Social Media Marketing for Everybody

Everything You Need to Know About Social Media in B2B and B2C Marketing
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The state of social

Like any nascent industry, social media was a crowded field for several years as upstart companies battled it out for consumer mindshare. This fragmentation created constant challenges for brand marketers trying to reach customers using these new and rapidly evolving communications channels.

However, since Facebook’s blockbuster acquisition of Instagram in 2012, the tide has turned toward consolidation. Today, the average American social media user is on just three platforms. Only 4% of marketers still say their primary social media challenge is keeping up with feature changes.

Analytics have also improved dramatically since the early days. Savvy marketers can now use sophisticated real-time metrics to help them understand how their social media efforts translate into improvements throughout the funnel.

But despite the maturation of social media technology, making meaningful connections and building an audience remains difficult. Nearly a quarter of marketers surveyed named community building as their number one social media challenge. Another quarter of respondents cited creating a cohesive social media strategy as their top priority.

If you’re one of them, this guide is for you. Read on for everything you need to know about social media for marketing in 2018.

1 Pew Research Center
## Which Platforms Matter?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Monthly Active Users</th>
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<th>Monthly Active Users</th>
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| **Twitter** | 2006 | 336M | • Share content and amplify campaigns via owned brand accounts  
• Listen and analyze conversations for market insights  
• Capitalize on real-time marketing opportunities  
• Engage with influencers and their fan bases  
• Provide ad hoc customer service | • Savvy consumers tune out obvious promotional material, so branded content must be highly relevant to attract attention and shares  
• Comment moderation may require significant attention and bandwidth | 2006 | 2.190B |  
**Facebook** | 2004 | 2.190B | • Share content via owned brand pages  
• Mine insights from billions of consumer conversations and behaviors  
• Boost organic reach with paid content promotion and sophisticated targeting capabilities  
• Provide customer service and shipment tracking via Messenger | • Bots and fake followers can mute the impact of owned and paid posts | 2004 | 1B |  
**Instagram** | 2010 | 1B | • Share image and video content via owned brand accounts  
• Create branded “stories” that autoplay in succession and disappear after 24 hours  
• Boost organic reach with paid content promotion, which appears in user feeds alongside standard content  
• Use image recognition technologies to surface your brand in user-generated content (UGC) | • Because native ads appear inline with organic content, promoted material must fit in aesthetically to receive consumer attention  
• Bots and fake followers can mute the impact of owned and paid posts | 2010 | 1B |  
**LinkedIn** | 2002 | 260M | • Share content via owned brand pages  
• Participate in conversations relevant to your brand’s area of expertise  
• Establish thought leadership by publishing long-form articles  
• Connect with prospective customers via Groups  
• Mine insights from millions of conversations and user behaviors  
• Promote content to boost organic reach | • Because LinkedIn is focused on professional networks, its utility is limited for B2C marketing | 2002 | 260M |
### Which Platforms Matter?

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<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
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<td><strong>Snapchat</strong></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>191M</td>
<td>• Share ephemeral video clips and images in real time via brand accounts</td>
<td>• User demographics may limit reach, depending on your target market; 78% of Snapchat users are 24 or younger</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Reach a highly engaged audience (DAUs open Snapchat an average of more than 18 times a day)</td>
<td>• Maintaining a steady stream of ephemeral content requires significant staff resources</td>
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<td><strong>Pinterest</strong></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>200M</td>
<td>• Share images via branded accounts</td>
<td>• User demographics may affect reach, depending on your target audience; 70% of Pinterest users are women</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Establish your brand’s aesthetic vision by curating boards of others’ pins</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Drive purchases with Rich Pins, which allow users to buy items they see in images</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Extend organic reach with paid content promotion</td>
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<td><strong>YouTube</strong></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1.58B</td>
<td>• Share video content via branded channels</td>
<td>• Creating quality video content can be more resource-intensive than other types of content</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Engage with consumers via video comments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Provide product support videos to help improve customer satisfaction and retention</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use image recognition technologies to surface your brand in user-generated content (UGC)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Boost visibility of your content via paid content promotion</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Reach new customers by working with influencers who have established large followings</td>
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<td><strong>Blogs</strong></td>
<td>Around 1994</td>
<td>70% of Marketers blog at least weekly</td>
<td>• Share long-form content with embedded images and videos</td>
<td>• Company blogs rarely see significant organic traffic; you will need to drive clicks by publicizing your posts in other social channels</td>
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<td>• Compete for mindshare from the 70-80% of consumers who ignore paid search results and go straight to organic results</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Create a “home base” for your brand’s voice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Engage prospects and customers with regular posts that keep your brand top of mind</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Improve your site’s search engine ranking and build inbound link networks by using keywords throughout your posts</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrate thought leadership</td>
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**Note:** All platforms listed are used by over 70% of marketers. The information is based on usage metrics and trends as of the latest data available.
Use social listening to understand your audience

The first rule of marketing—know your customer—is also the most critical guideline for developing world-class social media programs. And to learn about your audience, you must listen to them.

At any given moment, millions of conversations are happening globally on social media. Marketers with the right tools to filter, curate, and analyze these conversations can access a treasure trove of invaluable information: who their customers are, what they care about, how they make buying decisions, what inspires them to recommend products and experiences to friends, and more.

What marketers should be listening for:
- Brand mentions
- Competitor mentions
- Competitor messaging and campaigns
- Customer service issues
- Potential crisis management situations
- Real-time marketing opportunities
- Prospective influencer partners
Conduct social data research to inform brand strategy

Every conversation that has ever taken place on social media is archived. That means marketers with the right research tools have access to a vast source of rich data about audience behavior, trends, and attitudes.

Given the fast-moving nature of social conversation, most of the data relevant to marketing strategy decisions will have been generated in the past year or so. Marketers should look for a social research platform with ad hoc search capabilities across multiple social networks, unlimited access to recent conversations, audience segmentation capabilities, influencer identification tools, and the ability to export raw data in multiple formats for further analysis.

What marketers should research:

- Shifts in brand perception over time
- Audience reaction to past campaigns and historical events
- What types of content get shared most broadly
- What topics generate the most audience engagement
- Topics your audience cares about that aren’t yet part of your social content plan
- Patterns related to service and support requests

Is image recognition ready for prime time?

In the past, “listening” traditionally meant detecting specific words within text-based social posts. But in 2018, visual content is king. That’s why automated image recognition technology is a must-have for any social listening platform.

Image recognition tools use AI to identify logos or trademarked material in photos and videos on social networks. With these tools, your team can easily curate visual brand mentions and communicate with rights owners to secure permission to republish.
Create a super-efficient publishing machine

Social conversations happen in real time. For marketers tasked with injecting a brand’s personality into that conversation, drafting and distributing on-brand content across multiple channels at scale—and at exactly the right times—can present a significant challenge.

Staying organized and using the right social publishing tools is the key to success. Look for a social media management platform that offers:

✓ A centralized asset repository with media validation by each content channel
✓ Full calendar views of upcoming content by brand or social account
✓ Sophisticated tagging capabilities to support filtering and multi-dimensional post-campaign analysis
✓ Configurable draft and approval workflows
✓ Sharing tools that let you suggest or share top-performing content across the enterprise
✓ Governance tools that allow you to customize permissions and interfaces by job role
ACTION ITEM: Prioritize your social channels

It may be tempting to try to reach customers in every channel, but spreading your team’s resources too thin is unwise. Instead, choose 3-5 social networks that are the best fit for your brand and your customers. Consider:

Who are your customers?
Let their demographics guide your choices.

Do you sell to consumers or businesses?
B2B companies should emphasize professional networking site LinkedIn over channels like Snapchat and Instagram, where users are more likely to have personal connections.

Is your product highly visual?
If so, consider focusing on image and video-heavy channels.

Is your value proposition instantly understandable?
If so, visual content may be your best match. Offerings that require more explanation may be better served by long-form content.

What resources do you have for content production?
Highly produced video and polished images require more time and money than short text-based posts.

What resources do you have for community management?
Creating your posts is only half of the job when it comes to publishing. Be realistic about whether your team has enough bandwidth to manage responses on each of your channels on an ongoing basis.
ACTION ITEM: Create an editorial calendar

Once you’ve identified your key social channels, build your editorial calendar in three steps:

1. Define your content pillars. Using what you learned from social listening and ad hoc historical research, select three to five broad topic areas that your audience cares about and in which you can offer expertise.

2. Brainstorm anchor content for your chosen social networks. Aim for at least one large-scale piece (a video, long-form blog post, white paper, report, or campaign) per month. Try to design pieces that can be broken down into smaller chunks (e.g. snackable infographics or attention-grabbing statistics) and shared across all your channels easily.

3. Create a schedule with the big picture in mind. Use a single calendar to visualize and automate publication timing across all your social channels. Choose a publishing tool that includes draft approval workflows to ensure that everything is reviewed by all stakeholders before it goes live.

Content Ideas In Development Review Pending Published
Engage effectively and reliably to build customer relationships

In 2018, social marketing doesn’t end after you get prospects into the top of your funnel. Your team can use social to educate consumers about your brand, provide product support and training, troubleshoot service issues, route conversations for one-on-one agent follow-up, and feed conversation data back into your CRM to provide a more holistic customer care experience.

The key to effective engagement? Consistency. Once you’ve chosen the social channels your team will focus on, consider your resources. Then internally commit to target response times for engagement in your chosen channels. Over time, customers will learn that they can count on you to respond.

The right social engagement platform can dramatically simplify community management and customer service. Look for a tool that enables your team to:

- View conversations across multiple social networks in a single dashboard
- Maximize efficiency with pre-canned responses to common comments and questions
- Have multiple people simultaneously respond to high volume conversations without duplicating responses by showing when content is already in progress
- Categorize content automatically
- Access real-time status via dashboards available on both desktop and mobile
- Automate filtering and routing of messages
- Customize permissions and engagement interface by job role

Paid media: When, why, and how?

Each of the major social media networks offers paid content promotion opportunities, and many also sell traditional display ads. But why pay for exposure on a platform where you can already get free exposure?

In a word, reach. The posts you make on your owned brand accounts will be displayed for your subscribers/friends/followers—but if you pay to boost your reach, your content will be distributed to hundreds, thousands, or even millions more potential fans.

The most effective paid campaigns are based on content that has already been proven to resonate with your audience. Use organic social interaction to refine your message until it’s irresistible, then use paid media to shout it from the rooftops.
Get true visibility into social ROI with unified social analytics

The social media landscape may have matured and consolidated in recent years—but with multiple social accounts, channels, markets, and agencies, it’s as difficult and time-consuming as ever for brand marketers to compile data and analyze campaign performance.

A smart social media analytics strategy complements great publishing and engagement strategies by giving you near real-time visibility into what works, as well as what can be improved.

**Look for a social analytics platform that can deliver:**

- A single dashboard that aggregates KPIs and tracks progress across accounts, brands, channels, and markets
- Benchmarking against competitors
- Performance comparison between owned, earned, and paid media
- Configurable alerts that enable key stakeholders to stay abreast of campaigns as they unfold
- Easy-to-use APIs that enable integration of social data with CRM, sales, support, and other enterprise systems
Social skills: What makes a great social media manager?

As the daily voice and face of your brand, your social media manager may be your company’s most important ambassador. But great social media managers are much more than talking heads—they’re also talented planners and relationship builders who can use their skills to achieve business goals. So how do you find the right person for the job?

**Look for candidates with these five qualities:**

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<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Sharp, strategic thinking</strong></td>
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<td>Individual social media posts are short, but great social media managers can craft programs that make a big impact over the long term. They can align multiple goals, stakeholders, channels, campaigns, and content types with ease.</td>
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<td><strong>Deep brand understanding</strong></td>
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<td>Because social media interactions unfold in real time, great social media managers must have a deeply ingrained understanding of your brand’s voice that allows them to make quick, confident decisions. They should love being plugged in to the cultural zeitgeist and finding ways to inject your brand into trending topics.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Extroversion</strong></td>
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<td>At its core, social media is about building relationships. Your ideal candidate should genuinely love interacting with people. They should understand your audience. They should know how to leverage technology to help find, recruit, and manage influencers. And they must have thick skin; handling trolls or unhappy customers with grace demands patience, a certain emotional distance, and resilience.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Creative and technical skills</strong></td>
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<td>The daily work of executing a social media strategy requires an arsenal of content skills: razor-sharp copywriting, a keen sense of visual design for crafting compelling photo and video content, and an insatiable curiosity about new mediums that may be worth exploring for your brand. It also requires a high level of knowledge about all the available social media channels, how SEO complements the social strategy, and when paid content promotion is the right move.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Fluency with data and analytics</strong></td>
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<td>Because social media management involves coordinating multiple channels, campaigns, and objectives, using analytics to get a clear picture of what’s happening is imperative. Your ideal candidate must be comfortable with taking a data-driven approach to understanding campaign performance, then communicating the results of that analysis to a variety of stakeholders.</td>
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Takeaways

1. Even as the social media landscape consolidates and matures, brand marketers need to stay focused on the basics: accurately defining customer personas and building a strong community of brand advocates.

2. A unified strategy for social listening, historical research, publishing, engagement, and analytics can help brands maximize the impact of available resources and continuously leverage conversation data to improve the customer experience throughout the funnel.

Meltwater makes powerful technology that drives social media marketing for hundreds of global brands. By empowering marketers to easily search, discover, listen, publish, engage, and analyze at scale across earned, owned, and paid media, the Meltwater platform drives both insights and action.