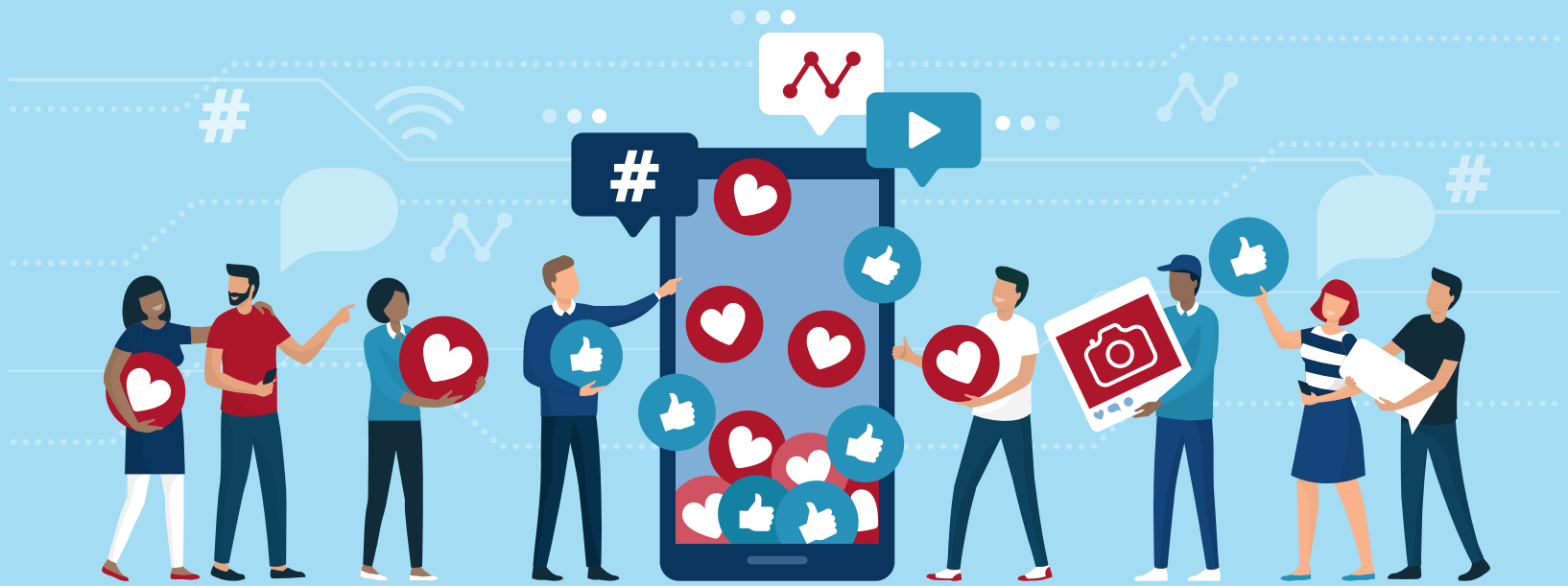


Putting **SOCIAL MEDIA** To Work For You

Many small businesses often have a small budget for marketing, which can create challenges in promoting products and services. Social media is a valuable and an inexpensive marketing tool available to help engage customers while attracting new ones.



To get started, consider creating business accounts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube to:

- Directly dialogue with followers to promote your business/brand while increasing engagement.
- Communicate timely information regarding special events or promotions.
- Run polls and request feedback.
- Create quick and informational posts, using business-related information, that are easy to digest.

As a small business owner, it can be daunting to think about coming up with regular social media posts. It can be helpful to create a social media schedule for your business and map out posts for at least each quarter if not for an entire year. The schedule should reflect seasonal promotions but also be flexible so when a special need or something timely arises, a quick substitution can be made. With a little bit of time invested in planning, a

- business can ensure that posts are consistent, strategic and complement other marketing efforts while generating results.
- Most social media outlets offer handy tools, like scheduling features, that can also help small business owners. A number of posts can be written at one time and then scheduled to appear over several weeks or months.

Other social media tips:

- Tag loyal customers or even neighboring companies and vendors on social media to broaden reach.
- Encourage followers to tag your business in posts.
- Give away a prize to create interest and buzz on social media. Prizes don't have to be expensive and could be free merchandise or services. Contests are a great way to gather potential customer data—like email addresses for newsletters or other communication — while also getting them to spread the word about your business to more potential customers.

Once you embark on using social media as a marketing avenue, it is essential to be active with regular posts. Consistency and commitment are important to build and maintain an online community to put social media to work for your business.

Source: wordstream.com