



Why is Social Media so Important?

Everyone uses social media these days, from individuals to businesses. In many areas, social media is how people hear about new products, news, and events.

Best Practices:

You need to post on social media 5-10 times per week in order for your posts to show up in people's feeds. (Otherwise, the algorithms just won't have your posts show up).

Identify what social media channels you will use

The big three: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter

Develop your over-arching theme and strategy

Think about how your theme and strategy fits into each channel

Customize content for each platform

Develop your posting schedule

4-7 times per week is a good standard

Post at prime times of day. Use Facebook and Instagram insights to identify times

Structure winning posts; engagement

Take the time to write meaningful captions. Consider trying a call-to-action like;

What do you think? Who likes organic strawberries better?

Get your audience engaged.

Use top-notch photos and videos

@tag other brands and people if they feature in your posts

Tag your location in posts.

TELL YOUR STORY. Avoid being "salesy" and be authentic.

Overview of the Three Major Social Media Platforms

Facebook:

2 billion monthly users

Vermont has a very high user rate

A great place for posting longer videos

If you choose to do a Facebook Live video, make sure you announce that you're going "live" before hand in a series of posts leading up to the event.

Use Facebook Events to promote events and ticket sales

Has robust paid advertising with Ad Manager and Facebook Ads; consider consulting an expert before spending money.

Utilize Facebook groups for outreach and networking

Instagram:

800 million monthly users

Post to Instagram Story, ideally a couple times per day

Follow industry-specific hashtags to build following and engage with potential customers

Think about how your Instagram profile looks as a whole.

The first thing people see when they go to your account is 9 photo blocks and your company's name. Think about how all your posts work together to create one cohesive "look" to draw customers in.

Twitter:

330 million users

Supports news and real-time quick updates

Use polls to engage your following

Use hashtags to reach more people

Retweet things that you think your audience will like





Marketing 101

The Marketing Landscape

Your social media presence is important, and so is your marketing approach overall. Be thinking about all of your marketing channels including:

Website

- Keep content up-to-date: copy and images for events, services, hours, especially the blog.
- Include social icons, to click through.
- Have a dialog box for enews sign-up if relevant
- Create Google My Business profile if open to the public
- Consider live social feeds

Social Media

- Set up editorial calendar, with some flexibility built in, to stay on track
- Integrate posts with other digital platforms, e.g. website and enews
- Only reference and maintain channels on which you are active
- Stay consistent with brand and messaging
- Consider hashtags, grammar, etc.

Email Marketing

- Use branded template for distribution and email lists such as Mailchimp (free!)
- Keep copy short
- Send regularly
- Link articles back to website
- Share re-purposed content on social media

Networking, Partnerships

- People with similar goals, in different places
- Consider non-profits and trade organizations for networking, education, advocacy and marketing (e.g CAE, Vermont Farm to Plate, Fresh Network)
- Integrate partnership projects into the marketing for your business

Events, In-Person Consumer Outreach

- Choose events where your audience is likely to appear
- Create a Facebook event listing and share to your page
- Free samples, interactive booth etc. – always a draw
- Create a postcard, rack card, brochure, flyer, pamphlet to accompany your outreach for your product/experience
- Place website and social icons on printed collateral

Advertising and Paid Promotion

- Notice where your competitors appear
- Consider social media advertising as most affordable
- Prepare your assets to receive customers prior to advertising
- Create tracking mechanisms within advertising – coupons, etc.

Earned Media

- Free PR for events, new line of product, new staff, etc.
- Develop a local and statewide press list (don't discount community newspapers, bloggers)
- Communicate with reporters who have your beat, and media who publishes in your area, if possible
- Twitter is a good platform to tag and talk to media
- Send post-event press release, blurb, and/or photos with caption
- Don't over-contact – timing
- Make your own news!