

Make the Most of Your Social-Media Sites

A robust presence is always important, but in the age of COVID-19, with people spending record amounts of time online, it's extra crucial. Following are some best-practice tips:

Facebook



- **Display a call-to-action button.** Facebook allows you to choose from standard options like "Book Now" or "Watch Video" or customize by selecting "Add a Button"
- **Engage your audience.** Every post should invite interaction: open-ended questions, polls, silly/heartwarming memes, fill-in-the-blanks, contests
- **Post live videos!** Video content is the most consumed type on Facebook, especially the live variety. Livestreams can now post to IGTV, giving people a longer timeframe to view them
- **Use hashtags sparingly.** Facebook isn't really known for them and too many appear spammy. Limit yourself to one pertinent hashtag on a particularly important post occasionally
- **Try Messenger Rooms.** Facebook's new 50-person video chatrooms are a perfect tool for boutiques. For details: www.vovsmagazine.com/messenger-rooms-perfect-for-bridal

Instagram



- **Post high-quality images/videos.** First and foremost, Instagram is a visual medium. Do not post any photo or video that you're not incredibly proud of
- **Share Stories regularly.** Save the more popular ones as highlights (grouped by category) on your home page
- **Use hashtags.** Studies say nine per post is ideal. Be specific (i.e. #Fall20BridalBestseller) and include a branded boutique hashtag (i.e. #ShanonsBridalCO)
- **Tag other people and brands.** This helps expand your reach and boosts credibility
- **Geotag your location.** It builds a sense of community and appeals to locals
- **Go Live!** It's one of the most authentic, interactive ways to connect with followers. Your audience can submit comments/questions in real time, and you can also bring someone on spur of the moment to converse with you

Pinterest



- **Balance new and old content.** Spend less time pinning existing duplicates and more time creating your own fresh content (images/videos that have not appeared on Pinterest before). Pinterest's algorithm favors accounts that do this
- **Think like a bride.** Generally, they're more interested in seeing boards divided by categories they search for and understand (i.e. plus-size gowns, sleeveless gowns, etc.) than industry specific ones (designer name, fabric, etc)
- **Follow the numbers.** Pinterest recommends pinning 15-25 times a day and maintaining up to 10 relevant boards. If you go much higher it's less effective and you risk being flagged/suspended as spam

Twitter



- **Get to the point.** You're allowed 280 characters but short, to-the-point statements or questions perform best on this platform
- **Add art.** Photos, GIFs and video clips are a great way to capture attention and add personality to your tweets. The latter should be 6-15 seconds long for maximum impact
- **Use hashtags sparingly.** One or two per tweet is all you need
- **Interact!** Retweet relevant content, conduct polls, reply to other tweets and never let a mention go unresponded to
- **Be careful what you like.** You might think liking someone's post is harmless if you don't comment on it. But that like will show up in your followers' newsfeeds creating an impression of what your boutique stands for

YouTube



- **Organize videos into playlists.** Those lists should have clearly defined, broadly appealing topics like Preparing for Your Appointment, Tour our Boutique, Meet our Staff, etc

- **Focus on great titles and video descriptions.** These often make the difference between someone watching or ignoring a video
- **Add subtitles.** This helps both the hearing impaired and anyone who might be watching someplace where noise isn't welcome
- **Avoid annotations.** They annoy many people and often look unprofessional
- **Choose categories and tags strategically.** How you group something makes a difference – use the tags YouTube suggests as well as a few specific variations of your own

Snapchat



- **Tease coming attractions.** Because snaps disappear after 24 hours, this is the perfect platform to give users a "sneak peek" of dress styles, special guests, events or new products to come
- **Offer specials.** Flash sales and exclusive invitations or promotions are a big hit
- **Share a behind-the-scenes look.** Your brides are curious about those everyday moments in your boutique, and this is the perfect platform on which to share them
- **Have fun.** Custom filters, eye-catching GIFs and clever text add personal-ity to your Snaps

TikTok



- **Study it.** The latest platform to debut on the social-media scene, Tik Tok is a short-form, video-sharing app where users create 15-60 second videos on any topic. It's primarily used by Gen Z
- **Keep things light.** Fun, visually appealing content works best. This is NOT the place to attempt a hard sell
- **Mimic trending content.** Regularly check out what's popular and, when appropriate, emulate its style
- **Use music.** It's all the rage on TikTok and one of the easiest ways to spice up a video
- **Create a hashtag challenge.** Challenge users to create content and add your branded hashtag to it. You can also use promoted hashtags and respond to other business's hashtag challenges

Any Site

- **Use a consistent, high-quality cover image.** Don't litter with text and change frequently as seasons/campaigns demand
- **Verify all pertinent info is up-to-date:** website links, store hours, contact info, etc
- **Post regularly.** Silence sends a bad message about your business's stability
- **Forget about best posting times.** They have changed dramatically along with peoples' schedules; instead, pick a regular schedule that works for you
- **Focus on quality/frequency of interaction.** This is more important than number of fans/followers
- **Delete dormant sites.** It's better to maintain one active, engaging presence than a handful of largely ignored ones
- **Feature prominent social-media icons on your website.** They should be on its home page and all links should work
- **Include calls to action.** After someone reads your post or watches a video what do you want them to do? Tell them specifically
- **Ensure reposts come from credible sources.** "Fake news" damages credibility
- **Reply to customer posts/inquiries promptly.** Mention their name when doing so
- **Avoid personal posts/controversial topics.** A business page is not the place
- **Keep a consistent voice.** Typically, this is easier to manage if a single (or small group of) employee handles all accounts
- **Regularly view free analytics.** Consider paid analytics/advertising on sites you're particularly active on
- **Stay up-to-date.** Sites continuously evolve; keep informed on any new features or significant changes

– Shannon Hurd