



A GUIDE TO SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING FOR RESTAURANTS

Learn best practices on social media platforms, strategy and content creation to support your restaurant.

MANAGE YOUR SOCIAL PRESENCE:

From established powerhouses like Facebook and Instagram, to newer platforms like TikTok and Twitch, it can be tempting to try to be in all places at once. But with limited resources and everything you have to juggle, you should streamline your efforts to focus on the platforms that are essential for reaching potential diners and driving dine-in and off-premise traffic.

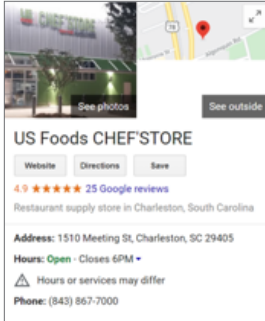
In this guide, you'll find quick-start tips for each channel, learn why it's important, get tips for great photography and more. Click on any of the links within this guide for a deeper dive into other resources on our website. You can also find additional content in our social media webinar! [Watch on demand here.](#)

Before we start, let's talk **analytics**. On any social media platform, the method of getting the most out of those platforms is to **have a business account for your company profile**. They are easy to claim and free to use, but provide much deeper levels of analytics that can help you learn more about potential diners and what they want. Use that data to help you determine everything, from the age range of your diners to the times of day or week they are online. Looking at post-analytics to see which drool-worthy photos get the most engagement can also help inform your menu decisions. What you find may surprise you, so don't assume you know everything about your diners before you start!





PLATFORM CHECKLIST



Google My Business

✓ GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

Why it's important: As 92% of consumers* have searched on a web browser for a restaurant in the last six months, it's critical that your Google business listing is claimed, complete and accurate. These factors, along with adding photos to your listings and responding to reviews can help improve your restaurant's local ranking

How to get started: Claim your business listing through Google My Business by following Google's instructions [here](#). If you use BentoBox for your restaurant's website, they offer a feature called [Local Sync](#) that can help make it easier to manage your menus and information on both Google and Facebook



✓ TWITTER

Why it's important: Before we share why it's important, let's discuss if you need it. Twitter has become more of a news-focused platform in the past few years, so unless you already have one and it works for you, or you are a relatively large restaurant group with news that rivals CNN, you may not need to engage in Twitter. The average tweet only lives for about 10 minutes unless it goes viral. Before you dive in, calculate if a 10-minute life span per tweet is enough to balance out the time you put in. If it is, use Twitter to broadcast any updates about your business and for customer service purposes

How to get started: Like many of the other platforms, you need to [set up your Twitter account](#) as a business profile to access helpful tools like Twitter Insights. The [Twitter Business website](#) also has good resources on how to build your profile and get ideas for Tweets

*92% of consumers have searched on a web browser for a restaurant in the last 6 months

**Five new Facebook profiles are created every second



✓ FACEBOOK

Why it's important: 1.66 billion users on average visit Facebook daily and five new profiles are created every second**. Although Facebook is not as popular among Gen Z teens, it is still a key platform to reach Millennials, Gen X and Baby Boomer consumers, particularly higher-income earners

How to get started: If you are currently using Facebook for your business, but do not have a business profile, step one is to claim it! Once you create your restaurant's [Facebook for Business Page](#), follow our quick tips to increase engagement with your Facebook posts [here](#)



✓ INSTAGRAM

Why it's important: With food-related content being some of the most successful Instagram posts, this platform is one of the most important for restaurants to share drool-worthy photos of their dishes. It's also become one of the most popular platforms, with about 1 billion active users. In recent years Instagram has become the new Google, with diners searching for restaurant options via hashtag, so don't forget to include a few in your posts

How to get started: First, ensure your Instagram profile [is set up as a business account](#), so you can take advantage of business features and Instagram Insights. Then check out our tips to making your business stand out on Instagram [here](#)

Instagram stories: The highest engaged content on all of social media, but it only lasts 24 hours. This content should be the least produced of anything you share. Think of it as a documentary for what your operation is up to in the moment. Use Instagram Stories to communicate temporary or daily specials to drive #fomo and generate quick revenue



SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY FOR RESTAURANTS

So, you have your profiles set up, but what should you post?
And how often? Here are a few best practices to guide your social media strategy.

BUILD A CONTENT PLAN: THE 5 W'S (AND 1 H)

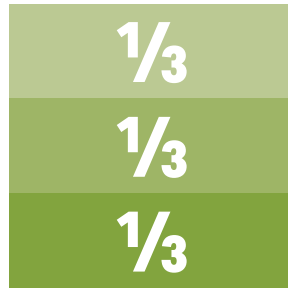


WHO:

- If you don't already have someone assigned to manage your social media presence, consider delegating the task to a social media-savvy member of your team. **Tip:** If you are always catching an employee on Instagram and making them put their phone away, that person might just be your new social expert!

WHAT:

- Follow the "Rule of 3rds":
The content you post should be equally balanced between
1) posting news about and tips from your business, 2) interacting with your audience by sharing their reviews and photos of your restaurant, and 3) promoting your products and services to keep what you offer fresh in your followers' minds
- Go behind the scenes, share recipes, feature your staff, tell your personal story and encourage reviews from your customers
- Be sure to share your updated takeout/delivery menus, any changes to your hours of operations, specials you may be offering and what you're doing to support your community
- User-generated content is a great way to create community while lightening the load on creating content. Sharing (with credit) diner's posts of your dishes is a no-brainer way to turn an occasional diner into a loyalist



WHY:

- Your main goal of any marketing efforts, including social media, is to convert hungry diners into your paying customers. Likes, shares and comments are great for measuring the effectiveness of your posts, but don't forget to monitor the impact on your overall sales
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, your goals may have also narrowed to focus on specifically increasing takeout and delivery orders. Many platforms offer features to make it easier to track these orders directly from your posts. For example, commission-free online ordering provider ChowNow recently announced a new "[Order Food](#)" button restaurants can add to their Instagram posts
- The reason why consumers would want to buy has also changed since the crisis: consumers want to support their local businesses and they miss going out to eat, so they want to bring that sense of normalcy home with them

WHEN:

- Across all platforms and business types, the best times to post on social media are mid-morning and mid-afternoon, specifically around the 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. times
- Recommended frequency across all business types are one to two posts per day on Facebook and Instagram, and seven to 10 times per day on Twitter, as tweets have a significantly shorter lifespan than posts on other platforms
- Test, test, TEST! Everyone's audience is different. Start with the recommendations and if you see a ton of engagement, you may be able to add another post per day, if you'd like. If you see engagement decrease, reduce the number of posts, your audience may be suffering from ad fatigue. Additionally, your optimal frequency and time of day depends on the age of your audience. College town operators whose audience is made up of Gen-Z students could require substantially more content than a restaurant in a Gen-X heavy area

WHERE:

- Once you've completed our Platform Checklist, stick to just those platforms when planning out what content you want to post on each platform
- Keep in mind that different types of content can work differently on each platform. For example, posting an image of your menu is easier to read on Facebook and Google, while enticing photos of your specials for the day would be perfect for Instagram. Switching up copy and visuals by platform can help your messages live longer

HOW:

- You can always choose to post directly through the platform as soon as you want the content to instantly go live on your profile, but this can be time-consuming in your already busy day
- Instead, you can explore tools that can help you schedule posts in advance so you don't have to drop everything to post during optimal times. Facebook and Twitter have scheduling tools right in their platforms you can use for free. For Instagram, tools like Later and Curalate have free or inexpensive scheduling options.



HOW TO NAVIGATE REVIEWS

The downside of the social mediasphere is that everyone's opinion counts. However, if you get a bad review, you don't have to let it get the best of you. Get the full download on how to tranquilize online trolls and respond to bad reviews [here](#).

DO:

Respond in a timely manner in a professional (not emotional) way that lets the customer know that you are taking the issue seriously and that you are working to resolve it.

DON'T:

Hit the send button on the review response before you've had an opportunity to take a deep breath.

PRO-TIP:

When you see a negative review come in, back away from the computer, take some deep breaths, and then respond. Remember, everyone can see your response, including future diners.

Learn how to get great reviews from acclaimed restaurant critic, Bill Addison [here](#).



7 SIMPLE TIPS TO CREATE GREAT PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

No, you don't need to hire a professional photographer to take your social media images. But, social photos do require great care. Your social feed is your digital front door, one of the first ways diners get a glimpse into what you have to offer. These days, if you don't have a photo or video to accompany your post, it's best to not post at all. The hashtag #instagramworthy exists for a reason – your content must be bold, bright and pop off the page to cause people to stop the endless scroll. Here are some tips to help you up your photo and video game.

1. Shoot in natural light and control shadows within your shot – never use flash!
2. Consider color composition including your food, plating and background
3. Shoot from the best angle – overhead shots are trendy but sometimes a closeup (but not too close) can be more enticing
4. Ensure food looks appetizing and has neat plate presentation
5. When shooting demo videos in your kitchen, control any background noise, including turning off the hoods, so you can be heard clearly
6. Shoot multiple options so you can pick the best shot to post
7. Limit the amount of text in images, as social platforms will reduce the reach of text-heavy images due to reading these as possible spam

Check out our in-depth guide for more ideas on plating for Instagram [here](#)





NEED A BOOST? HOW TO CREATE PAID SOCIAL ADS

We know what you're thinking: "I thought social media is free. Why do I have to pay for this?" It's the same reason you spend money on advertising or for a publicist: exposure. Facebook can expose your brand to potential customers. Promoted posts can be micro-targeted to a specific location, age and gender demographic to increase followers and, in turn, increase the number of locals who are regularly exposed to your posts. Added bonus: **it's not that expensive.**

While you don't need to run paid ads to have a robust social media presence, **social media is a pay-to-play business.** If you're looking to break through the increasingly saturated social chatter, you may want to start your paid social strategy with boosting a post or two and monitoring your results. Boosting a post can help show your content to the most people possible within your budget, and target demographics.

Carefully consider who you want to reach in your posts and set your target demographics accordingly. For example, you may want to reach people who consider themselves foodies within a 5-mile radius of your business. You'll also want to then plan your budget accordingly – increasing your spend increases your reach but targeting very narrow audiences can also increase your budget. Start with as little as \$10-25, test, learn and scale up from there.

To get started, check out each platform's quick and easy tutorials on running paid advertising:

Facebook:

[Beginner's Guide to Facebook Ads](#)

[How to Create a Boosted Post](#)

Instagram:

[Advertising Options and How to Get Started](#)



NEED MORE HELP MANAGING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE?



Reach out to your US Foods representative or schedule a virtual one-on-one appointment [here](#) with one of our Restaurant Operations Consultants.

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