

Social Media for Small Businesses in 2019

AT RUBY PORTER MARKETING & DESIGN, we know that the world of social networking is an ever changing ebb and flow of trends. There are certain best practices that we know will remain relevant to the way social media is used for digital marketing, such as:

- **Determining marketing objectives or messaging pillars and sticking to them.**
- **Creating a consistent voice for your brand.**
- **Use scheduling tools to craft a steady stream of content.**
- **Deleting channels with outdated posts rather than letting them continue to lie dormant.**

However, our research has shown a few key areas to focus on for 2019, including creating interactive and video content, encouraging community through groups and hashtags, and providing content that is attractive and useful to your audience.

Interaction is key.

SHARE YOUR STORIES WITH VIDEO. This can be short, 30-second slide shows, edited video, or Facebook Live and Instagram Stories. Videos are placed at the top of Instagram's news feed and are highly prioritized by Facebook. Videos and messaging should be planned, at least until you feel comfortable communicating to an audience in this way, but can also have a spontaneous and authentic feel, as if you were letting your viewers see behind the scenes.

Over 2,000 small businesses surveyed have either implemented **Instagram Stories** into their social strategy or plan to do so in the next 12 months.

-Hootsuite 2019 Social Trends Survey

In addition, it is important to respond to messages, requests and reviews on social media—[especially negative reviews](#). Thanking the person, acknowledging their experience, offering a sincere apology, and then moving the conversation into a private message is the best course of action. While part of social media management should involve automatically scheduling posts to save you time, it's also important to personally monitor the comments and interact with your followers to help them feel valued and heard.

Target your audience and build connections.

UNDERSTAND WHO YOUR AUDIENCE IS, based on their generation, and research how they use social media. Leverage channels connected to your target audience. Small business owners should be on LinkedIn, especially if they are business-to-business; Instagram and Twitter continue to gain in popularity among Millennials and younger demographics.

More than 400 million people on Facebook belong to a group that they find meaningful. When people find the right group, it often becomes **the most meaningful part** of how they use Facebook.

-Facebook Newsroom, 4/30/2019

Build connections and community among your followers. Create a Facebook Group for people that are united under a common interest around your products or services. The soon-to-be released [2019 changes to Facebook](#) will prioritize Groups and the ways people can access and participate in them. Use hashtags that relate and encourage others in the group or community to use them in their posts, as well.

Create quality content that is valuable.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT ISN'T LIKE regular advertising—every post cannot be an advertisement, or it will turn away followers. Make your content something people want to engage with, and give them a reason to check in with your page every so often. Make them laugh. Teach them something new. Be authentic. [According to Hootsuite](#), social media should be 20% promoting your products or services and 80% of content should be used to inform, educate, or entertain your audience. Above all, prioritize quality above quantity; it's more important to create quality, authentic content on a couple of key channels a few times a week than to post on every single social network.

64% of the nearly 3,500 small businesses surveyed identify a decline in organic reach and the need to increase paid budgets moving forward.

-Hootsuite 2019 Social Trends Survey

On the other hand, know that there will continue to be a diminished organic reach possible on most social media channels, notably on Facebook. Fortunately, paid campaigns on social media tend to also be very financially accessible; a budget of \$50 per month will get you a significant amount of exposure.

Decide how best to manage social media, for your small business.

A [2019 VISUAL OBJECTS SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY](#) OF over 300 small businesses showed that of the 65% of small businesses that use social media, 56% used in-house employees, 32% contracted with freelancers, and 28% hired outside agencies. While in-house employees provide a more authentic voice for a small business' brand on social media, it can be challenging for them to find the time or support all channels properly. Agencies or freelancers can help manage paid advertisements, produce content, and most importantly, track analytics. Tools to create visual posts, schedule posts, and monitor engagement can help in-house employees and others to manage social media.

THE BIGGEST TAKEAWAY THAT WE'VE FOUND IS SOMETHING WE ALL KNOW: people want to be treated like individuals, not demographics. Creating intimacy, being authentic, and building trust in your social media followers will take you far in 2019.

Ruby Porter Marketing & Design
58 West 11th Ave. Suite C
Eugene, OR 97401
541.683.3064
rubyporter.com

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