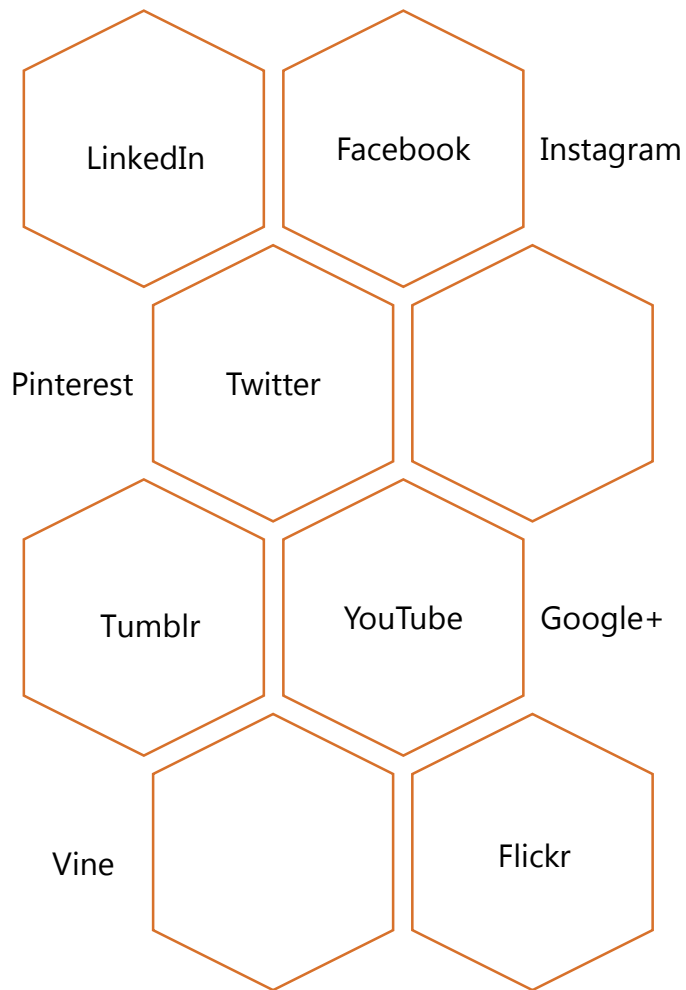


Social Media and Other Online Marketing Tips for Small Business



Learn How to Become a More Likeable Business and
Create a Strong Online Presence

Become a More Likeable Business

"Marketing in a social media world is not about broadcasting your message and getting the largest reach and frequency - it's about tapping into the conversation, listening, engaging, and empowering. The loudest, biggest spenders don't win anymore. The smartest, most flexible listeners do." - Dave Kerpen, *Likeable Social Media*

To successfully attract and retain customers, build brand equity and sell products/services, every organization must aspire to be likeable. As explained by Dave Kerpen in *Likeable Business*, a likeable organization possess and values the following core principles:

1. Adaptability

Small organizations must always be aware of external threats and opportunities. Keeping a finger on the industry pulse can be the fine line between success and failure. This is especially true given the lightning fast transmission of information via social media and other online platforms. The organization must remain nimble in order to easily respond to any shifts in consumer preferences, technological advances, supplier changes, and general industry developments. This also means that adaptability must be incorporated into the organization's goals, strategy, rules, and procedures. It should be an organization wide effort rather than solely reserved for the ownership. Every member of the organization has a stake in doing what it takes to survive and get to the top.

2. Authenticity

People do not like phony people. People also do not like to do business with phony organizations. Organizations that lack authenticity are often perceived as boring, untrustworthy, money hungry, and replaceable. Consumers are not loyal to inauthentic organizations. Organizations build authenticity by clearly stating their mission, staying true to that mission, and showcasing their human side. Authentic organizations are not afraid to admit fault and do whatever it takes to redeem themselves. They treat their customers and employees as invaluable pieces of the overall strategy for success.

3. Gratefulness

Successful leaders never forget people who have helped them achieve the current level of success. This means acknowledging and being thankful for contributions from colleagues, employees, family members, friends, mentors, and other stakeholders. While it may be tempting for the leadership to take sole credit for the success of the organization, it is a selfish and short-sighted approach to doing business. It alienates other members of the organization and sends a negative message to outside stakeholders. Regardless how busy or successful the organization becomes, it must

continue to find the time to appreciate its customers, employees, and other stakeholders.

4. Listening

Organizations that actively listen to their customers' wants and needs are perceived as thoughtful, considerate, and caring. Customers want to know and feel that the organizations they do business with understand their challenges and genuinely want to help. Customers and other stakeholders are also more likely to forgive organizations that listen and genuinely care. Social networking websites, such as Facebook and Twitter, are perfect tools for finding out what people are talking about in any given industry and engaging in those conversations. There has never been such an instantaneous and cost-effective way to participate in real-time conversation about any given topic.

Organizations that listen to their stakeholders are also more likely to have first-mover advantage in their reaction to industry changes.

5. Loyalty

As Bryan Pearson states in his book, *The Loyalty Leap*, "customers can only be acquired, churned, and reactivated so many times" before they get tired of the brand if the organization does not invest in their loyalty. Customers want to be recognized and rewarded rather than only asked to buy products/services. Most organizations do not operate in industries where their customers do not have other options, which means that they have to work hard to keep their customers happy and coming back for repeat purchases. This is especially true for organizations that engage in e-mail marketing since loyal customers are more likely to open promotional e-mail messages. Consumers are also more likely to give their contact information to organizations who recognize, value, and reward them. To maintain customer loyalty, organizations must deliver the right product at the right time and make sure that such delivery is meaningful and rewarding to the recipient. Otherwise, their efforts will be ignored and result in very little success.

6. Passion

Henry Ford's dream was to put an affordable vehicle in front of every American home and give American families the opportunity to see the country on four wheels. Making affordable cars was his passion and the Ford Motor Company was born out of that passion. Hard work, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness defined the company's personality. Whatever its passion may be, every organization must stay true to it. Any significant deviation from the core mission passion compromises the organization's identity and confuses its stakeholders. Passion dictates the organization's personality, which attracts customers and sells products/services.

7. Responsiveness

Organization leaders who are wired in to what is going on in their environment are better able to proactively handle external threats and opportunities. They rarely find

themselves in negative situations that require a reactive response. Instead, they handle such events before they become too big or too toxic. Accessibility and promptness are vital to effective responsiveness. Everyone loves organizations that respond to feedback, inquiries, and emergencies in a timely manner. Silence is definitely not golden and no excuse is good enough. Customers want to be heard, acknowledged, and served. There are very few things more annoying than not being able to get in contact with an organization, especially when one is unhappy with the purchased product/service.

8. Simplicity

For most business leaders, it becomes very tempting to start dabbling in many different projects in an effort to sell more products/services to boost revenue. The consequences of offering too many products/services are dilution of the organization's brand and core products/services, increase in demand for resources, and loss of strategic focus. It is always better to offer one really good product than ten decent products. This also applies to the number of product/service features. Fewer strong features are way better than lots of somewhat useful features. It is always better to keep things simple and aligned with the organization's overall mission and vision.

9. Spontaneity

Rigid organizational rules and regulations often restrict leaders and employees from doing "spur of the moment" things for their customers. This can be a significant roadblock to building strong customer relationships and providing exceptional customer service. Every member of the organization should have a defined amount of authority to go above and beyond to make customers and other stakeholders happy. Multilevel approvals and unclear roles lead to employee frustration and mediocre performance.

10. Storytelling

Everyone likes a good story, and every organization has one. The most important and often challenging part is sharing the organization's story with stakeholders both internally and externally. Stories provide organizations with credibility, relatability, and opportunities to build brand loyalty. Customers want to know how the organization was founded, how it overcame past obstacles, and what its vision for the future is. Such stories are perfect for social media content sharing. Stories are also powerful when incorporated into the company's sales approach, as long as they are true and genuine. False or highly inflated stories are perceived as scams and should be avoided. Anything can be made into a story and shared in a text, image, or video format.

11. Teamwork

As John C. Maxwell wrote, teamwork makes the dream work. Collaboration, cooperation, sharing, and learning from experiences (good and bad) together are characteristics of successful teams. Everyone has a stake in the overall mission and is responsible for the

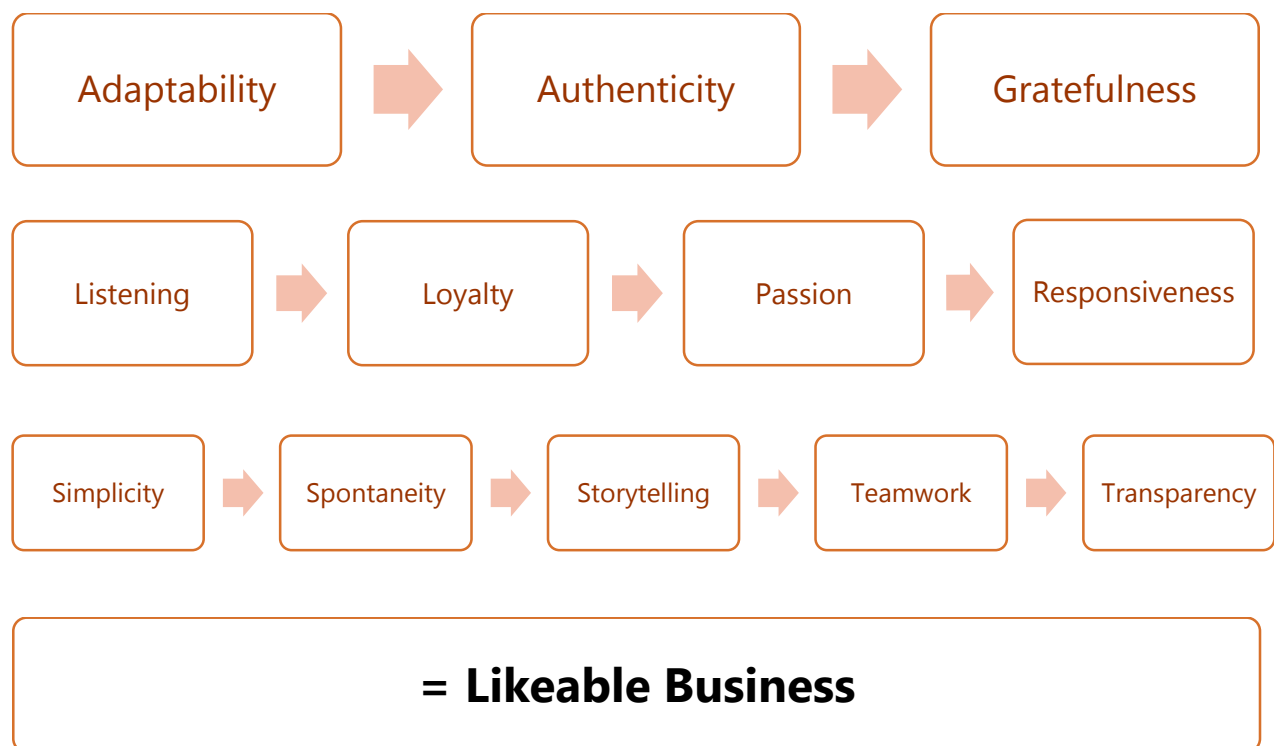
collective success of the organization. High school cliques, blame games, and secrecy are not permitted, if the organization wishes to achieve long-term success. Team leaders must make sure that their team does not become too strong or controlling where individual members are too afraid to speak up. Effective teamwork allows organizations to accomplish a lot more with fewer people and provide a more cohesive experience for internal and external stakeholders.

12. Transparency

Honesty is the best policy, especially in cases of company mistakes that negatively affect stakeholders. People are more forgiving when they are told the truth and offered a genuine apology than when they are presented with defensive excuses. That is what sets solid organizations apart from those that have no idea what they are doing.

Organizations that try to save face at the expense of their customers are often blasted via social media, which is an awful situation to be in. When organizations lie, they lose. That is the bottom line. A genuine apology and an offer to fix the problem are the best ways to resolve any negative situation.

Incorporating the above principles in the day-to-day operations enables organizations to be organically more attentive, transparent, and authentic. It also prompts organizations to become more likeable, listen more effectively, deliver greater value to their customers, and promptly respond to both internal and external changes. Likeable organizations are more successful than organizations that only care about the mighty dollar. Being likeable pays.



Create a Social Media Use Blueprint

There are more than 100 social media apps and websites in the world today, and each one promises the latest and the greatest features for both personal and business use. With this variety comes a lot of confusion and decision paralysis in terms of selecting the most beneficial social platforms for business use, especially since most organizations have very little time and energy to devote to such efforts. To save time and money, the college intern or entry-level administrative assistant is often tasked with “handling the organization’s social media”. This way the organization can say that it has social media presence without devoting too much time and money to it. This option offers the organization with an artificial win-win solution.

In reality, delegating social media management and marketing tasks to an inexperienced employee is a very short-sighted and careless business strategy given the long-term benefits of effective social media marketing. Every organization must take its relationship with social media seriously and make it part of its overall business strategy. To do this effectively, the organization must develop a detailed social media use blueprint, which is to be adopted by the organization as a whole. There should be no exemptions for certain organization members, including the top management and ownership, even if they have need to be trained. Social media use is not optional. It is vital to the long-term success of most organizations.

Organization’s social media use blueprint should be fairly short and it should clearly state the organization’s social media presence and marketing objectives, goals, personality, post schedule, and communication frequency. The two most important questions that must be answered while crafting the organization’s social media use blueprint are:

1. **Will the recipients of the message truly find it of value, or will they find it to be annoying or disruptive?** Annoying and disruptive content should never be published. It will only diminish the organization’s credibility and push away its followers.
2. **Would organization members want to receive the message if they were members of the target audience?** If the answer is no, the content should never be published. Undesirable content is worse than no content. It only encourages followers to ignore future content posts that may actually be more desirable.

Close attention must always be given to followers’ needs, wants, hopes, and dreams. Social media posts that speak to these four categories of content always get a positive response because they make people feel understood and accepted. Everything else is just clutter and noise, and should be avoided.

Every social media use blueprint must include the following components:

1. **Objectives and success measurements.** The organization needs to define what it hopes to accomplish via its social media engagement. Its social media objectives must be SMART (specific, measurable, assignable, realistic, and time-related). Otherwise, it will be very difficult to achieve and assess any future progress.

Examples of social media objectives:

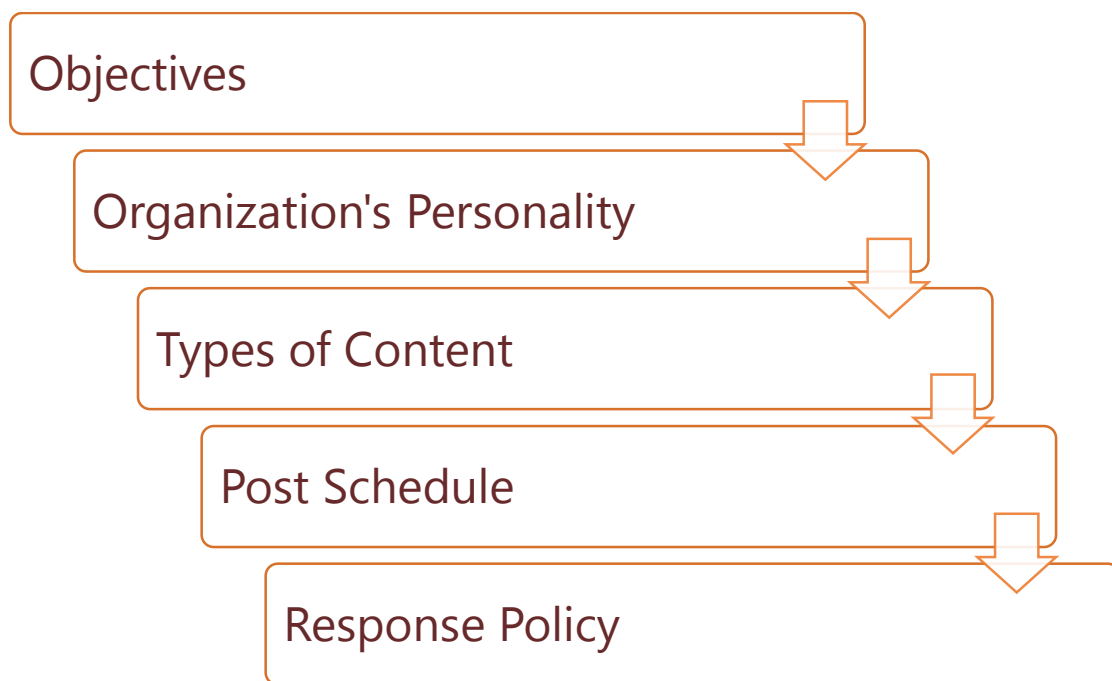
- a. Increase traffic to the organization's website by 10% within 12 months.
 - i. Shortened links and Google Analytics should be used for tracking.
 - b. Offer two product promotions once a month for 12 months.
 - i. Shortened links and promotional codes should be used for tracking.
 - c. Engage in at least 5-10 meaningful conversations with followers each month.
 - i. Keep track of conversations in a spreadsheet document.
2. **Organization's personality.** Every organization has a personality, which can be serious, playful, fun, professional, charitable, young, hip, etc. The goal is to select five or ten adjectives that define the organization's personality, and stay true to those adjectives when selecting content for social media posts. For example, it would not be appropriate for a dental office to share a magazine article about the latest fashion trends because such topic does not really pertain to its industry or the type of information its followers are expecting to learn from a dentist. It does not fit the dental office's brand personality. That type of social media post would be more appropriate for a fashion boutique.
 3. **Types of content.** Given the sheer abundance of online content, it is very important to clearly define what types of content the organization will share via its social media accounts. If the content is irrelevant, lacks value, or is annoying, it should not be shared. Some of the most common types of social media content are:

- a. **Links to specific pages on the organization's website.** Links to the homepage are rarely a good idea because visitors do not want to spend too much time looking for the information that was mentioned in the social media post.
- b. **Product promotions.** Discount offer codes and trackable links should be used.
- c. **Event announcements.** A nice graphic and a direct link to the event page should be included, and it should be posted at 3-5 days before the event.
- d. **News articles.** Only news stories that are relevant to the organization's industry and customers should be shared, with the exception of local or national emergencies.

- e. **Funny/Interesting/Nostalgic images and quotes.** This is a tricky category because it lends itself to some gray area as to what is appropriate and should be shared. Nudity, political themes, profanity, discriminatory stereotypes, or other controversial topics that often steer conversation in the wrong direction are never a good idea for content posts. The best idea is to share images and quotes that are least likely to prompt controversial debates and online fighting. No one wins in such situations, and the organization risks looking unprofessional.
 - f. **Videos.** YouTube is a great source of interesting videos that can be shared as long as the original owner is given proper credit. The organization should also share any of its own videos, if available.
 - g. **Testimonials.** Sharing customer stories and feedback is a great way to boost the organization's image and credibility. This is especially powerful if accompanied by photos or video. Sharing a photo of a handwritten letter or greeting card from a customer is a great example.
 - h. **Giveaways.** People love free stuff, and are often willing to exchange contact information for a chance to win something cool. This is a great way to build an e-mail list for future marketing efforts. It is very important to clearly specify the rules and terms of the giveaway and state how the participants' contact information will be used by the organization.
 - i. **New blog post announcements.** This is a great way to let followers be the first to read the organization's blog posts and provide feedback. Both text and video blog posts are great.
 - j. **Organizational milestones and stories.** As previously mentioned, people prefer to interact with organizations that have a personality and are likeable. Part of that equation is sharing various organizational events and milestones with followers. Some examples are anniversaries, employee birthdays, new hires, promotions, financial milestones, and updates from top management.
 - k. **Consumer research.** It has never been this easy for organizations to find out what their customers want and need. Social media platforms allow organizations to ask followers for new products/service suggestions and reviews, which is a great way to empower and engage customers, and also gather valuable data.
4. **Post schedule.** After making a comprehensive list of the types of content that will be shared via social media, the organization must set a detailed daily schedule for its posts. The post schedule should be broken into specific times during each day of the week. The

same type of content should not be posted more than once on the same day. The goal is to have variety in posts in order to maintain followers' attention and interest. It is also very important to review and adjust the post schedule every 6-12 months to avoid boredom and predictability.

5. **Response policy.** This is the area where most organizations fall short. They do not devote enough time to reading and responding to comments and posts from followers, and therefore miss out on making meaningful connections. The social media use blueprint must have a set protocol for promptly responding to followers within 24 hours. People do not like to interact with or follow organizations that ignore them. It is a waste of time for both sides.



Select the Most Effective Social Media App/Website

While there are more than 100 social media apps and websites, organizations should only focus on a few that are the most relevant to their industry and customer base. It would be silly to spend time and effort on building presence on a social media platform that is not widely used by the organization's target audience or that does not have a large user base. Trying to manage too many social media accounts stretches the organization's efforts too thinly and does not accomplish much. It is always better to focus full effort on fewer accounts.

To simplify things and get the biggest return on investment, organizations should focus their efforts on the most popular social media apps/websites:

1. Facebook

- a. 900,000,00 estimated monthly visitors
- b. Best for branding, promotional offers, event invites, and customer engagement
- c. Should post 1-3 times per day, seven days a week
- d. Best time to post on Facebook: 3:00 PM, especially on Wednesday - Friday
- e. Very important to monitor abusive posts and respond to comments
- f. Personal profiles (timelines) should never be used as business pages

2. Twitter

- a. 310,000,000 estimated monthly visitors
- b. Best for acquiring new customers, branding via use of hashtags (#), sharing current events, and providing customer support
- c. Should tweet 1-3 times per day, seven days a week
- d. Best time to tweet: 12:00 PM and 6:00 PM any day of the week
- e. Very important to make a list of hashtags (#) to accompany all tweets and also engage with other members who use those hashtags
- f. Not a good idea to follow too many users, especially if the organization's follower base is small

3. LinkedIn

- a. 255,000,000 estimated monthly visitors
- b. Great for B2B marketing, hiring new talent, and branding
- c. Should create a corporate account and not use a personal profile
- d. More appropriate for organizations that sell to other organizations (B2B)
- e. Offers the option for organizations to both host and participate in discussions about various topics, which is a great way to build credibility and market products/services to other LinkedIn members

4. Pinterest

- a. 250,000,000 estimated monthly visitors
- b. Perfect for organizations in the do-it-yourself (DIY), interior design, health and fitness, retail, event planning, or travel industry
- c. Create between 25 and 35 boards per account, and make sure that the most popular boards are located at the top
- d. Pin 2-5 items per day, seven days a week
- e. Best time to pin: 8:00 PM - 11:00 PM, especially on Saturdays

5. Google+

- a. 120,000,000 estimated monthly visitors
- b. Mandatory for all organizations who are concerned about their search engine rankings and search results position, especially for local searches
- c. Google gives preferential treatment to organizations with active Google+ pages
- d. Should post 1-3 times per day, seven days a week
- e. Best time to post: 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM, especially on Wednesdays

6. Tumblr

- a. 110,000,000 estimated monthly visitors
- b. Great for sharing original content and blog posts
- c. Mostly beneficial for organizations that have a good amount of original content to share on a daily or weekly basis, such as bloggers, photographers, journalists, or travelers
- d. Should never post stolen content
- e. Can incorporate the Tumblr blog into the organization's official website

7. Instagram

- a. 100,000,000 estimated monthly visitors
- b. Great for connecting with customers and local businesses via hashtags
- c. Imperfect and clever photos, when coupled with good hashtags, perform the best on Instagram
- d. Should post 1-3 times a day, seven days a week
- e. Best time to post: 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM, especially on Mondays

8. Flickr

- a. 65,000,000 estimated monthly visitors
- b. Great for sharing original photos
- c. Edited photos can then be shared on other social media or in print marketing material.
- d. Organizations can also use Flickr to buy and sell original photos
- e. Offers the option to create unique branded products that can be sold

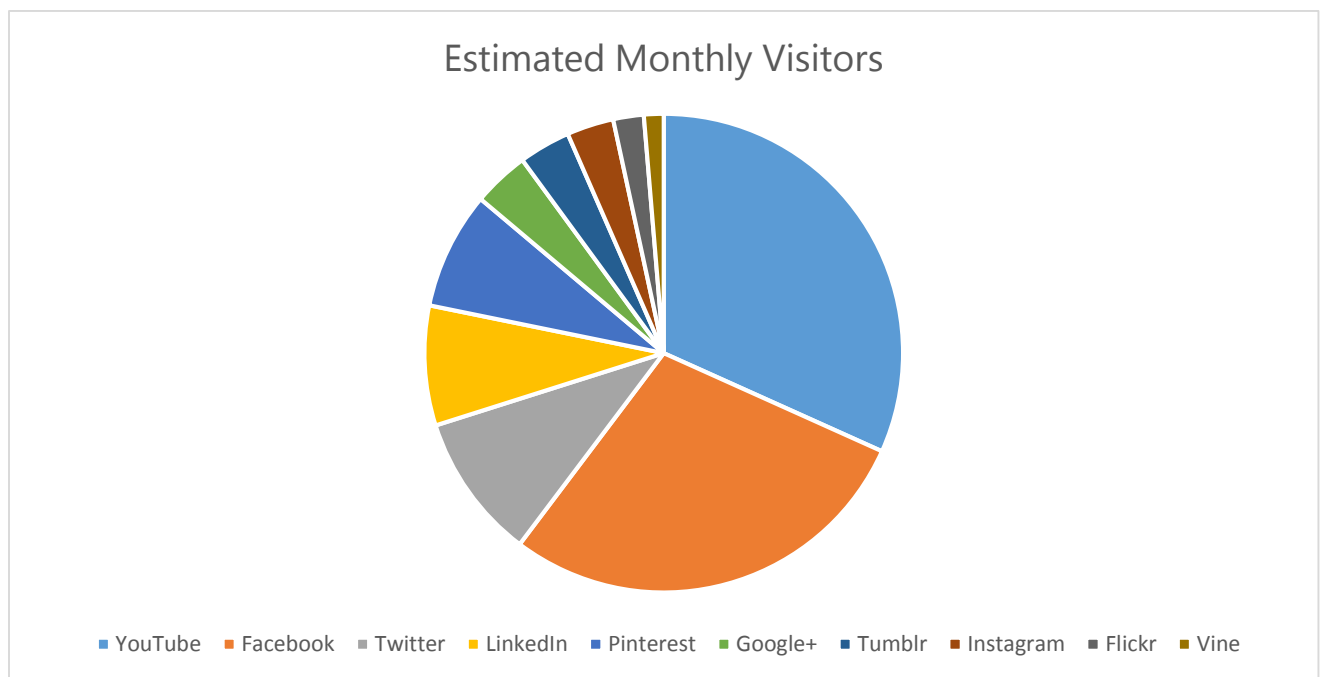
9. Vine

- a. 42,000,000 estimated monthly visitors
- b. Allows users to share six-second-long video clips with their followers
- c. Great for new product/service announcements/reveals, event previews, exciting adventures, or occasional check-ins
- d. Vine videos are not professionally produced and are spontaneous in nature
- e. Should not post personal home videos under the organization's Vine account

10. YouTube

- a. 1,000,000,000 estimated monthly visitors
- b. The biggest video sharing website in the world
- c. Great for sharing tutorials, webinars, and general promotional videos
- d. Can also pay to promote YouTube videos to get more channel subscribers
- e. Also a great source of content posts for other social media platforms

One of the best features of most social media platforms is that content posts can be scheduled in advance via scheduling services, such as Hootsuite, Postling and Viraltag. Facebook even has its own post scheduling feature, and it is free. Scheduling posts allows organizations to plan ahead, stay more focused, and save time.



Take Advantage of Online Advertising Services

Even though online advertising services, such as Google AdWords and Bing Ads, have been around for many years now, a lot of small organizations do not utilize them because of technical complexities. Poorly run online advertising campaigns can be very expensive and time consuming, especially if outsourced to an expensive agency.

The good news is that Bing, Facebook, Google, and Yahoo ads can actually be very cost-effective and hugely successful if the organization hires the right people and develops a solid online advertising strategy. The online advertising budget can also be as low as \$20 per day, if the organization is price conscious or just wants to test the service.

Online advertising services, such as Google AdWords and Yahoo, are very effective for attracting new customers while they are in the problem/solution state of mind and are looking for exactly what the advertiser is offering. The most important aspects of running successful online advertising campaigns are targeted keyword selection, budget/bid calculation, targeted landing pages, strong ad text/images, and split testing. The rest is smooth sailing.

Every organization should at least try running an online ad campaign with Bing, Facebook, Google, and Yahoo for 60-90 days, and then use the collected data to determine its future online advertising strategy. Running an online advertising campaign with a daily budget of \$5 will not be very effective because it will generate a very limited amount of data, which is not significant enough to incorporate into long-term business decisions.

Kapok Marketing offers online advertising consulting and campaign management services to small organizations in the Tampa Bay Area. We have extensive experience with Facebook Advertising, Google AdWords, and Bing Ads. We invite you to contact us at info@kapokmarketing.com. We are available to answer any questions you may have with no obligation to purchase any services. We truly want you to make the most of the available online advertising services available to your organization.

Learn More and Take Your Organization to the Top

If you would like to learn more about any of the topics mentioned in this document or obtain additional assistance, we invite you to contact us at info@kapokmarketing.com. We are more than happy to answer any questions you may have and point you in the right direction.

If you are interested in creating your own social media use blueprint, we offer a Do-It-Yourself Social Media Use Blueprint Packet for a one-time fee of \$189 at www.kapokmarketing.com/diyblueprint. It is a super easy, fill in the blank document that will save you many hours and give your social media marketing efforts a huge boost.

To learn more about Kapok Marketing and connect with us, we invite you to visit our website at www.kapokmarketing.com/about-us and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Google+](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#), and [Twitter](#).