



*Rocket*Science

HOW TO BE A
**SOCIAL
MEDIA**
SUPERSTAR



Welcome!

There's no denying social media is the number one place for businesses of all sizes to connect with new customers.

It seems almost every week a new social platform hits the headlines - it started with MySpace and Facebook, then along came Twitter and before you could blink, we had Instagram, Snapchat, Vine, LinkedIn, Snow, Yo, WhatsApp, Pinterest and several dozen others.

That makes for an unprecedented number of ways to reach potential customers. But it also presents some serious headaches. With so much choice, where do you start and how do you find the time to manage it all?

This Quickstart guide will give you tips and tricks to help you launch yourself on the seas of social media without running aground.



1. Don't overstretch yourself

With so many social platforms to choose from, it's very easy to spread yourself too thinly, get overwhelmed and swiftly fall into despair.

The trick is to choose your battle-ground wisely. Instead of stretching yourself over numerous channels, choose one or two to really focus on and commit your time and effort to those. You'll see far better results than if you try to cover too much ground too soon. Too many businesses fail at social media because they feel they have to master Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest and YouTube all at once.

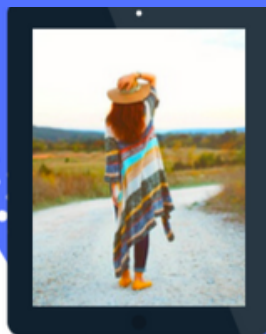
So how do you choose? Think about your target audience and where they're most likely to be.

If you're a fashion brand selling to Millennials, for example, you'd want to put your efforts into Instagram and Pinterest, where a younger, highly-visual, image-conscious demographic hangs out.

Of course, you'll want to tap into the massive popularity of video as well, but harness the power of IGTV and Stories before committing to the time and expense of creating YouTube masterpieces.

And wherever you are, always remember to use hashtags... but we'll cover those in more detail in another guide.

The key to choosing where to focus your efforts in social media is to always think about who you're talking to and you'll know where to invest.





2. Set a daily time limit

Social media can rapidly become a complete time-suck. You sit down to tweet and three hours later you're still there, trawling through articles, blog posts, re-tweets and pictures of kittens.

How do you avoid falling into the trap of becoming so bogged down that you end up getting nowhere? It's essential to keep focused on the task in hand and avoid frittering valuable time away.

The killer trick to this is to put aside a set amount of time every day - ideally at the same time each day - for social media. It doesn't matter if you make it 10 minutes or an hour but be consistent. And make it count.

By sitting down for 30 minutes at 10:00 every morning and, crucially, stopping at exactly 10:30 to get on with other work, you'll force yourself to stay focused. You'll respond to what's really important, post the content you need to get out and save non-essential items for reading later.

Just as importantly, you won't succumb to the all-too-familiar sense of 'social media overwhelm'.

You also won't resent the time marketing is taking away from getting your day-job done, which is one frequent reason newcomers give up.

Keep it consistent, keep it focused, keep it fun.





3. Get chatty

Social media is all about engagement - and that's where far too many businesses fall down.

It works when, to paraphrase a much-loved ad, it's exactly what it says on the tin. And that's "social". Whichever social channels you use, your objective is **to engage with other people.**

That doesn't mean bombarding them with constant updates on your latest products, clients or promotions.

Of course there's a place for subtle self-promotion, but you'll see your audience grow much more rapidly once you begin to join in conversations.

- Comment (politely and constructively, of course) on tweets in a subject area relevant to you
- Share posts from Facebook groups dedicated to your type of product, and comment on them
- Start discussions in relevant LinkedIn groups

You don't need to spend hours crafting a pithy response to every comment, just say something relevant and let people know you're there.

Ideally, share something which will interest other participants in the conversation.

It may take a little while but you'll start to become known and people will start actively engaging with you and coming over to your social properties - i.e. your Facebook page or Instagram feed - to find out what you're all about.

Better still, they'll start reciprocating by sharing your content with their followers. Bingo!



4. Don't be all "Me, me, me"

The single biggest mistake many users (and some brands!) make in social media is making everything about themselves.

We've all seen people constantly trumpet "Buy my product", "Read my new book", "Follow my blog." It's dull and annoying. More to the point, it's completely ineffective.

As with all marketing, you need to offer something of value to your audience. No-one's going to buy your product because you shout "Buy my product" at them constantly. Try doing that in the street and see what happens.

Instead, create a video showing how well your product does what it does and share that. Or write an eBook with fun facts and figures about your industry, business or service and give it away free on your Facebook page.

As you get smarter with your use of social media, you'll still find plenty of opportunity to slip in a sales pitch or two, but your audience won't feel you're haranguing them. And happy people are more likely to buy from you.

Always remember, it takes two to be social and if you're talking about yourself all the time, you're the boring one at the party who'll be going home early. And alone.





5. Be patient & persevere

Contrary to what many people think, results take time on social media. Meaningful relationships need time and effort, just as they do in the real world.

It's true that social is an 'immediate' channel in the sense that it enables others to interact with your brand in real-time - by 'liking' a Facebook post or re-tweeting you, for instance. But developing a deeper connection takes time, work and understanding.

Expecting social media users to buy your product straight away is like walking into a pub, offering someone a drink, then asking them to move in with you, all in the space of 5 minutes.

And the results will be very similar - it won't happen.

You need to give people time to listen to what you have to say, in bite-sized chunks, and you have to use those chunks to build a story. You can't bombard them either, or they'll switch off.

So plan out the message you want to get across, set up a social media calendar that supports this - i.e. what you'll post and when - and follow it through. Don't be at all surprised if it takes 3-4 months to start seeing any tangible results.

Getting your story across on social media takes commitment and you need to understand your audience.



So there you have it - a few essential tips to getting started in social media without getting swamped. We hope you've enjoyed this guide and that it's given you inspiration to kick off your own social media campaigns.

For more information, advice and tips on giving your business the head-start it deserves, visit

www.rocketsciencedigital.net

or find us on social media at...

Instagram: @rocketsciencedigital

Twitter: @rockscidigital

Facebook: www.facebook.com/rocketscienceDM

LinkedIn: Rocket Science Digital Marketing

