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**Social Media Marketing Strategies for
Small Businesses: A Comprehensive Guide to Success and Growth**

By
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An Undergraduate Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Midway Honors Scholars Program and the
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Abstract

Social Media Marketing Strategies for Small Businesses: A Comprehensive Guide to Success and Growth, explores the use of social media marketing strategies for small businesses. The purpose of this study is to identify specific strategies, techniques, and best practices for successful social media marketing. Social media has become a powerful marketing tool for businesses to promote their products and services. However, small businesses face unique challenges in the marketing landscape, including limited resources and low marketing budgets. Social media provides a low-cost, highly effective way for small businesses to reach new audiences and communicate with potential customers. With the right strategies, social media can help small businesses build brand awareness, create better customer relationships, and drive sales. By examining marketing analytics from two local startups (*Green Llama* and *Firestarter Mug*), implementing dozens of strategies, analyzing research from social media experts, and providing data-proven solutions, this study will help small businesses develop and implement effective social media marketing practices.

Background:

Social media has become an integral part of society, providing a platform for billions of people to share information, ideas, and beliefs with one another. As a result, social media has become a powerful marketing tool for businesses to promote their products and services. Small businesses face unique challenges in the marketing landscape, including limited resources and low marketing budgets. However, social media provides a low-cost, highly effective way for small businesses to reach new audiences. With the right strategies, social media can help small businesses build brand awareness, create better customer relationships, and drive sales.

This research explores the importance of social media marketing, and the specific strategies, techniques, and opportunities small businesses have in this space. By examining marketing analytics from two local startups (*Green Llama* and *Firestarter Mug*), implementing dozens of strategies, analyzing research from social media experts, and providing data-proven solutions, this study will provide insight into successful social media marketing for small businesses.

Literature Review

Social media marketing is an effective tool for businesses to increase engagement, promote brand-awareness, and ultimately drive traffic to an online or in-store location. Social media marketing offers businesses a chance to learn more about their customers and reach larger audiences for much less than traditional advertising (Funk, 2014). To take advantage of billions of active social media users and historically high engagement rates, many businesses have shifted their focus to creating online content. In Funk's book "Advanced Social Media Marketing," he emphasizes the impact social media continues to have on customer relationship management, brand equity, and consumer-driven collaboration (2014). Social media have transformed the way firms and customers interact, leading to better relationships, increased customer retention, better behavior analysis, and better decision making (Li & Larimo, 2020). Funk also gives marketers a basic rundown of brand utilization, best practices, platform data, and most importantly, how success is measured.

Social media marketing and the strategies marketers use are constantly evolving. The techniques used in the past are not the same ones used today. Content has become platform-exclusive, and not adapting to those changes will yield poor results (Funk, 2014). Furthermore, the same social media strategies used by big-budget companies are different from small businesses with fewer resources. While there has been much research on big budget social media strategy, few experts have taken small business strategy into consideration, especially at a time when organic growth is easy to attain. Small businesses have unique access to tight-knit support groups, specialized tools, and content styles that increase growth organically. However, access to those areas require small businesses to value their social media strategy as a large-scale marketing investment.

Opportunities

To understand the opportunity for businesses in the social media space, Funk explains the impact it has on brand engagement and the opportunity cost of ignoring it. Studies show that “91% of online adults use social media regularly,” and “An estimated 88% of businesses with 100 or more employees are now using social media for marketing purposes (2014).” If a business is not actively maintaining a social media presence, they are losing valuable marketing territory to their competitors. Social media is the easiest way for customers to discover new businesses and learn about their products or services; businesses not in this space are only doing themselves a disservice. Furthermore, the cost of maintaining social media channels is insignificant in comparison to the return on investment it provides. Social media is a “less expensive, high-impact way to promote businesses,” however, it still requires plenty of effort (2014). In order to see the best results, small businesses must take advantage of consumer perceptions. According to a study by *Small Business Trends*, 62% of consumers say they trust small businesses more than major retailers (Guta, 2021). This is a great opportunity for small businesses to make relatable, personalized content for their social media platforms. Small businesses connect with consumers very well, which helps cultivate community and form stronger relationships.

In comparison to other forms of brand management, social media is easy to use, intuitive, and produces valuable analytics to grow a business for free. Platforms like Facebook store analytics, audience demographics, viewership, engagement, link clicks, and more within the meta business suite. This allows businesses to learn more about their audience and create relevant, engaging content. With today’s technology and millions of free online resources, getting started on social media has never been easier. Most social media processes can be performed with a smartphone, making it cost effective and time efficient for businesses.

The biggest opportunity in social media marketing is the ability to build brand identity. According to Ghodeswar, brand identity is a “unique set of brand associations and values that customers resonate with (2008).” Social media platforms enable businesses to share these “associations” in an honest, vulnerable way. A report from *Consumer Goods* claims that 82% of shoppers purchase from brands that have similar values. Sharing values builds emotional connections with customers and provides a unique brand opportunity for small businesses (Bounfantino, 2022). Ultimately, a strong brand identity is easily recognized, evokes positive emotions, and helps brands differentiate themselves from competitors.

Best Practices

According to Funk, social media strategy involves extensive research and an adapt-or-die mentality. The social media landscape is constantly changing and so are the ways businesses engage with customers. Therefore, small businesses must be able to adapt to new technology and create content that resonates with customers. Social media platforms have unique identities and content styles, but there are many over-arching practices that businesses can use to strengthen their online presence (2014).

Funk identifies the need for a strong selling point and a clear, concise mission statement. These two factors are essential building blocks in a social media strategy. A firm’s unique selling proposition defines how customers will benefit from the product or service that’s offered, and the mission statement lets customers know what is important to the business (2014). Both factors become rallying points for businesses and provide them a chance to differentiate themselves, grow their brand identity, and most importantly, create community. Building a strong community around a brand is what social media is all about. Community not only increases engagement, but

it also makes customers feel like they are participating in something bigger than themselves. “It is not about selling a product or service—it is about establishing a vibrant network around an important topic, cause, interest, or area of expertise (Funk, 2014).” This ideology is what makes brands like Coca-Cola and Patagonia so popular—by building strong community values around the right causes.

Another important practice is identifying which platforms are best for the audience, how they align with social media goals, and what competitors are using. According to Horzewski, “Audience is absolutely the most important factor when choosing a social media platform.” Some audiences tend to favor specific platforms and ignore others all together. However, it is the businesses’ job to identify those groups and learn where they engage more often. Demographics and platform layout also play a big role in capturing engagement (Horzewski). For example, if the target market is aged 65 and older, businesses should prioritize platforms like Facebook who have a large percentage of older users. For younger audiences, TikTok might be the best platform to use. Determining *where* and *when* the audience interacts is the key to getting better results. If the target audience isn’t active on a platform, time, energy, and resources will be wasted.

Social Media Marketing Strategies for Small Businesses

Step 1: Identify the Audience:

Before any social media strategy is developed, the business must know who their target customers are. Market research helps businesses decide which social media channels to use, what content is relevant, and most importantly, who they are targeting. For small businesses with no brand recognition, finding an audience can be intimidating. Therefore, it is crucial that small businesses know ahead of time who they are targeting so they can personalize their marketing strategies. For small businesses with limited capital, customer feedback is important during this stage. Feedback will help businesses understand where customer pain points are so they can develop and market more effective solutions with their products or services (Narelda & Shekar, 2018). This data can be evaluated through feedback surveys, questionnaires, or focus groups. To get the best results, it is important to gather feedback from customers with diverse perspectives and backgrounds. That way, marketers can make connections with customer touchpoints and develop better strategies to reach them.

After analyzing market data, the next step is creating customer personas. Customer personas help small businesses form a “more intimate relationship” with their customers and provides them with a client-based perspective (Micheaux & Bosio, 2018). This process begins by creating characters with attributes of the target audience. For example, a customer persona for Green Llama would look like this: “Kristen” is 28 years old, has two kids, buys organic foods from the grocery store, composts her scraps, is willing to pay more for products that are consciously sourced, and shops at second-hand retailers. The goal is for marketers to adopt their customer’s perspective, rather than making broad assumptions about their identity. Instead of

hyper-focusing on demographics, it is best to dig deeper into the specific behaviors of each customer group. Ultimately, personas allow marketers to create understandable, real-life characters from raw market data. Then, small businesses can use those characters to link customer journeys.

Lastly, the customer journey links touchpoints, experiences, and interactions with the product or service a business is providing. It is structured around “a sequence of phases” that depict the relationship between businesses and their customers. According to Temkin, “With each interaction, the map should also define customer needs and identify how well the company currently meets those needs (2010).” This will allow businesses to formulate better strategies to meet the needs of their customers at every touch point, ranging from acquisition to brand advocate. Once those needs are met, marketers can develop more effective ways to reach customers from specific social media platforms.

Targeting Strategies:

Green Llama originally had no targeting strategy for the platforms they were creating on. Green Llama’s founders had a good idea of who their target customers were, they just needed help identifying and reaching them. Below are the specific strategies Green Llama used to *identify, target, and connect* with their audience.

1. **Ask For Feedback & Gather Data.** Feedback provides more information on *who* is using the product and *why* they are using the product. Green Llama was able to gather sales data and analyze customer feedback through surveys and testimonials from a variety of customers. Then, they built customer personas around the information they

collected. It was found that most of their customers are young to middle-aged women who care about their environmental impact, are stay-at-home moms, have families with young children, and are willing to spend more for products that have environmental benefits.

2. **Find Relevant Creators & Content.** Green Llama started this process by researching influencers with niches in cleaning, home and garden, lifestyle, and the environment. The goal was to understand where Green Llama's audience was interacting and who they were interacting with. Influencers are great resources to use because they have already established a community within their niche. Green Llama's early affiliate strategy was built around an environmental influencer nick-named, "The Garbage Queen." Her follower base aligned perfectly with Green Llama's mission and target audience. Furthermore, "The Garbage Queen" is an east Tennessee native and has a strong local following that Green Llama could piggyback off.
3. **Competitor Analysis.** Another great resource is competitors. Take note of how competitors are performing on social media, the content they are creating, and the community they have established.

Step 2: Identify Specific Platforms

Next, marketers must determine the social media channels that work best for the goals of their business. When starting out, many small businesses feel pressured to post on all platforms to get better results. However, this is extremely unnecessary and requires a lot of effort and time. Not all platforms are valuable for a business, and when time is the biggest investment, it is important to focus on platforms that provide a business with the best opportunity to grow. Each

platform has a unique interface, designated content styles, and different networking capabilities, which makes it hard for small businesses to adapt to. Instead of taking a quantitative approach, small businesses should center their strategy around 2-3 platforms. These platforms should serve as an avenue for customers to learn more about the business, their mission, and most importantly, the products or services they provide. For small businesses, it is especially important to create on platforms where their target audience can be reached. Instagram and Facebook make it easy for businesses to connect locally and provide the best networking opportunities for small businesses. These platforms have communities with huge local and global support systems that help small businesses thrive.

Platform Breakdown:

These three platforms give small businesses the best opportunity to grow, connect, and create. After extensive research and experience on other platforms, no other social media allows for the same opportunities.

- 1. Facebook.** Facebook was the easiest for Green Llama to get started on because it is structured around multi-content consumption. It may not have the flashiest user-interface, but it allows businesses to post in different styles that reach different audiences (video posts, text-only posts, reels, links, stories, etc.). Facebook has its own management tool called the “meta business suite” which provides businesses with loads of content tools, in-depth analytics, full control over advertising, and an easy way for page managers to post content. These tools help small businesses build the foundation of their strategy and make it easier to engage with their audience. The

- biggest advantage of Meta is the streamlined connection with Instagram. Through Meta, small businesses can post to both Facebook and Instagram, receive real-time notifications from each page, and run ad campaigns simultaneously across both platforms.
2. **Instagram.** Much like Facebook, Instagram is also built around multi-content consumption. Since the two are connected, content can easily be shared on both platforms. Instagram was specifically designed for community and engagement. It was much easier for Green Llama to grow on Instagram because the audience was more involved, and it was easier to connect with similar accounts. Another advantage of Instagram is its shopping segment. Instagram allows businesses to have an online store front on their pages with no hyperlink. This increases conversion rates for small businesses and eliminates extra steps to purchase from the website.
 3. **TikTok.** TikTok is the perfect platform for businesses looking to share short-form content to a wide range of consumers. TikTok generally appeals to younger audiences, however, there are plenty of opportunities to target other areas. TikTok's algorithm works by showing users content that is relevant to their own interests. This is unique because it pushes content out and into other communities. TikTok has a reputation of generating viral videos, and it is by far the easiest platform for small businesses to generate buzz on.

Step 3: Finding & Cultivating Community

An important objective for small businesses is to find and cultivate community on each platform. Small businesses should not idolize big brands with millions of inactive followers; instead, they should build a community around active engagement and loyalty. Followers are not always the best indication of success, and consumers are skeptical of accounts that have high followers with no engagement. For instance, Yeti has 1.8 million followers on Instagram but less than 2% actively engage with their content. From a social media standpoint, it shows a disconnect between Yeti and their social base.

Many businesses use followers as a trust-booster for their brand. Instead of building a community from the ground up, some businesses pay to inflate their follower numbers to trick consumers into believing they are more trustworthy. Many of these “followers” are inactive and do not engage with the content, therefore, providing no social or economic benefits for the business. Communities provide consumers with a sense of connection that draws them closer to the brand (Ilieva, 2022). This boosts credibility, increase SEO, visibility, and surrounds the business with a community of real supporters who want to see it succeed.

1. **Engage Constantly:** “If you want customers and followers to be engaged, you have to be engaged yourself,” (McLachlan, 2023). When small businesses engage with followers, it forms personal relationships and builds trust. Answering comments, responding to direct messages, and following others first are great ways to engage with users. The biggest mistake small businesses make is waiting for users to seek them out first. Businesses must be proactive in their search for

community, otherwise, they will lose market share to other creators and competitors.

2. **Find Mutual Support:** The small business community is huge on Facebook and Instagram; it just takes time to make connections with the right accounts. There are plenty of other businesses in the social media space looking for mutual support including follows, likes, reposts, or shares. The best part about mutual support is that it is completely free and has a big effect on visibility. For instance, if Business A reposts an image from Business B, it exposes Business B to more people.
3. **Be Unique:** Lastly, give consumers a reason to join the community. Unique and relatable content draws more attention. Experiment with different content styles, show vulnerability, and above all, show humanity.

Step 4: Set Realistic Goals & Keep Track of Progress

Next, small businesses should set specific goals for their social media. This might include improving engagement, spreading awareness, or driving traffic to a website. Once these goals are set, businesses can focus on creating strategies to achieve them. Setting goals allows a team to work more efficiently and track their progress. However, it's important to understand that progress in social media is not always linear. Some weeks will have higher engagement than others, some posts will not reach their intended audience, and followers will fade in and out. Being *consistent* is the best strategy, even when results are underwhelming. When starting out, do not let analytics discourage posting. Try focusing on small goals and continually work up to

bigger goals. Small victories in the early stages of social media will help businesses reach long term goals.

There are plenty of software available to help small businesses set goals and track progress. Jira is a great low-cost alternative with plenty of organizational tools for social media and general business operations. It is primarily used for task planning, and it serves as a valuable tool to help everyone on the team stay on schedule. At Green Llama, Jira helped the marketing team allocate time for planning content, sharing ideas, and most importantly, setting short and long-term goals. Jira divides tasks up into “sprints,” which allows team members to complete tasks throughout the week at their own discretion. By the end of the sprint, the team will be able to track their progress in relation to their long-term goals.

Step 5: Create a Content Plan.

Creating content on a consistent basis can be challenging, therefore, it is important to have a written plan in place. There are plenty of free tools available to help small businesses plan content including: Google docs, Canva, and Microsoft Teams, though any editable calendar template will work. Using a calendar to plan out monthly content and establish regular posting times will help balance out the workload. Appropriate planning keeps businesses ahead of the game and helps produce more consistent content. When businesses are too aggressive, they do not have time to plan things out and the quality of their content suffers.

Each platform has optimal posting schedules and times where audiences are most active. Thus, it is important to know which platforms require more effort and what times are best for posting. All social media requires attention, and the more consistent businesses are, the better results they will have. According to a study by Forbes, posting consistently over a six-month

period increased Facebook followers by 30% and blog traffic by 90% (Simpson, 2021).

Consistency also establishes better relationships with audience, feeds the algorithm, and improves the chances of exposure.

1. **Consistent Plans Create Results:** Consistency looks different for every business and some schedules work better for others. If nothing else, small businesses should strive to put out a variety of content each week (videos, text-only posts, stories, images, etc.). However, it really depends on what the audience is expecting and platform norms. The content plan that worked best for Green Llama on Facebook and Instagram was 2-3 reels per week, 1-2 posts in per week, and 1-2 stories each day. Over a three month period, this plan increased organic reach on both platforms by over 368.9 % and total followers by 50% .



Figure 1 Organic Facebook reach for Green Llama from Jan. 6, 2023 – March 7, 2023

Step 6: Create Quality Content

Small businesses should focus on creating content that is visually appealing and represents the brand well. Content is a direct reflection of a business and what it values. Therefore, content is a great way for customers to see value in the products and services that are provided, as well as an opportunity for businesses to differentiate themselves from competitors. Making quality content can be difficult for small businesses with no prior social media experience and limited resources. Therefore, it is necessary to take advantage of all the opportunities that social media provides. After a few weeks of consistent posting, it is easier to see how the target audience engages and what type of content they are interested in. Afterwards, small businesses can adjust the strategy to fit the likings of that audience.

The best way to learn about an audience is by looking at post analytics and creating different styles of content. Through the meta business suite, business owners can see post insights, audience demographics, interaction times, and ad results from previous campaigns (Newberry, 2022). After analyzing these results, marketers can make more relevant content based on what the audience is engaging with. Some audience members interact more with certain types of content. According to a study done by *Hubspot*, 54% of consumers respond better to video content, 41% to emails and newsletters, and 41% to social images (2022). In order to take advantage of this, it is crucial to find and identify the content style that resonates most with the audience.

1. **Video Content:** Video content is the easiest way to reach non-followers. Due to algorithms boosting videos, text-based posting is not as discoverable as it once was. The best part about video content is that small businesses are seeing big results

organically, contrary to the big-budgeted strategies of the past. Instead of churning out videos as quickly as possible, quality is much better than quantity. The resolution of the post, the wording, background music, and timing all plays a role in the virality of content. Thus, it's extremely important to produce high quality content. Otherwise, your posts may be less discoverable by the algorithm. In the past year, Firestarter Mug has increased its Facebook following by 300%, increased total video viewership by over 300,000, and received thousands of website visitors, solely because of organic video posting. Green Lama has also seen an increase in non-follower engagement since introducing video content into their strategy.

Reach

Facebook Page reach ⓘ

333,525 ↑ 24.2K%

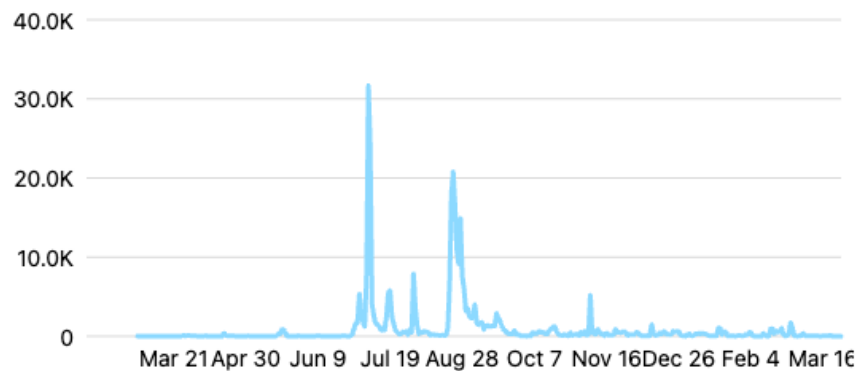


Figure 2 Video Reach for Firestarter Mug between March 21, 2022 - March 26, 2023

- Quality Over Quantity:** Instead of producing as much content as possible, it is more effective to focus on the quality of the content. Factors such as camera resolution, screen size, and subject matter all play a role in the impact and shareability of

content. Consumers do not want to see blurry pictures or videos—these are known to disrupt the viewing experience and social media sites will restrict them from gaining traction in the algorithm. Video and images should reflect the preferred size and aspect ratio of the platform. For instance, Instagram posts should be sized at a 1:1 ratio and reels should be sized at 9:16. Adhering to these ratios will provide a better experience for the consumer and yield better insights. Video content should be filmed with a high-resolution camera or smartphone with at least 1080p capabilities. Lastly, all content should be easy to read, relatable, and have a clear subject matter.

3. **Create Value for The Consumer:** Consumers demand content that is relevant and personalized to their interests. Valuable content captures attention and strengthens relationships with the audience, which will help small businesses expand awareness. Valuable content helps consumers recognize a problem, find a solution, relate to an idea or interest, expand knowledge of a relevant topic, or simply be entertained—which is why the algorithm loves to boost content that makes these unique connections. The easiest way to create valuable content is by identifying niche topics within the target audience, and then structuring content around those topics. Green Llama creates valuable content by showing alternative solutions to common cleaning practices, answering questions about tough environmental topics, and showcasing relatable information about eco-friendly habits. Part of the value in this content is its longevity. As platforms shift to become search engines, consumers are likely to stumble across valuable content long after initial engagement has passed.
4. **Hire an Influencer:** Influencers are a great resource to expand brand awareness and take advantage of an already established community. Influencers promote products or

services in return for free product or paid incentives. By leveraging an influencer's follower base and social impact, small businesses can market products without having to have a hands-on role in content production. For the best results, small businesses should focus on influencers that specialize in niches related to the products they are selling. Otherwise, the influencer's audience will have a hard time relating to the product or service.

5. **The 80/20 Rule:** The 80/20 rule, or "Pareto" principal is the best way to organize content. 80% of content should focus on valuable information, entertainment, and brand development. The other 20% should focus on the promotion of products or services. This general rule of thumb allows businesses to focus on creating unique content instead of "pushing products" every post. Ultimately, the goal is to develop a deeper brand identity before products and services are heavily promoted. This ensures that the brand builds community, rather than a weak sales channel.

Step 7: Take advantage of tools and trends.

In the past few years, social media platforms have grown specific identities. In order to succeed on these platforms, small businesses must take advantage of the tools they are provided with, make relevant content for that specific platform, and continue reaching new audiences. Once marketers learn each platform's interface, it becomes easier to create engaging content for consumers. Although some platform features are completely unique, most use overarching features to distribute and rank content.

Trends are usually short-term but provide big opportunities for marketers to reach new people. When content is posted during a trend, it is more likely to appear in consumer's feeds

and is often boosted in algorithms. This makes posts more discoverable for consumers, and it will forever be linked with that trend. The key is to identify trends before they are well established, that way, content will be boosted.

1. **Hashtags:** Hashtags are a useful way for users to find content and they are used in all major platforms. Statistics show that when a post includes relevant hashtags, it performs better than posts with none. Some platforms boost engagement when the user includes high-activity hashtags. For example, Tik-Tok videos using featured hashtags tend to have higher views and better interaction rates. Hashtags also help marketers target specific communities, and all relevant posts/accounts using those hashtags are linked in one central place. For Firestarter Mug, the percentage of post engagement from hashtags hovered around 5-7%.
2. **Location Pins:** Similar to the way hashtags work, location pins are another good way at targeting specific customer groups. Small businesses can really take advantage of location pins because content is grouped by where it is produced. Consumers looking to learn about the Johnson City area, can find all the content tagged with that location pin. Posts with high engagement will appear closer to the top of those lists and will benefit more from the pin.
3. **Video content:** Video content is currently the best way to increase engagement. Consumers are attracted to video content because it enhances their experience and it is visually appealing (*Why video content*, 2021). However, there are specific guidelines marketers must follow to capitalize on video content. Videos that use

- trending audio, have the correct aspect ratio, and have a high resolution typically perform better than ones who do not.
4. **Trending Audio:** Videos and images using trending audio are more likely to get engagement, especially on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. Trending sounds bring users together and promotes collaboration across the platform. When a sound is used over and over, the algorithm boosts it, causing it to show up in explore pages. Another advantage is that all videos created with a trending sound are grouped together under the sound's header. This makes it easier for viewers to find and it extends the lifetime of the post.
 5. **Memes:** "Meme" marketing is another popular way to get more exposure. Memes are an easy way for small businesses to relate with younger audiences and make more entertaining content. According to Forbes, memes are "a part of our culture," and consumers are more likely to share content that speaks to them on an emotional level (Cole, 2018). To get the best results, the meme must stay authentic to the brand and be posted at the right time. Just like any trend, memes spread quickly and have a short life-span—so, it is important to be timely.

Step 8: Brand Development

Businesses should focus more on brand development instead of product pushing. Social media is more than just a way to generate sales, it is a way to show consumers how the business is unique, its morals and values, and its mission. Generating sales is ultimately the goal, but to do that effectively, businesses must focus on improving the value of their brand first. Consumers want more than a transactional relationship; they want to make emotional connections with the

products and companies they are purchasing from. Also, consumers value companies that align with their own interests. To take advantage of this, businesses must be transparent through their social media pages. When consumers learn more about the brand and make connections with content, they are more likely to make a purchase. These consumers are also likely to engage with content in the future and become valuable customers. Unique, down-to-earth content creates huge opportunities for brand development. Consumers side with brands that humanize their social media and getting personal with the audience can strengthen those emotional connections. Some practices that facilitate this behavior include replying to comments, answering questions, and using team members in the content.

Step 9: Utilize Ads

Marketing is a high-investment space for any business. Bigger investments usually result in more opportunities to expand awareness. However, social media provides businesses with powerful, cost-effective ways to target specific audiences. Through the meta business suite, marketers can easily analyze consumer analytics, demographics, and location to run ad campaigns more effectively. This increases the chances for conversion and the value of the initial investment. On average, a \$10 ad on Facebook or Instagram will reach 500-1000 targeted consumers. When compared to conventional advertising strategies like billboards and signs, social media advertising targets the right consumers at the right time. For small businesses with limited budgets, this allows businesses to spend less on their ads and target specific customer groups every ad. This is important because small businesses usually target people within a certain area and Facebook meta business allows marketers to hyper-target those locations. Ultimately, social media advertisers have more control over who is seeing their content and

when. Another benefit of social media advertising is it is efficient and provides detailed analytics. Ads take less than 10 minutes to complete, and businesses can reuse their best posts as ads. Advertisers have full control over the amount of money they spend and the length of the ad. After the ad is posted, there is a short review period before it completes. Analytics can be tracked throughout the ad's life span and are stored automatically after its end. These analytics give small businesses a breakdown of engagement, link conversions, interactions, and reach on their ads. Then, marketers can use that information to get better results in the future.

Step 10: Be Active & Be Adaptive

The biggest mistake businesses can make with their social media is not being active enough. To make accounts grow and see better results, businesses must be active every day. Being active is what boosts visibility and improves overall engagement with the audience. This includes posting on the feed, sharing stories, replying to comments, interacting with similar accounts, and reaching out to followers. Small businesses are in a unique position to do this because they tend to have more personal relationships with their audience. Interacting with followers boosts credibility and trust within audience. When starting out, it can be hard to grow followers. That's why it's imperative for businesses to initiate contact with other pages and consumers alike.

At Green Lama, engagement increased when they supported other small businesses. These connections helped grow their following and establish a community of support. Additionally, businesses must be adaptive to platform changes, content preferences, and trends. Do not expect to produce the same content week after week and still see results. Social media

platforms are constantly evolving to fit customer needs; therefore, it is important for businesses to be able to adapt.

Conclusions

Overall, social media marketing provides small businesses with a powerful tool to reach broader audiences, build brand identity, and engage with customers in a cost-effective and measurable way. By creating unique and relatable content, small businesses can establish a vibrant community of supporters around their brand. Social media provides an opportunity for small businesses to share their values and make more emotional connections with customers. Unlike traditional advertising techniques, social media allows small businesses with limited resources and small marketing budgets to reach their target customers organically. Lastly, small businesses have a unique advantage because they are customer and community centric, unlike big corporations.

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