

# Read this before you begin your social media strategy



Here's a typical conversation I'll have with a client about why they haven't invested in social media.

Client: "Kirien, my target clients are doctors. They're not on Facebook and when they are, they're looking at cat videos, not coming to our brand page."

*Me: Okay. But Facebook is one social media platform. Do you think your target users aren't on any social media channels? These include Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube?*

Client: I'm not sure, we haven't really checked.

*Me: If you go onto LinkedIn right now and search for "Doctors" who work in the UK, there are over 30,000 results. That's a lot of potential clients. If you engage with even 1% of that number that's 300 people you're missing out on because you don't think social media is important.*

Client: Okay, if we get set up on LinkedIn. What am I going to share on there? Who wants to come on and see content about our boring products?

**If you ask these questions, this is post is for you.**

Firstly, let's get clear about the world we live in today.

## **THE WORLD HAS CHANGED AND SO MUST YOU**

"We are no longer in the Industrial Age; we are in a new economy that's digital, global, intangible, more meaningful and very entrepreneurial. Everything has changed and so must you." Daniel Priestly.

Think for a moment of the dramatic changes over the last 5 years.

There's been an explosion in new technology, social media is one thing. But think about smart phone usage, automation, e-commerce functions, speech recognition, and the volume of free information at your fingertips.

When today's customers land on your website, they want free things. Yet many brands still expect them to immediately part with their cash. Too many business owners are still trying to do business the same way they did it 20 years ago.

## **STARTING A BUSINESS IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA AGE VS. 20 YEARS AGO**

When you wanted to set up a business, you probably had to endure endless meetings about property and rental prices, think about getting a logo designed, plan for logistical issues, get phone lines set up, and you probably took an ad out in a magazine, you sponsored events, you had to buy new computers. It cost a lot of money.

That wasn't the case for [Fikki and Lola](#).

When they were students at Manchester University, they decided to get online and share their love of fashion. They set up a free blog, set up free social media accounts, shared their ideas, and were able to talk to their fans online — for free.

They focused on adding value and their fans got excited by their ideas. The word began to spread. Then they were contacted by fashion brands around the world. They were asked if they could be sent clothes and review them on their website and social media channels. They then grew into a lifestyle brand.

[Lola](#) explains

"We wanted to share our love of fashion which is why we started the blog. Now it's expanded to general lifestyle — being asked to review hotels and restaurants."

These brands understood the change brought by social media.

**An influencer can be a celebrity or it can be two 19-year-olds sitting in their bedrooms with direct access to a brand's target audience.**

Could you imagine this happening 20 years ago? This is the world we live in today. Social media has affected the landscape dramatically.

## **BIG BUSINESSES MUST THINK LIKE SMALL AGILE BUSINESSES**

Daniel Priestly, author of the best seller, *Oversubscribed*, tells us that big businesses need to learn from small businesses.

Social media has meant big corporate brands can no longer be faceless; you need to hire people who are willing to be the face of your brand.

The biggest brands in the world get this. Let's look at some examples.

PepsiCo is a 60 billion dollar company. But their CEO is the face of their brand, she's a celebrity. Type Indra Nooyi into [YouTube](#) and you'll see endless videos of her tackling their biggest critics openly and for everyone to see. She has a Facebook and Twitter account, too. She's out there. She gets why social media is important.

Huge brands like Facebook, Apple, and Burberry are doing the same. Sheryl Sandberg, the CTO at Facebook [writes books](#) and (obviously) keeps an active Facebook page.

**Who has time to write a book and post daily on Facebook?** You say. Most people don't. But they still find ways to share their values.

Angela Ahrendts is the Senior Vice President at Apple Retail but go onto her [LinkedIn page](#) and you'll see that she writes well read blogs.

## **WHY SOCIAL MEDIA IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU**

Social media is word-of-mouth marketing on steroids.

Instead of going to the market and having a reach of 200 people every Saturday, on social media you can communicate your brand values to over 200, 000 people.

It's that simple.

However, before you start building your brand on social media, it's important you understand social media best practice.

## **WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?**

If you're still asking what social media is, your competition is sitting back and smiling. They don't have to worry about crushing you because they will.

It's not even local companies who are competing with you.

That company in China who can produce material at half your price is likely targeting your competition with their shiny websites, active social media accounts and an army of free remarkable content.

They know that word-of-mouth marketing now includes building an online presence that includes social media.

Everyone knows that today, you don't need to be limited to clients in Birmingham when you can just as easily target companies in Bangkok and Belize.

### **HOW DOES MY BRAND BENEFIT FROM SOCIAL MEDIA?**

Go to any coffee shop, everyone is on their smart phone. People are taking pictures of food in restaurants and uploading them to Snapchat and Instagram. And when you're on holiday, the first thing we want is a wifi password. **The world is incredibly sociable.**

An internet connection, to many, has become a Human Rights issue.

Yet some people still think they're an offline business. Whether you run a salon, sell nuts and bolts, or energy drinks, you can't say "we don't get social media." You need to exist in the online world.

### **WHAT SOCIAL MEDIA IS NOT**

Social media is a tool to better service your audience, potential customers and current customers. It's a platform to share remarkable content and yes - to make sales.

The purpose of a Facebook page isn't to only shout about how great you are. It's partly that, yes, but it's also about shouting about how great you are at solving your customer's problems, sharing content that will support them, answer their biggest problems, and showing your personality.

If you're an events company and every day you post social media posts like "We have 20% off booking our main room this weekend, BOOK NOW. CALL NOW." You're not going to have a very successful social campaign.

Instead share photos of a recent event that took place, say what went well, say thank you to the people who came. If you have a new manager start, share that, let them know who he/she is, why they've joined the company and how their position helps YOU - their customer

## **CONCLUSION**

There you have it. You now know the fundamentals, what social media is and how it's affected the business landscape. Are you feeling ready to start your social media strategy? In our next post we're going to outline exactly how.