

# Making sense of **Social Media**



# Welcome.

## In this guide...

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- Content vs Engagement Guidelines / Code of Conduct
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Being active online can open up a world of business networking opportunities – but if not done well, it can damage your brand before a wide audience.

Conducting yourself professionally can be a difficult thing when it comes to putting your brand in the social spotlight. In this guide, we break down the key components of social networking and give you some easily digestible tips on how to present your business well within them.



# Content vs Engagement Guidelines

The two elements to company social media – content and engagement – are equally important in representing your business.

**Content** covers the media and messaging you post out to your followers from your company page.

**Engagement** is largely in response to someone who wants to interact with you, or a conversation you've chosen to chime in on.



# Content

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## Remember why you're there

First and foremost, the reason you're on a social media network is to showcase your business at its best, to attract customers and opportunities. Things can get a little murky in the depths of the internet, making it all the more important to keep your professional eye on the ball.

## Keep the content relevant

Social media activity can blur the lines between personal and professional contacts and comms. So, if you're running a business, we highly recommend you start a company Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram page – and keep your personal pages for your close friends and family. This is so you can stay on brand and reach your target audiences without annoying your friends and family too much and avoid giving others unwanted insight into a slice of your personal life!

Humour and sarcasm fly well when communicated in person, but they can come across the wrong way in the written word. If you've seen an opportunity to make a 'funny' Facebook post or comment on a client's page think twice about how your joke may translate online. Don't let this stop you from letting your brand personality shine through though – just make sure it comes across as friendly and not rude or offensive.

Meet your new friend, 'Short & Sweet'. In a world whizzing by, attention spans are not what they used be. As enthralled as you might be in your own content, imagine one of your customers scrolling aimlessly through their feed, and try to grab their attention and hold it just for enough time to get your message across.



# Content

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## Misty Frequencies

If we had a formula for the perfect number of posts, we'd offer it up to you on the shiniest silver platter we could find. 'How often should I post?' is a question we receive regularly, and the answer can vary depending on the type of business you run, and who your customers are. Here's a safe rule of thumb to consider:

Let's say increasing followers and engagement is similar to increasing your fitness when running.

If you exercise only once a week, nothing is likely to happen. Your muscles won't grow, and running won't get any easier.

If you exercise twice a week, you're likely to maintain a fair level of fitness. You might not be getting any faster, but you'll hold a decent pace.

If you exercise three times a week, your fitness should increase. Your pace picks up steadily, and you're a little less breathless at the end of each run.

If you exercise every day, you could burn out and your muscles could tear. You've pushed too hard, and now have to rest your muscles for a bit.

Bombarding your followers will drive a wave of followers to the 'unsubscribe' button, and leave you speaking to an empty room. Posting topical and enjoyable content 2 - 4 times a week could likely see an increase in engagement. We recommend testing it out, playing with it a bit. Post two pieces one week and four the next. See how your followers engage and amend your posting frequency from there.

## Credit your sources

If you're taking information and sharing it with your followers or target audience online, be sure to credit the source where you can. Citing sources is a polite way to say that the ideas you're conveying aren't yours originally. It's good practice and helps with relationship building - you acknowledge your source and they notice your interest/support, so it's a win-win, and it opens the channels for interaction. A tip of the hat goes a long way.

# Engagement

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## Tone is everything

Playgrounds are fun when everyone plays nice, the same goes for online interactions. Online communication usually comes without the visual and audio clues that face-to-face communication comes with. That means it's difficult to decipher tone and connotations at times.

However, if you develop clear brand messages, a tone of voice and brand guidelines at the outset, before you start being active as a business online, this will help set the right tone. Remember, written text can easily be misconstrued and misunderstood. Punctuation like exclamation marks, and emphasis like bold or capital letters can make something that might be a passive or active statement appear 'aggressive'. Sarcasm can be easily misconstrued, and it's best to watch your language to ensure that business phone keeps ringing.

## Charm goes a long way, be gracious

When you're positive online, you're a pleasure to deal with offline. If people share your material, go out of your way to thank them! Make comments on blogs, articles and videos you like or appreciate. Be professional in your comments and reactions, and maintain an approachable disposition everywhere your company name appears online.

## Dealing with bad reviews

Publicly posted bad reviews aren't very nice to receive, and are easy to take personally. They're also a fantastic opportunity to show how you rectify a situation professionally, and with grace.

Chances are you might have seen a company / customer online conversation go viral after a company takes the bait and kicks off at the customer. More often than not when it all winds down, the hurt part is the company who still needs to make money from their tarnished name.

Avoid viral embarrassment by publicly responding in a professional manner, and offering to look into whichever issue has been raised. At the very least, your customer will feel heard, and readers will see that you listen and you care. You can then rectify the situation through private messaging or offline.

Keep in mind that just because things happen in what seems to be a 'virtual' space, we should still exercise that same courtesy as we would in person.

# Engagement

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## Give all contact details for your business

When you set up, or if you're in the process of auditing your social media presence, make sure that your online profiles clearly display contact details and important information about your business. Use your brand logo, include your website URL, any contact email addresses and phone numbers and any other professional social media accounts your audience might like to connect with you on. Explain the purpose of your social media account – for example; 'this is a community for chocolate lovers in New Zealand to connect with each other and sample the latest products before they launch to market'.



# Checklist

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**Before you hit 'post', cast your eyes down this list to ensure you're in the green!**

- **Are you logged into the right account?**  
Check you're not logged into your personal account. This is important when commenting too - the photo shown alongside the text box will show you which profile you're commenting as.
- **Read it aloud.**  
Does it read naturally and does it make sense?
- **Check for spelling mistakes.**  
Nothing ruins a powerful message like a typo. If in doubt, copy your text into a Word document, and use spellcheck.
- **Is it relevant to my brand, would a new customer be engaged by this?**  
Is it industry-relevant or helpful to your followers? If a new customer saw this post, would they still give you a call?
- **Is it offensive / inappropriate?**  
Could someone take this the wrong way or does it portray someone in a bad light?
- **Is the photo / video the best it can look?**  
Is it too dark, or too small?
- **Is it short and sweet?**  
Can you edit any unnecessary parts out to leave a punchier message?
- **Is this putting my best business foot forward and does it represent the company well?**



# Small Business Content

## Stuck for ideas?

Try our Small Business Content Bingo to shift that writer's block.

