



Volvo Trucks. Driving Progress

Guide:

# Setting up your trucking business for success on social media



**W**hether you are an owner operator or a larger transport provider, social media can not only raise awareness about your products and services but also help generate revenue for your business. Over the years Volvo Trucks has put a lot of effort into building the company's presence over a number of platforms to meet various business goals. What follows is a step-by-step guide for establishing a social media presence based on industry best practices and lessons learned from managing Volvo Trucks' social media channels.



STEP 1

# KNOW YOUR PURPOSE

**Y**ou need to get started with social media by defining what purpose it will serve your business. Ask yourself what you want to achieve with your social media platforms. It could be to raise awareness of your brand or to market your services. Or it could be to better understand your market or create another channel for customer service. Keep in mind that the more specific your purpose is, the better your execution will be. Whatever goal you set for yourself it should be closely aligned to business objectives. You can also create different goals and purposes for different channels. For instance your goal could be to create thought leadership on LinkedIn and on Facebook you could be aiming for better and faster customer service.

**At Volvo Trucks** it took us some time to figure out our objectives with the different social channels. In

the formative years, we used social media to mostly test and learn what works and what doesn't. Posts were regular but mostly consisted of content produced for other channels like the customer magazine. We quickly realized though that it was hard to gain measurable outcomes from this kind of approach.

**With the launch** of the Volvo FH in 2012 we shifted our strategy towards creating more broad and viral content like (The Epic Split, The Hamster Stunt and The Flying Passenger). The objective was to attract likes, followers, shares and spread the content as far and wide as possible. On the back of these live test campaigns, Volvo Trucks successfully built a base of followers and established a strong presence across all social media platforms. Today our objectives are more geared towards engagement and conversion rates.



STEP 2

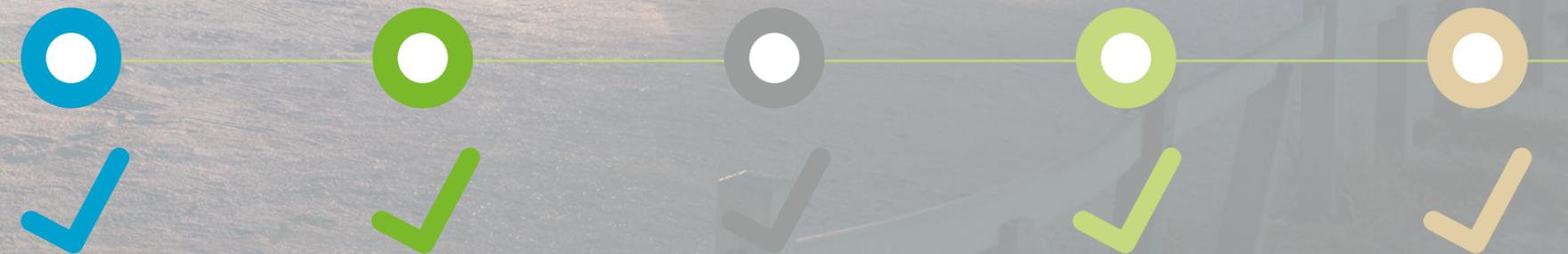
# CONDUCT A SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIT

**If you are** already on social media it's worthwhile to take a step back and evaluate your efforts. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What's working? What's not working?
- Who is connecting with you on social media? Are these the right people?
- How do your social media channels compare to those of your competitors?

**The results** of your audit should give you a clear picture of whether each social media channel you own today has a clear purpose, whether it's achieving meaningful business goals and whether it is worth keeping.

**During your** social media audit you should also keep an eye out for any impostor accounts that are using the name of your business as these can hurt your brand and also lure away followers.



■ STEP 3

# DETERMINE YOUR AUDIENCE AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

**One of** the great benefits of social media is the ability to target your messages towards very specific demographics. But this is only useful if you know the demographics of your target audience. So having decided on your purpose, the next step is to decide who exactly you want to reach. Where are they located, how old are they, what do they work with and what are their interests? Creating personas (fictional representations of your ideal customers) can be a great way to determine the needs, preferences and demographics of your ideal audience. At Volvo Trucks we work with 3-4 personas to determine our content mix and distribution strategy.

**When it** comes to audiences the good news is that you don't have to make many assumptions about their interests and demographics. There are plenty of social media analytics tools that can serve you that information. At Volvo Trucks we know that on Facebook our followers are drivers and owners operators who are mostly men. On LinkedIn our community consists of professionals in the automotive and transportation industries. And Instagram is where we have our youngest followers (ages 18-34), mostly drivers, who are very active and love sharing snippets of their lives on the road.



■ STEP 4

# DECIDE WHICH CHANNELS YOU SHOULD USE

**Which social** media channels you should use depends on your purpose and where your audience and competition is. Each channel comes with a unique user base that differs in age, gender and location. Here is a simple but useful illustration of audience breakdown of the major social media channels.

**The choice** of channel also depends on what your purpose is; for instance if you're looking to build brand awareness, Facebook is good for reaching as many people as possible since it has the most users. It also offers more parameters for targeting

if you want to do paid distribution. LinkedIn, on the other hand, is useful for targeting people in specific industries and occupations. Your content might reach fewer people, but they could be more relevant. When it comes to reach, quality often trumps quantity.

**When starting** out, it's good to stick to one or two channels at first. This allows you to ensure you're reaching your target audience, and to see how much time and resources is required. If things go well, you can gradually scale up. Our social journey at Volvo Trucks started with Youtube, followed by Twitter and Facebook.



## STEP 5

# DETERMINE THE TIME AND RESOURCES YOU ARE WILLING TO ALLOCATE

**Setting up** a Facebook or Instagram account for your business is pretty easy; the hard part is to keep it going. You need to create engaging content, map out your target audience, set a distribution strategy and engage with the followers who like, comment or share your content. All of this requires time and commitment. If you're new to social media marketing, I would suggest that you take some time to play around with different platforms and understand how long each activity takes. Yes, some updates are quick but others take time; you'll be surprised how much effort it takes to nail a 140 character tweet if you are focused on quality and impact.

**I would** say that there are two ways to allocate resources for social media marketing; bottom up or top down. In the bottom-up scenario you can shape your efforts around the resources you have. For example, if it's you or someone else who should manage social media in addition to other tasks, it's better to focus on core day-to-day channel

management (like posting updates and responding to comments) rather than big strategic campaigns.

**On the** other hand if you have time and resources, you can consider a top-down approach which allows you to not compromise on scale and ambition but will cost more as you will have to either hire someone or buy the service from a social media marketing agency.

**Regardless of** what your time and budget restraints look like, if you are planning to scale up your social media efforts you should definitely consider using tools & technology to speed up processes and reduce the manual workload. The major social media platforms have some tools that you can use and there are plenty of other free options out there. These can help you to schedule posts, analyse channel performance and more. We at Volvo Trucks for instance use Hootsuite and Talkwalker.



STEP 6

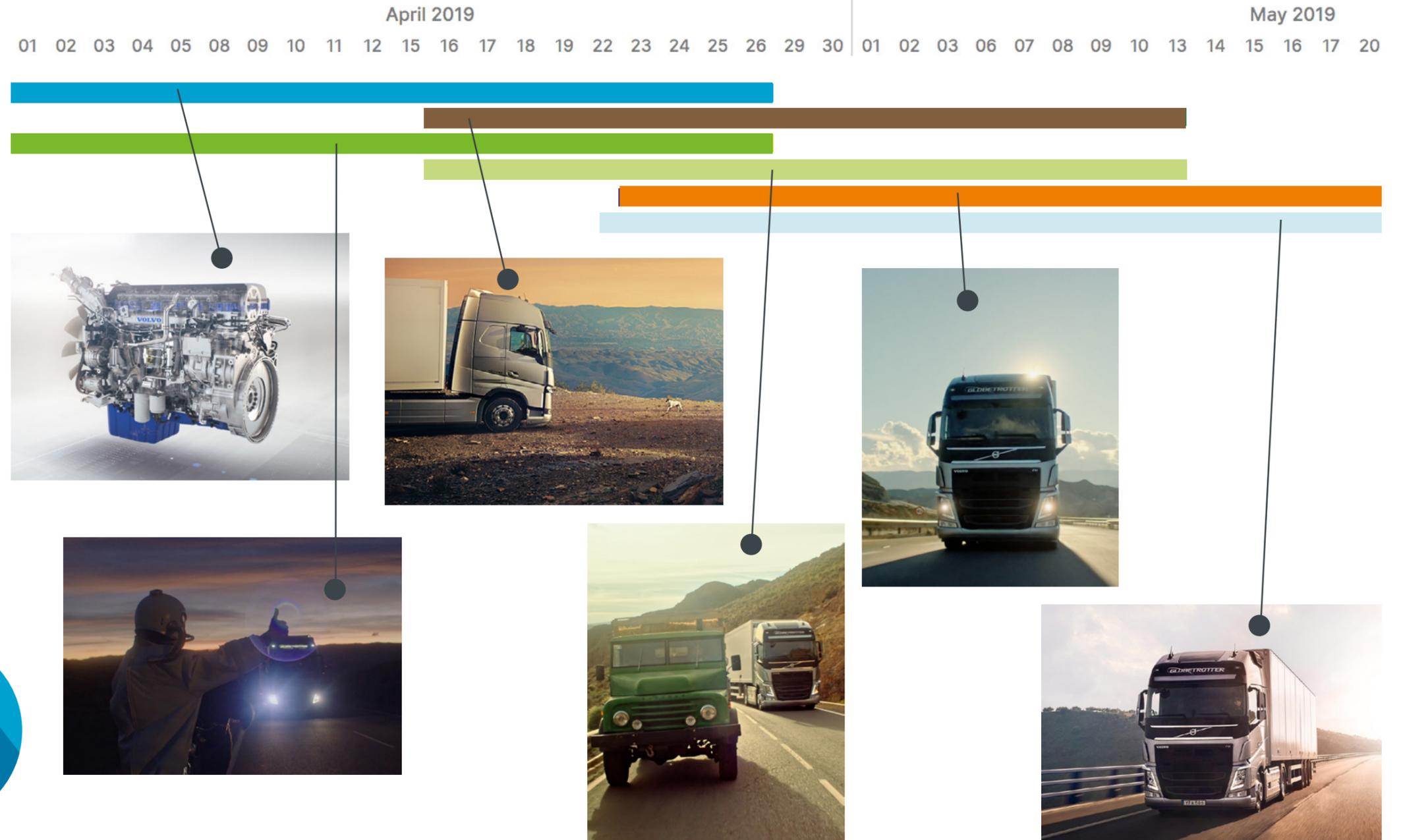
# CREATE A CONTENT CALENDAR

**You need** to create great content in order to succeed in social media (more on that in my next point). But it's also important to know when you will publish which is why you need a content calendar. If possible it should be created a month or so in advance and include things like:

- Time, date and channel
- Content title and format
- Content description
- Keywords
- Channel
- Call to action
- Keywords
- Post type and copy

**The purpose** of the calendar is of course to bring some law and order into your social media efforts. But it should also be flexible enough to address unforeseen events or trending topics.

**You can** use a simple Excel sheet or a Google Sheet to create this but there are also more professional tools out there.



## STEP 7

# START PRODUCING CONTENT



**When deciding** on what kinds of things to post on social media, keep your target group in mind: what interests them? What do they want to know? One common mistake is to be too focussed on selling your product or service. Or share things that might be interesting for yourself or your company but don't resonate with your followers. Remember, your audience is not captive. You can't force them to consume your content and they're free to unfollow you anytime. Your content has to offer something of value.

**When developing** your content it is important to remember that it reflects the purpose you have assigned for your social media channels. It is also good to think in terms of a sales funnel, where content can differ depending on your purpose and the different stages of a customer's purchasing journey. For example some of your content could be geared towards awareness where you educate and inform potential customers about broad, general interest topics related to your industry. Other content could be targeted to middle-funnel customers who are exploring their options and comparing products and services from different suppliers. When customers are in the intent phase, where they're actively looking for a new partner

to take care of their transport needs, you could target them with content that promotes your company's services. This approach requires a good understanding of your target personas and what the buying journey of your customers looks like.

**But if** you are starting from scratch and this all sounds too complicated you can begin with the 80-20 rule. Use 80% of your content to inform, educate, or entertain your audience. Use the other 20% to promote your brand or sell your products.

### Pro tips:

- **Social media** posts with video have 48% more views so use engaging videos as much as you can. When using this type of content keep in mind mobile users and adjust content accordingly. 4:5 or 1:1 usually works for mobile. The average time for video views on Facebook is 18.2 seconds so when producing videos make sure that you have a clear 'hook' right from the beginning.
- **Post frequently:** This can of course vary depending on how much time you have, your business and industry. In order to keep your channels fresh and engaging you should try to post at least 3-4 times a week. At Volvo Trucks we post twice a day.

- **But don't** compromise quality over quantity. This means making sure that your social posts offer value. If all you do is pitch and sell, there's very little motivation for people to follow you. Check out these tips on how to write great social media posts.
- **Curate content:** There is no need to create all of your content from scratch. You can also share interesting posts and articles from other accounts. Don't forget to follow social media etiquette by attributing it to the author or photographer and adding your own thoughts why this piece of content is worth lifting.
- **Consider using** hashtags as they can help categorize posts, increase awareness and attract followers. There are however certain hashtag best practices you should follow like not over-using them, using popular hashtags sparingly and not choosing ones that don't relate to your business. I recommend getting creative and using something that can be easily associated with your brand and unlikely to be used in reference to something else. We use the #volvotrucksmoment on Instagram which has been tagged more than 80,000 posts.



**Volvo Trucks – Volvo Trucks vs 750 Tonnes: An extreme heavy haulage challenge**

■ STEP 8

# CONSIDER PAID DISTRIBUTION

**Next, you** need to ensure your content reaches your intended audience, and the most effective way to do this is through paid reach. On a platform like Facebook, simply posting your content and relying on organic reach, it will only be seen by a very small percentage of your followers. However, with paid reach, you can target specific segments with a range of parameters such as location, age, occupation, and interests. With LinkedIn, you can target people working in specific industries, companies as well as positions and job titles.

**To get** the most out of your paid advertising it's important to think about what it is that you want to achieve; acquire new customers/prospects, re-target users who are already aware of your company or both? Do you want to gain more likes or increase conversion rates? It's important to think about goals as many social media platforms allow you to create paid campaigns based on them.



■ STEP 9

# INTERACT AND ENGAGE WITH YOUR FOLLOWERS

**Social media** is a form of two-way communication. Whether you like it or not, people will use it to contact you. Even if you have not set up your platforms for customer service, it is very possible that customers will still use it for this purpose. People will also comment on your posts, and it won't always be positive.

**You need** to be prepared for this and have the time and resources to respond. Ignoring or forgetting to respond to angry comments for instance will only add to their resentment. By contrast, a well-considered response can go a long way towards placating them. Engaging with your followers is also an effective way to improve customer relations, build loyalty and enhance your brand image.



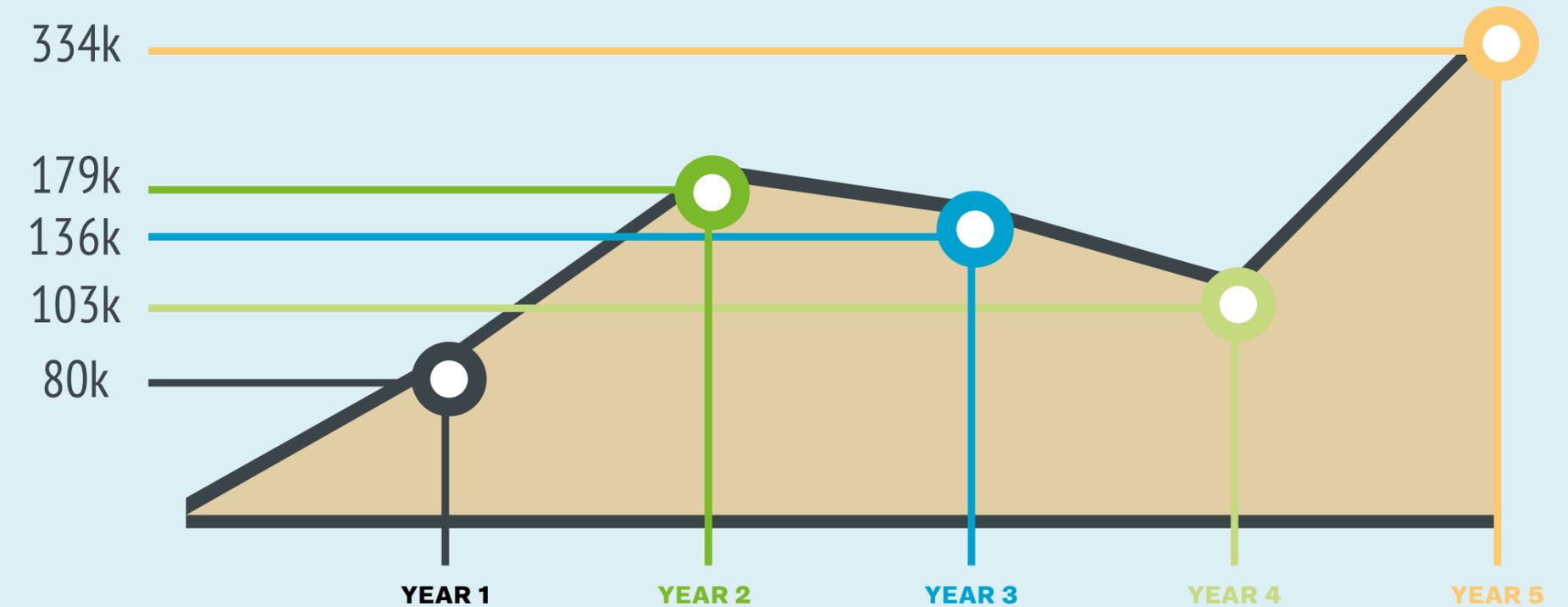
■ STEP 10

# MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS

How you should measure your social media channels very much depends on what objectives and purpose you had when creating a presence. Having said that some of the most common metrics in social media marketing are engagement, impressions and reach, share of voice, referrals and conversions and response rate and time. These combined will give a good view of your social media performance. Here is a quick snapshot of what those metrics mean in practical terms:

- **Engagement:** includes likes, comments, retweets and mentions of your account
- **Impressions:** are how many times a post shows up on someone's timeline
- **Reach:** is a measure of potential audience size of the content you are sharing
- **Share of voice:** measures how many people are talking about your brand online as compared to your competitors.
- **A social conversion:** is getting users to respond to your call to action or take the desired next step
- **Response rate:** indicates if and how fast you are responding to messages from your customers and prospects

You should try to pick a few of these metrics based on how relevant they are to your business, start tracking them and measure progress each month with the help of a social media analytics tool.



STEP 11

# ITERATE AND IMPROVE

**Social media** is a complex undertaking it is unlikely that you will get it right the first time. As you implement your strategy and track progress through data you will learn what works and what doesn't. Use the data and insights to shift strategies, test new types of content and platforms. Things change fast on social media and your business will most likely also go through some changes. Your channels need to reflect this.

**While social** media can be a business tool, it doesn't mean that you should stop having fun with it! Be open to trying new things such as live videos, participate in groups or conduct polls. Social media should be something that you should enjoy rather than another chore.



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