

Choosing Your Social Platform

AND 4 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Want to "get on social" but not sure where to start? The sheer number of social platforms available to business today is staggering and the choice can be paralyzing. Like most business owners you probably have enough on your plate with day to day operations without adding the burden of trying to work out where your customers are "hanging out".

This paper will cover the top social platforms for the broad tourism based sectors, for which many Alexandra Traders and Tourism Association members will fall.

What social platforms can I choose from?

The social media landscape has quickly become crowded in the last five years, with new platforms seeming to spring up every other week and as many falling to the curb. Each attracts their own audience, has their own etiquette, and can be beneficial for business in different ways. Because of this many people feel it's easier to align yourself to the wrong platform than the right.

Social Media Landscape



About the author

Caolán O'Connor is a digital coach, who helps successful but overwhelmed business owners learn to use digital tools to leverage their

business and regain control of their lives.



According to Forrester, Australian businesses will spend a whopping \$706.3m per annum on social advertising by 2019, up from \$240.0m in 2014.

Social In Australia

Australia is in a unique position. Typically uptake for any digital technology is between 3 months to 3 years later than the US. However, this gives us a great opportunity to see what works overseas and not adopt the "fly by night" brands.

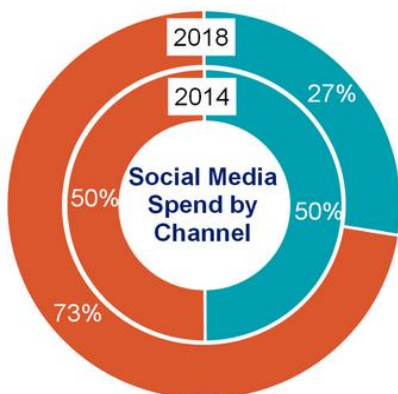
Even so, our appetite for social media (across the board) is staggering. In the month of September 2014 Australians visited the following sites:

1. Facebook - 13,600,000 Australians did stuff (up 20,000 on Aug).
2. Youtube - 13,100,000 Australians watched online videos.
3. Wordpress - 6,000,000 Australians visited blogs.
4. Tumblr - 4,600,000 Australians looked at photos.
5. Instagram - 4,000,000 Australians looked at more photos.
6. LinkedIn - 3,900,000 Australians explored their network.
7. Blogspot - 3,100,000 more Australians read blogs.
8. Twitter - 2,791,300 Aussies tweeted something
9. TripAdvisor - 1,650,000 Aussies wrote or read reviews.
10. Yelp - 1,300,000 more Aussies wrote or read reviews.

For the whole list see: www.socialmedianews.com.au/social-media-statistics-australia-september-2014/

Where do I start?

In November I had the opportunity to spend two days with Jim Brody, an online guru. Jim spent many years managing destinations for TripAdvisor, working for Oyster (online bookings), and a range of other online tourism organisations. These days Jim helps tourism destinations leverage their online reputation via social media. When asked which platforms Australian businesses should be using Jim replied with the following:-



Desktop **Mobile**
 Australian Social Media Advertising Spend, 2014-2018. Source: Socintel360

	Accomm	Experiences	Dining	Retail	Tourism Organisations
High Priority	TripAdvisor OTA Review	YouTube Instagram Pinterest	Foodspotting Yelp	Facebook Pinterest	Facebook Twitter Pinterest
Mid Priority	Instagram Facebook YouTube	TripAdvisor Yelp Facebook	YouTube TripAdvisor Instagram Pinterest	Twitter Instagram Tumblr	Blogs Tumblr YouTube Instagram
Low Priority	Blogs Twitter Tumblr Pinterest	Blogs Twitter Tumblr	Facebook Twitter Tumblr Blogs	Yelp Blogs TripAdvisor	TripAdvisor

Note: OTA = online travel agency

According to Kamber in their 2014 Social Media Trends report, our obsession with online video isn't going away any time soon. This suggest further growth (and business opportunity) for YouTube, as well as platforms such as Instagram which allow short videos too.

Now you know where to start you can begin planning a strategy around your social efforts. Here are four questions that you should ask yourself before jumping into the social "deep end".

1. **What do you want to achieve by being on a social platform?** How is this linked to your business goals? In my opinion there are at least five different reasons that you can use social media for. They include: increasing foot traffic; increasing \$ sales; launching a product or service; gaining supporters for brands/causes; and interacting with the community.
2. **Are your audience/clients/customers on that social platform?** The sectors described above are quite broad and every business is different. Spend some time checking for yourself.
3. **Do you have the skills, time and energy to apply to social media?** Succeeding on social is all about building lasting relationships (with your audience). This takes time, effort and strategy. It's a marathon rather than a sprint, and it's on top of existing operational pressures. Be honest with yourself when you answer this.
4. **Do you have a roadmap of how to get to your outcomes on social media?** It's easy to be social. It's harder to do social well. Having a strategy specific to your platform (Facebook versus Instagram versus TripAdvisor, etc), that is focussed on your business goals and is attuned to your specific audience is vital. Otherwise you're just spinning wheels on the spot.

Having trouble or want more information?

There are oodles of agencies out there that will help you develop a social strategy that is specific to your business. On top of that there are hundreds and thousands of articles on the topic available online. My advice, get clear on those four questions before you even think about going any further.

Alternatively, feel free to email me at caolan.oconnor@gmail.com to discuss any questions that you may have or get more advice on choosing a social platform to play with.

Kind regards,



Caolán O'Connor