



# THE **MARKETING** UMBRELLA



Is it  
**WORTHWHILE FOR**  
**MY SMALL BUSINESS**

to Hire a Marketing Consultant?

How To  
Create Webinars

**That GENERATE**  
**BUZZ**

**HASHTAGS**

for  
**Business Demystified**

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## Welcome to the Marketing Umbrella Magazine



The best source to generate more sales for your business with online marketing.

Each month we break down the complexities of a few key digital marketing strategies.

We make it easy to understand so you can decide if they should be implemented in your business.

It doesn't matter if you're just starting out or an established business owner, you will benefit from harnessing the power digital marketing.

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Umbrella Local is the leading digital marketing agency focusing on helping small businesses grow with digital marketing.

Umbrella Local, has local marketing experts in almost every market.

We provide dependable growth strategies that will increase your sales. Many of our services are result based, which means you only pay when we reach the agreed goal.

If you want experts to handle your marketing for affordable prices and dependable results, reach out to Umbrella Local.



## **IS IT WORTHWHILE FOR MY SMALL BUSINESS TO HIRE A MARKETING CONSULTANT?**

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Some small business owners think that only large businesses should hire marketing consultants. These small business owners are busy with the day to day grind and sometimes don't feel they have either the time or the money to bring on this kind of high-powered help. But the fact is that every business needs strategic analysis that paves the way for marketing to support and drive business goals. That's an important part of what a good marketing consultant can provide.



## **WHAT IS A MARKETING CONSULTANT?**

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Marketing consultants help business owners tie their marketing strategies to their overall business objectives. If you just implement marketing tactics without a solid strategy, you will only waste your money. Before you start advertising, sending email campaigns or publishing social media posts, you need to set a clear course.

Setting a clear course takes researching the market, the competition and your own company. A good marketing consultant can analyze your marketing, pinpoint your challenges from branding to lead generation, and develop solutions that will propel your business forward. Marketing consultants are strategic thinkers but also understand exactly what needs to be done on a tactical level – whether they do it themselves or show your team the necessary steps.

Of course, some marketing consultants have specialties. But unless your marketing is completely on track and you just need help with one specific area, it is better to look for a marketing consultant who can look at the entirety of your marketing needs and develop a strategy where each part of your marketing works well with the rest.



## **IS A MARKETING AGENCY THE SAME AS A MARKETING CONSULTING FIRM?**

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Don't think that every marketing agency out there is made up of marketing consultants. You may find strategic marketing consultants in some marketing agencies, but generally speaking, marketing agencies tend to be focused on tactical implementation. Though marketing consultants sometimes also do tactical implementation, their real value is developing your long and short term goals and strategies. They build the base on which you launch your marketing programs.



## **CAN I AFFORD TO HIRE A MARKETING CONSULTANT?**

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The better question is “Can i afford NOT to hire one?”

Times have been tough for a lot of businesses due to the pandemic. When money gets tight, often the first thing a business will do is cut back on their marketing. This is almost always a mistake, one that can adversely impact a business for years to come.

According to a well-known [Harvard study](#), companies that recover the best from recessions are those that do not cut their marketing or that actually increase it during the down times. When the economy improves, businesses that cut marketing often find themselves behind their competition that kept on marketing. And often they never recover their place in the market.

But here’s the thing. Businesses that keep marketing during a recession or hard economic times don’t necessarily spend their marketing budget in the same way as they did before the downturn. A good marketing consultant who thinks strategically can help you to determine the best way to direct your marketing dollars in a changing world.

Sure, money may be tight, and you may feel you just don’t have any additional budget to put toward hiring a marketing consultant. This is exactly why you need to be spending every marketing dollar as effectively as possible. That’s where a marketing consultant can lead the way.

If you are ever going to improve your marketing ROI, you won’t do it by just throwing a new ad campaign out there. Your success depends on detailed market research and a solid strategic plan.

The entire point of hiring a marketing consultant is to get your marketing strategies on track so you build better brand awareness, generate more leads, close more sales and increase your revenues.



## THE BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH A MARKETING CONSULTANT

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We have already established that the primary job of a marketing consultant is to create strategies and plans that help businesses reach their overall goals. That means they are not just focused on a few campaigns. They concern themselves with getting optimum ROI for all marketing programs.

Good marketing consultants also come to you with a world of experience. They are not guessing at the strategies they put in place. They have seen it before. This saves you time, money and mistakes with your customers.

Expect much faster results when you hire a marketing consultant than if you go the trial and error route. Of course, there is no magic wand. You still must be aware that marketing is a process. If you are 10th in your market, you won't shoot to number 1 overnight.

Marketing consultants can help you to

- Reduce unnecessary or ineffective marketing costs
- Better target your audience
- Develop messaging that resonates with that audience
- Develop a consistent brand
- Devise plans to increase lead generation
- Plan your customers' journeys so they end

in more conversions and repeat business

- Determine the best methods and channels to reach your customers and increase your sales
- Gain new insights. Marketing consultants typically work in a variety of industries and see techniques that may not yet be popular in your own. Coming from the outside, they can bring a fresh perspective you may be unable to see working in your business each day.

On top of all this, hiring a marketing consultant costs a lot less than hiring a full-time employee with this kind of top level expertise. There are no onboarding costs, no benefits to pay, and best of all, once a marketing consultant has done the job, you only need to see them now and then for a check-in if at all.

That beats continuing to pay a high salary all year long. The reality is, if you bring an employee onboard, it's unlikely you will be able to hire someone with anywhere near the expertise of a good marketing consultant. There is just no comparison between a successful, top-level marketing consultant and a mid-level marketing employee.



## **SO, WHO IMPLEMENTS THE MARKETING CONSULTANT'S STRATEGIES?**

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Who implements your marketing consultant's strategies depends on the needs of your business, the preferences of the chosen marketing consultant, the resources you have at hand and your own desires. There are basically four scenarios.

1. Some marketing consultants also provide implementation. Before hiring a consultant, be sure you understand what services they do and do not provide.
2. A marketing consultant could set up strategies and processes, and train your staff to implement the programs. Of course, this is assuming you have capable marketing staff. In this scenario, the marketing consultant may stick around to launch the programs and will likely check in on a regular basis.
3. You could hire a marketing agency to implement the plan if the marketing consultant and their firm do not do that themselves.
4. The marketing consultant could help you to hire remote or local freelancers or employees for implementation.



## **ASK UMBRELLA ABOUT MARKETING CONSULTING**

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If you think your business would benefit by hiring a marketing consultant (and almost all businesses could), call Umbrella Local. We can set you up with a free consultation with a marketing consultant to discuss your business. Call us now for a [free consultation](#).



## **HOW TO CREATE WEBINARS THAT GENERATE BUZZ**

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We now live in a world where working and holding meetings remotely have become increasingly common. Things may never go back to how they were before. Telecommuting is here to stay for many people, making webinars critical for today's marketing and sales efforts.

Though webinars have been around for quite some time, the new normal has certainly given them a boost. Many events, seminars, sales presentations and meetings that would once have been live and in-person have gone virtual. That's why it's important for businesses today to know how to create webinars.

More and more people rely on webinars in various formats to present and view information. In other words, prospects and customers in many industries, particularly in B2B industries, now expect that businesses will provide valuable webinars. Webinars are a wonderful way to engage and interact with customers in today's world.

This brings up a new issue. Since webinars are on the increase, how do you break through the clutter of all that digital content? How do you attract the attention of attendees, give value and create positive buzz?

It's no longer enough to just hop online with some hastily prepared PowerPoint slides. The bar has been raised.



## WHY GIVE WEBINARS?

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We've already talked about the new focus on webinars given the increase in remote work. Here's more reasons to give webinars:

- Webinars are popular. Every week, [54% of B2B professionals](#) watch webinars. 54%!!!
- In the process of registering attendees and interacting with them during webinars, you can collect a whole lot of information -- the kind of information that helps close deals.
- Not only can you gather information during webinars, you can directly answer questions your prospects have. They are a great way to connect personally with prospects and clients.
- Webinars are helpful for many different purposes from education to closing sales. They are effective at every point in the marketing funnel.
- You get people's attention for a prolonged period. People [view webinars for 57 minutes](#) on average.
- Webinars enable you to connect with people you would not have been able to otherwise. People attend webinars for a variety of reasons and they can attend from anywhere in the world.
- Webinars dramatically increase conversions. One recent report showed a [61% increase](#) in registrant-to-attendee conversion.
- They enable you to teach something about your company or its products and services to an audience who wants to be there.

So, let's get started!



## **DETERMINE YOUR PURPOSE**

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We aren't suggesting that you just start giving webinars in order to jump on the bandwagon. Determine your audience and your purpose for giving the webinar. Look at where your audience is in the marketing funnel. The most common purpose, that of [60% of businesses](#), is to convert users in the bottom of the funnel into paying customers.



## **CHOOSE YOUR TOPIC**

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Now that you've determined your purpose for giving the webinar, choose a focused topic to help you fulfill that purpose. Sure, it needs to be relevant to your business. But it also needs to be valuable to your audience.

How to find your topic? Any number of ways. For instance

- Hold polls and surveys on social media.
- Check which of your social media posts and blog posts have garnered the most views, likes and comments.
- Ask your salespeople and customer service reps what questions prospects and customers ask most.
- Look for topics that are focused and specific.
- Unless you are giving a webinar to current customers on how to use your product in advanced ways, include educational information about the market as a whole. You will set yourself up as an expert, and your audience will appreciate the helpful information you give them.



## **CHOOSE YOUR FORMAT & CREATE GREAT CONTENT**

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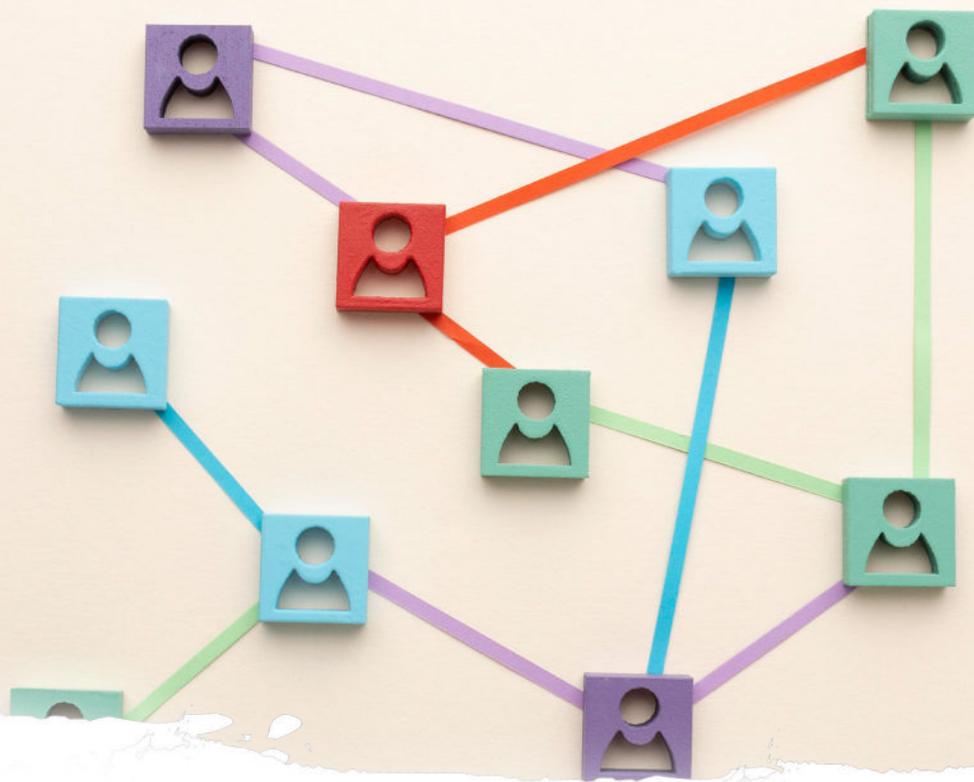
One of the most important things in creating webinars is to choose your format. Some people think of webinars as PowerPoint presentations that either show the speaker pointing at the slides or focus exclusively on the slides. Though that can be true, there are many other formats available. These include interviews, question and answer sessions, product demos and panel discussions.

Of course, your content is going to follow your chosen format. If you are using a PowerPoint, graphics and charts on the slides should support what the speaker says. But you don't want the audience to be able to read along with everything the speaker is saying. That only invites people to read the slides and ignore the speaker.

If you are not experienced in creating engaging PowerPoint slides, it may be time to bring in a presentation designer. You will need graphics and charts that emphasize your point, pique the imagination and don't put people to sleep. Slides should focus on visuals. Text should be short and underline your point. Add a bit of humor on a slide or two to recapture people's attention.

If you plan to host a panel discussion, you need to spend a lot of time planning your speakers, putting together questions (and asking your audience for questions in advance – more on that in a moment) and making sure your speakers know what to expect. The last thing you need are surprises.

Whatever your format, don't plan for your content to go over an hour. People don't have unlimited attention spans. So, you may want to plan on 45 minutes to an hour for your main content. You can follow that with 15 minutes of questions if it makes sense.



## **ENCOURAGE ENGAGEMENT THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS**

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From the planning stages to the webinar itself to the follow-up once the webinar is over, you should be looking for ways to engage your audience. Following are some possibilities creating engagement.

### **Before the Webinar**

Even if you plan to have polls or questions and answers during the webinar, we encourage you to gather your audience's ideas in advance. One of the best ways to do this is through social media.

Not only does it give you better insights on where to focus your content, but it also promotes buy-in and excitement from your audience. When they are asked to help shape the webinar, the content is much more likely to address their real concerns. It also shows respect for your audience.

### **During the Webinar**

Instead of just talking at your audience for the entire hour, have at least some sections of the webinar where two-way communication is encouraged. You might take a poll or invite a few questions on specific areas. You don't want to let the audience take over if you need to educate, but you don't need to lecture them for the entire hour either. There are various tools to permit interaction and yet let you maintain control.

### **After the Webinar**

Ask for feedback. Most people are only too happy to give it.

Ask your audience to share a link to another live webinar or a recorded event.



## **GIVE STRATEGIC THOUGHT TO THE DAY AND TIME**

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The day and time you choose will vary depending on whether your audience is in your local time zone, located throughout the US or located all over the world.

If your audience is domestic, time your webinar to avoid commute times. Generally speaking, Wednesdays and Thursdays at [11 am work well](#) as does [10 am](#).

Unless you are holding a conference with a lot of moving parts that goes beyond a typical webinar, you may want to hold the webinar live multiple times and give your attendees attendance options both inside and outside working hours. Some companies use webinars as sales tools, and if that's the case, it's almost certain you will want to repeat the webinar multiple times.

If you are going to limit the number of times you give the webinar live, consider the value of recording it and making it available on your website after the last live event. This makes sense if its primary purpose is to educate rather than close sales.



## MARKET YOUR WEBINAR

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It's not necessarily true that if you build it, they will come. Marketing your webinar is just as important as creating its content. Exactly how you market it is going to depend on whether your business is B2B or B2C, your industry, the audience you want to attract and where your audience is in the marketing funnel.

Here are some general tips.

1. Email invitations to that part of your list that is likely to be interested in the topic.
2. Plan a series of emails that get closer together as your webinar date gets closer.
3. Send reminder emails to registrants all the way up to an hour before the webinar. This will vastly increase attendance especially for free webinars. (Attendee no-show is less of a concern if you are charging a sum people won't want to lose.)
4. Tout your webinar all over your social media.
5. If you will have speakers, interviewees or panelists in your webinar, give them templates to make it easy for them to market the webinar in their own social media.
6. Approach industry influencers to promote your webinar. Obviously, they are a lot more likely to do that if they are presenting or speaking at the webinar.
7. Splash the webinar in obvious places on your website and create a compelling registration page.
8. Create an event page on likely social media platforms your audience follows. You can direct people who find you through social posts and ads on that platform to your event page.
9. Consider advertising the webinar in focused venues and to targeted audiences. One of the easiest ways to advertise is to simply boost your social media posts about the webinar.



## **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE**

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Learning how to create webinars isn't enough. We shouldn't even have to say this, but it's imperative that you hold at least one trial run. This is to test everything from your equipment to your timing to your content. Your practice session needs to include any guests you are planning to have. You will be amazed at how issues that could undercut your well-planned webinar reveal themselves in a test run.

To test all aspects, you will want to send an invitation to the practice session to some team members who can watch it and interact as the audience will during the real thing.



## **FOLLOW-UP**

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Once your webinar is over, you are still not finished. Now comes the follow-up. Here's a noninclusive list of some actions you may want to take.

1. Email all attendees. Invite them to contact you with any further questions. Send a link they can share with their colleagues to attend another live webinar or to listen to the recorded webinar. You might also want to offer a discount on one of your products.
2. Contact the no-shows and invite them to another live webinar. If there are none, share a link to the recorded webinar.
3. Survey attendees about what they found valuable in the webinar and any other questions regarding the webinar topic that would help your sales and marketing team.
4. Share relevant information about your webinar attendees with your sales team.



## **READY TO START CREATING WEBINARS?**

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There is a lot to do to learn how to create webinars and market them successfully. But in today's world, it's now expected that businesses use this method of communicating and sharing information.

If developing webinars is new to you, you will probably want some help to get your business's webinars off the ground at least for the first few.

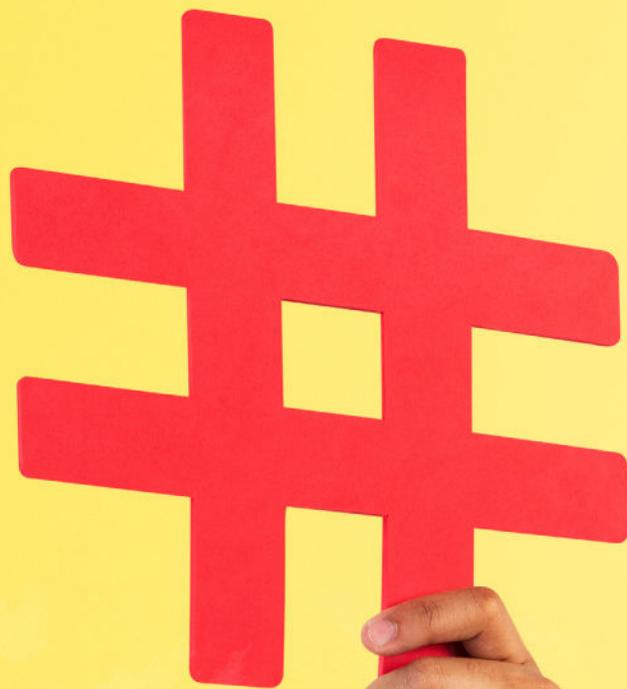
Consider contacting Umbrella Local to take all the work of creating and marketing your webinar off your hands. Outsource to experts while you focus on your core business. Call us for a [free consultation](#).



## **HASHTAGS FOR BUSINESS DEMYSTIFIED**

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Hashtags for business can make a huge difference in the success of your social media campaigns, particularly on Instagram. Using them effectively can greatly expand your reach and increase your followers. Yet many small businesses are using them ineffectively. In some cases, hashtags can even decrease engagement. It takes a bit of finesse.



## **WHAT ARE HASHTAGS?**

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Hashtags are words or phrases preceded by the #symbol. You can also use emojis and numbers as well as letters. They are a way to categorize content so people can find it. For example, when you click on an Instagram hashtag, you will go to a page of posts that also use that hashtag.

Hashtags have been around for awhile now. Their first use can be traced to Interlay Relay Chat (IRC) in 1988. It's a bit of a discussion who used it first on social media, but the consensus is that using hashtags on social media started on Twitter in 2007. Two years later, Twitter added its seal of approval when it began immediately hyperlinking anything preceded by the # sign. And the rest is history.

So, let's take a look at where, why and how to use them.



## WHY TO USE HASHTAGS FOR BUSINESS

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### 1. Get More Reach and Build a Following

In addition to following social media accounts, it is also possible to follow hashtags. This causes some posts with that hashtag to show up in the follower's feed. Also, if they click on the hashtag, it will take them to a page of posts using it. People use this feature to find interesting creators and brands and follow them.

### 2. Send a Message and Build Community

In addition to using hashtags that are popular so people will find you, you can also develop hashtags for a campaign you are running or that are specific to your brand. You can use these hashtags to help define your brand. But you can use them in other ways too.

For example, you could ask your audience to post photos of themselves using your product and add a particular hashtag. This might be part of a contest or just for the chance for them to be featured on your page. Suddenly you have people all over the platform using your brand's hashtag where their followers can see it. Some of those people will be influenced to also become your followers.

### 3. Entice People to a Physical Location

Though you can designate your location on some platforms, it still doesn't hurt to use a local hashtag for business. If someone sees those fabulous cream cheese brownies are from a bakery in their area, they may be motivated to visit.

### 4. Show Your Products or Services Are Related to a Specific Event or Holiday

If you are trying to get attention from those interested in anything from an upcoming marathon race to buying Christmas presents, hashtags can help point people to your related post.

### 5. Jump on Trends

A lot of people follow regular hashtags every week such as #TBT or #throwbackthursday. There's no reason you can't get in on that action, in this case maybe showing an early photo of you and your partner opening your first shop.



## WHERE TO USE HASHTAGS FOR BUSINESS

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Hashtags are a lot more important on some platforms than others. They demand a full-blown strategy on Instagram but aren't nearly as important on Facebook or LinkedIn. (Which doesn't mean you shouldn't use them there too. We'll get to that.)

### Instagram

You can use up to 30 hashtags on an Instagram feed post and 10 on a Story before the platform rebels and refuses to post your caption or comment.

Hashtags are more critical on Instagram than probably any other popular social media platform. However, that doesn't mean you should always post the maximum number. More in a bit.

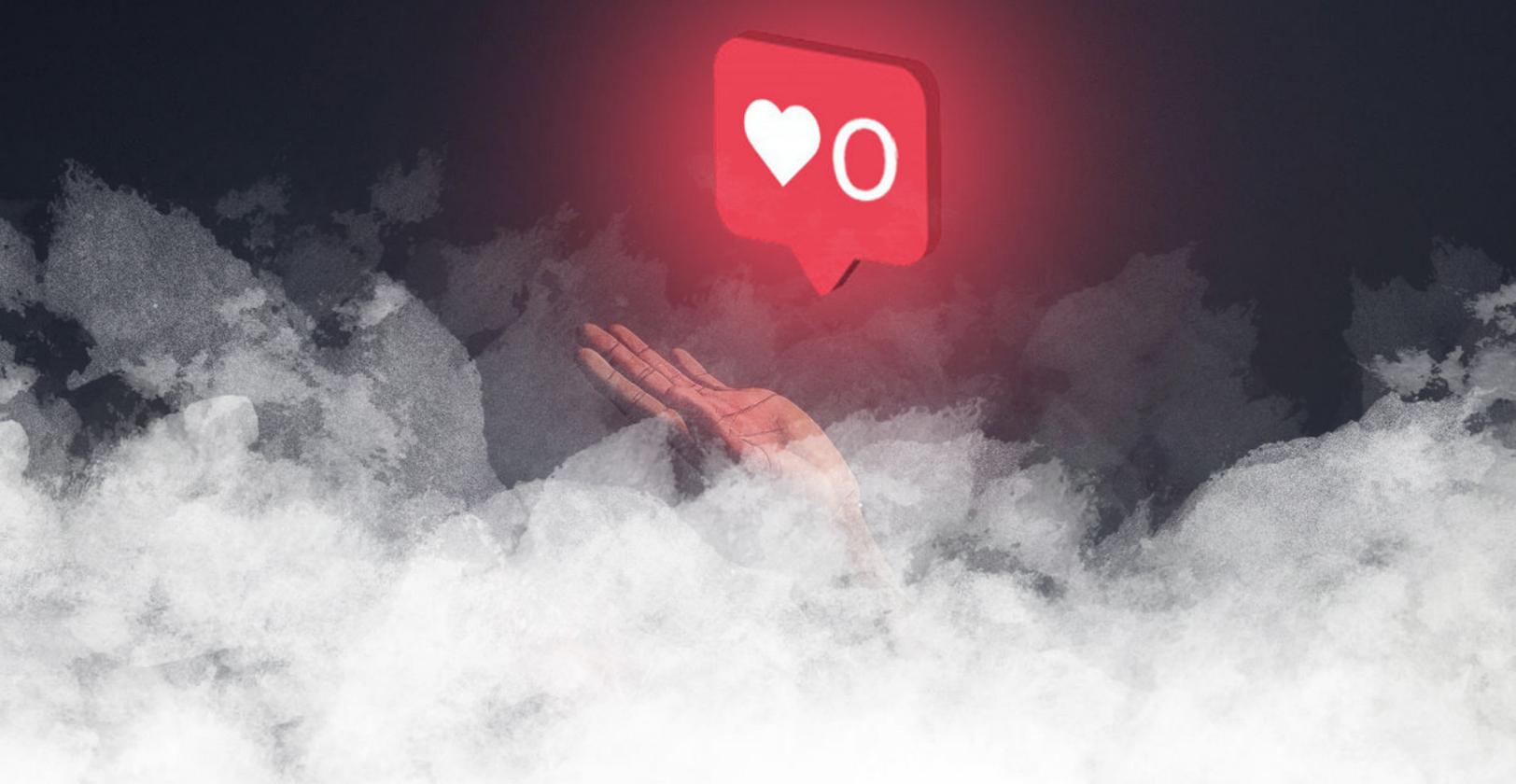
### TikTok

Hashtags are also important on TikTok for the same reasons they are on Instagram. But people don't tend to use as many at least in the captions. TikTok does not have a limitation on number of hashtags per se, but it limits the number of characters in the caption. Until recently, the number of characters permitted in the caption was only 100. TikTok has recently increased that to 300.

TikTok may have started as a dance trend app, but it's evolved into an app that features extremely varied content.

### Pinterest

Pinterest has been inconsistent on its recommendations about using hashtags. They may get you a short burst of extra exposure, but you probably don't need to worry about them a great deal. You can find out [more here](#).



## Twitter

Definitely use hashtags on Twitter. They can [increase engagement](#) as much as 1,065%.

However, don't overdo it. Twitter isn't as visual as Instagram. Though you can post images, usually people are just posting words. Your audience doesn't want your message to be buried in hashtags. Using two or three is plenty.

## Facebook

[Facebook](#) introduced hashtags late in the game, in 2013. Nine years later, hashtags still have not caught on that well on Facebook. However, they can still help someone who is searching for something specific to find you.

Instead of dumping a mountain of hashtags into your Facebook posts, monitor which ones work. Then use no more than a few.

## LinkedIn

Hashtags are relatively new to LinkedIn. Their use isn't as critical to your business on LinkedIn as it is on Instagram. However, hashtags can help your post show up on Google search. So, we recommend you use them, but just use a few.

## YouTube

You can use up to 15 hashtags in your video titles and descriptions. Don't ignore putting them in the title, because they can aid in your quest for your videos to appear in Google search results.



## HOW TO USE HASHTAGS FOR BUSINESS

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When using hashtags, there are several rules to keep in mind:

1. Except on Instagram, be circumspect with your hashtag use or you may just annoy people. Annoyed people don't engage.
2. Develop your own brand hashtags.
3. Test variations of the words you plan to use in hashtags. For example, in some cases a singular form is more effective, in other cases the plural form does better.
4. Check on the popularity of specific hashtags. On Instagram you can start by typing a hashtag into search. That will take you to a list with the hashtag and related terms, and will give you the number of posts using the hashtag for each.
5. Don't develop 30 hashtags for Instagram and then cut and paste them into perpetuity. If you do, the algorithm will penalize you.
6. Determine where to place your hashtags. You can put a caption and then a lot of white space between that and the hashtag. You can also put them in a comment, though that can affect reach. If you put them in an Instagram story, you could even put a sticker over them. Even if people can't see them, they are still there.
7. Monitor the success of your hashtags. Some platforms have tools right in the app for business accounts. There are also various third-party tools available for analysis.



## **NEED HELP WITH SOCIAL MEDIA?**

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When you're running a business, it can be difficult to find the time to keep up with the evolution of various social media platforms. You may prefer to focus on your business and leave the social media management to experts.

If you don't have the time, inclination or expertise to run the kinds of social media campaigns you would like for your company, [contact Results Pathfinder](#) for a free consultation.