



Social Media 101: The Beginner's Guide for Pizza Restaurants



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According to the National Restaurant Association's 2015 Restaurant Industry Forecast, 50% of both casual dining and fine dining operators, and 40% of family dining operators said they planned to devote more resources to social media marketing in 2015 than before. After all, 65% of American adults use social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, making social media the go-to advertising channel for many businesses these days. For restaurant operators, these sites are especially useful for sharing pictures of your food, interacting with customers, promoting deals, providing open hours and other restaurant info, and advertising to your local market.

Ready to get online, start connecting with customers, and increase your sales? This eBook offers several tips for getting started on the different networks, and also shares some best practices for maximizing your success once you do get going.



WHY USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

In this day and age, just about everyone is online and using social media, and as the old fisherman's saying goes: the best place to go fishing is where the fish are. In addition to a large portion of your customers being on social media already, here are 4 main reasons restaurants should be using social media:

- **To grow awareness of your restaurant.** By creating a social media profile for your restaurant and promoting the restaurant online, you're giving your current customers and potential customers another opportunity to learn more about it. Fans of your restaurant can Like or Follow your social media profiles to stay updated on all your news and deals, and you can also run paid advertisements that target other social media users in your area to expand your reach.
- **To create a voice for your brand.** People might know about your restaurant, but do they know what your restaurant is all about? With social media, you can give your brand a voice and help enhance your business' personality. The restaurant below, for example, shows off their chain's quirky sense of humor by sharing updates like this one:





- **Get to know your customers.** Another great thing about social media is that it provides an outlet for your customers to tell you what they like, and also what you're doing wrong, so you can continually improve.



- **Share promotions.** One of the best uses of social media for restaurants is promoting the deals that your restaurant is offering. For example, look at how this restaurant convinced more customers to order on Super Bowl Sunday:





BEST PRACTICES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

- **Delegate a Social Media Manager.** Before you create any profiles, choose one person to be in charge of all your social media duties. Having too many people involved might change the voice of your messages, or lead to problems like double posting. Having one person responsible keeps things easy and frees up other employees to focus on their regular restaurant duties.
- **Share posts that align with your brand and customers' interests.** This might seem like a no-brainer, but many restaurants make the mistake of sharing posts that aren't relevant to their cause. For example, just because a video is going viral on YouTube, doesn't mean you should share it on your page—even if you think your audience would find it funny. If you're a pizza restaurant, keep your posts pizza or restaurant related (which can include restaurant news or posts about your work culture). You don't always have to talk about yourself either! If you see an article talking about the history of pizza, the local farms where you get ingredients, or crazy pizza creations from across the world, those are just a few examples of related content to share with your audience.





- **Ask your fans for their opinions.** Tired of posting pictures of pizza, sharing articles, and promoting your deals? Don't forget to ask your fans and followers for their opinions. It's great direct feedback that can lead to more sales and more loyal customers.





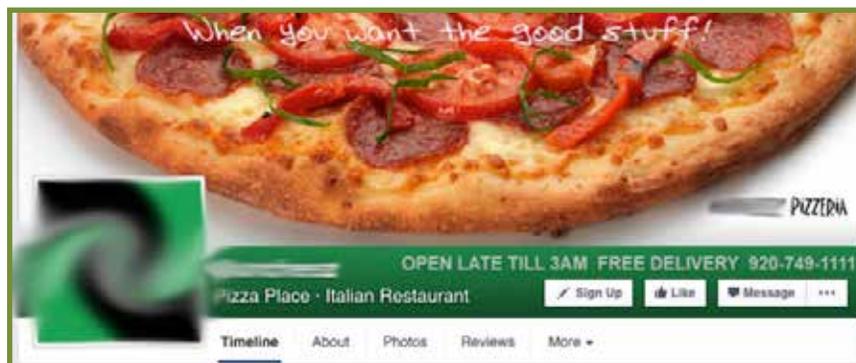
GETTING STARTED...

Facebook

- **Create a Facebook Page, NOT a personal profile!** There's a big difference between having a Facebook business page and a personal profile. Business pages are specifically designed for businesses, as fans don't need to ask permission to be your friend and see your updates. Likewise, business pages offer valuable insights on your social media performance, helping you improve your social marketing efforts.



- **Set your restaurant logo as your page's profile photo.** Your profile photo is what appears next to every post you make, and using your logo in its place is the best identifier for your brand.
- **Use your cover photo to showcase deals, restaurant info, and your food.** There are many different routes you can go with your cover photo, but displaying your food, deals, company info, or pictures of restaurant and customers is always a sure bet. The cover photo below, for example, uses several of these tactics to perfection. Note how this pizzeria keeps important information from being hidden behind the tabs:





- **Pictures of your food perform the best.** Nothing makes peoples’ mouths water faster than a picture of your pizza and a delicious description. Don’t just share any picture though! Make sure it’s well lit and makes your pizza look appetizing.
- **Great place to share promotions and deals—particularly exclusive deals for fans of your page.** If mouthwatering pictures aren’t enticing enough, promoting your deals is another great tactic to use on Facebook. You can also offer exclusive deals to fans of your page to increase page likes and traffic.
- **Share restaurant news and events.** Did your restaurant win an award? Did a sports team you sponsor win a tournament? Are you extending your hours? All of these things are great to share with your Facebook audience.
- **Encourage check-ins.** Facebook has a feature where users can “check-in” at a location, and it will tag your page and get shared in their friends’ feeds. Especially if you’re known as a dine-in restaurant, make sure you put a note in your menu asking patrons to check-in on Facebook. If their friends see them enjoying your restaurant or saying great things, you could earn new customers. You could even offer a small discount as encouragement.
- **Take advantage of video.** Facebook allows Pages to embed videos directly into a post, and catalogs the videos all in one spot for your fans to easily find and watch. You can also keep track of how many people view each video. If you have videos showing your pizza being made or an interview with your chefs, make sure you upload them to your page (or create some!).
- **Use Facebook Ads to geo-target Facebook users in your area.** While it’s great to promote to your fans, Facebook’s advanced advertising capabilities allow you to get your posts in front of other Facebook users in your area who don’t already follow your Page. Of course, these advertisements cost money, but it’s a much less expensive option than traditional channels, and be used as frequently or sparingly as you want.



Twitter

- **Include important restaurant information in account bio (e.g., location, hours, delivery or dine-in, phone number, website, menu, etc.).** Not sure what to say in your Twitter bio? Make it easy for your customers by providing some basic information. You can also use this area to showcase your brand personality. Just make sure you include a link to your website or a way to place an order
- **Follow similar strategy as Facebook.** Though both networks have their differences, they're both pretty similar in terms of what you should share, how you should style your profile, and what type of tone to use. Just remember you only have 140 characters to work with, so keep things short and sweet!
- **Timing is critical on Twitter; make sure you target the lunch and dinner crowds.** On Facebook, fans of your page can see a post you made at 3 p.m. right at the top of their feed when they log on at 7 p.m. due to Facebook's hidden algorithm that prioritizes which posts show up in someone's feed based on their previous Facebook interactions. On Twitter, however, your tweets remain in the same spot on someone's feed based on what time you posted, making it crucial to capture your audience's attention at specific times. If you want to get people to see your lunch special, for example, make sure you post close to lunch time, as your tweet will quickly get lost in the mix as your followers feeds are filled up with other tweets.





- **Use Sponsored/Promoted tweets with geo-targeting to advertise to Twitter users in your area.** Similar to Facebook, Twitter allows you to run paid advertisements targeted to different users and appear randomly in their feed. It's just another way of capturing the attention of local social media users who might not follow you.



- **Use hashtags and don't be afraid to create your own.** Twitter was the first social network to introduce hashtags, and they're frequently used and searched for by other users. Don't be afraid to use a few yourself (e.g., hashtagging the word "pizza" in your tweets so anyone who searches for "#pizza" can see them). You can even get creative and make up your own—just be sure to get your followers involved. Check out this one for one chain's Super Bowl promotion:



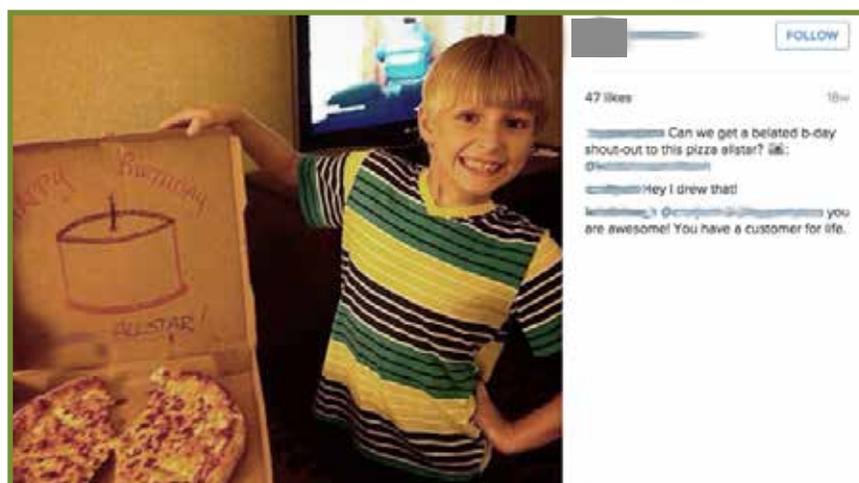


Instagram

- **Hashtags and photos are key.** As a social media site made specifically for sharing pictures, Instagram is perfect for showcasing your delicious food. Likewise, similar to Twitter, hashtags are commonly used on Instagram, so make sure you're including hashtags whenever applicable.



- **Use crowd-sourced photos to build customer relationships/loyalty.** One of the great things about Foodie culture today is that people are always taking pictures of their food. If someone takes a picture of your pizza and tags your Instagram account, feel free to share it on your own profile (and give them credit) if you think it's a great picture. A lot of times, they're flattered to have you share it with all your followers.



- **Run customer photo contests.** If you're looking for a way to get more crowd-sourced photos—while also building customer loyalty—try running a contest where the best picture of your food wins a prize (perhaps a free pizza?). Not only will it give you content to share on social media, but all the tasty looking pictures will have your followers craving your pizza.



- **Great site to showcase restaurant/employee culture.** In the grand scheme of your marketing and your focus on pizza promotion, it's easy to forget about the awesome people behind your brand. Instagram, however, is a great place to showcase the people behind the pizza and give them a little love. Especially when you consider that 53% of 18-29 year olds use Instagram, it can help with your hiring efforts of people the same age.



Pinterest

- **Create boards for recipes, menu items, and each of your locations (if applicable).** The reason people come to your restaurant is the same reason they're coming to your Pinterest page: for the food. Get their attention and interest by sharing pictures of menu items, recipes, pizza facts, and more. You can even categorize your pin boards by food type (e.g., pizzas, pastas, wings, etc.) or restaurant location.
- **Engage with other pinners.** The whole point of social media is to be social, right? Make sure you connect with your Pinterest audience by liking and repining any content that you find interesting, or by simply leaving a comment.



CONCLUSION

Regardless of what platforms you use, the most important thing is that you're committed to growing your online presence, and continuously monitor your activity and look for ways to improve.

*We hope you found these tips useful. If you need any help with the pizza part of your operation—specifically the crust—make sure you give us a call at **(920)-662-0304** or visit our website at **www.akcrust.com**. You can also find us on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook!*

Twitter — @akcrust

LinkedIn — www.linkedin.com/company/ak-pizza-crust

Facebook — www.facebook.com/akcrust