

# THE SMALL BUSINESS OWNER'S SOCIAL MEDIA PLAYBOOK

YOUR GUIDE TO BUILDING AND  
GROWING A GREAT BRAND ONLINE

2021



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8 keys to growing your business on social media

# INTRODUCTION

## THE PLAYBOOK DESIGNED JUST FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

We get it—as a small business owner, your to-do list is always a million miles long. And you probably know you need to build or grow your social media presence, but when? And how?

At Ripl, our goal is to give busy small business owners the tools they need to successfully (and quickly) create polished, professional social media marketing. And that's why we created this playbook. Whether you're brand new to the world of social media or have dabbled with creating your own content in the past, this guide is designed to be a crash-course on everything you need to know about social media basics.

## WHY SOCIAL MEDIA SHOULD MATTER TO EVERY SMALL BUSINESS

Simply put, your customers (and future customers) are already on social media—so you should be too. Today's consumers look to social media for information, business reviews, shopping inspiration, and insights from family and friends.

### THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS FOR BUSINESSES, INCLUDING:

- Engaging in two-way conversations with your customers, building trust, and strengthening reputation.
- Giving yourself an avenue for promoting everything from sales to company news.
- Simplifying eCommerce opportunities.
- Targeting just the right people with affordable paid marketing campaigns.

## HOW TO USE THIS PLAYBOOK

Every small business owner has a different level of experience and comfort with social media marketing. We designed this playbook so you can either go straight to the section you're most interested in, or read it cover to cover. Ready? Here we go!



# 1

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## INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK AND TWITTER, OH MY!

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First things first. Let's get familiar with the most popular social media channels and learn the type of content that's best suited for each one.

# CHANNEL CHEAT SHEET



FACEBOOK

Facebook is the old guard of social media channels and the most popular. Over 2.4 billion people use Facebook every month and more than 90 million businesses use Facebook Pages.<sup>1</sup> At the very least, your business needs a Facebook page that lists key details like your website, contact info, and a business description. From there, Facebook is a great place to post business updates and sales, and to generate user content (more on that later).



INSTAGRAM

Instagram is an image-and video-first social media platform. Users can create posts (with images or short video) or stories, with the latter expiring after 24 hours. Because of how visual Instagram is, it's ideally suited for showcasing products and lifestyle imagery.



TWITTER

With a 280-character limit, Twitter is the best way to spread the word with your customers about urgent updates and newsworthy changes. Twitter is also often where people go to vent about less-than-ideal customer service interactions, so monitoring your mentions and responding quickly can help with damage control.



LINKEDIN

LinkedIn was created for professional networking, so it can be an ideal place to share important business updates, post job openings, and promote new product releases. However, it's not the place for heavily promotional content.



YOUTUBE

For longer-form video content (longer than what's reasonable to post to an Instagram or Facebook story), turn to YouTube. This platform is where businesses of all kinds post video content, like product how-to's, new product reveals, Q&As, and behind-the-scenes content. Often, it makes sense to host a video on YouTube, then link to it from your other social channels.



PINTEREST

Pinterest is a hub for inspiration of any kind—like recipes, home décor, renovation, style, and much more. Built for organic discovery, users can pin content they'd like to save for later. With 322 million monthly users, Pinterest is the perfect place for customers to discover your products and services in a visual way.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://blog.hootsuite.com/facebook-statistics/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://investor.pinterestinc.com/press-releases/press-releases-details/2019/Pinterest-Announces-Third-Quarter-2019-Results/default.aspx>



# A SIMPLY SWEET EXPLANATION



## FACEBOOK

“I like ice cream sandwiches”



## INSTAGRAM

“Here’s a photo of my favorite ice cream sandwich shop”



## TWITTER

“I’m eating an #IceCreamSandwich at @TheIceCreamShop.”



## LINKEDIN

“I’m the CEO of Ice Cream Sandwich, Inc.”



## YOUTUBE

“Here’s my behind-the-scenes ice cream factory tour”



## PINTEREST

“The 10 best ice cream sandwich recipes”

## WHICH CHANNEL SHOULD I START WITH?

**BEGINNER:** Start with one channel. Choose the one that’s the best fit for your individual business. Instagram is often a good place for retail brands to start. Focus on posting content frequently, and adding followers.

**INTERMEDIATE:** Add a few more channels (as you see fit) and start including a broader mix of content types. Now might be the time to experiment with paid advertising or sponsored posts.

**ADVANCED:** Add a few more channels and start getting strategic about which content is the best fit for each channel.

## SHOULD I BE POSTING TO MULTIPLE CHANNELS?

Do what your schedule allows, and be realistic. It’s much better to have one robust social media channel where you post great content regularly, than multiple neglected channels.

# LEARN MORE

- [4 SOCIAL PLATFORMS AND WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW](#)
- [YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGE SIZES](#)
- [HOW TO REFRESH YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA BUSINESS PAGES](#)

# 2

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## SOCIAL CONTENT 101

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Now that you know where to post, exactly what are you going to post? No matter which channel you post to and how frequently, creating engaging content is paramount.



# THE 4 C's OF ENGAGING SOCIAL CONTENT



## CLEAR

Is your message clear? Are you sticking to one key topic?



## CONCISE

Are you keeping your captions short and using words economically?



## COMPELLING

Is your content interesting? Does it inspire action?



## CREATIVE

Does your content look and sound good? (This is where Ripl can help!)

# SETTING GOALS

GREAT SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING DOES ONE THING: IT FURTHERS YOUR COMPANY'S OVERALL GOALS.

COMMON METRICS THAT ARE TRACKED IN SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ARE:



## ENGAGEMENT

Are people liking, commenting, and sharing?

Are you building and reinforcing your relationship with existing customers?



## REACH

Is your message reaching as many people as possible?

More specifically, is it reaching the right people (i.e. people who are likely to be interested in your products or services)?



## LEADS

Is your content helping you reach potential new customers?

Is your brand gaining traction with new audiences?



## CONVERSIONS

Are people taking the desired action based on seeing your content?

That could mean buying something, filling out a contact form, or downloading an app.





TEXT ONLY  
ON IMAGES

Best for: Instagram stories,  
Facebook stories, Pinterest



GRAPHICS  
ILLUSTRATIONS  
& GIFS

Best for: Instagram stories,  
Facebook stories

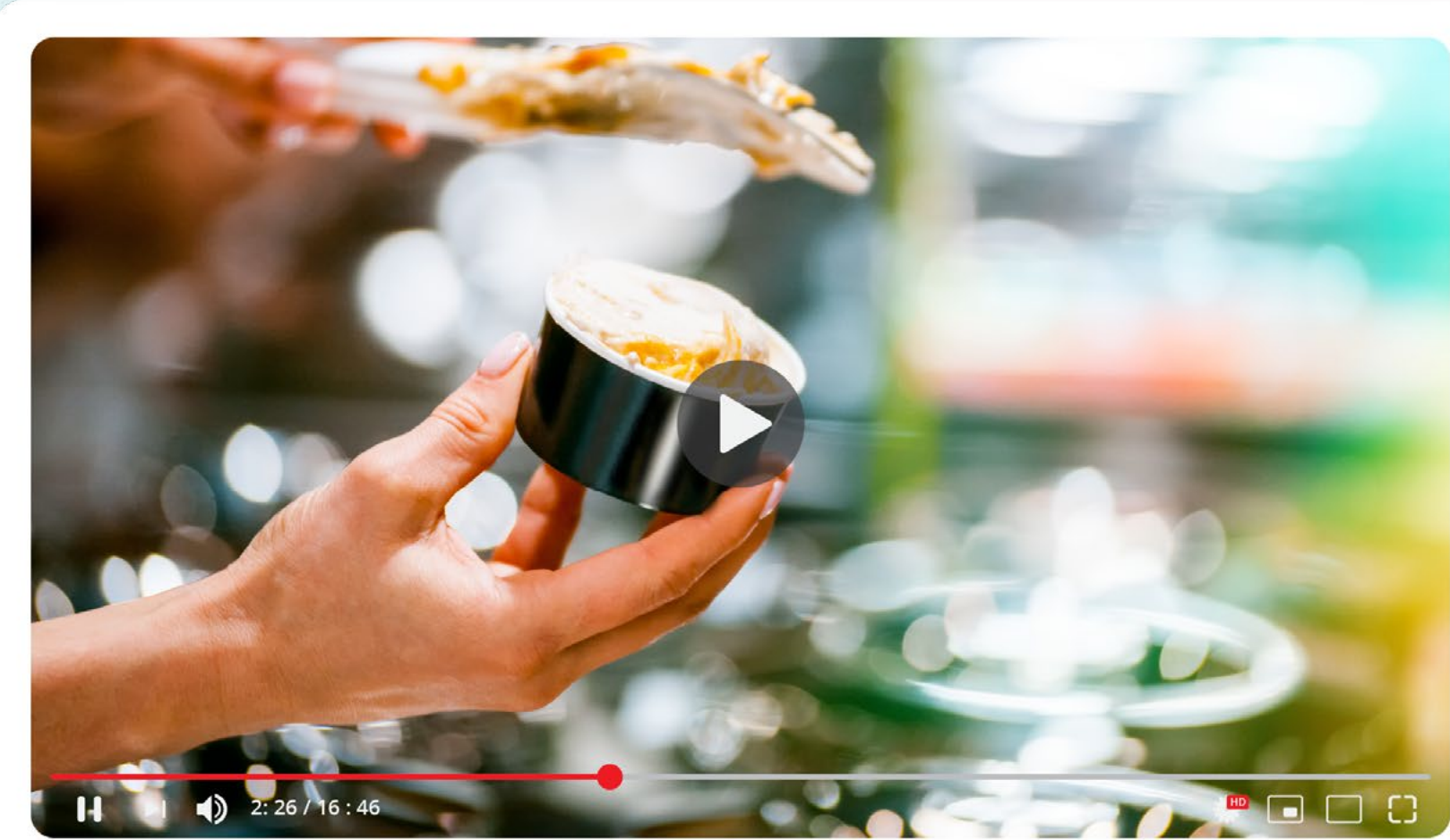


LIVE CONTENT

Best for: Instagram Reels/IGTV,  
Facebook Live



# CONTENT FORMATS



The Ice Cream Shop

4,532 views

40K 10K SHARE SAVE



SUBSCRIBE

VIDEO POSTS

Best for: YouTube, Instagram stories, Facebook stories



65 likes

The Ice Cream Shop Grand opening! Come check us out. We are open 11-9 everyday. #theicecreamshop

STILL IMAGE

Best for: Instagram posts,  
Facebook posts, Pinterest



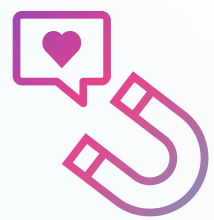
TEXT-ONLY POSTS

Best for: Twitter, LinkedIn





# TYPES OF POSTS



## ENGAGEMENT/BRAND BUILDING

Polls, Giveaways • Q&As • Behind-the-scenes • Holiday and seasonal posts\*  
Lifestyle content • GIFs and memes



## PRODUCT/PROMOTION

Sales and discounts • Product reviews • New product announcements  
Product “how-to” videos • Special events



## NEWS

Trends • Company accomplishments and milestones\* • Industry updates



## TEAM & COMMUNITY

Team updates • Neighborhood or community news • Showcasing company culture  
Job listings • Hiring announcements\*



## USER-GENERATED CONTENT

Customers' favorite products • Repost of customers talking about your products\*  
Content from UGC contests (like a photo contest)

## HOW DO I WRITE GREAT CAPTIONS?

No matter which social channel you're posting on, your caption should complement (and not repeat) whatever visual it's accompanying (photo, video, meme, etc.).

### YOUR CAPTION SHOULD...

- Add context to your post
- Show off your brand's personality
- Entertain or engage your audience
- Be brief, with the most important information right at the beginning
- Be proofread, so you're sure there are no errors or typos

## WHEN SHOULD I USE HASHTAGS?

Hashtags are a great tool in social media posts. By using hashtags relevant to your brand or the individual post, you make your content more immediately discoverable. If you have just a few hashtags to include, feel free to simply work them into your caption (for example: New #LEGO shipment just arrived! Stop by today for our early #BlackFriday sale.). However, if you'd like to really stack your post with hashtags, consider separating them from the rest of your caption with line breaks or add them as a separate comment.

## LEARN MORE

- [3 COMMON SOCIAL MEDIA GOALS & STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THEM](#)
- [HOW TO MAKE A POLL ON STORIES TO ENGAGE YOUR CUSTOMERS](#)
- [THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF HASHTAGS ON SOCIAL MEDIA](#)
- [HOW TO PREPARE A MARKETING PLAN FOR YOUR SMALL BUSINESS](#)

\* Best for beginners – these types of posts are a great place for new users to start!



# 3

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## POSTING CONTENT

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Once you decide to create social channels for your business, it's important to dedicate yourself to keeping them updated on a regular basis.

## IF YOU'RE JUST GETTING STARTED, EVEN ONE POST A WEEK IS BETTER THAN NOTHING.

However, there's nothing worse than a stale social feed, so once you decide to create social channels for your business, it's important to dedicate yourself to keeping them updated on a regular basis. Don't let the first thing your customers see on your Facebook page be a six-month-old post!

## HERE'S WHAT WE RECOMMEND.

Your ideal content plan may vary based on your type of business and how much time you have available:



### GOOD

Choose one platform to be your hero platform. Post 2-3 times per week. Experiment with stories and short video.



### BETTER

Post 4-6 times per week on your hero platform. Share daily stories. Begin exploring other platforms.



### BEST

Expand to more platforms while maintaining your hero platform. Daily posts and stories. Experiment with alternate content types like IGTV and Facebook Live.

# SHARE THE LOVE!

In addition to creating your own original content, you'll also want to get in the habit of regularly sharing other people's content—that can be retweeting, sharing other stories on your Instagram Stories, or tagging other brands in your posts.

## HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS FOR CONTENT TO SHARE

- Posts your customers have shared about your products or services
- Industry news related to your business
- Community events
- Support for other small businesses

# LEARN MORE

- [6 WAYS TO THANK YOUR CUSTOMERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA](#)
- [HOW TO DIVERSIFY YOUR INSTAGRAM FEED](#)
- [HOW TO USE STORIES FOR YOUR SMALL BUSINESS](#)



# 4

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## **GETTING IN THE HABIT WITH YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA SCHEDULE: READY, SET, GROW!**

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Now that you know the basics of social media marketing best practices, it's time to choose the right channels and posting schedules that will work for your business.

GETTING IN THE HABIT WITH

# YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA SCHEDULE

## DAILY

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- ☐ Check to see how your current content is performing
- ☐ Respond to comments and DMs from your followers
- ☐ Flag any spam/troll comments
- ☐ Monitor brand mentions
- ☐ Re-post any great user-generated content
- ☐ Post to your Instagram and Facebook Stories

## WEEKLY

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- ☐ Create and schedule social media posts
- ☐ Fill any content gaps with user-generated content, shares, or reactive posts
- ☐ Record a video for YouTube or work on IGTV or Facebook Live content
- ☐ See what competitors are posting
- ☐ Post to your Instagram and Facebook Stories

## MONTHLY

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- ☐ Run analytics to check performance
- ☐ Plan out next month's content
- ☐ Check out industry trends

## QUARTERLY

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- ☐ Run analytics to check performance
- ☐ Review and adjust goals



# READY, SET, GROW!

Now that you know the basics of social media marketing best practices and have a feel for the channels and posting schedule that will work best for your business, it's time to reach for the stars.

## 8 KEYS TO GROWING YOUR BUSINESS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

### CONSISTENCY

Post regularly across channels.

### ENGAGING CONTENT

Give the people what they want!

### A GREAT PRODUCT OR SERVICE

You've already got this one in the bag.

### MAKING THE MOST OF SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

Use channel-specific features to your advantage.

### CHANNEL OPTIMIZATION

Fine-tune each individual social channel to fit how your customers are using them.

### OUTREACH

Build community among other like (and unlike!) businesses and organizations.

### PAID PLACEMENTS

Strategically use sponsored posts or targeted social media ads.

### PATIENCE

It takes time to build a killer brand on social media. Hang in there!

## LEARN MORE

- [HOW TO SET UP AND OPTIMIZE YOUR TWITTER BUSINESS PAGE](#)
- [HOW TO SET UP AND OPTIMIZE YOUR INSTAGRAM BUSINESS PAGE](#)
- [HOW TO SET UP AND OPTIMIZE YOUR FACEBOOK BUSINESS PAGE](#)
- [HOW TO ADVERTISE YOUR SMALL BUSINESS ON PINTEREST](#)
- [A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO SETTING UP A FACEBOOK ADS CAMPAIGN](#)

# APPENDIX

# RESOURCES

## SOCIAL MEDIA BASICS

- [Social media etiquette do's and don'ts](#)
- [How to create a social media content calendar for your small business](#)
- [The do's and don'ts of using hashtags on social media](#)
- [Your ultimate guide to social media image sizes](#)

## GROW YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA

- [How to build your social media following when your business is new](#)
- [What are social media algorithms and how do I beat them?](#)
- [How to share customer reviews and testimonials for your small business on social media](#)






## MARKETING ESSENTIALS

- [How to prepare a marketing plan for your small business](#)
- [5 easy tips for taking better photos](#)
- [Hex Colors: How to set the perfect color](#)

## RIPL HELP

- [Ripl Support Center](#)

## SOCIAL PAGES

-  [Facebook Help Center](#)
-  [Instagram Help Center](#)
-  [LinkedIn Help Center](#)
-  [Pinterest Help Center](#)
-  [Twitter Help Center](#)



