



**B2B CONTENT  
EXCELLENCE  
SERIES**



**the  
marketing  
pod**

# **THE POD GUIDE TO WRITING FOR SOCIAL MEDIA**



## CONTENTS\_

1. Taking a strategic approach to social
2. Before you begin
3. Adapting your tone of voice
4. Character limits on posts
5. 3 things you should always include

# TAKING A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SOCIAL\_

Gone are the days when B2B businesses questioned whether they needed to be active on social media. **Yes, a social presence is important.** What form that presence takes will obviously vary; it's important to invest time into figuring out the best strategy for your business rather than diving straight into the tactics. But to neglect social media altogether is to miss an important, cost-effective marketing opportunity.

This guide aims to provide the practical essentials and some useful style tips for anyone writing for social media. You see, crafting written content for social media can be tricky; especially for B2B businesses used to more formal channels. Knowing the basics will give you the confidence to make better use of social platforms, so that your business can reap the rewards of raised engagement.

**So, if social media is something your business has shied away from, or something you want to do more effectively, this guide is for you.**



# BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Before you start to write, we recommend doing a quick scan of the news and taking particular note of anything happening in your industry or in your customers' worlds. This is a standard daily exercise in most marketing departments and can help you to be sure that whatever you're putting out there won't be at odds with recent news and events, or strike the wrong chord with your audience.

Check also for trending hashtags - they are a great way to attract new followers - but beware of jumping on a hashtag bandwagon unless it really is relevant to the subject of your post.

There is more advice on hashtags below, as they are a staple of good social media practice. Done well, hashtagging can help you **get your voice heard** in social media conversations, which is what it's all about, isn't it?

**First, let's explore what that voice might sound like.**



## ADAPTING YOUR TONE OF VOICE

**For the sake of this guide, we are going to presume that your business already has a strong sense of brand identity and a carefully honed tone of voice. (If you're shaking your head at this, give us a call).**

For B2B organisations, refining your voice for social media can be nerve-wracking. There is a balance to be had between maintaining the stance of an authoritative expert (for example) and adapting your persona to suit the channel. Yes, you need to 'get casual', this is you speaking to a peer in a more relaxed setting.

So feel free to drop some of the formalities but beware of going so far that your audience no longer recognises your brand.

How can you achieve this? Try making your language more concise and more personal - use first person rather than third person. Keep a conversational tone but steer clear of bad grammar, common social acronyms or slang, and only use emojis if you're absolutely sure they're appropriate for your brand and your audience.



An example of changing your language subtly without going too far might be:

**Original voice:**

MadeUp Business & Co. are holding an open event for prospective new partners on 13th January. Please register to attend by visiting [www.MUB.com](http://www.MUB.com)

**Social voice:**

Interested in partnering with us? We'd love to see you at our open event this Friday. Register today at [www.MUB.com/attend](http://www.MUB.com/attend) #MeetTheFleet

**Too far:**

Want to meet up IRL at our Partnerships open day? Don't delay, sign up today. Hit the link!  
[www.MUB.com/attend](http://www.MUB.com/attend) #FOMO

You can also adapt content and language between channels to optimise engagement. As a general rule, Facebook and Instagram can be a little 'fluffier'; they're great for showcasing your workplace culture or telling human stories. LinkedIn and Twitter are the more sensible social siblings: LinkedIn is a perfect place for links to long form content while Twitter prefers the news hook.

So - tell LinkedIn about your new downloadable whitepaper, tell Twitter one of the stats from your new whitepaper, tell Facebook how the team stroked the shiny cover on the printed version of your whitepaper and put a well-shot picture of them doing it on Instagram.



**As a general rule, Facebook and Instagram can be a little 'fluffier'.**



# WORD LIMIT\_

The most important piece of advice here is: **keep it short.**

When you're proud of your business, products and services, you'll always have so much you'd like to say - but a social media post is no place for an essay. While it's a great idea to include links to longer content, event/landing pages, blogs or whitepapers, don't try to tell your audience every reason they should be interested. **Pick one key message and stick to it.**

**NB: Deciding what to say on social is always much easier when you have in-depth insight into your audience, so any work you've done on profiling them and uncovering their interests, motivations and pain points should inform this content, just as it does all other marketing communications. (We can help with this!)**



As a general guide, sticking to the character limits here will help you boost post engagement. We've covered the five most commonly used social media platforms - but do feel free to send us your questions if you are using any others!



## Facebook

Facebook gives you all the characters you'll ever need and more. It's a big reason why so many Facebook posts never get read in their entirety. Stick to **between 40 and 80 characters**<sup>1</sup>. This is the sweet spot for maximum engagement rates and means your post will be easily scannable for anyone scrolling through their feed for interesting items. With brands suffering from rapidly decreasing organic reach rates on Facebook, the more easily digestible your post, the more likely your audience will be to bite.



## Instagram

As with Facebook, this platform lets you write the social media equivalent of War and Peace if you choose to. We respectfully suggest that you don't do this. In fact, the Instagram team recommends keeping your captions **under 125 characters** to ensure that your *entire* caption shows up in the Instagram feed. Drop down a line and include some hashtags afterwards if you think it will extend reach - but be sure to keep it relevant. The only real way to stay visible on your followers' feeds is to keep on getting those 'likes'.



<sup>1</sup><https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-character-counter/>



## LinkedIn

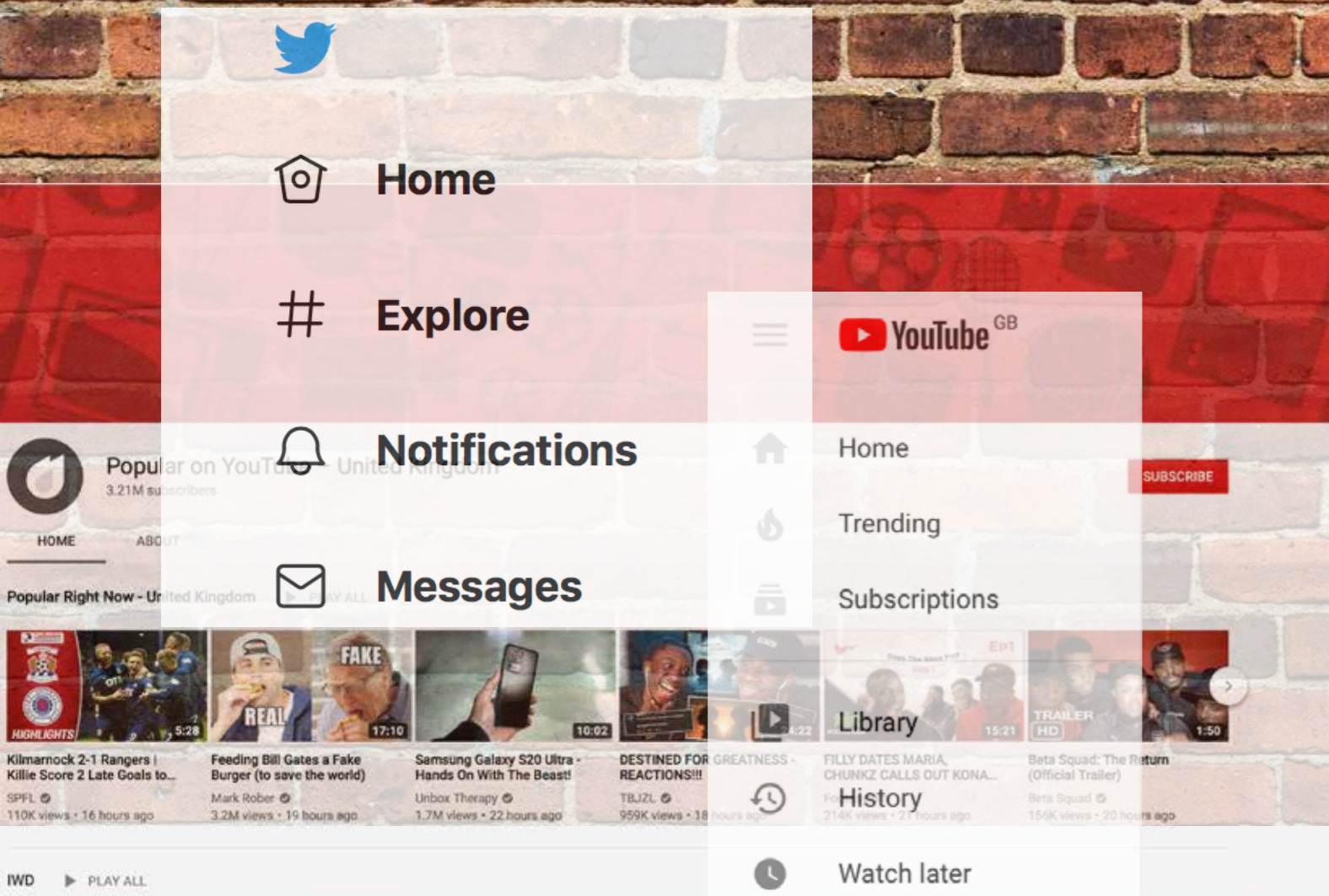
Be warned, LinkedIn will shorten your posts at 140 characters, adding a clickable 'see more' button, which only the most interested readers will use. The savviest marketers will therefore set themselves the challenge of staying below this **140 character** mark. LinkedIn is the preferred platform for many B2B users and is a brilliant place to increase brand awareness, show people what you stand for and start intelligent conversations. A key thing to remember is that the platform gives power and priority to individual users rather than businesses, so it's crucial to get your employee advocates to amplify any messages you put out as a business.

The easiest way to do this and keep communication 'on brand' is to provide employees with pre-written posts that they can use/adapt; enabling them to quickly and effectively participate even when they are busy. It's worth saying here that if you've got confident and charismatic staff that are already active on social, don't be overly-prescriptive. Letting them add their own personality to posts will give your brand more credibility.

**A quick word on visuals: Every social post performs better with an image. Get it right, and you'll see engagement rates soar. Your image may be a social tile you've created yourself (see below), a single image, an animated GIF, or even a short video.**

**The rule about images is much the same as the rule about language: less formal than usual is fine but beware of anything that could seem inappropriate, rude or lewd. As always, tailor your choices to suit the age/profile of your audience and the message behind your post.**





## YouTube

You might not think of YouTube as a social media channel in the truest sense of the word - but it's been an important social platform for brands for some time now and its prominence is growing in the B2B world too. It's primarily used as a reliable way to host, embed and share video content.



**An aside: Be sure to get your YouTube settings right to avoid inappropriate content immediately following yours, and turn comments off unless you intend to monitor and respond to these.**

YouTube is essentially a search engine and relies on text to order and rank content. It's your title that you need to give most attention to as this is how people will see you in a search. It can be up to **70 characters** (60 for playlists), and should include keywords that address your SEO goal: what are your target audience searching for? As anything over 70 characters will be cut off in search results, it's a good idea to put your important words first.

Next comes the description; YouTube's own training materials recommend using the first few lines of your description to explain your video using SEO keywords in natural, human-sounding speech. This will give you much better results than simply using a block of text packed with keywords. You have 5,000 characters to play with, but that doesn't mean you have to use them all - only say what's important, stay on message and remember who you're targeting.

You get an additional 500 characters to spend on tags for your video. While these are less important for search purposes than the other fields, or the subtitles included in your video, they do help YouTube figure out what your content is about, so be sure to refer back to your SEO goals again here.



## Twitter

Twitter used to give users a challenging 140 character limit but now you have **280 characters**. Once again, don't feel obliged to use them all. Posts of between **71 and 100 characters** in length get the most engagement, so aim for 100 characters as your upper limit and you'll be onto a winner. Links are no longer included in the total, but hashtags are - useful to know when you're drafting content.



# 3 THINGS YOU SHOULD ALWAYS INCLUDE\_

Writing for social media really isn't rocket science - but it can take time to hone your skills and find out what works best for your business.

## Top tip:

Once you've got the basics tied up, it's important to keep posting regularly. There are apps to help you achieve this (like Hootsuite, for example) but it's always best to have a human eye on everything and make sure that you're posting and responding appropriately.

Routines and checklists can help you reduce the amount of time and resources you need to dedicate to social media. A quick recommendation on routine from our own copywriters is to always draft content first and edit it after; get all of the information down before trimming and shaping it to fit word counts as necessary. Otherwise, you might drive yourself crazy trying to find the words that fit.

Our social media checklist has been covered in part by this guide: we recommend making sure that every post has these three essential components:

1. **An image** - crucial for better engagement
2. **A bit of personality** - lighten the tone and the language
3. **A call to action** - what do you want your audience to do? Give them a link to a fascinating download, a button to register for an event, a poll to respond to, or ask them to comment on something that's happening.

Always remember that social media is about **dialogue** - not simply a place for you to tell customers and prospects about yourself.



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The Marketing Pod  
February 10 at 11:40 AM · 🌐

Is opportunity based marketing showing us anything new, or do marketers just enjoy shaking up our acronyms? It's the question we asked in our latest blog - a quick read you can find here:

<http://bit.ly/newkidB2B>

#marketing #copywriting #b2bmarketing #digitalmarketing #abm #obm



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**OBM: B2Bs newest kid on the block? | Marketing News**

As a B2B marketing specialist, I believe I'm at liberty to share a little...

The Marketing Pod  
January 29 at 9:12 AM · 🌐

With the first month of the year almost behind us, here are our top tips for the B2B marketing trends you should definitely get on board with in 2020 - and those you should leave behind.

<https://www.themarketingpod.co.uk/.../marketing-trends-here-t...>

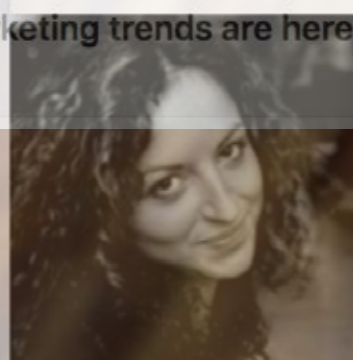


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**Stick or Twist: which marketing trends are here to stay in 2020 | Marketing News**

The Marketing Pod  
December 18, 2019 · 🌐

We're MASSIVE fans of Christmas here at the Pod (as you may have guessed). But is there a good way for B2B businesses to share a little the Christmas jolly with their clients? It's the question posed by our blog for B2B Marketing:



Jodie Williams, Jenny Hughes and 4 others

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If you're struggling to get your social in shape, The Marketing Pod has content creators and digital specialists who can help. We can work with you to find your voice, devise a social strategy, help you create original and effective content, or put your plans into action. **Why not get in touch to discuss your needs?**

[hello@themarketingpod.co.uk](mailto:hello@themarketingpod.co.uk)

## KEEP IT SOCIAL.

We haven't covered writing for social ads or image tile copy here. Watch this space for our 'Guide to writing for digital ads'.

