

# Social media strategy is more than tweets and a Facebook post

Mark Zuckerberg famously said that "People influence people. Nothing influences people more than a recommendation from a trusted friend... it is more influential than the best broadcast message"...

The social media revolution is more than just connecting people on a social level, for corporates, it's about influencing customers. According to Bradley Elliott, MD of Platinum Seed, "Growing your influence does not happen organically, a strategy has to be developed that defines key elements such as:

- your goals,
- your measurable objectives,
- your customers,
- a social media landscape audit,
- your messages,
- your chosen social media channels, and
- a content plan."

Too often companies see social media as either a "nice to have" or a "frivolous marketing tool" when in actual fact social media influences the very people that buy your product or service. When little thought is put into the why, who and how behind a social media campaign, results are less than the effort invested. It all starts with your goals.



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"Understanding what you actually want to achieve is important when dealing with potential customers that are new to your brand. Do you want general brand awareness? Do you want to launch a product or specific service? Are you trying to build customer loyalty or trying to increase traffic to your website. Each goal requires a refined approach to social media. No one size fits all, and if any digital specialist suggests otherwise then you know to look elsewhere," says Elliott.

Understanding your customers is also an important factor in developing a social media strategy that works for your business needs. What age group do your customers generally fall within? Do your customers fall within a particular cultural group? What are your customers' interests? What motivates them? Which social media channels are more frequently used by your customers? "These questions will help you to develop a customer profile that begins to shape the approach your specific business should take. The more information you have on your customers and their relationship with social media, the better.

"At present though, many corporates do not have the ability to gain insight at that level. The number of conversations across numerous social media channels is just too overwhelming to monitor second by second." This is where technology, such as Continuum, is likely to fill the gap. The balance between authentic engagement with your customers, and growing your influence can be maintained with a system that can identify trends, gaps and opportunities for you.

Outside of your goals and customers, the development of a content plan is a key step to a social media strategy. "Once you

know what you want to achieve, who to influence, and how to influence your customers (based on relevant insights from your customer research and landscape audit), it is then for you to develop content that connects to your customers. Content can take the form of video material, photographic images, written material, and infographics. It all depends on the channel being used and the audience being targeted."

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