

LEO Dublin City Social Media Strategy



Which Social Media Platforms Should You Use for Your Business?

There's no longer any question that social media is a necessary marketing tool for every business that wants to remain relevant and visible in today's busy online world. In fact, 92 percent of marketers say that [social media has helped increase exposure](#), which means that if you aren't using social media to its fullest, you're missing out on a huge opportunity.

But getting started can be difficult, and even something as seemingly simple as choosing a social platform can be more complicated than you'd think. There are thousands of social networks out there to choose from, but the good news is that you can start by narrowing it down to the most popular and most widely used platforms. From there, it's all about determining which platform will give you the exposure you're looking for with the right audience, and figuring out which one will help you meet your marketing objectives.

Narrowing Down Your Choices

There are social media platforms out there for everything and everyone, including ones to connect people with shared interests, similar hobbies, comparable demographics, and much more. The point is that there are way too many social networking sites out there to ever have a presence on them all, and your time would be better spent focusing on the sites that get the most traffic. Of all the social media sites out there, the top ones in terms of [monthly active users](#) include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Pinterest.

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Start by Defining Your Goals

There are many benefits to using social media, but it's important to have specific goals before you move forward. For one, your objectives will help determine not only the social platform you choose, but also the content you create, the audience you target, and more. Here are some of the most common benefits of using social media that you might want to focus on:

- Improving your customer service offerings by providing another platform on which customers can reach out with complaints, questions, and concerns Identifying new leads and prospects who are similar to your best customers
- Reaching out to new audiences and new demographics who might be receptive to your products or services Increasing brand awareness and exposing your business to new people
- Learning about the needs, wants, and habits of your audience and customers. Increasing traffic to your site and boosting sales

Then Determine What Channels Your Audience Is Already Using

The entire point of [social media marketing is to put you in contact with your best audience](#), so it's not advisable to choose a platform where your audience doesn't operate. Unfortunately, there's no Field of Dreams opportunity here where your prospects will start to use the social platform of your choice just because you've created a profile. Instead, it's a much better idea to analyze which platforms your audience prefers and to seek them out on the networks they're already using.

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There are a few different ways you can go about [finding where your audience is hanging out online](#), and one of the most straightforward is a simple customer survey. Ask questions like what social sites they use, where they get their information online, and which influencers they listen to. Another way to get information about your audience is through the social media sites themselves. With platforms like Facebook, you can actually tell Facebook about your ideal customers, and they'll estimate the audience size for you. You can also research the [demographics of different social media users](#) thanks to the Pew Research Center for Internet and Technology to determine where your audience is most likely spending their online time.

Finally, Examine the Type of Content You Typically Create

Different types of content work better with certain social media platforms, so it's integral that you consider the type of content you like to create and that works best with your brand. Instagram, for instance, is all about the pictures, so it may not be the right choice if most of what you create is long-form textual content like whitepapers. The type of content you create will depend on a number of things, including your industry, your brand, and your target audience, but content types you may focus on include:

- Blog posts
- Podcasts
- Testimonials
- User-generated content
- Webinars and livestreams
- Ebooks
- Whitepapers
- Videos
- Photographs

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After That, Pair Your Goals, Audience, and Content with the Right Platform

Once you've settled on the goals you want to achieve with social media, determined where your audience is already hanging out and decided what type of content works best for you, you can then go through and compare the different social media platforms to determine which one will best meet your needs. To help you decide, here's a rundown of the platforms, what they're good for, and what a typical user looks like:

Facebook: This is by far the largest platform, with over 2 billion monthly active users, [61 percent of whom are Americans](#) between the ages of 25 and 54. Facebook is good for lead generation, and its advertising platform can be highly customized to target very specific audiences. Facebook is also a good platform for building relationships, showing the human side of your business, and turning leads into loyal followers and customers. Many different content types are appropriate for Facebook, but the key is content that shows a different side of your company. Facebook (and Twitter) are both excellent for reaching large numbers of people, but it's important to remember that there's also a great deal of competition.

Twitter: Twitter is the go-to platform if your business is about immediacy, and if you want to reach out to followers with breaking news, announcements, important messages, and other in the moment information. Most Twitter users are under the age of 50, and the type of content that works best on this platform is [easily digestible textual content](#), such as how to articles, listicles, and quotations. Images perform better on Twitter than video, but text-based content still reigns supreme.

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LinkedIn: LinkedIn is typically the choice platform for B2B businesses, and especially if your goal is lead generation. This is also an ideal platform for editorial content, and it can help you establish your company as a trusted leader in your field, build authority for your brand, and engage leads through conversations. The demographic on LinkedIn is also different than other sites because there are more users between the ages of 30 to 49 than there are users under 30.

Pinterest: Images are the name of the game when it comes to Pinterest, and this platform is great if you're looking to drive sales because [over 90 percent of users plan purchases](#) using the platform. There are far more women on Pinterest than there are men, and it's a graphics-heavy platform that lends itself to décor, food, art, fashion, wedding, travel, and other businesses that can leverage topics that produce beautiful and stunning photographs.

Conclusion

Social media is an indispensable tool for any business that wants to remain pertinent and gain exposure online, because not only can it connect you with prospects who are right next door, but it can also help you reach out to people all across the globe. Beyond that, social media is also an excellent tool for building brand awareness, finding new leads, generating more website traffic, getting to know your audience better, gaining insight into the shopping habits of your best customers, and even improving your customer service. The trick to choosing the right social media platform for your business is all about confirming the goals you want to achieve through social media marketing, figuring out what platforms your target audience is already on, and choosing a platform that matches with the type of content you create.

The Beginner's Guide to Defining Buyer Personas

The Beginner's Guide to Defining Buyer Personas

“When you combine the Buyer Profile with Buying Insights, you will have clear guidance for the decisions you need to make to win their business.” - [Adele Revella](#)

One of the best ways to create content and plan promotional campaigns that truly engage your target audience is by creating a buyer persona.

What's a buyer persona, you ask? In a nutshell, a buyer persona is a profile that represents your ideal customer. By creating your own buyer personas, you'll gain the ability to tailor your marketing efforts and connect with your target audience to meet their needs and solve their problems.

After all, if you don't know who you're aiming your efforts at, how are you going to sell your products or services?

According to a study from Mark W. Schaefer, three to four buyer personas usually account for over [90% of a company's sales](#). And in this beginner's guide, we're going to show you how to create your own buyer personas to increase your audience, boost brand awareness, and drive more sales.

Carry out market research

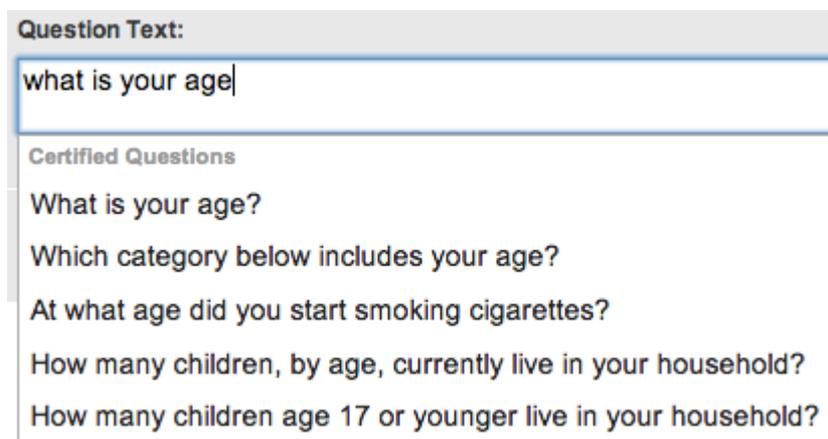
When creating a buyer persona, you're essentially creating a personality that embodies a key segment of your audience - and the first step to accomplishing this is to conduct thorough research.

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To get a gauge on who your customers are, what they want, and what they're looking for you to solve you will need to hold surveys and polls via your social media channels; interview current customers on one-to-one basis, and look at your competitors to see how their customers interact with them online; this will help you gain a better understanding of who you're speaking to on your channels.

Personalised campaigns [drive 18 times](#) more revenue than broadcast emails, so it's important to gain as much information as you can from the word go.

Services like [SurveyMonkey](#) are very useful as they offer suggestions on how to phrase certain questions for your various demographics to ensure that you get the most valuable response to inform your buyer persona campaign.



The image shows a screenshot of a survey question editor. At the top, there is a grey header labeled "Question Text:". Below it is a text input field containing the text "what is your age|". Underneath the input field is a section titled "Certified Questions" which lists several suggested questions:

- What is your age?
- Which category below includes your age?
- At what age did you start smoking cigarettes?
- How many children, by age, currently live in your household?
- How many children age 17 or younger live in your household?

To help you with your efforts, here's a video on creating a user poll on Facebook...

Another effective way to understand your consumers is through social listening. To find out how, read our practical [social listening guide](#).

Check your site analytics

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More data has been created in the last two years than in the whole previous history of the human race. That's a lot of data. You can harness this data to strategically focus your marketing efforts and reach out to your customers in a valuable way.

Inside your site analytics, you'll be able to see where your site visitors came from, the keywords they used to find you, and how long they stayed on site for once they arrived. This type of data is essential to creating buyer personas as it shows the search terms that led your audience to your site, as well as the devices and platforms they used to get there.

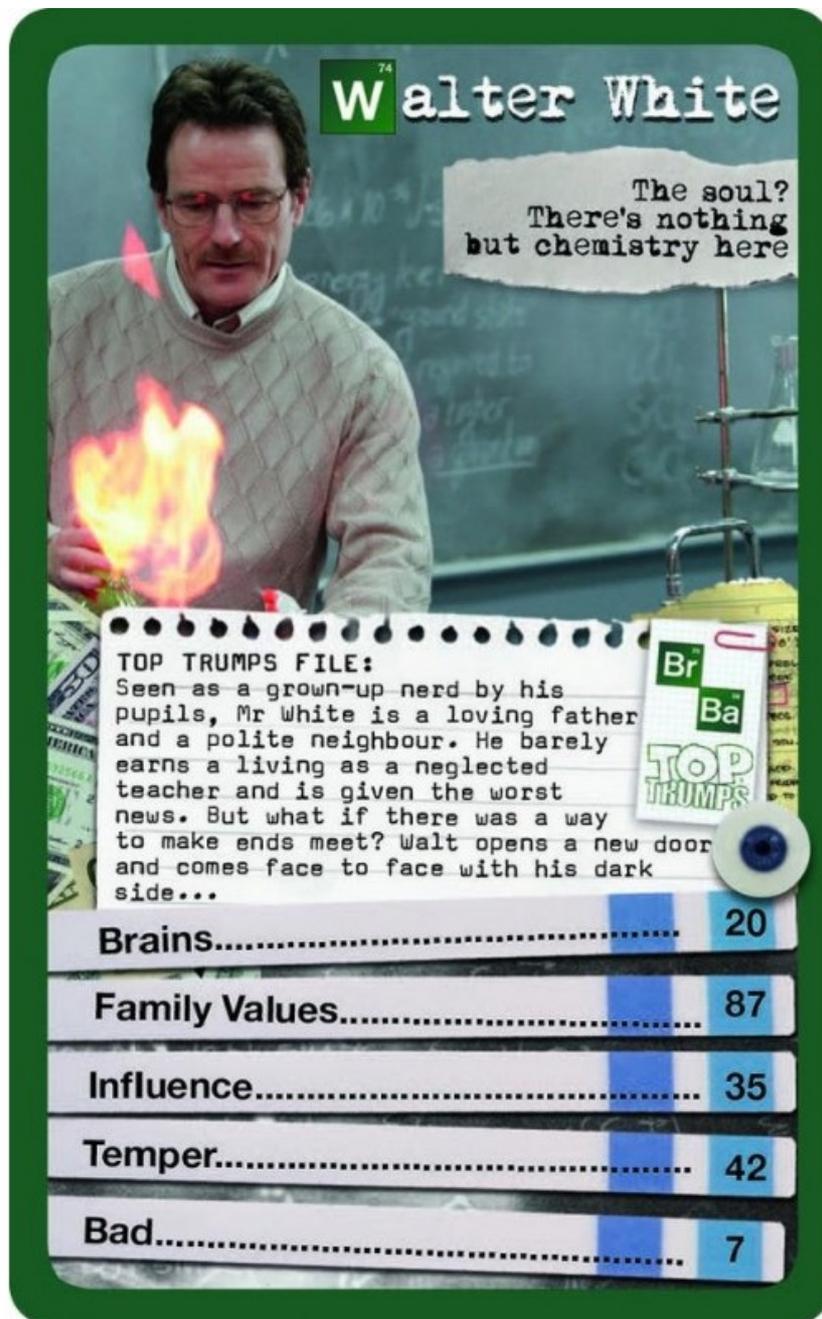
This video will help you decide which metrics you need to use to help define your perfect buyer persona.

Make a buyer persona template

Now you've checked your analytics, gathered your data and gained key insights on your customer base; you'll be ready to create a buyer persona template.

A buyer persona is a little like a Top Trumps card - only more useful.

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Here is an overview of what to include in your buyer persona template:

Persona name: It's very important to give your persona a name to bring them to life and humanize your marketing efforts

Job title

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- Essential information about their company (size, sector, etc.)
- Details about their job role

Demographics

- Age
- Gender
- Salary or combined household income
- Location: are they from an urban, suburban or rural region
- Level of education
- Family size

Goals and challenges

- Main goal
- Secondary goal
- How you help your persona reach these goals
- Primary challenge
- Secondary challenge
- How you can assist in resolving these problems

Values and fears

- Main personal values
- Common objections during sales process

Marketing message

Think about how you might describe or communicate your product or services to this particular type of person?

Elevator pitch

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Elaborate on your marketing message and decide on a consistent message based on how you're going to sell yourself to this customer.

Here is an example of a basic buyer persona.

	
Hugo Small business owner	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social media marketer• Senior decision-maker	
DEMOGRAPHICS	Goals and challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age 28 - 32• Skews male• £70,000 per annum• Inner London• Master's degree• Married, no children	Saving time on campaigns Generate interesting social content Maximise social media resources
	How we can help
	Schedule posts with ease Suggest content ideas Provide weekly insights
Values and Fears	Marketing Message
Good UI, providing information, Quick and seamless support	Ultimate social media scheduling and content planning tool

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Elevator Pitch

Use us to schedule your posts across all of your key channels and benefit from insider information on content that works best for your audience.

Add extra customer-specific information

In addition to the core details on your template, you should add extra snippets of information relating to your particular customer base; not only will this help you target your efforts more specifically, but it will also help to breathe extra life into your personas.

Each buyer persona template can be changed slightly to meet your needs, but as a guide, this information will assist you with your efforts.

- Level of digital competency
- Personal hobbies
- Preferred news sources
- Favourite blogs
- Most used social media platform
- Direct quotes from existing customer interviews

The power of a solid buyer persona

More often than not, it's easy to spot a business that understands the value of a solid buyer persona - and knows how to use it to their advantage. JetBlue is a shining example.

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JetBlue's primary buyer persona is the low budget traveller that seeks a comfortable yet affordable solution to flying.

Understanding its audience is young and likes to make the majority of their decisions through social media, JetBlue has crafted its efforts accordingly, picking up plenty of traction on Twitter in particular.

In fact, according to a recent report from TalkWalker, JetBlue sees **74.1%** of its overall social media performance from Twitter.

Fly like a BOSS, pay like an intern.
twitpic.com/b4p99t Book today only for fares from \$49 one-way. Terms apply. bit.ly/JBBOSS

← Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite



By JetBlue Cheeps @JetBlueCheeps

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By taking on a fun, conversational tone, using slogans like 'Flying like a boss', and focusing on responding to their followers almost instantaneously, the company has earned 477 thousand followers to date, and is following just one account themselves. Even their handle - [@JetBlueCheeps](#) - appeals to their key buyer persona.

As a result of its refined marketing efforts, aided by the company's 'Travel like a boss' campaign, and driven by its attention marketing personas, the company saw a [7.9% increase](#) in profit in 2016 from the previous year.

A clear indication of how buyer personas can help a company improve its brand message, appeal to its target audience and reap the rewards of ongoing commercial success.

By following the above steps and taking the time to create at least three key buyer personas for your company, you'll be able to create content and launch campaigns that not only sing to your audience but will help you brand grow and evolve with your customers.

7 Social Media Marketing Trends That Will Dominate 2018

7 Social Media Marketing Trends That Will Dominate 2018

The world of marketing has changed substantially over the past several years. These changes are mostly driven by trends in consumer behavior and preferences, particularly among young people. Getting exposure to members of Gen Z means that companies and marketing agencies alike have had to switch communication channels and refocus on what's important to young consumers.

Customer engagement through social media platforms like Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram has become a crucial component of any successful marketing strategy. As the world of social media marketing changes quickly, it's important to stay up to date on trends in the industry so that you can create the most successful engagement strategy possible. Here are 7 trends in social media marketing that will dominate in 2018.

1. A focus on hiring talent for content creation.

In the past, many companies hired freelance writers to create content for their social media accounts. They would then cross-promote new content across platforms. The increased prominence of social media platforms as a method of engaging young consumers will push marketing firms and companies to hire their own employees to focus on content creation.

7 Social Media Marketing Trends That Will Dominate 2018

As young consumers spend a great deal of time engaging with brands on social media, it's imperative that brands post content that is not only relevant to their target audience, but created specifically for the platform it's being posted on. The type of content that is best for Facebook is very different from the type best for Instagram, which means that companies have to hire experts in the content-creation space to manage their accounts. Marketing strategies often take time to create and implement, so hiring in-house talent for social media marketing is a great way to ensure success in the space.

2. Increased emphasis on video content.

More and more content strategists are focusing on video content rather than pictures for brand marketing. Expert marketers have found that effectively engaging their target audience is much easier through video. However, it's important to make sure that the video content you produce is closely aligned with your brand image and connects with your users.

To do this, create videos that your customers can relate to, and focus on showing your product in use rather than showing just the product itself.

3. A focus on user-generated content.

Many brands are leveraging user-generated content on their social media accounts to better engage their followers. For example, lifestyle brands will ask their followers to submit pictures of themselves wearing a particular style of clothing or doing a specific activity. These brands will choose the best submissions and feature them on their page, giving credit to the follower who submitted them.

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This is not only a great way to get new, quality content; it's also a perfect strategy for better engaging your followers. Chosen followers will be excited about being featured, and they'll be more likely to purchase your products and encourage their friends to check out your page. Instagram perhaps delivers the biggest ROI for UGC. You can use an Instagram analytics tool to measure which posts receive the most engagement.

4. Increased use of Stories.

Facebook and Instagram Stories have become very popular among individual users and brands alike. It's important for content strategists and marketers to produce content not only for posting directly to their accounts, but to their story as well.

Many users who follow a lot of accounts don't take the time to view every new post in their feed, but they will take a few seconds to view new stories. You can use this to your advantage by encouraging users to check out newly posted content in your story or by cross-promoting it in your other social media accounts.

5. Brand partnership to engage customers.

Many brands are making use of influencers on Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat to promote their products to a large audience.

7 Social Media Marketing Trends That Will Dominate 2018

Brand partnerships are a great way to reach new users, and are often much more cost effective than generating new content yourself. To successfully implement a brand partnership at your company, focus on partnering with users who have a clear message and a large follower base, and who actively engage the community they post in. Brand partners often find innovative ways to get customers excited about products, and you can use their talent to your advantage.

6. Live content will appeal to the masses.

Many brands and companies are using live content to get their followers excited and engaged. Product marketers use Facebook Live to do product demonstrations and show videos of real people using their product. Broadcasting to followers in real time is a fantastic way to get people interested in your content and engaged with your brand.

7. Starting conversations with individual users.

Many brands have hired strategists and marketers to communicate with individual users and potential customers. Social media content managers have begun to talk to users in the comments of Instagram posts and reply to users' tweets on Twitter.

Engaging with individual users directly is a great way to make followers feel important and get excited about your brand. And building brand loyalty and getting followers to actively engage with your content is the best way to convert users to paying customers.

Social Media Marketing in 2018: 8 Trends To Keep Your Eyes On

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Every marketer knows social media is one of the most effective ways to expand your reach, connect with your target audience, and grow your business.

However, along with everything else in inbound, social media is constantly changing.

Just take a look at 2017, for example.

In the past year alone, Facebook seduced Snapchat users to Instagram with the addition of stories, the president of the United States took to Twitter to communicate official policy positions in 140 characters (now he has 280, but we'll get to that), and Apple announced plans to [alter the way we interact](#) with our mobile devices.

As more and more brands expand their reach with social media, the competition on these channels is increasing and people's attention spans are decreasing.

So, how should marketers adjust their social media marketing in 2018?

They need to stay on top of the changes and be ready to pivot.

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As we move into the next year, we are going to see an overall increased amount of time spent on social platforms, with big brands digging in and committing to a much larger investment in social media marketing. 2017 saw a [60% increase](#) in social media budget over 2016, which is set to continue into 2018

You want to stay ahead of the curve and your competition, but you also don't want to waste time and money on a something fleeting that won't stick around. So how do you figure out what's going to be worth your investment?

Well, we did the hard part for you and identified the hottest trends in the social media world for 2018, hopefully giving you enough time to get them implemented right after the new year.

Before we dig into it, however, here are some of the biggest challenges social media marketers are going to face in 2018.

Social Media Marketing Challenges in 2018

Less Organic Reach

As more and more businesses increase their presence on social media platforms, the organizations themselves have made big moves to combat spam. In most instances, this means marketers have to fight a decline in organic reach.

With less organic return, brands are likely to take a more selective approach to social media marketing. They will have to be very particular about where and what they post and invest more in paid ads to keep their numbers up.

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Social Media Video Peaking

According to [research done by Kenshoo](#), spending on social video advertising grew 130% this year, with no sign of stopping.

The problem with this is the market for social video is being saturated. Businesses are now going to be challenged with producing even more relevant video content and distributing it properly if they actually want to get noticed.

“New Tool” Fatigue

[Hootsuite did some research](#) and found a lot of their customers are fed up with the never-ending list of new tactics, tools, and formats for handling their social media marketing.

In 2018, there is going to be a shift back to the basics.

Marketers are going to have to try and prove the ROI of existing tactics. This means metric measurements will be more important than ever as brands try and identify what strategies are working and what isn't.

Okay, so there are the challenges. So what can you do to overcome them? Onto the top social media marketing trends for 2018...

Social Media Trends for 2018

1. Instagram Stories

Yes, yes, Snapchat was first to let users share short videos that delete after 24 hours, but it worked! It worked so well Facebook decided to take a whack at it both on Instagram and in the app that bears its name.

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With its huge audience, it should come as no surprise that within the first year of the Instagram story debut, it has [surpassed Snapchat's view count](#) with 20 million views a day. At that same rate, nearly half of all Instagram users will be using Stories by the end of 2018.

This means [brands trying to connect with their customers on Instagram](#) must take the time to get on board with stories. Regardless of B2B or B2C, they are a great way to showcase your company culture or put your processes on display.

The stories are fun to use and to view, allowing you to add filters, tags, and text. One of the biggest brand benefits of Instagram stories is that they are discoverable, meaning that Instagram users can see your stories even if they are not your followers.

In addition, just like with any other post on the platform, you can hashtag relevant keywords to help users find you faster and easier. These tags are clickable, so brands can dive into their niche markets and target more effectively than ever. Brands are going to be trying new ways to engage with their story viewers by taking polls and asking questions with their posts. You can even tag your location

Now it's definitely a long shot for most, but any account with 10,000 followers or more can also [add links to their stories](#), which is a huge advantage considering Instagram doesn't allow links in posts otherwise.

2. Social Media Influencers & Micro-Influencers

Not long ago, the fastest and easiest public relations tactic was hiring a celebrity to endorse or [promote your brand](#) or product, but that can come with a hefty price tag (and now Kyrie Irving is joining the flat-earthers).

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Nowadays, a more reasonable solution is social media influencers (or micro-influencers), who are celebrities in their own circles.

Micro-influencers can have an incredible amount of reach, usually with followings in the hundreds of thousands or millions. Brands are shifting towards paying these influencers to promote their specific products because they deliver **11 times the ROI** compared to traditional digital marketing, and **49% of people** suggest that they depend on influencers for their purchase decisions.

This is not just a trend, but a billion-dollar emerging industry. Many of these influencers walk away with six-figure incomes, all from promoting brands to their massive followings. Take [Ryan ToysReview](#) for example. Ryan is an irresistible 6-year-old who is **estimated by Forbes** to have made \$11 million this year through his YouTube channel. Ryan opens toys, plays with them and then offers his opinions. With 10 million subscribers, he is leading the charge for the social influencer industry for 2018.

Over **90%** of marketers who employ an influencer marketing strategy believe it is successful. In 2017, brands struggled to connect with their audiences with traditional advertising tactics, so expect influencers to take off even more than they already have.

3. Augmented & Virtual Reality

While augmented reality's initial impact will be on mobile gaming, it is likely that social media platforms will find more ways to incorporate the new technology as well.

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Snapchat is already on board, teaming up with Bitmoji to allow users to project animated versions of themselves into the real world doing lots of random things. Not to mention Pokemon GO, which has let players catch the beloved pocket monsters in their real surroundings for a couple of years now.

Even the new iPhone 8 and Google's Pixel 2 have incorporated augmented reality with talking emojis amongst other things.

Getting away from the novelty of it all, the potential of augmented reality for brands is immense. Companies will be able to showcase their products in brand new ways to customers, like seeing how a piece of clothing looks on them or how a certain chair would fit in their living room.

[Implementing AR into your marketing efforts](#) can take some significant time and budget, but we expect a more manageable solution to AR customization to come out this year through social media.

In terms of Virtual Reality, most technologies have at least another year of development before they hit mainstream markets.

There is some hope for 2018, however.

Facebook, for example, has been working on a [project called Spaces](#) that is designed to allow friends to connect in VR. Since Facebook owns Oculus, a VR headset retailer and software company, it's no surprise that they are making this jump and it's an exciting move for marketers.

Facebook wants to release Spaces in 2018 and when they do, it is probably going to be the first VR social media experience. While still a ways off, marketers should start strategizing around this groundbreaking opportunity.

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4. More Live Streaming is Coming

While Facebook Live and [other live streaming](#) have been around for awhile now, the way people and brands are going to use them is changing.

We are going to see a lot more of it in 2018, and the people who do it well will be reveling in the organic reach it will generate. The significance of live streaming is not from it gaining popularity, but rather the technology we have to do it is improving.

We get better phones with better hardware every year, meaning better and more accessible video recording and processing.

In 2018, more brands will begin to harness the power of live streaming and will incorporate it into their monthly content plans. And like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and even LinkedIn even more social platforms are sure to follow as they try to capitalize on the trend.

5. Generation Z

What the heck is Generation Z? Gen Z are millennials' little sibling, born in the late 90s / early 00s.

This generation is the first to grow up 100% online and their tech-savviness is unparalleled. [According to RetailDive](#), Gen Z is 2-3 times more likely to be influenced by social media than they are by sales or discounts.

In other words, they value social media and what others are doing more than they do price itself. That's a huge shift from the price conscious shoppers of the past.

Social Media Marketing in 2018: 8 Trends To Keep Your Eyes On

Now, most marketers won't worry about Gen Z for at least a few years, but the very first of them are about 22 years old now and graduated college in 2017. A Gen Z workforce is on its way, and marketers should stay ahead of this curve on this one, especially B2B.

[Goldman Sachs](#) says that Gen Z is more valuable to marketers than millennials in 2018 because their buying power is only going to increase, and we need to shift social media strategies accordingly.

There will be a shift in social media investments to Gen Z-friendly platforms like Snapchat and Instagram, and away from those like Facebook.

6. Online Hangouts Become the Norm

Online hangouts are the perfect harmony between the live streaming trend and Gen Z. [Houseparty](#), for example, is a free app where you can live video chat with multiple people that saw rapid growth last year and is starting to turn heads.

Because of this, yes, you guessed it, Facebook is reportedly investigating ways to create a similar functionality within their live streaming platform.

7. Twitter... is Still Here

And it probably doesn't even know why.

For most businesses, it might be better to invest more time and money in increasingly popular platforms like Facebook and Instagram next year.

Twitter has been struggling in the past few years (in fact, we made a fairly significant [#Twexit](#) last year), and it needs to make some big changes in order to stay relevant in 2018.

Social Media Marketing in 2018: 8 Trends To Keep Your Eyes On

It was the slowest growing major social media platform in 2017, despite the viral coverage of President Trump's statements on the platform. Many users are leaving Twitter due to unfair code of conduct enforcement with regards to the President.

With this in mind, expect them to hit the drawing board in 2017 with any and all attempts to switch things up. They have already increased their character limit to 280 characters and experts predict they will soon fully launch their [subscription model for advertisers](#), among other things. The bottomline is: stay on the lookout. They aren't done yet.

8. Stricter Conduct Policies

Along the same lines as Twitter's code of conduct issue, many platforms are rethinking how they govern their users.

After a series of controversial issues during the 2016 presidential election, social media platforms have embraced a more involved approach.

Facebook, for instance, [recently turned over](#) a ton of ads that seem to be connected to Russian hacking, and has invested in new AI and human forms of monitoring.

In the wake of several graphic live streams, some resulting in death, Facebook also [had to hire more staff](#) just for content monitoring.

At this point, it seems more like damage control than a proactive solution, but we expect platforms to implement more preventative and long-lasting measures when it comes to content monitoring.

As a marketer, you need to know and understand these guidelines to ensure you don't get penalized.

Social Media Marketing in 2018: 8 Trends To Keep Your Eyes On

Key Takeaways

The 8 social media trends above (and likely many more as time passes) will impact users and brands significantly in 2018.

The end of the year is almost here, and, with these trends in mind, it's time to reconsider your [social media approach](#) to maximize your ROI.

In order to hit the ground running in 2018, get your plans underway now so that you can stay ahead of the curve with these latest trends.

So what did I miss? Anything else we should keep our eyes on? Leave us a comment and let us know!

How to Use Social Media To Drive Sales

How to Use Social Media To Drive Sales



According to a [report by Nielsen on social media](#) Americans spend three times more time on social media than reading their e-mail.

7.6% of online time is spent reading e-mail and 23% on social. The juicy bit of the study is that more than 70% of social networks users shop online. That's ~12% more than the average person.

These stats make a good case that if you and your brand is active on social networks, you can get rewarded – if you do it right.

Black Friday data

eCommerce sales during the last Black Friday topped \$1 billion for the first time in history. Thanks to [data from AddShopper's network](#) of over 7000 retailers we can take a closer look at what role social media played in the record breaking results.

How to Use Social Media To Drive Sales

On average, during Black Friday 2012, social traffic converted 77% higher than normal. Breaking down conversion rates and money spent by social source reveals some interesting insights

Real money behind numbers

For

Facebook

average order value was \$74 with 76% of total social sales and 69% of total clicks

For

Twitter

average order value was \$190 with 8% of total sales and 11% of total clicks

For

Pinterest

average order value was \$170 with 5% of total sales and 5% of total clicks.

For

Google+

average order value was \$195 with 3% of total sales and 0.06% of total clicks.

Facebook had the most clicks, most number of sales made AND the lowest average order value. While Google+ on the other hand had the lowest % of clicks, lowest number of sales made, but still managed the biggest average order value.

Numbers in perspective

How to Use Social Media To Drive Sales

Next, let's take a look at how those numbers compare with total sales. Turns out that from total sales made online Facebook accounted for only 4%, Twitter for 2%, Pinterest for measly 1%. The only outlier here was Google+ with close to 15%.

So as big as the initial numbers may seem, put into perspective it's not looking good at all.

The Forrester report



A new Forrester [report](#) titled [“The Purchase Path of Online Buyers In 2012”](#) analyzed conversion paths on 77,000 orders to determine what sources returned the most revenue. The data showed that fewer than 1% of transactions could be traced back to social links.

According to Forrester the low numbers could be due to the relatively short measurement period (30 days) and the size of the companies the data is based upon (only large scale e-commerce sites).

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Still that is 2 different large scale studies that seem to confirm that social media conversions suck. So, does it?

You can't sell with social

Social media can give your company many benefits – it can increase awareness, introduce you to new people, help with customer service (real time customer service!), follow-up with angry customers etc.

One thing that social is bad at is direct sales – just look at the 2 studies from the previous point. Both found direct conversions to be under 5%. And that's not good.

Wrong metric

The problem is with the metrics used – direct sales are a very bad metric to use for social. People don't go to Facebook and Twitter to buy stuff, they simply don't. They go there to chat with friends, discover new and interesting content, watch photos etc. They don't go there to buy.

All that doesn't mean that social can't be used for sales, it can and there is much success to be had there. But you have to approach it differently. You can't just go and blast your PR all over the place, no one will listen to you, and if no one listens then no one buys. Again, not good.

It's even worse when you are just starting out, trying to get your product to the market. You have no brand recognition what so ever.

How to Use Social Media To Drive Sales

Build trust



People buy from companies and brands that they recognize and trust. That have some kind of relationship with them. So don't use social media to sell *per-se*. But to get, initially at least, attention. Promote good relevant content, run contests, create an identity in your industry first.

Once people recognize that you don't just blast your company's PR all over the place, but share stuff they like (give good advice, relevant info etc) and find useful, they will follow and like your activities.

Away from Facebook

Now that you have their attention, it's time to drive them off of Facebook and into your website. In there you have total control over the environment and thus can work your conversions magic.

How to Use Social Media To Drive Sales

The easiest way to drive people from Facebook to your site is through your very own blog. You write a great blog post, and share it (and hopefully others do that as well) on social media.

It works because a blog post still carries the same DNA of your previous activities, meaning sharing relevant content. The difference is that now you are the creator of that content and they are consuming it in an environment that is controlled by you.

Some new people land on your site, read the post and see your [lead magnet](#) they can't resist. Now you get their e-mail and keep nurturing the relationship by sending something of value on a regular basis. Over time they'll develop trust in you and might even like you. Then they'll be ready to buy from you.

It's definitely a long term strategy, but one that will pay off handsomely in the end. Blasting "buy my crap" on social media will not lead to anything.

3 conversions to look for in social media

So direct sales numbers are not a good metric to look at when it comes to social media, but what is then?

1. Engagement

When you post stuff on Facebook, Twitter and the like – do people reply, like, comment, share your stuff? The more of those you get, the more confident you can be that you're doing the right thing, e.g. pushing out content that people care about and want to read.

How to Use Social Media To Drive Sales

If there is no engagement with your content then you have to take a critical look at what you're doing and why it's not working. Getting traction takes time, but don't let that become an excuse. Lots of companies have developed a significant following in 1 year or less.

Why is it important?



Engagement is especially important on Facebook, because of their EdgeRank algorithm that rewards “engagement” on your posts. Meaning that posts that attract a lot of engagement in terms of actions such as Likes, shares, and comments will be rewarded with greater visibility in users News Feeds.

On another note you can get more of those on Facebook if you simply ask for it, [according to new data](#).

According to the data:

- Ask for Likes and you will get more Likes and comments
- Ask for comments and you will get more comments and Likes
- Ask for shares and you will get more shares, comments and Likes

How to Use Social Media To Drive Sales

2. Traffic

How much traffic are you getting from social media? Here's how you can track that with [Google Analytics](#):

1. Go to **Traffic Sources** section, select **Sources** and **All Traffic**. From there you can identify who sends you the most traffic.
2. Once you know your main social media traffic sources, go ahead and create [Advanced Segments](#) for those websites to individually analyse your visitors from those sources.
 1. Because different **Twitter** clients send traffic that is not always tagged as being from [Twitter.com](#) or [t.co](#) the following should be added into one Advanced Segment using the OR statement:
 - [twitter.com](#)
 - [t.co](#)
 - [hootsuite](#)
 - [tweetdeck](#)
 - [bit.ly](#)
 2. For **Facebook** do the same OR statements with:
 - [facebook.com](#)
 - [m.facebook.com](#)
 3. For others check under **All Traffic** and set-up different Advanced Segments as necessary for your traffic sources.

Below is an example of an Advanced Segment for Twitter:

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The screenshot shows a web interface for creating an advanced segment. At the top, there are tabs for 'Advanced Segments', 'Email BETA', 'Export', and 'Add to Dashboard'. Below this, a 'Name:' field contains the text 'Twitter'. The main area is a list of criteria for the segment, each starting with an 'Include' button, a 'Source' dropdown menu, a 'Containing' dropdown menu, and a text input field. The criteria listed are: 'Source' containing 'twitter.com', 'Source' containing 't.co', 'Source' containing 'hootsuite', 'Source' containing 'tweetdeck', and 'Source' containing 'bit.ly'. Each criterion has an 'or' button to its right. Below the list, there are buttons for 'Add 'OR' statement' and 'Add 'AND' statement'. At the bottom, there is a section for 'More Options' with buttons for 'Save Segment', 'Preview Segment', 'Test Segment', 'Cancel', and 'Delete segment'.

3. Lead generation

How many new leads are you getting thanks to your social media efforts? One thing to remember is that leads from social media are different from your traditional leads.

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Different as in you can't go straight for the kill a.k.a sale – that will [kill the sale](#) with a social media buyer. Instead you must work on building trust through valuable and useful content and then slowly move into the sales part.

[Social Media Examiner](#) advises (Tip #4) to use decision making content that is designed to answer questions that are commonly being asked when purchasing your product. That way when your leads are finally in the buying phase they already have the answers to their questions that normally come up.

Tips

1) Social message match

The primary message on your landing page should be reflective on what you said in your social media channel. Seeing a familiar message adds to the feeling that you made a “good” click.

By having a mismatch between what you said on social and what awaits visitors on the landing page you risk visitors feeling lost and leaving. button.

2) Social proof

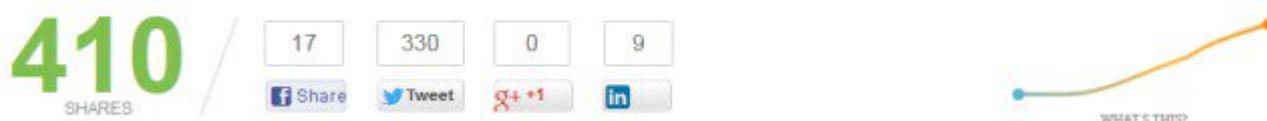
Use testimonials and social media widgets to establish your authority and show your success.

Widgets show how many people have liked, shared, tweeted your product/article etc. It can be used as [social proof](#) – if a lot of people have tweeted and liked it it obviously means it's good. Be careful though on how you use them – it can work against you. For example in eCommerce some sites used them in their product pages and have a row 0 there, not good. Negative social proof. Seriously, who shares a product page anyway?

How to Use Social Media To Drive Sales

Testimonials show people that you made someone else happy through your service, product, offering. Make sure they are authentic and use real photos of people whenever possible.

3) Social sharing



Social media icons help users share your content and offer ways for people to like your content. Likes are valuable votes of confidence (building trust) and go a long way with users who may have come to your site for the first time. Make your content easy to share. Above are social sharing buttons that [Mashable](#) uses.

Sure, there are people [arguing against](#) having social sharing buttons on your content – but I haven't seen any evidence to support that myself.

[Brightedge](#) conducted a detailed social share analysis of 4 million randomly sample tweets and discovered that sites that had adopted the "Tweet" button drove almost 7 times more link mentions (sharing) on average than sites that did not have the button.

[In some cases](#) a simple "Tweet" button can increase traffic by as much as 55%. For around 10 minutes of work to add a share button to your site you can potentially get twice the traffic.

Not bad, not bad at all.

But remember that too much of anything is rarely good. It's the same with social sharing buttons, [apparently](#) too many social sharing buttons make your site less social.

How to Use Social Media To Drive Sales

4) Use promotional campaigns

Holiday shopping [report from Yesmail Interactive](#) shows that consumers want to see more deals on social media that brands have been offering. At the same time consumers will tune out companies that bombard them with deals and promotions all the time.

The trick is to find a balance between putting out good quality relevant content and mixing it up with deals and promotional campaigns. Another [study by Pivot Conference](#) found that a whopping 83% of customers on social network seek deals and promotions.

Short bursts of traffic

But as always, you have to be careful with running campaigns and contests – they will drive heaps of traffic towards you, that's true, but most of that traffic is coming because of a promotion and not always because they care about you as a company or even your product.

Still, for a short term burst of sales it works, next let's take a look at two examples of companies and how they made it work for them.

Organic tea brand Steaz

[Steaz ran an integrated campaign](#) which included Twitter, Facebook, e-mail and pay-per-click ads on Google. Before the campaign started they were confident that they could generate 50,000 coupon downloads, 1,000 new fans/followers.

Actual results included 250,000 coupon downloads (with a 20+ percent redemption rate), 6,000 blog and social network mentions, and more than 3,000 new fans/followers. Steaz's December sales were double its previous best month ever.

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Dell

-  **Dell Outlet** @DellOutlet 28 Jan
Save 20% off Dell Outlet Business NEW ARRIVALS for Opti, Lat, Prec. & Vostro PCs! C0DXP3B\$NT423P del.ly/6011V4zR Exp. 2/1 9:59a CT
Expand
-
-  **Dell Outlet** @DellOutlet 25 Jan
24 Hrs Only!! Save 25% off Dell Outlet Latitude ST Tablet! Coupon Code: N\$Q0C\$K\$B\$J\$P\$W\$D del.ly/6014V2dq (Exp. 1/26/13 9:59am CT)
Expand
-
-  **Dell Outlet** @DellOutlet 24 Jan
24 Hours Only!! Save 20% off Vostro 3360, 3460, & 3560 Laptops! Enter Coupon: L62Z\$LN\$V\$Z\$C\$L\$B\$4\$N del.ly/6017VFcR (Exp. 1/25 9:59am CT)
Expand

Dell managed to generate more than \$4 million additional revenue through the use of [Dell Outlet Twitter account](#). They only used that particular account for advertising refurbished Dell computers and PCs and as the numbers suggest – they are successful with that.

Those past 2 examples were given to show that it is possible to drive new sales through social media, but the thing to remember is that you probably can't run campaigns forever (unless you're a deal-only company). By only sharing deals, in essence you're training your followers only to buy when there's a deal. Might not be a sustainable strategy.

A Quick Guide on Blogging for Businesses

A Quick Guide on Blogging for Businesses

There's a lot of content out there on the world wide web, and for good reason. Consumers are hitting search engines at break-neck speed to find out information about products and services of all kinds—and blogs act as a great collection of knowledge and resources for them. If you have ever wondered about starting your own blog for your business, or you're considering managing a blog for other businesses, here's everything you need to know (and how to know if they need it at all).

Do your clients need a business blog? (hint: yes!)

Ah, the universal question. Luckily, we've got the answer for you. And since you're here, you probably already know it.

Do you need a blog for your business, or do your clients? Considering that we're answering this question in the longest form possible—blog form—yes. And here's why.

A Quick Guide on Blogging for Businesses



You'll please the Google gods

Want to be on the first page of Google? A blog can help with that. Google LOVES active blogs. When you lace blog titles and content with applicable SEO, you improve your Google ranking. If you do so with their blog, that means you'll be getting more traffic to your website, and therefore to your business! What's more is that Google loves sites with regular activity, so posting on a schedule will improve your SERP ranking as well.

When you're [building your website](#), keep this in mind: when you're searching for questions related to your business, does your competitor show up first? Beat them to the punch with great content by including an informative and engaging blog on your site.

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You'll establish yourself as the expert

Who knows your business better than you? Nobody! You're the expert in your field, and you can educate your customers with a business blog. How does your service work? What kind of discoveries are happening in the field? People read content that can engage and educate them, so do both! Your business isn't boring, and a blog is the opportunity to prove it. Creating consistent, valuable content proves to your customers that you're invested in them and the relationship built between you ([Investopedia](#)).

Which leads me to my next point...

You'll build trust

Consumers gravitate towards brands they trust. Once you've established yourself as the expert in your field, people will trust your business. You've already given them something valuable: information. The blog can be a source of truth for customers, whether they're familiar with your brand or finding it for the first time.

There are many ways to increase your brand credibility with a business blog. Teach your customers how to use the products, or showcase how to get the most out of your services. Post about news in the industry. Most importantly, connect. Blogging is a personal way to keep customers informed about what's going on in your business ([Lifehack](#)). Consider blogging on a schedule to create predictability—that way the audience will know when to expect the content!

People like businesses with some transparency, too. Blogs are a great way to communicate what the business has going on. If the hours are changing, or you're moving locations, a blog is a great outlet for that announcement!

A Quick Guide on Blogging for Businesses

You'll have promotable content for social media

Your DO have social media, right? If you don't, take this as an opportunity to get started! If one thing's for certain, it's that a business blog and social media pages can work hand in hand. Once you've helped established yourself as the expert, now share that expert content to the masses! Coming up with current content for social media can be tough, but if you're keeping a regular blog, you'll always have something to post.

What's more is that relevant blog content is a great way to boost engagement and activity on social media pages. There are over [2.3 billion active users](#) using social media regularly, and that number is only rising. Give them something to talk about!

Don't be shy, either. According to [Entrepreneur](#), *not* promoting your content is one of the biggest mistakes you can make with your blog. Share away!

You'll create more leads

When done right, having a business blog can help you turn prospects into customers, and even attract more people to your business. Businesses with active blogs get [67% more leads](#) than those without. That's a significant increase! When you're consistently creating valuable content that can educate people and help them solve their problems, they'll develop a personal connection with your client's brand. That kind of emotional connection is what creates return customers. If you're looking for an ROI on blogging—this is it.

A Quick Guide on Blogging for Businesses

Blogging is the gift that keeps on giving. Once you've created content, it's on the internet to be shared and reshared without limit. Good content will continue to benefit your business—every day that passes only brings more views and engagement to their page. And the better the content is, the more of an audience you'll have. The internet is vast, but you can carve out your place with a business blog. Essentially, blogs are information, and that's the most powerful currency there is. And the best thing is that blogs aren't going anywhere.

So, now that we've discussed why you need a blog, it's time to get into how to make that happen. You didn't think we were just going to leave you hanging, did you?

Blogging for fun and profit: how to blog for businesses

So, your business has decided to take the leap into the blogosphere. Great! There's no shortage of reasons why blogging can benefit a business, as we discussed above. However, the world of business blogging may still feel like uncharted territory. What should the blog discuss? How many posts should get published, and how often? Just who the heck is going to read this stuff, anyway? This blog about blogging (a meta-blog?) will help you hit the ground running with tips on creating timely and fresh blogs that meet the needs and engage the minds of your readership.

Lay the foundation

A great blog starts with a great plan, and the planning stage is where you first answer the big questions that will determine what you write about, who you write for, and why you're writing in the first place. Before you fire up your typewriter, be sure to nail down answers to the following questions:

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- **Start with [buyer personas](#)**—who is going to be interested in what your business has to say? What are their pain points, and how do their products or services address and resolve them? Targeting the content to a specific readership makes it more likely to be seen (and shared).
- **Develop a list of keywords** relevant to the buyer personas. What kinds of search terms will they use when they're looking for solutions? Knowing the right keywords and putting them into use can optimize your blog to be found, guide your writing process and keep your copy consistent.
- **Decide your post frequency**—How often will you write? As we mentioned earlier, the fresher and more frequent your content, the more you'll have to offer to your readership, and the more [Google's page rankings will look favorably on your website](#).
- **Set measurable goals** in both the short and the long term. Are you looking to grow your email list and cultivate new leads, or are you focused on making your brand's voice trusted and authoritative in your field? Whatever the goals you determine, ensure that you also determine reliable metrics for measuring your progress.

Pick your topics

It may be easy to simply write a product feature or fluff up a sales pitch, but it's important to remember that the primary point of these blogs is to provide value to your audience, not to sell to them. Take another look at the [buyer personas](#) and their pain points, and assemble them into categories. These categories and their relevant personas will focus your writing and guide your use of keywords to optimize the SEO boost that the post provides. From here, you can begin to address some general topics.

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Another great source of blogging inspiration is your existing customer base. Think about the kinds of questions from customers that you answer on a regular basis. Many of these represent common pain points, and can easily turn into full blog posts. For every one customer who comes in or sends an email with a common question, just imagine how many there are tapping their query into Google in search of an answer!

For example, a furniture store might write a blog on the difference in durability between leather, vinyl and fabric upholsteries, or the different types of mattresses and their levels of support. An informative post that answers common questions and gives readers information that they can act on is going to rank higher on search engines and position your business as a source of information that readers can trust.

Content (not copy) is king

Getting the copy down is one thing, but a blog will be as dry as a bone without engaging content to supplement that copy. The content that your copy supports, more than anything, is what sets the blog apart from your competitors and drives the solution to their readership's problem. It's best to make your own, but there are plenty of resources out there for those who don't collect data or employ a design team.

Provide relevant and substantiated statistics in the form of graphs and infographics—these add credibility to the posts, and can provide shock value when used properly. Use visuals to break up the text. A well-chosen image or two can serve to break up the monotony of plain text as well as add a visual frame to the information the audience receives. Finally, use screenshots or photos to demonstrate your solution in action.

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Remember that the goal is to provide value, not to sell. Getting to the end of a blog and feeling like you just read a really long ad means that you're not going to come back for anything informative or authoritative. The more your readers can learn from a post, the more likely they are to return to the blog when they have another question that needs an answer.

What's the story?

Tell compelling stories (and write snappy titles). Narrative is a powerful tool, and we've known how to use it in sales and marketing for a long time. The same goes for blogs. Framing the movement from conflict to resolution as a journey makes an audience more receptive to the information being shared and puts it within a familiar and memorable framework.

Start by choosing a narrative voice. Anecdotes and stories about a business can use a first-person voice to draw readers in and demonstrate a unique way of overcoming challenges in ways that others can learn from and put into practice. A second-person voice (like the one used in this blog) allows readers to visualize themselves acting out your solutions as you offer them, while a third-person voice is suited to communicating stories about how the business has been part of another customer's success. Leverage the buyer personas and their challenges to tell stories that will engage the audience and show how your business fits into their lives. The blog posts don't have to read like a novel, but putting relevant information in action will help transform the blog from a lecture into a success story.

First person narrative, second, or third? Each offers a unique perspective when [#businessblogging](#)! [Click To Tweet](#)

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Sharing is caring

You've written something you can be proud of, so be sure to put it out there! Remember when we said social media can work hand-in-hand with a blog? Share new blog posts on your other marketing channels, and put the work in to gain readers other than Googlers and regular visitors to the site. Leveraging your social media following to widen the blog's audience has the added benefit that a new post that a follower finds useful or interesting is always easy to share with their own network. The more readers that come to see the business as a trusted source of information, the better!

Additionally, the business blogs can (and should) link to one another. Where there's an overlap in information or blog posts address similar issues, have them link to each other! An engaged reader will always be ready to find out more, and demonstrating that you have more information to offer is never a bad thing.

Finish strong

Last, but *certainly* not least, bring things home with a with a call to action. Have you ever gotten to the end of an interesting article, how-to guide or blog post and been filled with the inspiration to immediately test what you've learned? While the point of a blog isn't to sell, it's important to give readers something to engage with that allows them to take action and apply their new knowledge. Whether it's more content, a link to a product or promotion, or a contact form, your readers will have a way to act on their inspiration, and you will have a way to track engagement and turn readers into leads. Win-win-win!

A Quick Guide on Blogging for Businesses

Here's hoping this blog has both inspired you to start writing a business blog and given you the tools to do it right! You know that an active blog has all sorts of benefits for businesses of all kinds, like boosting SEO, building trust among a customer base, generating more leads and providing great shareable content for social media channels. Now, by following these blogging tips, you should be well on your way to inspiring your own readers with engaging stories, compelling content, and valuable information that will position your business as a reliable source of information.

With great content comes great responsibility. What will you blog?