

## What are the key things a business should remember when starting out on Social Media?

**Stuart:** So what are the key things that a business should keep in mind when starting out using social media?

**David:** Okay. I would say there are several factors that a business that, really, is just starting out on social media should take into account. One of these, and this point actually puts a lot of businesses off, is the amount of time and effort they actually put into the social media. Now, there's a whole scale of effort here, in terms of businesses that do very little, i.e. Post once a year, versus businesses that post literally on a minute-by-minute basis.

Now, you as a business have to think about the benefit that you are going to receive from the effort you're going to put in. I would say that devising a timetable for this and making sure you have the resources to backfill that, is an essential piece of what a business should think about before they start out using social media.

**Stuart:** That would be the sort of the key thing would be getting that timetable, working out what your investment versus the amount of return you're going to get.

**David:** That's right. Yes. I mean I think they're ultimately will be returned, providing you put the effort in. But there are several other factors that I think are important for a business as well and that is choosing the most appropriate channels for them. Obviously, there are many channels out there and choosing the right sort of channels for you as a business is quite important.

**Stuart:** Do you have recommendations on which channels you should start with? Is there an order?

**David:** It's really horses for courses. I would say that a presence on most of the key channels is a great thing to have, so for example, the likes of LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, Instagram and Pinterest the key players. I would say having a presence on those is a great idea but knowing which of those channels is more likely to suit you as a business is a very important decision that you should make up front. You should only really put your effort into one or two of those channels on a day-to-day basis.

**Stuart:** That's what I say because that's what, five, six channels? If you are spending 20 minutes, half an hour a day, maybe, on each one of those then that's a lot of time.

**David:** That's right. Yes. Like I said, having a presence on them is a great thing, but you really do need to identify a minimum I would say, of one or two channels that really fit you as a business. Bear in mind that there are platform tools, so there are tools that cut across all of those channels and allow you to manage a message. Post a message across multiple channels so you know even though you have a presence in all of them, and you're generating a lot of effort on maybe two of them there are tools that allow you to repost that message on other channels.

**Stuart:** So it sort of carries across?

**David:** That's right.

**Stuart:** You can optimise your time. Presumably, there are some pitfalls as well as benefits apart from time?

**David:** Yes. Really, there are several pitfalls that businesses that are just setting out on social media tend to fall into. One, obviously, that we've talked about is the time and effort. But there are pitfalls around the sort of material you post as well. Now, the material is obviously the key thing, posting the right sort of content using social media is really important for the business, as what you don't want to do is just throw any information out there with a view to it going viral or to gain interest.

What you want to do is make sure that is relevant information the information that excites people. Excites the right sort of an audience you want to be able to gather.

**Stuart:** That audience, you talk about users, followers, and fans. What are the differences? What are users, followers, and fans?

**David Taplin:** Really, depending on the channel that you're using, it depends on the terminology that you use but, in essence, it's a vote of confidence. Whether it be a YouTube subscriber, whether it be a Facebook like or whether it be a Twitter follower, all you're trying to do is gather, ethically, a good base of people that are following you for the right reasons i.e. they want to hear what you've got to say and ultimately, they want to fly your flag. They want to promote your business for you. That's the ultimate goal.

**Stuart Blake:** So it is to collect these users, followers, and fans. These people that want to hear your message.

**David Taplin:** That's right. Yes, in an ethical way. They're all and have been methods in the past that have been used literally just to gather fans, followers or mass, but that is almost frowned upon now and some of the social channels will penalise you for that. But to gain followers, fans in an ethical way will actually benefit you as a business in the longer term as they will be more likely to promote you as a business, to act on your messages and, ultimately, to buy from you.

**Stuart Blake:** Actually, I've heard rumors over the last, maybe only months but could be years, regarding collecting or trying to force people to join your groups and the risks of Twitter or LinkedIn just closing it down and that's the end. There's no negotiation with these. That's quite a pitfall. It's quite a dangerous position if you start unethically trying to collect these users, followers, and fans.

**David Taplin:** That's right, yes. Going back to one of our previous podcasts, I think we mentioned that businesses shouldn't shoot off the blocks in trying to gain followers as quickly as possible unethically. They should take their time to understand the channels they're using as well as get a good strategy in place for the content they're posting. What they'll see is a lot more engagement from the people they're posting to. They'll actually start to build a base organically without actually forcing it.

**Stuart Blake:** This is obviously not only the right thing to do but very powerful way of doing it as people are far more receptive to your message. Thank you, David.

**David Taplin:** Thank you very much, Stuart.

---

For further information on this or any of our podcasts, please visit any of the following channels:

Website - [www.umisconsultancy.com](http://www.umisconsultancy.com)

Twitter - [www.twitter.com/UMISConsultancy](https://www.twitter.com/UMISConsultancy)

Facebook - [www.facebook.com/UMISConsultancy](https://www.facebook.com/UMISConsultancy)

YouTube - [www.youtube.com/c/umisconsultancy](https://www.youtube.com/c/umisconsultancy)

LinkedIn - [www.linkedin.com/company/umis-consultancy-ltd](https://www.linkedin.com/company/umis-consultancy-ltd)