MINDBODY WHITE PAPER

How to Effectively Market Your Business on Social Media

MINDBODY®

Now more than ever, marketing your business requires a social media presence. Given that social media platforms account for 28% of the total time spent online globally,[1] engaging customers where they spend so much of their time has never been more important. This brief guide explains how to effectively and efficiently leverage social media for your business—so you can engage with your customers at the right time, in the right places.

01 Pick the Right Channels

You have a lot of choices when it comes to social media platforms. Before selecting any, think about your criteria for picking them to ensure you spend social media time wisely. Identifying your audience, defining your goals and evaluating different platforms helps narrow down the options.

Ask yourself who your typical customers are. Their age groups and interests will guide you to the social media channels that will resonate most with them. What do they want to accomplish with social media? On the flip side, consider what *you* want to accomplish with social media. Are you looking to increase your clientele, drive brand recognition, enhance customer service—or is it a combination of objectives? Most importantly, don't forget to check if your customers use the channel, and to analyse how they use it. This helps determine its effectiveness as a marketing tool.

First, let's look at a few of the most popular channels and their primary purposes.

Facebook

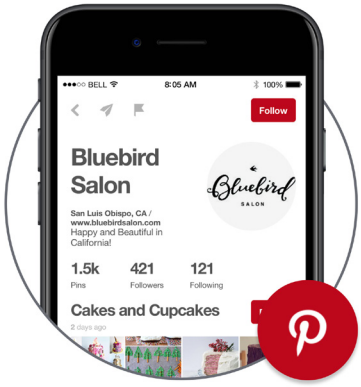
Facebook is the most widely used social media network, with 1.71 billion monthly active users.[2] Its large base enables you to reach a variety of audiences and cultivate a dialogue with them through testimonials and detailed information about your business. This depth of interaction helps you establish brand loyalty and encourages users to share your content. Facebook is also a great additional channel for clients to find all your necessary business information, such as your location, contact information and other details.

Instagram

With 500 million monthly active users,[3] Instagram has become an increasingly popular platform for businesses and offers substantial engagement opportunities with your customers. Its focus on imagery allows you to build a visual brand—using photos of your products, videos of your services and reposts of your customers interacting with your business. Take advantage of Instagram's blog for advice on ways this channel helps market your services.

Twitter

Twitter, with a reach of 313 million monthly active users,[4] helps you deliver short, up-to-the-minute news about products or services and keep your audience in the loop about trending topics. Because of Twitter's 140-character limit, using hashtags is key to creating dialogue and organising the conversation around a word or phrase relevant to your business.



Pinterest

For Pinterest's 110 million monthly active users,[5] the channel serves as a virtual inspiration board. This gives your business an opportunity to pin motivating images or tips that lead directly back to your website or to other relevant content. Like Instagram, Pinterest visually promotes your services and products, and its aspirational nature makes it especially popular among beauty, health and fitness businesses.

02 Optimise Your Posts

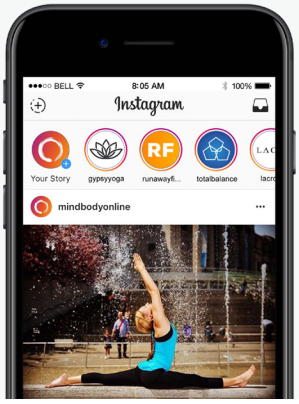
Once you have established which platforms align with your business goals, knowing how to optimise your posts will help you reach those goals. Let's look at some specific strategies for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. (For further information on how to leverage other channels, check out our webinar, "How to Spend Your Time Wisely on Social Media.")

Facebook

With Facebook, getting a "like" is a crucial starting point for connecting and growing your community. To generate more traffic to your page, focus on using images and short, digestible text in each of your posts—highlighting the most relevant content at the top of your page. Celebrate milestones, such as anniversaries or staff accomplishments. Responding to—and even featuring—your customers keeps them engaged, and asking questions at the end of your posts sparks conversation. Think of your Facebook page as a hub for your community.

Instagram

Instagram gives you an opportunity to showcase your business in an aesthetically pleasing way. While featuring pictures of your business is important, you'll appeal to a wider range of customers by mixing it up with fun, entertaining images and diverse captions that tell a story or promote a service. Captions that tag other users and use popular and relevant hashtags can also build brand awareness. Be careful not to oversaturate your page by posting more than twice a day,[6] but do remember to follow your followers back to generate dialogue.

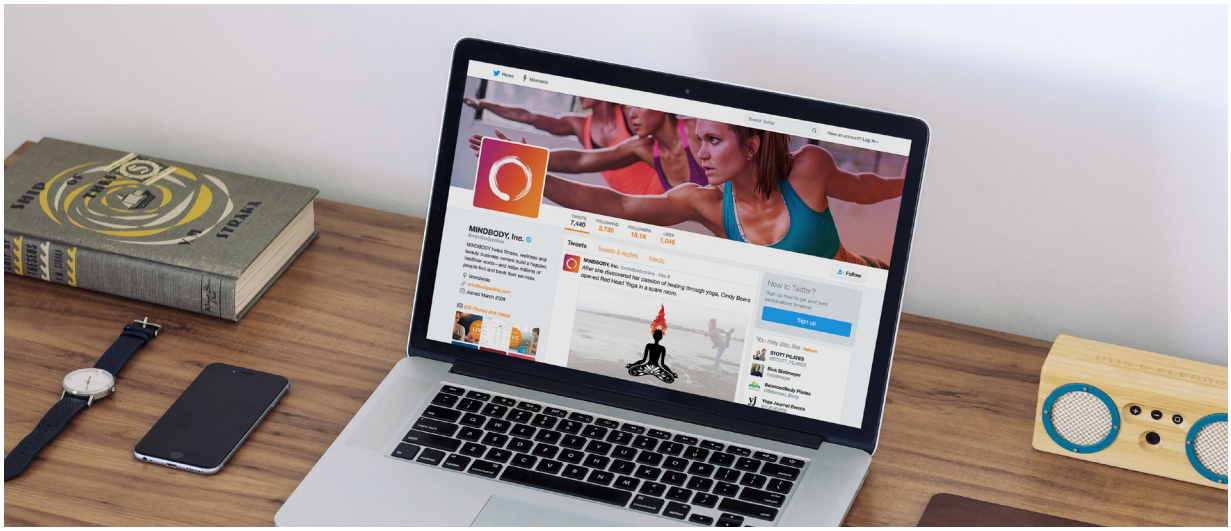


Quick tip:

Instagram's Stories feature lets you provide more context for your messaging using additional videos and photos, to keep your content varied and engage customers.

Twitter

To get the most out of your business's Twitter page, share pictures, videos and links, and make sure others can discover your conversation by providing unique and existing hashtags (e.g., "#hotyoga" or "#salonstyle" or "#pilates"). Tweet between 12:00 PM and 3:00 PM and at 5:00 PM on weekdays to get the most engagement.[7] Don't forget to reply to people who engage with you and to share other people's tweets, news and announcements—this makes people more likely to share your tweets, too. Live tweeting during events such as workshops can also help maintain focus on your business.



03 Get Help from Your Customers

You've decided which channels to use and developed a strategy for each one, but there's another key aspect of an effective social media presence: your customers! Let's talk about a couple ways to encourage them to help spread the word about your business.

Referral programs

Referral programs that reward your customers for steering a friend towards your business can be powerful marketing tools because they're more personal and cost-efficient than paid marketing campaigns. Promote your referral program on social media and include some type of call to action (e.g., "Sign Up!") to encourage them to participate. Ask your customers to share your business with their friends (be subtle with these requests to avoid seeming pushy—you want to be human and approachable). You might consider offering a special gift or discount for bringing you new customers. Most of all, keep it interesting and fun with different types of programs, such as contests to see who refers the most friends or raffles for all those who do refer.

Requesting reviews

Alongside referral and reward programs, requesting reviews also helps attract new business. Establish profiles on review sites such as Yelp and Google+, and make it easy for customers to review by providing links to your profiles in follow-up emails or on your website. Incentivise reviews by offering a gift card or some other small reward, and follow through even for less-than-glowing reviews—you can use them to improve your services. And don't forget to thank your customers for taking the time to review.[8]

Quick tip:

Customer reward programs like Perkville, which integrates with MINDBODY, help businesses automatically increase retention, generate referrals and increase social media presence.

Establishing and maintaining a social media presence takes commitment and time, but the rewards—retaining and acquiring customers—are worth the effort. Perhaps no other marketing method allows you to interact so closely with your customers and build lasting relationships that help your business thrive and grow.

[1] "Daily time spent on social network rises to 1.72 hours," Global Web index, January 2015
[2] "Facebook Reports Second Quarter 2016 Results," Facebook, July 2016
[3] "Instagram Today: 500 Million Windows to the World," Instagram, June 2016
[4] "What's Happening," Twitter, June 2016
[5] "150 million people finding ideas on Pinterest," Pinterest, March 2016
[6] "How To Optimize Your Social Media Posting Frequency," Social Media Week, March 2016
[7] "What 16 Studies Say About The Best Times To Post On Social Media," CoSchedule, April 2016
[8] "6 Simple Ways To Get Customers To Review Your Business Online," Forbes, August 2014

To learn how MINDBODY can help with social media marketing, call us at 1800.082.989 or learn more about MINDBODY at https://au.mindbodyonline.com/.