

# The Franchise Playbook for Localized Social Marketing

What every national franchise brand needs to know to fully leverage social media marketing for success.

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# The Franchise Playbook for Localized Social Marketing

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SECTION I:

# Introduction: Localized Social

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## Localized Social: An Untapped Opportunity for Franchise Marketers

Digital marketing can feel like the wild west for many companies. Between search engines, social media networks and review sites there are so many places where consumers are interacting with your brand and looking for local information. Not only are these platforms ever-changing, there are unique considerations for franchisors that often aren't addressed in standard digital marketing strategies, driven by the complexities that come with effectively managing and scaling efforts across tens, hundreds or even thousands of locations. Solving these challenges starts with a local focus.



### WHY LOCAL?

Most brand engagement happens on the local level. In fact, 72 percent of brand engagement happens on local pages, and 80 percent of those searching report being swayed by the opinions of others<sup>1</sup>. A smart locally-focused social media strategy, in platforms you can manage, can expand the reach of a brand and create genuine connections to an engaged base of loyal customers.

The latest research shows that nearly 80 percent of consumers report that social content affects their purchase decisions<sup>2</sup>. Social media is the first place most people turn, to find or uncover more about a local business, and is the premier source for due diligence by franchise prospects. Everything from your official social page content and mentions of your brand in social conversations, to ratings and reviews left for individual franchise locations, affect the overall visibility and perception of your brand and can make the difference between your franchise location being chosen or passed up in favor of other options.

As local search becomes more intelligent and personalized, a comprehensive local strategy is more important than ever to consistently manage brand interactions throughout the digital ecosystem and maximize your reach through each location. When done effectively, localized social marketing can propel your brand to the top of local organic search results and powerfully impact marketing content and paid advertising at every stage—from new customer conversion to the retention of existing customers and even the development of new franchisees.

Sources: 1. LSA & SOCI, A guide to Facebook Marketing for Multi-Location Brands, 2. Franchise Industry Marketing Survey / Highervisibility.com



## Consider these facts:

2nd

Social is second only to referrals as a customer acquisition source<sup>2</sup>.

70%

of consumers turn to social and review sites for customer care issues<sup>3</sup>.

^50%

More than half of consumers have passed up a business due to their local ratings and reviews<sup>4</sup>.

#1

Ratings and reviews are now the #1 factor consumers use in determining which business to visit<sup>4</sup>.

Sources: 3. Social Media Today / Market Force, 4. LSA & SOCI: The great conversational divide research, 2018

# 73%

of potential franchisees report that local social pages are a premier source of their diligence and decision making when considering new franchise opportunities<sup>1</sup>.



National franchised brands have an untapped marketing opportunity in localized social marketing that can be fully realized through a combination of powerful workflow software and a smart social media playbook to allow for the efficient central management of local content, conversation and reviews and an empowering decentralized local strategy for franchisees to easily deploy and engage.

This guide will help marketers, both at the franchisor and franchisee level, understand the value of an organized and managed local social media strategy to build and retain business, boost brand awareness, generate leads and influence buying decisions for a competitive edge that will boost the bottom line and fully leverage the power of your franchise as a national brand.

Click below to see how Liberty Tax is leveraging Localized Social Marketing:

[Liberty Tax](#)

Sources: 1. Franchise Industry Marketing Survey / Highervisibility.com

“ ”

The amount of time it took us to create social content, respond to online reviews and to report on the effectiveness of campaigns was overwhelming. SOCi allowed us to scale our social media strategy and measure the engagement and success of our campaigns for each of our locations.

**OCCASIO GEE**

Marketing Manager | Liberty Tax



SECTION II:

# Common Management Models

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## How To Get Started: Common Management Models

Now that you know the importance of having a localized social marketing strategy, it's time to get started making your presence known in every community you do business.

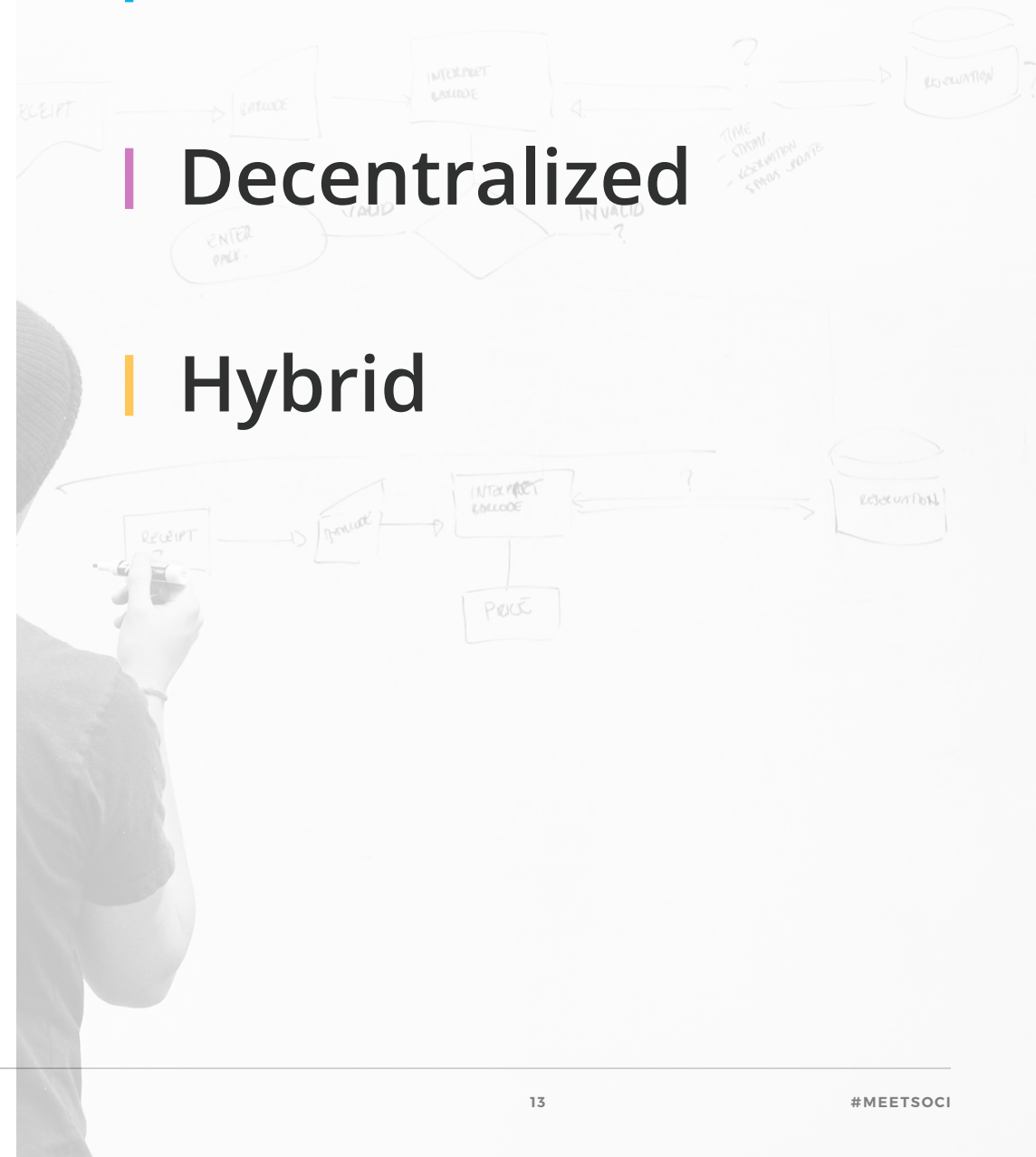
While there is no one size fits all approach for multi-unit brands, there are some common scenarios that will enable a company to find a winning social fit. In this section, we break down the benefits and challenges of the centralized, decentralized and hybrid social media marketing models. These are the most common approaches used by today's national franchise brands to manage localized social marketing at scale. The unique structure and needs of your organization will ultimately influence what route to take, but this framework should help crystallize those objectives and determine the model that best suits the digital marketing goals of the brand. The right model should deliver for both the franchisor and franchisees by providing a consistent brand presence across the top social, search and review sites and the flexibility to allow for a uniquely relevant landing site that is authentic at the local-community level.

### The 3 Models

## Centralized

## Decentralized

## Hybrid



# Centralized Model

+	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brand consistency</li><li>• Centralized reporting &amp; measurement</li><li>• Message consistency</li><li>• Easy management</li><li>• Efficient workflow</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limits voice and control of local franchisees</li><li>• Little to no local community presence</li><li>• Lacks local authenticity</li><li>• Lack of local content</li></ul>

Many national franchise brands implement a centralized approach to their online presence management. In this model, the corporate office manages all aspects of a company's online presence from social media to review sites and search engines. Typically, with a centralized approach, the focus is on the national brand, but occasionally companies will create a local marketing program that is managed by corporate employees.

There are benefits that this model offers to a national franchise brand. Chief among them is brand consistency and centralized reporting and measurement. When your online presence is managed and maintained by one centralized source you can assure that your messaging is consistent, cohesive, timely and accurate. With this model, quality control is less of a concern because there are clearly defined roles outlining who is responsible for which aspects of the brand's social marketing.





Implementation can also benefit from the simple workflows of a centralized model. With clearly defined roles that aid quality control, come simple and streamlined workflows that allow for content to be quickly turned around and posted into the market.



A centralized model also presents some significant challenges for national franchise marketers. This method can make it more difficult to take on a robust local presence and content strategy at scale. One team simply cannot manage the volume of local pages and content needed in an effective way. With a centralized corporate team you may also be missing out on the nuances of running a truly impactful local strategy. Without understanding the specific demographics and needs of a location it is impossible to create the most tailored and powerful content.

Additionally, the centralized model creates specific challenges for the franchisee. The control of content managed entirely at the corporate level, provides benefits from a workflow- and management-perspective for corporate. However, for the franchisee, it limits their voice and overall control of their own business. This model can even exacerbate certain control issues that are sometimes present in the franchisee/franchisor relationship and can potentially damage the franchisee's view on franchise ownership.

# Decentralized Model

+	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to create a robust local presence</li><li>• Reduced need / dependency on corporate resources</li><li>• High control and voice by the local franchisee</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of brand control / message consistency</li><li>• Inconsistent coverage by local market</li><li>• Higher risk of rogue content</li><li>• Higher risk of comments / reviews going un-answered and un-attended</li><li>• Inconsistent reporting &amp; measurement across locations</li></ul>

With a decentralized model the responsibility of social marketing management is taken from the corporate office and given to the individual franchisee managers and owners. Often in this model, corporate offices will provide limited support to these efforts, such as shared libraries of assets and a centralized document of suggested content and best practices, but the bulk of social marketing management is left in local hands with minimal corporate oversight.

Similar to a centralized approach, the decentralized strategy also provides opportunities and obstacles. The primary benefit is the ability to create a truly local presence through localized content and conversations. This local authenticity allows a brand to connect with customers on a more personalized level and establish locations as true members of the community. Establishing this hometown feeling can also allow the franchise brand to tap into the growing consumer trend to shop local.



SEE OUR ARTICLE:

## The Keys to Local Authenticity



This is the easiest model for both franchisors and local franchise owners. Corporate franchise teams can cut down on overhead and staff as most of this work will now fall to the individual locations. Local managers and owners can post as they feel fit, without jumping through the hoops of a corporate process.

However, a decentralized strategy has drawbacks. Without the supervision and oversight of the national brand, there is a greater possibility that rogue content can get posted by local franchisees or their customers that may reflect poorly on the brand as a whole. There will be brand inconsistencies from location to location with some markets being extremely active, while other locations may not dedicate an appropriate amount of resources to the task of social marketing management. In regards to reputation management, franchisees may delay or completely ignore responding to customer care issues such as reviews or comments, decreasing the brand's local and aggregate reputation scores. With the potential inconsistency of this program, there will be little to no data on the performance of this strategy and it will be hard to measure success or optimize for further effectiveness.

While a decentralized strategy certainly can allow for a truly localized presence, the challenges of this approach should not be overlooked.



# Hybrid Model

+	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared voice and control on the part of Franchisor and Franchisee</li> <li>• Local authenticity through the development and maintenance of local pages and content</li> <li>• Brand control and consistency via oversight from the Franchisor</li> <li>• Ability to create a strong local community presence in each of your local markets</li> <li>• Effective and Efficient management via workflow tools (technology)</li> <li>• Centralized reporting and measurement that can be rolled up nationally or distilled by local market / location</li> <li>• This consistent strategy produces greater brand visibility, improved local online reputation and overall increases new business in each of your local markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires the investment in &amp; integration of a technology solution</li> <li>• Investment in initial and ongoing training of your local franchisees</li> </ul>

In a hybrid model of localized social marketing management, the franchisor and franchisee essentially work together to create the most effective online presence possible on the national and local levels. The franchisor manages the corporate social media presence, while franchisees oversee individual local pages and local content. With this aligned model, the national franchise brand provides a baseline amount of management for all locations. Local franchisees can opt into additional opportunities to further tailor the approach to fit the needs of their specific customers.



SEE OUR WEBINAR:

## The Multi-Location Brand Framework for Localized Social Media Management



For example, the corporate office may create and manage local brand pages for consistency, but allow franchise partners to create relevant page content, such as local discounts or event promotions, with brand assets provided through a shared library. Under this model, responsibility, expertise and resources are shared.

The hybrid strategy solves many of the challenges that centralized and decentralized models encounter, without sacrificing authenticity for consistency or vice versa. However, the major challenge with a hybrid model lies in implementation. A truly efficient and effective hybrid strategy requires technology and a process to manage workflows, assets, and share results and performance. With this new technology, a certain amount of training in processes will also be required to get this program off the ground.

Notwithstanding some of its challenges, we highly recommend this approach as a way to boost brand visibility, lead generation, conversion and repeat business system-wide. Once fully in place, the overall benefits and gains far outweigh the initial upfront investment costs. Using a smart, automated workflow software solution allows brands to simplify, streamline and optimize a national/local program to achieve brand consistency and scale, combined with local relevance for powerful results.

Click below to see how Sport Clips is leveraging Localized Social Marketing:

[Sport Clips](#)

“ ”

What I love the most about SOCi is the library of images and posts that you can create ahead of time—that is especially important for the franchise system. We can manage the entire process at the corporate level, while allowing the franchisee to select and schedule the content.

**CHAD JORDAN**

Director of Marketing & Digital Services | Sport Clips

**SportClips**  
HAIRCUTS



## The Challenge

Staying competitive in thousands of local markets.

## The Solution

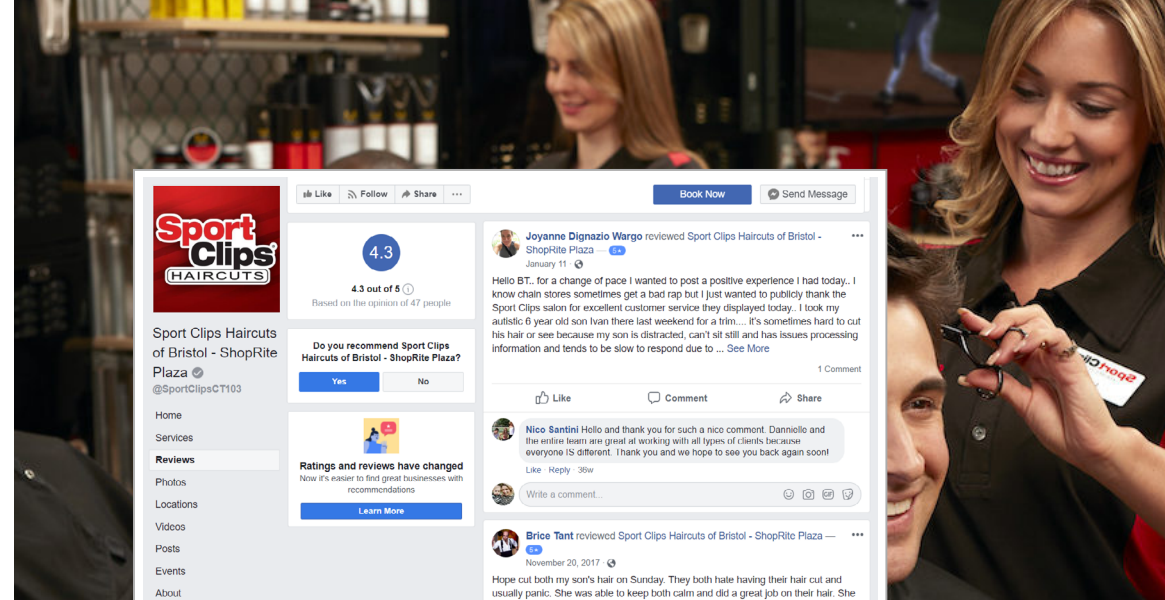
Claim and control social presence at the local level.

## 1,700 Pages Claimed

- Through SOCi, Sport Clips claimed 1,700 local pages and synced all franchise accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Google My Business, and Yelp

### Scheduling and Workflows

- Leveraging SOCi's platform, Sport Clips enabled quick and easy content delivery and scheduling
- Through SOCi's all-in-one dashboard and centralized reporting, Sport Clips could easily see content engagement metrics and further optimized using local peak time posting
- Developed workflows that focused on both accountability and efficiency



## The Results

ACHIEVED

## 4.29/5 Overall Rating

Efficiently and effectively responded to thousands of reviews through the SOCi platform increasing their overall rating.

## ^3% Growth

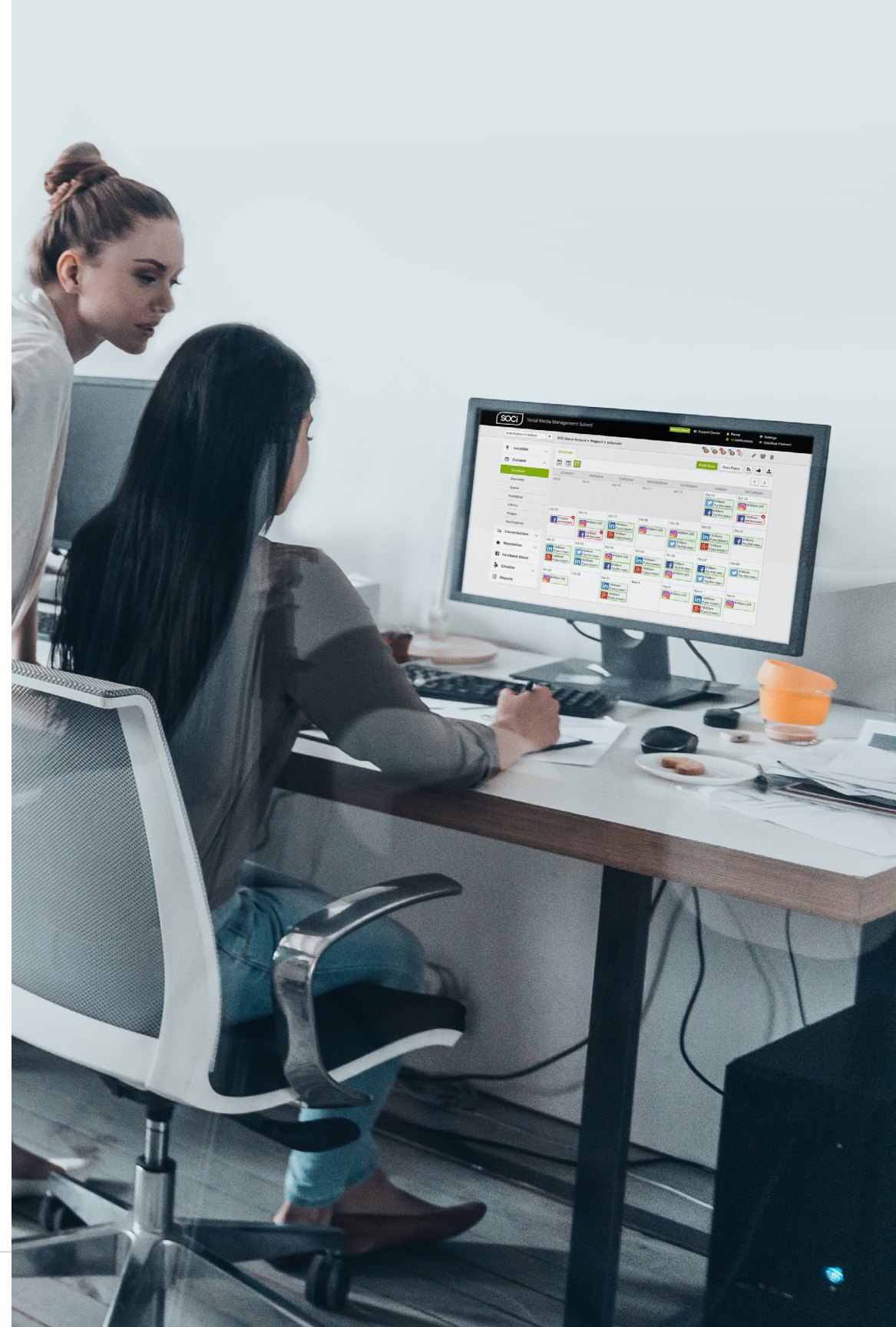
3 percent growth in followers/fans across the entire portfolio (**nearly 14,000**) in the first two months.

## 3.5 Million Interactions

Number of total brand interactions across social skyrocketed to 3.5 million.

## At SOCi, we know local.

Through years of working alongside national companies and their advertising and marketing agencies, we have identified what is critical to the success of setting up, rolling out, and maintaining a hybrid social media marketing model. For any local digital strategy to be a powerful part of a well-rounded national franchise marketing program, consistency in the look and tone of every consumer touch point is key and every social media move must be true to the brand promise. Setting goals, planning and executing content, consistency and speed in both messaging and response, and measuring the impact of those efforts are critical components to leverage the power of your brand through social media to build a local presence. Understanding these essential stages—and the most frequent pitfalls that may arise along the way with even the most solid localized social plan—can help simplify, streamline and optimize the hybrid model and your online presence on both the brand and local levels.



SECTION IV:

# Essential Places To Establish A Localized Social Presence

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## Essential Places to Establish a Localized Social Presence

Finding your place in localized social marketing can be daunting, but it doesn't have to be. A local presence starts where your customers are already clicking and talking to each other. Search engines, rating and review sites, and social media networks are now the most trusted consumer sources for business information (LSA, Local Media Tracking Survey) and a digital launching pad for critical conversations that can make or break a brand. Before you jump into the platform fray, it is important to note that not every social site is right for every business. The key is establishing and maintaining a local presence on those platforms where you can best reach your customers. To make that job easier, we cover some of the most popular sites and some factors to consider for your business.



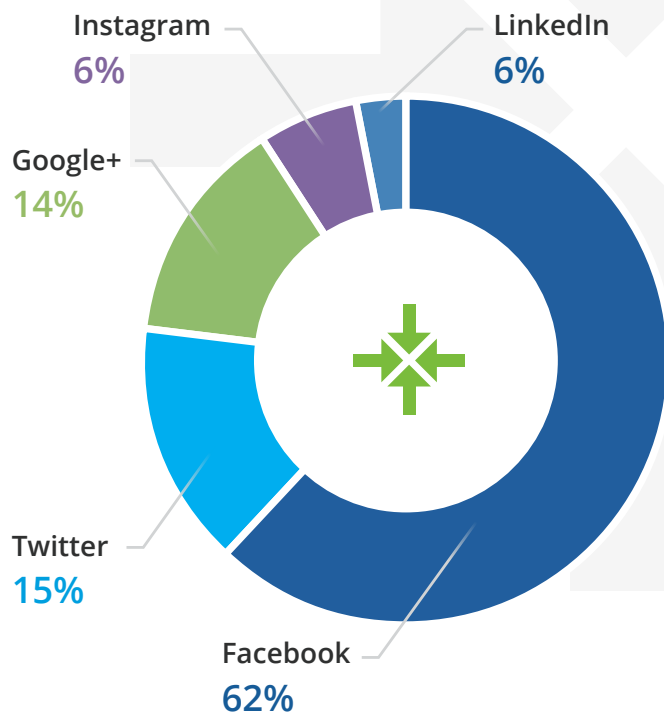
## Demographics of the Top Social Platforms

Social Channel	US Adult Usage	Gender	Age Range
Facebook	68%	Female	18-49
Instagram	35%	Female	< 35
Pinterest	29%	Female	18-64
Snapchat	27%	Equal	< 24
LinkedIn	25%	Equal	25-49
Twitter	24%	Male	18-29

## Top Social Platforms for Multi-Location Businesses

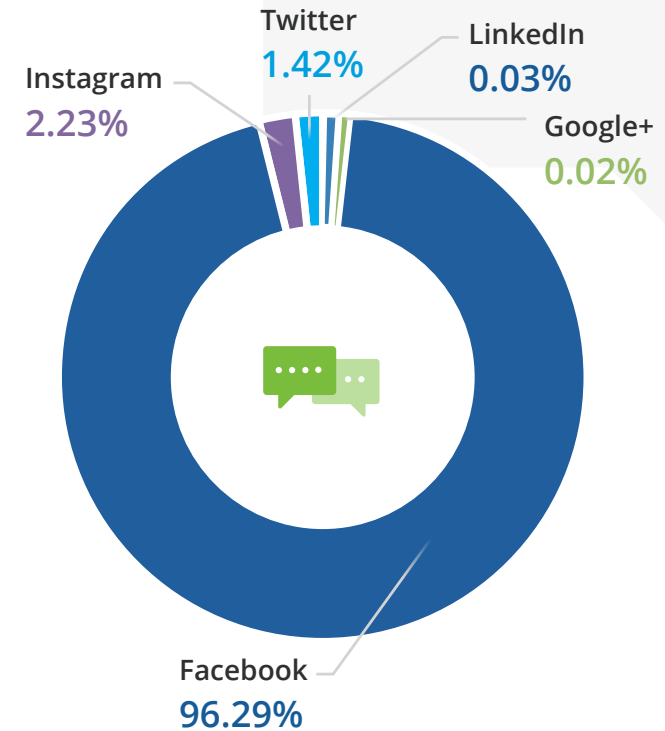
### Top Networks by Volume of Profiles or Pages

(Source: SOCI Q4 2018 State of the Market Report)



### Top Networks by Social Engagements

(Source: SOCI Q4 2018 State of the Market Report)



Among multi-location brands, Facebook is the dominant platform for localized social marketing with four times the number of profiles and pages under management than we see on networks like Twitter or Instagram. This is largely due to the fact that Facebook has the ability to create multiple Local Pages in addition to a corporate or Brand Page, while other networks don't have the same ability. Facebook also leads the pack on consumer engagement with local content, driving 26 times the activity seen on the other networks combined. This data illustrates just how hungry consumers are for local interaction. That's not to say that other networks aren't a valuable part of your Localized Social Marketing Strategy.

Below we further highlight some of the main platform features of some of the more popular social media sites:

## Facebook

Facebook is one of the most popular social media network out there, with 2.2 billion users globally and roughly 241 million monthly users in the U.S. and Canada. The platform is also zeroed in on local relevance in deciding what content, including advertising, to feature in Facebook Local, and the recently relaunched Events App. Facebook has the most advanced features for businesses to reach their customers, and as such its users are arguably the most conditioned to interact with brands in a meaningful way, making it one of the most important tools for national brands to carry out local social marketing. The social media giant knows its users and uses that data to your advantage in its ads products. To make the most of this platform, and its ever-evolving algorithm, requires constant experimentation and care, and a brand consistent strategy with a local twist.

SEE OUR GUIDE:

**Facebook Marketing for Multi-Location Businesses**



## Twitter

With more than 336 million active monthly users worldwide, Twitter now represents one of the most prominent customer care platforms. Customers are leveraging the simplicity of Twitter communication to air their support for brands, both nationally and locally, as well as their frustrations. As one of the top conversational platforms, Twitter also represents a fantastic source of local dialogue and communication of interests. Twitter users freely share what they are seeking, when they are seeking it, rendering it a great social listening tool. For the right audience, the micro blogging platform can be a game-changing avenue to spread the word about your brand, deliver great customer service and let your franchise partners shine with promotions and contests that feature local tie-ins. Retweets and hashtags can also boost engagement and brand awareness. Be aware, both praise and criticism about your company or a particular location can quickly trend on Twitter. It's up to you to respond promptly and uniquely to make Twitter count for your brand.

## Google +

Google will be deprecating this platform in early 2019. And while Google's first foray into creating a social channel was not successful, they have been quietly implementing their second social play within Google My Business Pages and Local Knowledge Panels without many businesses taking note. These locally focused social features are further described below in the Local Business Review Site section.

## Instagram

Boasting 1 billion followers, Instagram is much more than just a place to share photos. The visually-driven network is owned by Facebook and offers marketers the same paid benefits of its parent company, with a slew of free ways to build engagement, brand awareness and get results for local franchise partners. Instagram is visual (photos and videos) and Instagrammers expect high-quality content that tells a story. Brands, and local partners, need to deliver creative content and ads to generate new business, followers, and tap into local loyalty.

## LinkedIn

With more than 590 million members and 30 million Pages, LinkedIn is the largest online professional networking website, tops for lead generation, and an emerging social force for driving engagement, providing value, and building a large community of followers. The Microsoft-owned network recently announced LinkedIn Pages, the next generation of LinkedIn Company Pages. The relaunched Pages have been rebuilt from the ground up to make it easier for brands, institutions and organizations, from small businesses to large enterprises, to foster constructive conversations and leverage unique content with LinkedIn's community.

## Local Business Review Sites

Responding to reviews is more important than ever. Equally as important is how a brand responds to those reviews. We said it earlier, but it is a statistic worth repeating: local business ratings and reviews are the No.1 factor for consumers when deciding if a business is good or not, with more than 50 percent of consumers passing up companies that don't have at least a 4-star rating (LSA & SOCI). Review sites and social media platforms are now homes for conversation with your customers. As a brand, you need to be aware of all the ways consumers may try to reach you. Our latest State of the Market Report finds the top ratings and review sites for Multi-Location Marketers, based on the sheer number of new reviews occurring on a monthly basis. Here's a snapshot of the main platform features of these sites:

### Google My Business

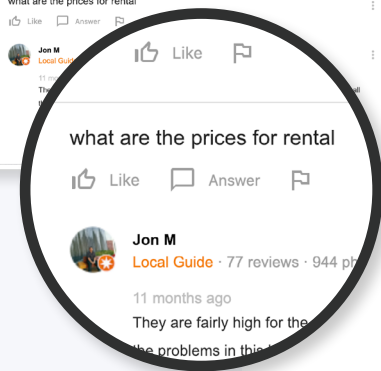
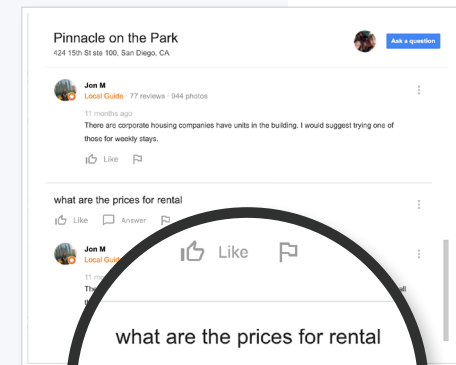
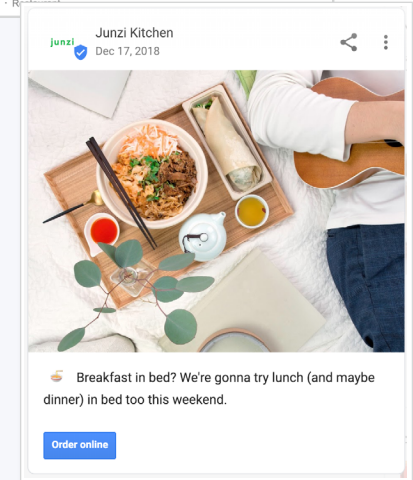
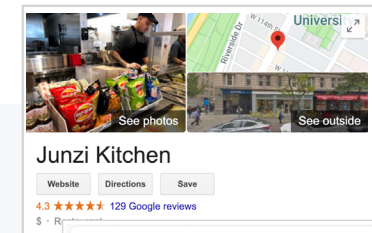
Most location-based strategies start with a Google My Business (GMB) listing and page, a free tool that helps businesses reach and engage with local customers across Google Search and Maps. A key feature of these pages is local ratings & reviews. In terms of total volume, Google is now the #1 ratings & review site growing their base of reviews by 278 percent from 2017 to 2018 (BrightLocal.com), beating out popular sites like Yelp and Facebook. Outside of local business listing and review information these pages are stacked with additional features that allow businesses to leverage their online presence on-the-go and interact with customers in real time to boost engagement. In fact, Google My Business now let's business owners post local content directly to these pages called Google Posts, as well as enables the posting of crowd-sourced questions & answers through a feature called Google Q&A. Based on their importance to a business's localized social presence both of these features are further described here:

### Google Posts:

Google Posts are business-generated content updates that promote a business's announcement, offer, event, or product update and can appear in a business's Google My Business Page, Google Map result and in general search results. When businesses create posts, they can place text, video or visual content in front of customers when they are looking for location-specific business information. Since Google stresses the timely nature of this content, Posts remain visible for 7 days, unless the business removes the update sooner, and events will stay up until the date that is listed. The intended purpose of Google Posts is to help local businesses connect with customers in their area. Businesses can capitalize on this content offering from Google by deploying consistent, high-quality updates on the platform, and incorporating Google Posts into an existing local marketing strategy.

### Google Q&A:

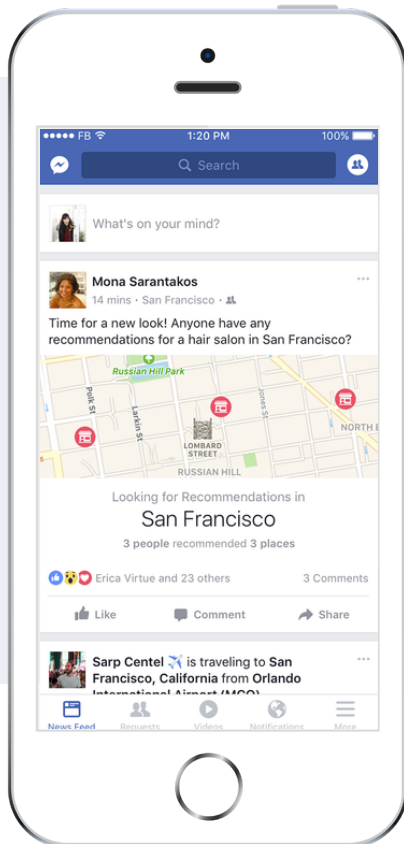
Google Q&A is a consumer-facing, crowd-sourced FAQ feature. This feature allows consumers and businesses to ask and answer questions about the business from the business's knowledge panel. The questions, and their responses can show directly in the business's Google My Business page as well as Google search results. As with any other user generated content, franchisors and franchisees need to regularly monitor the platform, as there are risks with inappropriate or inaccurate information about your business that could be posted and circulated. In addition, a good amount of what gets posted here has been seen to be reputation or service related. By claiming and actively managing your local Google My Business page or pages, businesses can be alerted of new questions as they are posted and can take part in the conversations taking part here.



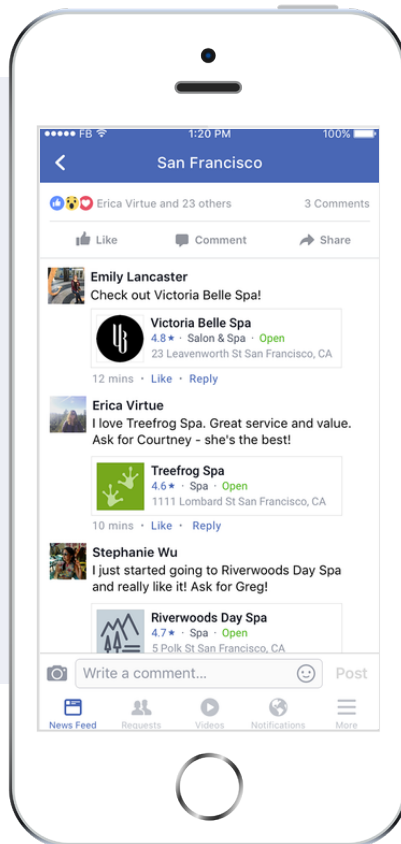
## Facebook Recommendations

Social media was built and thrives on folks asking for recommendations on just about anything, and more people turn to Facebook first for those opinions. Just like everything in the digital world, this interface is constantly changing. Most recently, the platform ditched the star ratings and reviews options in favor of a new Recommendations feature. Users can share their yes/no recommendation and explain why with tags, text and photos. Facebook believes these changes will inspire more authentic information, not less, and provide companies with a deeper understanding of their customers' experiences. These customer-generated stories about your brand will appear on your page and across Facebook more prominently as people search for or talk about your brand. Again, just another reason to keep close tabs on your digital footprint and present a united front of consistent messaging.

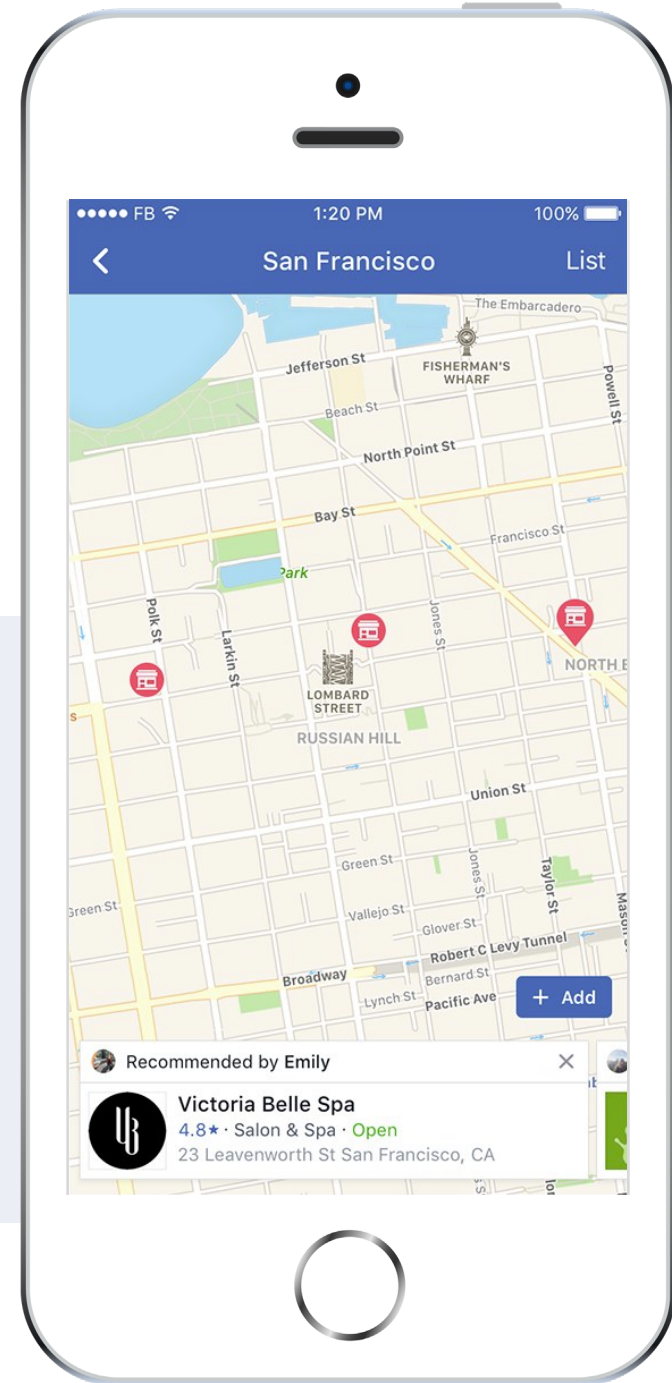
1



2



3





Yelp is a leading local guide for “real word-of-mouth” on everything from dentists to dining. Although Google My Business and Facebook have surpassed Yelp in the number of new reviews, Yelp remains the next largest review powerhouse in most industries, and cannot be ignored. At last count, Yelpers have written more than 171 million reviews -- with 68 percent of those posted with 4 or 5 stars, according to Yelp statistics. If you haven't yet, claim and optimize your business page to leverage Yelp's power to boost your overall SEO, build buzz and drive local sales. The platform averages more than 178 million unique visitors each month and these users are poised to make a purchase. Pay attention to your profile to improve your Yelp presence. Interact, share and reply to customer reviews, offer check-in specials, and install the Yelp review widget on your brand website and local landing pages. Yelp offers robust analytics to measure and track success.

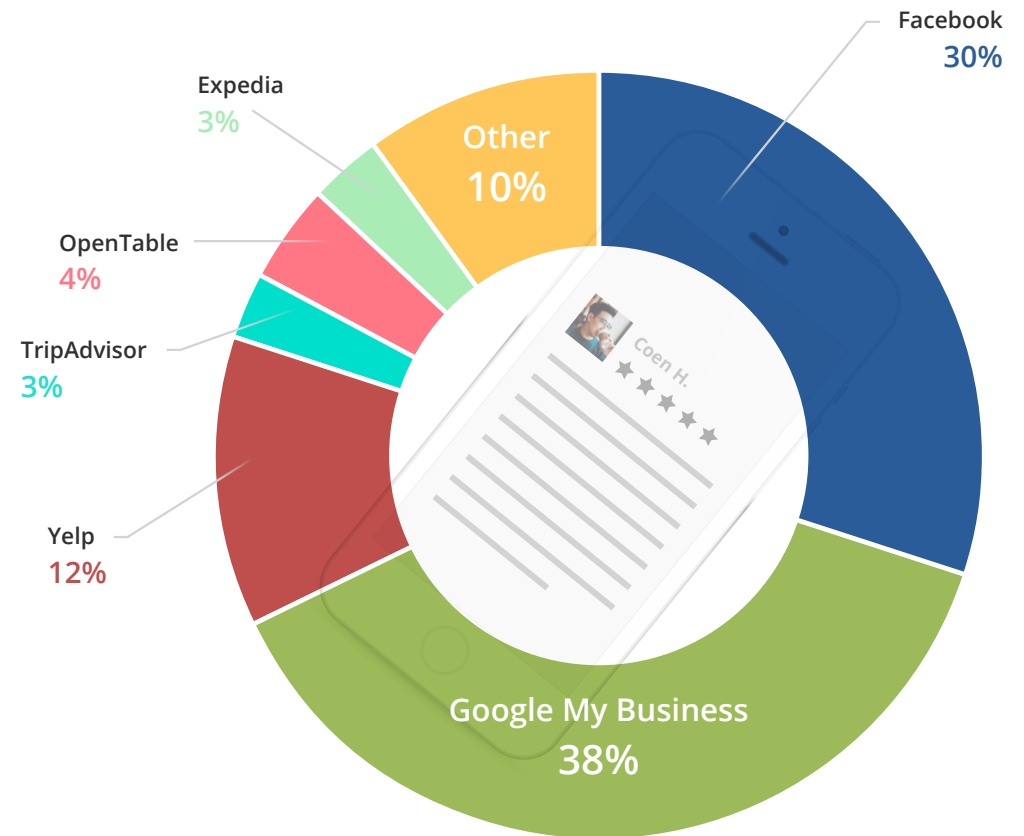
In conclusion, there are dozens of major social networks out there and hundreds more places where customers can choose to write an online review. Platforms and its users come and go. Companies must stay focused on those platforms and properties where their consumers are already engaging, yet be nimble in their localized strategy as the definition of social media continues to evolve.

A program that provides good coverage of the top social properties (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn) and review sites (Google My Business, Facebook and Yelp) for Multi-Location brands overall is a good place to start.



## The Top Review Sites for Multi-Location Marketers Based on Number of Reviews Received

(Source: SOCi Q4 2018 State of the Market Report)



Note: Depending on your industry or vertical, there are other very important review networks that come into play such as ApartmentRatings.com for apartments and property management, Cars.com for auto, ZocDoc.com for medical, and more. The lists for industry-specific review sites are endless, so doing the due diligence to figure out where your company's niche fits into the scheme of review sites is key.

SECTION IV:

# 5 Essential Steps To Achieving Localized Social Success

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## 5 Essential Steps to Achieving Localized Social Success

### 1

#### Establishing Your Goals

A solid localized social marketing strategy that uniformly tells and sells the story of your brand starts with a plan, some structure and a strategy to ensure success and avoid stumbling blocks (see our common pitfalls below). Clear marketing goals—communicated at the corporate and franchisee levels—will help achieve the following:

- **Consistency.** For any digital strategy to be a powerful part of a well-rounded franchise marketing program, consistency in the look and tone of every consumer touch point is key and every social media move must be true to the brand promise.
- **Optimization.** When you know what you are measuring you can focus on where to improve results.
- **Reduced Waste.** Clearly see the sites and initiatives that work and those that aren't paying off.
- **Scale.** Identify the areas where you may need to double down to scale marketing efforts and improve ROI.

Whether starting fresh or refining an existing marketing plan for social, it is important to take the time to define your purpose. Are you looking to increase the overall reach of the brand (and acquire and retain new customers) through local franchise adoption and participation? Do you need brand consistency from market to market? Or, is the aim to boost local social media engagement overall? Maybe, the answer is all three and then some. No matter the goals, any social media marketing effort includes measurable objectives. Leverage data available through existing systems and/or by using marketing tools, such as SOCi or Google Analytics. Then build on what is working.

Below we review some common goals and corresponding metrics to consider that can help create a trackable plan. They include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Local Participation/Adoption**—measured by the number of local franchisees engaged in the program
- **Overall Reach**—measured by number of active pages, page followers and/or likes
- **Brand Sentiment**—measured through average star ratings found on local social and review site pages or the sentiment of comments being left on these pages
- **Response Time**—measured by the amount of time it takes for either corporate or local locations to respond back to consumer reviews, comments and questions
- **Brand Engagement**—measured through high-valued touchpoints with your local pages and content as measured through local conversations and shares
- **Brand Presence and Consistency Market to Market**—measured through having an active local page presence and the type of messages being promoted via these pages

Goals and objectives are only as good as your communication with your franchise partners. Brands need to establish and communicate clear marketing guidelines system-wide and provide franchisees with the resources and support they need to succeed.



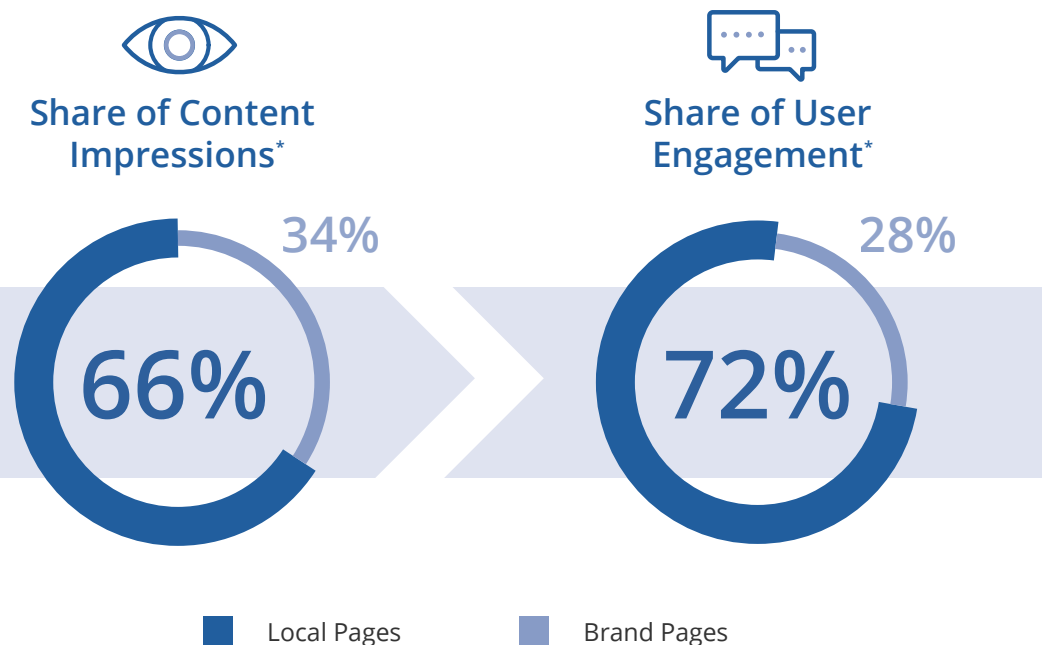


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## Building and Maintaining Social Presence

While Local Pages have emerged as a best practice, there are still major brands that only use a single brand account to interact with customers. Our data makes it clear: location pages create high levels of engagement and more authentic connections to consumers, who are already forming an opinion about your brand based on their experiences at individual locations.

### Where Social Engagement Is Happening



\*Source: SOCI + LSA Report, A Guide to Facebook Marketing for Multi-Location Brands (2018)

A National Brand Page, combined with active Local Pages, can deliver a one-two punch for a winning localized social media marketing strategy. National ownership and oversight of channels where customers are commenting and leaving feedback, will also provide a real feel for the state of the brand and adequately prepare you in the event of a crisis, such as a misfired tweet or viral customer or employee post. Simply put, every national brand needs a local social presence.

HERE'S HOW:

### Claim Local Pages:

Local Pages may be hovering out there like ghost towns, or even worse, over time, take on a life of their own, gathering reviews, images, comments and followers, eventually appearing on Facebook or Google search results by someone looking for a nearby brand location. The good news: unofficial location pages can be claimed and merged into official pages. Don't wait for a problem before taking this action. Claim, clean and manage local listings, every local business page, and any online social property that represents the company. Proactively create Location Pages to prevent others from filling the vacuum. Contact franchise owners and social platforms and do whatever it takes to collect all related URLs and unify channel oversight. It can be exhausting, particularly for franchisors with a large portfolio, but leaving one errant channel out is not worth the risk. Fortunately, there is help. National ownership of local pages, leveraged by technology like SOCI, allows you to keep tabs on your online presence system-wide and unify channel oversight as local franchisees enter and exit the franchise system. Once claimed, the national franchise brand can turn over administration rights to the local franchisee to oversee day-to-day management. Empower the franchisee with flexible, user-friendly tools to put their own marketing imprint and personality on the local page.

### Manage Rogue Content:

The wrong logo, incorrect store listings, or even worse, a rogue franchisee website, can send out mixed messages, harm a brand's reputation, and result in a lost sale. A customer complaint left unanswered could mean a lost customer for life. Once you claim rogue pages, respond swiftly to any unfavorable reviews and assure customers that you take their concerns seriously and are addressing the problem.

## Get Creative with Local Content:

Posting at a local level is important, but like all marketing activities quality is critical. It's not enough to just do it, it must be done right. Consumers expect authentic content and the best hybrid local/national social media strategies seek strong relationships, not followers. Strive for an authentic voice to truly engage with useful, appealing, accessible and credible content. To start, it is important to start posting branded content that has been localized across all of your locations, which can be easily and effectively accomplished through technology solutions that allow for the build-out and share of libraries of brand-approved content across all locations. If you don't have enough resources and training to do this effectively at first, no problem. Along with the share of libraries most technology solutions also offer the ability to take a single post and localize the content with a few clicks of a button.

Once you start posting content, your local franchisees will start to see the results and will want to start taking part in the creation. From here, your locations can leverage social to shine a spotlight on their community commitment, local events and specials and even highlight local customers and employees. Seize the momentum of the "Buy Local" movement to create a neighborhood feel for each location. A local owner profile, employee of the month celebration, highlights of any hometown team sponsorship, offers of local specials and the use of local influencers can all create new and lasting connections with people in your community. Never post just to post. Irrelevant content can do more harm than good and result in a loss of followers. Social media managers must create content showing they care about their local communities and that works to engage them, while also staying true to, and consistent with, national brand messaging.

Although empowering your locations to take part in their local social marketing has a lot of benefits as described - it also comes with some associated risks. Chief among these are messaging and brand inconsistencies on the content that gets posted at the local level. If quality or adherence to brand values and guidelines is a concern, you can adopt an approval workflow (a key feature offered within the SOCi platform) that requires content that was not previously approved or sourced from a corporate library to require approval before posting.

## Focus on Engagement:

Create content that drives high-valued engagements, such as shares and comments, versus low-value interactions that result in only reactions or likes. Why is this important? Through its recent algorithm changes, Facebook has been limiting the reach of content that receives low-value engagements and other networks are following in their footsteps. Therefore, it's important to identify and double down on content that is bringing in comments, replies, and shares and drive direct messages on any of the social networks in order to stay competitive and visible.



SEE OUR GUIDE:

### 6 Local-Social Engagement Strategies for Multi-Location Brands

There are so many ways to achieve this result. Pepper in questions or local polls into your posting schedule. Encourage user-generated content. Ask your fans to share a favorite example of something related to your business with a video or photo or add a caption for a picture that needs little to no explanation. Repost and share. Your customers are your best brand ambassadors.



## Post Regularly and Consistently:

How often you should post is highly dependent on the network you are on due to the nature of those platforms, their algorithms, and user behaviors. For Facebook and LinkedIn, our professional services team at SOCi recommends creating a schedule that includes two to three posts per week, while for Twitter and Instagram the recommendation is daily posting. While posting content within the window of Monday through Friday is often the simplest strategy, make sure to check your data as some brands get as much as twice the engagement on Saturdays and Sundays.

## Be Seen and Heard:

It's one thing to craft effective messages, and another to make sure folks see your content. The shift by social networks to influence the user experience by deemphasizing public content in favor of more personal connections requires brands to rethink strategies to foster and maintain engagement. A smart and diversified Localized Social Marketing approach requires proactive content management combined with the effective use of social content boosting and ad targeting to remain visible. See Step 4 for more information on how to effectively leverage social ads in your localized social strategy.



3

## Managing Customer Care

There is an art and a science to managing customer care. This is where your playbook and technology can be leveraged to keep your brand and franchise partners on the same page in terms of the rules of engagement and the all-important response window. Respond swiftly to consumer criticism and questions and welcome positive feedback. Nearly eight in 10 consumers expect a timely response to an online review or comment and SOCI's proprietary research shows that 89 percent of consumers are willing to change a negative review based on how the business responds. Negative reviews or comments are bound to happen. Proper training and support can reduce the risk and transform an unhappy customer into a loyal follower. Great customer care and a timely response can also help enhance satisfaction and help your company stand out from the crowd. When managing reviews and feedback at the local level you need to keep the following best practices in mind:

- **Try not to use "Cookie-Cutter" responses.** If your business is just getting started in this whole review response realm, it is ok to use a few templated responses to some of the more common feedback, questions and complaints you may be receiving. However, encourage your responders to try and personalize their response as much as possible. Personalization could be as simple as reiterating the reviewer's concerns at the beginning of the response. This will show that you understand the root of their feedback and that you, as a business or franchise, will take steps to improve. From here, try to provide customers with an offline way to provide more details into the situation so that the issue can be addressed and resolved quickly. Do not try to get into all of the specific details online. To take the guesswork out of managing these responses create a Quickstart guide, with explanations of appropriate posts and customer responses for common questions or concerns.

SEE OUR GUIDE:

Franchise Marketer's Guide to Local Reputation Response



Click below to see how Forest City is leveraging Localized Social Marketing:

[Forest City](#)

“ ”

With SOCI, we were able to consolidate our social media and online reputation management from three platforms to only one. Having one central location for all of our social content has streamlined our processes and workflow allowing me to review everything before it goes out.

**BRANDON CASTANEDA**

Digital Manager, Social Media Services | Forest City

ForestCity

- **Ensure your responses are “On-Brand.”** This can be difficult if you have multiple people splitting the task of managing your online presence. However, there is technology available to help your company manage this workflow. With platforms that offer an approval process before responses get posted for your customers to see and interact with online.
- **Respond at the speed of mobile.** Consumers are looking for a response to their online comments and reviews and a growing portion expect to hear back within twenty-four hours. In fact, Facebook has started to highlight those businesses within local search results that respond within this window. Don't be surprised if response times start factoring into search rankings more officially in the near future. As a business it is essential to be actively listening and responding to these conversations where they are happening, particularly in our 24/7 world where inquiries by consumers and franchise prospects are made on the fly and around the clock, not just during business hours. National franchise brands may want to invest in technology to make this process easier. There are platforms available that will allow marketers to manage all reviews in one platform, receive new review alerts, assign reviews to local locations or other roles within the organization, and even set pre-approvals and reminders for review responses.
- **Growing Your Base of Local Reviews.** An estimated 85 percent of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations (Bright Local) so it's important to gather assessments from satisfied customers. Reviews build social clout and brand credibility. The amount and quality of reviews can also improve search rankings and overall SEO efforts.

However, it is important to understand that each site that publishes user-generated reviews has varying degrees of what it encourages in terms of how you get reviews.

SEE OUR ARTICLE:

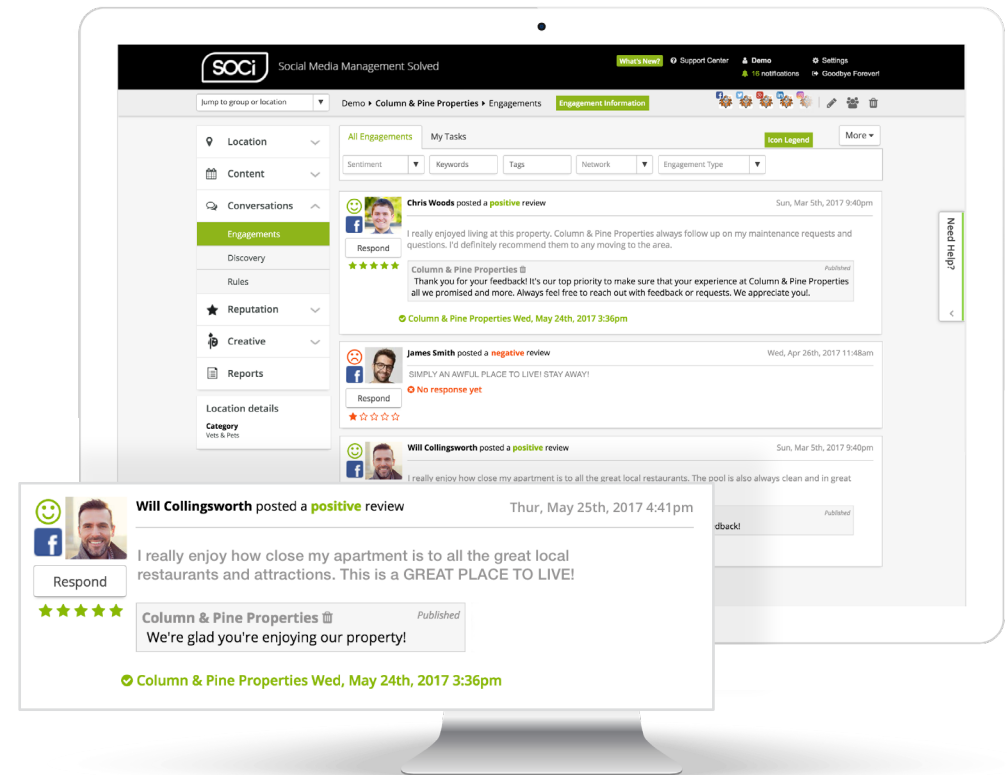
## The Do's and Don'ts of Growing Your Local Base of Reviews



Yelp is the strictest in how much it frowns upon businesses asking for reviews in any form, while Google and Facebook simply don't want you to do mass solicitation (i.e. sending a mass email to all your contacts asking for a review).

Still, there's a difference between the term “solicit” and “ask” when it comes to a review.

When you solicit a review, you might be requesting a customer to leave a positive review in exchange for something like a discount or freebie. You can understand how this is unfair because it skews your reviews to be positive when they might not otherwise be. To get more from your reviews, make the request the right way, at the right time in the customer journey—the end of the transaction, when they reorder, or after they tag you on social media, for instance. Make it easy for your customers to respond with an optimized site, visible review tabs or direct links to your profile on a specific platform. Don't forget to thank every customer for their feedback, and respond to every review that is written.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- **There is a ratings sweet spot.** You might assume that a few negative reviews could destroy the reputation of a business, but that's not usually the case. Consumers expect a few less-than-perfect reviews, but usually don't let one sway them from doing business with the brand. In fact, consumers are suspect of businesses that have a perfect 5-star rating. Based on the latest research we have found that over half of consumers expect between a 3.5 to 4-star rating in order to consider the business.
- **The volume of reviews matter.** In order to receive an average star rating sites like Google My Business require at least 5 reviews. On the consumer side - at least 10 reviews are needed in order for your star rating to be seen as credible. Although these are the minimums, businesses should always strive to continually increase their number of reviews as we know that both your average star ratings in addition to the number of reviews you have are becoming a key ranking factor in search. In addition, by building your base of reviews you can help ensure that one negative review won't come in and tank your overall star rating.
- **The more recent the more relevant.** Three out of four consumers look at the review date as a measure of relevance. In fact, most consumers only look at reviews that were conducted within the past year. This point further emphasizes the need to proactively manage your base of reviews.

See the latest research on the impact and importance of local reviews:

SEE OUR GUIDE:

**The Great Conversational Divide: What Businesses Don't Understand about Local Reviews and How It Could Be Hurting Your Business**



## 4

### Leveraging Social for Growth

Outside of the efficient cost, one of the greatest benefits of social advertising is its ability to grow your localized social audience, engagements and even sales from social at scale immediately without having to wait for someone to stumble across your post or promotion. If you want to reach 50,000 new people today—you can. Studies show that 50 percent of Gen Z-ers (18-19 year olds) and 46 percent of Millennials (20-36 years old) believe that social media is the most relevant form of advertising. Older generations rate social media advertising as the most relevant advertising, second only to TV commercials (Adobe's State of Digital Advertising 2018 report). This indicates a huge opportunity for national franchise brands to grow their audience at a cost significantly more affordable than other forms of advertising. To leverage localized social media for growth it is important to understand the various kinds of advertising available and how and when to use them.



## Boost

### What is it?

National franchise marketers and even individual franchisees spend a lot of time building content to share with local communities on Facebook. Facebook's recent algorithm change means posts no longer receive the reach they once had (in some cases, less than 20 times the reach). This is where ad boosting comes into play. Boosting is a Facebook ad feature available to anyone with a business page and posting content. This feature allows Facebook marketers to boost, or pay, for their content posts to be seen and or engaged with by more people.

### When to use it.

This feature was designed for the novice and is easy to use. With a few clicks of a button and minimal ad spend you are ready to go. With as little as \$5 you can get started and gain multiples on your reach. This feature is best used when looking to increase the reach or overall engagement to your organic social content/posts.



# SOCi Boost

Boost hundreds of social media posts across hundreds of pages in seconds

<https://www.meetsoci.com/features/soci-boost-plus/>

# Targeted Ads

## What is it?

Organic growth is the cost-efficient way to go, but targeted ads are a must in order to take advantage of the mass reach of social platforms based on recent algorithm changes. In addition, targeted ads provide more sophisticated, and highly targeted features to reach and build a local audience on social. These ads can be created to reach specific demographics and drive click through rates, or whatever action you want your audience to take after viewing your content. Setting up a campaign can be a little tedious, however, by leveraging a powerful technology platform the process of creating, managing and optimizing all of your social ad campaigns across all of your locations can be effective and efficient.


It's important to understand the different ad types and targeting options before you dive in if you want to get the best results. Below we highlight a few of the more common social ad types found on Facebook by ad objectives to give you an idea of what can be accomplished via targeted social advertising.

Ad Type	Ad Objective
Link Click Ads	Drive traffic to website, landing page, blog post, video etc
Multi-Product Carousel Ads	Drive awareness of multiple products or offerings
Lead Ads	Driving new leads
Page Like Ads & Page Post Ads	Drive likes & engagements to your social pages
Mobile App & Desktop App Ads	App installs
Event and/or Offer Ads	Drive traffic to a physical location or store

## When to use it:

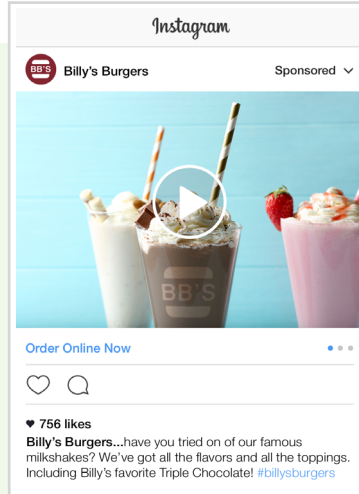
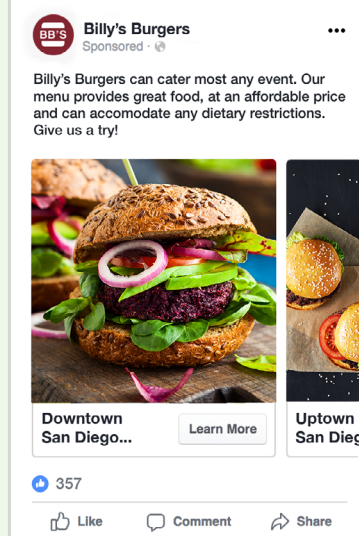
Targeted ads are a great way to grow and scale your social efforts from increasing overall reach and engagement to driving specific measurable outcomes. In addition, results are almost immediate, allowing you to quickly gauge the effectiveness of your marketing efforts. Targeted social ads have become an integral part of a successful localized social marketing program as it is an effective way to enhance your efforts at minimal costs. An opportunity that no franchise company should pass on.

**PAGE POST ADS**



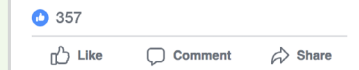
The Pizza Shack post includes a photo of a chef, a text-based introduction, and a comment section with user interactions.

**LEAD ADS**

The Instagram ad features a carousel of milkshakes with the text 'Order Online Now'. The Facebook ad features a carousel of burgers with location-specific text for 'Downtown San Diego...' and 'Uptown San Diego...'.

**LINK CLICK ADS**



The link click ad shows a '357' count and engagement icons for Like, Comment, and Share.



5

## Measuring Performance and Success

If you are using social media strategies, you should be measuring performance to optimize results. This may be the trickiest step to achieving localized social success. An estimated 46 percent of marketers rank measuring ROI from social as a top challenge and 38 percent of marketers note they lack the tools for proper tracking and measurement (2018 SOCi Annual Client Survey). If you set goals with long-term growth in mind, you should have already established the way to measure success.

SEE OUR WEBINAR:

### The Essential Steps In Tracking Social Media ROI



Set aside time every week, month, or quarter to measure your success, depending on what makes sense for you and your business. Are you seeing an increase of engagement online? How are your ratings on various review sites? Is your website garnering more traffic from social sites? It is important for you to be tracking various metrics so that you can compare and contrast effectiveness overtime.

It can be beneficial to compare and contrast the tactics and results of different locations. Are any of your locations significantly outperforming others or falling behind? There is an opportunity to learn from your local success and shortcomings to help franchisees learn from each other.

Prioritize your metrics. At this moment there will be a lot of data heading your way and based on your company's goals different metrics will matter more than others. Sometimes content with high click through rates, but significant bounce rates on your company website, for instance, is not as useful as content with a lower click through rate, but a higher conversion rate. Think about what matters most to you and measure your success accordingly.

Don't forget to keep an eye on your reputation management metrics. Response times, ratings, and sentiments are all things to keep in mind when evaluating and optimizing this strategy. Retaining customers can often be as important to the bottom line as gaining new customers. Once you have a foundation of data, start to optimize and experiment with tweaks to your program to see what is effective for your business and what resonates with your audience. If something works particularly well for one of your locations, share the wealth of knowledge with other locations to improve outcomes system-wide. Over time, you will see your results climb.

Click below to see how Ace Hardware is leveraging Localized Social Marketing:

[Ace Hardware](#)

“ ”

We can now measure engagement at a corporate level, which is something we were never able to do before.

**GARY DRUMMOND**

Local Marketing Manager | Ace Hardware

**ACE**  
The helpful place.

SECTION V:

# Common Pitfalls To Avoid

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## Prepare for Pitfalls

Like we said, Localized Social Marketing is complex. Each stage serves up its own set of challenges. Understanding the most frequent pitfalls will help simplify and streamline a hybrid model and optimize your online presence on both the brand and local levels.

### #1 Failing to Centralize Ownership of Local Business Pages

We can't say this enough: unofficial, duplicate, and unclaimed rogue listings and franchise pages can hinder local search results and wreak havoc on a brand's overall reputation. To avoid this stumbling block, franchisors must obtain access to all social properties that represent the company – across all platforms. Claim, clean and manage local listings and every local business page.

### #2 Setting and Forgetting Your Local Pages

So, you've created and claimed your local pages! Great. But your work has just begun.

Now that your local pages exist, customers will be interacting with them. At a minimum, you should post brand content to these pages, and always keep key local information—hours, address, services, prices and menu—up-to-date. Any information lapse can impact the brand experience.

### #3 Assuming if you Build It, They Will Come

As previously described, the days of simply posting on social and expecting all your followers to see everything are over. This is where social advertising comes in. Never has there been such an effective solution to reach your exact audience with the right message while only paying for the results you receive. Social Advertising = No Brainer.

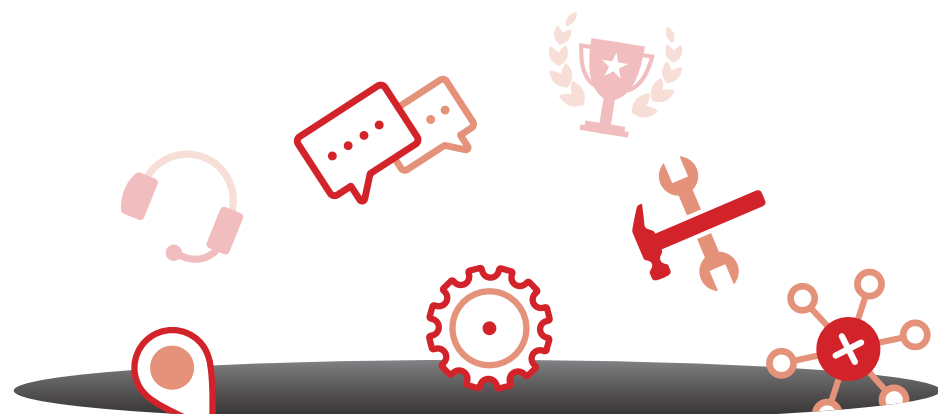
### #4 Ignoring Comments and Reviews

As we've stated in this report, responding to reviews is more important than ever. No matter the sentiment of the reviewee, your response is imperative. Responding shows consumers that you acknowledge their opinion, appreciate their time, and it reiterates that you care. Review sites and social media channels are hubs for conversations that your customers are having. Participating in those conversations allows you to influence the narrative.

### #5 Overcomplicating Workflow

Having a complex strategy doesn't mean you have to have a complicated workflow. While you want to create a program that is intentional and nuanced, localized social media marketing is meaningless if you can't consistently implement it in the market.

This is where SOCI technology solutions come in. Creating a well-executed localized strategy is an undertaking, so don't be afraid to get additional help for you and your team to help you manage assets, schedule posts and streamline approvals.



## #6 Lack of Training and Support

Training and support are crucial to creating a program that delivers results. We see marked improvement for companies that find the time and resources to properly train their staff. Your Localized Social Marketing Playbook, Monthly meetings, a Quickstart Guide and strong brand best practices communicated system-wide can go a long way to take some of the guesswork out of consistently managing the online presence of each of your locations.

SEE OUR ARTICLE:

**The Franchise Marketer's Guide to Getting Started with Social Media**



## #7 Resting on Your Laurels

Large social marketing platforms are always changing. You need to keep up. As much as you may want to develop a strategy and then forget about it, it is sadly not that easy. For best results, you need to optimize. So plan for it.



SECTION VI:

# Final Thoughts

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## Final Thoughts

As a marketer for a national franchised brand, you can have a direct impact on increasing your brand awareness, customer loyalty, and driving new sales. Take a proactive role and arm your franchisees with a brand approved and flexible program to maximize your impact.

Franchises are owned and operated by locals and they benefit their communities. Take advantage of the Shop Local movement and give your franchisees an opportunity to showcase their role in their communities and in your company. By doing so you can tie your company to their community and create connections that inspires customer loyalty and create a compelling competitive advantage in all of the local markets you do business in.

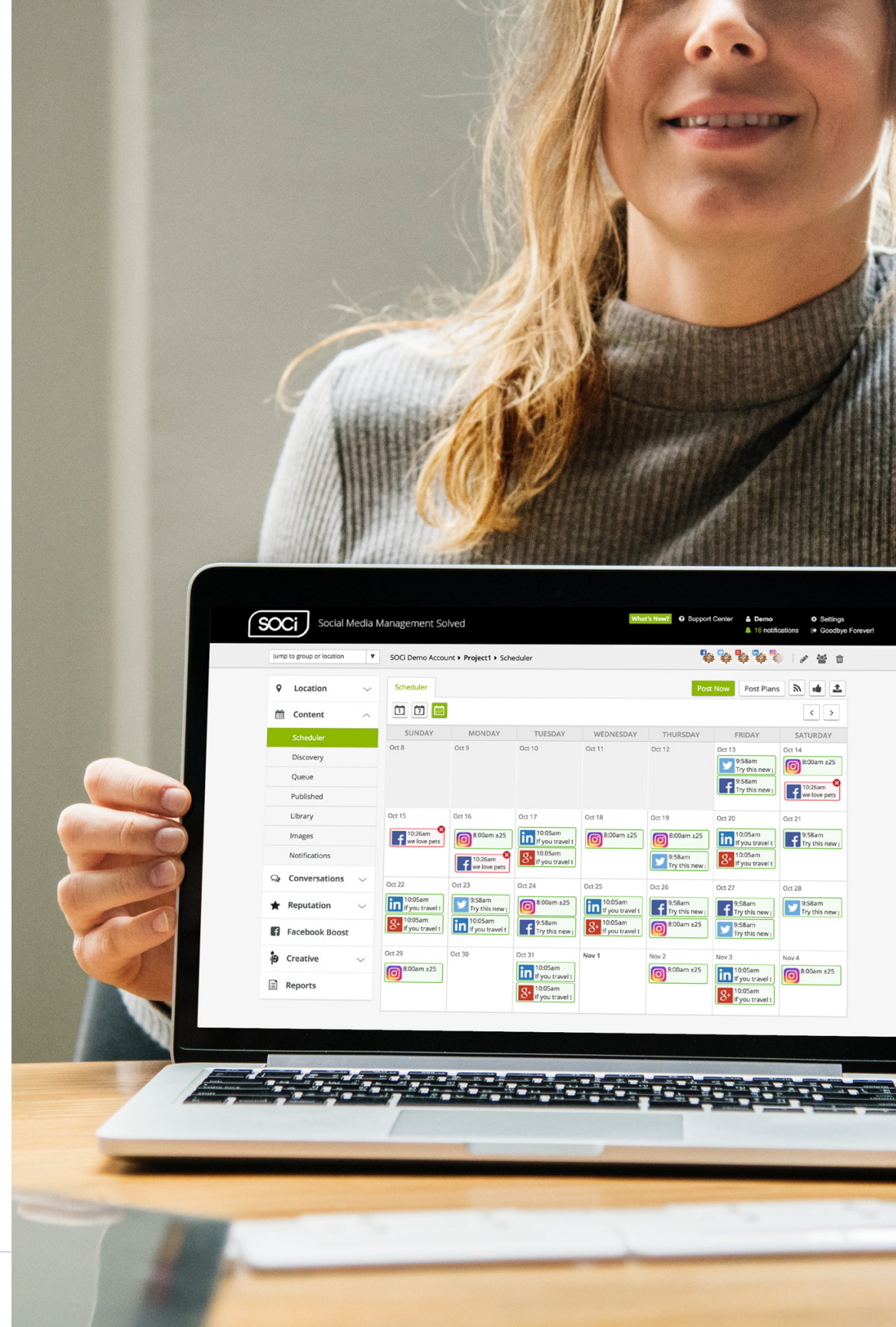


### About SOCi

SOCi is the leading social media and reputation management platform built to address the complex needs of highly visible multi-location businesses. An award-winning leader in the industry (#60 on the 2018 Inc. 5000 list of the fastest growing companies in America), SOCi has pioneered more than a dozen unique marketing tools to help multi-location brands manage their social content, reviews and ads across hundreds or thousands of locations in a single platform. For more information on how SOCi can fuel the success of your social media channels while protecting what matters most—your online reputation—visit: [www.meetsoci.com](http://www.meetsoci.com).

### Need more help in starting your local strategy?

Contact us at [hello@meetsoci.com](mailto:hello@meetsoci.com) or call us at 858-225-4110





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