

Guide to Getting Started with Social Media

2021



What We'll Cover

This guide will help you decide how to best leverage social media in 2021. We'll take a look at the top channels, how to find and reach your ideal audience, and what types of content can work best for you.

The tips in this guide are meant to be suggestions and high-level guidelines to help you get started. We encourage you to experiment with different content to see what works best for your audience.

Don't forget, you don't have to be an expert designer to build a social media community. Focus on sharing high quality information that will add value to your followers.

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Channel Recommendations

| | Facebook | Instagram | Twitter | LinkedIn |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Overview | Facebook has the largest reach among all social media channels. Users report using Facebook primarily to connect with friends and family so your content should be informative but informal and friendly. Excellent audience targeting is available through Facebook. | Instagram has the most usage among younger customers. Unlike most other social platforms, Instagram is highly visual and relies on entertaining images and short videos. | Twitter is often a one stop shop for news of all kinds: politics, pop culture, and niche interest groups. Most content trends and best practices apply here but timing and relevancy will be extra important. | LinkedIn is a great place to reach business owners and professionals who influence insurance decisions at their company. You may choose to share from your personal profile, company page, or in relevant industry groups. |
| Demographics (% of Americans using the platform) | 46% of ages 65+ 75% of ages 18 to 45 use Facebook. Usage among 20-30 and 30+ is similar. While teens use Facebook less than adults, Facebook still reaches 113.3 million teens compared to 52.9 million on Instagram. | 75% of ages 18-24 57% of ages 25-29 47% of ages 30 -49 23% of ages 50-6 | 44% of ages 18 - 24 80% of people under 50 globally Twitter skews slightly male: 62% Most US Twitter users live in cities. | 27% ages 26-35 34% ages 36-45 37% ages 46-55 29% ages 56+ Urban: 30% Suburban: 27% Rural: 13% |
| Recommended Audiences | Focus: Personal Lines Millennials and adult Gen Z customers reaching life milestones like growing a career, renting a first apartment, buying a first home, or starting a family. Baby boomers transitioning to retirement. They may be downsizing or relocating, enjoying grandchildren, or picking up new hobbies (travel, recreational vehicles, etc.). | Focus: Personal Lines Millennials and adult Gen Z customers reaching life milestones like growing a career, renting a first apartment, buying a first home, or starting a family. Older Millennials and Gen X customers with more established families, growing careers, and/or small businesses. | Focus: Personal & Business Lines Millennials and adult Gen Z customers reaching life milestones like growing a career, renting a first apartment, buying a first home, or starting a family. Using the right hashtags and finding the right people, you may be able to target small business owners. | Focus: Business Lines Millennials and Gen X small business owners any stage of business growth: -Just starting. -Expanding locations, products, sales, or number of employees. -Employee growth and retention. |
| Content Types | Single photos Multi-photo albums Video Stories Link to websites or blogs | In-feed photos IGTV series Stories Reels | Text Tweets (links optional) Image Tweets Video Tweets Retweets Stories | Text (links optional) Images Video Stories LinkedIn company page Industry groups |
| Posting Schedule | 1-2 posts per week | 1-2 posts per week | 5-7 times per week | 1 time per week |

Audiences

Before you begin creating content for social media, you will need to define your audience(s). It is important to know who you are trying to reach and what you want to tell them. The national Trusted Choice brand focuses on four main audiences: Millennials, Established Families, Baby Boomers, and Small Business Owners. Your state association can choose to get even more specific based on your location and focus. Some examples include **members, young agents, non-members, carriers.**

Build your audience profiles based on online research, customers surveys, and your business goals. Two examples have been provided below plus a blank template to build your own.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Audience Name: | Young Agents |
| Profile: | Age: 20-40 |
| Association Needs: | Young agents want to network with other IA's to gain knowledge and connection. They may be newer to the industry and wanting to learn and grow. They may be a part of a family agency. |
| Desired Perception: | STATE association understands my needs and supports me in providing services and education to further my career and development. |
| Programs: | Young agents, marketing, perpetuation, leadership, education |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Audience Name: | |
| Profile: | |
| Association Needs: | |
| Desired Perception: | |
| Programs: | |

Getting Started On Each Channel

1. Create your profiles

Once you have defined your audience and chosen your audiences, set up your social accounts as business profiles. This will include:

- ▶ A profile picture (recommended: use your company logo and be consistent across channels)
- ▶ A header photo (can be changed to match seasonality or showcase employees)
- ▶ Your agency's contact information
- ▶ Link to your website
- ▶ Your location
- ▶ A short bio including your value proposition and what customers can expect to see on your social channels. Resist the urge to write your agency's history and keep the focus on the value you provide.

2. Outline your content calendar

One of the hardest things about social media is deciding what to post. Start by creating a 12-month calendar with themes you can share each month. Some might be obvious seasonal trends like winter snow safety or summer road trip auto tips.

However, don't forget any big community service initiatives, events, or tradeshow. To help get you started, there is a topics calendar at the end of this guide.

3. Improve your posting

- ▶ **Consistency is key!** If you are just getting started, stick to once a week and post more often as you get more comfortable.
- ▶ **Don't sacrifice quality for quantity.** It is better to post less often if you don't have some thing valuable to share.
- ▶ **Look for inspiration.** Research your competitors and brands you love outside the industry to see what kind of content they are sharing. Can you borrow some of their strategies? Plus, share photos from customers and employees – with permission and photo credit!
- ▶ **Share articles from trusted sources.** If you do not have an established blog, put together a list of trusted sites like carrier partners, TrustedChoice.com, news sites, or even local sites to help find articles to share.
- ▶ **Test new things.** Do not be afraid to try new things on your channels. Switch up your posting times, introduce a video series, and look at your analytics to see what content is earning the most engagement. Do not be afraid to make mistakes!

Biggest Content Trends: 2021

Content value will beat production quality.

You don't have to look like you spend thousands of dollars on your content. With the fast pivot to online sales and communication in 2020, people are strongly focused on one question: does this information tell me what I need to know?

Don't let visual perfection stand in your way from sharing your knowledge. Record video on your phone, leverage free creative templates online, or leverage pre-made content from content to share from Trusted Choice.

Conversational marketing will change its tone.

Social media is social. We know it is important to write social copy as if you are talking to a friend.

However, in the past, conversational marketing tactics centered around promotions and making sales as quickly as possible. But in 2021, we have to make sure our social posts are focused on helping a customer solve a problem, learn how a product will help them, or break down an important but complex issue. Use this opportunity to highlight lesser known insurance risks and products or helpful safety tips.

Consumers will crave snackable content.

"Snackable" content is a term used to describe very short marketing content. With the rise of Tik Tok videos, Snapchat, and stories across many platforms, users expect short, concise content on social media. Keep your content short with simple language and memorable information. Got something more complicated to share? Consider breaking it up in a series of posts or link to a blog where consumers can read more.

Video will continue to take center stage.

Video has been a growing format on social media for years. However, Tik Tok and stories across platforms have made video an expected part of any content strategy. Consider sharing videos of you providing value insurance tips or text-based videos created with a template.

Example Content Ideas by Channel

Facebook

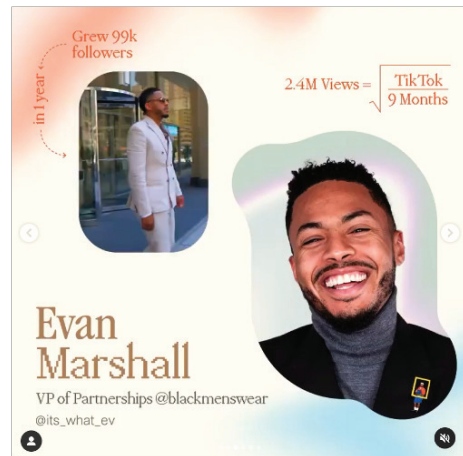
Ask attendees to answer a fun question that will get them in the right frame of mind for your event.



A Facebook story of a speaker highlighting key points they will discuss in their presentation.

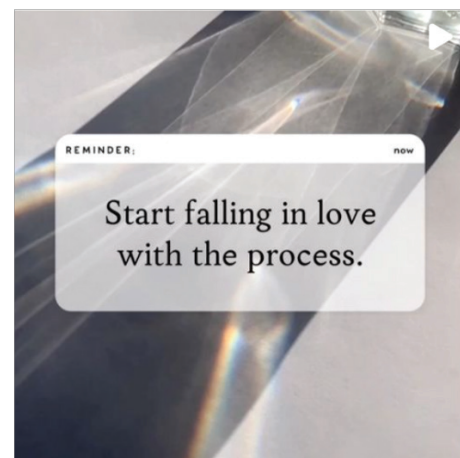
A video with footage from the previous year.

Tease your speaker line up to show what each expert will discuss.



If you have multiple sessions at your event, consider making a visual post of all topics to illustrate the full conference to attendees.

Share inspiration quotes to illustrate value that can be gained from attending your event.



Example Content Ideas by Channel

Instagram

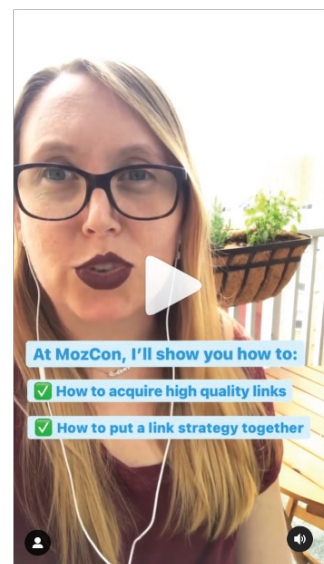
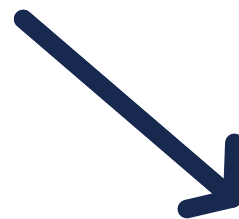
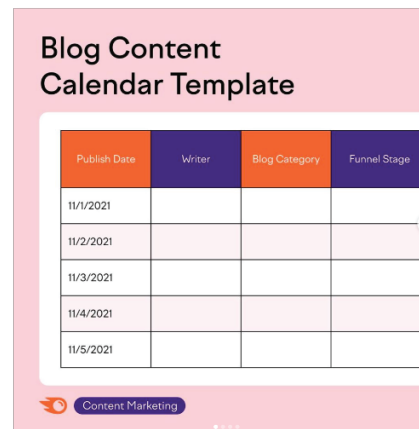
A highlight reel of what attendees will learn at the conference.

Story series of testimonials from past attendees.

Save a story highlight of all your speakers introducing themselves.

Share templates ahead of time to get attendees thinking.

Ask your speakers to help create and share reels about their sessions highlight what they will discuss or sneak peak tips.



Example Content Ideas by Channel

Twitter

A post highlighting pain points that you will address at the conference. Ask attendees to tweet any additional pain points.

Do a live Q&A prior to the event to give attendees and idea of what to expect.

Retweet attendees who share that they are excited about the event.

Tag your speakers and highlight what they are discussing at the event.



Example Content Ideas by Channel

LinkedIn

If your event is a series, map it out for potential attendees so they can see how lessons will build on each other.

Ask attendees to share questions or pain points ahead of time.

Highlight thought leadership quotes or articles from your speakers before the conference.

Give your audience a quiz to help attendees understand what they will learn.



Images Sizes



Twitter

Header image: 1500 x 500 | max 5 MB

Profile image: 400 x 400 | max 2 MB

In-stream image: 1024 x 512 | max 5 MB

Promoted image: 1200 x 600 | max 3 MB



LinkedIn

Company cover: 1536 x 768 | max 4 MB

Company logo: 300 x 300 | max 4 MB

Company page banner: 646 x 220 | max 2 MB

Shared image: 350 pixels wide

Sponsored content image: 1200 x 627



Facebook

Cover image: 820 x 312 (min 400 x 150)

Profile image: $\geq 180 \times 180$

Shared post image: 1200 x 630

Event cover: 1920 x 1080

Promoted image: 1200 x 1200

Facebook story image: 1080 x 1920

Facebook story ad: 1080 x 1920



Instagram

Profile image: 110 x 110

Shared photos: 1080 x 1080

Stories resolution: 1080 x 1920 (min 600 x 1067) | max 4 GB

Promoted image: 1080 x 1080, 1080 x 566

Annual Content Themes

| | JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH | |
|----|---|--|---|--|
| Q1 | <p>New Year's Day Martin Luther King Day</p> <p>New Habits Winter Safety</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Winter Maintenance & Safety (home & car)</p> <p>Re-evaluating needs for the year (Business, Home & Car)</p> <p>Healthy habits (Home, Life, & Business)</p> <p>Recreational Vehicle (snowmobile)</p> <p>Travel (Ski or Beach) (Vacation home & Auto)</p> | <p>Chinese New Year Valentine's Day President's Day Black History Month Heart Health Month</p> <p>Jewelry/Personal Property Winter Safety</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Winter Maintenance & Safety (home & car)</p> <p>Protecting Valuables (Jewelry & Personal Property)</p> <p>Heart Health (Home & Life)</p> <p>Recreational Vehicle (Snowmobile)</p> <p>Travel (Ski or Beach) (Vacation home & Auto)</p> | <p>St. Patrick's Day National Pi Day (3/14)</p> <p>First Day of Spring Start of Tornado season Spring Cleaning</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Winter and Early Spring Maintenance (Home & Car)</p> | |
| | Q2 | <p>Passover Easter Distracted Driving Month</p> <p>Rainstorm Flooding Spring Cleaning</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Spring maintenance & safety (Home & Car)</p> <p>Distracted Driving (Car)</p> <p>Rainstorm/Flooding (Home & Car)</p> | <p>Mother's Day Memorial Day Graduation Season</p> <p>Rainstorm & Flooding Lawn/ Back Yard Maintenance</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Spring Cleaning/Yard Maintenance (Home & Car)</p> <p>Recreational Vehicle (RV & Boat)</p> <p>Backyard Pool & Grilling (Home)</p> <p>New Grads (Renter's & Auto)</p> | <p>First Day of Summer Father's Day Juneteeth</p> <p>Rainstorm & Flooding Summer Home Maintenance Employee Wellness Month</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Summer Home maintenance & safety (Home & Car)</p> <p>Backyard Pool & Grilling (Home)</p> <p>Summer Travel (Vacation Home, RV, Boat)</p> <p>Employee Health (Small Business)</p> |

Annual Content Themes (cont.)

| | JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER |
|----|---|--|--|
| Q3 | <p>Independence Day</p> <p>Rainstorm Extreme Heat</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: 4th of July Travel (Home, Car, Vacation Home, RV, Boat)</p> <p>Backyard Pool & Grilling (Home)</p> | <p>School back in session</p> <p>Hurricane Rainstorm Extreme Heat</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Home Maintenance & Safety (Home & Car)</p> <p>Backyard Pool & Grilling (Home)</p> <p>Summer Travel (Vacation Home, RV, Boat)</p> <p>Hurricane & Natural Disaster (Home & Car)</p> <p>Back to "work" (Small Business)</p> | <p>Labor Day First Day of Fall</p> <p>Hurricane Rainstorm</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Fall Maintenance (Home & Car)</p> <p>Hurricane & Natural Disaster (Home & Car)</p> <p>Back to "work" (Small Business)</p> |
| | OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER |
| | Q4 | <p>Halloween</p> <p>Hurricane Winter Safety Cyber Security Month Small Business Month</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Fall Home Maintenance & Safety (Home & Car)</p> <p>Hurricane & Natural Disaster (Home & Car)</p> <p>Fire Pit and Home Heating (Home)</p> <p>Fall Foliage Travel (Car, RV, Vacation Home)</p> <p>Cyber Security Tips (Home & Business)</p> | <p>Thanksgiving Dia de los Muertos Giving Tuesday Small Business Saturday</p> <p>Hurricane Winter Safety Snowstorm (Northern States)</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Home Maintenance & Safety (home & car)</p> <p>Fire Pit and Home heating (Home)</p> <p>Kitchen & Travel Safety/Thanksgiving (Home & Car)</p> <p>Giving Tuesday/Small Business Saturday (Small Business)</p> |

Resources

Scheduling

Best for Instagram

Planoly: Plan your Instagram grid and stories in Planoly. You can also use their free LinkIt tool to link to multiple website pages in your bio. Free for up to 30 planned posts per month.

Later: Later is best used as an Instagram post and stories planner but can be used for Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn too. You can also use their free Linkin.bio tool to link to multiple website pages in your bio. Free for up to 30 scheduled posts per social channel.

Best for Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn

Crowdfire: This tool helps you easily schedule Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn posts plus help find related content to share. Connect three profiles for free or get more customized content curation ideas starting at \$7.49/mo.

Buffer: The tool makes it easy to schedule your social posts. Connect 3 channels and schedule 10 posts at a time for free or upgrade for \$15/mo.

Hootsuite: For a more advanced social scheduling, listening, and content tool, check out Hootsuite. Get started for free or upgrade starting at \$29/month.

Creating Content

Canva: This tool offers easy to use templates for all social channels. There are also templates for videos and printed materials. Free or \$13/mo for tons of extra stock photos and graphics.

Stock Photos: Find free stock photos to use on Pexels, Pixabay, and Unsplash.

Movavi: an easy to use video editing tool. Get started with basic features for free.

Images sizes: This is the source for the image sizes listed above.

Linktr.ee: Share multiple links from one link in your Instagram bio and anywhere else you want. Linktr.ee is text based and does not require the visual element of Planoly or Later. Get started for free or upgrade to custom branding and analytics for \$6/month

Content to Share by Trusted Choice: Find ready to use graphics specific to insurance on Content to Share. Members can download all graphics for free and use them on any digital or print platform.

Latest Trends

Later: Stay up to date on the latest social trends organized by channel.

Social Media Examiner: Deep dive in the latest information on analyzing your social data and getting started with paid ads on each channel.

Social Media Today: Find articles on the latest content, platform, and CMO outlooks on Social Media Today.

Content Marketing Institute: CMI can help you with content related to more than just social media. Find templates, how-to's, and case studies.

Post Ideas:

Promotional Posts

- Countdown to the event or to on-sale dates
- Share creative reveals of lineups or special guests
- Use teaser videos and images to increase excitement
- “Humble brag” by posting media or influencer coverage of your event
- Use urgency to drive purchases when early bird ticket and registration sales end
- Offer discount codes to followers of your social media accounts
- Share articles about your event to generate

PR Relevant Posts

- Share relevant industry news to keep attendees and potential attendees up to date
- Use interactive content like questions or polls — these can even be used to decide components of the event!
- Make fans feel like insiders with a behind-the-scenes look at the event’s production
- Create social contests and giveaways, such as offering VIP access to select followers who share the post
- Respond to any questions, issues, or comments people send your way
- Create engaging images of the event that entice sharing
- Surface great “user-generated content” (UGC): Retweet or share posts, pictures, and video from attendees of the event

For promotional posts, include a link to your ticketing or registration page to make it as easy as possible for people to buy. You can use a link shortener like Bit.ly to shorten the link, so it doesn’t take up much of your valuable character count. (It’s also worth setting up tracking on the link to see what’s driving sales, either via your social media management platform or with UTM codes)



40
characters

Posts with 40 characters receive 86% more engagement than posts with a higher character count



25
words

If you’re marketing to businesses, write a 16-25 word post. If you’re marketing to consumers, 21-25 word posts typically get the most shares



100
characters

Tweets shorter than 100 characters have a 17% higher engagement rate

Power Words to Arouse Curiosity

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Astonishing | Dark | Odd | Thought-provoking |
| Backdoor | Elusive | Off the record | Top secret |
| Banned | Extraordinary | Off-limits | Trade secret |
| Be the first | Eye-opening | Strange | Unauthorized |
| Become an Insider | Forbidden | Outlawed | Unbelievable |
| Behind the scenes | Forgotten | Priceless | Uncharted |
| Bizarre | Hidden | Private | Unconventional |
| Black Market | Hilarious | Privy | Under the Table |
| Blacklisted | Hush-hush | Lost | Under wraps |
| Bootleg | Illegal | Remote | Underground |
| Censored | Illusive | Retricted | Undiscovered |
| Class full | Incredibly | Ridiculous | Unexplained |
| Classified | Insane | Secret | Unexplored |
| Closet | Insider | Secrets | Unheard of |
| Concealed | Interesting | Shh! | Unique |
| Confessions | Invitation only | Shocking | Unlock |
| Confidential | Key | Smuggled | Unsung |
| Controversial | Limited | Sneak peak | Untold |
| Covert | Little-known | Spoiler | Unusual |
| Cover-up | Login required | Strange | Wacky |
| Crazy | Members only | Stunning | Witheld |
| Cringeworthy | Myth | Supersecret | Zane |

Power Words to appeal to Vanity

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Ahead of the game | Crowned | Kick ass | Spine |
| Amazing | Daring | Knockout | Spoiler |
| Amplify | Dazzling | Legendary | Staggering |
| At the top | Defiance | Limited | Strong |
| Attractive | Drop-dead | Little-known | Stunning |
| Awe-inspiring | Effective | Lucky | Successful |
| Bamboozle | Elegant | Magnanimous | Super-human |
| Beautiful | Elite | Mind-blowing | Triumph |
| Bold | Insane | Moneymaking | Turbo charge |
| Booming | Insider | Notable | Ultimate |
| Boost | Interesting | Noteworthy | Unbeaten |
| Boss | Invitation-only | Off the record | Unsung |
| Brassy | Enchant | Optimal | Untold |
| Bravery | Epic | Priceless | Unusual |
| Brazen | Fearless | Prosperous | Valor |
| Bright | Fortunate | Quick-witted | Vanquish |
| Brilliant | Foxy | Remarkable | Victory |
| Cheer | Genius | Sassy | Wacky |
| Clever | Good-looking | Saucy | Wealthy |
| Closet | Gorgeous | Sensational | Witheld |
| Concealed | Guts | Shh! | Wonderful |
| Confessions | Handsome | Shocking | Wonderland |
| Confidential | Hero | Smart | Wondrous |
| Conquer | Jaw-dropping | Smuggled | You |
| Controversial | Jubilant | Sneak-peak | |
| Courage | Key | Spectacular | |

| Process | How can Social Media deliver value? | Which media formats should be used? | Potential social media/network matches |
|--|---|---|---|
| Performers are announced | Deliver information on speakers/sessions and generate buzz | Video, write up, real time update, contest | Blog, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube. |
| Early-bird tickets announced | Offering special discount on selected networks | Real time updates, longer write ups with benefits, video from previous year, contest for free tickets | Twitter, Facebook, Blog (with embedded video), Forum posting, LinkedIn Group posting, Youtube |
| Attendees obtain badge at registration | By informing them what to do next | Real time updates, pictures, small videos | Twitter, Facebook, Instagram |
| During session | Generate FOMO | Live stream of session | Twitter, Facebook, Youtube |
| Session ends - Break | Ask for feedback and inform about upcoming sessions | Real time updates, notifications, poll | Twitter, Facebook, Social Media powered Event app |
| There is a room change | Inform attendees as quickly as possible | Real time updates, short video | Twitter, Facebook |
| Highlight performers for the event | By giving detailed information about their previous talks and experience | Blog post with interview, guest post, video, video interview | Slideshare, Pinterest, Youtube, Blogs, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn |
| Slides need to be distributed to the audience | By making it easy to share without sending emails or let speakers manage this process | Slides, write up, video | Slideshare, Blog Post, Youtube |

Association Marketing Checklist

- Start marketing efforts long before you think you need to begin event promotion
- Don't put all of your eggs in the social media basket
- Identify the best channels and platforms for communicating with members
- Get marketing help from registered participants
- Involve speakers, exhibitors, and sponsors
- Demand attention with promotional videos
- Grow your membership base by attracting emerging professionals
- Design strategies to retain and attract members who are entrepreneurs

Email tip: Include a number in the subject line of your emails. Users are more than **2% more likely** to open the email, and almost **3% more likely** to reply!