

FRANCHISEE SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE



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SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

Social media is a powerful marketing tool, and can be a great way to attract new customers, spread the word about your business, and maintain relationships with existing clients.

Used alongside your regional website, a well-managed social media presence can help you promote your services to a wider audience within the local area, and will go hand in hand with your other marketing efforts, such as blogging.

(Please refer to our 'Guide To Blogging' for more information about blogging on your regional site.)



DID YOU KNOW...

Since developing a content plan and strategy for Head Office's social media marketing efforts at the end of 2016, our social traffic has increased by an average of 351% compared to the previous year.

Over recent months, we've reviewed our strategy to identify what has worked, and what hasn't, and we've likewise looked at our competitors' accounts to see what content of theirs has generated the most engagement. This research will inform our national strategy going forwards, and is also the basis for the advice given in this guide.



GETTING STARTED

To begin with, you need to decide which social networks you want to use – Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn will be the best platforms for promoting your **it'seeze** region.

It is up to you whether you target all 3 networks, or whether you focus on building your presence on a single channel. Remember though, it's better to focus on delivering high quality content on one network rather than spreading your efforts too thinly over multiple channels – start small, keep track of your performance and the effort required, and then go from there.



FACEBOOK

Facebook is the most popular social network, and is a great place to share updates, photos, and news with your customer base. It is mostly used to connect with friends and family, and so what you post on here needs to be interesting and appealing to personal users.

“What you post on here needs to be interesting and appealing to personal users.”

You will need your own Facebook account in order to set up a business page. A business page is required because it will not only be indexed by search engines, but will also allow for better engagement with your products and services, as customers can like posts, leave reviews, and more. Your business page name needs to reflect your Google My Business listing name – **'it'seeze Websites Region'** – and your handle should be **@itseezeRegion**.





TWITTER



“Connect with and reach out to a variety of personal and corporate profiles.”

Twitter allows you to share concise, varied content with a wide audience. You are limited to 140 characters per tweet, but the engagement levels are typically higher due to hashtags and the ease with which you can connect with and reach out to a variety of personal and corporate profiles.

Your Twitter handle needs to be @itseezeRegion – any alternatives must be pre-approved by Head Office. It is important that you use a dedicated it’sseeze Twitter account rather than tweeting from your personal account, as this will ensure that you maintain your professional image. This should be set up using your it’sseeze email address.



LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is a social network built specifically for professionals. This makes it a useful channel for sharing company news, prospecting, and showcasing your industry expertise. You are better off using your personal profile (be sure to brand this accordingly) to share updates and connect with people, rather than creating a company page. This is because as a networking platform, LinkedIn makes it far easier to engage with audiences on a personal level, and company pages typically receive very few followers.

TOP TIP

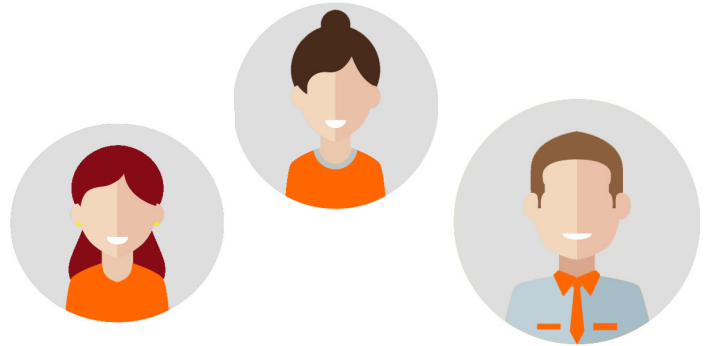
Make sure you fill out each profile in full with relevant, keyword-rich company info and contact details, including a link to your regional site.

You will find a list of resources, including profile icons and cover banners for each network, under ‘Social Media’ in the Marketing section of the Support Site. You must use these graphics to brand your social media accounts – any bespoke graphics will need to be briefed and/or signed off by Head Office before being published.



GROWING YOUR COMMUNITY

In order for your social media marketing to be successful, you need to build an audience. The more people who follow your social profiles, the more people will engage with your content, which in turn will allow you to reach a wider audience.



When you start out, invite your friends, family, and existing customers to like your **it'seeze** Facebook page. When they interact with your posts, either by liking, commenting on, or sharing your content, you'll appear in the timelines of their connections, giving more people the opportunity to discover and follow your page.



Begin by following the national **it'seeze** account (@itseeze) and the many existing regional accounts – these can be found by searching for **it'seeze** and clicking on the 'People' tab in the search results. This should provide you with an initial following in return, and will also give you an idea of what your fellow franchisees are posting. You can also search for and follow your customers and people you've met through networking events on Twitter, many of whom are likely to follow you back.



To build your LinkedIn network, search for the profiles of family members, friends, former colleagues, networking connections, and customers, and invite them to connect. Also search for LinkedIn groups to join, such as local business groups and industry related groups – you can do this by searching for a keyword, and then selecting the 'Groups' tab on the search results page.

TOP TIP

You can also encourage people to follow you on social media by including links to your profiles in your email signature, or by integrating social media feeds into your regional website

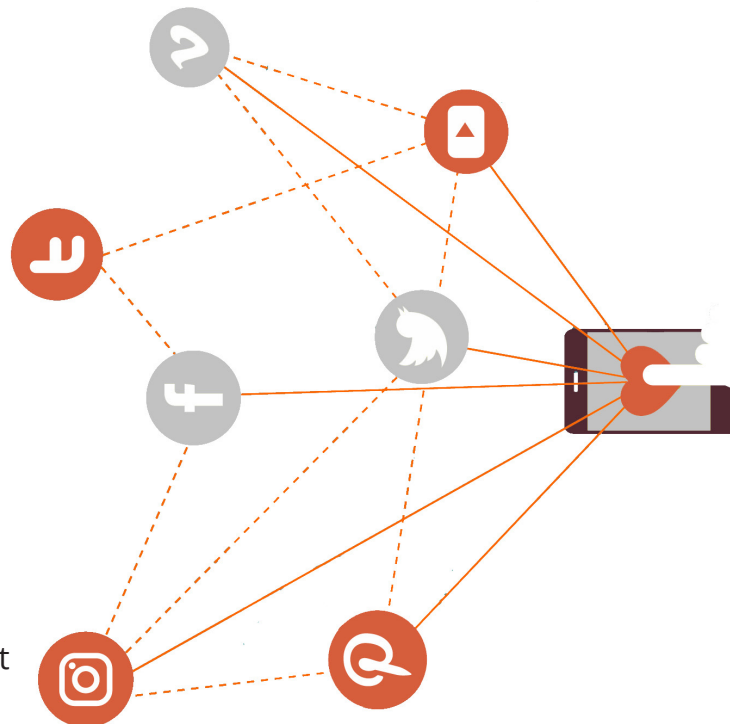


SHARING CONTENT

Your target audience on social media will include prospective clients and existing customers, so what you post needs to reflect this.

A good rule to remember is the rule of thirds – 1/3 of your content should promote your business, 1/3 should be curated content, and 1/3 should be direct engagement and interaction with other users.

Keep your content fresh, relevant, and interesting – don't simply post the same message over and over again. You should also constantly adapt your strategy according to your audience's habits – work out what types of content they're engaging with the most by reviewing the number of comments, likes, and shares each post receives, and post more of what resonates.



It's also important that you tailor your content for each network – don't cross-post.

Cross-posting is the act of posting the exact same message across multiple platforms, with Twitter and Facebook both providing the option for automatic cross-posting from one network to the other. It may save time, but it ultimately leads to low engagement, as a post from one network is rarely compatible with the conventions of another, and this practice is generally perceived negatively.

Similarly, you should avoid using any third-party tools that allow you to set up automatic posts from an RSS feed of curated content – this can often lead to the accidental promoting of a competitor's content, and will make your posts appear spam-like and off-putting to potential followers.





On Facebook, you can tag other businesses, organisations, or personal accounts in your posts using the @ symbol – this will notify the person of your post, increasing your chances of engagement. This is useful if you want to tag a client or a local business you've partnered with.

Visual posts receive the highest levels of interaction, so make sure you include an image in your posts. When sharing links on Facebook, pasting the URL into the box will bring up a preview, which automatically pulls in images from the web page.

Liking, commenting on, and sharing other people's posts will also help you increase your engagement level and boost brand awareness.

Here are some examples of the many different types of content you can post and share to keep your timeline varied and your audience interested:

- Pages from your regional site – e.g. local portfolio, website editor, before and after portfolio, etc.
- Posts from your blog
- Recent customer testimonials
- **it'seeze** videos – e.g. website editor, case studies, etc.
- Examples of recent websites that have gone live in your region or added to the national portfolio
- Content that's been posted on the national account by Head Office
- Industry related third-party content – e.g. tech news, marketing tips, small business advice, etc. – however, take care not to promote anything from a competitor
- Tips and advice to help your customers get the most out of their **it'seeze** website – refer to the monthly client newsletter for inspiration
- Local news – e.g. community, networking, or charity events you're involved with, exhibitions, customer updates, etc.
- Company updates – e.g. photos with new clients, charity activities, work anniversaries, etc.





On Twitter, you can share all the same types of content as on Facebook, but bear in mind that your message and any links must fit within the 140 character limit, so will differ considerably from a Facebook post. You can also use hashtags to expand the reach of your tweets, as these amplify your posts to a wider audience than just your followers by allowing you to join existing conversations.



The best hashtags to use to promote your **it'seeze** region are popular local hashtags such as **#TorbayHour**, **#BoostTorbay**, etc. Many of these local hashtags are often used for conversations held at a certain time every week – you can find a list of current Twitter hours under 'Social Media' in the Marketing section of the Support Site.

Trending topics also provide a variety of hashtags you can use to promote your tweets, e.g. **#MondayMotivation**, **#WednesdayWisdom**, **#FridayFeeling**, etc. You can set the trends you see on Twitter to show the most popular topics in your location to give you an idea of what to post about.

You can also boost your engagement on Twitter by creating polls; live-tweeting events, such as a local exhibition or conference; liking, commenting on, and sharing other people's tweets; asking and answering questions, and thanking people for sharing your content. You can tag users on Twitter using the @ symbol.

Visual posts are also the most effective on Twitter, so make sure you include an image, animated gif, or video with your tweets. Links will display a preview, but the image will need to have been set on the web page, otherwise a blank space will display. To add an image to a page on your regional site, open the 'Page metadata' panel and click 'Choose image for social media'.

Another useful feature of Twitter is the ability to create lists. This allows you to organise a timeline that will only show posts from selected Twitter accounts, which is ideal for managing curated content. To add a user to a list, click the 3 dots next to the 'Follow' button on their profile, and then select 'Add or remove from lists'. By adding accounts that continually post high quality content, it will make it a lot easier for you to source relevant third-party posts to share with your audience.





As LinkedIn has been designed for the sole purpose of professional networking, you are more limited in what you can post. Share your latest blog posts, as well as company news and updates, but don't overdo it on the self-promotion.



Instead, try to establish yourself as an authority in your industry by sharing relevant third-party content with your connections, and providing professional assistance and advice in the groups that you have joined – this could lead to new opportunities and leads.

Interact with your connections' posts and with the content on your timeline by liking, commenting, and sharing – this will encourage other users to respond in kind, and can also lead to you making new connections.

TOP TIP

Visual posts attract the most attention on every social network – Head Office can supply you with high quality graphics for testimonials, blog quotes, website screenshots, blog posts and more. These images are available in the form of editable templates or bespoke graphics, for which there is a 7 day turnaround time – please send any requests to marketing@itseeze.com.



TIMING YOUR POSTS

The key to effective social media marketing is strategy. Plan ahead, be consistent, and stick to a schedule.

To get the most value from your social media efforts, make sure you're sharing your updates at the right times to reach the biggest audience and generate the most interaction. You can plan what you want to post ahead of time, and then schedule your posts for the optimum times. You may find that these times are subject to change, so keep an eye on this and adapt your scheduling accordingly.

At minimum, you should be spending 30 minutes - 1 hour a day on each of your social accounts. Even if you schedule your posts in advance - this should take no longer than 2-3 hours per week - you still need to allow at least 15 minutes per day for monitoring your activity, reacting to customer interaction, and engaging with content posted by other users.



Facebook has an inbuilt scheduler that you can access by selecting 'Publishing Tools' at the top of your business page. Posts typically work best between 9am-3pm, with Wednesday through to Sunday being the strongest days. You should aim to post on Facebook at least once a week.



A social media management platform such as Hootsuite will allow you to schedule your tweets. Monday through to Thursday are the best days to post, with 12pm-3pm being the top time. Content has a much shorter lifespan on Twitter, so you should aim to tweet at least 3 times a week.



You can also use Hootsuite to schedule posts for LinkedIn. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at noon and 5pm are considered the optimal times to post. Aim to share one update per week.



TOP TIP

You may find it helps to create a social media calendar to help you figure out what to post, and what content to create when, if you're going to be blogging. This will also allow you to keep track of upcoming public holidays, events, industry-specific occasions, and company milestones, all of which can shape your content plan. Remember though that you don't have to stick rigidly to this plan, and do need to leave yourself open to adapting your schedule in case of unforeseen developments or events.

Alongside your calendar, creating a content directory of shareable regional pages, your blog posts, national videos, etc., will help you plan and recycle content so that you never run out of ideas.

SOCIAL MEDIA CALENDAR

Month	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Nov			TW: Curated content - news article	FB: Case study	TW: FB: New website screenshot
6	TW: Client meeting photo	TW: FB: New website blog post	LI: Curated content - news article	TW: Testimonial quote	FB: Curated content - news article
13	TW: Curated content - infographic	LI: New website blog post	TW: New website screenshot	FB: Before & afters page	TW: Testimonial video
20	TW: Before & afters page	TW: Curated content - Head Office blog	FB: Testimonial quote	TW: FB: New website screenshot	
27	LI: Curated content - infographic	TW: Testimonial quote	TW: Curated content - Head Office blog	FB: Curated content - infographic	TW: New website screenshot
Dec					
4	TW: Curated content - news article	LI: New website blog post	TW: FB: New website blog post	TW: FB: Copywriting tips blog post	FB: Testimonial video
11	TW: New website screenshot	TW: Curated content - marketing tips	FB: Website editor page	LI: Curated content - news article	FB: Testimonial quote
18	TW: Website editor video	LI: Copywriting tips blog post	TW: FB: Festive site screenshot	TW: Curated content - Head Office blog	
25	TW: FB: Christmas message		TW: FB: New website screenshot	FB: Curated content - marketing tips	TW: FB: New website screenshot
Jan					
1	TW: FB: New Year message	LI: Curated content - marketing tips	TW: Testimonial quote	TW: FB: New website screenshot	TW: Responsive video
8	TW: New website screenshot	FB: Testimonial quote	TW: Curated content - infographic	FB: Curated content - infographic	TW: Copywriting tips blog post
15	TW: Curated content - news article	TW: FB: Responsive blog post	FB: Curated content - news article	LI: Curated content - infographic	FB: Website editor video
22	TW: FB: New website screenshot	LI: Responsive blog post	TW: FB: New website blog post	TW: Curated content - Head Office blog	FB: Responsive video
29	TW: Testimonial quote	TW: Live tweet Local Expo '18	TW: Live tweet Local Expo '18	LI: New website blog post	

If you have any further questions about social media, please do not hesitate to contact the Marketing team at Head Office at marketing@itseeze.com



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