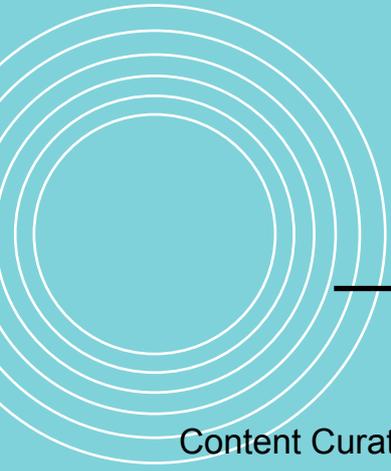




Social Media Marketing Toolkit For Tourist Guides

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Introduction

Social media has had a dramatic impact on the way we experience the world around us. It has also presented significant marketing opportunities for a few industries such as travel and tourism. With consumers increasingly turning to social channels across all stages of the consumer journey, it is essential for travel brands to be present and effective on social media to drive business outcomes.

With this trend in mind, we have created this toolkit on Social Media Marketing, specially tailored for tourist guides, to help you build your brand online and better reach potential customers through social media platforms. Whether you are completely new to social media, or someone with marketing experience, there is something in this toolkit for tourist guides from all backgrounds. We hope you find this content useful and are able to apply it to grow your brand and business.

As this toolkit is released in April 2020, with the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, countries around the world have imposed travel advisories and restrictions, and prolonged social distancing measures are expected to remain in place through 2020. Even as we cope with and recover from these uncertain times, tourist guides can make the best of the situation in the following ways:

- **Be where your consumers are** - With limitations on mobility due to social distancing, consumers are spending more time on social media platforms.
- **Use the downtime to upskill yourself** - One of the ways to make the best of the decline in business is to use the time to invest in your learning and growth.
- **Plan and prepare for the recovery** - Tourist guides who use the downtime to build their online brand will be better prepared to grow their business when the sector recovers.



The 2 Waves of Technology That Have Reshaped Travel

With the evolution of technology, the way people plan their trips has changed dramatically over the past decade.

Offline to Online

With a few simple clicks, anyone with a computer can find the best deals on a hotel and book a flight in minutes. More tourists today are making their travel decisions and bookings online. Online travel agents (OTA) are all-in-one platforms providing real-time information and price comparison information to smart travellers. OTAs such as Expedia, Agoda and Booking.com have fundamentally changed the way people plan their trips by making it much easier to go direct instead of relying on middlemen when planning a trip.

Southeast Asia's online travel spend is expected to hit US\$76 billion by 2025, according to Meltwater (2017).

Desktop to Mobile

Over the past few years, there has been another wave of change. Mobile devices have overtaken desktops as the key device for travel planning.

Desktop still plays a big role in travel research, but 40% of US travel site visits are now coming from mobile. However, the length of those sessions has shrunk by 5%. With more frequent and shorter sessions, travellers increasingly turn to mobile devices in shorter spurts to make informed decisions faster than ever before. As a result, bookings have grown nearly 10% on mobile travel sites.

The Travel Consumer Journey

Travel micro-moments start when people begin dreaming of a trip, and they continue all the way through the long-awaited trip itself. These moments tend to fall into one of four categories, which map closely to the stages of the travel decision-making process: dreaming, planning, booking, and experiencing. As tourist guides, you can reach your target consumers across all these stages through the right channels and platforms.

Dreaming Stage

SEEKING INSPIRATION

- Google Search from mobile devices – a few hundred micro-moment searches happen, even before a single booking is made.
- Travel influencers play a key role in driving destination choices and selecting activities within those destination
- Seeking visual content – videos and images are key.
- The most popular type of travel videos watched on YouTube are travel vlogs.
- Word of mouth is essential – both in person and through private messaging apps.



Planning Stage

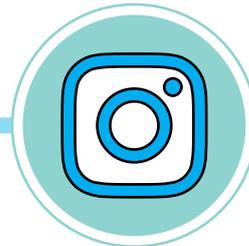
SEEKING USEFUL INFORMATION

- During the travel research phase, consumers rely on search engines.
- Travel content sites like TripAdvisor get a lot of traffic at this stage.
- Social media plays a key role – 32% of vacation travelers use social media to research vacations before booking.

Booking Stage

SEEKING GOOD DEALS

- Price comparison sites like Skyscanner and travel booking sites like Expedia are favoured for their deals.
- High price sensitivity – less willing to splurge and more likely to seek good deals, even for the unique experiences they crave.



Experiencing Stage

SEEKING UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

- “Is this social media ready?” is the single most important question that determines the extent of social media brand advocacy.
- Destinations and experiences that travellers can share on social media have become extremely valuable social currency.
- Fueled by the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), travellers increasingly feel that what does not get shared is not worth doing.



Chapter 1:

Personal Branding

What Is a Personal Brand?

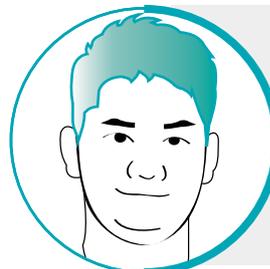
As a tourist guide, the product you are promoting is yourself. There were over 2,900 tourist guides in Singapore as of 31 December 2019. What makes you different? Why should customers choose you over others? What is your unique selling point? Crafting answers to these questions in a way that reflects your skills, passions, values, and beliefs is personal branding. It is about purposefully and strategically showcasing your authentic self to your customers.

Examples of personal brands



Lady Gaga

American singer, songwriter and actress known for her outrageous outfits and incredible stage presence



Joseph Schooling

Sporting prodigy and Olympic Gold Medalist in Swimming



Gurmit Singh

Popular actor/comedian well known for playing the beloved character Phua Chu Kang



Steve Jobs

Co-Founder of Apple, known for his simplicity, elegance and relentless pursuit of excellence

Why You Need a Personal Brand

- 1 To communicate clearly with customers

- 2 To differentiate yourself from competition

- 3 To build trust with potential customers

Pre-Internet Days



Your personal brand was your business card.

Today



Your personal brand is on social media.

4 Steps to Crafting Your Personal Brand

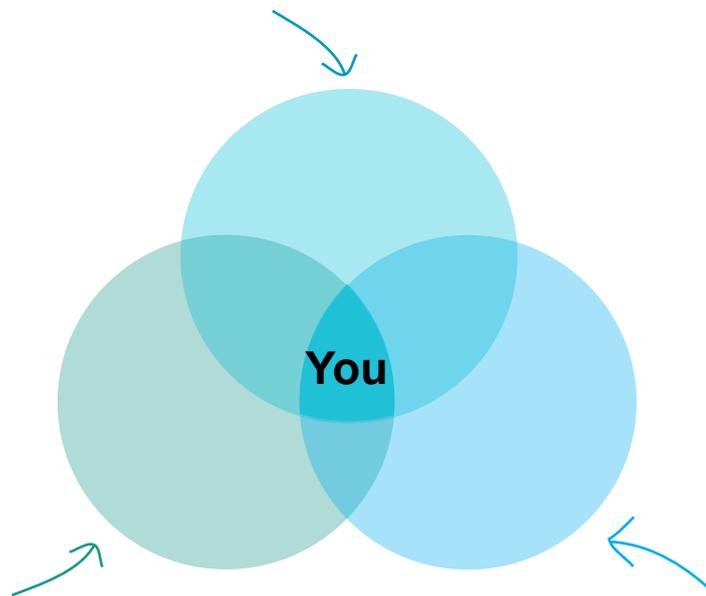
1

Build your foundation.

There is a misconception that building a personal brand means crafting a persona. But a persona, by definition, is fake. It is not a true reflection of who you are, and therefore, it is inauthentic. You want to find the special thing that is YOU and make your brand all about that. You cannot make it up; it has to be real.

Your passions & interests

What industries and topics are you most interested in? What are you passionate about?



Your skills & credentials

What skills have you acquired over the course of your life? What training, credentials, certifications, or awards have you received?

Core values & beliefs

What are some of your most important core values? What do you believe in? What do you stand for? What do you stand against?

2

Craft your brand proposition.

1. Your brand vision

What do you want to be known for? If you were to become Singapore's go-to expert on a particular topic, what would that be?

2. Your brand mission

Why do you want to build a personal brand? What is your purpose? Who do you want to influence? What do you want to accomplish?

3. Your brand message

What is the key message you want to communicate? What message do you want to consistently reinforce in your content and in your marketing? If you could only give one piece of advice to your audience, what would it be?

4. Your brand personality

What are the personal characteristics and traits that you can weave into your brand? Do you want to be perceived as someone who is very polished and professional, or perhaps more quirky and adventurous?



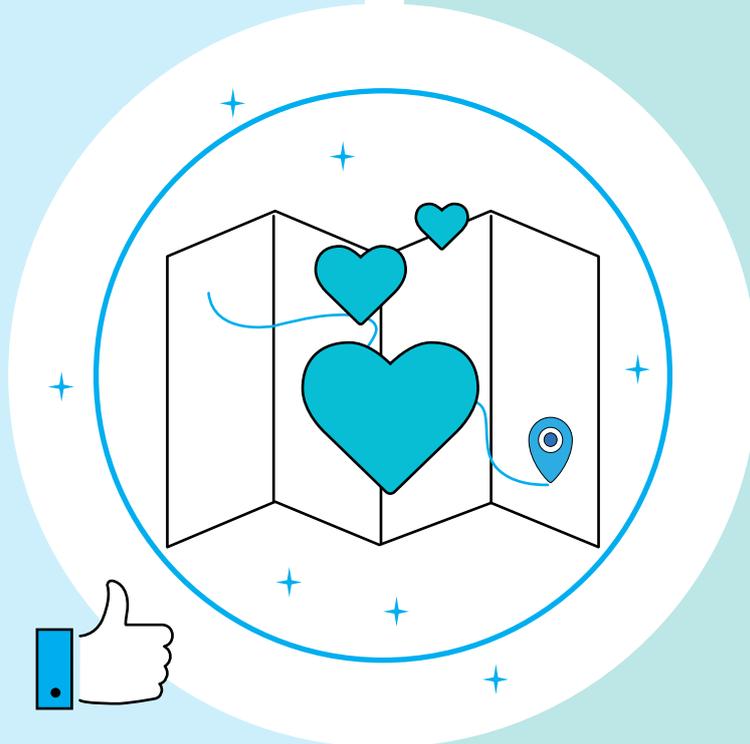
Some questions and ideas to get you started...

- 1 Why did you choose to become a tourist guide?
- 2 What is your favourite part of being a tourist guide?
- 3 What is unique about you? Ask your family and friends what they think is the one unique aspect of your personality that they value.
- 4 What do your clients value most about your tours?
- 5 If you are still stuck, try taking the [Carl Jung personality archetype test](#).

4

Package your personal brand.

Now that you have crafted your personal brand, the final step is to translate it into an experience your customers cannot resist and will not forget.



Create an Irresistible Offer.

Evaluate your current tour itineraries against your newly defined brand proposition and target audiences' demographics, interests and challenges. How can they be improved to better reflect your personal brand and create a memorable experience uniquely suited to your target audience?

Make It Stand Out.

Create a catchy name for your personal brand and for your tours.

Find ways to make the tour experience more immersive and memorable - every aspect of your tour matters! That includes what you wear and how you interact with your customers.

Social Media is the Digital Word of Mouth Channel



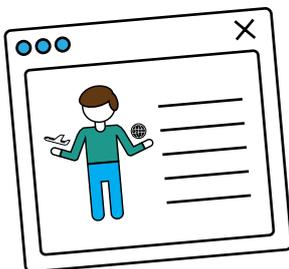
Have you tried googling your name? What did you find? Did you find your social media accounts? Your LinkedIn or Facebook pictures? Reviews that mention you by name? Ask yourself: “Is this what I want the world to see? Do these results reflect my personal brand?”

Now, let's take a step back. “How do people perceive you online?” Do your customers recommend you to their friends? What do they say when they recommend you? Do they tell people you are knowledgeable? Funny? Friendly?

Do you want that genuinely satisfied consumer review to be shared with everyone? So instead of each satisfied consumer telling 1 or 2 others, their review could reach and inspire hundreds more.

Social media is the new digital word-of-mouth channel. It is how your clients share their experiences and discover the experiences of friends and family. What they see on social media influences their decisions on where to travel and what to do there.

If you want to manage and shape how potential consumers perceive you online, creating and managing a social presence is crucial.



32%

of vacation travellers turn to social media for information on what to do on their trip.



36%

of vacationers say that they trust authentic customer reviews more than brand websites.



Chapter Summary



If this is the first time you are thinking about your personal brand:

- Start by mapping out your skills, passions and core beliefs and finding the sweet spot where all 3 intersect.
- Write down your vision and mission statements.
- Choose 2-3 people who know you well from different aspects of your life - Your family, friends and colleagues. Share your draft of your personal brand and get their inputs on it.
- Based on the above, craft the core message you want to communicate, to express your brand personality.
- Define your target audience in as much detail as possible. Create multiple separate groups of target audiences to suit your brand's variety of offerings, if needed.
- Now, package everything together into a 1 page personal brand outline. Remember, you want this to be concise and catchy!



If you already have a rough idea of what your personal brand is, there is still a lot of value to putting it down on paper. As you write it down, you may want to further define it and make it concise. Avoid general sweeping statements and make your goals SMART - Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-based.



If you already have a well-defined and clearly documented personal brand, print a copy of it for easy access. Review your marketing activities online and offline over the past year and evaluate if your marketing message is in line with your brand. Should you be making any changes to your message?



Chapter 2:
**Understanding
Social Media
Channels**

Selecting a Good Profile Picture

A picture speaks a thousand words. Human beings are visual creatures. We make split-second decisions about people based on nothing more than a picture! These first impressions are not easy to change (no pressure!), so no matter which social platform you are using, a good profile picture is key.



Do's



- Ensure your face is seen clearly. Remember, you are the brand.



- Smile in photos.



- Use vibrant colours and eye-catching angles where possible.



- Ensure the photo is a visual depiction of your personal brand. If your personal brand is thrill-seeking and adventurous, use a picture that shows you engaged in an adventure sport or on a roller coaster. If your personal brand is centered around being an expert in history, use a picture taken at a historic place in Singapore.



Don'ts



- Use a low resolution or pixelated image.



- Use religious, political or otherwise sensitive content.



- Use overly formal photos or passport photos.



- Use very personal photos - like your wedding photo or one with your family. It is best to focus on your profession as a tourist guide.

Writing Your Profile Description

A memorable description that reflects your personal brand is an important part of your social presence. You will need to distill your personal brand proposition into a few words. A good way to get started is to list words that you (and your friends and family) associate with your personality and your guiding style.

Your description should be between 30 - 60 words, long enough to describe your personal brand and value proposition, but not so long that readers lose interest.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

Use the “I am, I do” structure.

“I am a history buff with a flair for theatrics. I bring the past alive through my immersive stories.”

Ask a question.

“Do you want to explore the hidden side of Singapore?”

Talk about what makes you different while focusing on what the customer is looking for.

“I am the only tourist guide with a _____, so you and your family can _____.”

Use interesting facts.

“Did you know that Singapore is the only country that _____? Explore the hidden side of the city through the eyes of _____.”

Choosing a Social Media Channel



Choose Facebook if...

- Your core audience age is diverse and/ or includes people older than 45.
- Your content will often contain hyperlinks.
- You have a website and you want to use social media posts to direct people to your site.



Choose Instagram if...

- Your core audience skews younger (below age 45).
- Your content will be mostly visual.
- You have a hashtag strategy or you want to use hashtags to drive visibility.
- You have video content for Instagram stories.



Choose LinkedIn if...

- Your core audience is Business/ MICE related, and you require a formal/corporate presence.

Choose YouTube if...



- You have a content marketing strategy with long form video content (longer than 10 mins).
- Your video content aims to reach travellers in their dreaming or planning phases when they are deciding what to do in Singapore.



Choose Twitter if...

- You aim to post regularly (3-4 times a week).
- Your content will be short form (less than 280 characters) and focused on trending topics and hashtags.



Choose TripAdvisor if

- You aim to target customers in the planning stage of their consumer journey.
- You wish to curate customer reviews and are able to respond to every customer review in a timely manner.

Social Media 101

Here is an overview of how to create posts on the top 6 most popular social media platforms in the world.



Post description - Keep it to 70 words or less to avoid getting cut-off on mobile devices

Include hashtags to increase visibility

Tag the location where the picture was taken

Portrait image dimensions should be 1200 pixels (wide) x 630 pixels (high)

FUN FACT

Are there any relevant events that you can leverage? Referencing pop culture and current events is a great way to increase engagement on your posts.

To set up an account, visit www.facebook.com



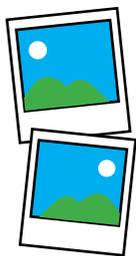
Instagram

5 steps to creating a post:

- 1 Select photo or video (Any photo or video can be directly uploaded to Instagram from your mobile phone photo gallery).
- 2 Create a caption (Instagram caption character limit: 2,200 characters. If the amount of characters is beyond 95, it may be hidden on some mobile devices).
- 3 Add some fun hashtags (Instagram hashtag limit: 30 hashtags).
- 4 With permission, tag people (tag your friends and loyal customers in any pictures they are featured in).
- 5 Add a location tag (very important to let your followers know where the photo was taken in Singapore).

Voila!

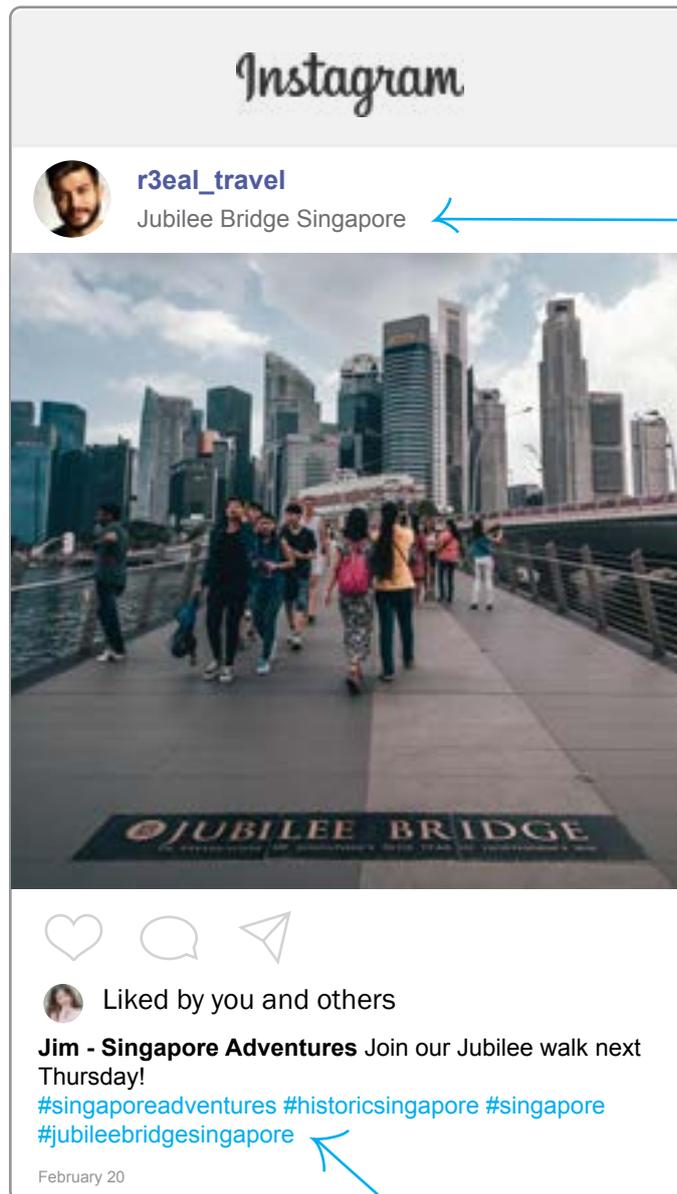
Your post is complete! Make sure to hit the share button and you are all set.



Did you know?

Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia were deemed the most Insta-worthy by travel media in 2020.

Among the 50 countries listed, Southeast Asian countries Singapore and Indonesia (Bali) made it to the top 10.



Tag your location where the picture was taken

Portrait image dimensions should be 1080 pixels (wide) x 1080 pixels (high)

Minimum resolution: 600 x 1067

Max. image size: 30MB

Full screen vertical ad (9:16). File types: .jpg or .png

Include hashtags to increase visibility

To set up an account, visit <https://help.instagram.com/>



To set up an account, visit
www.linkedin.com/help

3 simple steps to creating a photo post:

1

Who can see this post? (Select who you want to view this post)

2

Select the photo you want to upload.

3

Write a caption and add a hashtag.

3 TIPS

Catch the attention of people on LinkedIn with these 3 tips:

-  Write text-only posts on LinkedIn.
-  Use emojis in LinkedIn posts.
-  Comment on other people's posts.



YouTube



#Singaporetravel

Exploring Around Chinatown in Singapore

4,097 views



1209



3



Share



Download



Save



R3al_travel

34,097 subscribers

SUBSCRIBE

January 15, 2020

Chinatown in Singapore is an awesome place to visit, but what do you do once you get there? Plenty of places to see and lots of activities to do.

Follow me on:

www.r3altravel.com

To set up an account, visit:
www.youtube.com

For more information on starting a
YouTube channel visit:
<https://creatoracademy.youtube.com/>

FUN TIP

You do not need elaborate equipment to start a YouTube channel. It is fun to be able to record a vlog entry wherever you are, and your smartphone is a great choice for recording on the go. Smartphones have excellent cameras, and you probably always have your phone with you. You can even post directly from your phone to YouTube!

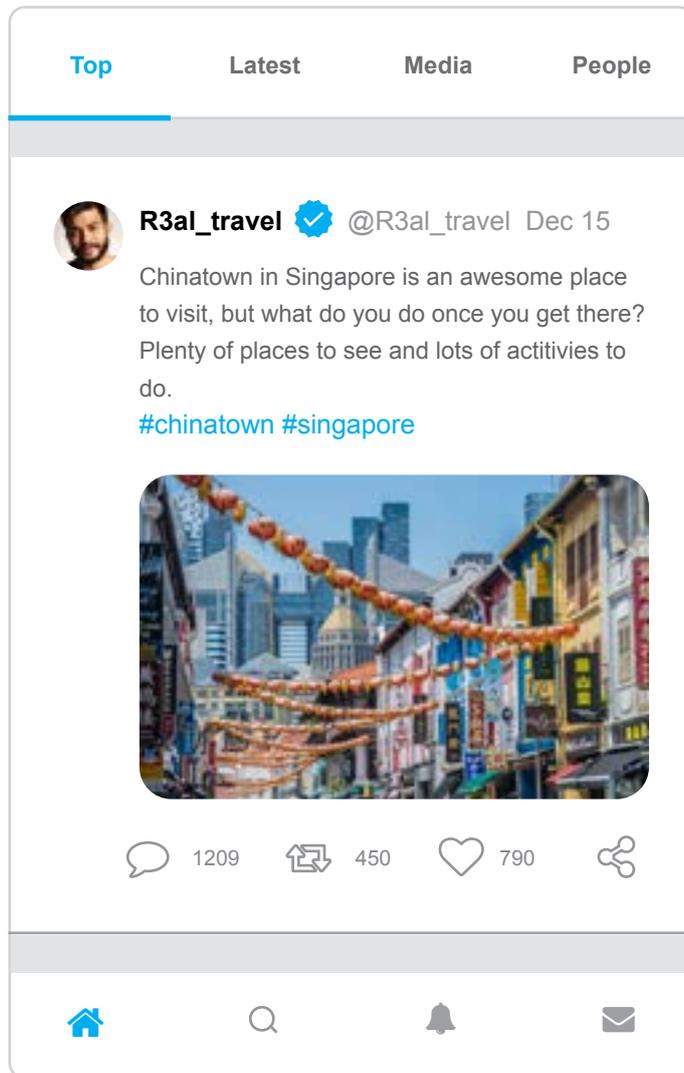
When Starting on YouTube

Have fun

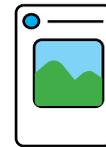
You may be sharing one of your passions or using YouTube to promote your business. Whatever the purpose of your YouTube channel is, make sure you enjoy what you are doing and you have fun doing it.

Be passionate

People can feel the difference between speaking with passion and speaking because you have to. If you are not excited, your audience will not be either. Having a genuine interest in the subjects you are covering is a crucial element in starting a successful YouTube channel and gaining a strong audience.



What Should I Tweet?



Engagement is **200%** higher for tweets with image links.

People are **21%** more likely to respond to a question, so tweet questions.



86% retweet rate for tweets that contain links.

Engagement is **17%** higher for tweets with less than 100 characters.



To set up an account, visit:
www.help.twitter.com

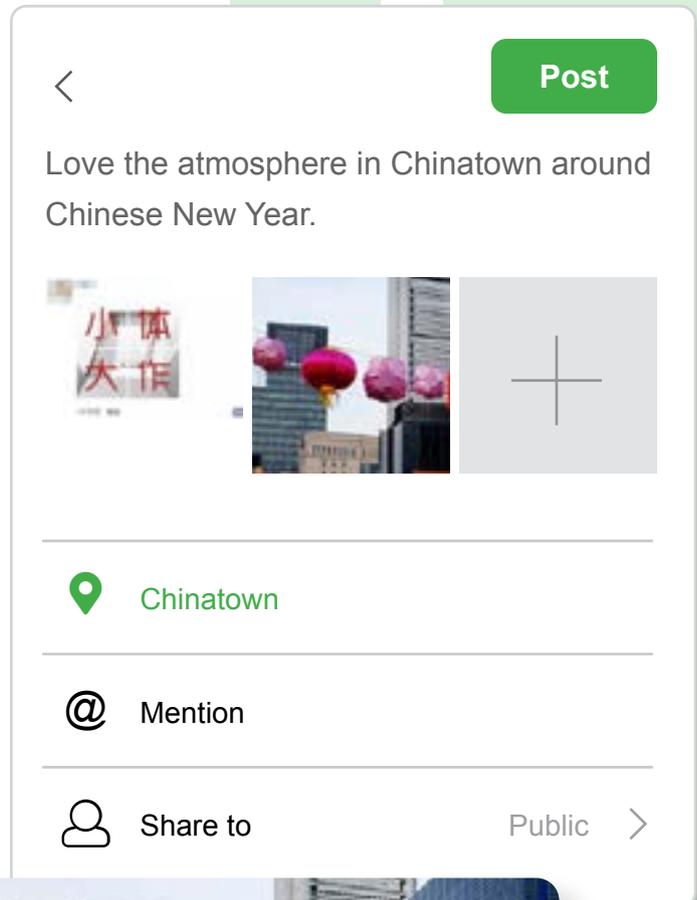




6 simple steps to create a photo post:

- 1 Take a photo or video on your phone camera, or choose from your album.
- 2 For this example, we will be choosing from the photo album (you can select up to 8 pictures to upload at once).
- 3 Add a caption.
- 4 Add a location tag.
- 5 Mention any friends or followers in your post.
- 6 Select who you want to share to.

- Public
All contacts
- Private
Just me
- Share List
Just selected contacts
- Do Not Share List
Exclude Selected Contacts



How to post on WeChat Moments

WeChat Moments give you a way to share your life with your family, friends, and potential clients.

You can choose to share your post with specific people only.

FUN TIP:



Have your account's QR CODE printed and ready to share with your fellow clients who use WeChat!

Creative WeChat Post Ideas



CREATIVE IDEA 1

Sometimes creative postings can be adapted to attract users' attention – e.g., jigsaw style, to split a full picture into 9 separate pictures so it appears larger.

CREATIVE IDEA 2

As WeChat Moments only shows the picture thumbnail before users tap to look at details, this can sometimes be leveraged for a creative posting.

By making the thumbnails look interesting, a friend or client are more likely to tap on the respective picture. This will enlarge the picture with more information to view.



Example 1.1: The user has intentionally replaced characters within an idiom to draw attention to the post and product.



Example 1.2: When tapped, each image opens up to reveal more information.

5 Myths About Social Media Marketing Debunked



Myth #1

“To be effective, I need to be active every day on every social media platform.”

The key to success is choosing to be on the platform that your target audience is on, and posting in the format and frequency that is suited to that platform.



Myth #2

“Social media marketing is only for young people.”

Did you know that 96% of people aged 45 and above have a social media account? And 47% of people aged 45 and above spend more than an hour on social media platforms every day?



Myth #3

“Every post should promote my business or my services.”

53% of people turn to social media to find informational or entertaining content. So promoting your business excessively can turn away your audience. Social media's main purpose is for you to connect and engage with your audience. Be useful and interesting to them and they will turn to you when the need arises.



Myth #4

“I don't have enough content for social media.”

Social content is the easiest type of content to create. All you need is an idea, an image or video from your phone and 1-2 lines of text, and you have a social media post! Social media moves so fast, so you can repurpose content often to get more long-term value for the content you create. One can also simply share posts as part of content curation.



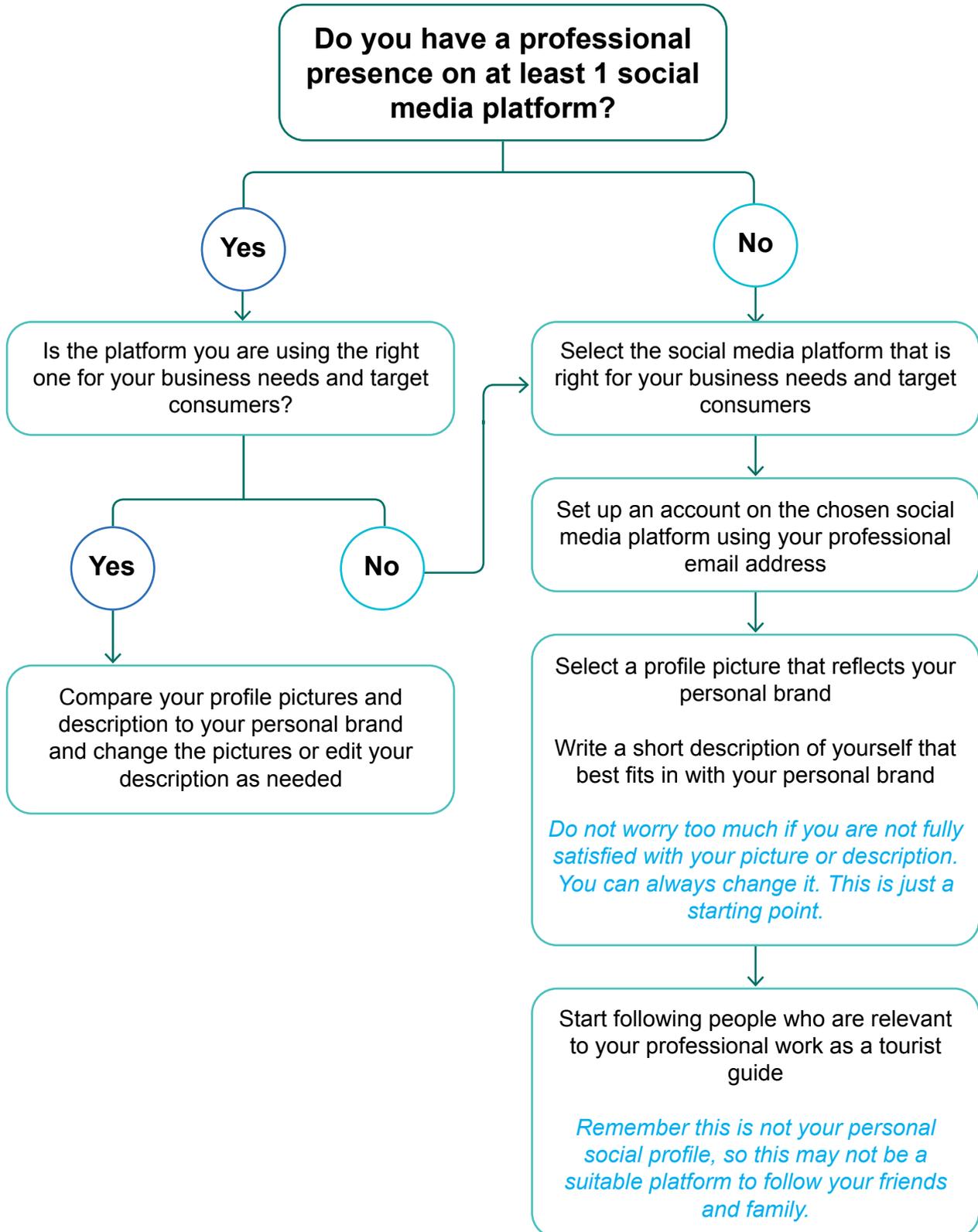
Myth #5

“I need to spend a lot of money to be visible on social media.”

Tourist guides can market themselves individually as a brand without any cost. Social media is one of the only high-reach channels where you can get visibility without spending much money.



Chapter Summary





Chapter 3:
Content Strategy

Social Media Content Strategy

Social media content is simply a matter of posting on your account whenever you feel like it, is it not? That is what even celebrities and influencers seem to be doing, right? Wrong! The best brands are built when social content is carefully preplanned and scheduled.

Finding your content sweet spot

The sweet spot for your content lies in the intersection between what your personal brand stands for and what your audience cares about. For every piece of content you post, ask yourself these 2 questions - Is this in line with what my personal brand stands for? Is this content relevant to my target audience?

Benefits of crafting your social content strategy

1 Goal-Oriented

Creating a social content strategy will force you to think about your audience and create content suited to them.

2 Consistency

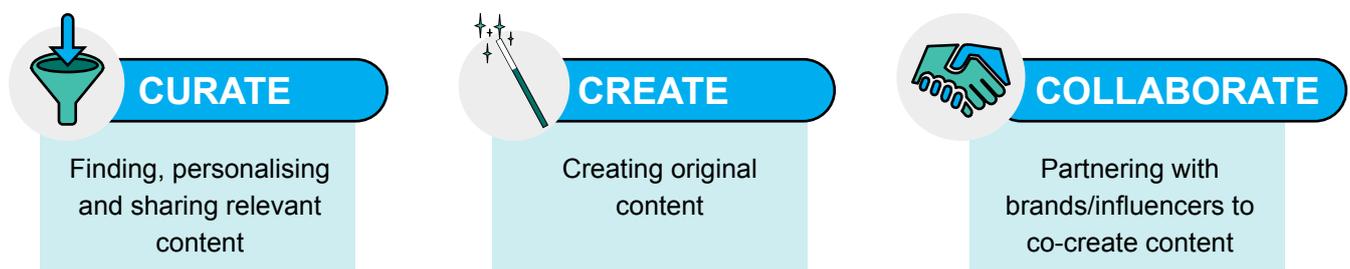
Having a preplanned strategy and prepared posts ensures that you are posting regularly. Consistency of posting is key to maintaining an engaged audience.

3 Efficiency

Without an overarching strategy, you could spend too much time planning each individual post as and when you create and post them. Instead, by creating a social posting calendar, your time is spent more efficiently.

Curate, Create and Collaborate (CCC) Framework

Here is the hard truth: There is no way you can create all the content needed to feed your audience's appetite. The good news is that you do not have to! The CCC Content Framework will help you put together a relevant and engaging content calendar with minimal effort.



Content Curation: Enhancing Existing Content with Your Personal Flavour

We live in the age of information. The challenge for your customers is not accessing information, but sifting through and identifying relevant content.

Curation is not a random reposting or sharing of content. It is adding your voice to a handpicked collection of content, gathered from a variety of sources, around a specific topic that you publish and share with your followers. Curating content from high quality sources helps increase your credibility and exposure in the travel industry. Unlike sharing generic content, as a thought leader, you should focus on sharing content that is of high relevance and value.

Do's and Don'ts of Content Curation



Do's

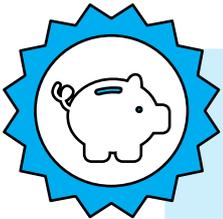
- 1 Always credit the original source. You are curating content, not stealing it.
- 2 Ensure that your content is accurate. There is a lot of fake news and outdated information on the Internet.
- 3 Ensure diversity of sources. If you report from just 1 or 2 sources, your audience can just follow the sources themselves.
- 4 Add your personal touch. Your audience is interested in your personal brand and is looking for your point of view.



Don'ts

- 1 Forget your content sweet spot. Ask yourself these 2 questions - Is this content in line with my personal brand? Is this content relevant to my target audience?
- 2 Compromise quality for quantity. This could happen when you force yourself to post at a certain frequency when you do not have the time to dedicate to content discovery. Always prioritise quality over quantity. Your audience will love you for it.

Becoming a Thought Leader Through Strategic Content Curation



1. Invest in discovering content gems.

75% of any curation strategy is discovery. Have a list of 20-25 high quality sources that you follow regularly. This can be a combination of newsletters, magazines, blogs, and influencers' social media channels. It will likely take you some time to find the right sources from which to curate. Always be on the lookout for high quality content creators and curators in your area of interest and follow them on multiple digital channels.



2. Gather content in a central repository.

Once you have curated a list of sources, invest in exploring the content. You can use tools like [Evernote](#) and [Pocket](#) to help you gather all shortlisted content into one platform for future use. Using the right tools can help ensure that you have a constant supply of well-curated content for sharing.



The Bookmark Hack: This one is a bit traditional, but simple and effective. Once you have found a handful of go-to content sources, star them all with a bookmark in your browser, and organise them into a folder. Then each day, start your curation by going to your bookmarks, right-clicking the folder, and opening all the sites at once.



3. Always add your personal touch.

Your role as a content curator is not just to find good content to match your audience's interest and needs, but also to add your flavour to it. Do not just share an article on your Facebook or an image on your Instagram page. Add 1-2 lines highlighting why this article is interesting or why the image is unique.

This is an opportunity to highlight aspects of your personal brand. If your personal brand is a witty commentator, add a funny quip to the post.



4. Schedule a content calendar.

No one has the time to discover, personalise and share curated content on a daily basis. In fact, the most efficient way to do content curation is in bulk. This is where a social posting calendar software is useful. There are many free or low cost tools such as [Buffer](#) (free basic plan) and [Post Planner](#) (\$3 per month).

Using these tools, you can pre-plan, craft your posts in bulk and schedule them for posting across multiple social channels in advance. Then, at the scheduled time, the software will post your content under your page/account automatically. Many social post scheduling softwares come with a content discovery tool and image editing capabilities.



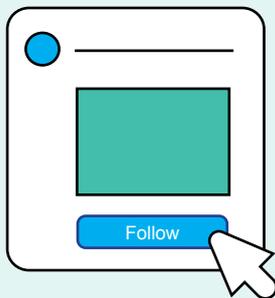
The Calendar Hack: If you do not want to use any software or tools for content scheduling, you can use the free calendar application on your phone. Create a new calendar and name it "Social posting calendar". Schedule each post for the week as an event on your calendar. You can add the post text in descriptions, include links, attach images and more. Then set a reminder to remind yourself to create the post.

Content Creation: The Art of Storytelling

Content creation is a vital aspect of your social marketing strategy. Material that you create from scratch best reflects your personal brand and is unique to you - that is what keeps your followers coming back for more.

The first question that comes up when trying to create your own social content is...what should I post about? Finding the trending topics, and areas of interest of your audience is the first step.

How to identify topics for content creation

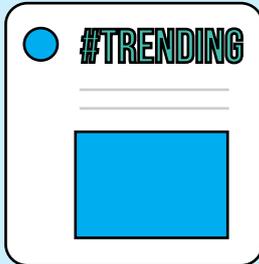


1. Follow relevant topics on a content feed

One of the best ways to know what is trending in your field is to follow brands, thought leaders and content sources that regularly publish content in the industry. You can manually follow a curated list of such sources on each of your personal or professional social channels, or you can choose one of the following content curation platforms: [Feedly](#) (\$11/month), [Social Animal](#) (\$70/month) and [Buzzsumo](#) (\$142/month).

These platforms can be set up with topics and themes that are relevant to you. For example, if your focus is on food tourism, you can follow popular food bloggers, restaurant chains, etc. All the trending content from your topics of interest across all social platforms will then be put together for you in one clean feed.

By browsing through this curated feed, you can find inspiration for topics you can post about.

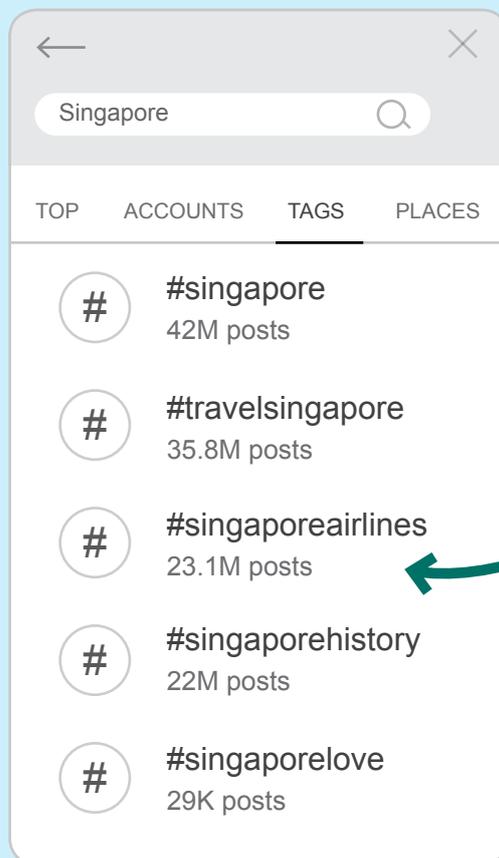


Look for trending Instagram hashtags.

A very helpful feature on Instagram is that you can search for hashtags related to a phrase. If you enter a phrase or a word in the Instagram search box, you can switch to the Tags tab on the top to view the list of related hashtags. For instance, you can find the related hashtags to analyse what places people like to visit when they go on vacation.

Within the same search, Instagram will show the number of posts just below the hashtag. Hashtags with a high number of posts are likely to be trending and popular.

You can use Instagram hashtag searches to see what influencers or people in general are posting on topics relevant to your brand. Use this as an inspiration for your own content creation.



Number of posts

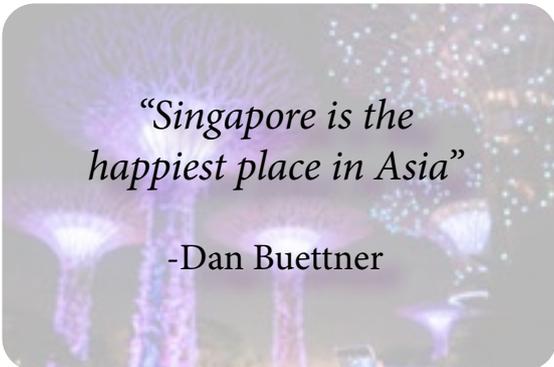


Different Types of Content You Can Create for Social Media



1 Photos

Photos are the easiest format for social content. Almost all smartphones come with a great camera, and built-in photo editing features such as filters to make your photos look great. But to go one step further, you can try using a photo editing app.



2 Quotes

Quotes are brief and create an instant connection, especially when paired with a relevant and eye-catching image. There are many free sites and apps (such as [Pablo by Buffer](#)) that can create a beautiful quote poster in minutes.



3 Short Articles

Do you have a blog or a website? Repurpose the content for social media with a catchy headline, short description and a link to your full article. Free tools like [Co-schedule's headline analyser](#) can help you write engaging headlines.

For those who want to spice things up with more creative elements...

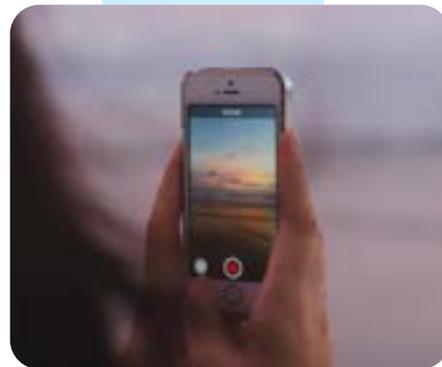


4 Stories

It started with Snapchat but now Instagram and even Facebook have a “stories” section with highly visual content. Stories come with interesting filters and animations. You can also post short videos.

5 Videos

Videos are a great way to grab attention. If you have a good smartphone, you can take high quality videos and make simple edits right on your phone. Keep your videos short and sweet. You can also choose a theme and record a series of short videos.



6 Livestreaming

It is immediate, authentic, and if you do a good job, your audience will love it. If you are at an event or a show, you can livestream the action around you. If you are an advanced content creator, you can create your own content and go live.

If you have tried all these and want to take your social content to the next level...



7 GIFs

GIFs (pronounced “jiffs”) are a series of images looped into a short video. GIFs are easy to find or create (using tools like [Giphy](#)). While GIFs are a great way to reach and engage a younger audience, remember that context is everything. Even big brands have wrongly used GIFs, leading to online backlash. So if you are unsure of the context, best not to risk it.

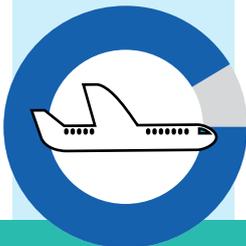
8 Cinemagraphs

A cinemagraph has the same file format as a GIF. However, rather than a series of images playing in a loop, it is a static image with movement in one part of the frame. It is a great attention grabber on social media, and you can easily create your own using smartphone apps such as [Loopsie](#), [PICOO Camera](#) (Free in iOS or Android Appstore) or [Cinemagraph Pro](#).



8 Infographics

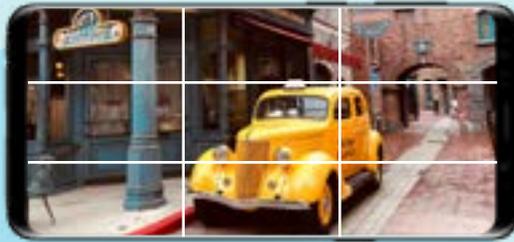
Infographics are a great way to pack content that is informative or entertaining (or both!) into a highly visual format. With tools like [Piktochart](#), [Venngage](#) and [Canva](#), creating your own infographic is easier than ever.



5 Tips to Help You Take Social Media Worthy Photos on Your Smartphone

If the photos you add to social media do not look professional, they will hurt your brand image. Fortunately, with the high quality cameras in most smartphones, and some tips and tricks to good photography, anyone can take social media worthy photos. Here are some tips to help improve your photography skills.

1 Use gridlines to create balance.



Smartphone cameras have the option to use gridlines. Position your subject and anything important in your photo where those lines intersect. Only amateur photographers center everything on the screen.

2 Look for symmetry or patterns.



We are naturally drawn to images with symmetry and patterns. Capturing these can elevate the image and bring it to a more professional level.

3 Do not zoom: crop instead.



Manual zoom on a smartphone camera affects the image quality. Either get closer to the subject or, if that is not possible, take the picture as it is and crop it later to get the composition you want.

4 Leverage natural frames.



Sometimes, subjects are perfectly positioned to be captured within natural frames surrounding them - this could be trees, archways or even doors and windows.

5 Capture reflections.



Taking photos of reflections can add a unique perspective to your photos. Glass walled buildings, mirrors and bodies of water make for great reflection shots.

3 Techniques to Help You Shoot Better Videos

Ever wonder how travel influencers take professional looking videos? While it is true that some use professional equipment and invest time in editing, it is possible to take such high quality videos simply by using your smartphone. Achieving a professional look is more about your technique than your tools.



1 Try a different angle to add a unique perspective.

Most of the time, we tend to film at eye level. Try filming a bit lower than your waist level to get a unique angle and perspective. It makes the subject look bigger and more impressive.

2 Use pre-planned cinematic movements.

Most of the time, we do not think about how we are going to move the camera before we start filming. To get the effect of a professional video, choose the movement strategically. Pan from one side to the other, forward, backward, up or down in a controlled motion. Always take a moment to pick your shot before you start filming.



Harsh light casting shadows

3 Manage lighting and sound.

Lighting is harder to manage when shooting outdoors. Try to shoot in the mornings or evenings to avoid harsh shadows. If you have to shoot at midday, find a shaded area, or choose to film on overcast days.



Soft light in open shade

If you are going to be seen talking in your video, make sure you pick a spot without any distracting background noise. People will watch interesting content even if it is not in high definition, but they will not be as tolerant if the audio quality is poor. If it is not possible to find a quiet spot to film, you can do a voiceover during editing.

Content Collaboration: Using the Power of Influencers

Influencers on social media are people who have built a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a specific topic. They make regular posts about that topic on their preferred social media channels and generate large followings of enthusiastic, engaged people who pay close attention to their views.

Brands partner with social media influencers because these influencers can drive awareness, create new trends and encourage their followers to buy products they promote.

What are the benefits of partnering with social influencers?



Visibility

How many followers do you have on your social media channels? A few hundred maybe? A few thousand if you have worked on building a strong brand. A travel influencer is likely to have tens if not hundreds of thousands of followers. Which means that any content you co-create with them will result in high visibility for your tours and your brand in general.



Validation

It should come as no surprise that influencers tend to have a strong influence on their followers' purchasing behaviour. If a travel influencer talks about your tours and how he or she loved them, it becomes a validation of your quality. Influencer marketing has become an extension of modern day celebrity endorsement.

How Can You Leverage the Power of Social Influencers?

1 Identify influencers whose content areas overlap with your offering.

Influencers are constantly looking out for interesting content - it is their bread and butter! In order to strike a mutually beneficial partnership, there needs to be an overlap between the topics the influencer is interested in and your business/brand. For example, an influencer who mostly posts about extreme adventure sports may not be interested in partnering with a tourist guide focused on city tours. But a travel influencer who tends to post about beach holidays might be.



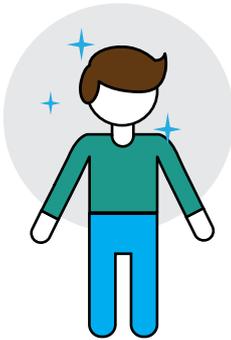
The manual method - Look for these influencers on social platforms by searching for relevant topics and themes (or hashtags), and start following them to understand the type of content they share.



Using a tool - There are many influencer discovery tools that can help find influencers who have audiences that are relevant to your business. The benefit of using such tools is scalability. Some tools to explore are [Upfluence](#) and [Klear](#).

2

Learn more about your shortlisted influencers.



Once you have shortlisted some influencers (maybe 5-10), it is time to dig a little deeper into their audience to understand the potential value of a partnership.

- What percentage of the influencer's followers are authentic? (yes, it is possible to have fake followers). [Hypeauditor](#) is one of the cost effective tools you can use to identify how many genuine followers an influencer has.
- Which countries their followers are from - to make sure these are the target countries for your business.
- The average engagement rate you can expect from this influencer.

3

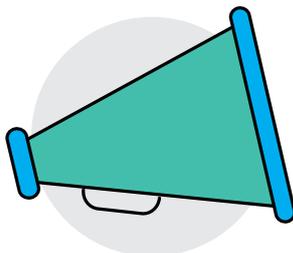
Craft a mutually beneficial value proposition.



Make a case for why featuring you, or your tour, would be of interest and benefit to your chosen influencer's target audience. It may be helpful to see what other brands they have worked with and the value exchange provided. Was it a free product? Exclusive or personalised products? Creative content collaboration?

4

Reach out!



Most influencers will mention how they can be contacted (either through email or through the direct messaging feature on social platforms). Reach out with ideas for partnerships and be open to alternative suggestions. As long as the partnership stays true to your personal brand, and the followers are your target audience, it will likely be a meaningful partnership.

Some Do's and Don'ts of Influencer Marketing



Do's

- **Offer a mutually beneficial value exchange** - Influencers care about their authenticity. They do not want to be seen as merely pushing products for a profit.
- **Consider micro-influencers** - The number of followers is not the only metric to look at. Micro-influencers with a smaller follower base may have a much more engaged audience and be more open to partnerships.
- **Partner with other travel brands** - Brands can have high influence too.



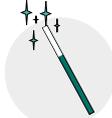
Don'ts

- **Focus only on sales** - If the message is too sales driven and appears inauthentic, it becomes ineffective. Focus on driving positive visibility and measure the reach and engagement driven by the content.
- **Limit creative freedom** - Influencers know their audience best. Allowing them to create the content they think will resonate best with their audience is likely to have the most authentic feel. As long as it does not diminish your personal brand positioning, allow the influencer to craft the content.



Chapter Summary

Based on your level of expertise and experience with digital content, the table below provides a guideline on the percentage of content that you should aim to curate, create and collaborate on.

	 CURATE	 CREATE	 COLLABORATE
 BEGINNER You are just starting out with professional content creation for social media.	75%	25%	
 INTERMEDIATE You have been creating social content for a while. You have built up a small-medium following and you have a good understanding of your audience and their interests.	50%	50%	
 ADVANCED You have a strong following on digital platforms (i.e., social/website/blog). You are able to post regularly and invest time and resources in collaborative content creation.	25%	60%	15%



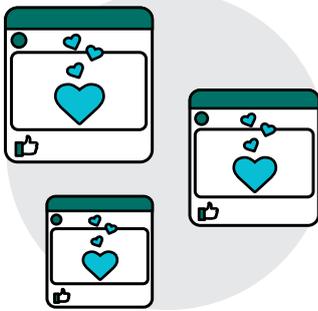
Chapter 4:

Driving Visibility

Understanding Social Visibility

In the early days of social media, if you posted something, you could be rest assured that at least 15-20% of your followers would see it in their newsfeeds. This percentage of people who will see your post organically (without any paid ads) is called the organic reach of your post.

But today, average organic reach of 3% means that if you have 100 fans on Facebook, only 3 people will see your post. Why did this happen?



Increasing clutter

3.4 billion people had a social media account as of January 2019. That is 45% of the world's population. 95 million photos and videos are shared on Instagram alone every day! A staggering number of friends and brands are competing for the same limited real estate on your newsfeed - leading to a drastic decline in organic reach.



Evolving algorithms

Social media platforms want users to spend more and more time on their apps. This will not happen if the users are bombarded with too much branded content. So the newsfeed algorithms of social media platforms have been modified over time to prioritise content from friends and family and less from brands.

So how can you cut through the clutter on social media to reach a sizable audience?

There are 2 ways to do this:

1. Optimise your content and page for organic reach.
2. Drive visibility through paid social media advertising.

Optimise Your Content and Page for Organic Reach

To effectively use the first strategy of optimising for organic visibility, it is important to first understand how social media algorithms work. The question is - How does Facebook decide what content appears in your newsfeed and in what order?

1. Meaningful Interactions

Social media platforms aim to drive meaningful interactions between people. This means, posts which have many comments and replies have a higher organic reach than posts which only get “likes”.

So you should...use social content to generate conversations. You can ask questions, get your audiences to vote or share their opinions. Note that asking explicitly for people to “like” your posts is not viewed favourably by most platforms. When people comment, reply wherever possible.

2. Content Type

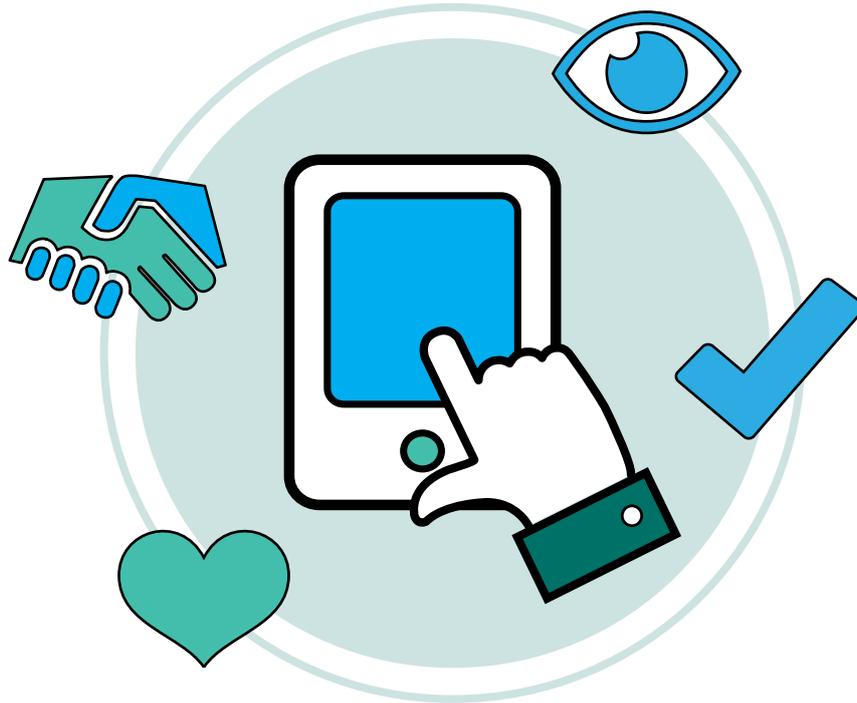
Certain types of content work better than others. For example, your audience might respond better to photo content on Facebook, stories on Instagram, and short thematic videos on YouTube. However, there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution.

So you should...test and learn. Explore various content types. Track the performance of different types of content and optimise towards the formats that work best in driving engagement.

3. Initial Performance

Social platforms show every post to a small sample of followers, and use the responsiveness of this group to evaluate the quality of the content. If the initial audience responds positively by liking, commenting and sharing the post, the platform decides that this content drives value, and shares it with more of your followers.

So you should...ensure that your followers are your core target audience. Do not attempt to “buy” followers. Inauthentic followers will lead to poor initial engagement and poor overall visibility of your social content. Always aim for quality over quantity.



4. Past Engagement

Algorithms also take into account the last time a user engaged with your content. The more regularly they engage, the more likely they are to see future content. Consistency of posting is critical to sustain the momentum.

So you should...post regularly. As a rule of thumb, 1-2 posts per week is a good frequency on newsfeed-based platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn). For search-driven platforms like YouTube, 2-3 per month is usually sufficient.

5. Recency

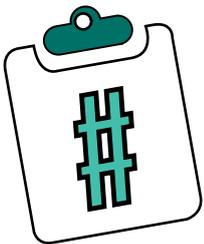
Recency is less of a factor than it was in the past, but it does have an impact, especially in driving initial performance.

So you should...post at a time when most of your followers are online. There are numerous studies that claim to have found the ultimate best time window for posting. These are irrelevant, because they are aggregated and do not take into account the behaviour of your unique audience. Certain platforms share data on the time of day most followers are active. For example, Facebook and Instagram provide this data under the Insights section. Use this as a guide. For other platforms, avoid posting late at night or too early in the day.

Using Hashtags on Instagram to Drive Organic Visibility

Hashtags are to Instagram what Keywords are for Google Search. They help your content be discovered. Users can discover content by searching hashtags on their own or clicking through related posts for a particular tag. In addition, users can follow hashtags now. That means your content can end up in a user's feed even if they do not follow you. And if you are sharing great content and tagging it with relevant hashtags, people might just start following you.

According to Agorapulse, Instagram posts with at least one hashtag got 70% more likes and 392% more comments than those without hashtags. So if Instagram is a priority platform for you, it is time to plan your #strategy.



How many is too many?

Instagram allows you to include 30 hashtags on a post. That does not mean you should use 30 on every post. Too many hashtags can look spammy. Based on research, top-performing posts appear to follow the rule of "less is more." 2 to 5 hashtags will be the optimal range.

Types of hashtags to use

1 Category specific hashtags

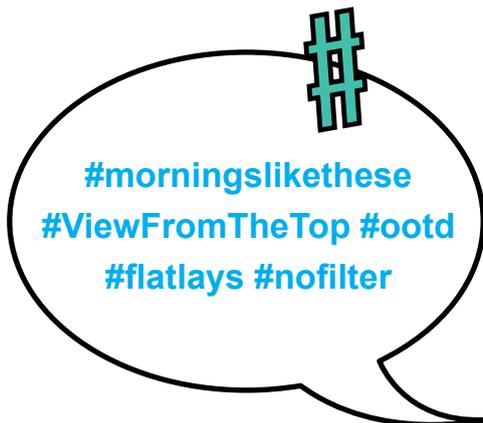
Travel is one of the most popular categories of posts on Instagram and hence has a long list of relevant hashtags - [#postcardsfromtheworld](#) [#travelphotography](#) [#Instatravel](#) [#wanderlust](#) - to name a few. These hashtags apply to a broad variety of content and are widely used. Using them can help increase the visibility of your content. However, the downside is that the volume of posts using them is so high that your content may get drowned out in the clutter.



2 Content specific hashtags

These are hashtags specific to the content of your post, such as:

- Location specific - [#Singapore](#) [#Gardensbythebay](#)
- Scenery specific - [#beachtime](#) [#oceanviews](#) [#ipulledoverforthis](#)
- Activity Specific - [#hiking](#) [#shopping](#) [#chilling](#)



3 Creative hashtags

These may be more niche and applicable to very specific contexts, but are valuable because of their high relevance and more engaged audiences they can help you reach. Some examples include [#morningslikethese](#) [#ViewFromTheTop](#) [#ootd](#) [#flatlays](#) [#nofilter](#)

4 Brand specific hashtags

Brand hashtags are specific to your brand or business. It could be just your brand name, or it could be a caption or tagline associated with your brand.



Hashtag Do's and Don'ts



Do's

Use timeless hashtags.

#TBT (Throwback Thursday) is one of the most used hashtags on Instagram and a perfect nostalgia marketing opportunity. Use it to reminisce and reuse your older content.

Experiment with emoji hashtags.

In addition to numbers and letters, emojis can be included in hashtags (spaces and special characters, such as % or \$, do not work). These animated icons are eye-catching and, because they can stand in for entire words, will keep your hashtags short.

Make sure that hashtag means what you think it means.

You do not want to inadvertently attach your brand to a raunchy or nefarious campaign. Before using a new hashtag, be sure to browse through the hashtag page to ensure the associated content is appropriate. In addition, since hashtags do not have spaces, always check - When you combine two or three words together, does it spell out something else? Also, check and double-check any acronyms you use in hashtags for any potential double meanings.

Monitor hashtag performance.

If you have an Instagram business profile, you can see just how effective your hashtags are. Use data to tweak your strategy to get more views and engagement. Open any post, then tap the "View Insights" text beneath it. Then swipe up to see complete details on the post, including follows, reach and impressions, and how users discovered it.



Don'ts

Use hashtags that solicit likes or follows.

Hashtags, such as #followme or #like4like, will attract bots, spammers and other users who have no intention of engaging with you in a meaningful way. They also show your followers that your brand is okay with engaging in spammy behaviour. That is not a good look.

Use irrelevant hashtags.

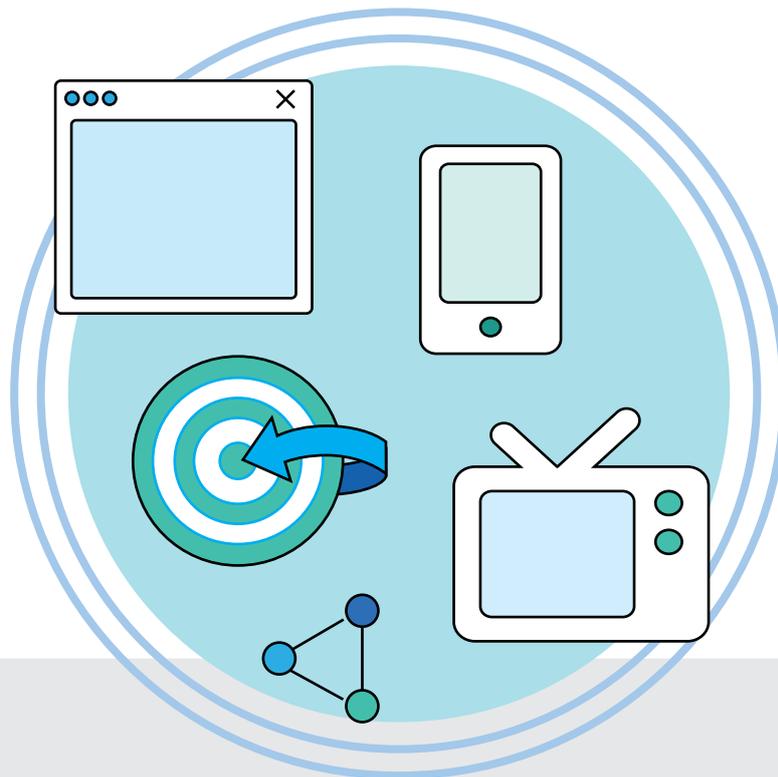
Stuffing irrelevant hashtags onto posts is spammy behavior. It will annoy people who follow those hashtags and they will likely tell Instagram to "Do not Show for this Hashtag." Hashtags must be used strategically. You will only increase engagement if you give the audience what they are looking for. Always aim for content that speaks to their interests.

Add hashtags after publishing posts.

Any tags added after you have published a post will not appear in searches.

When using hashtags, use all lowercase letters. This might make your hashtag hard to read, since there are no spaces. Instead, you can capitalise the first letter of every word for readability.

Using Paid Media for Strategic Visibility



With the continued decline of organic visibility, social media is becoming a pay-to-play ecosystem for those wanting to drive high volume results. One of the key factors that sets apart social media marketing is that anyone can do it on a budget as small as a few dollars per day. This is both good and bad news.

It is good because unlike other mass media channels (like TV and newspapers), social media advertising provides scale to small players. The downside is that small daily budgets begin to add up, and without a clear strategy and careful optimisation, you could end up wasting substantial amounts on social advertising without driving returns to your business.

When and Why Should You Consider Spending Money on Social Media Marketing?

So far, everything covered in this toolkit is about driving organic social media marketing. However, the bulk of the visibility brands get on social media is through paid advertising. Paid social marketing has the potential to drive significant visibility to your brand and business, but it is not for everyone. Here are a few key considerations before you decide to invest in paid social media marketing.

1

Do you have the time and resources to invest in learning social media marketing?

For someone entering the digital marketing space without prior marketing experience, learning the nuances of ads on social media ad platforms can be a challenge. It is certainly something almost anyone can learn with time and dedication, but if you do not have the time and resources to invest in learning, there is always a danger that you may overspend and end up wasting your investment.

2

Have you created and tested your brand offerings through organic strategies to ensure they work?

Before you put money behind your own brand and business offering, it is essential that you test it out. Running ads before you have fine-tuned your offering could be an expensive way to learn.

3

Do you have a budget to spare for test and learn?

Nobody will get everything right on their first try. Learning to advertise on social media is like learning any other skill - you will make mistakes and learn new things all the time. Do not assume that you will start seeing returns from your first dollar.

5 Strategies to Kick Start Your Paid Social Media Marketing



1. Start with re-targeting.

If you have a website or a blog, re-target the people who visit your site or read your blog, with ads on social media. (If you are unsure of what re-targeting means, start with this [App Institute's Beginner's guide](#)). The 2 key benefits of this strategy are:

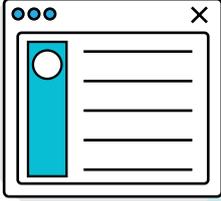
- a. You are only focusing on the people who are already interested in your offering, so your money will only be spent on trying to convert them to book a tour.
- b. Your audience size will be limited, so it will be very difficult to overspend and hence waste money on irrelevant audiences.



2. Target a well-defined, small audience - prioritise relevance over reach.

Social media platforms can offer a staggering amount of reach. Over 3.4 billion people use social media - it can be tempting to try to reach as many people as possible with your message.

However, the key to success is to remember that only a fraction of them will be interested in visiting Singapore, and an even smaller fraction who will be willing and able to hire a tourist guide on their trip. Booking a tour is not an impulse purchase (like buying chocolate at the checkout counter aisle at a supermarket); you cannot convince someone who does not need it to buy it. What you want to do is to reach people who are already planning a trip to Singapore and are interested in learning more about Singapore.



3. Use the platform's data and intelligence to your benefit.

Social media platforms are a treasure trove of data when it comes to consumer behavior. For example, in 2018, Facebook introduced a feature called trip consideration - this enables advertisers to reach people who are intending to travel but have yet to decide on a destination. Use the nuanced audience segments created by the platform to target consumers most relevant to your business. Social platforms also have a well calibrated test and learn algorithm. So instead of deciding all aspects of what your ad must look like, why not test and learn? Run 2-3 variants of an ad on the same audience pool, and the social media platform can auto optimise for creative performance - meaning, the platform will monitor how people respond to different creatives (which one do they tend to click more). By letting the algorithm optimise, you can remove the human error and bias.



Chapter Summary



BEGINNER

If you are in the beginner stage, focus on ensuring visibility to people actively looking for you online.

- Add links to your professional social media accounts from your personal accounts, web pages and any other digital presence you have.
- When others (your customers, media, etc) mention you online, request that your social account to be tagged or at least mentioned.
- Include your professional social media accounts on your namecard.
- Ensure that the Google search results for your name or brand name features your social profile.



INTERMEDIATE

If you are in the intermediate stage, focus on building your base and driving organic visibility.

- Post regularly at a time when most people are online, and respond to comments and posts .
- Ask the people you know to share your page/content.
- Try to start conversations with your audience by asking questions and encouraging interactions on your content.
- Use relevant hashtags, especially on Instagram but also on Facebook and Twitter.



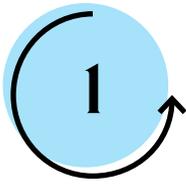
ADVANCED

If you are in the advanced stage, you could consider testing paid visibility.

- Start small - a short campaign for a specific targeted audience with a small budget (~\$10-\$20 per day for a week to 10 days).
- Ensure your tagging and tracking setup is working before the campaign starts.
- If your aim is to drive bookings specifically, start with retargeting from your website.
- In the longer run, invest in structured training. You can start with online training for the specific social media platform(s) you are on.

Conclusion

Social media platforms are like Swiss Army Knives. They can be used in a lot of different ways to serve different purposes. Before getting into content creation and driving visibility, it is important to identify the purpose for which you want to utilise social platforms.

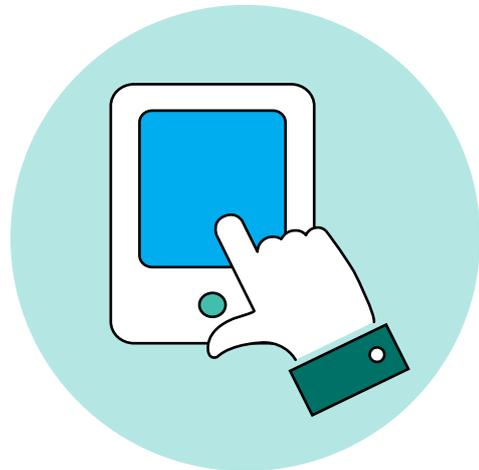


Social Media as a Show of Digital Presence

The Internet is now the first place people turn to for any information. You must have a professional presence they can find, and social media can be that presence.

In the simplest case, your professional social media account can be used as a show of digital presence, available for people to find when they look for you. If this is your objective, then your presence, profile description and photo, and some content around your service offerings will be sufficient.

It may not even be necessary to invest in significant content creation. By simply following a robust curation strategy, you will be able to maintain a presence and be visible to customers who are actively seeking to find you specifically. Paid advertising is not required.

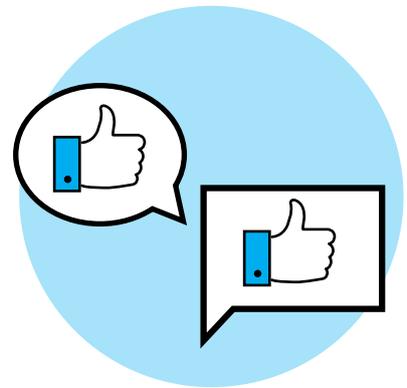




Social Media as a Digital Word of Mouth Platform

With our everyday communication increasingly becoming digital, social media serves a key role as a digital word-of-mouth platform. Social media has become a medium for people to share their lives with their communities, to be informed about trends and events, and to discover new brands and products.

Using social media platforms at this level requires an investment in content creation (in addition to curation) and strategies for driving organic visibility.



Social Media as a Performance Marketing Platform

With its potential for high reach and high engagement native formats, social media is well placed to be a mass market platform to reach millions of people. If your aim is to use social media as a marketing channel to drive large scale visibility and sales, you can consider leveraging paid advertising options on most social media channels.



Resources for learning more about Social Media Marketing



Facebook & Instagram -

www.facebook.com/business/learn



Twitter -

www.twitterflightschool.com/student/catalog



LinkedIn -

<https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/how-to-advertise-on-linkedin>



WeChat -

<https://blog.hootsuite.com/wechat-marketing/>



YouTube -

www.youtube.com/creators



Tripadvisor -

www.tripadvisor.com/TripAdvisorInsights



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