

Which Social Media Platforms Should You Use?



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.

Start by Defining Your Goals

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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.

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