



Make the Most of social media on National Pet Shop Day

Social media is a wonderful way for businesses to increase their online presence, engage with their audience, target specific demographics, and drive revenue. When executed effectively, it can offer a significant competitive advantage in today's digital landscape and play a crucial role in building and strengthening brands.

By directly interacting with customers, businesses can respond to comments, answer questions, and engage in conversations, building relationships and fostering a sense of community. This can lead to customer loyalty and word-of-mouth referrals. Consistent posting and engagement help increase brand visibility, making businesses more recognisable to potential customers.

To maintain a consistent and effective social media presence, planning content and scheduling posts are essential. It is also important to be prepared to adapt content strategies based on real-time events, customer feedback, and industry developments. Consistency, engagement, and authenticity are key factors in successful brand-building on social media.

Top Tips for promoting a business effectively on social media

- Determine the most relevant social media platforms for your target audience and focus your efforts on those platforms.
- Define your social media marketing objectives, whether it's increasing brand awareness, driving website traffic, generating leads, or boosting sales.
- Develop a content calendar to outline what you'll post and when, including important dates, holidays, and specific events.
- Consider using a mix of formats, such as text-based posts, images, videos, and stories, to make your content diverse and engaging. Ensure your content is visually appealing, on-brand, and provides value to your audience.
- Research and identify the best times to post on each social media platform based on your audience's activity, using tools and analytics available on the platforms.
- Make sure to actively engage with your audience by responding to comments, messages, and mentions.
- Consistency is crucial in social media marketing. Stick to your content calendar and posting schedule to maintain a strong presence and keep your audience interested.
- Don't hesitate to repurpose evergreen content or update and recycle successful posts. This will help you maximize the value of your content and save time on content creation.

What type of content works best for retailers?

Social media revolves around communication and connection rather than traditional hard selling. Successful businesses on social media establish an authentic voice that resonates with their target audience, inviting prospects to become part of an exclusive club that reflects their values and aspirations.

One of the most effective tools for showcasing a brand's personality and values is carefully planned and executed video content. Stories and reels on Instagram, for instance, offer interactive opportunities to promote authenticity and establish a genuine connection with the audience.

Instagram was the first successful image-focused social media platform and has become a valuable channel for retailers because it allows for visually appealing product profiling.

Engaging reels and stories on Instagram can accelerate engagement, build trust with consumers, create storytelling opportunities, demonstrate brand character, improve brand awareness, reach new audiences, unlock opportunities for content diversification, and provide more creative options.

How to make an effective reel

The Reels you can create need not be complicated, but they should have a purpose. Here are some things you should consider;

- **Tag products:** Potential shoppers can press "View Products" to view additional details about the product highlighted in a Reel with product tags. Customers don't even need to exit the app to purchase the marked items immediately.
- **Keep it short and sweet:** Keep in mind that you just have a few seconds to get the attention of the audience, so make sure your reel is succinct and direct. Putting on catchy music might also aid in boosting engagement.
- **Use templates:** There's no reason to start from scratch. Recreate a reel you enjoy to advertise your own goods or services. Simply view the reel you wish to duplicate, select "Use template," and add your own films. This is a simple method of getting started with Reels without having to reinvent the wheel.
- **Use hashtags and geotags:** Make sure to use hashtags relevant to your business (e.g., #nationalpetshopday, #petshops, #petproducts) as these are crucial for users to find your content. Reels can be more easily found by locals if you geotag them when suitable. Having an offline store or managing a local business requires it.
- **Follow trends:** Keep an eye open for what others are posting, monitoring any emerging trends then modify your reels as appropriate. You don't have to follow every trend, but if you see one that might be useful for your business, don't be afraid to take advantage of it! It could be as simple as incorporating a popular song into a Reel – there is no need to overcomplicate it.
- **Experiment:** Try not to take yourself too seriously. It's important to show personality and build a relationship. By forging a bond, and being authentic, customers are far more likely to engage with you. Don't be afraid to mix it up, however - you won't know what your audience responds to the best until you start blogging.

Other social media channels to consider

There are a multitude of social media channels available these days, but don't be fooled into believing that they all offer benefits from a marketing perspective. You have to consider the demographics that use each platform, and also the opportunities to either sell a product, or position your brand in a favourable light.

Whilst we've already discussed the potential presented by Instagram tools, let's look at the other channels that could help you to achieve your marketing goals:

- **Facebook:** Facebook is a successful, long-running social media platform with a proactive team focused on improvement and keeping the platform up to date. Pros include effective video features and the ability to sell directly from your page. However, news feed algorithms may work against you, and sponsoring posts is necessary for visibility.
- **X (formerly Twitter):** Whilst X has a large user base, suggestions are that it struggles to attract new users. The main benefit of X is that it can convey short, snappy messages without getting bogged down in the 'fluff', but in turn, it is a platform synonymous with complaints and 'trolling' which can be challenging to manage which can, if not handled effectively, damage your reputation.
- **Pinterest:** Pinterest has great potential for retail, as it's an aspirational platform, that visually appealing for customers who may want to replicate a kind of lifestyle. From Pinterest, it is possible to link directly to retail websites for easy purchase. However, pins can quickly become outdated, and often Pinterest users are just there to peruse and gather ideas rather than procure items.
- **Snapchat:** Snapchat is a popular social media platform with high engagement, and it offers an excellent opportunity for retailers to target teens and millennials with attention-grabbing content. It can be a great way to gain brand exposure, and promote events, however, because posts only have a 24-hour lifespan, there is a lower likelihood of generating actual sales.

How to maximise your social media marketing

You shouldn't anticipate becoming a social media success overnight. As with all business growth initiatives, it takes time, patience, and commitment – but done well, it can certainly help to build business, stimulate new custom, and encourage loyalty or the desire to trial.

Here are some simple guidelines for ensuring your endeavours are successful;

- Dedicate time and effort to build your following. Be sure to follow/like others' posts or comments to increase your chances of getting followed back. There are many online tools available that will enable you to search for relevant account holders, or people discussing similar topics to you.
- Consider promoting your channels for more followers, especially if you have the budget. Use platforms like Facebook's advertising to promote your page.
- Stay active and post regularly to avoid appearing dormant and attract more followers. Again, there are tools you can use that will help you to pre-schedule posts and monitor how successful they were, which should save you valuable time.
- Encourage your customers to follow you by highlighting your social media channels on your website, emails, and in-store. Remember to cross-promote your social media channels to boost their visibility. Leverage platforms like X to promote your presence on other channels like Instagram.

