

SOCIAL MEDIA: AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING FOR GATE SAFE REGISTERED INSTALLERS

If social media is not in your marketing plans you are missing an opportunity to reach the majority of your target audience. Simple. The average user spends 20 minutes on Facebook each time they visit, and that could be several times per day. In the US 1/5 of web page views are on Facebook, so 1/5 of all content viewed on the internet is on Facebook.

And that's just Facebook.

Having a presence on social media is almost as important as having a website.

Some quick questions, have you run a press advert in the last 12 months? What did it cost you? What was the value of sales directly attributed to that advert? Not that easy to answer, is it. Now, how many times in the last 12 months have you asked for a recommendation on Facebook? How many times have you typed something into the search bar on Facebook? How many times have you looked at a business that Facebook tells you one of your friends likes? Whether we believe it or not, social media is influencing the purchasing decisions of our customers. Therefore, to be considered by these customers, we need to be active on social media ourselves. The following is just a taster of what is involved in social media marketing. There are hundreds of thousands of hours of research, workshops and courses available on the web to help you get a greater understanding, but this should get you off to a good start.

Your brand

Be clearly identifiable as your brand, logos, brand name, tone of voice, people. Be consistent with your branding across all the platforms you are active on. Ensure you include links to your website from all of your social media accounts and equally include links to all your social media accounts from your website, emails and printed materials. Make it really easy for your customers to find you and then be confident that they have found the right business when they get there.

Presence - and consistency

Your audience is using social media and so are your competitors. Being present, having a social media account is one thing, but you need to use it to post content that your audience will find useful, informative,

educational or entertaining. Post often and be consistent. Posting once a month is not enough, posting 10 times one day and then not at all for a week, doesn't work either.

Post every other day on Facebook, more often if you get lots of likes, comments and shares, less often if you don't but at the very least a couple of times a week. Where you appear in Facebook's newsfeed depends on how your followers like your content. When you post something, as few as 2% of your followers will see that post depending on how Facebook rates your content. Facebook has a closely guarded formula to work out when you show your content and how often. On twitter, post as often as once an hour. A tweet disappears down the timeline quickly and can last only 18 minutes. If you aren't tweeting, your followers won't see you. Be realistic though, posting hourly is hard work. Post when your audience are most likely to be active. Look at your twitter analytics and see which tweets got the most engagement, likes and retweets. What time of day did you post?

Instagram works in a similar way to Facebook, in that there is a formula that determines when posts will be shown and to who. Keep your posts informative and entertaining to get likes and comments which signals to Instagram that your content is well received and should be shown more.

Engagement

Engagement is the fuel that drives results on social media. Likes, retweets, shares and comments prove that you are reaching the right people for the content you are posting. But it must not be one way, you need to be liking other people's posts, commenting and sharing to show that you are real, to demonstrate your genuine nature and to get noticed by others.

Authenticity

There are tools out there that save you time by posting content for you, retweeting anything that mentions your keywords (what people relate your business with). But that's not you. A formula won't generate an emotional response and it's just plain boring. People buy from people so don't be afraid to show your personality and the people behind the brand. On the other hand, keep it professional. Personal rants, political views, mud-slinging have no place on your business social media accounts.

Keywords, hashtags

What do you want to be known for? What words will a person type into the google search bar to find you? That's a keyword. Hashtags are a word preceded by '#' which renders that term clickable on social media

platforms, notably Twitter and Instagram. Clicking on a '#' amalgamates all the content that has used that hashtag and enables users to discover new content and brands to engage with.

Stand out on one platform, not mediocre on many.

Social media never sleeps but you have to. For social media marketing to deliver results you need to work at it. It's not a sales channel, it is a marketing channel and takes time and effort. Better to invest that time and effort in a platform where you know your customers are active than be shouting in an empty room. Spend a little time to see where your competitors are active, where your customers are active.

No hard sell

No one likes to be sold to and the best salesmen don't sell, they inform, guide and demonstrate their expertise. That's what your content should do on social media, inform. A hard sell approach turns your customers off and can lose you sales. No more than 20% of your posts should be promotional, with the aim of generating a sale. Your posts should educate, reinforce your expertise and demonstrate your core values, like commitment to customer service, quality, breadth of range and professional credentials.

We hope that this short overview has given you food for thought. If you would like more advice or training please get in touch with Gate Safe at info@gatesafe.org and we will be happy to direct you towards our recommended social media marketing professional.