

THE #ECONDEV SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

**30 Social Media Strategies to Nurture,
Engage, and Expand Your Audience**



SOCIAL MEDIA IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PLACES ONLINE TO HAVE A PRESENCE SO YOU CAN GAIN NEW LEADS AND ULTIMATELY, CUSTOMERS.

As an Economic Development Organization, what are the strategies you should be using on these platforms to reach more of your target market?

In this guide, we're breaking down key strategies for the top 6 Social Media platforms:



Facebook



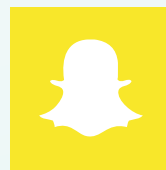
Twitter



LinkedIn



Instagram



Snapchat



Pinterest

Read on to find out how to utilize these Social Media platforms to grow your organization.

As an Economic Development Organization, maybe you've been posting semi-regularly on Facebook, and now you're wondering: How can I take this to the next level? What can I do to expand my reach, and get more leads through my posts?

1 Create a Funnel and Optimize Your Website

Think about Facebook (and all social media) as a funnel to drive people to your website or to take a specific action you want them to take.

For example:

- You may want to get people to sign up for an event
- Read a blog post
- Visit your website
- Sign up for your mailing list

Ultimately, you need to be driving traffic back to your website, whether that's through reading a blog post, watching a video, or signing up for an event or program.

Once they are there, make sure that your website is properly optimized to capture new leads. One way to do this is through offering an "opt-in gift" — a free incentive for signing up for your mailing list. This could be a drawing for a restaurant or hotel in your community, or a free guide to your community.

Make sure you're also driving traffic from your website back to your Facebook page. This way, wherever people find you, they can easily access more of your information.

2 Look At Your Engagement and Compare

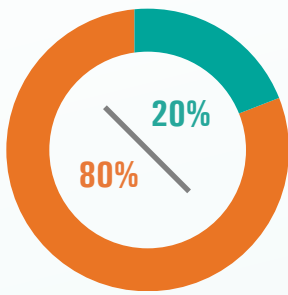
Look at your insights. What posts have the best engagement? Through finding out what's working and what posts are getting the best engagement, you can better manage your promotions.



You can also look at other pages you want to watch and monitor, and compare yourself to other communities in the region or across the country similar to yours. Or if an organization is doing a great job on Facebook, look to them for content inspiration.

3 Create Posts That Add Value And Follow The 80/20 Rule

Spend 80% of the time talking about and sharing others, and 20% talking about your own business.



Who do you need to be talking and sharing about? Success stories within your community! These could be blog posts or videos on your site that you share on Facebook. By promoting your community's successes, you are also organically selling the value of doing business in your community.

When promoting an event, product, or program, keep your posts totally focused on your target audience and the value they can get from what you are sharing.

You can also utilize Facebook LIVE as a fun and engaging way to connect with your audience and share your content. Try using it at events, giving a sneak peek into the insider experience.

4 Take It To The Next Level With Facebook Ads

The great thing about Facebook?

↳ Almost everyone is on it.

The challenge of Facebook?

↳ Almost everyone is on it!

Because there's so much traffic and information, your posts might not get seen without boosting or sponsoring them. Due to Facebook algorithms, business page posts show up on fewer feeds if they are not a sponsored or paid ad. I recommend that all EDOs have at least a small budget for Facebook ads and boosting posts. This can allow your posts to be seen by a much broader audience.

5 Allocate Time Weekly to Keep Up the Conversation on Facebook



You can start with blocking out just one hour a week to schedule out content on your page. Repurpose blog posts, articles, and videos on your Facebook feed.

Just remember — it's social and conversational. Check your page regularly throughout the week and reply to every comment! Make it a conversation.

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TWITTER

Twitter is the social media network where users post, reply and retweet 140-character messages, called “tweets”. With an active Economic Development community, this social media network is a no-brainer for Economic Development Organizations! With over 317 million monthly active users, what are some key Twitter strategies for Economic Development Organizations?

6 Optimize Your Profile



Include a brief description of your organization, key hashtags, and your website link or a call to action in your profile. To come up with your description, share how you can help your target audience and what you offer of value. You should also make sure you have an appropriate picture or logo as your profile pic, plus a header image.

7 Create Categories and Groupings

You can create categories and groupings — following businesses and CEOs, colleges and universities, and EDO partners at the municipal level. You can very quickly and easily see what others are doing and share their information when appropriate. Making it easy to manage that process.

8 Use Hashtags

Hashtags are keywords used in Twitter, starting with the “#” symbol. These are a key way to find other people tweeting about the same content as you, and to attract others to your tweets!



9 Share, and Post Regular Content

You can build a following on Twitter by putting out good content that people want to share and retweet. The content should be timely and relevant to your followers. If you're an EDO covering a region, make your posts about resources the businesses in that region can get access to. You can schedule your Twitter content in advance just like with Facebook, using an app like [HootSuite](#), [TweetDeck](#), [Zoho](#), or [Buffer](#).



10 Use the 80/20 Rule and Retweet

80% of the time, share your original content and posts, and 20% of the time, share, retweet, and promote other people's content that your target market would find valuable. Or to simplify it, one out of every 4-5 tweets should be about someone else. (Tip: Retweet and reply to the thought leaders and companies you'd like to build relationships with. You can connect directly with thought leaders and companies by tagging them.)



You can also utilize Periscope, the live streaming app, on Twitter. With all of the live streaming options (on Facebook, Instagram), Periscope can be beneficial to use if your target market is on Twitter.

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LinkedIn is a business-oriented social network and a place to build connections with other professionals. People are going to LinkedIn during the work day, and so they are very business-focused, reading and sharing industry-related articles and topics. LinkedIn is a great place to start a relationship with someone professionally that you haven't met, but may have a mutual colleague or acquaintance.

11 Create a Company Page

I suggest that EDOs all have a company page and repurpose blog content on that page. It's an opportunity to regularly put out consistent branded content. And it's easier for the team to share and like as well. So staff doesn't have to constantly come up with new content, this serves as a great way to repurpose the existing content.

12 Like and Share Posts



When you "like" a post, it will show up on other people's feeds that you liked it. That can draw people back to your page. You can also share other people's posts.

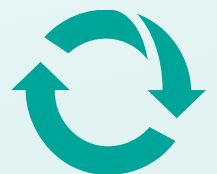
13 Join Industry Groups



There are a lot of industry groups in LinkedIn. You can join groups, read content, participate and add value in these discussions. It's important to be customer-focused and providing value, versus being too salesy. You can also utilize the industry groups to find out what people's needs, pain points, and challenges are. This is a tactic that helps you learn more about the industry and passively get involved in LinkedIn groups.

14 Repurpose Content On Your Page

LinkedIn is a great place to repurpose blog content into LinkedIn articles. You can also post blogs from your website onto LinkedIn to direct traffic to your website. If you are a larger organization, you can post an article on your blog on your website, and then share on LinkedIn and have members of your office or team also share it.



Another type of content to repurpose is any powerpoints you have created. You can upload these to SlideShare in order to post your presentation content easily for your LinkedIn network.

15 Optimize Your Profile

You'll need a great headline, professional headshot, and to flesh out the content so you can fully tell a story about yourself. You'll need your job description and About Me section full of details and interesting information that relates to your work.

Quickly grow your network through spending 30 minutes a day every day on LinkedIn. You can check who has viewed your profile every day and use that as opportunity to reach out to people and engage in conversation.

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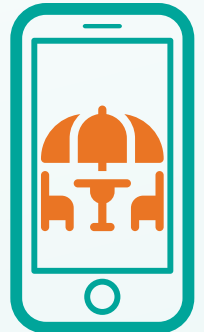


INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a very visual, user-friendly platform and a great place to tell stories through photos, videos, and small captions. This social network is all about the pictures or short videos and captions of the pictures. It incorporates hashtags, so people with common interests can search the hashtag and find your photo.

16 Show the highlights of living in your city

Think about who your target audience is. If you want to reach young entrepreneurs, Instagram could be a great way to reach them. 28% of Internet users between the ages of 18 and 29 use Instagram. 4% of internet users between the ages of 30 and 49 use Instagram.



Young entrepreneurs who you might want to attract are going to be interested both in the cost of doing business in your community, as well as the work-life balance of your community. Show the highlights of living in your city, whether it's the great restaurants, hiking trails, breweries or other interesting entertainment.

17 Support your existing businesses and highlight local talent

Instagram is an opportunity to highlight existing businesses, local talent, and things you want to attract more of. Every week you could tackle a new industry. You could do an "Instagram takeover" where you get someone from a certain industry to take over your account. Here are some ideas as examples:

- **Manufacturing Month** - You could have manufacturers sharing photos inside the industry.
- **National Education Week or Teacher's Month** - You could feature public schools or public school teachers.
- **Fall Back-to-College Season** - You could focus on higher education in the local community.
- **Transportation** - Pictures of people walking and biking, sharing rides, highlighting different transportation routes.
- **Mass Transit** - A picture of mass transit could link to a blog about transportation network.
- **Healthy Lifestyle Initiatives** - A picture of people biking could link to blog about bike to work day or an initiative in promoting healthier lifestyles.
- **Restaurant Week** - You could highlight an upcoming restaurant week and share pictures of food from different restaurants.

18 Try out Live Streaming

Through Instagram Stories, you can record short videos, and these will be available on your page for 24 hours. You can also save these to your phone and then put all the videos together to be a screen capture of your day.



Instagram LIVE videos can be viewed as you are recording them, which can be exciting for followers to catch you in real time. Once Instagram LIVE finishes, it goes away and does not have shelf life beyond that live stream.

19 Use hashtags

Hashtags increase the number of eyes on your posts, and serve as a way to find other relevant audiences. Posts with at least one hashtag average 12.6% more engagement.

20 Drive traffic to Instagram through your other avenues

Instead of people only finding you by stumbling on your Instagram account, send them there via

- Your website
- Your newsletter
- Your signature blocks in emails
- Hold message in voice mails
- Other social media sites

Encourage them to check you out on this and other platforms. Give them your Instagram handle and make it easy for them to find you!

As an EDO, you could start thinking more creatively about sharing more pictures and appeal to different people in your audience through Instagram. Try out Instagram “stories” — a lot of Instagram users prefer the stories to regular Instagram posts. Other people will enjoy seeing a “LIVE” video pop up on their feed. Others will enjoy regular posting on their feed. Mix it up and have fun with it!

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SNAPCHAT



On Snapchat, users can post or privately send photos and videos that are only available for 24 hours. (Instagram later adopted this in their Instagram Stories feature.) Snapchat is more popular among young adults and teenagers. (71% of Snapchat users are under 34 years old. 45% of Snapchat users are aged between 18-24.) If you want to reach this age group, Snapchat is a great way to become relevant and heighten your organization's visibility within this audience.

21 Show Personality And Engage the Demographic on Snapchat

Share interesting photos and videos of your town that younger entrepreneurs might be interested in. Like with Instagram (and every social network), keep in mind who you are targeting and create your content specifically for them.

22 Create General Filters

Businesses can create filters that will show up on a user's home page within a particular area and during a specific time. This can be a great way to promote your brand during live events. People at the events will see the filters; the friends they send the "snap" to will see the filter, and often, people will take a screenshot of the filter and share on Facebook or Instagram.

23 Create Event Specific Filters

If you're hosting an event which many of your attendees are in the Snapchat demographic, you could create some special filters for the event. They are only available (to be used) by people in the building or specific geolocation you've selected, but when they share the pics with all of their friends, your event filter will appear.

24 Cross Promote Your Snapchat

Cross promote your Snapchat on Facebook, Twitter, and email to let people know you are on Snapchat to follow you. This will help you to increase your following.

Utilize a Summer Intern to Create a Fun and Engaging Snapchat Strategy

See how the platforms evolve and don't be afraid to have fun with it. A younger person's unique perspective can help shape an authentic presence that resonates with your target audience.

You can also partner with your local community college to see what students are doing on Snapchat. Look to the demographics that are successfully using Snapchat for inspiration of fun, quirky ways to stand out on this platform.

But remember! Don't hop on a social media platform for the summer if you won't keep it up after that. Social media is all about consistently showing up over the long-term!

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Pinterest is a place for users to post “pins” of images onto their “boards.”

It’s sort of like a virtual scrapbook for saving all your favorite recipes, ideas, fashion tips, quotes, and more. There are 150 million active monthly users on Pinterest. 81% of Pinterest users are females. Men account for only 7% of total pins on Pinterest. 67% of Pinners are under 40 years old. 50% of Pinterest users earn \$50K or more per year.

26 Share Interesting Images Or Infographics

Pinterest is a great place to share blog posts using interesting images or infographics that link back to a blog on your website.



27 Optimize Pinterest For SEO

(from [HubSpot](#)). SEO, or “Search Engine Optimization”, is a way to utilize keywords to show up in search engines in Google, so you can get more traffic driven to your site. Here are a few ideas for optimizing your Pinterest page so that it shows up in more search results:



- Include SEO in the “About” section of your Pinterest page.
- Include links back to your website.
- All of your images should have SEO-friendly file names and alt text.
- Use hashtags.

People don’t generally use Pinterest as part of their normal work day. This is also more personal and female-oriented (lots of recipes, fashions, DIY recipes, etc.).

28 Drive Traffic From Pinterest To Your Website

You can create infographics and posts on Pinterest that are linked back to a blog on your website. When people click on the “pin” they can go to your website to read the entire blog.

29 Promote Your Agriculture Industry

If you have a strong or growing agriculture base with some potential, Pinterest is a way to capitalize on this asset. People have to eat and drink all year long! You could share everything from holiday DIY elements to locally grown soups and stews throughout the winter months, and fresh fruit and veggies in the summer months.

30 Repost Blogs Through Pinterest Images to Drive Traffic to Your Website

To come up with content ideas to post, consider the question: What do you have to offer and how could you highlight business in your community? For example, you could share an image and article of farmers with food, recipes, or DIY ideas. Figure out what businesses in your community are engaged on Pinterest and see what you can do to support their efforts.



You can also encourage your team to join in and share and repin their favorite things. Perhaps you could set up a board for every staff member and create an internal contest to see who can get the most repins! Social Media is supposed to be fun — why not make it into a game?

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A FEW LAST TIPS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA:

NO MATTER WHAT NETWORK YOU ARE ON, REMEMBER THAT SOCIAL MEDIA IS ABOUT BEING SOCIAL!

The more you interact with other users via commenting, sharing, replying, retweeting, repinning, or regramming, the more interaction you will receive! Keep it social, stay consistent, and always have the target market in mind when creating content. And remember, growing a following and seeing results doesn't happen overnight. It requires a consistent effort and visibility. Now go out there and get social!

Note: As social media is constantly changing and sites are tweaking user capabilities, some of the information in this guide may have changed since publication.

Whether you've implemented a tip noted above or you've gotten a fresh spark from this guide, I wish you success in the future. Please stay in touch — I want to hear great things from you and your community!

Get in touch at Sandy@PlatinumPR.com and find out more about how to get our support at PlatinumPR.com.

