

Social Media Marketing Fundamentals

- Course for marketers, creators, small-business teams, and social-media beginners
- Social media now serves as search, shopping, customer service, and community
- Learn core concepts through a repeatable 30-day action plan
- Fit social into broader 2026 marketing strategy and business goals



Why Social Media Still Matters for Business



- Over 5.6 billion people use social media globally



- Social networks drive 15%+ of all online sales



- Marketers report increased exposure, traffic, leads, and sales



- 73% will switch brands if you don't respond on social



- Small teams win through resonance, not just reach



The 2026 Landscape: Key Trends and Shifts



- Brand awareness is the top priority for nearly 60% of marketers



- Social search and answer engine optimization now rival traditional search



- AI is table stakes: 94% use it, but authenticity still wins



- Creator partnerships, community building, and social commerce are maturing



Core Concepts and Terminology

- Reach is unique viewers; impressions count total views, repeats included.
- Engagement is interaction; conversion is a desired business action.
- Algorithms prioritize relevance signals like saves, shares, and watch time.
- 55% of teams now choose leads or sales as their top KPI.



Major Platforms and Their Strengths



AUDIENCE

Broad
Lifestyle
Enthusiasts

CONTENT STYLE

Visual,
Inspiring,
Aspirational



AUDIENCE

Mass
Mainstream

CONTENT STYLE

Diverse,
Community,
Conversational



AUDIENCE

Viewers,
Learners,
Researchers

CONTENT STYLE

Long-form,
Educational,
In-depth



AUDIENCE

Gen Z,
Trend Seekers,
Creators

CONTENT STYLE

Short-form,
Trendy,
Entertaining



AUDIENCE

Professionals,
Decision Makers,
Businesses

CONTENT STYLE

Professional,
Insightful,
Authoritative

- Instagram leads on awareness, engagement, traffic, leads, and revenue
- Facebook dominates scale, product discovery, community, and ROI
- YouTube wins long-form video, education, and purchase influence
- TikTok excels in discovery, Gen Z engagement, and social commerce
- LinkedIn remains the top B2B platform for leads and reputation

Setting Goals and Defining Your Audience



- Build SMART goals tied to awareness, engagement, conversion, and retention



- Create personas from demographics, behavior, and platform habits



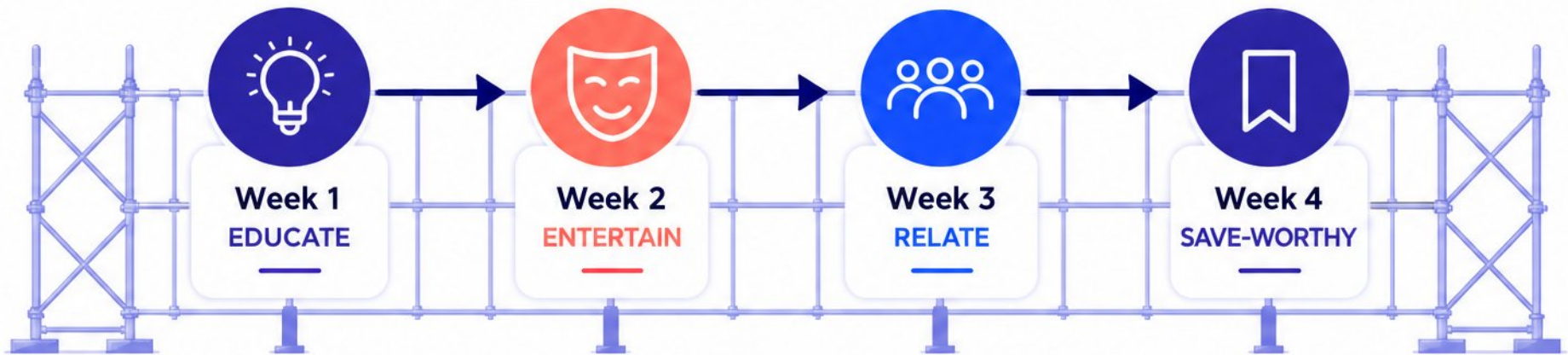
- Focus on business outcomes: leads and sales outweigh likes and clicks



- Concentrate effort on two or three platforms with proven fit



Content Strategy and Planning



- Build content pillars, story arcs, and serialized formats that earn attention



- Use editorial calendars with a sustainable posting cadence



- Make value-driven content: educational, entertaining, relatable, save-worthy



- Plan for social search and answer engine optimization from the start

Creating Engaging Visual Content

- Lead with hook, context, and clear call to action
- Use carousels, short-form video, images, and text strategically
- Authentic, human-made visuals beat polished production
- Use simple tools for consistent, mobile-first design



Community Engagement and Customer Interaction



- Reply fast to comments, DMs, and mentions



- Build trust by handling negative feedback with care



- Turn active followers into advocates and brand fans



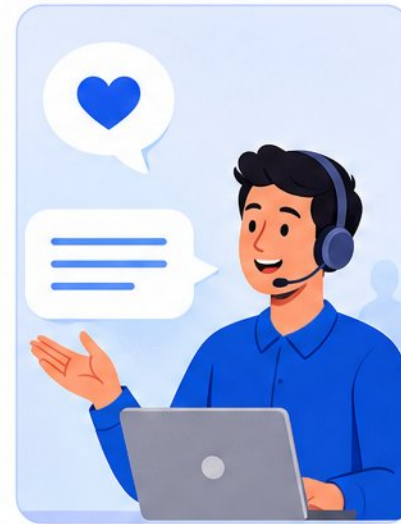
- Encourage user-generated content and employee posts



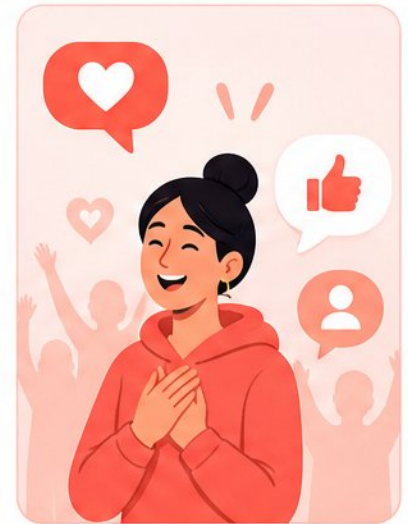
- 73% of consumers will switch if a brand doesn't respond



They reach out



We respond
with care



They become
our biggest fans



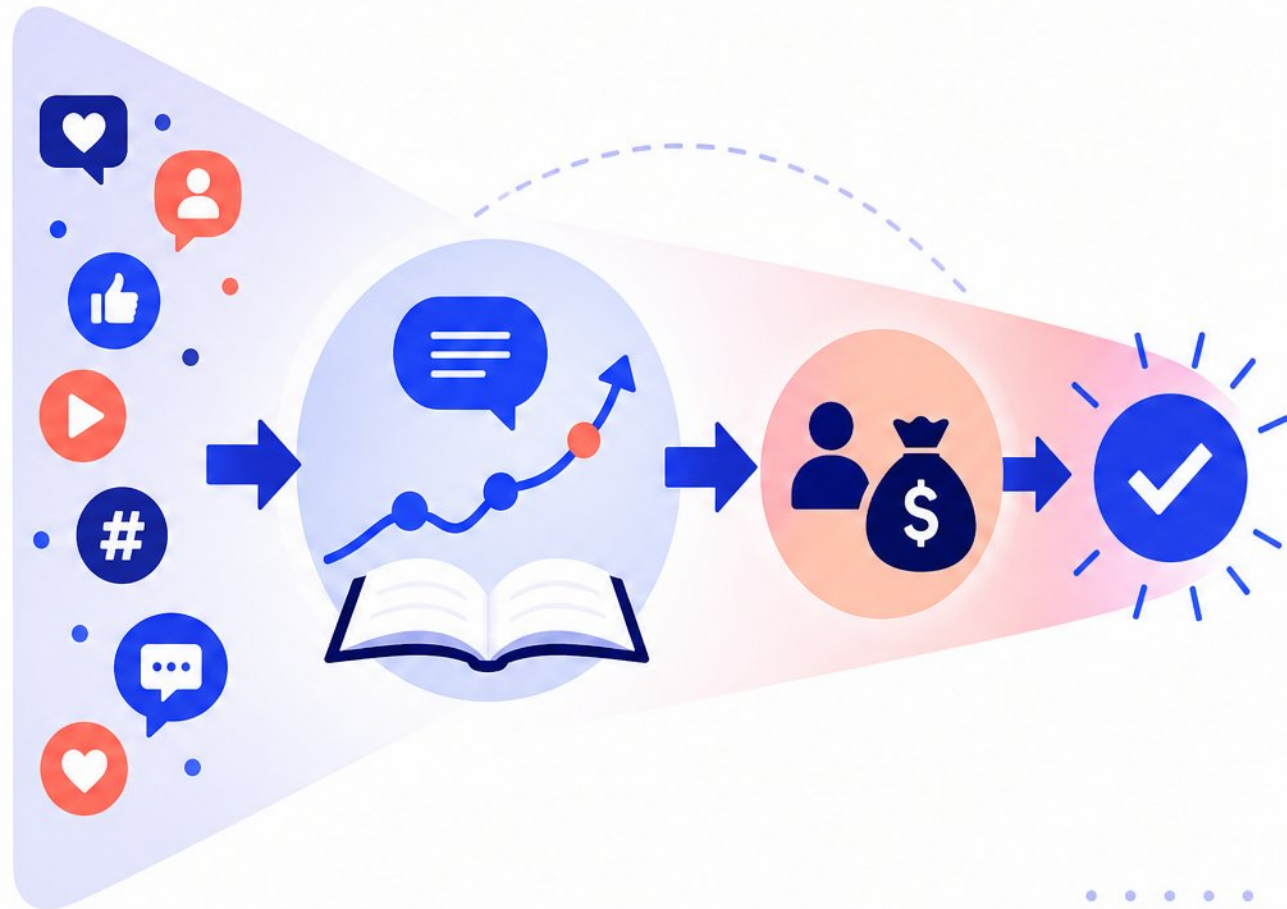
Measuring What Matters

- - Map KPIs to awareness, engagement, and revenue outcomes
- - 90% believe social drives revenue; only 35% can prove it
- - Native analytics show reach and engagement, not closed deals
- - Third-party tools add competitor and cross-platform context
- - Use UTMs, CRM data, and attribution to connect social to business results



Simple Reporting That Informs Decisions

- Focus on reporting that answers business questions, not just data dumps
- Storytelling: connect reach and engagement to leads and revenue
- Match tools to team size and budget
- Benchmark against your own past performance first



Practical Tools and Workflows



- Build a stack for scheduling, analytics, and design



- Use AI for ideation and captions, keep your brand voice



- Create template systems to protect consistency



- Start with free or low-cost tools before investing



- Prioritize simple tools that solve your core problem



Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them



- Spreading too thin across too many platforms



- Chasing vanity metrics instead of business outcomes



- Over-relying on AI-generated, generic-looking content



- Ignoring social search and community management



- Slow response speed drives customers to competitors



Your Action Plan and Next Steps



- Set SMART goals tied to awareness, engagement, or revenue



- Pick 2-3 platforms where your audience and results align



- Run small content experiments; learn from saves, DMs, and shares



- Track intent signals and benchmark against your own past data



- Use free templates and native analytics before adding paid tools



*Follow the signals.
Stay the course.*



1. Set Your Direction



2. Focus Your Platforms



3. Experiment and Learn



4. Measure What Matters



5. Build Smart, Scale Later

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