

Digital Marketing **NOW**

A Breakthrough Guide for Small Business

**Social Media
Trends
Making
an Impact**

How to Dominate

LOCAL SEO

**& Outrank Your
Competitors**



**5 Fatal
Beginner
Mistakes**

**That Will Kill
Your PPC Budget**

How To Monitor

**Your Social
Media Presence**

in 10 Minutes a Day



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INTERNET MARKETING EVOLVED

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Digital Marketing NOW

Thanks for checking out this issue of Digital Marketing NOW, your online marketing resource guide for small business. Each month we will be covering topics that resonate with local businesses just like yours.

Our goal is simple. We want to enable you to do big things online, and it all starts by breaking down the complexities of marketing your business online.

It doesn't matter if you're just starting out, or an established business owner in your local community, you can always benefit from increasing your brand's visibility online.

To your Success,

Digital Marketing NOW
www.digitalsapien.com

Digital Sapien Interactive is a leading small business internet marketing service provider. We help small businesses connect with more customers online.

If you want to build your business, you need to market, it's that simple. But you can lose thousands of dollars if you don't know what you are doing. So we urge you to take action with some of the strategies we recommend.

For a more "hands off" approach, we offer affordable solutions and can deliver results. We hope you enjoy this issue of Digital Marketing NOW and feel free to reach out to us anytime.



Social Media Trends **MAKING AN IMPACT** **Today**

With the advent of social media sites, marketing, advertising, and sales promotion activities have significantly evolved within the modern operational expenditure (OPEX) business environment. The internet now presents many exciting possibilities for brick and mortar businesses to reach out to potential customers, and the use of social media platforms have helped countless business owners manage customer engagements and promote their products and services in an extremely targeted way.

Before looking at some of the social media trends that businesses can practice to increase sales and manage communication, it's important to look through existing statistics on the use and benefits of social platforms, and how one can harness the power of such networks.



Facebook, Tweeter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and blogs are the most popular networking sites in the social media community. The use of each platform varies and so do the benefits. According to a research done by Google,

about 90% of people who own smartphones have at least one account registered to any given social media site. This means sites like Instagram or Twitter host millions of internet users who are basically potential clients, and the fact that businesses can communicate to clients from all corners of the world is no longer a new concept.

SOCIAL MEDIA USE

From Inc 500 records, 94% use LinkedIn while Facebook and Twitter's reach constitute 80% and 79% respectively. A large percentage of any business' clients access social media sites on a routine basis too. The use of social sites has grown exponentially over the last few years and the implication for your business's bottom line is huge.



TRENDS TO TAKE NOTE

For small and medium businesses, social media platforms present a cost-effective way to interact with a multitude of prospects, initiate marketing campaigns and promotions, and increase sales conversion. Today, some of the trends that can be applied to join business reaping advantages of social media and harnessing its full potential include:



On trend



Facebook

Facebook is simply the most popular and top-ranked social media site. According to the company, it has more than 1.39 billion monthly active users. Facebook has a community and outreach unmatched by any other social platform existing today and it will continue to trend in the coming years.

Most businesses already acknowledge opportunities therein. However, remember that most Facebook users are attracted to information about family, friends, and social activities rather than your advertisements, and the posts which garner the most “likes” are ones that engage users.

- **Facebook Implications** – The core benefits of

This media has grown to become one of the most powerful social media profiles for small businesses existing today. Its use has increased to 94% in 2014 and its reach looks set to increase this year. Using this platform presents your business as a legitimate professional who is both an apt businessman and skilled service provider.

- **Implications of LinkedIn** – For brick and mortar businesses, LinkedIn presents the core values and benefits of professional connections. Any business can use the media to increase connections with other service providers in the same niche. It also smoothes connections with suppliers, potential employees, and customers.
- **Social Media Use Tips** – Maximizing the use of LinkedIn will require building a strong complete business profile including employee profiles, so remember to design and help employees present complete portfolios with pictures and families. Once that's done, ensure the profiles are optimized with targeted key-

using this social media platform lie in advertisement, marketing campaigns, and customer metric collection through interaction. By channeling targeted messages to your chosen demographic group, you'll be able to learn a lot about customer responses to situations, speculations, and user experiences with your products.

- **Social Media Use Tips** – Establish a presence on Facebook and complete the profile with descriptions, pictures, and links. Be professional in all your communication but ditch the corporate marketing jargon – users dislike that because it doesn't allow them to interact with you on a personal basis. Corporate talk is confusing and most people will just click away when they feel disconnected from your message.

With Facebook, you also have to keep constant interaction and distribute quality content frequently to engage customers and peers. To fully reap the benefits of Facebook, be sure to create fan pages, Facebook ads, and make judicious use of pictures, memes, videos, polls, and host giveaways or offer discount coupons.

words and messages that attract relevant/desired businesses.

It's important to join relevant groups in the niche you serve as this helps you gain more insights from peers and position your business as the best. Additionally, you can use presentations such as SlideShare to deliver illustrations and publish leadership content through the platform. This basically aids in pushing up potential clients' perception of your business through strategic positioning and marketing.



LinkedIn



Twitter

Twitter is yet another social media platform that has been long considered a powerful communication and marketing tool. The network allows your business to create a profile and upload images, post short messages inquiring about your customers, respond to questions, and even using it as a customer support page in real time.

- **Twitter Implications** – At its best, Twitter offers a platform to broaden message outreach since it hosts nearly 288 million users. You can engage

customers in any way you want using short targeted messages (160 characters) and especially as a tool to open up meaningful conversations.

- **Social Media Use Tips** – Tweets have a very short lifespan and Twitter heavily relies on traction/attraction (your followers and those you follow). You should use Twitter to engage potential clients and associate with reputable businesses by following them and retweeting their messages. Because well-established brands tend to have a lot of followers, engaging with such brands will get your Twitter account seen by the same group of customers you're both targeting. This can prove to be an effective and cost-effective way of reaching out to potential customers.

Make use of relevant hash-tags (#) as you're tweeting or retweeting to broaden visibility and outreach. Using images can also increase reach and intrigue customers.

Blogs are not only powerful marketing tools, but they're also low-cost and very effective in getting your messages across. They're basically websites that act as social media bases where your business has unlimited opportunities to post content, incorporate links, connect with peers and leaders, invite guests to give interviews, describe, promote or review products and services, and educate your customers about your products.

- **Blogging Implications** – With blogs, you'll have control over all content and interactions as well as how you portray and market your brand. However, it requires you to update quality content on a consistent basis, and this requires resources and time to accomplish. Blogs should therefore be approached patiently and cautiously.

Many blogging platforms such as Blogspot and Wordpress also do not allow blatant promotional pieces on their platforms. This is easily rectified by purchasing a domain name and hosting your blog on your own web hosting server, giving you 100% control over its content.

- **Social Media Use Tips** – Optimize the blog for search engines to improve visibility and ranking, and make sure to incorporate links which refer customers to resourceful content. You can make additional profit from advertising for other partners and appearing in their blogs as well to boost outreach.

As a gateway linking to other sites, you can publish a variety of content targeted for specific groups.



Blogging

There are many other social media trends that look even more promising in coming years. These include creating high-quality videos and posting them on YouTube for clients to learn more about your business. Others include Pinterest, Google+, and niche forums which are all hosts to multitudes of internet us-

ers and potential clients. The goal of using social media is holistic designing and creation of content combined with broadening business/brand outreach – so be sure to engage the entire team and establish a complete optimized online presence on most, if not all, social media platforms.



CONCLUSION

Tweet

Like

Share

Photo

Post

Friend

News

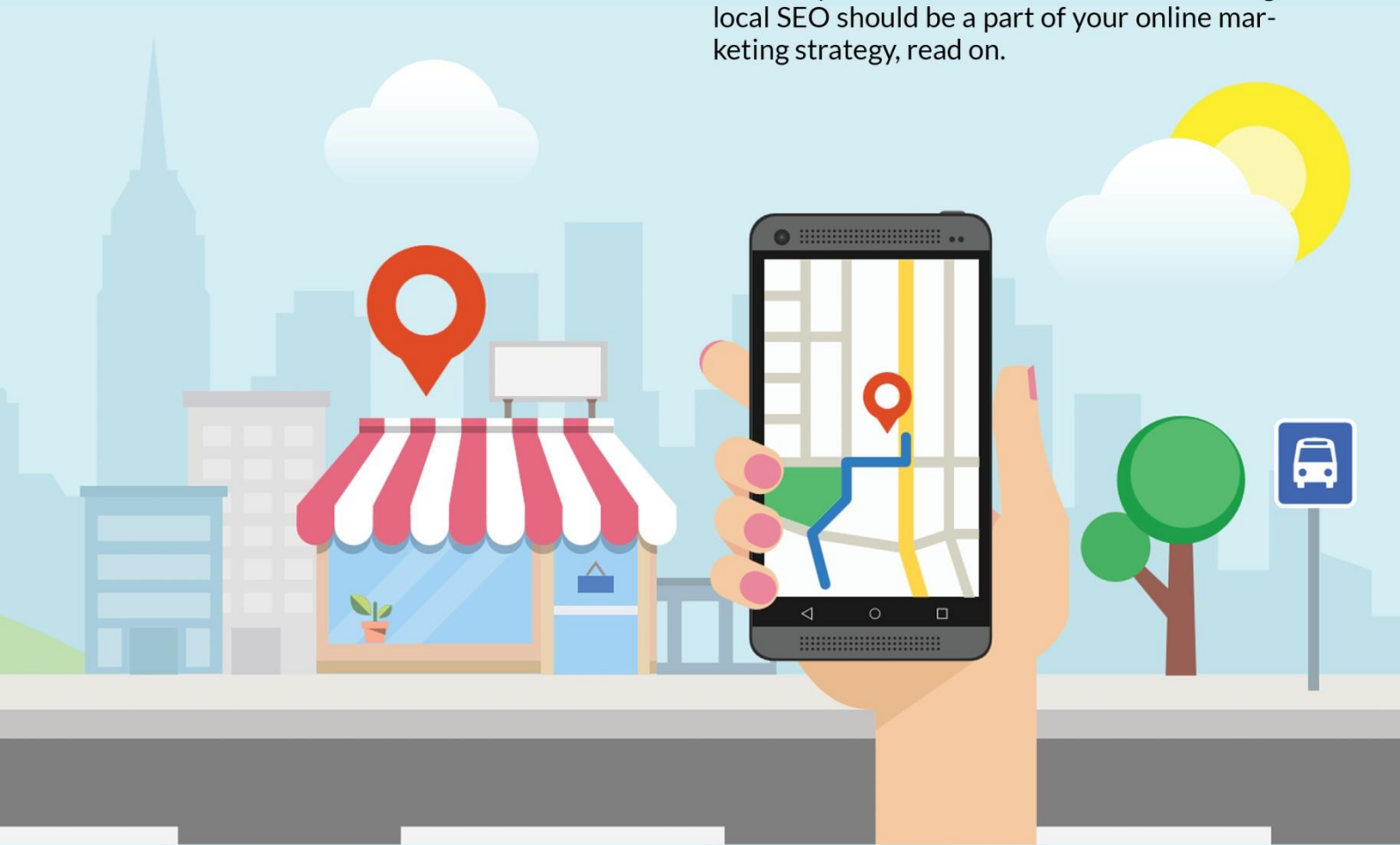
Post

Friend

How to Dominate Local SEO & Outrank Your Competitors



As a small brick and mortar business, there's nothing more important than dominating local SEO. Your traffic is much more targeted than online retailers with national customers. It can't be stressed enough the importance of focusing your SEO strategy on keywords and phrases that involve cities you serve. If you're not convinced that dominating local SEO should be a part of your online marketing strategy, read on.



WHY FOCUS ON DOMINATING LOCAL SEO?



How about some stats to give you a little perspective:

- 51% of consumers look for local businesses on their smartphones/tablets (while on the go)
- 40% of consumers prefer to purchase at a store versus online (if they knew where a local store was)
- 50% of consumers use their smartphone to search for local businesses

- 80% of consumers use search engines to find local info
- Around 3 billion search queries per month consist of local key phrases
- 70% of consumers use local search to find brick and mortar businesses
- 30% of Google searches are for local info

This says a whole lot about local search and it should get you excited about taking a piece of this gigantic pie. Now, let's see the different ways you can do just that.





5 WAYS TO BOOST LOCAL TRAFFIC



Optimizing for local search can increase your online and offline traffic tremendously, if you play your cards right. Here are the steps to take:

- **Classify Your Business as a Local Business**



People won't know that you're a local business if you don't let them know. In search engines that have indexed your business, you want to ensure that you are categorized as a local business. First, you need to claim your Google My Business page and then classify your biz as a local one.

You should then optimize the page by including all the info needed for your profile, including a description of your business. Also input your address and local phone number. You'll have to choose relevant categories related to your business. Avoid spamming your page because Google frowns upon this and won't hesitate to penalize you.



● **Maintain Consistency with Your Online Presence**

If you have different listings around the Web, you want to make sure that they all have the same information. This will make your small business seem more reliable and trustworthy. Check all of your listings to make sure they contain the same phone number, address and descriptions. If you've recently moved locations or switched phone numbers, update these as soon as possible. The feel of your listings should also resemble one another, so that it helps to establish you as a brand and gain you recognition for it. Google doesn't like to showcase profiles of businesses that are closed or have indications of a changed owner or data discrepancies.

Remember, this is about drawing in traffic, as well as building your online image. The more listings you have pointing back to your Web site, the better your rankings will be -- and ultimately, your traffic and conversion rates.

● **Search and Claim All of Your Online Listings**

The business listings you create online aren't going to be the only ones that you have to worry about. Other databases will pick up your listings and you'll have to find these to make sure that the information contained on those listings are up-to-date. You'll first have to claim that the business is yours and then you'll be able to make adjustments to the listing.

You can get this started by adding your business listing to the top five local directors, which include Google My Business, Yelp, Yahoo Local Listing, Bing Places for Business and Manta. Then list in directories that are industry-specific. Take time to build up your listings on a regular basis and search for those you have yet to claim. The larger your network of listings, the better your search engine ranking will be for related keywords -- allowing you to dominate the local market.





● Use Keywords to Optimize Your Social Listings

The business listings you have on search engines and social media will need to be optimized with relevant keywords. Simply having your listings all over the place isn't going to suffice -- not if you want to dominate local SEO for your market. Choosing the right keywords can be confusing, but can be done with a bit of research.

If you haven't already, you should implement Google Analytics, so you can have a bird's eye view of how your customers are finding your Web site. You will see the search terms they're using, which can then be used for your listings. You can also try thinking of what people are likely typing

into search engines to find what your business offers. A bit of brainstorming and A/B testing can go a long way.

Just make sure that the keywords you choose aren't too competitive. Check out the key phrases you plan to use using Google Keyword Planner before making your decisions. The longer your key phrases are, the less competitive they will be. This is why local SEO isn't too difficult to dominate. Simply add different city names to key terms that are already specific and you have yourself a longtail keyword.

A great example is "Plumber", which is too generic compared to "affordable plumber in Brooklyn NYC" or "24 hour plumber in Brooklyn NYC". It's much easier to rank in the local 7 pack, as compared to regular organic search results. Here is an example:





Keep Your Content Fresh

If there's anything search engines hate, it's stale content. After you've taken the above steps, you will have to keep your local business relevant to search engines and people by updating your content. You don't have to do this yourself -- if your budget allows, you can invest in a copywriter to do this for you.

Your content needs to be high quality and regularly posted. An excellent way to do this is with the use of a blog. The content should also be fresh and engaging, so that people will want to read and share it on social media. This not only keeps

up your ranking on search engines, but will also help to spread the word about your local business. Here are the other benefits of using content to dominate local SEO:

1. It helps to position you as a thought leader in your local niche.
2. It tells Google that you're in a specific niche, so keep your topics niche-specific, and you'll rank higher for your niche keywords.
3. High quality content will get you more organic inbound links, which further improves your local position in search engines.

YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS HAS A CHANCE TO COMPETE

If you thought that your small business couldn't compete with the giants, think again. Local SEO is one of the sure ways you can attempt to become recognized as a leading provider of your service or product in your locale.



5 FATAL BEGINNER MISTAKES THAT WILL DEplete YOUR PPC BUDGET FAST

DRAWING IN TRAFFIC TO YOUR WEB SITE TAKES TIME AND A GREAT STRATEGY. THIS ESPECIALLY HOLDS TRUE WHEN YOU'RE USING SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION.

What a lot of small business owners are finding to be quicker and just as effective are pay-per-click ads. By implementing PPC ads into your marketing campaign, you can target specific people at certain times of the day right away. While with SEO, you have to wait months before you get a chance to achieve a ranking that will allow your site to be found by visitors.

But this doesn't mean you should choose one over the other. PPC ads can be highly effective for small businesses, especially those that are brick and mortar, since they can target local audiences. Just keep in mind that SEO is a part of building a successful PPC campaign. While you're creating your strategy, make sure not to make these five common beginner mistakes.



FAILING TO CHOOSE KEYWORDS BASED ON BUYER INTENT

Your first intention when you start searching for keywords to use for your PPC ads is to find all relevant keywords that have high search volumes. Unfortunately, search volume of a keyword alone isn't going to ensure the profitability of that keyword. This is because it may not have a buyer intent behind it. If your buyers aren't clicking on it, then your traffic won't convert.

The search queries you choose (the keyword phrase people will type in to find your business) should be carefully thought out. Research will have to be performed to determine how your target buyers are finding your small business. If you already have Google Analytics connected to your Web site, you can use that to find this out.

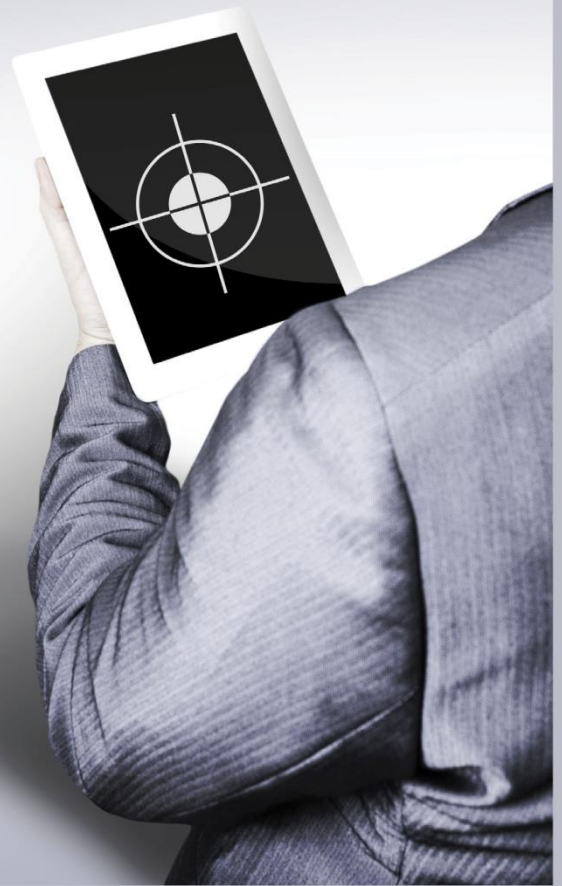
The keyword phrase should be quite specific. For example, if you see the key phrase "home insurance" and it has over 15,000 searches per month and costs \$26 per click, this isn't a good option. Home insurance is too generic. What would be better is "buy home insurance" or "home insurance quotes", especially if they have a high search volume.

NOT ELIMINATING WORTHLESS TRAFFIC USING A NEGATIVE KEYWORD LIST

This feature in your PPC campaign can and should be put to use. If your local small business sells handmade furniture, you may have people searching for DIY articles and videos about making handmade furniture. So you want to make sure that you eliminate those DIYers, since they aren't looking to buy. You could eliminate keywords like "DIY", "How to" and "video". Controlling your traffic will ultimately enable you to control your PPC budget.



PAY PER CLICK



SENDING TRAFFIC TO THE WRONG PAGES

When people click on your small business ad, where are they taken to? If you aren't sending them to a landing page that will help them to convert into paying customers, then you need to rethink your strategy. A common mistake made by beginners is driving traffic to a home page or contact page.

When someone clicks on your ad, they are interested in whatever it is your small business offers. The page they land on should help them find more information about your product or service and how to purchase, aka sealing the deal. Otherwise, you will have frustrated individuals leaving your site within seconds, sending your bounce rate soaring.

Your best bet is to create specific landing pages to use for your pay-per-click ad campaign. You can then offer special deals to the incoming traffic. The ads should also be related to the copy in your PPC ads. To do this, build a landing page for each and every offer you have.

NOT A/B TESTING YOUR ADS

You won't know what works until you test it out. Guessing what you think will work and then failing is going to quickly deplete your PPC budget. A/B testing, also known as split testing, can be used to determine which ads perform the best. You simply create two or more slightly different variations of an ad and watch them for a few days or weeks.

What you should be paying attention to is the quality of the traffic, versus the quantity. It's better to have a lower amount of converting traffic than a high amount of non-converting traffic.

An example would be to have one ad say "Save 25% on Bed Sheets" and another that says "Buy Bed Sheets 25% Off".





NOT USING A STRATEGY FOR YOUR PPC BUDGET

If the issue with your PPC campaign is that you're running out of money too quickly, then there is an issue with your strategy. If your ads are only running half the day because the budget depletes before giving you the results you desire, then you will have to either raise your budget or use ad scheduling.

As a small business, you may struggle with the idea of increasing your budget, after all it's the reason why you created that budget in the first place. If this is the case, you should look to using ad scheduling to help keep traffic coming in during the times of day your target buyers are shopping.

To determine this, you're going to have to find out what time of day and which days of the week your buyers are converting. Using this as your schedule will help you to get more out of your campaign, without having to break your bank account.

↑ Day and time	Bid adj. ?
Monday, Midnight - 01:00 AM	+ 0%
Monday, 01:00 AM - 05:00 AM	- 20%
Monday, 05:00 AM - Midnight	+ 0%
Tuesday, Midnight - 01:00 AM	+ 0%
Tuesday, 01:00 AM - 05:00 AM	- 20%
Tuesday, 05:00 AM - Midnight	+ 0%

There are a few other ways you can get more out of your smaller budget:

- Divide your campaigns and ad groups and make them more specific with short lists of keywords
- Add a longer list of negative keywords
- Get rid of the high-cost keywords
- Use keyword match types that are more restrictive, like broad match or phrase match modify

STRATEGY



Analysis

MAKE SURE YOU RUN A SUCCESSFUL PPC CAMPAIGN

When you own a small brick and mortar business, the goal of your PPC campaign is to drive in local traffic. Keep in mind that you should be using specific keywords that include the names of your city and surrounding cities. Tie in these five tips and you should be able to save your PPC campaign and your budget.

MONITOR YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE IN 10 MINUTES A DAY



Businesses actively using social media stand to gain many benefits. Outlets like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn create a communication channel to and from your business where people can connect on a non-business level. Through social media your network can interact with you, express their views and opinions, and ultimately connect with your business at a time that's convenient for them.

But it goes both ways. Not only do consumers have a comfortable social channel to connect with a business, businesses can gain excellent insight into their consumers. Comments made on your business' posts can reveal how people view your business. Do they like the content you share? Are they sharing positive experiences or venting their frustrations? They may even share suggestions on what they wish your business offered; an extremely powerful insight!





Ultimately, social media can help a business understand if they are creating raving fans or frustrated customers, on a “real time” basis. Knowing this, a business gains direct insight into the minds of their followers and their reputation.

The potential benefits of actively using social media are outstanding... But comes at a price. Actively using social media means consistently adding content, responding to comments and posts, and

listening to what your followers are saying. The only way to accomplish this is through monitoring your social media channels which takes time.

But just by following a few simple guidelines, monitoring your social media presence doesn't have to consume all of your time. Here are five steps you can take to effectively monitor your business' social media presence in only 10 minutes a day.



1. SET A SCHEDULE:

Social media has a tendency to draw you in for extended amounts of time. You may have planned to only check a couple of things on Facebook and log off. Next thing you know it is 30 minutes later and you're still scrolling away.

Choose a certain part of the day. We recommend the morning, but it's more important to pick a time

that works for you and stick to it. When that time comes stop whatever you are doing and go through the steps below. You only have 10 minutes to complete them.

This step is a precursor to the actual activities, but it's every bit as important. Your schedule is the backbone of your social media monitoring success.

2. CHECK TWITTER CHATTER (3 MINUTES):

Log in to Twitter and check chatter about your company as well as competitors. Retweet or favorite positive and insightful tweets. Comment on any tweets that require it. Twitter keeps everything to 140 characters or less so time management is almost built in to Twitter. You can also save streams in Twitter or use a tool like TweetDeck to increase efficiency.



3. FACEBOOK OVERVIEW (3 MINUTES):

Log in to Facebook and scan through the comments. 'Like' positive and insightful comments. Check your private messages and make note of any that need to be responded to. If a private message requires a detailed response, schedule that for another time of the day. Remember this is social media monitoring time. Responses may require research, additional details and, most importantly, more time. Save it for later.

Also check your Facebook Insights page to get a general idea of your business page's activity. Don't go in depth here. Look for trends such as new 'Likes' and post reach.

4. SCAN GOOGLE ALERTS (2 MINUTES)

Google alerts can send you a notification if your business name gets published online. It most commonly shows blog posts or comments where your business is mentioned or a link to your business is posted. Google alerts will also show posts on Quora as well as website pages where your business is mentioned.

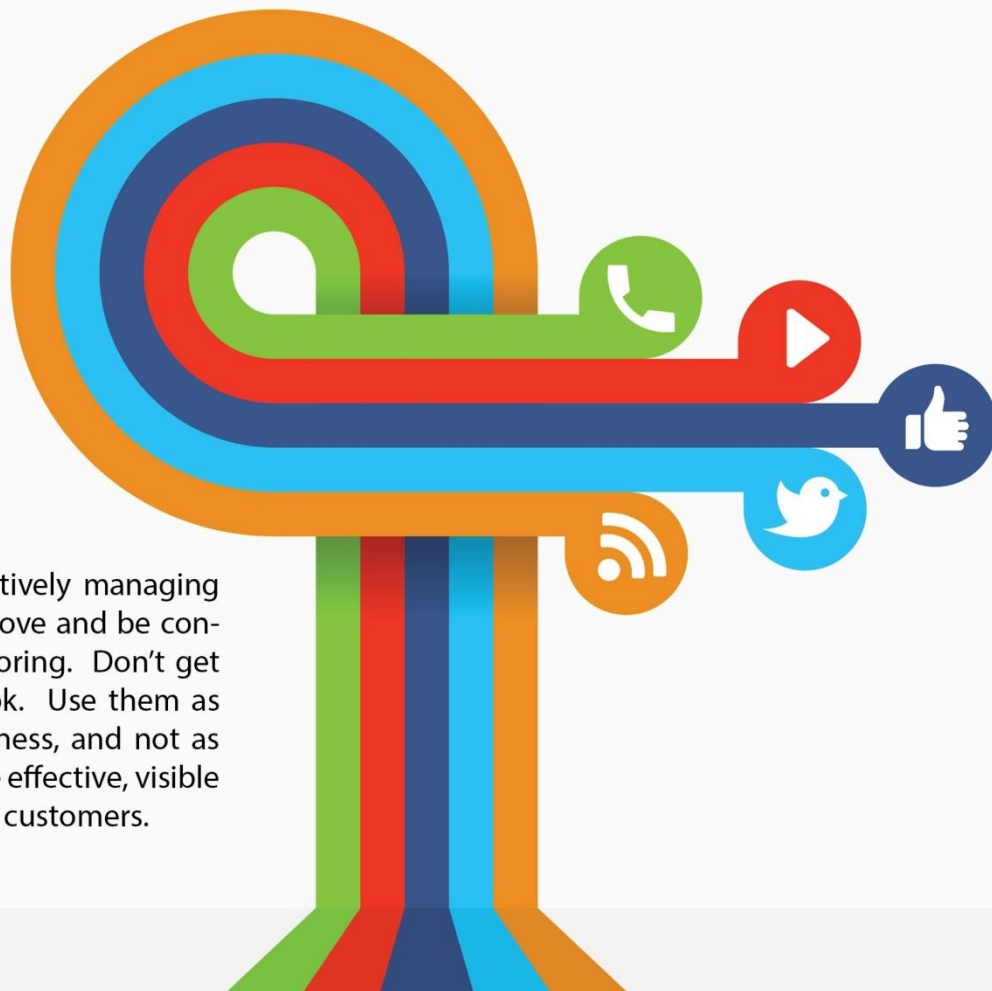
It's important to remember to scan Google alerts. Don't read entire articles. Take note of how your business is mentioned, who is mentioning it, and if any action should be taken on your part. Again, if detailed responses are required make note of it. You can respond with thought and detail later. Stick to monitoring.



5. LINKEDIN QUICK LOOK (2 MINUTES)

There are two areas to scan in LinkedIn. First, check your company page and look for new comments. Next, scan your group digest. As you do this, if you can make a very quick comment do so. Make sure it's quick and do it when it is industry related and showcases your business expertise.

Social media is powerful, but effectively managing it can be daunting. Use the tips above and be conscience of your social media monitoring. Don't get stuck in Twitter or lost on Facebook. Use them as marketing tools to grow your business, and not as ways to kill time. The result is a more effective, visible business that better understands its customers.



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