

Social Media Guide

With almost 3.5 billion active social media users around the world¹, the opportunity available for meaningful social interaction between brands, companies and consumers is unrivalled. It has become one of the most widely used marketing channels for generating brand awareness and a key driver of traffic to business and ecommerce websites in today's marketplace.

A range of platforms are available and can be leveraged to your advantage in different ways; using a broad style and medium of content to help promote your business and its service offerings. Social media is also a powerful route to building meaningful relationships with your clients by talking through wider topics and engaging with your community in pursuit of becoming a trusted Adviser within your specialist area.

Always remember with social media that your messaging to your community ought to be conversational - but always professional. Always remember that FCA rules and guidance on financial promotions apply to social media in exactly the same way as any other medium. This can be a challenge given social media tends to be informal in style and can limit how much you can say. **You should always seek appropriate approvals from your compliance or equivalent function.** In any event, pushing products and services too hard can be off-putting and isn't the best way to engage your audience, and retain them. Keep conversations flowing and spend time generating quality content. Leads will follow naturally if you are engaging in quality conversations and making the conscious effort to tailor your approach to suit the needs of your audience.

Which social media channels should I use?

With so many options out there, you may question which channels are the best for your business to choose to operate on. We would suggest focusing on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn as the most appropriate and widely used channels. We will discuss the advantages and opportunities of each channel but as a rule of thumb, always embrace a suitable and dedicated approach in communicating with each audience on each platform.

Facebook

Key Statistics¹

- 2.45 billion global users.
- There are 35-40 million monthly active users on the platform in the UK.
- Of these, 52% identify as women and 48% men (based on users aged 18 and older).
- 65% of UK Facebook users aged 13 and up, 37 million people can be reached with adverts on the platform.

Facebook is predominantly used as a B2C channel (business to customer) where users typically go to engage with friends, family and browse topics of interest.

Channel Approach

This is therefore the most informal channel where communication should involve a lighter, less forceful tone. Topics should be informative and helpful, with the intention of generating conversation and brand affiliation.

Messaging should never look to forcefully push products or services (people will ask if they are interested), but instead bring value to your audience and help you to build your brand credibility. In terms of frequency, you should look to post on Facebook multiple times per week to keep your brand front-of-mind and your community engaged.

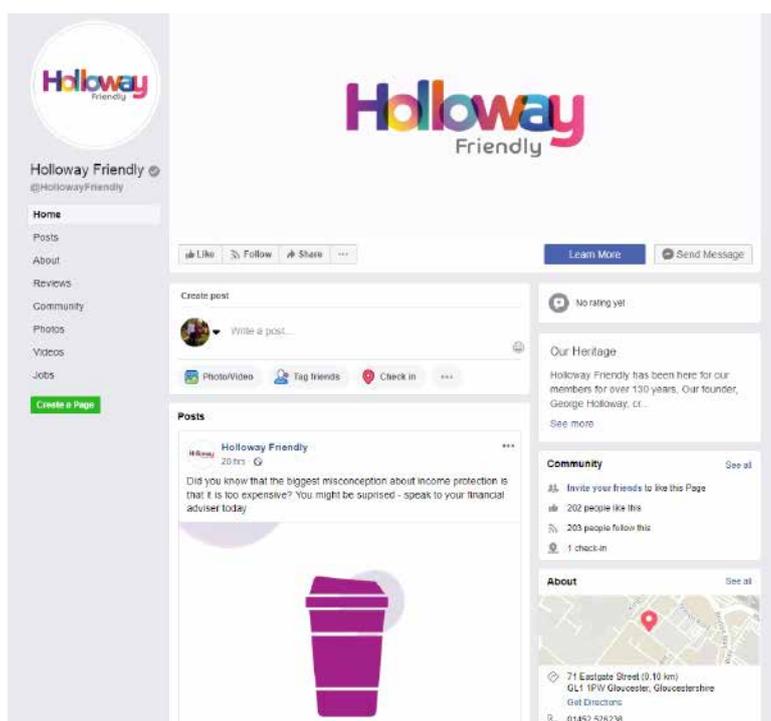
Content Types

There is great scope for generating various content types on Facebook including videos, images, polls, carousels, canvases and much more. Vary your creative assets and ensure that your content is, more importantly, exciting and engaging as this will spark interest far more than sharing the same thing over and over again. Facebook also works like Google in the way that it recognises duplicate content, so it is important that your assets are unique otherwise this will impact the reach and engagement of your channel and content.

We would recommend always including an image or a video when you post, as these generally perform much better than text only based posts. According to research from Buffer this year on the best performing content types for Facebook, it was found that videos deliver the best results out of all other content types, followed by images and then links². Facebook is currently favouring the use of more video content on its channel, so video posts will organically see larger reach as a preferred content type by the Facebook algorithm. It is important to keep informed of the latest channel developments as the algorithms changed periodically throughout the year and this will impact the delivery of your content and your channel's success - a solid information point is required and news on the developments can be found on most major social media websites.

General Housekeeping

When setting up your business profile on Facebook, ensure you set this up as a business and not as a personal page. [Click here for a guided set up](#). You will need to set up your page as a 'local business' or a 'company, organisation or institution' depending on your size. Be sure to then optimise your profile by adding pictures (profile and cover), a short description, create your username and complete the about section. After these four steps, your page will be visible.



To further improve your profile, verify your page, customise the layout of your tabs on the left hand side, edit your call to action button and set up automated messaging for when you are unavailable. All of this is available in the settings. You may also choose to like other pages as your page - this is suitable if you are affiliated or partner with other companies.

Once you have started interacting, check in on your 'Insights' on a regular basis to find out more about your audience, what they are responding well to and how you can improve your content in response to this. Click here to learn more about [Facebook Insights](#).

The metrics that you will need to track to understand the impact of your social media will depend on your wider business goals and social media objectives. For example, if you would like to increase your page audience, you will need to track reach (organic and paid), engagement and page like/follower growth (including page likes and unlikes). This will allow you to understand the impact of your content and overall activity, and whether your results demonstrate success. [More information about Facebook metrics can be found here](#).

Twitter

Key Statistics¹

- 16.7 million people in the UK can be reached by advertising.
- This number represents 24% of the UK population, aged 13+.
- The gender breakdown is shared as 60% male and 40% female.

Channel Approach

Twitter is renowned for being more of a reactive news channel, with a mixed B2B and B2C audience. The tone of voice is generally more professional than other channels (exc. LinkedIn), however, Twitter can also be used to engage in reactive conversations, enabling businesses to take on a more relaxed, conversational approach.

People will generally use the channel for short updates and for engaging with or contacting companies - generally for customer service issues.

Twitter has a character limit within each tweet (280) and this needs to be considered when planning copy and the messaging you want to focus on. The limit also includes links, however, no matter the character length of the URL, Twitter only counts it having 22 characters. Use this to your advantage by tweeting exciting updates and cut straight to the point.

Best practice generally indicates that multiple tweets per day are best but always opt for quality over quantity and be sure to optimise your tweets by including the location and relevant hashtags, for example, #IncomeProtection, as this will expand the reach of your Tweets and in turn increase your engagements. Hashtags work by collating Tweets into a thread where users interested in that topic can view all Tweets that are related to that specific hashtag. They also allow businesses to get involved in readymade topical conversations and can present a solid return on investment in terms of audience growth and lead generation.

Content Types

Content types are more limited on Twitter compared to Facebook, comprising of just a handful including photos, videos, GIFs and polls. Twitter's strategy for future growth harnesses the power of video and, as such, content that falls within this type - video, GIFs, animations - deliver greater results.

As with Facebook, certain content types typically perform better than others. For example, **engagement is 200% higher for Tweets with with image links**. You can keep abreast of content performance on most major social media news sites.

However, It's not just the type of content that can impact your social ROI. As with any channel, considerations need to be made to optimise the content to give it the best opportunity to deliver. This also includes taking into account the **time of day your target audience is most active**. For Twitter, this is generally 9am, 12pm, 3pm and 5pm.

As with all social channels, look to use a range of content types and generally speaking, always use something in accompaniment with your Tweet to make it more visually appealing.

General Housekeeping

Setting up a Twitter profile is relatively straightforward and you will find substantial guidance online to support this process. Once you have done this, optimise your bio, including relevant hashtags to your business and your company URL. This will make your profile more discoverable.



Start following people whose interests are aligned with your service offering. This may include partners, customers and industry leaders. We wouldn't recommend following your competitors to but to keep track of their activities, you may wish to add them to a 'private list'. To do this, click on their profile, click the three dots and select 'add or remove from lists'. We would recommend setting up multiple lists so that you have quick access to customised feeds per topic, only including updates from the specific people within those lists.

Twitter Analytics are located within the dropdown from your profile icon on the top right hand side and will enable you to find out more information about the performance of your Twitter profile including, follower metrics, content performance and more.

Be sure to define your objectives, as well as what you would like to track, before you start your activity as this will help you to demonstrate success.

[Click here for a full guide on how to use Twitter Analytics.](#)

LinkedIn

Key Statistics¹

- There are 28 million profiles in the UK.
- The gender breakdown is 60% male and 40% female.
- 52% of UK adults (18+) now reachable by LinkedIn adverts, according to LinkedIn.

Channel Approach

LinkedIn is the most widely used social media channel for B2B use. Professionals use this channel for ideas, industry updates, job opportunities and engaging with a like-minded community.

Posts should look to discuss your industry, business activities, instil thought leadership and convey ideas. Generally speaking posting a few times per week is ideal providing you have quality content to share.

As a company, LinkedIn can be quite limited as there aren't as many features accessible on a Company page in comparison to a personal profile. So within your strategy, ensure you utilise your main influencers - your staff. They can list your page as their employer, offering a more personal approach, but they can also support your activity with their own complimentary content.

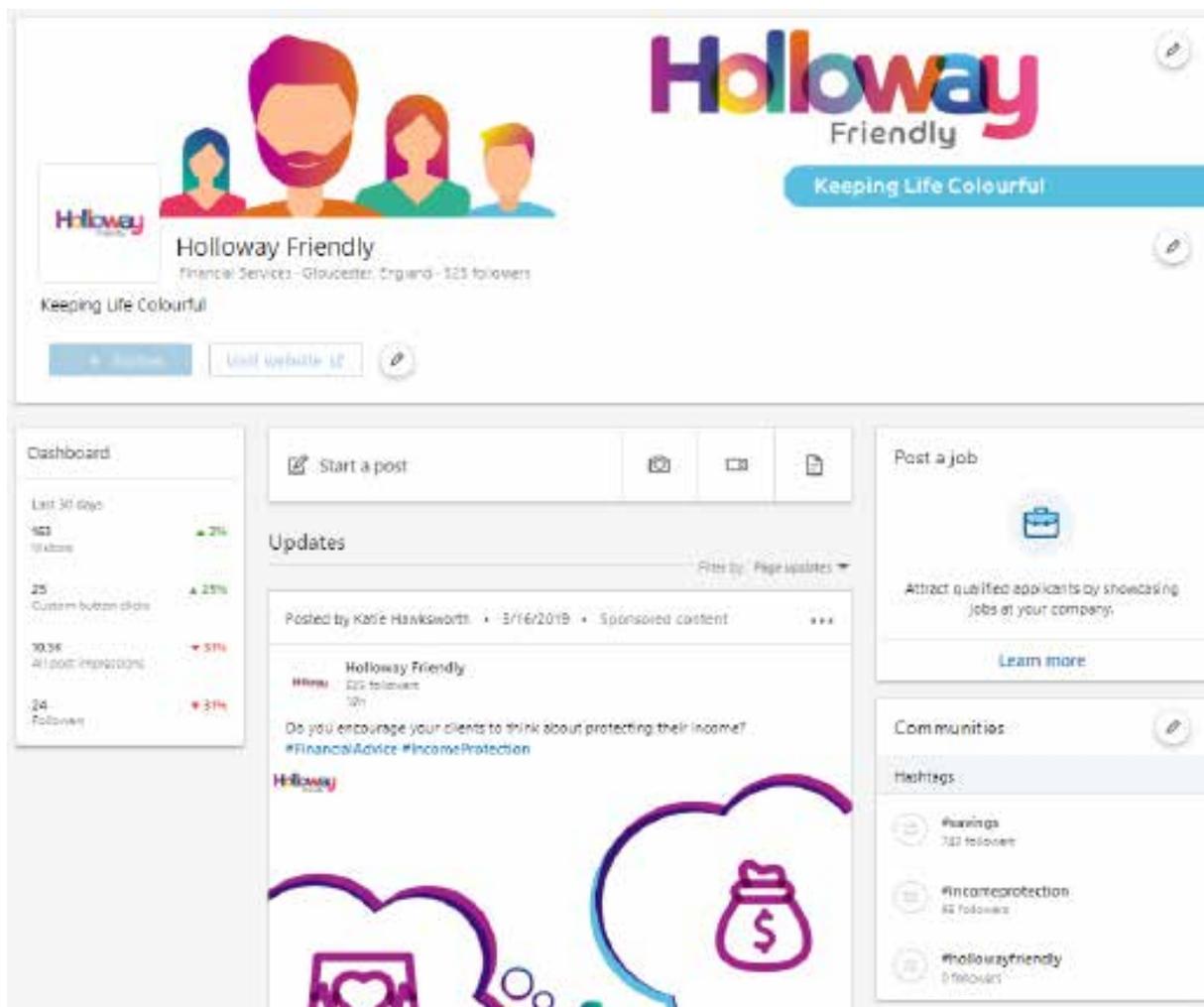
Content Types

Content types are restricted to text only posts, images, videos and documents. Documents are particularly useful for the distribution of whitepapers and blog articles. Hashtags also play an important part of your posts so make use of these where relevant. If you don't have anything to share, it may be worth exploring 'Content Suggestions', This is a great area to explore trending topics on LinkedIn. Always keep your target audience in mind but if there is something which you think would be of interest to them, share it!

For businesses, **LinkedIn makes up 50% of all traffic to B2B websites and blogs**, so a great way to utilise this channel is to underpin your website outreach strategy. In addition to this, long-form content typically delivers the most shares on LinkedIn, so if reach is something you have identified as an important metric to track, this content type will give you the greatest social ROI.

General Housekeeping

Setting up your LinkedIn profile is more straightforward than Facebook, but slightly more complex than Twitter. Click on one of the edit buttons and you will see a popup where all your alterations can be made. Work through this ensuring you optimise your page info including your profile picture, cover picture, name and tagline, as well as your buttons where you can add a link to your website. If you do not have a website, use the button for a 'Contact Us' call to action to prompt users to contact you. Once you've optimised your profile, look to engage in 'communities' and '**groups**' which are relevant to your industry.



Hashtags can be saved in your communities where you edit your other key information. You will need to be selective about these as you are limited to only three but a few suggestions might be 'Savings, #IncomeProtection, #FinancialAdvice'.

Groups work in a similar fashion but are moderated by group owners. We would recommend exploring suitable groups on your personal LinkedIn account before adding them to your company groups. This area is generally more suited to your own business groups or partner groups.

Analytics are also available for LinkedIn, distinguished by 'Visitors', 'Updates' and 'Followers'. [Click here for more information on using LinkedIn Analytics.](#)

Paid Advertising

All that we have discussed is available to anyone in the UK, providing you adhere to each social platforms terms and conditions. Each platform has its own advertising extension which you may wish to explore to leverage the impact of your social media posts.

As with all paid advertising, we recommend that you consider your audience and overall objectives first. If social media seem to be working in targeting these audiences, paid advertising may be a cost effective marketing tactic which you employ.

To understand whether your advertising is delivering results at a reasonable cost per acquisition, set internal benchmarks based on the [current industry performance](#).

With paid advertising, you have the option to trial it yourself, hire someone to undertake this in house, or outsource this to an agency or freelancer. We will cover off some popular approaches in a separate guide.

Crisis Management

Dealing with complaints in a public forum can be daunting, but every business will at some point face this kind of situation, you just need to ensure that you are prepared.

A social media policy will enable you to detail how you would like to respond to specific situations and plan responses in advance for typical complaints or questions.

The best way to respond to negativity on your social media channels is to be human and don't send an automated response. Make sure that you tailor your response and convey that it is of the utmost importance to you to resolve this. If the situation is escalating and the consumer is clearly angry, then aim to take the conversation offline as soon as possible - this can be done via direct messages or via a phone call.

Most complaints are resolved quite quickly, as long as you have the correct measures in place and respond in a timely manner.

¹ <https://www.avocadosocial.com/uk-social-media-statistics-for-2020>

² <https://buffer.com/resources/facebook-marketing-2019>

Contact us.

We're here to help.

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We're here

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