

## HOW TO MASTER LEAD GENERATION

### □ Create a goal-oriented structure.

Each page's goal should be very clear and easy to act on. It should state exactly what you want the user to do and provide a concise call to action button (links are less effective). Thoughtfully placed fields where users can sign up for a newsletter or promo offer are good. And pop-ups are also an excellent way to encourage engagement. Best practice is to have it fire on the 2nd or 3rd page view or after 1 solid minute on your site.

### □ Highlight case studies and testimonials.

Often customers are more likely to trust a product or service that has been recommended to them by another consumer than they would if the company marketed to them directly. When you've gathered testimonials, make sure not to bury them on a testimonials page. Try adding them to your rotating carousel on your homepage. Or use a site plug-in to add them to other places on all your pages so that users won't miss them.

### □ Create useful resources your customers can download.

Not only does this demonstrate that you're an expert who's willing to share valuable insights, but you can set up download forms for these resources and capture customers' details in the process, allowing you to contact them later with a sales pitch.

### □ Offer a free trial, sales promotion or money-back guarantee

Sometimes latent customers may be lurking around your site looking for a reason to hit 'Buy now'. Tempt cautious buyers by giving them that extra 'something shiny' that nudges them towards a sale.

### □ Limit calls-to-action.

In today's digital age, information overload is a serious risk to customer retention. Decide what action you want your audience to take on a page of your website and give them one single call-to-action – reducing distractions and increasing the chances of a click.

### □ Convert your social media audience.

Some brands have a strong, engaged social media audience who may never have visited the company's website. Running a promotion targeted specifically at Twitter or Facebook followers and offering them special value for being part of your social network can help convert them from followers to customers.

## PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS

### □ Business cards

No ifs, ands or buts about it—business cards are an absolute must, no matter what your business is. There is no need to spend a ton on fancy cards or a professional logo; sites like Vistaprint make business cards and other promotional materials affordable and accessible to everyone.

### □ Brochures

If you are a business that offers many different types of services that you feel need to be explained to potential customers, then consider brochures. However, since they're pricier, make sure they are a fit for your business and will get good use.

### □ Postcards

A promotional standard, the postcard can be used for more than just mailing. And for many different purposes, such as promotions, sales, and special events.

### □ Swag

Consider items that potential customers could use in their everyday lives, such as pens, magnets, cups, drink holders, bottle openers, etc. Before you shell out cash on these items, think about what will be a good match, and most importantly, if people will actually look at what's on the item. For instance, will they even notice what's on the pen they're writing with?

### □ Signage

Posters, pull-up banners or marquees are larger-scale items that help you decorate your environment with your brand. If you often host or attend events, or you have an office or store space that you want to make more recognizable, signage is a great option on a variety of budgets.

### □ Uniforms & apparel

Deck out your staff with branded clothing to proudly display your logo while they're working or out in the community. Or give them away to customers so they're reminded of your business every time they throw on a t-shirt or hat!

# CHECKLIST FOR LAUNCHING YOUR NEW WEBSITE

## ❑ Register a short and memorable domain name.

Remember, your domain name becomes your brand, make sure people can easily find and remember your web address. Register your domain with a hosting provider like GoDaddy, Bluehost or Name.com. Whoever you choose, test their customer support and ask about their options for securing your site and keeping regular backups.

## ❑ Pick a mobile-responsive design.

Most hosting providers have a selection of templated sites to choose from, or source one on your own. Whether it's a multi-page site or a single landing page, make sure to choose a **mobile-responsive design** (this means your website will function and read well on mobile devices as well as laptops and desktops.)

## ❑ Set up analytics.

There are several free services out there such as Google Analytics that allow you to track and monitor your web traffic for meaningful insights that can help with marketing and business strategy down the road. Integration is as simple as copying and pasting a small snippet of code on the backend of your site. Make sure to drop it in either the header or the footer if you have a multi-page site as you will want this to fire on every page.

## ❑ Create a clear 'About' page with key information.

Customers need to easily find opening hours, contact details, location. Make sure this information is all in text format so that it can be read by search engines and it's a better user experience for your customers. Not sure if it's text? Try highlighting part of your address or phone number on the live version of your site. You should be able to copy and paste the information.

## ❑ Publish & refresh content regularly.

Start small. You don't need to have a daily blog or multi-page website right away. Integrating your social channels through a feed of your posts is one way to keep the site up to date. Just make sure you strive for quality over quantity. Search engines are sophisticated enough to tell the difference and they will point users to whichever website offers the better experience.

## ❑ Keep important information "above the fold."

Everything customers need to know about your company at a cursory glance should be visible above the fold. Fill this valuable website real estate with brand imagery and messaging, site navigation, and your call to action. Don't try to jam everything above the fold - Group content into readable chunks with sufficient whitespace to ensure users can easily skim and scan.

## SHORT & SWEET SEO CHECKLIST

### □ Research keywords in your industry.

You'll use keywords across your website to help tell the search engines what your website is about. Tools like Google Keywords let you research what search terms people are most commonly using so you can ensure you tap into hot topics.

### □ Include a clear title tag and meta-description.

When you look at search results, title tags are the main headline links and meta-descriptions are the short paragraphs underneath them. Title tags should be 50-60 characters long, including spaces. Meta-descriptions can and should be longer – about 145-160 characters (anything longer will likely be truncated by search engines). Don't duplicate title tags as these can be penalized in search. Make your headline (<h1> tag) different from the title tag to vary the keyword phrasing of your page and increase its chances of appearing in different searches.

### □ Add alt text to your images.

Alt text is the description of the image, which search engines use to identify what an image is so they can index it for search results, such as in Google Images.

### □ Include formatted headings and subheadings in all content.

It's not enough to simply bold your headings. Search engines won't identify them as headings unless you make sure they're called out with <h1> or <h2> tags in the page's HTML. Simply use the text formatting drop-down menu when you're creating content. A good rule of thumb is to use a new heading for every 150 words, or about three paragraphs.

### □ Update your site frequently.

Search engines want to know that your website is active and that it will provide current and relevant information for visitors. This explains the popularity of blogs, which provide a way to keep content new and fresh. Include links to other content on your site and around the web.

### □ List your website in directories.

To avoid being invisible online, create listings on several online directories. They help increase your rankings by bumping up the number of backlinks to your website. While there are hundreds of online directories, it's worth doing your due diligence to get listed on the big ones, like Google, Yahoo, Bing, Yelp, YellowPages and TripAdvisor.

# SURVIVAL GUIDE TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Deciding the right platforms for your business

## Facebook

**Overview:** One of the most widely adopted social media platforms. It is the most recognized platform and seen as an “all-rounder”, making it a great starting point for a company taking the first steps into social media marketing.

**Why use it:** Facebook allows you to connect one-on-one with your followers, helps you reach large groups, and gives you deeper insights into your audience.

**What to Post:** Be sure to have a mix of fun, educational and promotional posts. Post owned content and well as sharing relevant articles or videos you find across the web. If you don't diversify your posts, Facebook's algorithm will start placing your posts lower in user's feed decreasing your overall reach.

### Tips:

1. Use the cover photo to promote large assets, announcements, or events. The cover photo is typically the first thing a user sees when they visit your Page.
2. Add links to your posts to point to a page on your website. Use Facebook's rich link preview format, which appears when you paste a link in the post text, rather than embedding it within a caption.
3. Remember the 80/20 rule—80% of your updates should be social in nature. Facebook wants to be sure users are engaging with posts in their Newsfeed. If you are regularly posting over promotional content with little to no engagement, your Page's organic distribution to fall over time. Rotate the content you post to keep it fresh and interesting.
4. Schedule posts for when your audience is online. People use Facebook at different points throughout the day and you want to post when your audience is most active. To find this info, check your Facebook Insights data. Click the Insights tab and then click Posts in the left menu to see times and days your audience is engaging with the platform.
5. Share content from other channels. You don't need to rely solely on content you create and publish yourself. Instead share relevant news stories or articles that relate to your business. Your audience will appreciate the variety of information and see your channel as a resource to engage with more frequently

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## Twitter

**Overview:** Targeted more for short, high-frequency updates. A Tweet is a short message, 140 characters max. It can include videos and photos, you can prefix your words with hashtags to make them a searchable link. Twitter is a fast-paced platform, with content generally visible for 18 minutes or less. Retweets can add to content's longevity, but the upper limit is still measured in hours, not days.

**Why use it:** Provides large scale reach and a way to quickly spread content and expand your audience. Twitter can also work as an extension of your customer service department, and is a great tool for listening to what your competitors are up to or updates in your industry sector.

**What to post:** Share content that is interesting and relevant - from fun infographics and educational content, to industry news, occasional press releases, and announcements. The 4-1-1 rule states that for every four light and informative content you share, you can have one soft-sell offer and one hard-sell offer, like a demo. The 4-1-1 rule can guide your sharing strategy for many social platforms, not just Twitter.

### Tips:

1. Include a hashtag in every post, and use sources like Hashtagify to research top performing, and similar, category hashtags.
2. Monitor boards for customer issues and respond promptly.
3. Use @Mentions to engage other Twitter users in your tweet. They will get notified after being tagged in your tweet.
4. Keep your tweets short and sweet. Research shows tweets that contain less than 100 characters receive 17% higher engagement than longer ones.

## Pinterest

**Overview:** A virtual scrapbook that allows users to share and organize visual imagery and link to external sites. Very aspirational in tone and good for showing the benefits of long-term purchases.

**Why use it:** Great for travel and tourism, art, design and fashion.

**What to post:** Make sure you are including a good content mix in your Pinterest boards. Followers will want to see a combination of business and culture content.

1. Tips:
2. Use relevant keywords to describe your pins so users can easily find them.
3. Organize your boards around different themes: different product, collections, company culture, inspiration, how-to, etc.
4. Posts can be linked to online content, so use engaging visuals to encourage users to visit your links.

# SURVIVAL GUIDE TO SOCIAL MEDIA

## Instagram

**Overview:** A Facebook owned platform, Instagram is a visual platform that is all about stunning imagery.

**Why use it:** Although a smaller audience, statistically Instagram has the highest engagement rate. Great for designers to showcase fashion, art and architecture; also a huge following for food brands, restaurants and cafes.

**What to post:** Make it visually engaging: Instagram users are savvy and creative, and know lackluster content when they see it. Don't post a photo or video unless it has aesthetic appeal.

1. Tips:
2. Make it exclusive: Post images and videos that can only be seen on Instagram.
3. Make it personal: Post photos and videos that give your audience personal insight into the inner circle or workings of your product or company.
4. Hashtags act as keywords, providing a way for people to find your posts. Include 2-3 hashtags for every image you post.

## LinkedIn

**Overview:** The world's largest professional network on the internet. More corporate in tone, LinkedIn allows you to post a digital CV and network with colleagues, workmates, suppliers and customers.

**Why use it:** Brands create company pages on which to post job ads, company updates and staff stories. LinkedIn is now the way to reach an audience with a business mindset. You can also post job openings on LinkedIn and search candidates, making it a great venue for recruiting talent.

**What to post:** LinkedIn is seen as a professional network, your content mix and tone should aim to be fairly professional and engaging. Content that helps the reader do his or her job more effectively, or adds to the conversation about a crucial topic in an industry generally performs best.

1. Tips:
2. Customize your LinkedIn URL to match your business - Press the "edit profile" button and then click the gear symbol next to your URL. This will take you to a separate page where a "your public profile URL" box will appear with the option to edit the link.
3. Customize your background image. This is your biggest opportunity to brand your page. Make sure to choose a file that is large enough so that it doesn't become stretched or pixelated.
4. LinkedIn doesn't have a built-in spell checker. Check and double-check for any typos!

## CHOOSING A DOMAIN NAME CHECKLIST

### Keep it short.

Get straight to the point. This is not the time to get clever, you want your domain name to be you brand. Make it short and simple.

### Make it memorable.

This is all about impact and recall. Remember that longer domains are often harder to remember.

### Make it easy to type.

Your customers need to type your domain into the address bar. Even if they're clicking a link, that link needs to be typed in by someone.

### Make it easy to pronounce.

People remember (and have more positive associations with) things that they can easily say and think about. If you can't easily say the name, you're going to lose memorability.

### Use keywords where possible.

If there are relevant keywords that match your brand and what your business offers, this is a great opportunity for an SEO boost. Local painting business? JoesPainting.us is a solid keyword domain name.

### Check for trademarks.

Make sure your domain isn't easily confused with other businesses in the market. Remember it's not whether you think your domain is confusing, but whether a company might take legal action against you, if they consider your domain name is infringing on their trademark. Get legal advice when in doubt.

### Avoid numbers, hyphens and other symbols.

When trying to get around limited domain name availability, some people choose to include hyphens between words to create a more unique combination. While this strategy is understandable, the main difficulty with hyphenated web addresses is customer recall. They're trickier to say aloud and add an extra piece of information for customers to remember.

### Remember to renew.

Don't risk letting your domain name renewal lapse. As soon as you miss that annual renewal your domain hits the market where anyone is able to scoop it up. Opt for auto-renew or 3-5 year renewal options with your hosting company.