Dornoch
You can do it all from here

A Beginner's Guide to Social Media and Digital Marketing

Getting Your Business in Front

of the People that Matter

Planit Scotland

Why do I need social media?

You've perfected your product offering, got yourself an all-singing-all-dancing website, and listed your business on the Visit Dornoch and VisitScotland directories. Why bother with social media?

The world is becoming increasingly reliant on digital technology – and the way people book travel is changing every day. New generations of travellers, both holidaymakers and those visiting from closer to home, look to social media more and more to guide them on their journey. Just take a look at these statistics:

- 97% of millennials (and 60% of all travellers) share photos while travelling.
- 84% of millennials say they are likely to plan a holiday based on a friend's social media posts.
- 75% of all social media users interact with their friends' travel posts.

Clearly having a strong presence on social media is important if you want to capitalise on this growing market. But where do you start?

It might seem daunting at first but setting up your social media profiles is relatively simple. This guide will give you hints and tips on how to set up your profiles, links to loads of useful tutorials, and best practices to keep you right.

Let's get started…

Facebook

Facebook is the biggest social network there is. Over 1.5 billion users log on every single day meaning this is a potentially massive market for you to tap into.

Where to start

Setting up your business on Facebook is relatively straight forward. (We recommend doing this on a computer, rather than a phone or tablet.)
Click here to watch a video tutorial.
(Tip: Some video tutorials may have ads at the start. Click 'Skip Ads' in the bottom right corner of the video to get straight to the content!)

When setting up your page, here are a few key things to keep in mind:

- Choose your profile picture wisely – this is seen next to all of your posts and comments, so needs to represent your business, e.g. your logo. Whatever you choose, it is recommended that you rarely (if ever) change your profile picture, to maintain a

Followers vs engagement

It can all too easy to become preoccupied with how many people follow your accounts. While it's nice to see those figures grow, in reality those are 'vanity statistics'. The real value is in engagement – the way people are interacting with your content. If your post reach is greater than the number of people following you, you're doing well!

Remember this is *social* media. The best businesses don't just broadcast information but engage in conversation with other users. By replying to comments, reviews and other posts, you are opening a dialogue and showing potential visitors that you are a friendly, approachable business that values it customers.

sense of consistency. If you need an easy way to resize or edit your profile picture, consider using Canva. (More information on page 5.)

- Express yourself with your cover photo – the large image at the top of your profile is the perfect place to show off your products or services. This can be changed regularly to reflect seasonal offers or images. Canva is a great resource to create an eye-catching cover image, too!
- Give as much information as possible – your Facebook page will allow you to include contact details, location, and information about your business and services. Be sure to fill out as much as possible to give users the complete picture.

What to post

There are two types of posts on Facebook:

- News feed posts – these are evergreen, meaning they always stay on your profile. These are the posts you see from your friends and businesses you follow when you log into Facebook
- Stories – these are photos or videos that appear for just 24 hours and are often used for sharing informal content.

Photos and videos have the highest engagement levels of all news feed posts so think about how you can incorporate them into your content. Once you build a bit of a following, you might even consider a Facebook Live stream to interact with your fans – all you need is a phone!
Click here for a short video tutorial on Facebook Live.
Click here for a more in-depth tutorial on Facebook Live.
Click here to find out about Facebook Live on mobile.

Click here to find out more about how to use Facebook stories for your business.
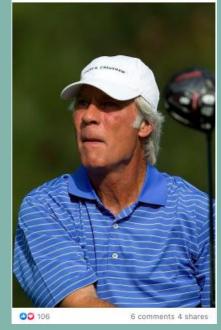
Remember to ask questions to open up dialogue and encourage interaction. Facebook's algorithms are a closely guarded secret, but it's widely recognised that comments and shares are more effective for getting your content seen by other users than likes. And once you've received those comments, remember to interact with them!

Keep an eye out for great user generated content you can share – this could include photos, videos, comments and reviews posted by your customers. People who share content about your business are acting as brand ambassadors and sharing this content (across all social networks) both makes them feel valued and proves your credentials to potential visitors. Other users may tag your business in posts or

Case study

Royal Dornoch Golf Club
22 October at 19:14

#ThrowbackThursday Before the 1980 Open at Muirfield, our honorary member Ben Crenshaw flew up to play. When he returned, somebody asked the famous American, a two-time Masters champion, how he had liked Dornoch. "I almost didn't come back," said Crenshaw 😊

#royaldornochlinks #friendsofroyaldornoch

106 — 6 comments 4 shares

Images are attractive to social media users – as can be seen by the number of likes, comments and shares this post has.

This post tells (and shows) users something interesting without being overly pushy with sales messages. Give quality content and the brand loyalty will follow.

Note the use of tailored hashtags of interest to existing fans, and the more general #ThrowbackThursday to reach a larger audience.

photos, or they may post directly to your page so be sure to keep checking regularly. Keep on top of your reviews and remember to reply to them all – good or bad.

Facebook doesn't make as much use of hashtags as other social platforms, but it's still worth including one or two key tags where appropriate.

When to post

As important to consider as what to post is when to post it. It's not necessary to post every single day. Spending time creating a few quality posts a month will be far more valuable – and a better use of your time – than throwing something up every day. It might help to create a plan of what you want to post and when, to keep you focused and stop you missing any big events or promotions.

Research shows that the most effective time to post on Facebook is 3pm on Wednesday, followed closely by midday at the weekend, and afternoons on Thursday and Fridays. However, these are generalisations and may not be applicable to your business. Head to the 'Posts' section of your page's Insights and you'll find graphs telling you when your page's followers are online to give you a guide. To access your page Insights, simply navigate to your page on Facebook and select 'Insights' from the menu on the left of the screen.

If you discover that your users are most active in the evenings, early mornings or at the weekend, you might decide that you don't want to be on Facebook at that time. Using Facebook's page tools, you can schedule your posts to go live at specific times. You can also use this to plan content for a few weeks in advance.
Click here to read a simple how-to guide on scheduling your posts.

If there's a post that contains some important information – for example, updated opening hours, you might not want this to get lost in amongst your other content. You can pin a post to the top of your profile so that it's the first thing a user will see when they visit the page.
Click here to find out how to pin a post.

What next?

For more top tips on using Facebook to promote your business, click here to read a comprehensive blog post.

Instagram

Owned by Facebook but its own separate beast, Instagram is an image sharing platform with over 1 billion users worldwide.

Where to start

First, you'll need to set up an Instagram account for your business – then convert it to a business account. Might sound complicated, but all it takes is a few clicks. Unlike setting up your Facebook page, you'll need to complete all this in the app on your phone for the best results.
Click here for a video tutorial on setting up an account.
Click here to watch a video tutorial on converting your account to a business profile.

When setting up your profile, remember these points:

- Pick the right username – this will be seen alongside all your posts and comments, so make sure it easily identifies your business.
- Choose your profile picture wisely – like on your Facebook page, make this an image that easily identifies your business.
- Give as much information as possible – regular Instagram profiles have limited information about the user, but business profiles allow you to add loads of extras. Be sure to make use of the customisable buttons that make it easier to people to contact you.

What to post

Like Facebook, there are two types of posts on Instagram: feed posts and stories. Both share one thing in common, though – the content must be visually appealing.

Instagram feed posts are evergreen. These are the square photos you see when you arrive on an Instagram profile. When writing the captions, make sure you get your message across. Remember you can't include clickable links – but you can include up to 30 hashtags to ensure your content is seen by as many people as possible.

Stories are photos or videos that appear for just 24 hours (although you can save the best ones in your highlights) and are often used for more informal content, like sharing other users' images relating to your business, conducting polls or asking questions.
Click here to read more about the difference between feed posts and stories.
Click here to find out how to save stories to your highlights.

It's possible to link your Facebook business page and your Instagram account together – however we recommend against posting exactly the same content on each. While you might use the same imagery, you'll need to tailor the captions for each platform to make sure you're tagging in the correct pages and using the right hashtags.

When to post

The right balance of feed posts and stories is different for every profile, so feel free to experiment to see which ones work best for you – and gain the biggest engagements.

Like Facebook, there's no scientific method to find out the best time to post. It often comes down to trial and error. There are things you can do to stack the odds in your favour, though. You can use Instagram analytics to find out when most of your audience is active to help plan when you're going to post.
Click here to find out more about Instagram analytics.

Hashtags

Hashtags allow you to connect with people who are interested in topics relating to your products or services. Different social networks use these in different ways, but the basic concept is the same.

Using tags like #DineInDornoch, #DreamInDornoch and #DiscoverDornoch will allow people interested in visiting the area – or already planning a trip – to find your content, and therefore hopefully visit your business.

Websites like RiteTag, Best Hashtags and Top Hashtags are great places to start looking for hashtags relevant to your offering.
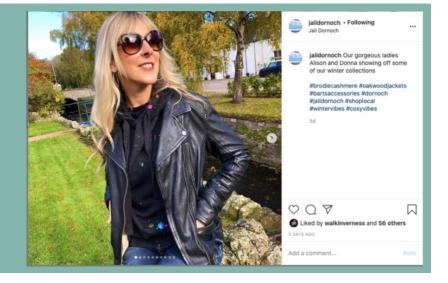
Like Facebook, you might not want to be posting on Instagram at all hours of the day. While Instagram doesn't let you schedule posts on its own app or website, there are various third-party systems that allow you to do this. The most popular of these is Hootsuite.
Click here to read how to schedule Instagram posts using Hootsuite.

Case study

This post makes use of the gallery style of Instagram feed post, allowing users to browse through multiple images.

The hashtags used are a mix of location-specific and topic-specific, meaning that the post will reach the largest possible audience.

jaildornoch • Following
Jail Dornoch

jaildornoch Our gorgeous ladies Alison and Donna showing off some of our winter collections

#brodiecashmere #oakwoodjackets #bartsaccessories #dornoch #jaildornoch #shoplocal #wintervibes #cosyvibes

5d

Liked by walkinverness and 56 others

5 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...   Post

What next?

Click here to read a blog that gives great tips on how to maximise the impact of your Instagram account.

Canva

Do you look at some social media profiles and wonder how they manage to create such eye-catching graphics? The good news is that you don't need a degree in graphic design to do it.

Canva is an online tool that allows you to create professional looking graphics. The best part is you can use it for free! While there ae some paid features, for most users the massive range of free templates, fonts and graphics will be more than enough.

You can use Canva to create eye-catching images to go alongside your posts, or to craft the perfect profile and cover images. The possibilities are almost endless!

The best way to learn how to use Canva is to set up an account and have a play around, and they also offer some fantastic, easy-to-follow tutorials.
Click here to access the tutorials.

Google My Business

Your business profile on Google is an important tool for getting the word out there about your offering. It's that box on the right-hand side of a Google search that tells users a bit more about your business – your opening hours, directions, booking links, amongst many others. (You'll also find interesting statistics, like how customers search for your business and which keywords they used to find you.)

Click here to read a blog explaining how to set up Google My Business.

Another benefit of registering your business with Google is that you will show up more prominently in Google Maps searches. If you're a restaurant with a full Google My Business profile, for example, then people looking for places to eat lunch in Dornoch will see more information about your business in their search.

Don't worry if, when you search for your business, there are already details on there (especially if they're wrong). Once you've claimed your business profile, you'll be able to edit them and ensure that all the information given to potential visitors is correct and up to date.

As with every social network, it's important to include as much information as you can to ensure your profile is fully fleshed out. You can post photos and news updates, and interact with Google user reviews. Just remember: Like all social platforms, ensuring you keep it updated is key to your success.

Newsletters

Another way of engaging with your audience is by sending out a newsletter. If you collect email data from your customers, and they have given you permission to use them for marketing purposes, then this is a great way of reaching out directly.

You might want to set up a monthly or quarterly mailout sharing your latest news, or maybe you'd just like to send infrequent updates whenever you have a special offer on. Whatever you choose, just be conscious not to bombard your customers with emails as you want them to stay subscribed.

There are lots of services that allow you to design and send email newsletters. One of the most popular platforms is Mailchimp. It's easy to use, has great templates and also the ability to create your own design from scratch if you want to (you can use Canva to help you create graphics). Best of all, if you have fewer than 2,000 subscribers then you can use it for free!

When designing your emails, remember to be clear and concise. Think about the newsletters that land in your own inbox – the easiest ones to read (and click the links in) are those that are short and to the point.

Mailchimp has a number of step-by-step tutorials to guide you through the process of setting up your mailing list and sending your first newsletter. Click here to access them.

Mailchimp can also keep you right on GDPR, ensuring that your subscribers have given their consent to receive marketing information from you. Click here for more information.

Other Social Networks

Once you've got Facebook and Instagram under control, you might want to branch out onto other social networks. Here's a quick glimpse at some of the platforms you might want to consider for your business…

TripAdvisor

You might not think of TripAdvisor as a social network, but in terms of travel and tourism it's one of the most important. Make sure your business profile is complete and up-to-date, and filled with lots of nice images. Remember to keep updating them if possible.

It's important to take stock of all your reviews and remember to reply to them all – building that social relationship. It's easy to fall into the trap of leaping to your defence in response to one bad review and forgetting to thank the dozens of users who left good reviews before that. Treat everyone equally, always be polite and your guests will appreciate it.

> ### Creation vs curation
>
> You might hear people talking about two types of content on social media: created and curated. Created content is material you have developed yourself, while curated content is other people's work that you share, like links and photos. It's good to have a mix of both kinds throughout your profiles.

Click here to read a blog that explains how to handle reviews on TripAdvisor and other platforms.

Twitter

Twitter is a 'microblogging' platform that allows you to share posts limited to 280 characters (including spaces) alongside photos and videos. Sharing information on Twitter will force you to be economical with your words – but sometimes that's no bad thing, as it allows you to focus on your core message.

Click here to watch a video tutorial on how to set up a Twitter account for business.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is primarily for business to business networking, but there are definitely ways that tourism businesses can take advantage of the platform. If you're an accommodation provider, for example, you might want to showcase your rooms to business travellers. Or an outdoor centre might want to share their activities to those looking to provide incentives for their staff or delegates.

Click here to watch a video tutorial on how to set up a LinkedIn company page.

Shortcuts

Rather type in a web address than click a link? We've got you covered! Here's how to access all of the links from earlier in the document…

Facebook

Facebook: www.facebook.com

How to create a Facebook Business Page (YouTube): https://bit.ly/3oXCxQT

What is Facebook Live? (YouTube): https://bit.ly/3lfCP3i

In-depth look at Facebook Live (YouTube): https://bit.ly/3jWDANh

Facebook Live on mobile (Facebook): https://bit.ly/2UC2rM7

Guide to Facebook stories (Influencer Marketing Hub): https://bit.ly/36kYVeq

How to schedule your posts (WikiHow): https://bit.ly/2Iifz62

How to pin a post (Facebook): https://bit.ly/3lkGqgn

Facebook Page tips and tricks (HubSpot): https://bit.ly/3mQbVPH

Instagram

Instagram: www.instagram.com

How to set up an Instagram account (YouTube): https://bit.ly/2I6pWtM

How to convert an Instagram account to a business profile (YouTube): https://bit.ly/3oSHZ7r

Feed posts vs stories (Social Media Today): https://bit.ly/2TRd25d

Saving stories to highlights (Instagram): https://bit.ly/361xFl0

How to use Instagram Analytics (Hootsuite): https://bit.ly/2HTp8bT

Scheduling Instagram posts (Hootsuite): https://bit.ly/3khUoOT

Hints and tips for Instagram for business (Buffer): https://bit.ly/3kWl5K3

Canva

Canva: www.canva.com

Canva design tutorials (Canva): https://bit.ly/3kRACe2

Google My Business

Google My Business: www.google.com/business

How to set up Google My Business (Hootsuite): https://bit.ly/36jR5Sk

Newsletters

Mailchimp: www.mailchimp.com

Mailchimp tutorials (Mailchimp): https://bit.ly/2JUH7iI

GDPR (Mailchimp): https://bit.ly/3keEKnq

Other Social Networks

TripAdvisor: www.tripadvisor.com

Responding to reviews on TripAdvisor and other platforms (HubSpot): https://bit.ly/35XaEj6

Twitter: www.twitter.com

How to set up a Twitter account for business (YouTube): https://bit.ly/3eqNLbE

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com

How to set up a LinkedIn company page (YouTube): https://bit.ly/2TVvyt6

Hashtag Resources

RiteTag: www.ritetag.com

Best Hashtags: www.best-hashtags.com

Top Hashtags: www.top-hashtags.com