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# 5 WAYS

Small Businesses Can  
Make the Most  
Out of Social Media *#SMB*



BY JENNIFER GREGORY

# 5 Ways Small Businesses Can Make the Most Out of Social Media

Most large corporations have positions dedicated solely to managing the company's social media outlets, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and now Pinterest. But as a small business owner, social media responsibilities most likely land on your desk or another employee's desk in addition to many other responsibilities. With the ability of social media to increase your customer loyalty, revenue and brand recognition, it is important that it doesn't get pushed to the bottom of your to-do list.

Here are five tips for maximizing your presence on social media:



# 1

## Pick the Right Media for the Message

Different social media applications are best used for different messages and goals. Think about the different messages you want to share with potential customers and then decide the best place for that based on the type of interactions on that media. By having a strategy, you will maximize your time spent and also increase the effectiveness of what you are sharing.

**Raindrop Roofing** in Portland, Ore. has seen a significant increase in leads due to their focused social media marketing efforts. “Twitter is our daily touchpoint for generating conversation, Facebook is who we are in pictures and LinkedIn, in terms of social networking, is our business networking anchor,” said Jenni Green Miller, social media/marketing director. They also use Angie’s List and Yelp to interact with potential customers.



# 2

## Engage With Your Followers

You most likely greet each person who walks into your store with a warm welcome. Or when you meet a new client for the first time, you make sure that they feel appreciated. Think of your social media contacts the same way and respond to all posts, tweets and comments. By reaching out, you are working to establish a relationship that will hopefully translate into real life contacts and customers.

Make your social media pages as interactive as possible, such as posting questions, holding contests and asking for photos. Another effective strategy is to get your followers to help spread your message by adding a Like button when claiming a Facebook coupon so the coupon displays in their friends News Feed.



# 3

## Provide Useful Information

A common mistake many small business owners make is to use social media only to talk about their company and their product. “Do not spend all your time posting about yourself or your company. Self-promotion should be done in moderation and overkill will only drive your followers away,” said Ian Aronovich, co-founder and CEO of [GovernmentAuctions.org](http://GovernmentAuctions.org). “You should post things of value — like relevant news bites, top five or top 10 lists, or humorous items — to your followers.”

Think about your customers and what information they are interested in and what types of questions they often ask that are related to your field of expertise. If you own a yoga studio, instead of simply posting about yoga or your latest special, provide information about eating healthy and the latest trends in workout apparel. Keep a tickler file of interesting articles and useful information as you come across so that you can maximize your time when ready to post.

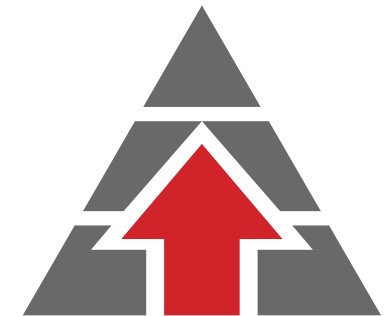


# 4

## Keep Your Social Media Pages and Accounts Updated

If a potential customer goes to your Facebook page and sees that the last time you posted was six months ago, they are likely not to post and even more likely not to return. “Often ... small businesses will sign up for every social media outlet available and not keep them up to date, which can be even worse than not having a social media presence at all,” said Amanda Goodhue, director of digital PR at [Excela Marketing](#).

Set aside specific times during the week to focus on social media. Aronovich recommends installing social media applications on your smart phone so you can update your accounts even when not in the office. You may be able to update Facebook while waiting for an appointment or respond to a Tweet while your daughter finishes up soccer practice.



# 5

## Integrate Your Social Media Into Your Brand

If your Facebook page doesn't link back to your website or people ordering products can't easily find your Twitter account, then you are not maximizing your exposure and efforts. "For a successful social media strategy, businesses should make sure Facebook, along with other social media platforms, are integrated with all brand touch points," said Goodhue. She said this includes everything from your website, business cards and even your employee's email signature. Determine where you want your followers to visit, most likely your company's website, and make sure that the URL is located prominently on all accounts and communications.

