

How can a Business choose the most appropriate Social Media channel for them?

Stuart: With so many social media channels out there, how should a business choose which one's right for them?

David: It's a good question. There are many, many channels out there that businesses can use for social media. There's the channels that are used for predominantly content and blogging such as Blogger, Tumblr, WordPress. There's even microblogging such as Twitter. Then you move on to the image-sharing social sites such as Flickr, for example, Pinterest, Picasso, Instagram.

Then the video-sharing, YouTube, Vimeo, and then you move on to the networking, the hardcore networking social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+. There's a whole raft of social media tools and channels there for businesses to use. I would suggest that there's a scattering of each of those within their social media strategy. However, depending on the type of business they are and the type of industry they're in, depends on which of those categories of channels would suit them.

For example, if you're in retail, if you're in fashion, makeup, you might want to go more towards the video image style channels. Whereas if you are looking to engage with people, if you've got a lot of good information that you want sharing, if you want to engage and get people to do that for you, then you want a really good networking site, such as Facebook, LinkedIn. If you've got a lot to say, if you've got a lot to speak about, if there's a lot of information that needs explaining, maybe blogging tools are best for that business.

Stuart: What you're saying is, if a business has a very pictorial product, perhaps photographs of events or great looking buildings, then something along the lines of one of the more pictorial social media channels would be better for them. Maybe if they've got a car or something along those lines that could move and you can easily create video content, that that would be a great start.

Or if they're mainly informational, I'm just trying to think of a business off of the top of my head, perhaps medicine or something, where there's not any great photographs, a tablet's not going to produce a pretty picture, and isn't very inspiring but the benefits of the healthcare are quite powerful. It's about picking the media type to go with your message.

David: That's right, yes. I think what you should bear in mind is that all of these channels, all the categories I mentioned earlier, have started with a specific area or niche of the market in mind, but now, they're cutting across and overlapping each other. Whereas Twitter for example, used to be only text based, a microblogging

site, now obviously several years ago it introduced more characters, it introduced the ability for you to be able to attach images.

LinkedIn was very corporate but now it's becoming more of a blogging site, more of an interaction-based site, they're all overlapping. But what I think you need to do is choose a couple of channels that really depict how your business wants to be represented. I would suggest that there's always an element of imagery attached to anything you try and post, just to catch people's eye, but there are definitely channels out there that would suit your business better than others, and I would suggest you do a little bit of market research just to find out what those channels are.

Stuart: And are some channels quicker to engage in than others?

David: Yes, they are. We actually have done a lot of work on engagement and how long it takes people to actually pick information up and act on it, using certain channels. I would say that from our experience, there are certain channels that are very difficult to engage with. Google+ for example, at the moment, has a big following, has a lot of people on there, big base, but in terms of engagement it's very difficult to get the ball rolling.

Whereas, at the other end of the scale you've got Twitter. People feel very at ease with Twitter, in terms of engagement, in terms of using your information, posting it, sharing it, retweeting it, liking it. And that sometimes is a good place to start. A very fluid channel that will really get the ball rolling for you and your business. Then maybe use some of that momentum to spread over some of the other channels that are a little bit more difficult to engage with.

Stuart: The channels, although are different in the way you engage with them, it's not that an image-based social media channel is easier to get engagement than a video-based or a text-based social media channel.

David: I think humans generally like to look at images and they like to be stimulated by either video or images as opposed to text. In regards to the channel that you use, I would always suggest injecting video and animation where possible, but imagery as a start point to supplement content. And that way we've seen a lot of good results in good eye-catching imagery that accompanies quality text can actually be far, far more engaging and relevant to the user than just content on its own.

Stuart: But you don't have to only post video content onto a video social media channel, or imagery onto an image-based, Pinterest, for example, social media channel.

David: No, that's right. Like I say, over the past 5 years they've all started to now build widgets, they've all started to extend their own functionality into the realms of each other's niches, I guess. So content-based social media sites have now included the ability to be able to add images and video and vice versa,

video and image-based social media sites also allow you to add content and links and all the other things that now have become prevalent to a good social media post.

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