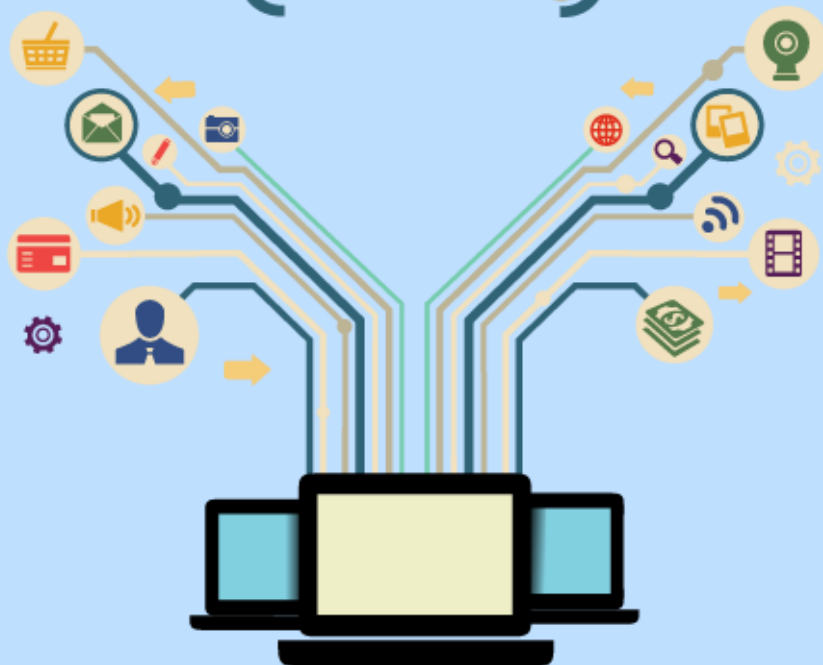


SIMPLY SOCIAL



INTRO

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Introduction

Let's face it: keeping up with social media can be hard work. As a business owner you may not have the time or ability to do it all yourself. This guide will teach you everything you need to know about outsourcing these tasks to a social media manager.

We'll go over what social media management is, why you should consider it for your business, what to look for in a social media manager and where to actually find one once you're ready to start hiring.

What is Social Media Management?

If you're in a situation where you want to actively work on a social media presence for your business, but find yourself lacking the time or necessary expertise, social media management might be the solution you're looking for. By outsourcing the daily management of your social media pages you free up your own time to focus on other things, leaving it all up to a professional manager instead.

There are many advantages of doing this; one that stands out is that your social media manager will have enough experience to devise the optimal strategy from the get-go, whereas if you were to do it all yourself you would most likely have to go through a lengthy period of trial-and-error to find what your audience responds to. Getting it right is crucial as competition for eyeballs on the social networks is constantly increasing.

The main disadvantage is that you won't be in full control over what's posted on your social media properties. Of course you can (and should) discuss guidelines with your newly hired manager, but ultimately choosing the day-to-day content to post will be up to them. You will have to take a step back and let them do their job - if you try to micromanage them it will only end up being inefficient and frustrating for both of you.

It doesn't have to be expensive to outsource social media management, but you should be prepared to pay at least \$20/hour for a person with some previous experience. A recognized expert will of course cost more than that though. However, keep in mind that this won't be a full-time position so even if the hourly rate is fairly high it may not cost much in total per month.

Once you've hired someone and you're ready to get started, all you have to do is draw up a strategy together and then let them do their thing. You shouldn't expect to see results immediately though, as building a successful social media presence takes time and cannot be rushed.

Do I Need Help?

Before going out and looking for a social media manager, there are a few questions you should ask yourself to determine if you even need one or if you would be better off doing these things yourself.

First of all, consider whether you actually enjoy social media or not. If you don't, chances are you're never going to be able to successfully manage your own pages. The truth is that trying to force yourself to do something you don't enjoy day after day will likely just lead to burnout and cause you to quit before seeing any results from your efforts.

You also need to take into consideration whether you actually have the time to do it all yourself. The total time spent per day may not amount to much, but if you can't see yourself having the time to check your pages, update them and respond to discussions several times per day you should probably consider outsourcing it. And, even if you would be able to squeeze it into your schedule, think about whether it would actually be the best use of your time, or if you should be working on higher-level tasks instead.

It should go without saying that you should also be something of a "people person" to handle social media effectively, as it may otherwise prove extremely tiring and even annoying at times. You will have to be patient and friendly or you'll risk ruining your online reputation.

Finally, ask yourself how important social media is to your business. If it's not something you prioritize highly, maybe it's not a good idea to spend money on a social media manager. Keep in mind though that social media may only become more and more important with every year, so you may as well start focusing on it now to get ahead of your competitors.

What to look for

Once you've decided you're going to hire a social media manager, it's time to start thinking about the traits and skills he/she should have.

First, a couple of things that may be obvious to some: a great social media manager should be friendly, have great communication skills and be a good writer with flawless spelling and grammar. Those are absolute necessities - someone who can't live up to those basics will simply not do a good job.

One thing that's often overlooked is the person's experience with the industry your business is in. For example, a social media manager who's mainly been involved in managing pages for car dealers may not be a good fit for a business that sells supplements online. The more experience they have in your particular niche, the better. It will also allow them to respond better to questions from fans and followers, without having to consult you all the time.

You'll also want a person who stays updated with the latest trends and techniques, and has the ability to learn new things and expand to other platforms as they become popular. As social media is in a constant state of change this is quite important.

It's also a good idea to look for complementary skills that could be useful for a social media manager. One is being good at researching things online, as that will be very helpful when looking for new, fresh content to post to your pages. Another useful skill is the ability to create and edit images and video, allowing them to make unique media content for your properties, and perhaps even build out a YouTube channel.

Where

When you've determined that you actually do need help with your social media, and you've put some thought into what traits and skills your ideal candidate should have, it's time to go out there and start looking.

Before you even start looking elsewhere though, consider whether you can actually "outsource" it in-house instead, meaning getting one of your existing employees (if you have any) to handle it. This may be the best choice if you're just starting to build your social media presence, as it will be easy to get started and you'll be guaranteed to get a person who's proven to be reliable.

Another good idea is asking around among your friends and colleagues - perhaps they know someone who'd be the perfect guy or gal for the task? Maybe they've even hired someone for themselves, who could also work for you. This alternative is great because you don't have to go through a lengthy recruiting process.

If, however, you decide to go online and look instead, you've got many options. One idea is starting by checking the most popular freelancing sites (oDesk, Elance, Freelancer.com and others). There are literally thousands of skilled workers on these sites, but it can be a bit of a chore to sift through the many dozens of applications most job postings get. You also need to be aware that the majority of applications you'll get on these sites will be very poor choices for a position like this, lacking even basic qualifications and English skills.

Other online options include looking in search engines, or hitting up classifieds sites like Craigslist. Both can yield some great results if you're willing to put in the time to look properly.

Conclusion

By now you should have a pretty good idea about how social media management works, and how it can be beneficial to your business. Keep in mind that even though it is usually a good idea to follow the recommendations in this guide, every business is unique, and ultimately it's up to you how you want to handle your social media. You should therefore feel free to adjust the "recipe" as needed. After all, no one knows what your business needs better than you.

It's also worth mentioning that hiring a social media manager is not a "quick fix" that guarantees results. Even if they're very good at what they do, building a strong social media presence takes time. If you're patient and prepared to wait for it you will most likely be rewarded; the worst thing you can do is hire someone to work on your pages for a few months and then give up because you're not seeing a return on your investment.

The key to success is sticking with it, even when it seems like it's not going to work. Sooner or later you'll catch a break and your pages will catch on with your audience and your following will start to snowball.

Good luck!