



Choosing your Social Media platform

Although you may not like it, social media is here to stay and it is very likely that there will be new platforms on the scene soon. That means choosing the right platform – where your audience is likely to hang out – is more crucial than ever.

Doesn't everyone use Facebook?

Actually no, not everyone... Facebook attracts predominantly 35-55-year-olds but a growing number of people are turning away from the platform. That said, if Facebook is your platform of choice, Facebook Groups has become a growing area within the Facebook site.

The fastest growing platform is currently Instagram and in 2019 Instagram Stories is tipped to become the most popular form of social media. The Instagram audience is predominantly 19-35 but this is changing rapidly with growth happening in the 35-45 age range.

Let's take a look at platforms you have to choose from:

Instagram:

Although Instagram is not an easy platform to grow, the audience is really engaged which means you don't need a large following to make an impact. Instagram has no sharing facility so the feed is a lot less cluttered than the Facebook feed.

It was started as a bespoke image-sharing platform, and was taken over by Facebook who have added many innovative features such as Stories, filters and IGTV (Instagram TV).

Check it out:

- **@northyorkmoors:** They say a picture speaks a thousand words and that's true of this Instagram feed showing off the beautiful scenery of the North York Moors throughout the year. As well as being visually enticing, the stunning images are linked to events and tourism spots in the area, meaning that the pictures are working extra hard to market tourist attractions. It's a great example of how pictures, rather than words, can reach out to people.
- **@fordhousenorfolk:** A luxury holiday cottage in Norfolk, mixes aspirational images of the property and surrounding area, with small insights into the people who own the cottage and their lives.

Snapchat:

Snapchat is one of the hardest platforms to use for marketing so I would recommend that if you have no experience of this platform you don't choose it as a medium for raising awareness. However, if you have been brought up in the Snapchat era, it's your personal platform of choice and you know that you can get great engagement with it, then it might be an option for you as long as you know your target audience is also on the platform.

Twitter:

Twitter is the platform that transcends all social media. Avid Twitter users of all ages enjoy the platform because of its short, chatty nature.

Twitter also attracts pockets of individuals who are passionate about certain sectors, for example, sports people, journalists, scientists and those in agriculture. It's about sharing up-to-date news with your audience, letting people know what's trending right now and giving them the latest on current topics and affairs.

If Twitter is your social media platform of choice there is scope for using it within the tourism sector but it does take time to learn how to be effective with it.

Check it out:

- **@CotswoldsGent:** The Twitter feed of lifestyle blogger, travel and tourism guru, the Cotswold Gentleman (thecotswoldgentleman.co.uk) gives a snappy, chatty view of the Cotswolds with regular feeds updating viewers about the latest events and happenings. There are up-to-date news items and money-off offers (meal deals at local pubs and restaurants, entry to Cotswold festivals and events), links to other stories in the area (the latest 50 best pubs poll, for example) and pictures of events in the area that leave the viewer itching to be involved and know more. <https://twitter.com/CotswoldsGent>
- **@LygonCotswolds:** Creating their own content and behind the scenes and sharing and retweeting others. The Lygon Arms is building a nice community feel around their Twitter. <https://twitter.com/LygonCotswolds>

LinkedIn:

LinkedIn is the professional platform where people can showcase their expertise. People join early in their career and often stay active on the platform well into retirement. It is mainly for work-related posts, topical issues and professional conversation, however, more recently the platform has become far more engaged as people look for alternatives to Facebook. You can post videos, write posts, comment and share other people's content and even write your own LinkedIn articles – this is very popular with readers and allows you to create your own press.

LinkedIn is the place to be if you are interested in attracting corporate clients or someone who would be visiting in a work capacity or planning a break based on culture.

YouTube:

Owned by Google, YouTube videos can be effective for weeks, months and even years. The aim is to build up a following of subscribers who ask to be notified about your content. This means that a good YouTuber will provide consistent quality content for their audience.

Check it out:

- Jessica Dante's channel 'Love and London' is a great example. Jessica is an American who now resides in London. The video content provides guidance of things to do, super-targeted at Americans visiting London. With over 80,000 followers she has grown her audience in a two-year period by niching into a very specific area and concentrating all her effort on her YouTube Channel. <https://www.youtube.com/user/loveandlondon>

My advice would be, choose the right channel, where your ideal customers are and concentrate on getting it right! Learn how to make the platform work for you, social media is not a magic wand, you must work really hard to get results ... but it can bring great rewards.

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