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5 ways social media can help you boost your Small Business Saturday sales
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U.S. consumers spent $16.2 billion at independent retailers and restaurants on Small Business Saturday® last year—a figure that demonstrates how important the Saturday after Thanksgiving has become for local shops. Social media has helped fuel this momentum, and a well-planned social media strategy can inspire continued enthusiasm in 2016.

Use the tips below to learn how you can use social media to bring in more customers this Small Business Saturday. Then, use the accompanying checklist to put your plan in place.

**Announce special offers on Snapchat**

Snapchat now rivals even social media mainstays like Twitter® in popularity. More than 18 percent of U.S. residents are predicted to use the platform at least
once a month this year. Snapchat differs from other platforms in that its photo and video posts, called “snaps,” last just 1-10 seconds. The fleeting nature of the posts suits them for publicizing limited-time offers such as your Small Business Saturday deals.

If you don’t use Snapchat now, [this guide](#) can help you get started. Once you begin taking snaps, use the built-in text and drawing tools to turn your snaps into compelling customer offers. For example, take a photo of a popular item and add text that says: “50% off this Saturday only!” or, “Screenshot this snap for an extra 10% off at checkout.”

**Create a behind-the-scenes story**

You can use Snapchat’s story feature to string together related snaps into a slideshow, which your contacts can access for 24 hours. You might use this to create an extended Small Business Saturday preview: For example, include photos or videos that highlight some of your unique items, or build excitement by sharing scenes of employees preparing for the event. You might take snaps of other local stores to include in your slideshow as well—showcasing your neighborhood’s appeal may draw more people to the area.

If you have a dedicated Instagram following, you can create a similar slideshow using [Instagram Stories](#), which would also remain accessible for 24 hours.
Inspire action on Facebook
Facebook® is still the most widely used social media site, so it’s a good idea to maintain a strong presence there. Keep your Facebook Business page up-to-date, and add fresh photos and other touches that ensure it communicates what’s most appealing about your business. Consider using features that may help you make sales or gain a wider customer base. For example, try using a call-to-action button, such as a “Book Now” option for restaurants and appointment-based businesses, or a “Sign Up” button for an event like a Small Business Saturday promotion.

Get ahead of your tweets
If you use Twitter to announce promotions and happenings at your business, use a scheduling tool to stay organized in the lead-up to Small Business Saturday. The new Twitter Dashboard lets users schedule tweets without needing a third-party service. You could queue up tweets to remind followers about Small Business Saturday and let people know about specific discounts or other incentives that you’re planning. The Twitter Dashboard also lets you monitor keywords and sends a notification when they appear in tweets. This can help you track mentions of your business and keep tabs on other stores’ Small Business Saturday plans.
Go live to bring in customers

Broadcasting live footage from your store on Small Business Saturday could showcase the appealing atmosphere you’ve created—as well as some of the deals you’re offering—and entice viewers to come visit. Tools like Facebook Live and the Twitter-owned Periscope make it easy to stream live video on Facebook and Twitter using your smartphone. You or an employee could set aside time during the day to show footage of your store or products, or chat with customers about their experience on Small Business Saturday. You could also let viewers know what you have planned for later in the day—for example, more discounts or a giveaway.
Checklist: Plan your Small Business Saturday social media strategy

Now that you’ve brushed up on some newer social media tactics, the next step is to put them to work. This checklist offers suggestions for when and how to take the steps described earlier in the guide. Not all of them may be right for your business, so focus on those that apply to you.

3–4 weeks before

- **Explore new platforms and features.** Familiarize yourself with new tools and features you plan to use this holiday season: Download and start experimenting with the Snapchat app, for instance, or start scheduling tweets on Twitter Dashboard.

- **Publicize your platforms.** Place signs in your store encouraging customers to follow you on the sites you’ll use, and invite or remind email
subscribers to follow you. Include your Snapchat and Instagram usernames and your Twitter handle in all communications.

2–3 weeks before

- **Spruce up your Facebook Business page.** Add new photos or a call-to-action button to your Facebook Business page, be sure your hours and other details are correct, and revisit your “About” section to be sure it conveys what’s special about your business. Announce promotions or happenings to build excitement as Small Business Saturday approaches.

- **Begin planning tweets.** Start writing engaging tweets about your promotions and events for Small Business Saturday. Think about scheduling them for times when you have noticed your followers are more likely to retweet, respond, or favorite your tweets. You can view a calendar of your scheduled tweets on the Twitter Dashboard, and add or delete tweets as you like.

1–2 weeks before

- **Practice Facebook Live or Periscope.** Set the privacy setting to “only me” on Facebook Live or “private broadcast” on Periscope, and practice the kinds of shots you have in mind. Recruit employees or friends to act as stand-ins for customers if you intend to do interviews. Facebook recommends that you make live videos long—at least 10 minutes—
to give followers a better chance of seeing them, so think about how to keep the scene engaging. View the video to evaluate sound, lighting, and other details that you might want to adjust.

- **Create a Snapchat or Instagram story.** Take photos or videos of items you’ll have on sale on Small Business Saturday; show your team putting up decorations or arranging shelves; and highlight shops that have eye-catching seasonal or Small Business Saturday-themed window displays.

**On Small Business Saturday**

- **Broadcast from your business.** Go live from your business early in the day. Capture the atmosphere in your store and talk to customers about their finds. Make clear to viewers why they should come to your business—whether it’s a discount you’re offering, a raffle or contest, or special seasonal merchandise.

- **Encourage customers to spread the word.** Ask shoppers to post photos or messages about what they’ve found at your business. Watch for good opportunities to make this request, such as when someone compliments a particular product or remarks on a good deal you’ve offered. At checkout, mention that customers can check in or review your business on Facebook or follow you on your other key social media channels.