

PROMOTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Social Media Platforms

These are our picks for the best social media networks for promoting a restaurant or other foodservice operation:



Facebook

The world's largest social network has a huge potential audience and many tools to reach and interact with your customers.



Instagram

A simpler platform focused on photography and short videos, this is currently the hottest social network and a great place to reach a younger audience.



Twitter

While not as large or full-featured as Facebook, Twitter still has a large userbase of potential customers for your business.

Getting Started

Signing Up

On Facebook, your personal account will create and manage your business page. On Instagram and Twitter, you will create separate accounts for your businesses, which you can set as business accounts to unlock additional management and promotion tools. Make sure fill in all information about your business as completely as possible, including hours and contact info.

Choosing Admins

Multiple people can manage one social media account. Make your job easier by sharing the work of running your social media, or assign it all to one or more of your employees that has a knack for it. On Instagram & Twitter, just share the login information for the account. On Facebook, add more admins in your page settings. When employees leave, be sure to remove them as admins or change your login password.

Linking Platforms

It is possible to link your accounts across networks, so you can make one post and have it appear on multiple networks. This can be a way to promote on more networks with no extra work. Facebook posts can be sent to Twitter and vice-versa, and Instagram posts can be sent to Facebook (and Twitter without images).

Advertising

All social media networks have tools to "boost" a post by paying to have it shown to more people. Advertising on social media can be a great option for businesses of any size. Your budget can be as small or as large as you want, you can have tight control over who sees your ads, you only pay for advertising that is actually seen, and you get tools to analyze the performance of your ads.

Strategy

Set a Schedule

This is arguably the most important part of running your social media presence! Having a schedule will help you post consistently and make it easier to know what to post. For example, you can develop a week-long posting schedule with certain types of content each day.

Facebook and Twitter even include options to post in the future, so you could set up all your social media promotion for a week in one sitting (services such as Hootsuite offer more advanced tools for this). You can always deviate from the schedule when you need to, but using a schedule will provide a plan for keeping your social media presence active day-to-day.

The best frequency of posts will vary business-to-business. You want to stay visible to your audience, but not overwhelm them and drive them away.

Content

The possibilities for what you can post are endless, but here are some suggestions:

- Daily/weekly specials
- Food photos
- Interior/exterior photos
- Photos of staff or customers
- Upcoming in-store events
- Sports events to be shown on TV
- "Of-the-day" items like soups
- Holiday hours/specials/events
- Ask questions
- Promotions/discounts
- Videos and/or Facebook Live
- Customer reviews/testimonials



DOs

Research What Others Are Doing - Look at the social media of local businesses and large national brands to get inspiration for what you could do with your own page.

Follow - Follow the competition or other businesses you admire to keep tabs on what they're up to and how they are promoting themselves.

Promotions - Offering discounts to your social media followers is a great way to attract followers and drive business to your location.

Be Responsive - Try to quickly respond to messages, comments and reviews.

Use Photos (and Video) - Posts with photos or video are much more effective at getting attention than basic text posts. Try to include photos with every post.



DON'Ts

Don't Be Negative - Getting a negative review or comment is almost inevitable, no matter how hard to try to please your customers. When it happens, do not get drawn into an argument. It will only make things worse. Also, avoid deleting negative reviews and comments unless they are vulgar, recurring, or otherwise unacceptable. Instead of fighting or hiding negative feedback, try to respond in a way that demonstrates that you understand the criticism and want to improve.

Don't Review Yourself - Avoid the temptation to have you, your employees or your family give your business favorable reviews. If your customers notice, it will give them a bad impression, and sites have systems to detect and remove self-reviews anyway.



BUILDING & MANAGING YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE



Claim Your Listings

The most important part of building an online presence for your business is to claim ownership of the listings on popular websites. This will allow you add and change information, link your listings together, monitor and reply to reviews, and more. Although the details vary site-to-site, the process generally entails creating an account with each service and then confirming that you own/manage the business with a verification phone call.

We recommend claiming your listing with at least these services:



Google - As the most popular search engine and mapping service, and a leading review site, Google is the most important listing to claim and maintain. Many potential customers will see nothing beyond Google's at-a-glance information before deciding to visit a business, so keeping that complete and accurate is a key part of your online presence.



Facebook - If you didn't create a Facebook Page for your business, Facebook may have created one for you. You can claim it and turn it into a full business Page and inherit all of its followers.



Yelp - Yelp is the leading business review site, so having a complete and accurate listing there should be a priority.



Apple Maps - Apple offers the Apple Maps Connect service to claim and fill in your business's listing on Apple Maps. Because Apple Maps is used by millions of iPhone users, having a complete listing there is important.

Restaurant Review Sites - TripAdvisor and OpenTable are just two of the most popular restaurant review sites. Claiming and filling in these listings will make sure that potential customers can find the info they need.



Crucial Information

Now that you've claimed your listings and can add to them, here are the most important pieces of information to make sure are included.

Contact Info - Including address, phone number, and links to your website and social media.

Hours - If a customer can't tell if you're open, they're likely to move along and look for a business that does make their hours easy to find.

Menu - Adding your menu might take a little more work, but providing it will draw in more customers - especially for take-out orders.

Website

For restaurants, having a website is a good idea, but not as important as it once was. Now, Google and social media networks like Facebook can provide customers with information about your business, and help you connect with them better than a traditional website can. If you'd like a website, Martin Bros. offers our Website Builder service with basic restaurant sites for only \$180 per year including design and setup.



Managing Reviews

Once you've claimed your online listings, you'll be able to set up email notifications of new reviews. Use this feature to stay on top of what customers are saying about your business, learn what's working and what needs improvement, and respond when appropriate.

When dealing with online reviews, avoid getting dragged into arguments with negative reviewers. It will only make things worse. Instead of fighting negative feedback, try to respond in a way that demonstrates that you understand the criticism and want to improve. Stay positive! Also, feel free to respond to good reviews as well - a friendly "thank you" might turn a fan into a super-fan.

It can be tempting, but avoid having you, your employees or your family give your business favorable reviews. If your customers notice, it will give them a bad impression, and sites have systems to detect and remove self-reviews anyway - and some even punish businesses that use them.

Advertising

Online advertising can be a cost-effective way to reach potential customers. Set your own budget (with prices starting much cheaper than traditional print or television advertising), control what audience sees your ads, pay only for advertising that is actually seen, and get tools to analyze the performance of your ads.

We recommend advertising with Google and/or social networks like Facebook and Instagram. These platforms reach the widest audience and give you the most control over your ad spending. We recommend against advertising on Yelp, as their system is not as effective or transparent as other options.



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