

The 7 Top Social Media Sites You Need to Care About in 2020

And how to know where to invest your time

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New social media sites, like TikTok and Vero, are springing up and attracting millions of users like never before. While on one hand, this explosion of social media platforms presents brands with unprecedented opportunities to reach growing audiences on emerging platforms, there's also an increasing challenge around how to best allocate time, resources, and attention among the sea of options now at the disposal of marketers around the world.

Social Media in 2020

Should you go all in on Instagram? Maybe place half of your social media budget into Facebook and split the rest between YouTube and LinkedIn? What about Pinterest? These are the kinds of questions plaguing small businesses and marketing teams alike.

To help you decide which social media platforms are going to be right for your brand this year, here are our picks for the top social media sites you should care about (and invest in) during 2020 and guidance on where to place your bets.

1. Instagram

Long the home of influencers, brands, bloggers, small business owners, friends and everyone in between--Instagram has topped well over 1 billion monthly users for some time now. If you're wondering whether a meaningful segment of your audience spends time on the platform, the answer is almost surely a resounding yes.

Who's on Instagram (and Why): Instagram has become one of the most popular social media platforms for teens and young adults, especially in the US. Use of the app slowly drops off with age but stays consistent across both men and women, so if your customers are under 40, then Instagram can't be ignored.

The Content that Works Best on Instagram: Beautiful photography, stunning visuals, unique designs, selfie-style video that speaks directly to your audience and a cohesive theme to your content will help you stand out on Instagram.

You Should Prioritize Instagram if: Your target audience is under the age of 40, you run a lifestyle, ecommerce, or photography business.

2. YouTube

YouTube hails as the second most popular search engine in the world today, right behind its parent company, Google. If your business could benefit from producing video tutorials or walkthroughs, visually driven instructional content, product reviews or interviews, then this social media platform is a must for reaching their more than 2 billion monthly users.

Who's on YouTube (and Why): A whopping 73% of US adults report regularly using YouTube, with a heavy concentration in the age range of 15 to 34 years old. YouTube is broadly popular amongst both men and women, and usage tends to go up alongside income and level of education.

The Content that Works Best on YouTube: Video only! Depending upon your type of business and who your audience is, both long-form and short-form video content can work very well on this platform. Most viewers tune in for a combination of education and entertainment, so whether you're teaching your audience about emerging marketing tactics or streaming video gameplay, work hard to retain their attention throughout your videos. You might also consider tapping into popular YouTube trends like unboxing videos (especially if you rep a physical product) and "with me" content that takes viewers along with you for the ride. Additionally, if starting a YouTube channel feels ambitious, partnering with YouTube influencers who are excited about your mission could help you test the waters before you dive in.

You Should Prioritize YouTube if: Your audience is below the age of 50 and consumes video content as a means of either education or entertainment.

3. Facebook

With nearly 2.5 Billion monthly users, Facebook is hands down the largest social media site in the world. While that practically ensures at least some of your audience regularly uses the platform, it's developed a somewhat negative reputation amongst younger users that are increasingly turning to other alternative sites.

Regardless, if your brand stands to benefit from sharing industry-related news, engaging (short-form) videos, graphics and other visually appealing content—especially if your primary audience is above the age of 30—then consider having a presence on Facebook. You might also consider leveraging Facebook groups to gather your customers or community in one place online. Facebook groups, unlike Facebook business pages, aren't for advertising, but they can be helpful in creating conversation.

Who's on Facebook (and Why): 68% of US adults report using Facebook, with 51% saying they're active multiple times daily. Usage is spread evenly amongst males and females, while users tend to get increasingly active as age increases (especially beyond the 40+ year old demographic).

The Content that Works Best on Facebook: The more interesting, engaging or even polarizing your content is, the more likely it is to go viral on Facebook. Lean heavily on short videos, eye-catching images and attention-grabbing headlines to attract an audience. For Facebook groups, interactive content and conversation-starters are the way to go. Consider live streams and polls.

You Should Prioritize Facebook if: You want to reach an audience of adults and have engaging visual (or video) content that can capture their attention, invoke an immediate emotional response and

make them excited to share with their friends. Or if you want an easy way to create an online community around a topic or business.

4. Twitter

While Twitter's monthly active user numbers have hovered consistently around 300 Million for a while now, a whopping 40% of those users are active on the site multiple times daily, suggesting that if your audience uses the platform, they're likely very engaged. The popularity of this social media site remains high amongst tech-savvy users and is particularly active in B2B verticals related to business, marketing and politics today.

Who's on Twitter (and Why): 63% of Twitter users are between the ages of 35 and 65, with males making up nearly two-thirds of those people.

The Content that Works Best on Twitter: Twitter has become a very popular medium to communicate breaking news, digest bite-sized content, and communicate directly with your users in real-time. Videos and images tend to stand out best, but a well-timed written tweet still works wonders if you're hopping on trending topics and are particularly witty.

You Should Prioritize Twitter if: Your audience skews toward the demographic of mature males between the ages of 30 and 60. Experiment with a combination of content types ranging from educational videos, to gripping visuals and discussion threads that offer advice & opinions.

5. TikTok

This new kid on the block is less than two years old but received over 1 billion downloads of their video-based app during their first year of operation. Today, TikTok reportedly sees over 800 Million monthly users (according to a leaked advertising deck), which instantly places it amongst the top social media platforms in the world in terms of sheer user figures.

Who's on TikTok (and Why): Around 50% of TikTok's audience is under the age of 35 in the US, with much of that audience concentrated amongst those between the ages of 16 to 24.

The Content that Works Best on TikTok: Entertaining, interesting, comedic and sometimes nonsensical short-form video content, usually set to the tune of popular songs. Think fun, catchy music-video style content.

You Should Prioritize TikTok if: You want to reach (and entertain) a young audience with fun video-based content that doesn't often have a direct connection to your products or services. Being overly self-promotional on this platform won't build you a loyal following, so be prepared to take the approach of entertaining first.

6. Pinterest

Pinterest has become a very popular social bookmarking tool for saving ideas and finding creative inspiration when it comes to everything from cooking to DIY home projects, vacation ideas, interior design, business and everything in between. With an audience predominantly consisting of adult women, this social media platform is also often cited as a crucial part of the product discovery journey.

Who's on Pinterest (and Why): With over 320 million monthly users, Pinterest boasts one of the most concentrated audiences of women amongst all social media sites. Nearly 80% of their users are female, with a heavy concentration amongst Millennials.

The Content that Works Best on Pinterest: Vertically formatted images do best on this platform, due largely to the browsing experience users are presented with. Polished imagery with clear copy that conveys what the Pinner will see if they click through performs best. Numbers, lists, and quotes should be a big part of your strategy here. And don't forget to consider keywords and search terms in your imagery.

You Should Prioritize Pinterest if: Your audience consists predominantly of adult women, your business is related to lifestyle, fashion, decorating, or DIY.

7. Snapchat

Despite seeming to lose some ground to competitor social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, Snapchat remains one of the most heavily used apps with the under 25 years of age demographic—boasting over 300 Million monthly users in recent months. Most Snapchat users frequent the app in order to share updates and communicate with friends & family through disappearing images and short video messages.

Who's on Snapchat (and Why): Young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 make up a massive 78% of active users who partake in the platform's over 14 Billion daily video views. Users tend to skew slightly more toward females, with the majority accessing the app daily.

The Content that Works Best on Snapchat: Video-driven storytelling. If you have a knack for creating compelling (usually selfie-style) short videos that can entertain & educate a young audience, then Snapchat is a no brainer platform for you to form connections with your customers.

You Should Prioritize Snapchat if: You want to reach a young audience and have an affinity for creating bite-sized, engaging video content. Like with TikTok though, don't expect to flip on your camera and talk about your products all day, as most Snapchat users are here to be entertained.