

THE AGENCY GUIDE

to Getting Started
with Social Media

2021



What We'll Cover

This guide will help your agency decide how to best leverage social media in 2021. We'll take a look at the top channels, how to find and reach your ideal audience, and what types of content can work best for you.

The tips in this guide are meant to be suggestions and high-level guidelines to help you get started. We encourage you to experiment with different content to see what works best for your audience.

Don't forget, you don't have to be an expert designer to build a social media community. Focus on sharing high quality information that will add value to your followers.

Table of Contents

Page 3	Channel Recommendations
Page 4	Audiences
Page 5	Getting Started on Each Channel
Page 6	Biggest Content Trends: 2021
Page 7	Example Content Types by Channel
Page 11	Image Size Recommendations
Page 12	Annual Content Themes
Page 14	Resources



Channel Recommendations

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	LinkedIn
Overview	Facebook has the largest reach among all social media channels. Users report using Facebook primarily to connect with friends and family so your content should be informative but informal and friendly. Excellent audience targeting is available through Facebook.	Instagram has the most usage among younger customers. Unlike most other social platforms, Instagram is highly visual and relies on entertaining images and short videos.	Twitter is often a one stop shop for news of all kinds: politics, pop culture, and niche interest groups. Most content trends and best practices apply here but timing and relevancy will be extra important.	LinkedIn is a great place to reach business owners and professionals who influence insurance decisions at their company. You may choose to share from your personal profile, company page, or in relevant industry groups.
Demographics (% of Americans using the platform)	46% of ages 65+ 75% of ages 18 to 45 use Facebook. Usage among 20-30 and 30+ is similar. While teens use Facebook less than adults, Facebook still reaches 113.3 million teens compared to 52.9 million on Instagram.	75% of ages 18-24 57% of ages 25-29 47% of ages 30 -49 23% of ages 50-6	44% of ages 18 - 24 80% of people under 50 globally Twitter skews slightly male: 62% Most US Twitter users live in cities.	27% ages 26-35 34% ages 36-45 37% ages 46-55 29% ages 56+ Urban: 30% Suburban: 27% Rural: 13%
Recommended Audiences	Focus: Personal Lines Millennials and adult Gen Z customers reaching life milestones like growing a career, renting a first apartment, buying a first home, or starting a family. Baby boomers transitioning to retirement. They may be downsizing or relocating, enjoying grandchildren, or picking up new hobbies (travel, recreational vehicles, etc.).	Focus: Personal Lines Millennials and adult Gen Z customers reaching life milestones like growing a career, renting a first apartment, buying a first home, or starting a family. Older Millennials and Gen X customers with more established families, growing careers, and/or small businesses.	Focus: Personal & Business Lines Millennials and adult Gen Z customers reaching life milestones like growing a career, renting a first apartment, buying a first home, or starting a family. Using the right hashtags and finding the right people, you may be able to target small business owners.	Focus: Business Lines Millennials and Gen X small business owners any stage of business growth: -Just starting. -Expanding locations, products, sales, or number of employees. -Employee growth and retention.
Content Types	Single photos Multi-photo albums Video Stories Link to websites or blogs	In-feed photos IGTV series Stories Reels	Text Tweets (links optional) Image Tweets Video Tweets Retweets Stories	Text (links optional) Images Video Stories LinkedIn company page Industry groups
Posting Schedule	1-2 posts per week	1-2 posts per week	5-7 times per week	1 time per week

Audiences

Before you begin creating content for social media, you will need to define your audience(s). It is important to know who you are trying to reach and what you want to tell them. Trusted Choice® nationally focuses on four main audiences: Millennials, Established Families, Baby Boomers, and Small Business Owners. Your agency may choose to get even more specific based on your location and business lines. Some examples include [wineries in Virginia](#) or [motorcycle owners in Dallas](#).

Build your audience profiles based on online research, customers surveys, and your business goals. Two examples have been provided below plus a blank template to build your own.

Audience Name:	Established Families
Profile:	Age: 30-50 HHI: \$125k-\$500k 1-2 parents, 1+ children
Insurance Needs:	Established families want to protect their family and these needs change over time. They may be buying their first home or upgrading their home. They may have multiple cars, teen drivers, a vacation home, or recreational vehicles (boats, RV, etc.)
Desired Perception:	"A Trusted Choice Independent Insurance Agent understands my growing family's needs. They are insurance experts who live in my community and can recommend the best insurance options for my family as my needs evolve."
Product Lines:	Home, auto, life, recreational vehicle, renter's, condo, vacation home, umbrella

Audience Name:	Small Business Owners
Profile:	Age: 35-65 HHI: \$150k-\$1M
Insurance Needs:	Small Business Owners need a trusted advisor to help them navigate their insurance needs as they grow. They want to protect all parts of their business - physical location, employees, online/cyber store, business vehicles, and general liability.
Desired Perception:	"A Trusted Choice Independent Insurance Agent understands my growing business. They are insurance experts who live in my community and can recommend the best insurance options for the current state of my business and anticipate future needs."
Product Lines:	Small business, cyber, business liability, business interruption, errors & omission, worker's compensation, business umbrella, commercial property, commercial vehicle

Getting Started On Each Channel

1. Create your profiles

Once you have defined your audience and chosen your audiences, set up your social accounts as business profiles. This will include:

- ▶ A profile picture (recommended: use your company logo and be consistent across channels)
- ▶ A header photo (can be changed to match seasonality or showcase employees)
- ▶ Your agency's contact information
- ▶ Link to your website
- ▶ Your location
- ▶ A short bio including your value proposition and what customers can expect to see on your social channels. Resist the urge to write your agency's history and keep the focus on the value you provide.

2. Outline your content calendar

One of the hardest things about social media is deciding what to post. Start by creating a 12-month calendar with themes you can share each month. Some might be obvious seasonal trends like winter snow safety or summer road trip auto tips.

However, don't forget any big community service initiatives, events, or tradeshow. To help get you started, there is a topics calendar at the end of this guide.

3. Improve your posting

- ▶ **Consistency is key!** If you are just getting started, stick to once a week and post more often as you get more comfortable.
- ▶ **Don't sacrifice quality for quantity.** It is better to post less often if you don't have something valuable to share.
- ▶ **Look for inspiration.** Research your competitors and brands you love outside the industry to see what kind of content they are sharing. Can you borrow some of their strategies? Plus, share photos from customers and employees – with permission and photo credit!
- ▶ **Share articles from trusted sources.** If you do not have an established blog, put together a list of trusted sites like carrier partners, TrustedChoice.com, news sites, or even local sites to help find articles to share.
- ▶ **Test new things.** Do not be afraid to try new things on your channels. Switch up your posting times, introduce a video series, and look at your analytics to see what content is earning the most engagement. Do not be afraid to make mistakes!

Best Content Trends: 2021

Content value will beat production quality.

You don't have to look like you spend thousands of dollars on your content. With the fast pivot to online sales and communication in 2020, consumers are strongly focused on one question: does this information tell me what I need to know?

Don't let visual perfection stand in your way from sharing your knowledge. Record video on your phone, leverage free creative templates online, or leverage pre-made content from content to share from Trusted Choice.

Conversational marketing will change its tone.

Social media is social. We know it is important to write social copy as if you are talking to a friend.

However, in the past, conversational marketing tactics centered around promotions and making sales as quickly as possible. But in 2021, we have to make sure our social posts are focused on helping a customer solve a problem, learn how a product will help them, or break down an important but complex issue. Use this opportunity to highlight lesser known insurance risks and products or helpful safety tips.

Consumers will crave snackable content.

"Snackable" content is a term used to describe very short marketing content. With the rise of Tik Tok videos, Snapchat, and stories across many platforms, users expect short, concise content on social media. Keep your content short with simple language and memorable information. Got something more complicated to share? Consider breaking it up in a series of posts or link to a blog where consumers can read more.

Video will continue to take center stage.

Video has been a growing format on social media for years. However, Tik Tok and stories across platforms have made video an expected part of any content strategy. Consider sharing videos of you providing value insurance tips or text-based videos created with a template.

Example Content Ideas by Channel

Facebook

A festive, text-based image with tips on how to keep your home safe during a snowy winter. Experiment with other seasonal maintenance tips for home and car.



An article with tips on how to prepare for hurricane season.

An article about adding teen drivers to an auto insurance policy.

Film a short video series with 1-minute tips on what is and is not including in a basic home insurance policy.

Get specific in stories with tips on a lesser known insurance tip like insuring an engagement ring, recreational vehicle, or seasonal tips.



Create a video series (1-3 minute each) with insurance tips for new homeowners, downsizing empty nesters, or families with a recent grad.

Share photos from your agency's community involvement.



Example Content Ideas by Channel

Instagram

Create an IGTV video series (1-3 minute each) with insurance tips for new homeowners, recent grads, road trips, or newlyweds.



See Live Example

Share text-based carousel graphics with seasonal maintenance tips for home and car.



Share video-based stories of yourself explaining insurance tips for secondary product lines: engagement rings, personal property, recreational vehicles.



See Live Example

Don't be afraid to find some stock photos of product lines (home, car, etc.) and share your insurance tips in the caption.

Develop reels by shortening your existing tip-based videos.



See Live Example

Example Content Ideas by Channel

Twitter

Share seasonal articles about keeping up with home and car maintenance.



Repurpose your videos with tips for homeowners and road trips.



Retweet articles from carrier partners or local blogs.

Share tips and trends related to the evolving work from home environment - employee engagement, cyber risks, time management.



Share photos from your agency's community involvement.

Example Content Ideas by Channel

LinkedIn

Share articles about employee engagement and retention.

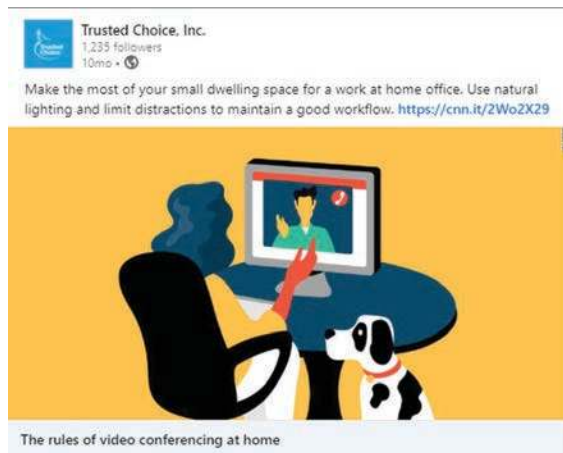
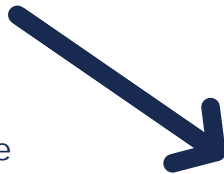
Share articles about cyber security and how any business can be at risk.

Write tips on liabilities the average business owner might forget about.

Join industry or small business groups and leave comments on interesting posts. Focus on adding value – don't sell too much!

Post photos of your agency's community involvement or team building days.

Share tips and trends related to the evolving work from home environment – employee engagement, cyber risks, time management.



Images Sizes



Twitter

Header image: 1500 x 500 | max 5 MB

Profile image: 400 x 400 | max 2 MB

In-stream image: 1024 x 512 | max 5 MB

Promoted image: 1200 x 600 | max 3 MB



LinkedIn

Company cover: 1536 x 768 | max 4 MB

Company logo: 300 x 300 | max 4 MB

Company page banner: 646 x 220 | max 2 MB

Shared image: 350 pixels wide

Sponsored content image: 1200 x 627



Facebook

Cover image: 820 x 312 (min 400 x 150)

Profile image: $\geq 180 \times 180$

Shared post image: 1200 x 630

Event cover: 1920 x 1080

Promoted image: 1200 x 1200

Facebook story image: 1080 x 1920

Facebook story ad: 1080 x 1920



Instagram

Profile image: 110 x 110

Shared photos: 1080 x 1080

Stories resolution: 1080 x 1920 (min 600 x 1067) | max 4 GB

Promoted image: 1080 x 1080, 1080 x 566

Annual Content Themes

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
Q1	<p>New Year's Day Martin Luther King Day</p> <p>New Habits Winter Safety</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Winter Maintenance & Safety (home & car)</p> <p>Re-evaluating needs for the year (Business, Home & Car)</p> <p>Healthy habits (Home, Life, & Business)</p> <p>Recreational Vehicle (snowmobile)</p> <p>Travel (Ski or Beach) (Vacation home & Auto)</p>	<p>Chinese New Year Valentine's Day President's Day Black History Month Heart Health Month</p> <p>Jewelry/Personal Property Winter Safety</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Winter Maintenance & Safety (home & car)</p> <p>Protecting Valuables (Jewelry & Personal Property)</p> <p>Heart Health (Home & Life)</p> <p>Recreational Vehicle (Snowmobile)</p> <p>Travel (Ski or Beach) (Vacation home & Auto)</p>	<p>St. Patrick's Day National Pi Day (3/14)</p> <p>First Day of Spring Start of Tornado season Spring Cleaning</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Winter and Early Spring Maintenance (Home & Car)</p> <p>Tornado/Disaster (Home & Car)</p>
Q2	<p>Passover Easter Distracted Driving Month</p> <p>Rainstorm Flooding Spring Cleaning</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Spring maintenance & safety (Home & Car)</p> <p>Distracted Driving (Car)</p> <p>Rainstorm/Flooding (Home & Car)</p>	<p>Mother's Day Memorial Day Graduation Season</p> <p>Rainstorm & Flooding Lawn/ Back Yard Maintenance</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Spring Cleaning/Yard Maintenance (Home & Car)</p> <p>Recreational Vehicle (RV & Boat)</p> <p>Backyard Pool & Grilling (Home)</p> <p>New Grads (Renter's & Auto)</p>	<p>First Day of Summer Father's Day Juneteeth</p> <p>Rainstorm & Flooding Summer Home Maintenance Employee Wellness Month</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Summer Home maintenance & safety (Home & Car)</p> <p>Backyard Pool & Grilling (Home)</p> <p>Summer Travel (Vacation Home, RV, Boat)</p> <p>Employee Health (Small Business)</p>

Annual Content Themes (cont.)

	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
Q3	<p>Independence Day</p> <p>Rainstorm Extreme Heat</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: 4th of July Travel (Home, Car, Vacation Home, RV, Boat)</p> <p>Backyard Pool & Grilling (Home)</p>	<p>School back in session</p> <p>Hurricane Rainstorm Extreme Heat</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Home Maintenance & Safety (Home & Car)</p> <p>Backyard Pool & Grilling (Home)</p> <p>Summer Travel (Vacation Home, RV, Boat)</p> <p>Hurricane & Natural Disaster (Home & Car)</p> <p>Back to "work" (Small Business)</p>	<p>Labor Day First Day of Fall</p> <p>Hurricane Rainstorm</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Fall Maintenance (Home & Car)</p> <p>Hurricane & Natural Disaster (Home & Car)</p> <p>Back to "work" (Small Business)</p>
	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
	Q4	<p>Halloween</p> <p>Hurricane Winter Safety Cyber Security Month Small Business Month</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Fall Home Maintenance & Safety (Home & Car)</p> <p>Hurricane & Natural Disaster (Home & Car)</p> <p>Fire Pit and Home Heating (Home)</p> <p>Fall Foliage Travel (Car, RV, Vacation Home)</p> <p>Cyber Security Tips (Home & Business)</p>	<p>Thanksgiving Dia de los Muertos Giving Tuesday Small Business Saturday</p> <p>Hurricane Winter Safety Snowstorm (Northern States)</p> <p>Sample Insurance Topics: Home Maintenance & Safety (home & car)</p> <p>Fire Pit and Home heating (Home)</p> <p>Kitchen & Travel Safety/Thanksgiving (Home & Car)</p> <p>Giving Tuesday/Small Business Saturday (Small Business)</p>

Resources

Scheduling

Best for Instagram

Planoly: Plan your Instagram grid and stories in Planoly. You can also use their free LinkIt tool to link to multiple website pages in your bio. Free for up to 30 planned posts per month.

Later: Later is best used as an Instagram post and stories planner but can be used for Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn too. You can also use their free Linkin.bio tool to link to multiple website pages in your bio. Free for up to 30 scheduled posts per social channel.

Best for Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn

Crowdfire: This tool helps you easily schedule Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn posts plus help find related content to share. Connect three profiles for free or get more customized content curation ideas starting at \$7.49/mo.

Buffer: The tool makes it easy to schedule your social posts. Connect 3 channels and schedule 10 posts at a time for free or upgrade for \$15/mo.

Hootsuite: For a more advanced social scheduling, listening, and content tool, check out Hootsuite. Get started for free or upgrade starting at \$29/month.

Creating Content

Canva: This tool offers easy to use templates for all social channels. There are also templates for videos and printed materials. Free or \$13/mo for tons of extra stock photos and graphics.

Stock Photos: Find free stock photos to use on Pexels, Pixabay, and Unsplash.

Movavi: an easy to use video editing tool. Get started with basic features for free.

Images sizes: This is the source for the image sizes listed above.

Linktr.ee: Share multiple links from one link in your Instagram bio and anywhere else you want. Linktr.ee is text based and does not require the visual element of Planoly or Later. Get started for free or upgrade to custom branding and analytics for \$6/month

Content to Share by Trusted Choice: Find ready to use graphics specific to insurance on Content to Share. Members can download all graphics for free and use them on any digital or print platform.

Latest Trends

Later: Stay up to date on the latest social trends organized by channel.

Social Media Examiner: Deep dive in the latest information on analyzing your social data and getting started with paid ads on each channel.

Social Media Today: Find articles on the latest content, platform, and CMO outlooks on Social Media Today.

Content Marketing Institute: CMI can help you with content related to more than just social media. Find templates, how-to's, and case studies.