones from your Operators/Suppliers*
- Company Information
 - *People are on your page to learn about you- show them who you are!*
- Business/Marketing Info & Trends
 - *Share info about the way you do business*
- Industry Info/Trends
 - *Tips & Tricks about your industry that others might find useful!*
- Videos
 - *Try videos featuring your chef making a special recipe, a tour of your location, or just a quick peek at what's going on. People love to see "behind the curtain".*
- Promotions
 - *Lots of people look to social media before making a purchase. Make your deals visible and give your consumers something to look at!*



Where?

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Pinterest are some of the most popular platforms overall- but what is best for you? It may take time to figure it out, and that's okay! Post in a few places for a while and test it out- you may find that some platforms work for you while others don't, and you can move on from there. Certain content is more suited to one platform over another; here is a guide on what content is best for which platform.

- If you want to post a certain type of content for the most part, start with a platform that supports it best (e.g., if you want to post mostly photos, start with Instagram), and add other platforms as you see fit.



When?

There's no time like the present! There is no "perfect" time to get started, so sometimes it's best just to jump right in! There are some "peak" times to post during the day, but an off-peak post is better than none at all. Your specific audience may have times when they're online more, so track your analytics to see when the best times will be.

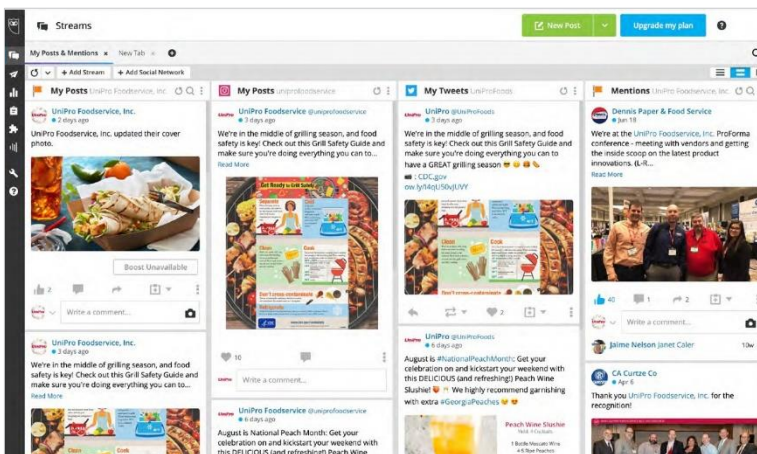
- Generally, you want to aim for times when people are taking a break or are off from work: early-mid-afternoon when people are on their lunch break (**2-3 p.m.**), or early evening when people are off work and done with dinner (**6-8 p.m.**).
- **Note: one size does not fit all.** Your audience may be online at off-peak times, so experiment and see what times get you the most views. Ex: If your audience is mainly restaurant operators, they may be online later than people who work a regular 9-5 job.
- This will take time to figure out, so don't get discouraged!

Keeping Organized

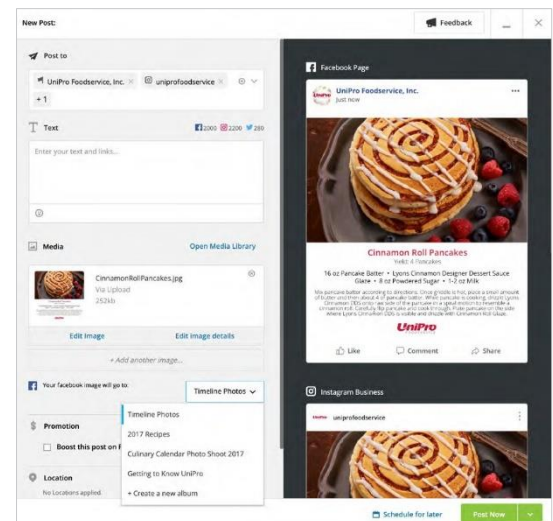
Having a schedule for social media posts ensures that you do not post too much of the same content in a row. Color coding by post type (information, photo, etc.) will make it easy to tell if you are focusing too much on one thing or neglecting another.

An Excel calendar is the easiest way to achieve this, and it can be shared with others who might have input on the content you want to post.

september							2019
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	
1 Food Photo	2	3 Company Info	4	5 Food Photo	6	7	
8	9 Industry Article	10	11 Food/Diet Info	12	13 Recipe	14	
15	16	17 Recipe	18	19 Food Photo	20	21 Food/Diet Info	
22 Recipe	23	24	25 Industry Article	26 Food Photo	27	28	



Apps like Hootsuite and Sprout Social allow users to log into all their social media platforms simultaneously, and create a single post to post across each account at the same time, rather than having to create them individually. This will save significant amounts of time and allow you to curate your accounts so they are consistent across all platforms.



Why?

Why start a social media account? What are your main goals? Some common ones include:

- Driving traffic to your website
 - ***Include links to your website in the majority of your posts***
- Pushing viewers to call you (your location, your sales people, etc.)
 - ***Include your contact info/link to your contact page in your posts, along with a call to action ("Call Now!")***
- Getting sales directly from your accounts
 - ***Make regular posts about promotions & sales with links to your website***
- Getting your name out there- brand recognition is important!
 - ***Focus on branded content: images with your logo on them, pictures of your office/employees, etc.***

75% of people purchased a product because they saw it on social media. Of that percentage, 60.7% need to see a post 2-4 times from the company before making a purchase (Source: Sprout Social).

- Statistics like these show the importance people place on seeing things online before making a purchase. If you're not active online, you're missing out on a large customer base.

Once your reasons are identified, you'll have a better idea of how to craft your message. If you want people to go to your website, make sure to include a lot of links and calls to action so people want to click!



Things to Keep in Mind

Consistency is key! If you look at any major brand's social media or email campaigns, you will see that they are totally consistent with their colors, logos, themes, and even wording. A unified brand and message creates trust, because it shows people that you are one company with one message- having things all over the place makes a company look unprofessional and disorganized.

Your brand is more than just your logo and your colors; It is the overall public perception of your company. This means the tone and voice in various communications, web and retail environments, and client/ customer relations should all be considered within a brand as well.

Establish brand guidelines that create consistent type treatment, color, art direction, mood, and voice across all mediums in which your brand will be used. Have your team reference these guidelines when creating branded collateral or any experiences your brand will be associated with it.

Your brand is the face of your business and it's important to ensure you are providing the proper structure to strengthen your business's goals and values. These are only a few considerations and not all will always apply. The most important element of creating a unified brand is an awareness of your business's goals and values – from here, it's all a matter of tailoring the right brand that meets your needs.

Source: Killer Visual Strategies

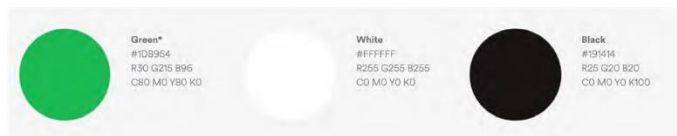
Brand Standards

All major companies have Brand Guides - a book with all the font, logo, and color standards so that all ads/emails/posts across the company match, no matter who creates them.

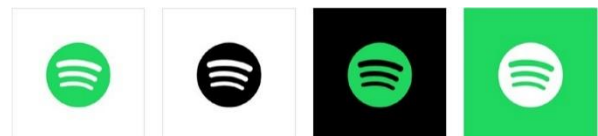
Example: Spotify



Colors



Logos



Logo Misuse



How to Start

Craft Your Profiles: Applying your brand standards across all platforms is vital - you want people to know that you are a unified, organized company that is personally handling all of these accounts. Using your logo for a profile image and industry-related images as cover photos, you will show a united front across all platforms.

- Depending on the space allowed, you can also include important company in the bio sections. **People often check social media first when looking for company hours and contact information**, so this is an important thing to include where applicable.



www.facebook.com/business



www.business.twitter.com



www.business.instagram.com



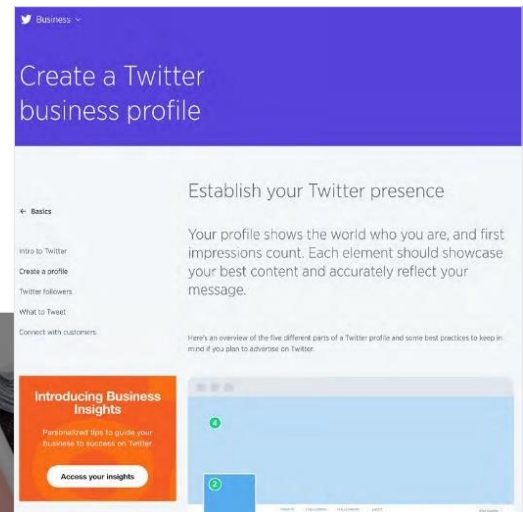
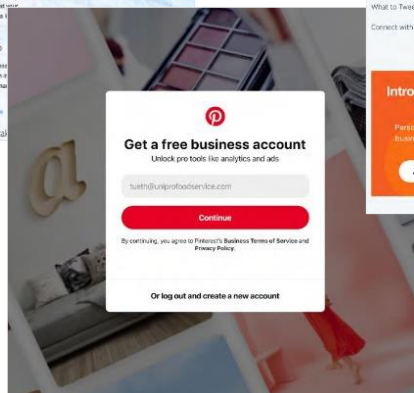
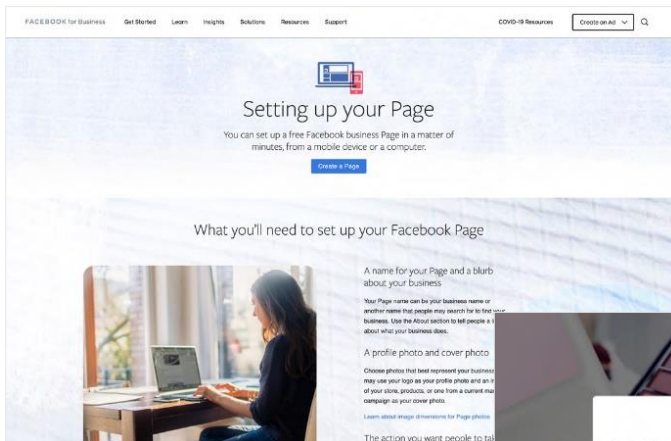
www.business.linkedin.com



www.business.pinterest.com

Follow Platform Guidelines: Each social media platform has its own way of setting up a profile- therefore, each site has a startup guide. Visit these websites to learn the specifics of setup for the account you want to start.

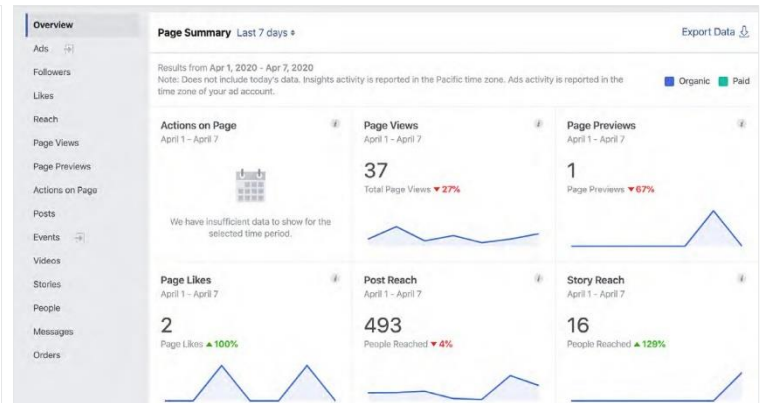
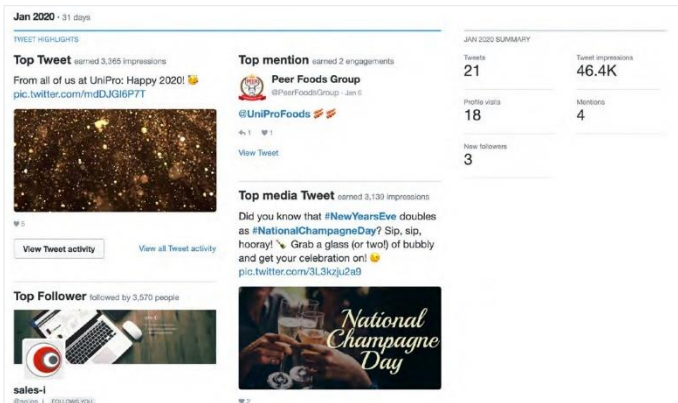
- **Note:** These instructions are designed for beginners, so you will be able to set up your page even if you have no social media experience.



Post Regularly: However many times you decide to post per week, you need to make sure it is consistent. Ex: If you want three posts per week, you should post around the same time - possibly on the same days - depending on what time you see the best engagement.

Track Analytics: Most social media platforms have analytics which show the amount of interactions and views that a post receives. By tracking these statistics, you can glean information about what posts perform the best and which do not; if you see that photos perform better than news links, you know to post more photos and fewer links that do not perform.

- **Note:** This is a process; it will take time to judge how well your posts are doing. If you have no real following yet, it will take some time just to get followers before you can judge which posts will perform the best.



Respond to Engagement: It is important to engage with anyone who posts or comments on your page; people expect brands to engage with them, and it can increase trust in the brand when people see that you are available and will respond to their comments, whether they are positive or negative. It can also help to Like or Comment on other brands' pages- show them that you're online and ready to engage!

Conclusion

Building a social media presence can be a slow process, but it has a snowball effect. Stay in it for the long haul! With consistency and effort, an active social media presence is well worth the benefits it will bring your business, so use the outline above to devise a strategy you can commit to.

Source: onlinemarketinginstitute.org

