

Growing your business with social media

Part 1

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It's true, there was a time when social media was just for youngsters. Today, the most popular social media platforms offer three of the most attractive benefits for anyone trying to build a business:

- social media makes it easier for customers to find you
- it's a great way to share news and raise your profile
- in general, running a social media account is (mostly) free.

In this 2-part overview, we'll explain how social media can help to grow your business. We think you'll definitely 'like' our practical tips on getting more active on social media!

Creating a community

The aim of social media is to start a worthwhile conversation. Every interaction could be the start of a mutually-beneficial long-term relationship.

You can be at the heart of an online community, and the conversations you have don't need to focus exclusively on insurance policies:

- connecting regularly with like-minded business associates is good practice
- you'll get to know niche audiences well – perhaps in a business sector

- you can create a sense of 'the human side' of insurance
- it's a great way to build relationships and engage with key audiences.

You may choose LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook (we'll look at these in more depth in part 2). Or you may start blogging on your own website, with a combination of tools to 'push' messages further afield.

Boost your ‘findability’ – and your reputation

Other brokers may know you very well. But with so many listings on the ‘find me a broker’ websites, how can you improve the chances of being chosen by a new customer? A social media account will make it easier for customers to find you, contact you, and get to know your business.

The more content you create on social media, the higher your website’s search rankings will be – whether that’s a search in Google, Yahoo or Bing.

Having a strong profile and a reputation for being up-to-speed is important – especially if you’re looking for local business. Customers respond positively when you’re commenting on the issues that matter to them, so you’ll need to think about posting topical articles or comments – at the right time.



From Facebook to face-to-face...

It's probably the best outcome from any piece of social media activity: someone finds you, likes what you're saying, and asks for a face-to-face meeting to discuss some business.

Social media is a way to stand out against competitors (but remember, you can't 'sell' online).

The FCA recognises the value of social media. It doesn't deter you from using it, it offers clear guidance on distinctions between business and personal accounts, and the overarching message

is clear: every communication with a client must be fair and not misleading. (Best of all, the FCA's guidance includes some very clear, good and bad examples of social media posts for brokers).

The easiest way to go from Facebook (or LinkedIn, or Twitter) to a face-to-face meeting, is to explain the need for prudence:

"Interesting, let's explore that in person – that way we'll protect your personal information."



Keen to get started?

In Part 2, we'll look at staying up to date, finding the right niche for your social media presence, and which platform might work best for your business...

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