

Engaging Your Social Media Audience



Imagine if you could jump into a time machine and tell business owners 20 or so years ago that they would be able to beam their messages right into a device in a potential customer's hand? And that potential customer would need that device like their car or their morning coffee? It would have seemed crazy then, yet it's the reality that we live in today. This gives business owners a great opportunity to reach people directly in real time. Businesses can use this tool for their benefit, but, as with any tool, it must be used correctly to be effective.

It's important to remember that social media is not just a way for you to push information out; it is a two-way communication tool. Social media is about being social. Social media is also part of your brand, so it needs to fit with what (or who) your business is. By providing a reason for potential customers to keep paying attention to you, you can increase sales. This is your ultimate goal!

Consider the 10 strategies below to boost engagement on your social media channels.

Share interesting things. This can vary based on the type of business you have (and, therefore, the type of clients), your location, and your personality. If you are doing something neat, share it!

Reply and engage. If someone comments on your posts or has a question, don't forget to respond. No one would want to be ignored in a traditional store, and the same applies online.

Be visual. As the old saying goes, "A picture is worth a thousand words." This is especially true on your social accounts. Try sending a text-only post and one with an image or video, and compare the reach and engagement of the two.

Ask a question. This can really drive engagement because people typically like giving their opinion, and it can lead to lighthearted debate. Ask something like, "What's your favorite way to celebrate your birthday?"

Ask to pick a side on a non-controversial topic. Or state your opinion on something that isn't controversial. For example, around Halloween, you could ask, "Do you like candy corn?" or "90s country music is better than today's country."

Share something funny. Everyone loves to laugh! Many social media accounts use this strategy.

Talk about a trending topic. What are people already talking about? A big football game? A space shuttle launch?

Talk about a current holiday. Wish your followers Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, Happy Holidays, etc.

Have a contest. People love to win stuff, and contests are great attention-getters. The prize does not have to be an expensive item.

Keep it short. This is key—attention spans are short, so you need to grab them quickly. Keeping all social media text around the size of the original tweet length (140 characters, not 280) is a good practice.

When posting, try to avoid talking about subjects that trigger negative emotions. Stay away from politics, religion, talking about how much money you make, or controversial opinions. Be yourself, and let potential clients know what makes you unique. When deciding what mix of posts to share, consider the three strategies to the right.

If you take a look at these three strategies, you will notice there isn't a great deal of active selling going on. This is where many businesses misstep. You have to give your followers a reason to pay attention, and a constant sales pitch doesn't do that. Take a look at a few major brands on their social channels for inspiration.

Now go out there and get social!

Posting Strategy #1

- 70% of content is fun, non-sales
- 20% is sharing relevant content from other organizations
- 10% is focused on sales

Posting Strategy #2

- 80% of content informs, educates, or entertains
- 20% promotes your brand

Posting Strategy #3

- 1/3 of posts promote your business
- 1/3 share content from others
- 1/3 are personal branding

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