

How to Use Social Media as a Lead Generating Power Tool

Ever wonder where all the leads are? Or how you can reach the perfect customers who will love your business, products, and services so much they'll share it with all their friends, who will in turn become new customers for you, taking your business to new heights and sending profits through the roof?

We'll save you some time wondering and just tell you where they are.

They're on social media.

Facebook: 1.49 billion users

Twitter: 316 million users

LinkedIn: 380 million users

Instagram: 300 million users

Pinterest: 72.8 million users

When you look at the number of people interacting on social media platforms everyday, it makes you wonder if using social media to market your business might be a great way to find new customers...

...and you would be right.

Why Social Media is Such a Powerful Tool for Small businesses

People don't want to be marketed to anymore. They see advertising and traditional marketing as an intrusion and a nuisance. Take a look at some of the traditional marketing tools:

Telemarketing

Print ads

Door hangers

TV and Radio ads

Billboards

They all have one thing in common. They are interruptive.

To reach today's consumers you have to meet them where they are and get their permission before you show them your business.

Social media allows you to show up to their virtual front door, and bring them exactly what they've been looking for. The result is a warmer reception, a happier prospect, and a lead who is eager to hear what your business can do for them.

Benefits of Using Social Media to Reach your Customers

Generate word of mouth

A person will value a friend's opinion more than a brand's every day of the week. If your current customers can connect with your business online, they can easily tell their friends about you. A nod of approval from a friend is worth more than paid advertising ever could be.

Increase Brand Loyalty

Chances are you aren't the only contractor in town. What you could be though, is the only contractor in your specialty who interacts with your community online. Being present in conversations about your brand/trade/industry

will show that you are 'one of them.'

Capture leads

Yes, it is possible to capture leads using social media. It could be a private message from a fan asking if you can help them solve a problem, or an email you collect during the course of a facebook giveaway. There are many ways to capture emails and phone numbers from prospects.

Build trust in your company

The 'real person' effect is strong on Facebook, Twitter, and other conversational platforms. Remember how annoyed you were the last time you tried to call the utility company and got that robo-response that took 18 button pushes to finally lead you to a conversation with a real human being?

Most people feel the same way you do, and as the digital landscape grows and people become more and more disconnected, a response from a real person carries more weight....and more influence.

Drive more traffic to your website

Everytime you post a link to your blog or website on one of your social accounts, you create another opportunity for the world to visit your website. More traffic builds upon

itself, and every link gives you more power on the great wide web.

Show authority

Social media gives you an opportunity to post informative and interesting blogs from your website, comment on newsworthy contributions from others in your community. Here is your chance to stand front and center as an seasoned professional who knows his stuff.

Picking the Right Tools: You Best Social Media Platforms

If you tried represent your business on every social media platform that pops up, you wouldn't have time to do your actual job and run your business. Luckily, you don't have to have an account on every social media platform, just the ones that matter.

To decide which social media platforms will be the best for your business, take a look at where your ideal customers are.

Where are your potential leads spending their time?

NETWORK	FACEBOOK	TWITTER	LINKEDIN	INSTAGRAM	PINTEREST
AGE	18-29 87% 30-49 73% 50-64 63% 65+ 56%	18-29 37% 30-49 25% 50-64 12% 65+ 10%	18-29 23% 30-49 31% 50-64 30% 65+ 21%	18-29 53% 30-49 25% 50-64 11% 65+ 6%	18-29 34% 30-49 28% 50-64 27% 65+ 17%
GENDER	M 66% W 77%	M 24% W 21%	M 28% W 27%	M 22% W 29%	M 13% W 42%
TOTAL ONLINE ADULTS	71%	23%	28%	26%	28%

Platforms Contractors Should Definitely Use

Google+

Google is currently the reigning king of all search engines. At this moment, two-thirds of people prefer to use Google for their internet searches, while one-third use Bing or another search engine such as Yahoo!. A social network that is tied to the most popular search engine is worth your attention.

Over 500 million people are currently on Google+, and approximately 343 million of them are actively taking part of the network by sharing and +1-ing content.

Whatever social networks you choose to use, make sure Google+ is on that list.

YouTube

YouTube is big. And it's a big one for contractors in particular. You have specific knowledge and information about your industry, and it's an action oriented industry.

Ideas for videos include:

- explaining how something works
- showing how to do something that people are always asking about
- give a behind-the-scenes look at what you do

This doesn't have to be a Hollywood style production either. Grab a smartphone or tablet, shoot a quick video and throw it up on YouTube.

Do's and Don'ts:

- YouTube is also a search engine. Be sure to include descriptions of your videos.
- Keep videos short. Under 3 minutes will get you the most views.
- Don't try to cover too much in one video. Small snippets of information work best.
- Don't treat videos like ads for your business. Educate, entertain, inform, inspire.

What to Post

Today's marketing currency is **content**.

Content is the words (text), images, sounds, and videos on your web page. Content is also the videos, pictures, posts, tweets, and articles that you share across social media.

Give people interesting and relevant content, and you'll win their attention every time.

Share content your audience can relate to. Content they care about, that addresses their concerns, or solves their problems.

The content that you share on social should:

- Educate
- Entertain
- Inform
- Inspire

It's not all about you

How do you have an effective two-way conversation with your customers? Remember the 80/ 20 rule.

- 80% of your social content should come from sources outside of your own website
- 20% of your social content can promote your business, services, and content from your site







And don't forget to have an actual conversation with your audience. If someone asks you a question in a comment, answer it. If someone sends you a message, reply to it.

Don't wait.

Have these conversations with your customers as soon as you can.

What to Post

The platform you are posting on will determine the type of content you want to post. People expect to see different things on Facebook than they do on Twitter, and so on.

NETWORK	 GOOGLE+	 FACEBOOK	 TWITTER	 LINKEDIN	 INSTAGRAM	 PINTEREST
WHO	Everyone	Everyone	Men	Men, Professional, Connections	Women	Women
WHAT TO SHARE	Blog posts, reviews, pictures, articles	Blog posts, images, videos, status updates	Blog posts, images, Tweets	Blog posts, images, articles, industry statistics	Blog posts, curated collections that inspire	Images
WHEN	9-11am	3pm	12pm, 5pm	7-8am, 5-6pm	8pm-11pm	3-4pm
IDEAL LENGTH	60 characters	40 characters	71-100 characters	n/a	n/a	n/a
MISC			limit to 3 #s			

Automate Your Efforts

If you are wondering how you're going to find the time to do all this and still run your business, you're not alone. A lot of time and thought goes into a solid social media strategy. Which is why many busy professionals use marketing automation tools.

Marketing automation tools help you bring all your content together in one place, and allow you to schedule posts far in advance, usually on multiple platforms at once. And many of them are free.

Check out tools like [Sprout Social](#), [Buffer](#), and [Hootsuite](#) to get started.



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