

Your Social Media Strategy



About the course

This course is dedicated to establishing or elaborating your company's social media presence. In this course, you have the chance to **rethink and further elaborate on your company's methods and strategies how to use social media.**

What will you learn in this course?

We will help you to find answers to the following questions:

- Why should I **promote my business on social media**?
- How can I develop a **social media strategy**?
- How can I choose the right **social platform for my company**?
- **Which content is successful** on social media to promote my company?
- How can I **manage user-generated content** about my company, its products, or its services?

This course will also allow you to **discuss, interact** and **collaborate** in an interactive way.

How long will it take you to complete the course?

We estimate approximately **three hours** of learning time, depending on how much you want to engage. The course can be interrupted at any time and resumed later.

About the authors

This course was designed for the [DigiCulTS project](#) by [Isabell Grundschober](#), a researcher and instructional designer at the [University for Continuing Education Krems](#). The project is co-funded by the [ErasmusPlus program](#) of the European Union.

But now, let's get started with the first chapter of this course:

- ≡ 1) Getting started
- ≡ 2) Define Your Goals
- ≡ 3) Do a Reality Check
- ≡ 4) Analyze Your Audience
- ≡ 5) Choose Your Platform
- ≡ 6) Create Engaging Content
- ≡ 7) Publish and Manage Content
- ≡ 8) Monitor Your Success

1) Getting started



Does your small or medium-sized company already benefit from the advantages of social media for your business?

Social media are here to stay. According to [Statista \(2021\)](#), there were **around 3.6 billion** people active on social media in **2020**. Estimations predict a number of 4.41 billion users by 2025.

With a **growing number of users** on these platforms, the more relevant it gets for companies to establish an online presence there. Social media are more than just a marketing tool ([Lardi & Fuchs, 2013](#)). Participating in social media also means **access to digital culture** and its newest developments:

„**Digital culture** refers to the knowledge, beliefs, and practices of people **interacting on digital networks** that may recreate tangible-world cultures or create new strains of cultural thought and practice native to digital networks.”

([Poepsel, 2018](#))

If you want your business to stay competitive, there is no way around digital networks like social media. They are key for **product or service innovation** and **customer value creation** ([Matarazzo et al., 2021](#)).

Please mind: **Social media are not only for big players with a big budget** for digital marketing. Also small and medium-sized can benefit from social media ([Forbes, 2021](#)).

DigiCulTS podcast: How a medium-sized company uses social media

As a starting point to dive into the world of social media strategy, we were looking for some practical examples. Therefore, we invited [Sabine Melnicki](#) to the [DigiCulTS Podcast](#). She is a partner at the medium-sized company [TangoTunes - the Digital Tango Music Store](#). We wanted to know more about TangoTunes' social media strategy.



My name is [Isabell Grundschober](#). I am a DigiCulTS project partner and I hosted the DigiCulTS podcast episode on social media use for small and medium-sized businesses. I hope you enjoy it!

Tune in!

Our [podcast](#) host is DigiCulTS partner [Isabell Grundschober](#), located in Austria. She asked Sabine the following questions:

- How did you **choose the social media platforms** you are active on?
- Which **target groups** do you try to reach via social media? What to consider when **creating content** for your TangoTunes target group?
- How do you define "**success**" for your social media activities?
- How do you use social media to **achieve your business objectives**?
- For all small- or medium-sized businesses who aren't on social media yet: **What do they miss out?**

Tune in!

We uploaded the podcast episode on SoundCloud, where you can listen to it for free. Enjoy!

DIGICULTS PODCAST

**Pros and cons
of social media use
for your business**



In the [DigiCulTS podcast episode with Isabell and Sabine](#), you have heard about some practical advantages of social media for small and medium-sized companies.

We dug a bit deeper and found a comprehensive list of the most common **advantages and disadvantages of social media** for small and medium-sized businesses ([Queensland Government, 2020](#)):

Advantages

- **Broad reach:** Social media can reach millions of people all around the world.
- **Ability to target particular groups:** Many forms of social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) allow businesses to target specific groups.
- **Free or low-cost:** Many forms of social media are free for business, and paid options are usually low-cost.
- **Personal:** Online communication on a personal basis with individual customers and groups.
- **Fast:** You can quickly distribute information to many people.
- **Easy:** You don't need high-level skills or computer equipment to participate in social media. The average person with a standard computer should have no difficulty.

Disadvantages

- **Wasted time and money:** You spend a lot of time online for little or no tangible return.
- **The rapid spread of the wrong kind of information about your business:** Incorrect information can be easily and quickly distributed. Also, you need to be ready to handle negative reviews online.
- **Legal problems:** There are privacy legislation, laws regarding spam, copyright, and other online issues.

Also research showed, that an investment in social media capabilities pays off:

"Our analyses show that a budget devoted only to classic **offline advertising cannot replace a social media budget**. Managers should take this caution into account when making budgeting decisions. The long-term analysis, over seven years, identifies a strong increase in fans over time, which implies that early **investments in social media dynamic capabilities are worthwhile.**"

(Marchan, Hennig-Thurau & Flemming, 2021)

The next chapters of this course will support you **to develop or further elaborate your social media strategy**, so you can benefit from the advantages of social media for your business and at the same time minimize the disadvantages. **Let's get started!**





Do you want to make social media work for your company?

Many social media accounts struggle with **low or stagnating numbers of people who see their content**. Also a stagnating number of reactions, comments and follows is a common problem. Still, social media are a crucial factor to stay competitive nowadays.

Developing a sound social media strategy is the first step to success. What exactly is a social media strategy?

“A **social media marketing strategy** is a summary and plan of everything you want to achieve on your chosen social platforms and what you need to do to get there.

Outlining everything from your **goals**, to your **audience**, to your **posts** and how you're going to **measure your performance**, it allows you to address and plan what's going to make your brand successful across social channels.”

- [Smallbusiness.co.uk](https://smallbusiness.co.uk), 2020

Businesses of all sizes need to have a social strategy, so don't miss this opportunity to create your own, succinct document to outline your plans for social media to optimize your social activity to reach customers, increase sales, and support innovation and digital transformation of your company (smallbusiness.co.uk, 2020).

In the following chapters, we'll help you to develop a sound social media strategy.

7 steps to success

In the following chapters, we will help you to develop a sound social media strategy. We will introduce you to the following 7 steps:

- 1 **Define your (social media) goals**
- 2 **Conduct a reality check:** Identify your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats regarding social media activities of your company
- 3 Analyze your **target audience**
- 4 Choose your **platform**
- 5 **Create engaging social content**
- 6 **Publish and manage** social content
- 7 **Monitor your success** to revise and further elaborate your social media strategy

Before we start to work more in detail on your social media strategy, let's do some initial brainstorming.

We want to know your opinion: Is social media relevant to your small or medium-sized business? Have you been using it in the past? Why or why not? Which pitfalls do you know when using social media?



Share your experience and
discuss with peers

Social media for your businesses: Yay or nay?

We want to know what you think about social media. That's why we have created an **online discussion board** for you using [Padlet](#) so that you can share your reflections and experiences with peers.

The screenshot shows a Padlet board with the title "Social Media: Is it relevant to your small or medium-sized business? Why? Why not?" and a subtitle "There are some reasons, why some small or medium-sized businesses shy away from presenting themselves on social media. What is your opinion on the use of so". The board contains several sticky notes with the following text:

- You use social media for your business: Why?
- You don't use social media for your business: Why?
- Which social media platforms did you choose? Why?
- What is tricky when using social media to promote a small or medium-sized business?
- To stay in touch with my customers
- Micro enterprises don't use social media, they should consider hiring a community manager (who can work from home, doesn't need an office)
- Most of them use facebook, some LinkedIn, and Instagram
- We don't have many employees and social media work can be time consuming - is it paying off?
- because of fear that social media always means to loose (productive) time
- Instagram is the most popular platform right now, many SMEs don't use it
- LinkedIn is better for searching for new

The board also features a heart icon, a clock icon with the text "TIME FLIES", and a comment input field "Kommentar hinzufügen".

This is a screenshot of our online discussion board "Padlet". To share your thoughts and ideas, click on the "plus" sign-button on the bottom of each column.

Join the Padlet and discuss with us!

There is no need for registration. You can comment completely anonymously.

OPEN THE PADLET

i **You haven't used Padlet yet?** It is pretty user-friendly and intuitive. You don't need to sign in to use it. If you would like to learn more about how to use it, here is a brief [YouTube-tutorial](#).



Further reading and resources

"New Research reveals how small businesses are using social media"

SME owners were surveyed on their social media use and the part it plays in their current and future business plans.

[READ MORE](#)

"Why Small Businesses And Startups Should Invest In Social Media Marketing"

Tony M Fountain suggests three key ways how social media marketing can help small businesses and startups.

[READ MORE](#)

Using social media to market your business: the basics

Read the guide provided by Queensland Government to get a comprehensive overview of advantages, disadvantages, and key social media services.

[READ MORE](#)



What lessons have you learned from this chapter?

Lessons learned


There are many **advantages** of social media use for small and medium-sized businesses like broad reach, the ability to target specific target groups, and low costs.

Still, there are some **disadvantages**: Wasted time resources without tangible outcomes, misinformation, and legal problems. Therefore, to make social media work for your business, it needs a sound **social media strategy** to minimize the disadvantages and at the same time maximize the benefits.

We learned about general advantages of social media, but **how exactly can social media contribute to your specific business goals?** Connecting social media actions with business objectives is an important first step in your **social media strategy**. Learn more about it to enhance your strategy in the next chapter.

Define your goals!

2) Define Your Goals



Why does your business want to use social media?

Think about how social media can help you to achieve **your wider business objectives**, **how social media could help to reach them**, and how you could **measure your success** in reaching these goals through social media.

Here are **some examples of business objectives**, that small and medium-sized businesses wish to attain through social media ([McCann& Barlow, 2015](#)):

- **Increase brand awareness:** You want people to recognize your brand, talk about your brand, and feel an emotional connection to your brand.
- **Higher sales:** You want to sell more of your existing services and/or products.
- **New customers:** You want to reach more people to sell your products and services, e.g. new target groups or new countries.
- **Better customer relationship:** You want to stay in touch with your customers after a purchase.
- **Trust & credibility:** You want to improve (online) trust and credibility and to display how competent your company is in providing high-quality services and/or products.
- **Innovation:** You want to develop new (digital) services and products or want to elaborate existing products and services. [Papa et al. \(2018\)](#) showed in their study that the use of social media positively influences innovation processes in small and medium-sized businesses.



Share your experience and
discuss with peers

What do you want from social media?

Share with us which objectives you wish to attain through the use of social media in our digital brainstorming space. Maybe you'll also find **inspiration** by reading through the contributions of other owners or employees of small or medium-sized businesses. We have opened a free, anonymous room for online brainstorming [via Google Jamboard](#).

i You haven't used Google Jamboard before? It's pretty user-friendly and intuitive. You don't need to sign in to use it. If you would like to learn more about how to use it, here is a brief [YouTube tutorial](#).



Which business objectives you wish to attain through the use of social media?

Take a post-it
at the menu
on the
left-hand side.

Higher
sales

Higher brand
awareness

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Let's brainstorm!

[Join our online brainstorming space.](#)

Open the [Jamboard link](#), pick a **virtual sticky note** on the **menu from the left-hand side**, and share which business objectives you wish to attain through the use of social media.

We're looking forward to reading through your contributions!



Aligning your business objectives with social media goals

What's important for your social media strategy: **Define smart goals that align with your business objectives.** Here are two examples of how to align two of the business objectives listed above with more SMART social media goals and indicators of success:

Business objective	SMART social media goals	Social media metrics to track	Timeframe
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Business objective	SMART social media goals	Social media metrics to track	Timeframe
Develop new (digital) services or products	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a social media campaign including a series of a minimum of 20 postings to understand the target group's opinion on a current product or service 2. Get 1000 reactions on postings from the campaign within 6 months 3. Collect 200 comments on postings from the campaign within 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of postings per week • Reactions, shares, mentions • Views • New/lost followers 	6 months

Business objective	SMART social media goals	Social media metrics to track	Timeframe
Increase brand awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Achieve 100+ social shares on Facebook per post within two months 2. Post twice a week on Instagram and Facebook starting this month 3. Double Instagram followers within two months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of postings per week • Reactions, shares, mentions • Views • New/lost followers 	2 months

What are SMART social media goals?

In the example above, you can observe how wider business objectives could be operationalized through social media goals. You might notice that the social media goals identified in the second column are pretty specific. They are so-called "**SMART**" goals. Writing SMART goals is a well-established method in management practice ([Sull & Sull, 2018](#)). SMART goals rather resemble concrete activities than abstract objectives. SMART goals are:

- Specific
- Measurable

- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time-bound

Goals can drive strategy execution...

...but **only** if they are **aligned with your broad business objectives** and if it is **possible to make course corrections** as circumstances change.

Therefore, make sure that your **SMART goals are aligned with your business objectives** and **frequently discussed & reviewed in your team** ([Sull & Sull, 2018](#)). Check your social media goals regularly: Were you able to attain the goals? How well they have served to reach your overall business objectives?



Dream - plan - act! Let's make your business objective real. A first step: Setting up a draft set of attainable and measurable social media goals.

Start to identify your social media goals now!

Open a document and write down your SMART social media goals. Don't forget to connect them with your wider business goals and to write them in a way that they are measurable as well as attainable at a certain time.

Set up a plan, when you will review these goals with colleagues or peers.

If you would like to read through some further resources on how to write SMART goals for your social media strategy, we suggest the following resource below:

Check out some examples: SMART goals for social media strategy

Do you want practical advice and examples on how to set SMART goals for your social media strategy? Check out this resource!

SMART GOALS



Further reading and resources



"Use and measurement of social media for SMEs "

McCann & Barlow (2015) investigate why small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are using social media and how they should measure its return on investment (ROI)

[READ MORE](#)

"With Goals, FAST Beats SMART"

Sull & Sull suggest the FAST method for writing goals. The article was published in the MIT Sloan Management Review in 2018.

[READ MORE](#)



What are your takeaways from this chapter?

Lessons learned

In this second chapter, you learned how to **identify goals for your social media strategy**.

Successful execution of your strategy depends on the **alignment** of social media goals **with wider business objectives**, **SMART wording of goals** as well as on the **regular review** of goals to see if they are fit for purpose in the fast-changing world of digitalization.

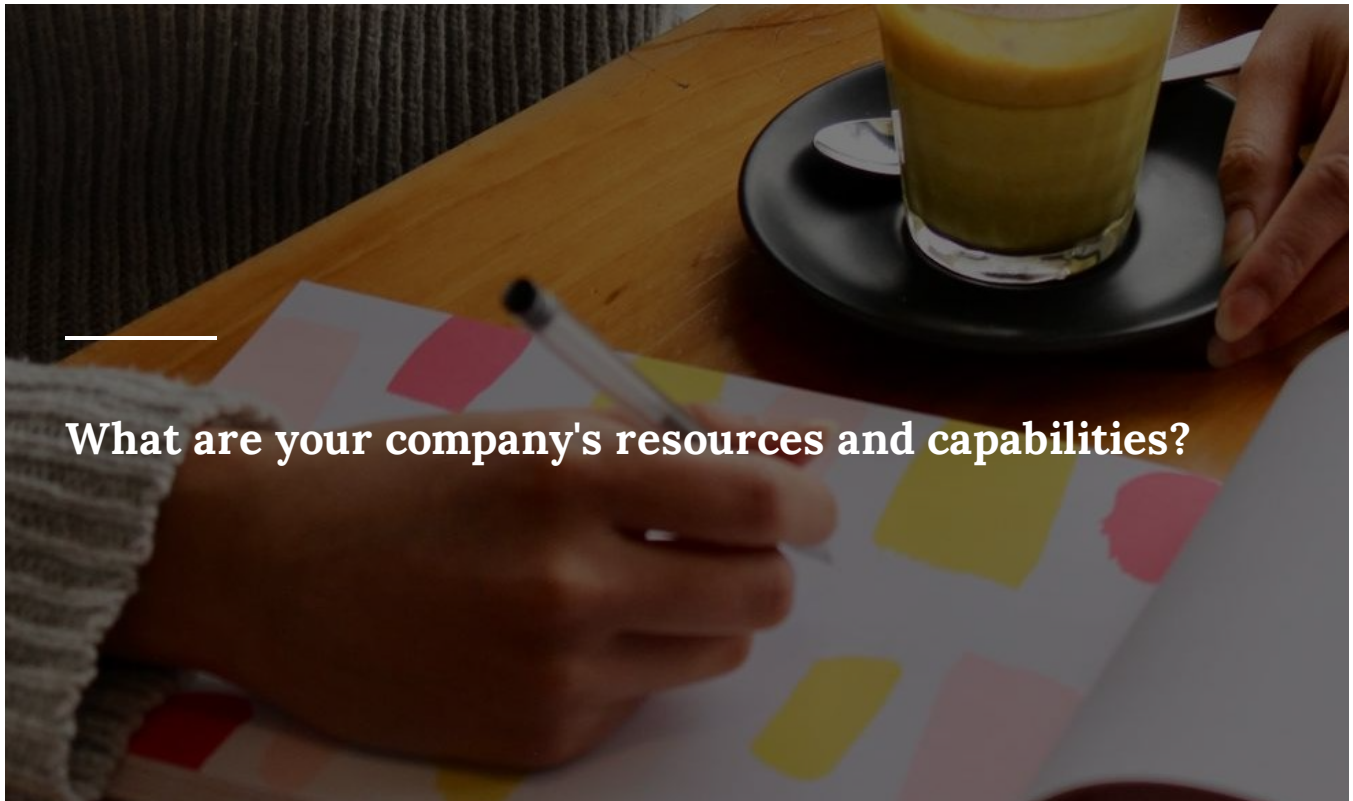
What already works well? What could be improved?

You now know about your **social media goals**. **What can you do to reach them?**

As a first step, we suggest taking a closer look at your company's resources and capabilities to better understand your company's strengths and weaknesses. Time for a reality check!

I'm ready for a reality check!

3) Do a Reality Check



What are your company's resources and capabilities?

You wish to attain certain social media goals to ultimately grow our business. But how to make it a reality? Are these goals actually attainable and realistic for your company? If yes - **how is your company going to reach these goals?**

The answers to these questions depend on your company's resources and capabilities:

“While resources refer to what an organization owns, capabilities refer to what the organization can do. More specifically, capabilities refer to the firm’s ability to bundle, manage, or otherwise exploit resources in a manner that provides value added and, hopefully, advantage over competitors.”

- [Edwards \(2014\)](#)

Resources and capabilities are tightly linked—capabilities tend to arise from using resources over time. First, we'll take a closer look at your resources:



What are your company's tangible and intangible resources when it comes to social media?

A very most common social media challenge for businesses is not having enough human and financial resources ([Herold, 2018](#)). Let's check out what tangible and intangible resources you have available **to attain your desired social media and wider business goals:**



You can start off your social media strategy with some basic equipment.

Tangible resources for social media

are resources that can be readily seen, touched, and quantified:

- **Hardware:** Social media management and content creation can be done with **basic hardware:** You'll need a laptop and/or computer (with integrated webcam and microphone) and a smartphone for your social media activities.
- **Software:** You'll also need basic **software** to plan and create content. Some tools are free, some might come together with your operating system.
- **Time resources:** Time resources are a crucial factor in implementing your social media strategy. It needs time to plan, create, curate, manage and evaluate social media content.

Intangible resources for social media

are resources that are difficult to see, touch, or quantify:

- **Established brand & brand reputation:** Your brand reputation influences and supports all social media activities.
- **Digital culture & digital identity of the company:** Your company might already have a digital identity (e.g. social media presence, website, etc.) you can build upon.
- **Cooperation partners:** IT support companies, social media agencies, etc.



Digital culture and the digital identity of the company are a big asset to build upon.



What is your company capable of?

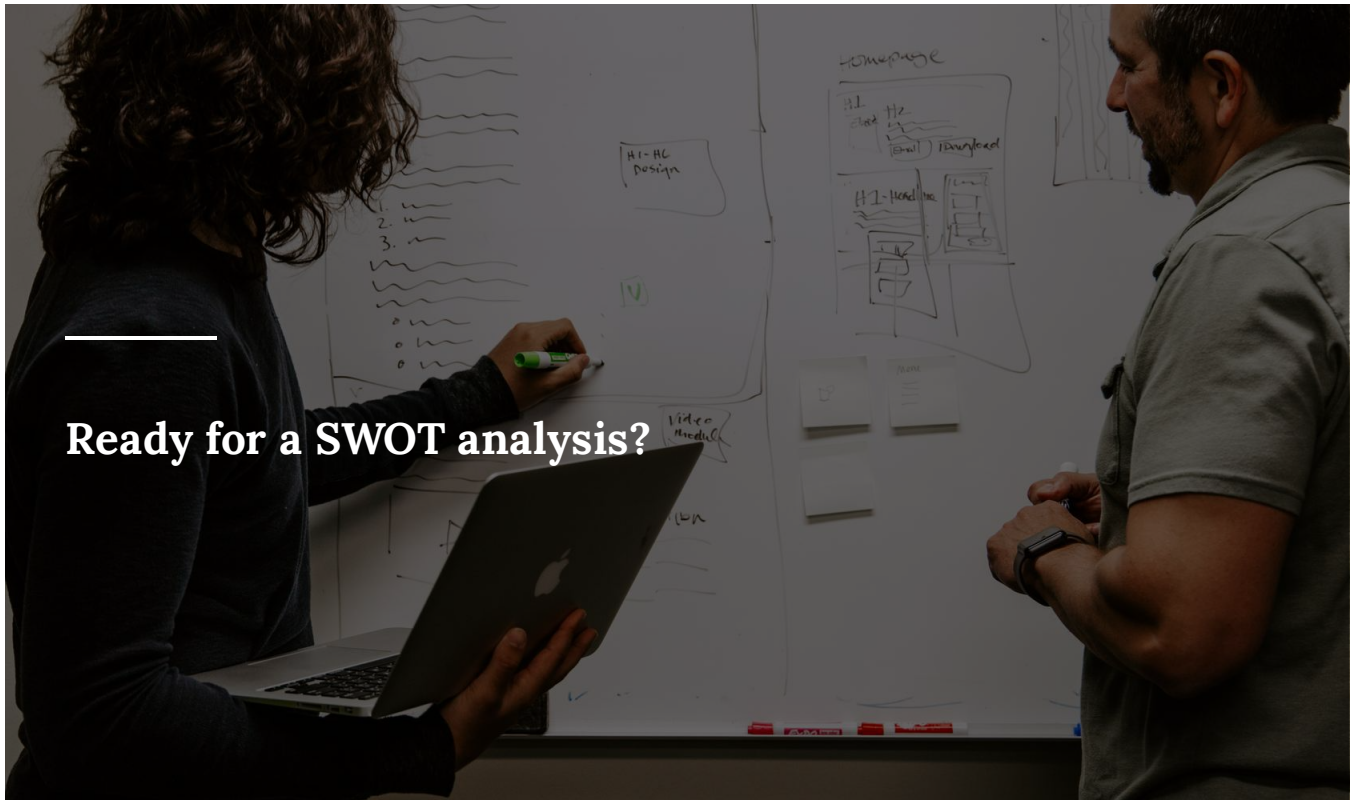
We talked about tangible and intangible resources for social media. How can your company make use of them for the effective implementation of a social media strategy?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Who is able to make **social media plans** according to the overarching social media strategy and business communication strategy of your company?
- Who is able to **create** content for social media (including social media campaigns)?
- Who is able to **curate** content for social media?
- Who is able to **provide community management** on social media? (Answer questions, react to comments, etc.)
- Who is able to understand **social media analytics** to improve the success of your company's social media activities?

If these skills and competences are not available in your company, there are two possibilities:

- You could **hire social media experts** for some or all of the named tasks (based on your available budget)
- **You and your colleagues are getting trained** through courses and/or learning-by-doing (based on your available time resources)



A SWOT analysis is a method for documenting internal **strengths** (S) and **weaknesses** (W) in your business, as well as external **opportunities** (O) and **threats** (T).

Strengths and weaknesses

You thought about your company's current resources and capabilities. How do they affect your success in social media and the accomplishment of your defined goals? Here are some examples of strengths and weaknesses related to social media:

- **Strengths:** Your company is well connected to social media agencies or self-employed social media specialists. Members of the staff are experienced in content creation and social media. Some colleagues are highly interested in learning more about social media. Your company owns the basic technological infrastructure for content creation. Your company already has a social media account with a certain number of followers.
- **Weaknesses:** Your company has only a small budget and/or time resources for social media. Some colleagues are very skeptical regarding social media and refuse to open an account there. Nobody in the company has content-creation, -curation, or -management skills.

Opportunities and threats

Let's face it - the success of your social media strategy not only depends on internal factors (like strengths and weaknesses based on your resources and capabilities). There are also some **external factors**, which might influence your success in social media. Here are some examples of opportunities and threats connected to social media ([Heinze et al., 2017](#)):

- **Opportunities:** More and more people are using social media - you need to be where your customers are. Your company can target buyers and expand markets through social media. Interactions with customers on social media can support product- and service development.
- **Threats:** Social media can be time-consuming with little tangible impact on business goals. There is a lot of information and competition on social media. Therefore there is a risk of not reaching the target group efficiently. Users on social media can spread wrong information about your company. Your company could receive bad reviews online, which could lead to a negative impact on your brand's reputation.

How to do a SWOT-analysis

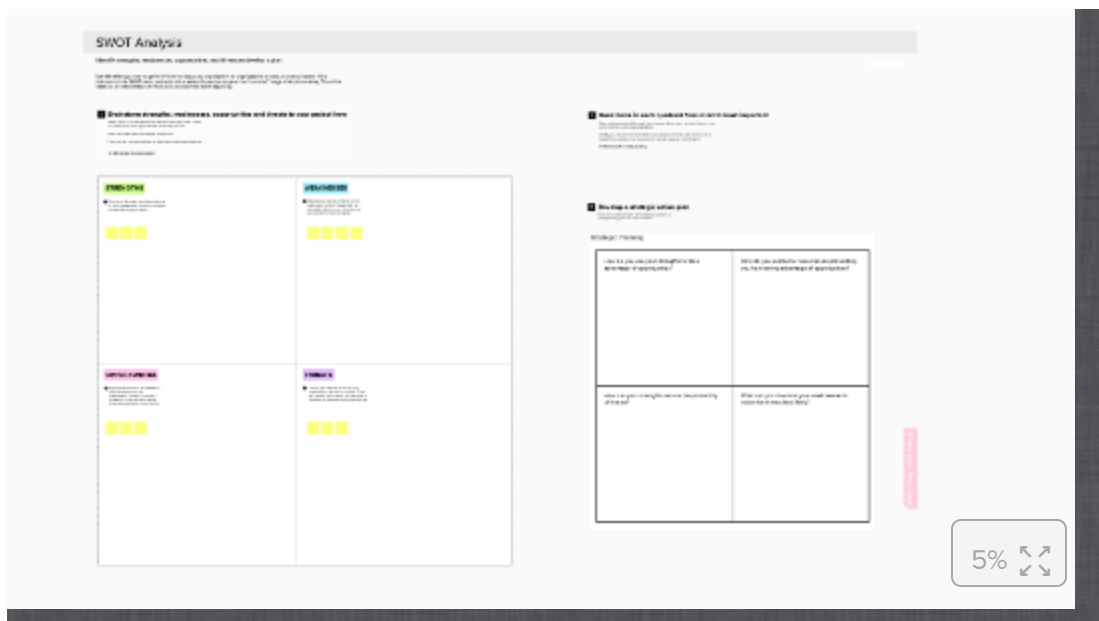
Learn here how to conduct it and find out which aspects you need to consider for future social media activities of your business.

SWOT GUIDE

An example of a SWOT brainstorming chart

In the following brainstorming tool "Mural", there is a useful template available to conduct a SWOT analysis. You can check it out below by zooming in or you could also click on ["View on mural"](#) to contribute to the brainstorming.

MURAL



MURAL

[VIEW ON MURAL >](#)

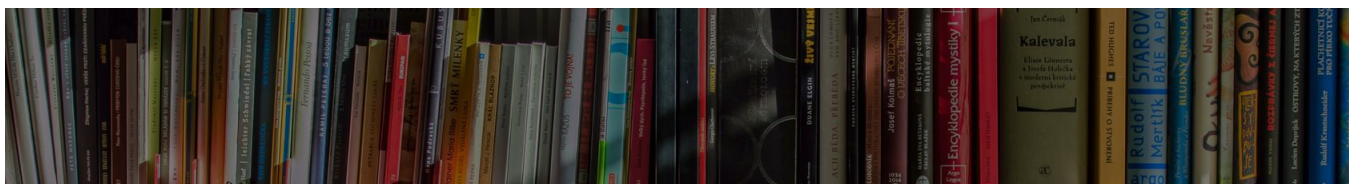
i You haven't used Mural before? You don't need to sign in to use it. If you would like to learn more about how to use it, here is a brief [YouTube tutorial](#).



Reviewing your social media goals

After you brainstormed the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities of social media use for your company, you might find it **useful to revise your initially defined social media goals**.

This way, you can further elaborate your social media strategy step-by-step.





"Social media resources and capabilities as strategic determinants of social media performance"

This scientific article by Marchand, Hennig-Thurau & Flemming gives insights into the newest research results. It was published in the International Journal of Research in Marketing in 2021.

[READ MORE](#)



What are your takeaways from this chapter?

Lessons learned

You learned about **tangible and intangible resources for social media** use as well as **social media capabilities**. You used a SWOT analysis to better understand your strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats for your company when using social media.

The results of this analysis should be used to **review your identified social media goals**.

After brainstorming your company's resources and capabilities, **we'll now take a closer look outside your company: At your target audience**. Knowing about the target audience is an important factor for choosing the right social media platforms as well as developing interesting social content. Let's dive into it!

Analyze your target audience

4) Analyze Your Audience



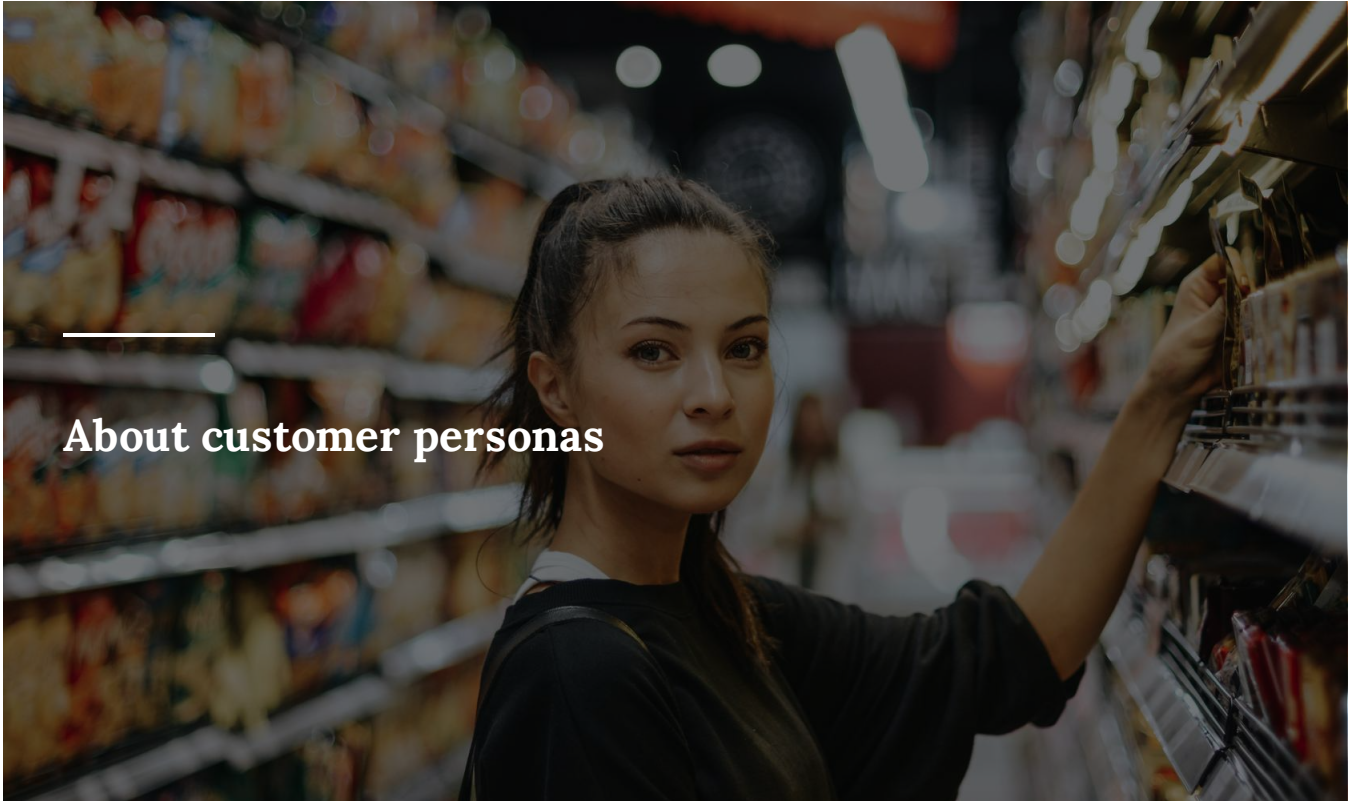
What have we achieved so far in this social media strategy tutorial? You have figured out the initial aspects of your social media strategy: Your social media goals as well as your company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats when investing in social media identified goals.

The next aspect to consider in your social media strategy is your target audience. Understanding your customers will help you decide what, where, and when to share content on social media.

A useful method to learn more about your target audience is the **persona approach**. This method

was already widely used in direct marketing long before it was adopted in digital marketing. It **supports empathy** for your buyers and their user journeys towards purchasing ([Heinze et al., 2017](#)).

About customer personas





Who is buying your products and services? Why do they purchase them?

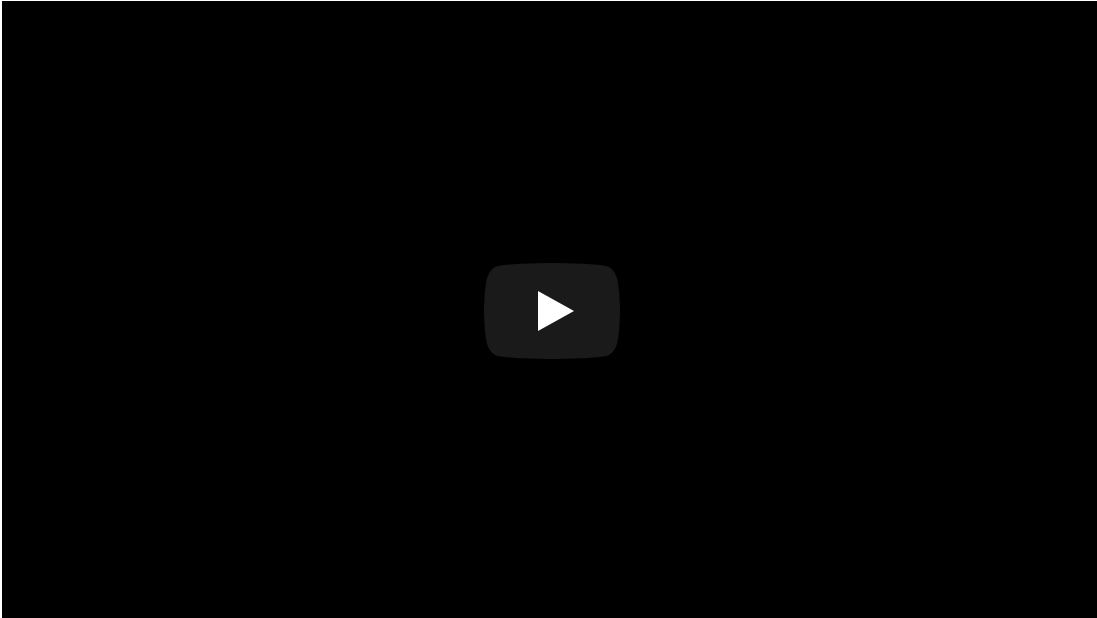
What is a customer persona?

Customer personas are semi-fictional representations of your customers based on

- your experiences,
- market research, and/or
- real data about your existing customers.

The [following YouTube video](#) gives a brief overview of what customer personas are, including 3 examples of customer personas:

 YOUTUBE



Creating Customer Personas

Nowadays, personalisation and customisation are becoming increasingly powerful components of business success online. In order to do these effectively, you n...

VIEW ON YOUTUBE >

The video emphasizes that...

☐

...customer personas are all about the stories behind your company's consumers.

☐

...a company usually has more than one customer persona.

☐

...a customer persona is about hard facts and data only.

SUBMIT

Customer personas are more than just data

As you already learned from the video above, customer personas are **more than summarizing facts and demographics**.

You basically develop **model customers** as if they were real persons.

The customer persona is all about placing a **personal and human story** around your consumer. This helps to gain empathy and a deeper understanding of the needs and pain points of customers ([Heinze et al., 2017](#)).



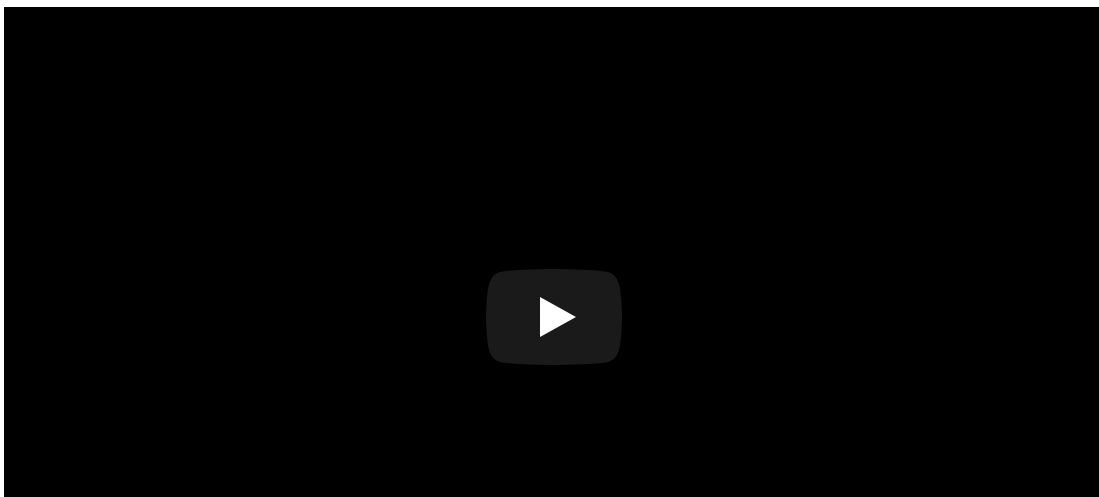
Basic elements of a customer persona

When creating your customer persona(s), consider including **your customer's demographics, behavior patterns, motivations, and goals**. The more detailed you are, the better. Think about:

- The age, occupation, and gender of your target audience
- Their interests
- Their online activity – are they active online? When do they go online and why?
- How and why they use social media.

If you don't have this information about your target group yet, you can practice "[social listening](#)" to gather all the necessary data for your personas. Here is a brief introduction to social listening:

 YOUTUBE



Marketing - What is Social Listening?

Dr. Phillip Hartley explains what is Social Listening.

https://thebusinessprofessor.com/en_US/principles-of-marketing/what-is-social-listening

VIEW ON YOUTUBE >

Example of customer/ buyer personas

Here you can find various examples of buyer personas to get a better understanding of the core elements of personas.

[READ MORE](#)

Practice social listening

Gather information about your target group through social listening on social media. It supports the development of sound personas.

[READ MORE](#)



[illegible]

- 1 **Download** the free DigiCulTS customer persona template as inspiration for your company's customer personas. Feel free to adapt this template to your industry and specific context.
- 2 **Brainstorming:** Ask your colleagues or partners to participate in a brainstorming session. Use the DigiCulTS customer persona template as a basis for brainstorming. Collect all ideas and experiences through making use of post-its. You could either draw up separate personas from the start or you could just collect all of your experiences and ideas and cluster them into personas as a second step.
- 3 **Collect feedback:** Show the personas to other colleagues or partners. Ask them, if they could be "real" customers, or do they still feel a bit "artificial" or "stiff"? Use the feedback and further improve your personas.
- 4 **Shared understanding:** Share your finalized personas with the whole team to get a shared vision of how you want to address these personas via social media.

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Picture

My motto

Demographic/Psychographic information		Behavior on social media	
Name		Used social networks	
Country		Why are they using social media?	What is their motivation? Which content do they enjoy?
Age		Which devices do they use to get online?	
Gender		When are they online in social media?	At which day of the week, which time of the day are they active? Are they active online during work, in their breaks, in their leisure time?
Family situation		How do they behave in social networks?	Do they react to, comment or like content or are they passive „lurkers“?
Job & annual income		What are their pain points in social media use?	What do they dislike in social media? What do they dislike when following a brand on social media?
Life goals			
Life values			

Lifestyle & preferences	
Hobbies and interests	
Role of your company in the life of the customer	
Reasons, why your product/service is purchased	
Media preferences	Where do they go for information?

My frustrations

My motivations for purchasing



Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



DigiCULTS Buyer Persona, created by Isabell Grundschöber (UWK)

Feel free to adapt this template to your industry and specific context.

The DigiCULTS customer persona template

We created a customer persona template for you, containing the following sections:

- demographic and psychographic information
- Lifestyle & preferences
- Behaviour in social media

Customer Research Methods

In case you have more time and want to create more elaborated customer personas, check out the following customer research methods!

[READ MORE](#)

DOWNLOAD

Download the free DigiCulTS customer persona template here.

DOWNLOAD



Further reading and resources

Digital and Social Media Marketing: A Results-Driven Approach

Heinze et al. (2017) describe the buyer persona in detail in their book about digital and social media marketing.

READ MORE



What are your takeaways from this chapter?

Lessons learned

One aspect of a sound social media strategy is to gain a **deeper understanding of your target audience** on social media. Customer personas are a useful approach to **gaining empathy** and **learning about the expectations, wishes, and pain points** of your (potential) customers when it comes to social media interactions.

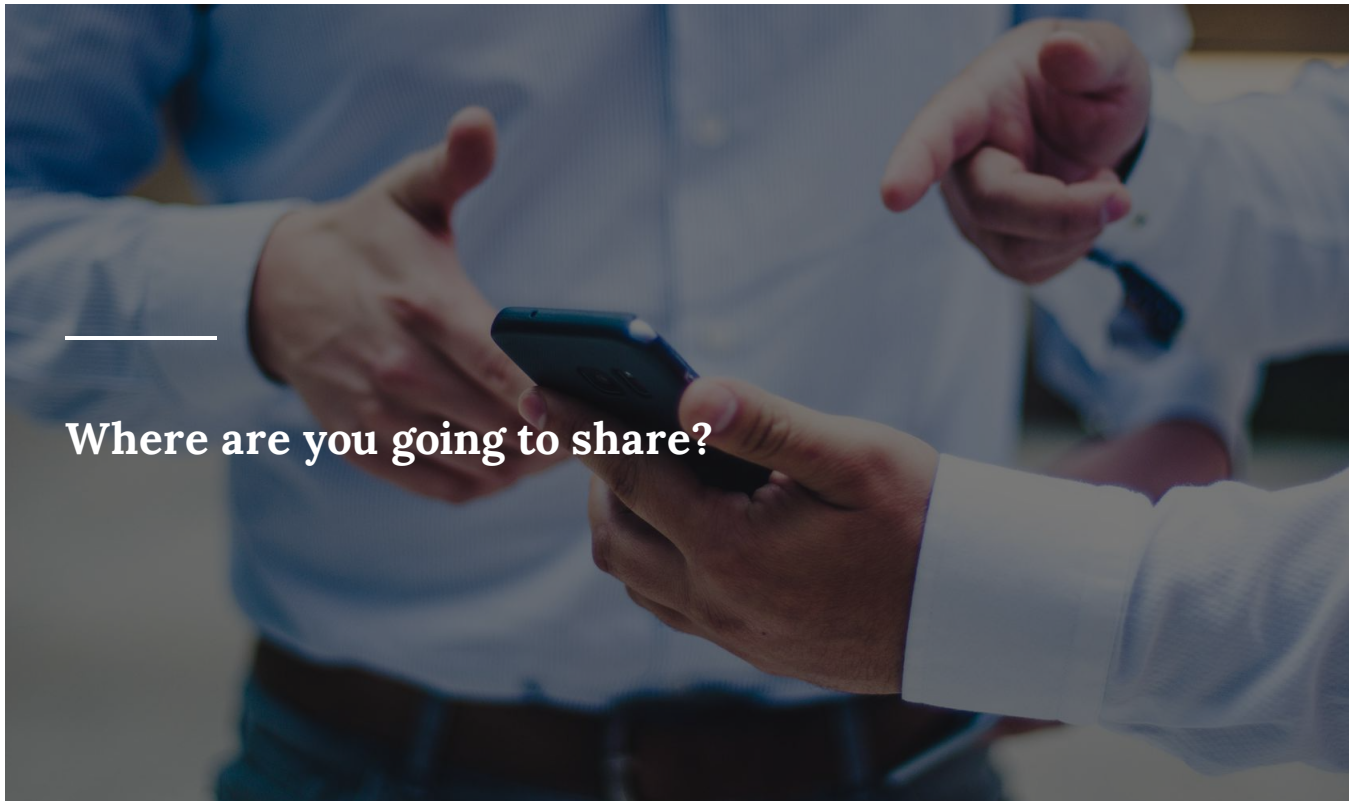
Customer personas are **semi-fictional representations** of your customers based on your experiences, data about your customers, or general market research.

From customer personas to social networks

With the help of the customer persona template, you learned more about the behavior of your target group on social media. You also checked out, **which social networks they prefer to use**. Let's have a closer look at **which platforms you should choose**.

Choosing the right social platforms

5) Choose Your Platform



Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, or Tiktok: Which social platform is relevant for your business? Is it necessary to present your company on all these social networks? This chapter helps you to **revise your choice of social media platforms** for your company or to make an **initial choice of social media platforms (in case you haven't used them yet)**.

First of all and most important:

You don't have to use each and every social media platform available on the internet.

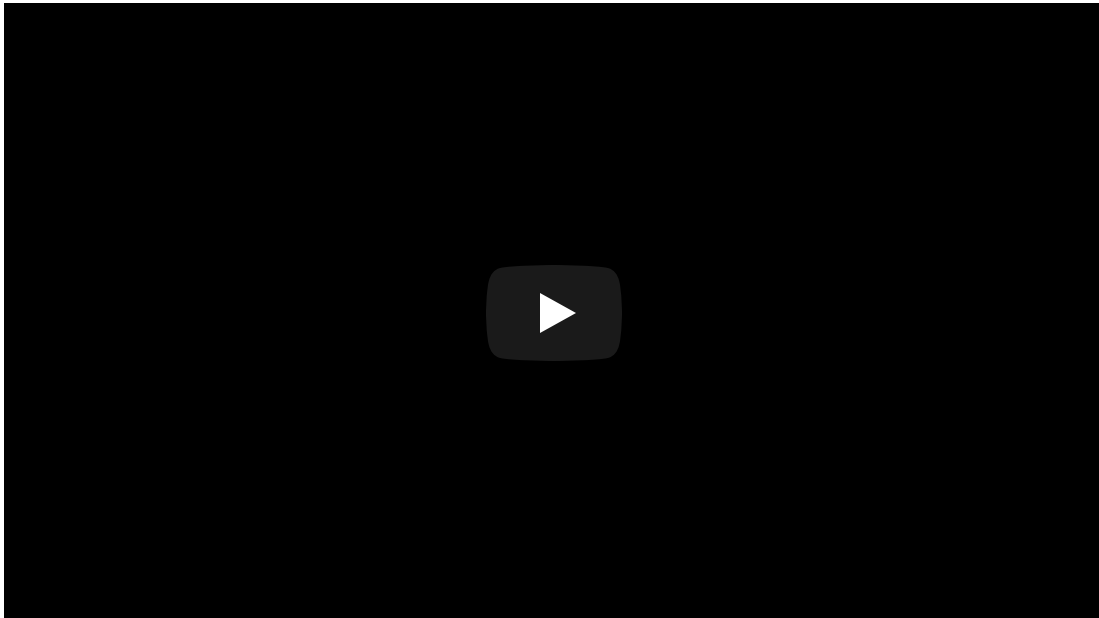
Choose your social media platform(s) wisely! Usually, each platform requires a kind of content, therefore it could be overwhelming to start your social media presence right away with various platforms (smallbusiness.co.uk, 2020).

To make an informed choice, it helps to get an **overview of the most popular social media** platforms, their characteristics, and users they attract:

Learn more about the most popular social media platforms

In the following video, you can learn more about Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube. They attract different kinds of users, a different number of users, they require different content and work in different ways, based on different algorithms.

 YOUTUBE



The BEST Social Media Platforms for Business in 2022 | Which Is Best For YOUR Business?

Billions of people use social media, but what is the best social media platform for business? In this video, we're giving a full breakdown of the major socia...

VIEW ON YOUTUBE >

Check your knowledge about social platforms!

How much do you know about social platforms? Check your knowledge!

Which statements about social media platforms are correct? Tick off all true statements.

☐

Facebook is the largest social network with more than 2 billion active users, checking Facebook every day.

☐

Instagram is a highly visual platform. You have to be very engaging to capture attention on Instagram.

☐

Instagram users have an older demographic.

☐

Linkedin is a business and employment-based platform, useful for B2B networking. The newsfeed is not as competitive as Facebook and Instagram.

☐

Algorithms on Facebook and Instagram are very competitive. Just because someone is following you, it

☐

doesn't mean they also see your content in their newsfeed.

☐

LinkedIn has a high-income and well-educated audience. If you serve businesses or professionals, LinkedIn is important for your business.

☐

Twitter is a real-time social media platform. You need visual content to stand out.

☐

Most people use **Pinterest** as a search engine to find useful information. Pinterest is mostly used by men.

☐

Youtube is the largest search engine worldwide.

☐

A downside of **YouTube** is that video production is expensive and time-consuming.

SUBMIT

Knowing about social media platforms is important, but it still can be **overwhelming** to make a good choice of social media platforms to use for your business. **The following 4 aspects will help you to narrow down your choice** of social media platforms to the most relevant for your business:



**4 aspects to consider when
choosing social platforms
for your business**

Consider the following 4 factors when choosing a social platform

Step 1

Your target audience



You need to be active on platforms that your audience uses. In the previous chapter of this tutorial, you **analyzed your target audience** with the help of the **persona approach**. One aspect of this analysis was to identify on which social platforms your (potential) customers are active. Use this information to identify which social platforms are most relevant for your company.

Step 2

Your competitors



Competitor analysis on social media is key. Which social platforms do your competitors use to promote their business? Check out **where they have the most active users**.

Step 3

Available competences



Which social media competences do you have? In the chapter "Do a Reality Check" you identified your company's capabilities. Check if there is enough knowledge, skills, and competences available. You can hardly choose a social platform no one in the team is familiar with (except you plan a training).

Step 4

Available resources



What time resources or financial resources does your company have? In the chapter "**Do a Reality Check**" you identified your company's resources.

In case you want to outsource social media activities to an agency, it is a question of **financial resources** how active you are on social media platforms.

In case you yourself or your team are in charge of social media activities, it is a question of **time resources** when choosing the number of social platforms.

Summary

To identify on which social platforms your company should be active, consider the following 4 factors:

- Your target audience
- Your competitors
- Available competences
- Available resources



Further reading and resources

Key social media services

Queensland Government published information about key social media services for business owners.

[READ MORE](#)

13 Top Tips For Choosing The Right Social Media Platform For Your Business

The Forbes article from 2019 identifies 13 tips on how to choose the right social media platform.

[READ MORE](#)



What are your takeaways from this chapter?

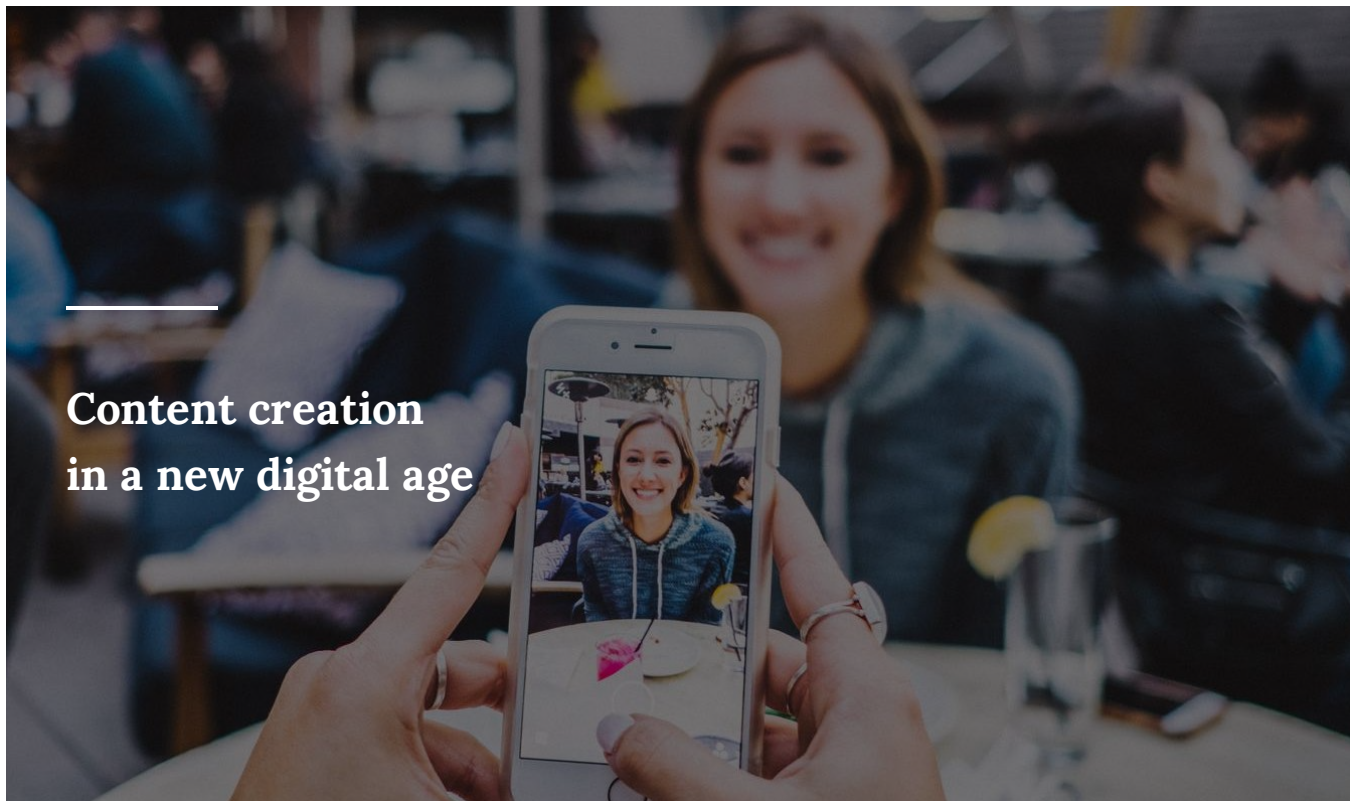
Lessons learned

This chapter helped you to revise your social media platform choices or to make your initial choice of social platforms for your company.

Most important: Your company doesn't have to be present on all social media platforms out there. This would be pretty time-consuming and expensive. **Choose wisely** by analyzing where your **target audience** is active on, which platforms your **competitors** use and which **competences** and **time resources**, as well as **financial resources**, are available.

You chose your platform(s). Now, let's create some content!

6) Create Engaging Content



Content creation
in a new digital age

In the 90ies, the early days of the internet, online communication wasn't at all fit to be a substitute for face-to-face communication. Important communication cues were filtered out. Also, the internet was rather used to **get a message to many users**. **There were early forms of social networks that we now know**, but similar to the newspaper, it was rather used to **"shout out"** than to initiate a dialogue between publisher and reader. **But times have changed!**

The History of the Internet

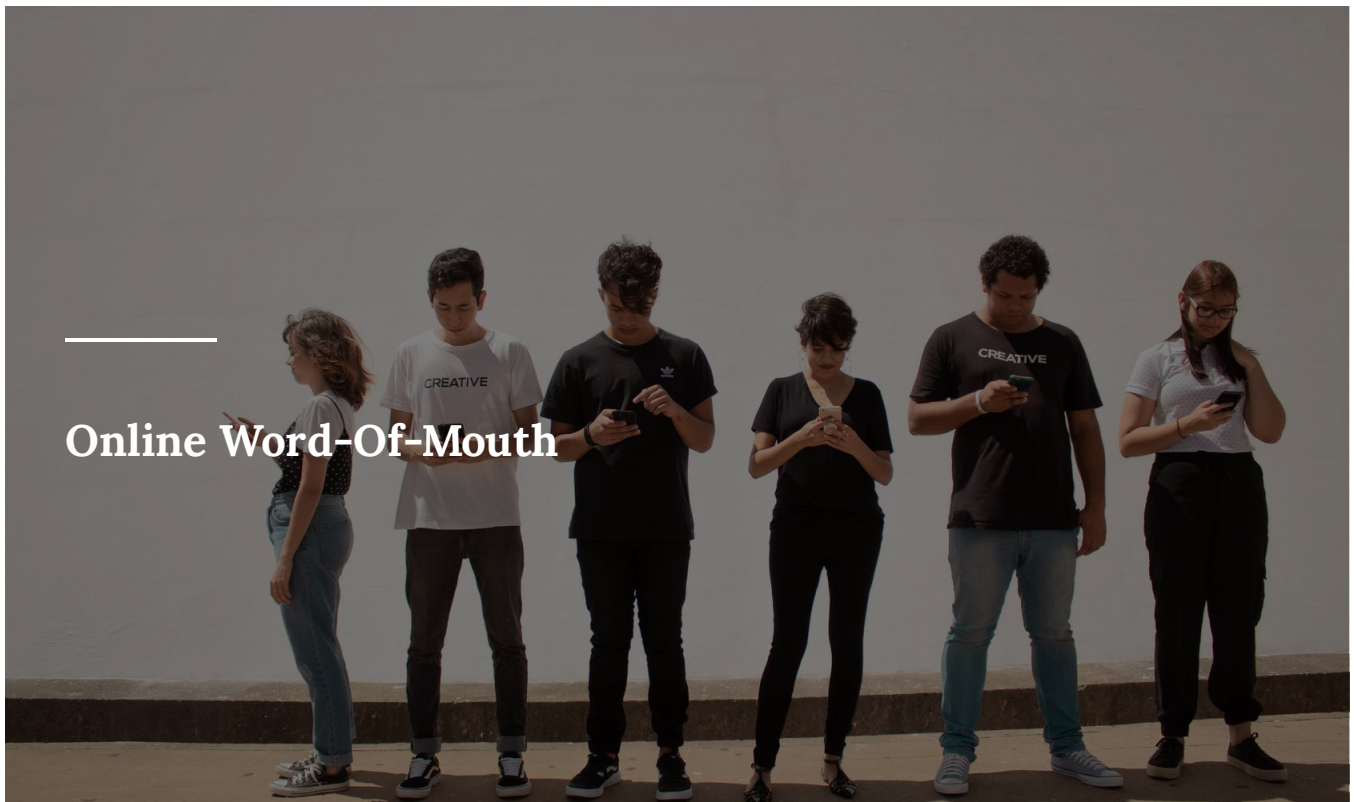
Learn more about the history of the internet in the DigiCulTS course "Promoting Digital Transformation", Chapter 4.

LEARN MORE

In the last decades, **more and more people have learned how to publish online** (like on personal blogs) and how to interact with others online. Step by step, also social networks have changed in a way, everyone can easily publish and share. It is more than just a dialogue with others. **Publishing online is about online presence and identity**, which is under **constant development through social interactions online**.

An online presence and identity are not only for big organizations that can afford programmers. **Everyone can be a content creator nowadays**, with all upsides and downsides.

Online Word-Of-Mouth



Your company's shout-out messages to your customers are important, also in this new age of the internet. Keep sharing information and news about your company and your products and/or services! **But please be aware of the following advice:**

“A brand is no longer what we tell the consumer it is –

it is what consumers tell each other it is.”

- [Scott Cook, co-founder of Intuit](#)

The **effects of advertising** your company, products, and services **do not merely depend on the original message you posted**, but rather on how users reacted, shared, and adopted your message in the content they are producing on social media.

The **number of reviews and other online content**, that is created and shared by users on social media has increased **dramatically in recent years**. This kind of online content is also called **user-generated content**. Some examples:

- **User reviews** a specific brand, product, or service on Google or Facebook
- **User videos** discussing the features of a product on YouTube, Instagram, or Tiktok
- Users **displaying their newly purchased products** on Instagram, tagging the brand

User-generated content has the potential to **shape consumer brand perceptions**. It significantly influences the **purchase decision of customers** ([Goh, Heng, & Lin, 2013](#)) **Therefore:**

Focus on engaging consumers to co-create your brand!



How to find interesting topics for engaging social media postings?

There are 3 aspects to consider when finding interesting topics:

1

Think of your target audience

2

Emotional content wins.

3

Think about reasons why your target audience would engage with your content.

1) Think of your target audience!

The first step to **high-impact, engaging postings** is finding the **right topics** for your postings. Think back to your target audience analysis: **Who will be reading your content?** Take a look at your **customer personas** and consider the following questions:

- What **goals, values, challenges**, and **pain points** do they have?

- How can you **help them** to **overcome their challenges** and **resolve their pain points**?

Your postings **need to be of value** for the target group to be interesting for them.



What are the goals, challenges and pain points of your target audience? Create content which is addressing these topics.

A practical example

For a **fitness apparel and accessories brand**, the **goal of its target audience** might be to get or stay in shape. They might have some personal goals like running a marathon or lifting heavier weights.

Their challenges could be to **stay motivated** and **understand the newest research results** on how to train effectively.

Their **pain points** could be time management (**work-life balance**), **health issues**, or **access to a gym** (e.g. during Covid-19).

The **fitness brand creates content** revolving around these topics. At the same time, it can feature or showcase its newest products and underline **how they can contribute to reaching the target group's goals** or **to solving specific problems**.

2) Emotional content wins.

According to studies, **emotional content** seems to offer the greatest potential for a large diffusion.

Content will be more likely to be shared if it evokes **high-arousal emotions** ([Berger & Milkman, 2012](#)).



Let's get emotional.

Don't shy away from triggering emotions.

Again, knowing your target audience is key.

You have a good chance to evoke emotions by addressing the target audience's goals, values, challenges, and pain points. Your posting could be **amusing, surprising, heartwarming, beautiful, inspiring, warning, or shocking.**

No matter which emotions you trigger: Make sure that you have some kind of **emotional impact** on your target group!

3) Think about reasons why your target audience would engage with your content

There are some key motives why users react to, share, and create content about your company, your products, or your services. Make sure to address one or more of these motives in your social media postings ([Roma & Aloini, 2019](#)):

ENTERTAINMENT	EDUCATION	ENHANCE SELF-WORTH	ECONOMIC INCENTIVE	CO
<p>The users are in need of entertainment and therefore comment, react, share or create content on social media. It could be funny (e.g. memes), interactive (e.g. a dance challenge or photo challenge, this-or-that voting, a quiz, etc.), or tapping into a trending topic on social media (contributing to popular hashtags or challenges).</p>				



ENTERTAINMENT

EDUCATION

ENHANCE SELF-
WORTH

ECONOMIC
INCENTIVE

CO

Content infused with educational information and news is more likely to be shared. **Share a bit of your expertise** about your products and services online. You could also create content about **news in your industry** and how it affects your business. **Even better:** Information, that is useful for your target audience to **improve their life** or **solve one of their problems** (e.g. sharing how-to-tutorials, sharing secrets or life hacks, quizzes, etc.)



ENTERTAINMENT

EDUCATION

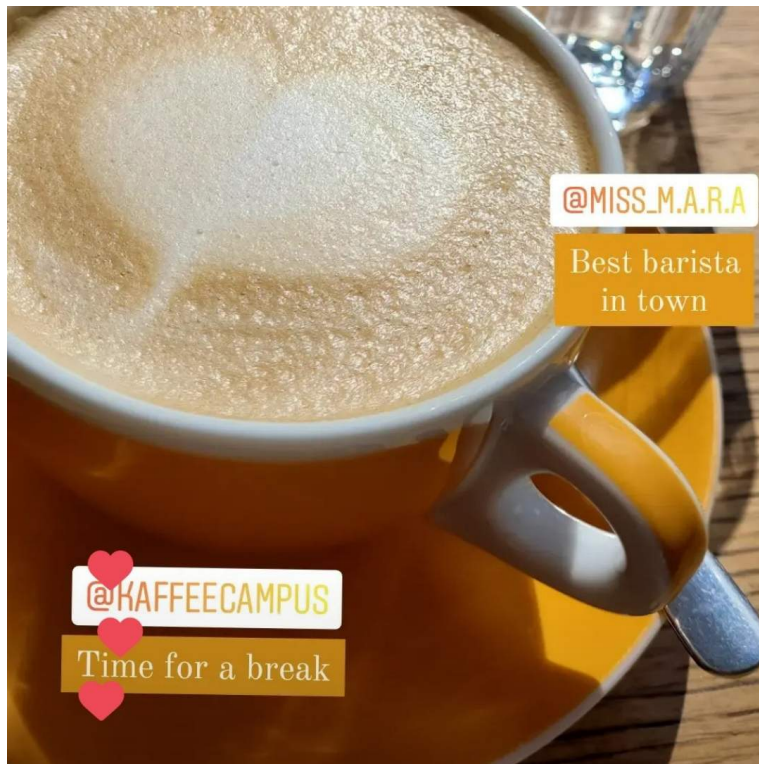
ENHANCE SELF-
WORTH

ECONOMIC
INCENTIVE

CO

Expressing personal identity is an important aspect of social media. It is a means to continuously develop and establish an online identity. If your company's posting or social media campaign has the potential to enhance the user's own self-worth, it is more likely that they engage with it. A successful strategy is to **share user-generated content** about your products and services. This way, you **make your target group feel proud, special, and/or heard**.

Here is an example of **user-generated content** by a customer at a [local coffee shop and roastery @Kaffeecampus](#) in the Austrian city of Krems, both tagging the coffee shop as well as the barista in a story on Instagram. It was reshared by the coffee shop's account - a great strategy on social media for higher impact.



ENTERTAINMENT	EDUCATION	ENHANCE SELF-WORTH	ECONOMIC INCENTIVE	CO
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Announcements of sales or promotions (e.g. **discounts, giveaways**, etc.) have a positive impact on engagement, especially if they are connected to certain actions.

Below you find an **example** of a promotional posting. A small skincare manufacturer is **giving away a limited number of presents** to all users, who are following the company account, liking the posting, and commenting as well as tagging three friends.



ENTERTAINMENT	EDUCATION	ENHANCE SELF-WORTH	ECONOMIC INCENTIVE	CONCERN FOR OTHERS
---------------	-----------	--------------------	--------------------	--------------------

Sharing is caring! Altruistic motives and **concern for other users** are common aspects of sharing and creating content on social media. Customers want to **help others to make good buying decisions** or they want to **support good causes** (e.g. support initiatives to help refugees, against domestic violence, against the gender pay gap, for work-life balance, etc.).

An example of a movement with concern for others is the #blacklivesmatter initiative:

W WIKIPEDIA



Black Lives Matter - Wikipedia

Black Lives Matter (BLM) is a decentralized political and social movement that seeks to highlight racism, discrimination, and inequality experienced by black people. When its supporters come together, they do so primarily to protest incidents of police brutality and racially motivated violence against black people.

READ MORE WIKIPEDIA >

ENTERTAINMENT

EDUCATION

ENHANCE SELF-
WORTH

ECONOMIC
INCENTIVE

CO

Users want to **connect to others** and **belong to a community**. They have a human desire for social interaction. **Online challenges** on social media can address this motive for sharing, commenting, and reacting online. **You are building a community of followers** and fans for your brand - make sure they **feel heard, connected, and welcome!** **Content ideas to support belonging:**

- Asking followers for advice
- Share customer-spotlights
- Introduce your team
- Share user-generated content

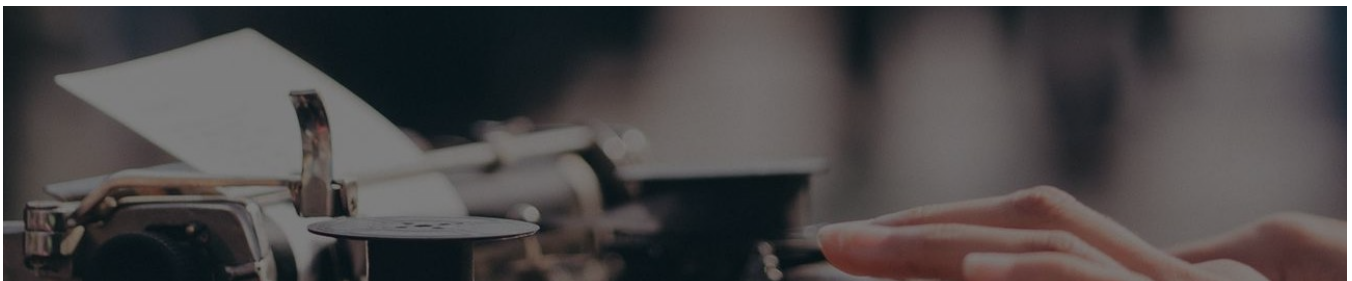
- Share behind-the-scene information
- Always react to the comments of your target audience and stimulate the conversation.




Let's check out more practical examples

The social media management tool Hootsuite gives 29 practical examples of how to write engaging content.

29 CONTENT IDEAS





How to create a high-impact posting on social media?

You chose an interesting, engaging topic. What is the next step?

The following 6 aspects need to be considered when **creating content** for social media so it can have a **high impact**:

- 1 Well-written and readable content
- 2 Use visual media, but don't violate copyrights
- 3 Consistency
- 4 Easily findable content
- 5 Different social media, different behavior

1) Well-written and readable content

Make sure, that your article is written to be read online and easy to understand. This has a direct impact on the extent people engage with and take on your message. **Use personal pronouns** (say “I” and “we,” not “it” and “the company”), use the **active voice**, and write **concisely** (not too long, not too short!).



You want to know how readable the text is?
Check out the link to the calculator below.

Calculating readability

Readability scores can help you to get valuable insights into how easy your text is to understand.

A [Flesch Kincaid Calculator](#) can be used to show how readable your text is by providing a **Flesch Readability Ease score** and the **Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level** score.

Flesch Kincaid Calculator

Cut and paste the text you want to test into the box on the site, then click "Calculate". This will give you the text's readability scores.

CHECK IT OUT

Next to readability, also the **tone of your writing voice** is important: Adapt it to your target group! **To decide which tone fits best**, [use social listening](#) to find out which tone customers are using online. **Observing the wording and media your customers are using** on social media will help you to find the right writing voice and supporting media.

2) Use visual media, but don't violate copyrights

Express your message on social media through rich, visual means.

In the last decade, most social media platforms have been incorporating more and more **visual-oriented features and richer content** in social media ([Roma & Aloini, 2019](#)). Therefore, make use of appealing **pictures, videos, and GIFs** in your postings and comments.

In general, **posting videos** has become very popular among users on social media, especially since the introduction of the ["story-function"](#) on various social media platforms after the big success of this function on Snapchat.

Mind copyrights when choosing pictures and videos online

If you want to use pictures, videos, sounds, etc. you found online, you need to check if you are violating any copyrights. In general, each video, picture, or sound usually is **copyright protected by default**. This means you are not allowed to use it without the permission of the owner of the picture or video.



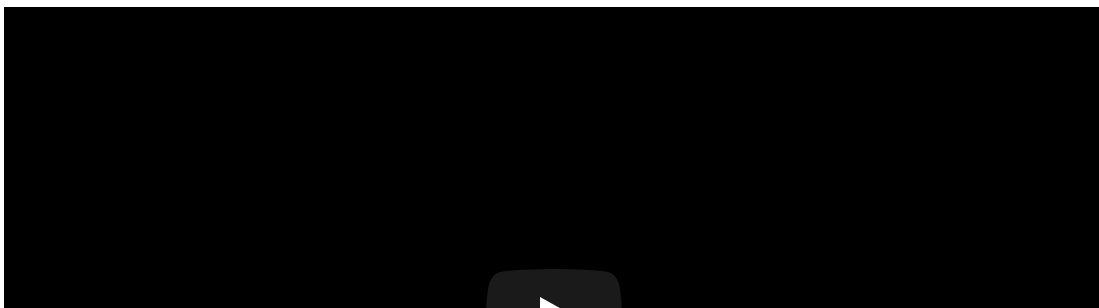
Being active on social media also requires knowing more about copyrights in your country.

There are some exceptions:

Some creators open the usage of their work for others by licensing it under [creative commons](#). This means that, under the conditions specified by the specific creative commons license, the picture, video, text, or sound can be used and even altered by others.

The European Union Intellectual Property Office collected frequently asked questions about intellectual property and copyrights and answered them for each EU country:

 YOUTUBE





FAQs on Copyright - EUIPO: Answers to your most common copyright questions across Europe

In the EUIPO's FAQs on copyright for consumers, a user-friendly webpage, you can find answers to your most common copyright questions using country and langu...

VIEW ON YOUTUBE >

You are unsure if you are breaching copyright rules?

The **European Union Intellectual Property Office** provides answers to frequently asked questions for all European Countries. Check it out!

[READ MORE](#)

3) Consistency

Consistency is key to successful social media marketing. You want your audience to recognize your brand, therefore you must be consistent: **Your tone of voice, your content, and your aesthetics need to be consistent over time.** This will support you to grow in audience engagement and reach.

Furthermore, make sure that the information you provide on social media is **in line with the information** you give on your company **website**, on **printed marketing material**, and on **other marketing channels**.

4) Easily findable content

There has been a huge shift to social media use from mobile devices. This changed the ways how users shared content on social media. Interactions are dynamic, ubiquitous, location-based, and real-time. Furthermore, the users' participation also increased due to the use of mobile devices ([Roma & Aloini, 2019](#)).



Make your slogan a hashtag and encourage your customers to use it when posting brand-, product- or service-related content on social media.

How can your company be found on social media?

- Use **hashtags**, e.g. a unique **company hashtag**, and convince users to use it when talking about your brand, your products, or services on social media.
- Use **geo-location services** in your posts, to give interested users online the chance to drop by at your local store in person.

5) Different social media, different behavior

Structural differences among channels deeply affect the social environment. Don't make the mistake to ignore these differences [\(Roma & Aloini, 2019\)](#).

[Market research by sprout social \(2021\)](#) showed that **51% of consumers will unfollow** companies on social media when they **find the content irrelevant**. It pays off to adapt your content to you the target group on the respective social media platforms. Understanding how users engage and interact within different social media is crucial for the impact of your postings.

Every platform has its own audience and each audience has its **own expectations** for what kind of content they find relevant. Again, in this case, [social listening](#) is a useful method to get more insights to optimize the relevance of your postings for your target groups on different social media platforms.

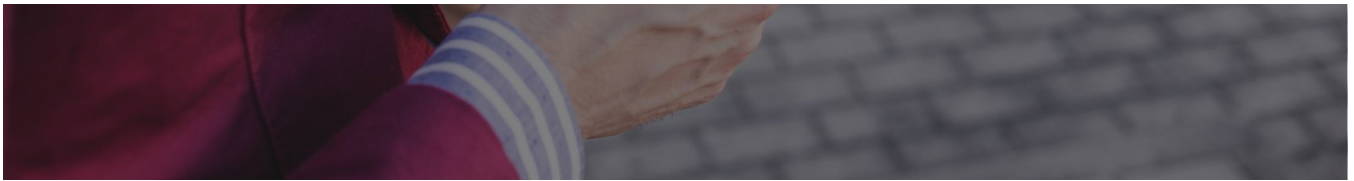
What to post on different social media platforms

Posting the same content across Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other social media isn't doing you any favors. This article gives some ideas and insights.

WHAT TO POST?



Share your experience and
discuss with peers






We have created an **online discussion board** for you using [Padlet](#) so that you can share your social media tooltips with peers online: **Which tools do you like to use for content creation? Why?**

Add your answers to our [online discussion board below](#). All you have to do is click the button with the "plus" sign on the bottom right-hand corner to add your comment:

Trouble viewing this page? Go to our diagnostics page to see what's wrong.

UNIVERSITÄT FÜR WEITERBILDUNG KREMS 21D

-  Share
- 



Your tool tips for content creation on social media

Which tools do you like to use for content creation? Why?

`more_vertical`

Canva.com

[You can open Padlet in a separate browser tab here.](#)

i You haven't used Padlet yet? It is pretty user-friendly and intuitive. You don't need to sign in to use it. If you would like to learn more about how to use it, here is a brief [YouTube-tutorial](#).

Further reading and resources

"How does brand-related user-generated content differ across social media? Evidence reloaded "

In this article by Roma & Aloini (2019), you can read more about recent research on brand-related user-generated content on different social platforms.

READ MORE

Do you want some more practical advice on content creation and management?

Meta provides a free online course "**Social Media Management**" (approx. 12h workload) on the course platform Coursera. It gives practical advice on how to create an online presence **on Facebook and Instagram**.

[LEARN MORE](#)



What are your takeaways from this chapter?

Lessons learned

Online word-of-mouth and **brand-related user-generated content** are crucial for the high impact of your social media activities.

You learned how to choose **interesting, engaging topics for social media postings**. Furthermore, you now know about **five characteristics of high-impact social**

content:

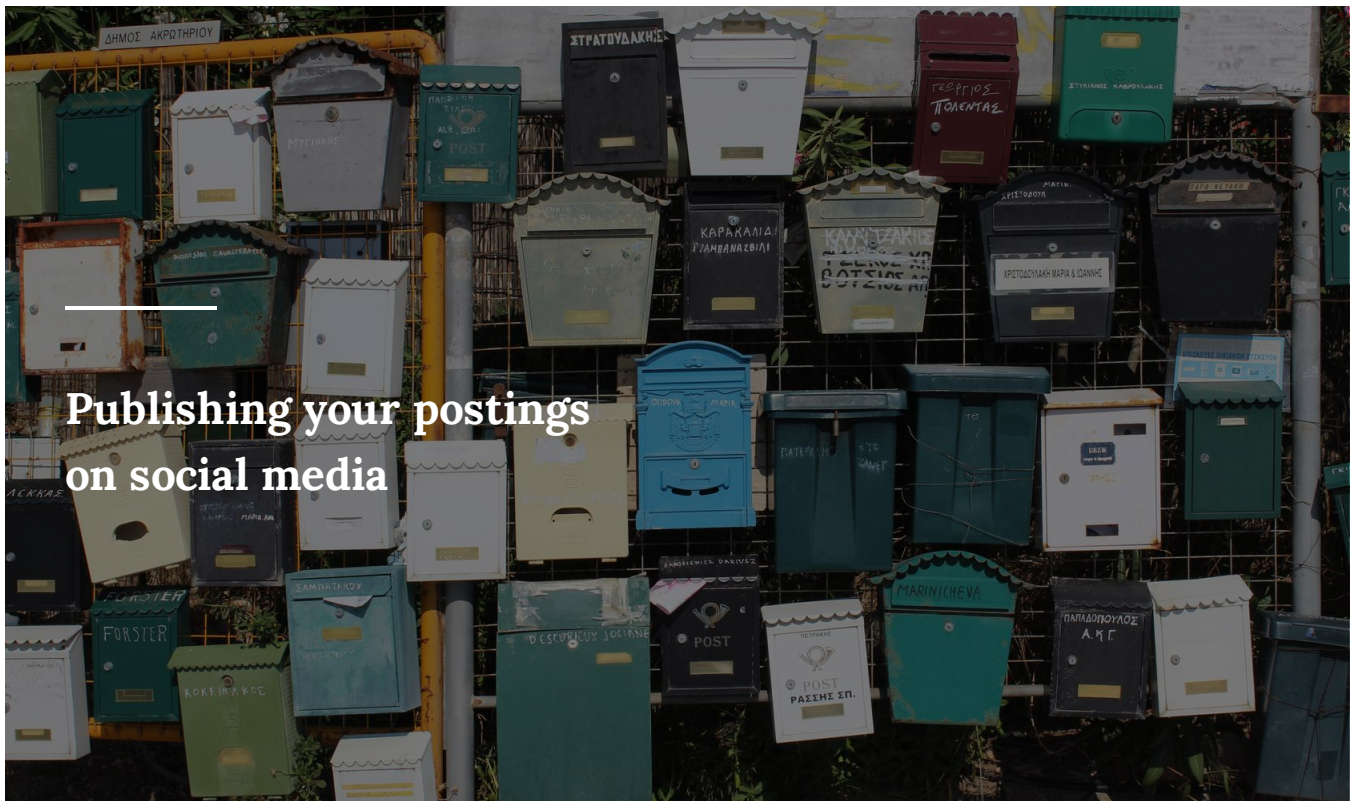
- Well-written and readable
- Using visual media, but don't violate copyrights
- Consistency
- Easily findable
- Adapted to the social media platform

What's next?

We now know what we need to consider when creating engaging content. In the next chapter, we'll take a closer look at **managing your content** as well as **user-generated content** to boost the social media performance of your company.

How to manage your content as well as user-generated content?

7) Publish and Manage Content



In the last chapter, you learned what to consider when creating high-impact, encouraging content for social media. Now, we'll have a closer look at the next step: **Publishing and managing your content as well as user-generated content**. We have some advice for you on how to elaborate your publishing and content management strategy:

1) Choose a suitable posting frequency

Your followers like consistency. They want to know, what they can expect from you.

Therefore, choose a suitable posting frequency that is **in line with your company's resources and capabilities**. See also chapter 3 of this course "**Do a Reality-Check**" to identify your company's resources and capabilities regarding social media activities.

2) Choose a suitable posting time

When is the best time to publish a posting? This highly depends on the behavior of your target group on social media. Here are two examples:

“For a brand targeting **mums**, for example, it may make more sense to create engaging content at **2 am** when mums are awake and alone with their babies. For a brand targeting **football fans**, as another example, your research may find that your audience most wants to engage after football matches in the **afternoon or evening**.”

- [Matt Rhodes](#)

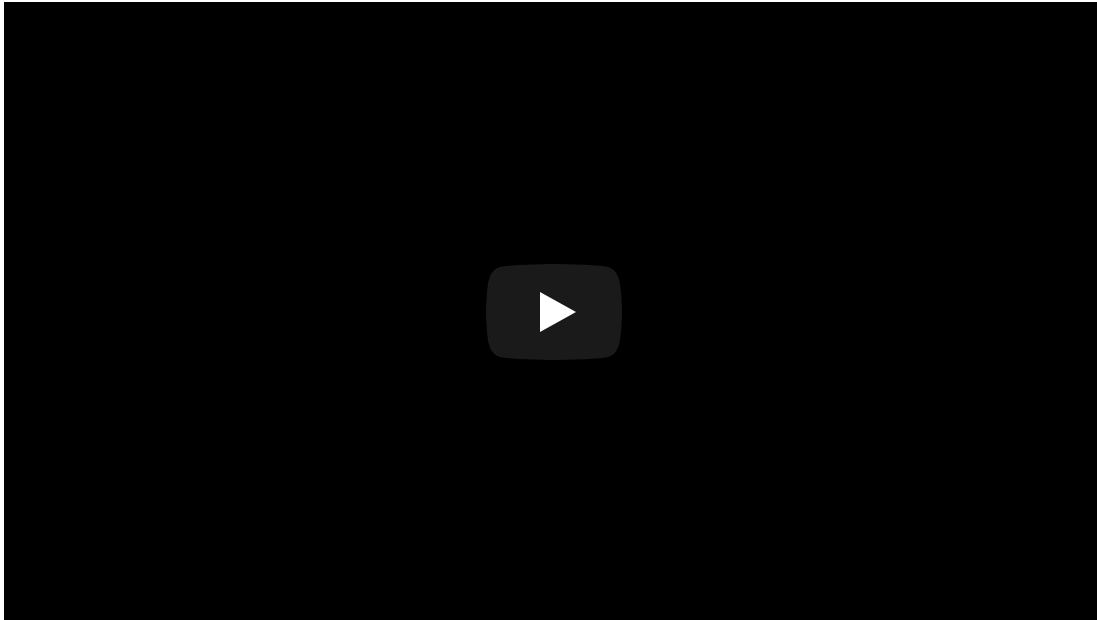
Some business dashboards, e.g. [the Meta Business Suite](#), give suggestions at what times it is most favorable to publish. You can also collect data and experiences by **monitoring your posting reach, reactions, and comments** to your last postings at different times.

3) Plan your postings in a posting calendar

You know how often you want to post and which times of the day might be suitable for your target group. You are ready to set up a **posting calendar**! You can basically use any program, which allows you to create tables (like Excel, Google Sheets, etc.) but there are also many content management tools out there, which can help you to organize and plan your postings. [The Youtube Video provided](#)

by [Hootsuite](#) gives an **example of how to set up a posting calendar**. It basically is a result of all our prior learnings and reflections from the last chapters of this course.

 YOUTUBE



How to make a social media content calendar in Google Sheets (FREE TEMPLATE)

So you wanna make a social media content calendar and get ORGANIZY? Well, watch this video to find out how the pros here at Hootsuite use Google Sheets to pl...

VIEW ON YOUTUBE >

What are the advantages of a posting calendar?

☐

You don't forget to post on social media. A consistent posting frequency is supported.

☐

You can plan your workload for social media activities.

☐

You can plan postings for a whole year in advance!

☐

You can use the calendar also for reflecting on your content strategy.

SUBMIT



Let's get creative! Developing content for social media can be a lot of fun.

You cannot force creativity at a certain time.

You don't necessarily have to create a posting at the very moment you want to post it. You could **create it in advance**, at a moment you have a great idea of just feeling like creating content for social media. This is especially important if you want to share **pictures or videos**, which need a bit of time to be produced.

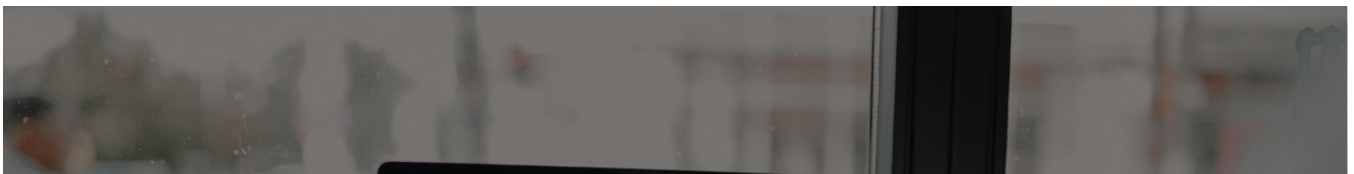
Creating in advance


There is the possibility to **save** created postings **for later** on several social media platforms. Furthermore, there are **various applications**, which help you in media production for social media:

- [Canva](#): A graphic design platform to create social media graphics, presentations, posters, documents, and other visual content. There are plenty of free templates as well as paid subscription options.
- [Kinemaster](#): A video editing app, which is great if you want to create and edit videos on your mobile phone.

4) Keep your promises

With a posting calendar, you are equipped for consistent posting. Now, you only need to make it a reality. **Don't forget:** Be consistent with the amount and regularity of postings on social media. This is very important if you want to **grow your company account and gain more followers**.





Content and community management

What is community management?

It is all about building and facilitating **an authentic and engaged community** of **customers, employees, partners, and followers**. You have the chance to give your brand a human voice and it allows actual relationship building with all of your company stakeholders.

A study by [Göttel, Wirtz & Langer \(2021\)](#) showed, that **entertaining, vivid, informative, and credible content** has a positive influence on user engagement. This is very much in line with what we suggested in **chapter 6 of this course**.

If you want to support the credibility of your company online, check out our DigiCulTS course "**Online Credibility & Trust**". Brand trust mediates the relationship between **user engagement and purchase intention**. Among other methods suggested in the DigiCulTS course "Online Credibility & Trust", also **community management** is a **crucial method to build trust**:

“Thus, the **exchange with other users** may even be more important for trust building due to the fact that users will **not expect other users to euphemise**

anything about the brand. Even though **community managers cannot directly control** this communication, they can at least foster it and make a plea concerning the exchange among users within the community.”

- [Göttel, Wirtz & Langer \(2021\)](#)

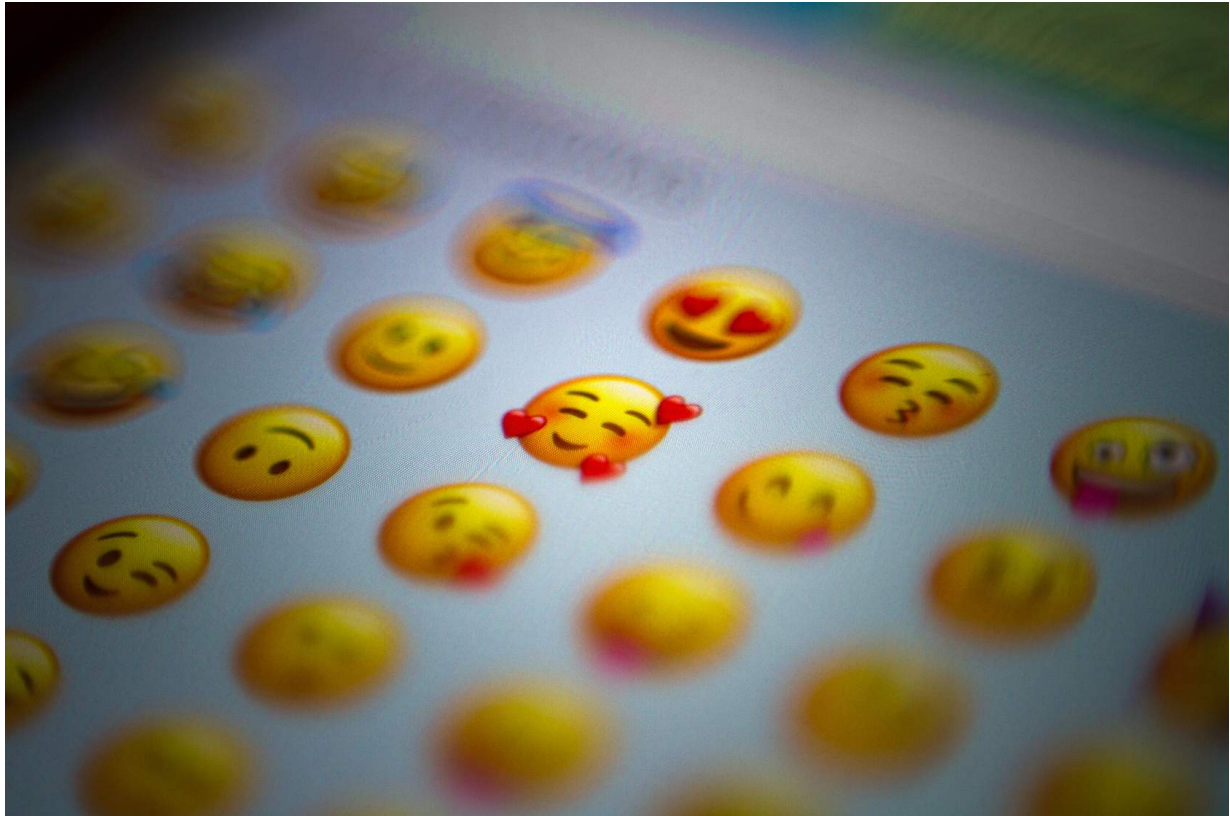
Advantages

There are various advantages of actively engaging in community management for your brand ([Fiverr, 2021](#)):

- **Product/ service development:** Gain new ideas and feedback from your customers and audience members through direct conversations
- **Customer support:** Offer support for your customers when it's needed
- **Higher awareness:** Boost product, service, and brand awareness amongst your target audience
- **Social listening:** Gain new insight into your audience's needs, expectations, and motivations through social listening
- **Higher sales:** Increase the number of **interactions**, **conversions**, and **ultimately sales** within your brand

User-generated content and community management

In the world of social media, you need **not only to manage the content you are creating** for your business but **also user-generated content** related to your brand, your products, and your services. **Fostering a community** around your brand means more user-generated content and therefore many important chances to build trust and promote your products and services.



You are "out there" with your brand, products, and services. Users have different needs, expectations, opinions. It will result in different reactions to the content you are sharing online.

Managing online consumer sentiment.

Some consumer-generated content (e.g., reviews, blog posts) is **positive** for your company, but some of it can be **negative** and can build into **consumer backlashes** if it is not **carefully managed**.

It is likely that you cannot address all negative sentiments. According to a study by [Berger & Milkman \(2012\)](#), there are certain **types of negativity** that may be more important to address because they are **more likely to be shared**:

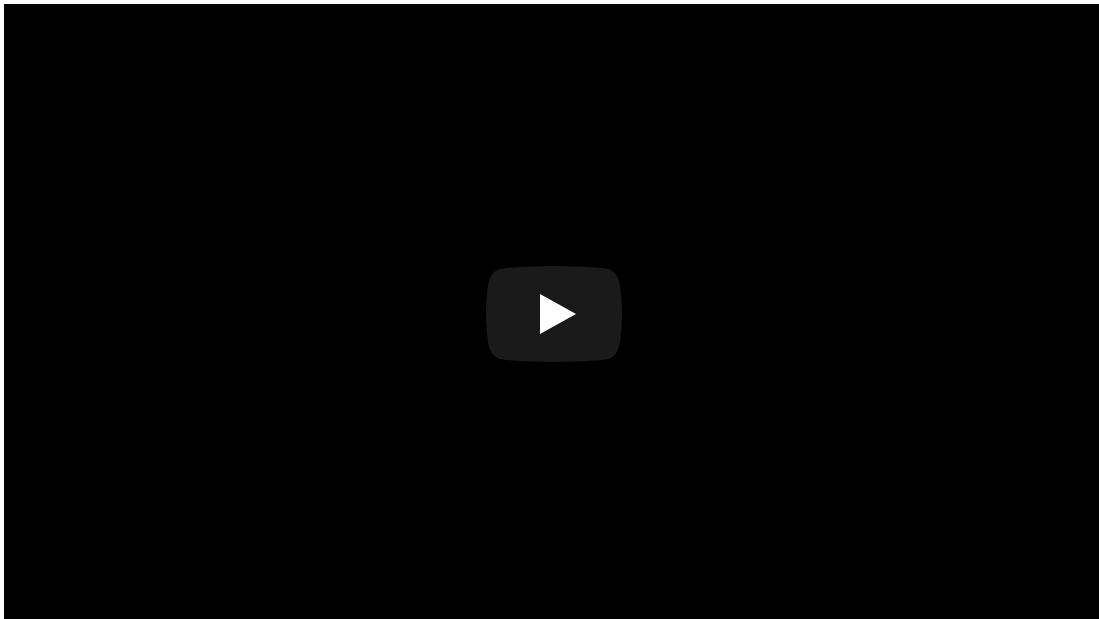
“Customer experiences that evoke **anxiety or anger**, for example, should be **more likely to be shared** than those that evoke sadness (and textual analysis can be used to distinguish different types of posts). Consequently, it may be more important to **rectify experiences that make consumers anxious** rather than disappointed.”

- [Berger & Milkman \(2012\)](#)

What to do as a community manager?

Managing user-generated content and supporting a community around your brand and products, means you are **navigating complaints**, **doing advocacy-building**, looking for **influencer connections**, **networking** with brands, and **gaining feedback**. The following video with Tara Richards and Jenny Heinrich introduces you to social media community management, **giving 10 tips and tricks**:

 YOUTUBE



Top 10 Social Media Community Manager Tips and Tricks

Vitruue's own Tara Richards and Jenny Heinrich share their Top 10 Social Media Community Manager Tips and Tricks. 1. Don't Plan Too Far Ahead. Don't plan more...

VIEW ON YOUTUBE >

Video summary

Some of the tips and tricks from the video might sound familiar to you. Some of them we already have introduced to you in this course, others are new. You also might notice, that **community management** goes hand in hand with **your social media strategy** and **content development for social media**:

1

Don't Plan Too Far Ahead. Don't plan more than one month in advance. (You already know about this tip from earlier in this chapter)

2

Play By The Numbers. Focus on the quality of your fans, not the quantity. (You already know about this tip from earlier in this chapter)

3

Be a Community Advocate. Limit your marketing on Facebook. The fans should be the priority at all times.

4

Make Engagement Your Goal. Get responses and figure out what works. Experiment to get fans to chime in.

5

Relax And Interact Like A Real Person. Limit the "corporate-speak".

6

Run Your Posts Through The "BFF Checker". Is this something that you could comfortably say to your best friend? If not, scrap it and start over.

7

Don't Be Big Brother. Let conversations flourish without you before you jump in.

8

Don't Coddle The Complainers. Deal with the complaint if necessary. Don't draw attention to complaints by adding fuel to the fire.

9

Let Your Fans Shine. Invite fans to share their media and stories on your wall.

10

Use Your Community to Learn. You have a **virtual focus group** at your fingertips.

Further readings and resources

Success factors of brand community management in social media

Learn more about study results on online community management by Göttel, Wirtz & Langer (2021).

[READ MORE](#)

What Makes Online Content Viral?

Berger & Milkman (2012) took a closer look at which content goes more viral than other content.

[READ MORE](#)



What are your takeaways from this chapter?

Lessons learned

In this chapter, you learned that you can **manage your social media content** by making use of a posting calendar and planning ahead. Also, the management of **user-generated content** was addressed. Engaging in **community management** is a necessity for a high-impact social media appearance. You were introduced to **10 tips and tricks** for successful community management.

Ideally, you are **constantly getting feedback** and input from customers and other stakeholders of your brand online. **But what to do if you don't get many reactions, comments, or input?** Time to take a closer look at your social media strategy, you might need to revise it.

Reflecting on your social media strategy

8) Monitor Your Success



Which metrics are relevant to find out if your **social media activities are successful**? The answer to this question **depends on your social media goals**! They determine the metrics you want to monitor. It makes sense to **identify a related metric for each goal**, which you have learned to identify in chapter 2 of this course.

This metric will **help you to determine if your social strategy is hitting the mark or not**.

Which metrics are actually out there and available for monitoring?

Sometimes it could be overwhelming to identify the right metric for your goals, especially, if one is not sure which metrics are available to monitor on social media. **Different social media platforms** usually offer **slightly different metrics**.

You can find the metrics in the **data dashboard for business accounts**, which are available for free on various platforms (e.g. [Instagram Professional Dashboard](#) or [Meta Business Suite and Business Manager](#), or [Twitter Analytics](#)).

Here is a quick introduction to the **most important and common metrics**.

ENGAGEMENT	AWARENESS	SHARE OF VOICE
------------	-----------	----------------

Engagement is one of the most important performance indicators. It also tells you how many people are interacting based on your post through **sharing, commenting, liking**, and/or **clicking**.

- **Total number of engagements:** the total number of all likes, comments, shares and clicks
- **Post engagement rate:** This rate shows you **how interesting your post was**. It rate is calculated by **dividing** your **total post engagements** (likes, comments, shares) by the **total reach** of your page and multiplying by 100. The higher the rate, the better.



ENGAGEMENT

AWARENESS

SHARE OF VOICE

If your goal for social media is focused on **brand awareness and perception**, there are two indicators of awareness that are important for you:

- **Impressions:** How many times a post was shown in someone's timeline on social media. It could be, that some users saw your post several times on their timeline.
- **Post reach:** This indicator tells you how many unique people saw your post or page.



ENGAGEMENT

AWARENESS

SHARE OF VOICE

The share of voice tells you how many people are mentioning your brand on social media compared to your competitors. **The more one is talked about, the greater the share of voice is.**

Its rate is calculated by **dividing your brand mentions** by the **total number of mentions (of your company and your competitor)** and multiplying by 100.



Interpreting the metrics of a posting

This is an **example** of how you could use certain metrics in social media to **reflect on our social media content**.

A **post** receives **a lot of likes** but **no comments or shares**. Is this good or bad?

☐

This is okay if the **intention** of the posting was to present a beautiful image and a caption that **isn't meant to be a call to action**.

☐

This always is a sign of poor performance.

☐

This is a good sign, since a lot of likes is always good.

☐

It is bad if there was a **call to action** that **encouraged comments and shares**. Then the **lack of them could mean a poorly performing** caption.

SUBMIT

Social media analytics tools

If you want to get more **insights into your social media activities**, you can also make use of social media analytics tools. Usually, these kinds of tools provide even more metrics and help you to calculate rates like the **share of voice**.

There are some tools, which offer freemium functions, others need to be paid for. Here is a list of social media analytics tools:

Free social media analytics tools

This list from 2020 gives an overview of social media analytics tools that are for free (at least to some extent).

READ MORE

Competitive benchmarking

Do you want to stay competitive? Then you need to know what other companies, stakeholders, and customers in your industry are currently talking about. You can **follow and monitor their activities** (see the 4-steps-guideline below) or use [social media competitor analysis tools](#) for automated analysis. Usually, you try to answer the following questions ([AdEspresso, 2022](#)):

- Who are your competitors on social media?
- Which social media platforms do they use?
- How do they craft content for their social networks?
- How much engagement does their content get?
- How are your social media marketing efforts doing compared to your competitors'?
- Are there gaps in your social media marketing strategy?
- Are there potential threats to your brand on social media?

Competitive analysis in 4 steps

- 1 Identify your competitors
- 2 Gather your data
- 3 Run a SWOT analysis (see also **chapter 3** of this course, where we introduced the SWOT analysis)
- 4 Keep your analysis up to date with social media monitoring

Which actions to take in each of the steps you can learn in AdEspresso's guide on conducting a competitive analysis:

How to do a competitive analysis on social media in 4 steps

This guide by AdEspresso (2022) will help you to conduct competitive benchmarking.

READ MORE



Share your experience and
discuss with peers

We have created an **online discussion board** for you using [Padlet](#) so that you can share **good practice** experiences on social media: **What was your biggest success on social media? Why?**

- Some postings perform better than others. Do you remember a posting with a great impact on social media (likes, comments, shares, etc.)? How do you interpret the **social media metrics**?
- Do you have **assumptions about the reasons for the posting's success**?
- You could also **leave some general remarks** on which postings seem to be the most successful in your opinion.

Add your answers to the questions on our **online discussion** board below. All you have to do is click the button with the "plus" sign on the bottom right-hand corner to add your comment:

Trouble viewing this page? Go to our diagnostics page to see what's wrong.

UNIVERSITÄT FÜR WEITERBILDUNG KREMS 21D


-  Share

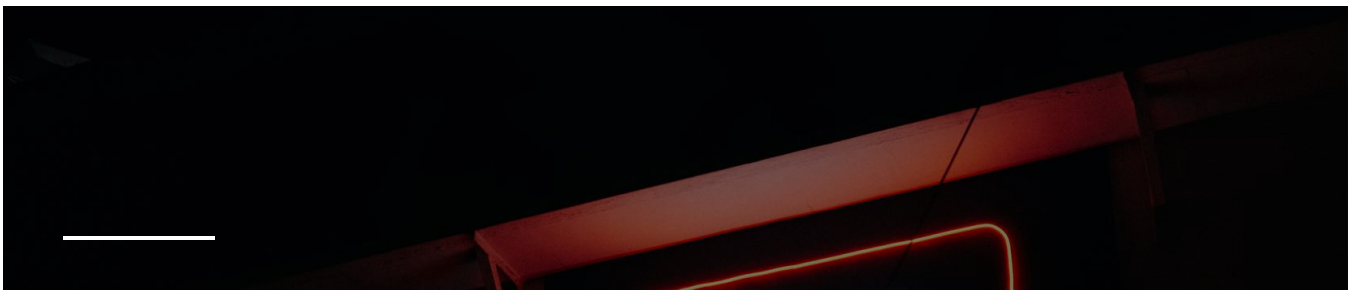


What was your biggest success on social media? Why?

Some postings perform better than others. What were postings with the most impact (likes, comments, shares, etc.)? Do you know why they were so successful? You are invited to describe your posting or to share a

[You can open Padlet in a separate browser tab here.](#)

 **You haven't used Padlet yet?** It is pretty user-friendly and intuitive. You don't need to sign in to use it. If you would like to learn more about how to use it, here is a brief [YouTube-tutorial](#).



HELP!

**Nobody likes or
engages with
my postings!**



**Nobody likes or engages with my postings!
My number of followers is stagnating!
What can I do about it?**

All monitoring actions as suggested above will **help you to understand your target group** and to tailor your postings and interactions to their needs, expectations, and interests. **It can take some time** until you really get a feeling for the right tone of voice in your postings, the right choice of pictures or topics. Still, there are some **tricks for a quick fix** to help improving **your reach on social media**:

 **YOUTUBE**



7 Social Media Hacks That'll Make Your Business Grow Faster | Neil Patel

Today I'm going to share with you 7 content creation hacks to grow your business faster. You're on Facebook, you're on Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. But a...

VIEW ON YOUTUBE >

Video summary

Neil shares the following tricks to improve your reach on social media:

- 1 **Respond to all user comments!** Your post is much more likely to get viral, especially on Facebook.
- 2 **Keep sentences short, combined** with a **"see more" link**, especially on LinkedIn.
- 3 Share content that is **not directly connected with your products and services**. Keep people informed about your products, but don't overdo it.
- 4 Use the **"story-function"** on Facebook and/or Instagram.
- 5 **Cross-following: Invite followers** to follow you also on other social networks you are active on.
- 6 **Use exit pop-ups on your website**, to invite people to follow you on your social media channels.
- 7 **Create video content** for social media.



Revise your strategy

This course introduced you to **essential aspects of a social media strategy** and supported to do **develop your strategy** step-by-step, chapter-by-chapter. Once developed, you need to make sure that the **strategy is regularly reviewed** to further boost your business success on and through social media. We suggest following to-do-list to review your social media strategy:

☐

Revise your **social media goals** and how they relate to your broader business objectives.

☐

Revise the **chosen metrics and indicators** (are they useful and suitable?).

☐

Check if your **assumptions about your target group** are still valid or if they have changed. You should keep an eye on new target groups emerging and changes within a target group itself.

☐

Review if the **chosen social media platforms, content strategy, and social media interactions** are suitable for reaching your goals.



What are your takeaways from this chapter?

Lessons learned

In this chapter, we introduced common metrics to measure the success of your social media activities. You could either use **professional dashboards for monitoring**, which usually are provided by social networking platforms for free, or **additional social media analytics tools** and/or **social media competitor analysis tools**.

Please always keep in mind to **regularly revise the social media strategy of your company**, to ensure you are up-to-date in this fast-changing online world.

We hope you enjoyed this introduction to developing a social media strategy!

We highly appreciate **your feedback**, so **please leave a comment** about this course [in our feedback padlet](#). **Thank you!**



Thank you for checking out the DigiCulTS course. I hope you found some useful takeaways for your professional practice.

Contact information

This course was designed for the [DigiCulTS project](#) by [Isabell Grundschober](#), a researcher at [the University for Continuing Education Krems](#). Feel free to connect with Isabell on social media to share your experiences about this course or discuss the course topics:

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