How to navigate social media marketing trends



30-second summary:

- Even if you have a small marketing budget, you can still compete with bigger competitors.
- To navigate social media well, you must hone your social listening and online investigation skills to find out what topics are relevant to your core audience.
- Success requires embracing trends early with a creative and positive mindset.
- Arjun Rai details four strategies for learning to navigate the changing social media landscape.

It’s no secret that social media marketing trends change rapidly. You might see a hashtag trending on TikTok before you go to bed, but when you wake up, everyone’s talking about a new hashtag or meme on Twitter. Is it any wonder that small business marketers need a way to confidently navigate social media?

For certain, it can be hard for small companies and startups to put more than a few hundred dollars into a social media marketing strategy. Plus, many entrepreneurs lack the experience and expertise needed to spot hot trends and

capitalize on those topics in real-time, unlike big competitors that have unlimited marketing budgets and personnel.

The good news is that developing a successful digital marketing strategy is possible, and it doesn't have to take grunt work or cost you more than a cup of coffee a day. It simply requires innovation. (In other words, even if you have a small marketing budget, you can still compete with the biggest competitors — #yougotthis.)

Unlocking the secrets of digital marketing

If you spend any time on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or other social media platforms, you've likely seen how trends bubble up out of nowhere. The possibilities may seem overwhelming, but you can't afford to wait and see what sticks. You have to jump in and offer relevant content that outshines other chatter before the topic shifts. Agility is the game.

To navigate social media, you must hone your social listening and online investigation skills. Identify where you should start by asking, "What's going to be pertinent to my core audience?" A good way to find out is to see what your strongest competitor's social media marketing strategy looks like. Is the company using specific hashtags or emojis? Which posts garnered the most engagement?

No matter what, joining the "First!" crowd (aka early adopters) is a win. This holds true for anything: memes, emoji, hashtags, social platforms, etc. If the trend takes off, you become an early adopter and net more brand awareness. If it fizzles, you learn from the experience and prepare for the next trend. All you need to keep going is creativity and a positive mindset. Plus, the platforms themselves may reward

you.

How to navigate social media

Does digital marketing still seem daunting? Here are four strategies you can use as you learn to navigate social media:

1. Spend up to 10% of marketing resources on new social media platforms

Did TikTok sneak up out of nowhere? You might not have noticed its growth signs. Don’t worry; it won’t be the last social media platform to take off.

Start investigating new social media platforms and spend about 5% to 10% of your marketing budget there. Get to know how they work and figure out where your business could fit in. At the same time, devote the rest of your efforts to popular platforms like Pinterest, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. When your “portfolio” is split up like this, you won’t lose too much if a new venture takes a nosedive.

2. Conduct A/B tests with your content

Split test different kinds of copy, hashtags, graphics, videos, and images to see what does well. Once you find what performs the highest, make it 90% of your strategy. You can continue to iterate and experiment with the remaining 10%.

Remember that it’s OK to regurgitate content to a certain degree. Twist existing content into a new angle and reuse other people’s videos and images — just don’t forget to credit the original creator when possible. Memes in particular require very little editing. All you need is a popular format and a pithy caption.

3. Enlist help – real or digital

You can’t spend all your time learning how to increase brand awareness on social media. Find opportunities to crowdsource and automate your digital marketing in order to efficiently keep up with trends.

In his book ‘Traffic Secrets‘, Russell Brunson talks about trying Instagram with his influencer friends. This group approach can lighten your workload. Find partners you can create content and share insights with or consider relying on digital marketing automation tools to help you identify trends and schedule posts.

4. Avoid the “quick win” mentality

Social media trends come and go, but winning the digital marketing game is a long-term goal. It may take months or years for your account to take off, even on a new platform.

So stay positive and keep going. If and when you see significant success, you’ll gain street cred for being an early adopter or a long-term user. Plus, you’ll be in a better position to stay ahead of the curve on trends because of your comfort level with the platform.

Social media has proven to be an excellent equalizer, enabling fledgling companies to compete with larger businesses for followers and engagement. By following these four strategies, you’ll be able to better leverage social media trends this year and find your social stride.

Arjun Rai is the founder and CEO of HelloWoofy, a social media and blog management platform driven by artificial intelligence that helps small businesses (or as he likes to say, “underdog marketeers”) with smart marketing for the digital age. You can find him on Twitter @arjunraime.

More about:

How to navigate social media marketing trends