SOCIAL MEDIA

While your website is your company’s own turf, you need to venture outside these walls in order to reach more people. That’s where social media comes in.

Just over a decade ago, the idea of “social media” wasn’t even around. And yet here we are, with more than 2.3 billion active users on Facebook and hundreds of millions more on Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok and other social networks.

Simply put, social media is the main forum of communication for the majority of people — especially your younger audience who doesn’t know a life without the internet. If your organization doesn’t have a space on social, it’s missing a critical opportunity.

WHY SHOULD OUR COMPANY BE ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

Construction companies may not think they need to make a big commitment to social media.

While construction marketing efforts mostly happen within the industry, the need for communicating in a more public forum may not seem as great.

However, the growing skills gap in the industry and the need to recruit and train a new generation of craft professionals necessitates a more outward strategy.

In order to reach a new audience, you must expand into new territories and try to build new relationships.

Your audience is on social media. No attempt to reach the core audiences in recruitment efforts is complete without dedicating time, personnel and money towards establishing your company on social media.
You don’t need to create a profile on EVERY social network that comes around. In fact, you should be careful not to overstretch your resources by trying to establish yourself everywhere, especially if you have a smaller marketing team with only one or two people managing your social profiles. However, there are three core networks you should concentrate on:

Facebook  Twitter  Instagram

Concerned about managing multiple social media channels at once? Look into using third-party social management tools such as Hootsuite or Sprout Social. These tools can combine the feeds and publishing process of multiple networks onto one platform.

Seventy-eight percent of 30- to 49-year-olds own a Facebook account, which means Facebook is a great place to reach parents and other influencers of children and students.³

As a brand, your primary presence on Facebook will be your Business Page. You can share text, photos, videos, polls, events and other types of posts to people who have “liked” your page. You can also share beyond your own community with promoted posts and other Facebook ads.

Although Facebook has many positive features, it can also be frustrating, especially for smaller pages. Facebook utilizes an algorithm that decides what to show on a user’s timeline, which means even people who have liked your page might not see your post.⁴

Every post is a gamble, and you never know exactly how well a post will do. And just like at a casino, you have to pay to play. Allocating budget to boosting Facebook posts will go a long way toward growing your reach.

**PROS:**
- Massive audience
- Great for parents and influencer demographics
- Top social advertising system

**CONS:**
- Not as popular among younger audience
- Timeline algorithm can inhibit your visibility
- More pay-to-play

**POST FREQUENCY AIM:** 2-5 per week

**PROFILE PICTURE DIMENSIONS:** 200px X 200px

**COVER PHOTO DIMENSIONS:** 820px X 360px (keep text and graphics near center so they aren’t cropped on desktop or mobile)

**SHARED IMAGE:** 1200px X 63px
While people use Facebook to connect with friends and family, Twitter is more for reaching beyond your current circle.

Twitter is popular for its back-and-forth interactions among users and for its (mostly) reverse-chronological timeline of quick updates of 280 characters or less. Its time-sensitive layout makes it great for live coverage of events or reactions to breaking news, and the frequent use of hashtags allow you to search for key terms and jump into the conversation quickly.

Out of all of Twitter’s users, 64% are within the 18-29 or 30-49 age brackets, so it’s also a good place to reach our core audience of influencers.5

Because Twitter’s timeline is less algorithmically built than Facebook’s (although they continue to gradually add more of these elements in), it’s much fairer to organic, non-paid content. However, your window for other people to see that content is smaller.

**PROS:**
- Less algorithm = Better for organic content
- Can tweet more without spamming
- Great for interactivity

**CONS:**
- Stagnating user growth
- Easy to get lost in the noise
- Character limits can cause issues

**POST FREQUENCY AIM:** 10-15 per day

**PROFILE PICTURE DIMENSIONS:**
400px X 400px

**COVER PHOTO DIMENSIONS:**
1500px X 500px

**SHARED IMAGE:**
1024px X 512px

Twitter is a much different network than Facebook.
This social network is all about the visuals. Every post is either a photo or a video.

When done well, a beautiful picture, a cool video or a well-designed infographic can leave a greater impression on those who see it. However, Instagram's text and link-sharing limitations can inhibit your ability to go into detail or provide a call-to-action.

Unlike Twitter and Facebook, Instagram’s demographics swing much younger, with 72% of people aged 13-17 using Instagram. The number of users drop in each subsequent age group.

As is the trend among social networks, an algorithm now has a lot of control over a user’s Instagram feed, which can make starting off a new account more challenging. But as you post more, use hashtags and develop a community, you can find success.

**PROS:**
- Perfect for eye-catching visuals
- Popular among younger audiences
- Instagram Stories feature gives additional visibility and versatility

**CONS:**
- Limited link sharing
- Mobile-only
- Algorithm influencing timelines

**POST FREQUENCY AIM:** 2-5 per week

**PROFILE PICTURE DIMENSIONS:** 180px X 180px

**SHARED IMAGE:** 1080px X 1080px
Although each individual network has its quirks and intricacies, there are a few best practices that apply to any social media channel you are on.

**DEVELOP A PERSONALITY**

Nobody wants to follow an account that posts like a robot.

Developing a brand voice is important in all marketing, but especially on social media. It shapes how you interact with people.

Your personality should reflect your brand. For construction companies and associations, we recommend a balanced approach. This is an interesting and exciting industry, so have some fun. But be careful not to feed into the negative stereotypes of the industry, such as it is unsafe or only for men.

When Build Your Future shares about safety or diversity, we aim to provide facts that disprove misconceptions.

**FIND THE BALANCE OF POST FREQUENCY**

There can be a fine line between posting too often and not posting enough.

Because of how the timeline algorithms work, you need to be active and posting relatively frequently. Going weeks at a time between posts will indicate that your page is dormant or lacks quality, and it will not be shown to users.

“**At the same time, posting too often will appear spammy.**”

Finding the balance of post frequency is key to social media success. We’ve listed some recommendations at the end of each social platform section, but you’ll need to determine what is right for your organization based on your audience and content.
PROVIDE VALUE

Unlike your website, a social network is not your own territory. You are a guest in someone else’s home, and you need to make yourself useful to stick around.

That means providing value to your followers. Your followers made a commitment by following your page, and it’s up to you to make sure that decision was a good one.

Using social media exclusively as a billboard of self-serving ads is not a great strategy for growth. You need to think about your audience: What do they want to see?

You can mix in promotional posts occasionally but remember that your primary focus for social posts is to offer value to your audience.

TRACK AND EVALUATE PERFORMANCE

How do you know how you’re doing on social media? The key is to log your metrics.

By recording analytic data and establishing benchmarks, you can see how your numbers rise or fall over time. This can give you clues into what works and you should do more or less of.

All major social networks provide their own metrics, such as Facebook Insights or Twitter Analytics. Metrics can also be collected from third-party social management platforms.

These are some key metrics to track:

- Followers/Page likes
- Reach/Impressions
- Post likes
- Shares/Retweets
- Number of posts
- Follower demographics
- Engagement rate

In fact, Facebook Insights offers analytics on the age, gender, location and other demographics of your fans, allowing you to shift your messaging to reach your target audience. When switching our messaging focus to parents, Build Your Future’s follower age range of 25- to 54-year-olds has increased by 257% from January through September of 2019.
WHAT SHOULD OUR SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING BUDGET BE?

Depending on the size of your organization, your social advertising budget could range from just a few hundred dollars to a few hundred thousand.

Unsurprisingly, the more money you spend, the more people will see your ads on social media.

But that doesn’t mean companies with tighter budgets can’t have success on social media!

**EXAMPLE 1:** Boosting one Build Your Future video on Facebook for just $20 helped us earn more than 1,115 additional views and reach more than 5,000 people — a cost per result (CPR) of less than $0.02.

**EXAMPLE 2:** Spending $800 over a two-week period on a Build Your Future Facebook Page Likes Campaign generated over 34,000 impressions and 1,073 followers added. The cost per follower spend was $0.74.

It’s important to note that while Build Your Future’s Twitter account saw higher CPC and CTR compared to our Facebook while running similar campaigns, the targeting options on Facebook are much more effective in reaching our core audiences. There is a potential for lost spend with non-parents on Twitter.

CREATING SOCIAL MEDIA ADS

Although different social platforms have slightly different advertising services, there are some basic principles that most adhere to.

Most of the advertising work will be done in an ads manager. There’s the Facebook Ads Manager, Twitter Ads, and the LinkedIn Campaign Manager. Since being bought by Facebook, Instagram ads are also done through the Facebook Ads Manager.
Creating ads on these platforms follows the same basic three-pronged hierarchy:

1. **Campaign** — The top umbrella for any ads you want to run. Name the campaign, choose an objective, and set a time frame and budget.

2. **Ad Sets** — Within the campaign you can have one or several ad sets, which are groupings of ads. Ad sets allow set timelines and budgets for each, so they are especially useful to break up a campaign into different sections. For example, set a campaign for a full business quarter, with a separate ad set for each month.

3. **Ads/Creatives** — These are the actual placements, including the media and copy. You can create multiple ads in an ad set.

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Facebook prefers ads with little or no text on the images. Ad images with lots of text will not be shown to as many people. Use the Text Overlay Tool to check that your ads will fully run.
AUDIENCE TARGETING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social ads are able to target specific characteristics of social media users.

As much of the key data (age, gender, etc.) is provided by the users directly when creating their profile, targeting can be very accurate. Data is also collected based on what pages a person follows and which posts they interact with.

🌟 You can customize everything — copy, imagery, tone, content — to be the most effective for the audience you're trying to reach. For example, if you're trying to reach parents of high schoolers, then ads featuring students of a similar age might deeply resonate with them.

🌟 It's a cost-effective tactic because you aren’t sending a single message out to a large generic audience and hoping something sticks. You aren’t wasting dollars showing an ad to someone you don’t want to show it to.

🌟 By not showing the same ads to everyone, you avoid irrelevancy. Build Your Future services both students and adults, so portions of our content and messaging are more geared toward one or the other. Messaging intended for parents wouldn’t make sense to show to their children, so targeting helps provide spill-over.

Each platform gives you a number of characteristics to choose as part of your custom audience, including age, interests and jobs.
See the examples of custom audiences on Facebook and Twitter that Build Your Future has built as part of its #DiscoverMore campaign. Use these as a guide, and then add and customize it to even better fit your own organization.

**FACEBOOK | Parents and Teacher Audience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience Name</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Excluded Connections</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People Who Match</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**You can create and save multiple custom audiences on Facebook for easy selection in the future.**

**TWITTER | Parents and Teacher Audience**

**Follower look-alikes**
@parentsmagazine @todaysparent @parenting

**Keywords**
Parent, parents, father, mother, parenting, construction

**Interests**
Job search, career news and general info, Job fairs, Moms, Dads, Parenting teens

**Behaviors**
Social media platforms offer a few ways to amplify your message for a fee.

True advertisements on social media act similar to ads you might create through Google Ads. Some pop up on the side of the page as banner ads, while other will appear in the main timeline with a “Sponsored” notice.

Another method of promoting on Facebook is through boosted posts.

Most standard posts on Facebook can be boosted. Doing this increases the number of people who see your post, meaning more clicks and better engagement.

Facebook uses an algorithm to curate what appears on a given user’s timeline. With Facebook giving priority to posts from friends and families over those from brands, business pages can struggle with low organic reach — even if they have lots of followers. Boosting gives your post higher priority for the algorithm, so you have a better shot at being seen.

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**ADS**

**Pros:**
- More detailed customization options, such as link preview customization and dynamic creative.
- Multiple formats, such as side or banner ads.

**Cons:**
- More detailed creation takes longer.
- Some ad placements are easier to ignore than timeline placements.

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**BOOSTED POSTS**

**Pros:**
- Quickest promotion options.
- Appear more naturally in timelines, although can still be labeled as sponsored.

**Cons:**
- Lacks detailed customization.
- Limited to regular post format.
SOCIAL ADVERTISING QUICK TIPS

✦ Not sure what the most effective social ad for your audience will be? Make a few placements within the same ad set. Over the course of the campaign, the system will show the ads performing better to more people. By comparing your results, you can get a picture of what types of ads resonate best.

✦ Don’t feel the need to promote every tweet or Facebook post. If you’re on a tighter budget, reserve your funds for the most important content, like new blogs, videos or events.

✦ Is one of your organic updates gaining traction naturally? It’s a sign that people are very receptive to that particular post, meaning that boosting it might be even more effective than normal.

✦ Track your ad spending and ad performance metrics in the same place. It’s an easy way to see which of your ads did well, which fell flat, and which give you the most bang for your buck.

RECRUITING THROUGH ADVERTISING

With all the noise online, advertising is an important part of making sure you are reaching your audience. Digital advertising has a number of effective and efficient options for budgets of all sizes. Two popular methods are through Google Ads and programmatic marketing platforms.

GOOGLE ADS

Looking for a way to get your message in-front of general audiences? Google Ads offers a way to deliver content that fits directly with active searches — in effect, offering tailored information that consumers want.

Google Ads is an online advertising platform where you can pay to display brief advertisements to web users, which will show up as top search results, side bars and other placements.

“If you are a nonprofit organization, **BEFORE setting up your Google Ads account**, check if you’re eligible for a **Google Grant**. You could receive up to $10,000 of in-kind advertising each month.”
HIGHLIGHTS OF GOOGLE ADS

BUDGET

Pros:
- You decide how much you want to spend by setting your budget to a daily limit or campaign total spend.
- Choose the campaign model option that best fits your needs: Cost Per Click (CPC), Cost Per Impression or Cost Per Engagement.
- Once you set up a campaign, it runs well without needing intensive time effort on your part. It is recommended to review your ads at least 30 minutes a week.

Con:
- Budget restrictions could limit your ability to appear first in search results.

CAMPAIGNS

There are a variety of options with Google Ads to fit your specific needs.

🌟Search: These are text forms that show when someone searches for a product or service.

🌟Display: These are image forms that display on websites or apps.

🌟Video: Generally, six or 15 second videos, these show up right before or during YouTube videos.

COST PER CLICK (CPC):
Only pay if somebody clicks on your ad.

COST PER IMPRESSION: Pay based on how many times your ad was seen.

COST PER ENGAGEMENT: Pay if somebody completes a specific engagement, such as watching the video ad.
As seen across multiple advertising platforms, there is a hierarchy to creating your ads:

1. **Campaigns** — A campaign is a set of related ads. This helps keep you organized and be able to pull metrics based on topics, i.e. parents, students, industry. Set your campaign goals (and don’t worry, you can always adjust these) and choose the type of campaign you’d like to run.

2. **Ad groups** — Ad groups allow you to create multiple ads that are targeted to the same audience and keywords. This lets you create different art and content directions for a particular audience to see what appeals the most.

3. **Ads** — This is the content and images that your audience will see. You’ll set headlines, descriptions, images and a URL that will best appeal to your audience.

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**Check out a few best practices of using Google Ads:**

### DEMOGRAPHICS

This is key. To target parents, ensure your audience is set to people with children and a specific age range.

### AUDIENCE

For display and video campaigns, create a custom intent audience to segment your ideal audience. First develop a keyword list that fits a common theme like the examples below:

**Students:** best job options; build a building; building careers; career options; career websites; careers for students; careers in building; careers in construction; choosing a career; find a career path; find my dream job; find the right job for me; find your dream job; help me find a career; what career should I choose

**Parents:** beginner construction jobs; best construction jobs; career builders; career exploration; career finder; career ideas; career in construction company; choosing a career; choosing a career path; entering the job market; find your career; jobs for students; jobs for teenagers

There may be a few overlaps which is why choosing an age range and other demographics options is highly important. The last thing you want is to have your ads compete with themselves.
Evaluation

While it can be easy to set your ad and let it run, it's important to make sure that it's running successfully. There are different measurement tools depending on what your goal is.

If your goal is to change perceptions or increase interest in a career in construction, it’s useful to track your clicks and clickthrough rate (CTR).

Impressions give you a great snapshot of how many times your ad has been viewed.

The CTR is found by how many clicks your ad receives compared to the number of impressions. A good CTR is considered 1% or higher. Don’t worry if you are not hitting when your ads first begin running — it typically takes time to evaluate which keywords are best triggering your ads.

If specific keywords are running a low CTR, you have a couple of options. You can pause or remove these words. Or, if you feel that these keywords are especially important to your campaign, adjust your ad to better match.

Programmatic Marketing

Programmatic marketing is an extremely efficient advertising tool that allows even more targeting approaches than other platforms. This tool uses online behavioral data across a range of partner networks to target people most likely to engage with ads.

There are various platforms that can be used for programmatic marketing such as Genius Monkey and MultiView. Advertisements will display across multiple media outlets, such as Google, Yahoo!, MSN and more.
HIGHLIGHTS OF PROGRAMMATIC MARKETING

REACH
Provides a clearer idea of the reach of your ad and conversion rate that goes beyond clickthrough rates. If a consumer sees the ad, does not click on it, yet visits your website later, this is considered a conversion that is tracked. To do this, you’ll need to be able to add code to your website.

BUDGET
Distinct budgetary considerations compared to other advertising platforms.

• **Pro:** The cost per click is typically the lowest possible.
• **Con:** The overall cost to be efficient is higher than needed on other platforms.

TARGETING
Extremely focused. Targeting options include:

🌟 **GEO:** Choose specific states to be most effective.

🌟 **Demographics:** Select age range; gender; job titles; parents of children a specific age; etc.

🌟 **Behavioral:** Include searches by the audience: college options; available scholarships; what should my child major in.

🌟 **Emails:** Narrow to individuals who are receiving emails from specific sources: @collegeboard.org; @schoolcounselor.org; etc.

🌟 **Websites:** Select competitors’ websites to offer alternatives: collegeboard.org; college-insight.org; etc.

🌟 **Keywords:** Choose keywords that apply to searches for target ads.
Besides identifying the factors listed in the targeting section, you’ll need to write your ad and supply creatives (images, gifs, etc.). Here is an example of the Build Your Future Today campaign targeting parents:

**NATIVE TITLE:**
Why a career in construction?

**NATIVE DESCRIPTION:**
Better question: Why not? With 40% of the current workforce retiring by 2030, they’ll be in demand and highly paid. It’s time to talk construction.

**SOCIAL TITLE:**
Why a career in building?

**AD DESCRIPTION:**
Better question: Why not? They’ll be in demand and highly paid. Think about construction.

**COMPANY NAME:**
Build Your Future

**DISPLAY URL:**
discover.byf.org

Programmatic marketing ads require more design skills as they will need text and a call to action included.
With programmatic marketing, the managing of the ads is run by a different company so it’s more hands-off compared to Google Ads or social media advertising.

However, you will have a custom dashboard that lets you pull metrics that match your goals. Make sure to review impressions, clicks, total conversions and cost per click.

**EXAMPLE:** Spending a total of $5,000, Build Your Future had a 41.24% total site conversion rate of 18,529 during a four-week time frame. The campaign had a $0.65 CPC and over 1.3 million impressions.

Programmatic spend can be an effective tool in driving website traffic.

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**SOURCES**


