

BACK TO BASICS SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING FOR TAXI COMPANIES



WHY?

The latest reports show that 3.6 billion people worldwide are using social media, with that figure expected to rise to 4.41 billion by 2025*. Love it or hate it, it is clear that social media is here to stay, and your customers will be using it.

Your business needs to be using social media for marketing, keeping in touch with customers, developing your brand and staying ahead of the competition. If social media isn't really your thing, it can be difficult to know where to start; even if you love Twitter in your personal life, when you're running your own business it can be difficult to find the time to manage your social media presence.

Here at Sherlock Taxi, we've put together some basic guidance on social media best practice for our customers including an overview of the key platforms, useful links to help you get started (if you're not already), how to make your marketing impactful and Sherlock features which can help you to measure the effectiveness of your campaigns.

IF YOU'RE NEW TO IT OR FIND IT DIFFICULT TO KEEP THE MOMENTUM, WHERE SHOULD YOU START?

Like most things in life, it's better to keep it simple and do a couple of things well rather than spreading yourself too thinly. Social media is no different. A good place to start would be Facebook and Twitter as they are easy platforms for you communicate directly with your customers.

SO WHAT CAN SOCIAL MEDIA DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

- Raise brand awareness
- Put your business at the forefront of people's minds
- Make your business the "go to" local taxi company, fostering brand loyalty
- Increase bookings and demand
- Be used to encourage your customers to act in a certain way (for example, download and book via your app or use referral codes to introduce your company to local friends – more about this later on)
- Improve your organic SEO rankings

WHERE SHOULD YOU START?

If you're not using any social media yet, it's really easy to set your profiles up. Hootsuite is a social media management platform and their website has loads of information from the basics through to more complex social media management. We've linked a few articles to get you started:

<https://blog.hootsuite.com/steps-to-create-a-facebook-business-page/>

<https://blog.hootsuite.com/twitter-bio-ideas/>

You've got your profiles set up and now you're ready to post – where should you start?

* <https://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users/#:~:text=In%202020%2C%20an%20estimated%203.6,almost%204.41%20billion%20in%202025.&text=Social%20network%20penetration%20is%20constantly,2020%20stood%20at%2049%20percent>

YOU'VE GOT YOUR PROFILES SET UP AND NOW YOU'RE READY TO POST – WHERE SHOULD YOU START?

It's really easy to fall into the scattergun social media approach of just posting anything and everything all the time with no defined strategy. The problem with this is that it is difficult to measure whether your social media is effective, and your time is being well spent.

BE SPECIFIC AND MEASURABLE

Try to make your goals specific and measurable, for example, if you are based in a town with lots of young people and a vibrant nightlife you might want to use social media to promote yourself as a safe route home with content emphasising the checks you do to ensure your drivers are safe – this is a particularly salient point if Uber operate in your area given the issues they have had with driver safety concerns. Know your audience! If you know who you are trying to attract, you are more likely to create relevant and engaging content for them.

GET FRIENDLY WITH YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Use local community groups on Facebook to keep in touch, share local news stories on Twitter and try to position yourselves as a source of local information that the community wants to stay in touch with. There is a real movement of people wanting to “shop local” and support local business over multinationals so you should really tap into this sentiment. Interacting and engaging with other local businesses will help you to do this and hopefully they should reciprocate!

VISUAL CONTENT

People love visual content. Your content will stand out more in someone's feed if you use exciting and clearly branded visuals to grab attention, and visual content is often weighted more favourably by social platforms' algorithms. You can create professional looking imagery quite easily with tools such as [Canva](#) which include loads of free templates and stock images to choose from. Sprout Social also offers a great guide to image sizes to make sure your pictures are high res and the right size for different platforms – check it out [here](#).

DON'T OVER SELL

Nobody wants to read boring sales posts all the time – keep your content engaging, informative, amusing and relevant to your local community. This will lead to more followers and more people engaging with your brand. If you increase your brand awareness in this way, you will position your business as the local “go to”.

CREATE AND SCHEDULE CONTENT

It can be difficult to keep the momentum going with posts so the best thing to do is create a content schedule and plan it out for a couple of weeks or a month in advance. You can use scheduling tools to plan the posts in advance, so you don't even need to worry about them throughout the month. There's lots of tools available for this, we recommend [Hootsuite](#) as it has a free plan which allows you to manage posts across three separate social platforms. For a modest cost, you can have unlimited posts and use analytics tools to review how well your content is performing – what's your engagement like, are your campaigns driving new business, where are there gaps in your content? Don't forget to hashtag to help the algorithms push your content to as many relevant viewers as possible.

MANAGING COMPLAINTS

Unfortunately, all businesses will receive complaints but it doesn't have to be all negative. You can use social media to limit reputational damage and respond accordingly. This is a great way to manage your customer services and make your business stand out as a company that values their customers. Think about the kind of complaints you typically receive and prepare a couple of generic templates that you are happy to respond with publicly.

DRIVING SPECIFIC GOALS

We've touched on making sure your goals are specific and measurable – let's take one example and look at this in a bit more depth: encouraging app downloads to increase bookings through automated channels.

You may want to encourage more of your passengers to download your app and book through this rather than the call centre. This is a great way to take pressure off the call centre, keep up with changing consumer demands (the desire for simple tech solutions rather than making a phone call to make a booking) and scale up without needing to increase your overheads through additional office staff.

To encourage app usage, you can incentivise customers to use this channel through promo codes and discount vouchers. This is where your dispatch system can work with you and your social media marketing strategy to really deliver measurable results.

It is easy to set up promo codes in Sherlock with lots of different parameters such as percentage off or fixed price discounts and referral codes. You can then promote these tools via social media to advertise your business. You can get full details on setting these features up by talking to the Support team or on Confluence at:

<https://confluence.haulmont.com/display/SP/Promo+Codes> and

<https://confluence.haulmont.com/display/SP/Referral+Codes>.

There's not much point using codes to incentivise without measuring their effectiveness. Sherlock has a range of reporting tools out of the box to help you with this including a booking source report (so you can measure increases in app usage) and a jobs with discounts report.

WHAT ABOUT B2B MARKETING?

You may also be looking to grow your B2B account base. The best social media platform to use here is LinkedIn as it is more of a professional network.

You can follow [this](#) Hootsuite guide to setting up a profile if you don't have one – you should have an individual and company profile. You can use LinkedIn to connect with businesses in the area to actively grow your account base. It is also an excellent way to communicate news and information with your clients – for example, the Covid safety mechanisms you have put in place to keep everybody safe.

IN SHORT...

There's a lot to think about when it comes to social media but the key is to make a plan, keeping it achievable, measurable and specific. Keep tweaking your plan along the way as a lot of your content will be trial and error and you'll start to learn what works best for your business.

Next up, we'll be talking about paid advertising through social media and the do's/don'ts.

Thanks for reading!

As always, if you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in touch!

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