

SECRETS TO



Social Media Success for Small Businesses

AdRoll | bitly

Establishing a social media marketing program is time-consuming. And when you're building a business, you're juggling a lot already.

The internet is flooded with advice to help you with every social media business topic under the sun. But knowing which sources are accurate and what to spend your valuable time researching can add hours to your workload.

We'll show you:

-  How to stand out in your followers' feeds
-  How to get the most mileage out of your content
-  Tips for running successful social ads

.....& more

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01

Tailoring a strategy to your strengths

Conduct a social media audit

Let's start with talking about an often-overlooked step: the audit. This step is critical if your brand already has a presence on social. (If you're not on social yet, you can [skip ahead to the next section](#).)

The premise of an audit is simple: you can't form an effective strategy without first taking a look back at your historical performance.

A successful audit will tell you who your audience is, what type of content they like (and don't like) and how active your brand has been across its channels.

To conduct an audit, you can use [this template](#) or create your own. Here's what it should include:

- Profile information (name and URL)
- Follower count
- Posting cadence
- Audience demographics
- Engagement metrics
- Top performing posts (type of post, engagement, URL)
- Worst performing posts (type of post, engagement, URL)

You'll need to source this information for each of your brand's social channels.

Take note of the data that sticks out to you. Are you surprised at how many times a video of your CEO's keynote speech was viewed? Maybe you weren't aware of how young your audience is, or that a large number of your followers is from a certain country. This information will come in handy when you start defining your social media goals, which we'll dive into soon.

Select the right channels

Now that you've conducted your audit, it's time to choose which channels to be present on.






Often, there's a steep learning curve as you build your brand's online community and get up to speed with their interests and preferred ways of communicating. Over time, you may find that most of your target audience is active on a few channels in particular. This is why, to start, it's smarter to focus on growing and engaging your audience on two to three channels. You can always expand your presence beyond those channels in the future, if it makes sense.

Tip:



The channels you're personally most comfortable with aren't necessarily the ones your customers prefer.

Before getting up and running on any channel, here are a few questions to consider:

-  Is your business B2C or B2B (or both)?
-  What channels do your target audience frequent?
-  What are you trying to achieve?
-  Do you have a budget? If so, what is it?
-  What channels are your competition on (and which do they receive most engagement on)?

While there are exceptions to every rule, you can use the guide below to understand which channels are likely to be a good fit for your business.

Facebook

Best for B2C

Facebook is great for B2C and some B2B businesses that can dedicate some dollars to a social advertising budget. While Facebook has 2.37 billion monthly active users¹, its algorithm heavily favors paid business content over organic, making driving an organic strategy on this channel tough.

Twitter

Best for B2B and B2C

If your goal is to increase brand awareness or to build a community of influencers, Twitter could be a powerful marketing tool for your business. The platform published a study² that shows that Twitter users reward brands that make an effort to be responsive and share quality content. How? By engaging in offline conversations on those topics the brands tweet about.

Twitter is also a great channel for brands to demonstrate top-notch customer service. People use it to connect with brands, whether it's to air their frustrations or share glowing reviews.

LinkedIn

Best for B2B

With more than 260 million users logging into LinkedIn each month, 40 percent of whom use the platform daily³, LinkedIn offers brands a lot of opportunity to drive website traffic, promote company culture and share thought leadership content. In fact, according to one study⁴, LinkedIn was shown to drive well over half of all visits from social media to corporate websites.

¹ <http://bit.ly/ebook-instagram-users>

² <http://bit.ly/ebook-twitter-audience>

³ <http://bit.ly/ebook-linkedin-stats>

⁴ <http://bit.ly/ebook-linkedin-company-stats>



Instagram

Best for B2C

If your brand is B2C and you aim to connect with influencers in retail, health and wellness, or beauty, Instagram could be a goldmine for your business. While it can also be a great tool for B2B brands (especially those that use it for recruitment), the visual nature of this platform plays into the hands of B2C businesses with products to share.

Pinterest

Best for B2C

Pinterest is also a great platform for brands with products to show off and can be an excellent driver of traffic to your business's website. By creating boards that reflect your brand and pinning content to those boards that links back to your website, Pinterest can help improve your business's SERP (search engine results page) ratings.⁵

[Jump to social ads](#) 

⁵ <http://bit.ly/ebook-pinterest-google-ranks>

Set goals & define metrics

Now that you know which social channels you want to build your brand's presence on, it's time to set measurable goals to work toward. If your team is focused on driving awareness, reducing churn and increasing sales, you may want to consider goals like increasing customer engagement on social by X%, generating X number of leads, and driving X% of traffic to the company website.

Here are some common metrics to consider when setting your social media goals:



Engagement



Clicks



Reach



Followers

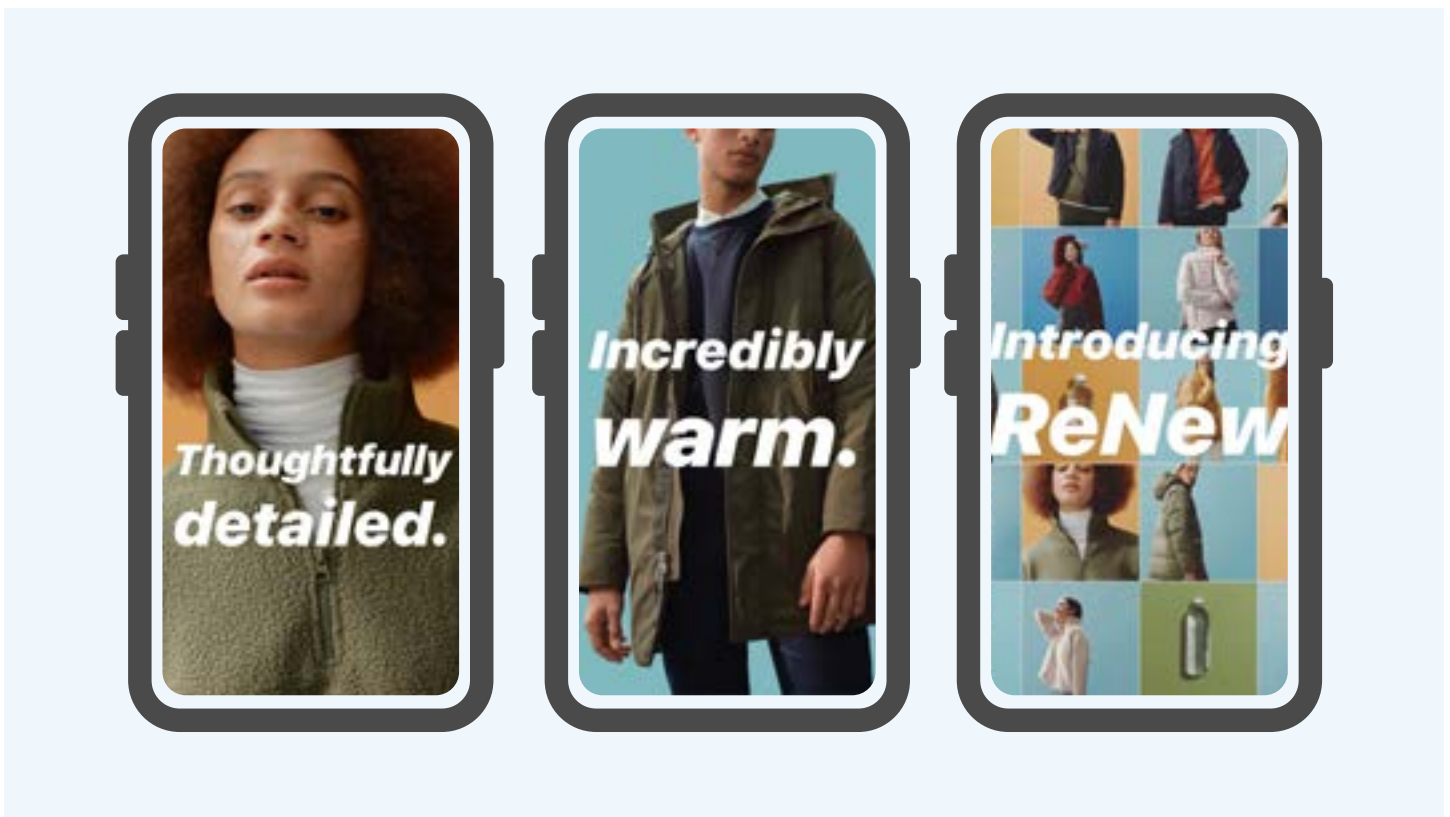
You shouldn't feel you have to set your entire strategy for the year ahead. Instead, you can start with a few focused goals and then add more to the mix once you've gained momentum.

Establish tactics

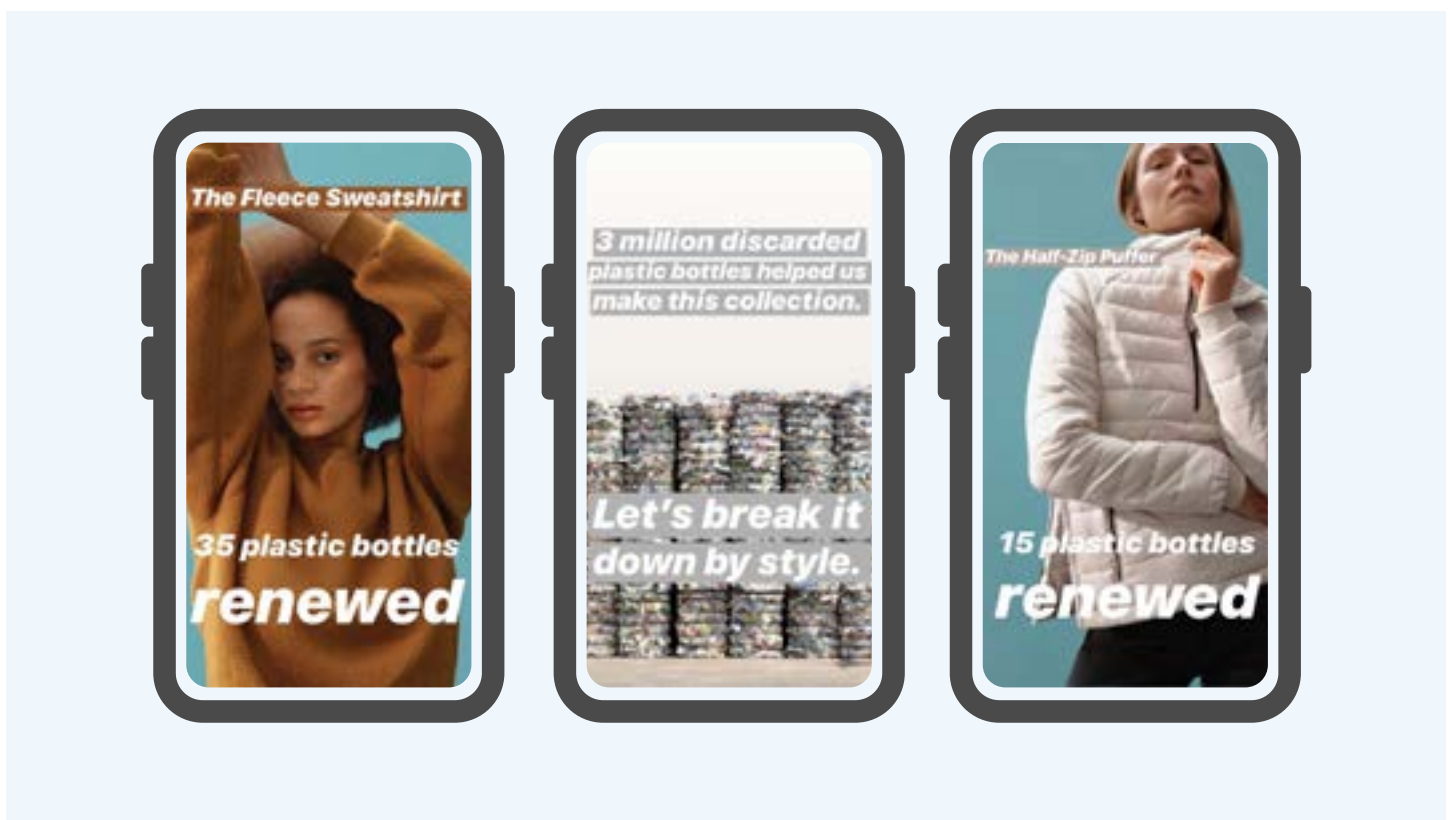
No strategy is complete without having a firm handle on how to tactically execute it.

This is where the results of your content audit really come into play. For example, if the audit revealed that your Instagram followers engaged most with posts about your brand's products, you might want to consider using that channel to debut a new product or line.

Sustainable clothing retailer Everlane does this really well.



They used Instagram Stories to tease out the launch of their line “ReNew.” The campaign was simple and effective. Why? It gave their followers a much-anticipated preview of Everlane’s latest line. Plus, they tied the launch to the brand’s mission to be a leader in sustainable fashion. Overall, it was straightforward and very on-brand.



Let’s say you’ve identified that one of your goals for Facebook is to use the platform to establish your company as a thought leader in its space. A tactic you might use to meet that goal is to publish a monthly Q&A series featuring employees in your organization discussing topics pertinent to your industry.

Your tactics should tie to at least one of your social media goals (but ideally multiple), be realistic (not aspirational) and set your social media strategy into motion.

Tactics are the “how” of the social media strategy.

Tailoring a strategy to your strengths will help you get really clear on what you want to accomplish, which channels you’re going to use to do it and the steps you need to take to get there. Remember: you can engage your target audience more effectively if you don’t spread your social media team too thin. So, don’t feel you need to be on every channel to start. Instead, consider why your business is on social and decide which channels are most likely to help you reach your goals. Speaking of goals, don’t make the

mistake of not defining what they are and which metrics you’ll use to measure your success. This is key!

And finally, keep in mind that some of your success will come down to trial and error. Don’t be afraid to try new tactics to reach your goals. Like Everlane, look for ways to engage your audience while showing off the best aspects of what your brand has to offer it.

02

Establishing a community

Often, brands forget one crucial aspect of social media: the social part. If you're guilty of this, it's time to shift your thinking. Instead of approaching your channels as message boards for one-way communication, try thinking of them as forums to engage your audience. This teaches you what's top of mind for your consumers, including:

- What content they engage with
- What topics they're interested in learning more about
- What questions they have about your brand or industry

Depending on your objectives for social media, establishing and maintaining a community can be more valuable than vanity metrics such as the number of likes your posts get or how many followers your brand acquires. Why? Because when you invest in growing a strong community that engages with your brand on social media, you're also building trust between your brand and its customers and prospects.

Every action your brand takes on social—from likes and shares to comments and follows—contributes to how your followers perceive it. If people like the content you're sharing, or have had positive interactions with your brand through your social channels, they're more likely to speak highly of your business and recommend it to others.

Dos

- ✓ Do answer questions people have about your business
- ✓ Do offer value with every post
- ✓ Do follow back your most loyal audience members

Donts

- ✗ Don't be tone deaf when responding to customer complaints
- ✗ Don't just focus on selling your products or services
- ✗ Don't go dark or only post sporadically

76% of consumers are more likely to buy from a brand they feel connected to on social media than its competitors.⁶

Be proactive.

With the right tools, you can scan the channels you're on to discover people talking about your brand and industry. (We'll discuss tools in more depth later.) This allows you to proactively jump into those conversations.

A proactive strategy might include sharing a coupon code to thank your customers for using your brand's products or services. It could also involve scanning your social monitoring streams for industry-related chatter and hopping into relevant conversations to share your business's unique point of view. Or, you could answer questions people have about your products or services.

⁶ <http://bit.ly/ebook-sprout-social-insights>

Embrace user-generated content.

There are so many creatives and thought leaders active on social who would be more than happy for your brand to share their photos, videos and testimonials, among other types of content.

To get started sharing user-generated content (UGC), make sure you've defined who your brand's ideal content contributors are and what kind of content you'd like them to contribute. Being very clear about what kind of UGC you want to share on your social channels will help to ensure the quality of your content remains high and suits your brand.

Don't forget to give credit to the creators! This helps build goodwill between your audience and brand and is really important to remember when sharing UGC.

Have a strategy for dealing with negative comments.

Of course, part of building relationships with your online community includes being receptive to feedback, criticism and problems related to your company's products or services. While there may be plenty of people online who will sing praises about your business, there will undoubtedly be those who are not happy with something about your brand. This can be intimidating, but it's actually a huge opportunity.

People expect brands to provide support via social media. In fact, 42 percent of consumers expect a response from a brand *within an hour* of contacting them through social.⁷

⁷ <http://bit.ly/ebook-social-response-time>

When it comes to dealing with negative comments on social, don't overthink it. Consumers want to feel like they're engaging with real people on the other side of their screens. If you receive a complaint, respond to the customer as you would if they were approaching you with their problem in person:



Listen carefully

Try to understand the issue and put yourself in your customers' shoes.



Take it offline

Ask to discuss the problem in more detail in a private message.



Decide if you're dealing with an upset customer or troll

Unlike upset customers, no amount of customer service will satisfy a troll.

03

Choosing the right tools

Your business may be on the small side but its presence on social doesn't have to be. Investing in the right tools to help you execute on your social strategy is key to making sure it's not. Luckily, these tools don't have to cost your business an arm and a leg. Here are some of the ways they can help your business out on social.

1

Creating quality graphics

If your design team is stretched (or if it doesn't exist) you can still create visuals for social that have a consistent, on-brand look. Visme offers design software anyone can use to create infographics, social cards and data visualizations to help your business stand out in your followers' feeds.

2

Highlighting your brand in every communication

You spend hours creating and scheduling content to share with your followers. Don't you want to know if it's working? Bitly helps you go beyond vanity metrics by revealing important insights that help you understand who's engaging with your content and on which channels and devices. Plus, you can use custom branded links—links that replace the “bit.ly” with a domain that better suits your business—so every link you share is a powerful asset for your brand.

3

Managing your workflow

Between creating content, writing posts, posting, responding to questions and measuring performance, keeping up with the demands of social can be a very tedious, cyclical effort. Using a social media management software like Sprout Social can help you save time by enabling you to schedule your posts and easily create detailed reports.

4

Tapping into the power of social ads

Marketing campaigns tend to prioritize the bottom of the funnel—but building brand awareness is just as important. With [AdRoll Attract](#) and look-alike audiences, you can target upper-funnel prospects by serving ads to users who have yet to interact with your brand on your social channels, such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

04

Repurposing content

Creating content consistently and frequently enough to fuel your social channels is a challenge for organizations of every size, not just small businesses. When you spend time creating something, you want to get as much mileage out of it as possible. How can you do that? One way is to find new methods of sharing it out with your audiences.

Start by understanding what you have in your content stack.

Consider the following questions:

- What kind of content do you have?
- Do you have more blog posts or how-to videos?
- Which pieces of content have received the most engagement since they were first shared out with your audience?

Answering these questions will help you understand your options for repurposing content. The results of your social media audit should help you out here.

Finally, know your aim. Repurposed content should help you get new eyeballs on your blog posts, videos, guides, infographics and other material. Don't be afraid of being a little repetitive, but do make sure that you offer new value with every piece of repurposed content you share.

Here are four ways you can breathe new life into your content.



Turn quotes into visuals.

If you've interviewed someone for a blog post or case study, why not take their most powerful quotes and create a series of graphics to share on social? Research has consistently shown that social media posts with visuals get as much as 2.3 times the engagement than posts without visuals.⁸



Trim videos down to short snippets.

Attention spans on social can make it difficult to engage your followers with long videos. So, take your full-length videos and size them down to shorter, easy-to-digest snippets. You can use them to promote the original video, or roll them out as a separate series. (Don't forget to add subtitles!)

⁸ <http://bit.ly/ebook-blog-traffic>



Convert a blog post into a webinar.

Take your best-performing blog posts and turn them into webinars. Blog posts can make excellent webinars since they tend to narrow in on one topic in particular, covering it from multiple angles. You can even invite other brands to co-host and co-promote a webinar with you.



Use internal data to create case studies.

If your brand markets to other companies, chances are your audience is hungry for fresh data to inform their own content creation and business strategies. If it markets to consumers, facts and figures can help provide people with information they need to move along the sales funnel.

05

Building brand awareness + credibility

Whether it's an explicit goal of yours or not, being on social is an opportunity to build brand awareness. But being present on social typically isn't enough on its own. Here are some ways you can help your brand stand out as a credible leader in its field.



Brand every touchpoint.

Take advantage of custom branded links. With the power to make sure your brand is seen whenever you share a link, they help businesses build brand awareness. And, since your customers know they can trust your branded Bitly links, they're 34% more likely to click on your links.⁹



Develop a unique brand voice.

There's no need to sound like your competitors on social media. In fact, doing that could more harm than good. Don't overthink it. Keep your voice simple and always remain true to your brand.



Use consistent branding across your profiles.

No matter which of your social channels a person visits, they should feel like they're all owned by the same business. Keep the look and feel of your social media profiles consistent so your audience knows they're in the right place.

⁹ <http://bitly.is/branded-links>



Join industry conversations.

We've mentioned this a few times now. Whether it's an organized tweet chat on Twitter or an informal conversation on Instagram, taking part in discussions related to your business can help position your brand as an expert in its field and boost its credibility and brand awareness by exposing you to new and relevant audiences.



Experiment with paid social.

Invest in an advertising budget to help maximize the reach of your content and business. It often takes some fine-tuning before you reap the benefits of your dollars spent, but, once it does, paid ads can be a powerful way to find new followers and introduce them to your business.

06

Driving traffic to your website

Channels such as Facebook and Instagram have made it easier than ever to broaden your reach and find more consumers. They help brands engender trust by engaging audiences in meaningful two-way conversations.

With native formats and mobile-friendly user experience, social platforms have become some of the best places to advertise online.

People spend, on average, two hours and 22 minutes on social networks.¹⁰ With there being nearly 2 billion

daily active users on Facebook and Instagram alone, there are plenty of opportunities for brands to stay top-of-mind.¹¹

If you're considering advertising on social, here's the rundown on the kinds of ads you can place.

¹⁰ <http://bit.ly/ebook-global-social-report>

¹¹ <http://bit.ly/ebook-dustinstout-social-stats>

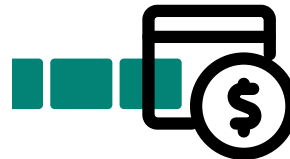
Types of social ads

Single-image ads



These are the most common format on Facebook and Instagram. They consist of a single file, an image with less than 20 percent text, one landing page and a call-to-action. Single-image ads also require descriptive text, which includes a title, description, link description and display link.

Carousel ads



These do a brilliant job of helping e-commerce businesses showcase products from their websites. You can add up to 10 photos or videos in a single post, which is handy for businesses that might want to highlight different product variations or prices.¹² This ad type is perfect for launches of new product lines, step-by-step instructions on how to use your products and customer testimonials that relate to your brand.

¹² <http://bit.ly/ebook-facebook-carousel-ads>



Types of social ads

Story ads



These can be run on Instagram Stories using metrics such as reach, traffic, conversions, video views or brand awareness to drive the results you're after. The tool supports mixed media and carousels, but the default display length for images is five seconds, and the maximum for video is 15 seconds. Instagram ads also include one call-to-action per card, but you can choose different destinations for each one.

Video ads



Video ads on Facebook and Instagram are out-stream video ads. This means they appear outside of any streaming content, similar to standard display ads. If you want to show your products in action, you can use a video that plays automatically when it's in the center of a user's feed.



07

Measuring your impact

We know attribution is on the mind of every digital marketer, especially as they try to find out which social tactics and channels are driving the most revenue. Marketers use attribution to measure social metrics, like impressions, clicks and shares, to understand how their social campaigns are doing in regards to brand awareness, engagement and response.



Finding the right attribution model

Before we talk about measuring the impact of social marketing campaigns, let's take a closer look at attribution in the wider context of digital marketing. If you're advertising on multiple digital channels, ensuring that all your data is working together can be almost impossible. This disconnect creates a disjointed, limited view of your customers, making it unnecessarily difficult to figure out what is influencing customers to buy.

This fragmented picture leads to inefficient use of advertising spend and faulty testing frameworks—for example, cutting off advertising spend on a social channel and seeing its impact, as opposed to measuring the effectiveness of that channel against desired goals. Attribution solves this by investigating the activities and channels that factor into a person's decision to convert.

Below, we break down the different stages of attribution modeling and recommended next steps. Before settling on an attribution model, consider your marketing goal, and keep in mind your lookback windows when applying credit for a conversion. You'll want to see the last 28 days of your social campaign so you can take into account all the touchpoints before deciding on a model.





Last-click attribution

Last-click attribution awards 100 percent of the credit to the last thing a person clicks on (organic social post, paid social ad, etc.) before they completed the desired action. If you're just getting started with attribution, this model will suffice, though it limits your view of your customer's journey.

This model only really works for limited-time promotions or when you need to compare and contrast two different social channels (e.g., Facebook vs. Instagram). A more comprehensive attribution model that goes beyond just clicks will help you gain a better understanding of what's behind your ROI.

Recommended next step

Start looking into how multiple social channels and tactics impact your customer journey and avoid limiting your view to bottom-funnel metrics, such as clicks and conversions.





Blended attribution

A simple alternative to last-click attribution is blended attribution. This incorporates customer touchpoints, including both views and clicks of organic and paid social posts, before the purchase. Though conversions can come from people who have clicked on a social ad, they can also come from those who have just seen it and then navigated back to your site at a later time. This method of attribution takes into account metrics such as impressions (the number of times a social ad has been served to your audience) and clicks.

Recommended next step

Consider a custom attribution model. Take an existing weighted model, and then adjust it incrementally to align better with your business. It's critical to carefully monitor how these adjustments impact end conversions.

For instance, if conversion quality declines, course correct immediately. As you begin to experiment with more complex media mixes, the challenge of measuring incremental impact will become apparent.





Multi-touch attribution

If you're advertising beyond social channels, then multi-touch attribution is for you. This method takes a holistic look at all of your advertising channels and gives weighted conversion credit to each touchpoint by using AI technology. We recommend using multi-touch if you're making a sizable investment into a marketing strategy that spans across multiple digital channels.

Recommended next step

This level of attribution can be very sophisticated, so ensure you have the resources and bandwidth to really invest in this level of measurement. Complete commitment is required to get the most out of multi-touch attribution.



Wrapping it up

Some businesses haven't discovered the potential of social media, but many others have—potentially even your top competitors. We hope this guide is a launching pad for your business's success on social media.

Remember: no matter the size of your business, your industry or your target audience, social media can be valuable and impact your company's sales and bottom line. By focusing on the basics, you can create a strong foundation to establish your brand, build meaningful relationships with your customers and prospective customers, and meet your company's marketing and customer service goals.



About AdRoll

Since 2007, AdRoll has been on a mission to help businesses compete online and grow revenue. Ambitious commerce brands use the AdRoll Growth Platform to make their display, social, and email advertising work together to accelerate business growth. Powered by industry-leading automation and personalization,

brands are better able to structure, measure, and sync their marketing efforts. Built for performance, our Growth Platform sees 37,000 customers generate more than \$246 billion in sales annually.

**Bitly + AdRoll
partnered to bring
you this ebook.**





About Bitly

Bitly is used by businesses around the world to build stronger connections with their customers across every digital channel. Our complete Link Management Platform empowers businesses of every size to embed short, branded call-to-action links in their communications using tools, analytics and insights to maximize the impact of every digital initiative. Learn more about us on [our website](#).



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Enterprise can empower
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