



# Social Media That Works for Small Businesses (North America)

A plain-English social media guide for US & Canadian small businesses — pick the right platforms, post realistically, and stay FTC-compliant.

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Social media can do real things for a small business: keep you visible to people who already know you, help new local customers find you, and give regulars a reason to come back. What it usually can't do is replace a steady stream of sales overnight, or work if you post once and disappear for three months. This guide is for owners across the US and Canada who are time-poor and want a sensible, honest plan — not a viral fantasy.

The North American market is enormous and crowded, which is good news and bad news. The bad news is you're competing for attention with everyone. The good news is the platforms are built for niche and local targeting, so a coffee shop in Austin or a bookkeeper in Calgary can reach the exact people nearby who'd actually buy. The trick is choosing one or two platforms you can keep up with.

## 1. Pick the platforms that fit your customers

Don't try to be everywhere. Go where your customers already are. **Facebook and Instagram** still cover the widest age range in the US and Canada and are the default for most local businesses. **TikTok** has huge reach in the US and skews younger; it rewards genuine, unpolished video. **LinkedIn** is where B2B lives. **YouTube** is unmatched for how-to and longer demos. And don't skip your free **Google Business Profile** — for any local business it's often the single highest-return "social" presence, because it's what shows up in Maps and local search.

## 2. Plan content you can actually sustain

Consistency beats polish. Pick a posting rhythm you can hold for months — two or three times a week is plenty for most small businesses, and far better than ten posts one week and silence the next. Batch your content: set aside an hour to shoot photos and draft a week or two at a time, then schedule it. Mix it up so you're not always selling. Lean into North American **seasonality**: back-to-school in late summer, Black Friday and Cyber Monday, the year-end holidays, and local events all give you ready-made reasons to post.

## 3. Boost smartly — and tie social to reviews

Organic reach is limited, so a small paid boost can go a long way. You don't need a big budget — even US\$5–20 (or the CAD equivalent) behind a post that's already doing well, tightly targeted to your town or your customer type, beats a large untargeted spend. Social also feeds your reputation: encourage happy customers to leave honest **Google** and **Yelp** reviews, share the good ones, and reply to every review politely. Reviews and a complete Google Business Profile often drive more local sales than the posts themselves.

## 4. Measure what matters — and stay compliant

Ignore vanity numbers. Follower counts and likes feel nice but rarely pay the bills. Track the things tied to money: profile visits, clicks to your website, calls, direction requests, messages, and bookings. Use a unique link or a discount code to see what social actually drives. On the legal side, if you pay or gift an influencer, US **FTC Endorsement Guides** require clear, hard-to-miss disclosure — a visible **#ad** or **#sponsored**, not buried in hashtags — and any testimonial must be genuine. In Canada, the **Competition Bureau** enforces equivalent rules against misleading or undisclosed paid endorsements.

A rough guide — your customers, not the platform's hype, should decide where you invest.

| Platform  | Best for  | Realistic effort   |
|-----------|---|--|
| Facebook  | Local reach, community, events, the widest age range                | Moderate — a few posts a week, plus replying to comments and messages      |
| Instagram | Visual businesses — food, retail, beauty, trades showing their work | Moderate — needs decent photos or short video; Stories add upkeep          |
| TikTok    | Reaching younger US audiences with genuine, unpolished short video  | Higher — video-first and frequent; great only if you enjoy being on camera |
| LinkedIn  | B2B — consultants, agencies, and selling to other businesses        | Lower volume — one or two thoughtful posts a week beats daily noise        |

## Common questions

### Which platform should I start with?

Start with the one your customers already use, and pick just one or two. For most local US and Canadian businesses that's Facebook and/or Instagram, plus a free Google Business Profile for local search. If you sell to other businesses, start with LinkedIn instead. Better to do one platform well than four badly.

### How often should I post?

Aim for a rhythm you can sustain — two to three times a week is plenty for most small businesses. Consistency over months matters far more than volume. Batching and scheduling a week or two ahead makes this realistic when you're short on time.

### Do I need to pay to boost posts?

Not to start, but a little goes a long way. Organic reach is limited, so even US\$5–20 (or the CAD equivalent) behind a post that's already performing — tightly targeted — can beat a big untargeted spend. Start small and scale only what converts.

### Is social media worth it for B2B?

Yes, but the playbook is different. LinkedIn is the main channel — a couple of thoughtful posts a week, sharing useful insight rather than hard selling, builds credibility and keeps you front of mind. B2B sales cycles are longer, so judge it on relationships and leads over time, not instant sales.

### How do I measure whether it's working?

Track outcomes tied to money, not vanity metrics. Likes and follower counts feel good but rarely pay the bills. Watch profile visits, website clicks, calls, direction requests, messages, and bookings — and use a unique link or discount code to see what social actually drives.

### Do I need to disclose sponsored posts?

Yes. In the US, the FTC Endorsement Guides require clear, unmissable disclosure of any paid or gifted partnership — a visible #ad or #sponsored, not buried in hashtags — and any testimonial must be genuine. Canada's Competition Bureau enforces equivalent rules. This protects you legally and protects the trust you're building.

Read the full interactive guide, with a free tool, at [cmbeyer.com](https://cmbeyer.com) — or ask Bea to build a package for your business.