



Quiip

CHOOSING A SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT TOOL

A simple guide for Australian companies



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Overview

With the proliferation of social media channels and competing priorities for your marketing resources, choosing an effective tool (or tools) to manage your online presence is critical.

Social media management tools are channel-agnostic software applications that help you consolidate your social media efforts. They can be used to publish content, manage customer and community engagement, mitigate risk, provide detailed analytics and assign your team's resources.

As your organisation grows, an effective tool is a must-have for any modern business, and a powerful way to help you stay ahead of the competition and make the most of your online presence.

If you're considering your options and ready to start shopping around, the following guide can help you answer [six essential questions to find the right tool](#)—or tools—for your organisation.



Overview

To simplify the selection process, and maximise the benefits to your business, we ask six key questions to determine which social media management tool might best suit your needs as an organisation.

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Question 1:

What stage are you at?

Before you start, consider what stage your organisation is in. Small business options are available, while enterprise solutions can be tailored to large organisations. Only scale according to your needs.

Stage 1: Starting Out

You are looking to get started on social media for the first time.

Stage 2: Stepping Up

You already use the 'native' social platforms but a better setup would help.

Stage 3: Moving Over

You already use a tool but are ready to transition to something bigger/better, or your current tool isn't right.

Question 2:

What are your goals?

It's important to clarify why you want a social media tool. Prioritising your strategic goals will help narrow down which tools meet your needs and your budget.

Rank these key features in order of importance. Which are optional and which are non-negotiable?

Our Social Media Management Goals

1. To know what the public is saying about our organisation in real time.
2. To scale up or streamline our publishing and community management operations.
3. To better assign social media queries to appropriate team members.
4. To understand who is engaging with our content and how channels are performing.
5. To manage resources, keep costs under control and determine our ROI.



Question 3:

What are your needs?

Social Media Tasks

Publishing It's important to maintain high standards as your accounts and followers increase. Tools can help you plan, draft and schedule posts of all kinds.

Engagement Organise your staff and accounts so you can respond quickly to users' questions and comments. Many tools offer a universal inbox to collate all your messages in one place.

Sponsored Ads and Posts Create, manage, and track your social media ads. Clear results can then help you to optimise and target your campaigns for best results.

Moderation and Risk Management When you need to hide, remove or escalate content, it pays to have systems that support your operating procedures and escalation plan. Assigning tasks to team members can simplify workflows.

Listening Do you need to react to trends? Some tools aggregate all your brand mentions in a single inbox. Or, imagine having automated reports to keep you or your executive team up-to-date.

Sentiment Is jumping on any spike in negative mentions of your brand a high priority? Improve your brand reputation with useful metrics and qualitative analysis.

Analytics and Reporting A unified experience can combine data across multiple platforms. Collate insights, compare and report on growth, reach and influencers.



Question 3:

What are your needs?

Integrations

Some social media tools utilise add-ons and integrations to synch with other popular programs. These add-ons can seamlessly connect your social media efforts to other business areas and maximise your resources.

This level of integration can greatly enhance your operations, but requires collaboration and buy-in from across your business.

Some popular integrations include:

- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) e.g. Salesforce
- Customer service platforms e.g. Zendesk
- Link shorteners and URL management e.g. Bit.ly or Linktree
- Design platforms e.g. Canva or Adobe
- Analytics e.g. Google Analytics
- Digital asset managers (DAM) e.g. Dropbox

Extra Features

- Chat-bots and AI powered features
- Social and e-commerce
- Influencer marketing
- Approval and creative workflows
- Image and video editing
- Automated feed publishing
- Employee Advocacy
- Link in bio



Question 4:

How will it work?

Consider your workflows

Identify the pain-points or bottlenecks in your current processes - both online and offline - to ensure your chosen tool can/will improve your workflow.

Surveying staff can help identify new opportunities to improve the speed and visibility of your work and results.

Choose a tool that can help you streamline your workflow, adding efficiencies not adding layers of confusion or manual effort. It is only simplifying your work if it also improves your output.

WORKFLOWS are plans and processes that help ensure that every post is well-crafted, strategic, and aligned with your brand guidelines.

The right social media management toolset should help you streamline workflows around publishing, engagement, service and issues management, moderation and reporting.

Question 4:

How will it work?

Ask:

- Who needs to approve the creation and publication of social media content? How could tools assist that process?
- Who is responsible for scheduling and publishing social media content?
- What are your processes for managing social media risk and crises?
- Who will need access to view, assess, action or escalate social media activity from both the organisation and users?
- Are there tasks that can be automated or simplified?

Consider:

- Once you know your main stakeholders, take a moment to survey their needs and capture requirements.
- Major or common pain points. What is slowing people down? Where are things getting missed or muddled?
- Who really needs access? To help accountability and oversight, it can be useful to have a consolidated team of admins/agents who take responsibility on the tools for their areas of expertise - e.g. customer service, PR, content, community management

Question 4:

How will it work?

Technical Considerations:

Security and compliance

Any new tool should first be carefully checked to avoid exposing your data to risk. Consult with IT and stakeholders to capture integration or interoperability requirements and be sure any vendor has up-to-date documentation.

Mobility

With many staff now working remotely, it's vital you factor in mobile apps and your organisation's approach to helping staff operate technology out of the office and after hours, if needed. Verify your most critical features (e.g. publishing, triage) are available on-the-go.

API Access

An API, or application programming interface, helps connect two pieces of software, e.g. Enabling a URL preview image when scheduling content. All platforms have restrictions on which data they release to businesses, though some may be available at a cost. Be aware of these restrictions

Question 5: How will it be implemented?

Training

Before you select your tool, consider what skills are needed and rank these in order of importance. Which are optional and which are non-negotiable?

Map out a training plan that accounts for your team's capacity to handle the work and their capacity to learn:

1. Who needs training?
2. What do they need training in?
3. Does the vendor conduct training sessions, workshops, on-call support, and provide easy-to-access documentation?
4. What are the associated costs?

NOTE: Vendors often tailor their onboarding or training to your team or offer on-demand video tutorials. Check if this is included in any contract.



Question 5: How will it be implemented?

Change Management

Anytime you introduce new tools, you need to manage the shift from one way of working to another. When you're choosing your tool, think through the ripple effects it may have through the rest of your organisation.

- ◆ How can it help address current work-flow, triaging, customer or audience support challenges?
- ◆ Will adopting it help improve operational approaches or processes?
- ◆ How much complexity might it add to existing processes? Note: this may be a good and/or necessary thing for your organisation, but should be a factor in your assessment.
- ◆ Are there others that might benefit from learning and deploying the tool?
- ◆ How much change management will be required to transition into using the tool?

Most organisations have entrenched habits that require time and planning to move away from.

Ask if a certain tool may make culture change easier or harder to manage, and realistically estimate the internal effort to transition.

Question 6: Partner or provider?

Where are you in your social media journey?

Determine how important it is for you to have a vendor you can work with over time as your needs evolve.

For some organisations (particularly larger ones investing in a significant number of licenses for software), it pays to have a vendor willing to work closely and collaboratively; happy to share upcoming functionality, and willing to engage in 1-1 conversations about optimising the tool for your needs. A partner can support customisation, early access to features, product input and consultation to help you optimise your experience.

But sometimes, a casual relationship does the job. If you're earlier in your social media journey, it can be useful to test-drive a few options before committing to a favourite. There's no perfect approach, only what's right for you.

Question 6: Partner or provider?

Consider:

- ◆ Does the tool position themselves as a partner for businesses? Or an off-the-shelf option with no frills? Do they allow for both if you change your mind?
- ◆ How confident are you in capturing your needs and predicting your social media tool usage for the next 18 months?
- ◆ If you need to change tools again - or regularly - how will your organisation cope, both practically and culturally?
- ◆ How likely it is you would like some form of customisation?
- ◆ Would it be valuable for your business to have visibility of, or access to, features and functionality in advance (e.g. in early trial/beta)?

Next steps: Selecting a tool

Cost:

Some costs are constant, while others increase as your requirements do. Not all tools itemise their pricing. So, to be confident negotiating a deal that works for your needs, here are a few pointers on potential costs.

Ask:

- Can you save by combining multiple systems into a single tool?
- Is the cost in another currency and have you allowed for fluctuations?
- Are they willing to share their product roadmap with you?
- Are some features hidden behind more costly tiers?
- Does the tool allow a free trial before purchase?
- Are you buying direct from a firm, or are you connected with a salesperson? (You can't negotiate with a firm).
- Is onboarding or training included?
- Does pricing increase based on number of users, or platforms, or both?

Consider:

- How many user accounts and social accounts you will require - depending on the tool, this can impact the costs dramatically.
- Audit your current spend on social media management and ask how much the improved processes will save you and your team.
- Don't forget the cost of implementation and training!

Next steps: Selecting a tool

Negotiations and trial periods

- Could you negotiate a better deal? Many vendors are willing to drop the price to get your signature on the dotted line. Could they offer you extra features or user accounts to get you on board?
- Vendors are often glad to provide a trial period for free or at a reduced rate. While some features may be limited during this time, it will give you a hands-on experience that is difficult to replicate in a sales environment.
- Have you asked for references? Talk to your peers (and read white papers!) who use the tools you're considering. They can give you valuable insights into the pros and cons of each tool. Your vendor should be able to provide details of other clients who you can contact to hear their firsthand experience

Identifying the perfect fit for your business

There has been much upheaval in social media networks in recent years. Likewise, social media management tools continue to adapt and rearrange their priorities to cater to the shifting landscape.

Please note: The following is not a comprehensive list and while this information was accurate as of April 2024, it is liable to change at any time.



Next steps: Selecting a tool

Vendor	Plans for small social teams and freelancers	Plans for mid-sized businesses	Plans for enterprise businesses
Brandwatch		✓	✓
Buffer	✓	✓	
CoSchedule	✓	✓	✓
Emplifi	✓	✓	
Hootsuite		✓	✓
HubSpot	✓	✓	✓
Khoros Care		✓	✓
Khoros Inbox			✓
Meltwater		✓	✓
Meta Business Manager	FREE	FREE	FREE
Sendible	✓	✓	✓
Sked Social		✓	✓
Sprinklr			✓
Sprout Social		✓	✓
SparkCentral			✓

Final considerations

One tool to rule them all - or a combination?

Businesses rarely have all their needs addressed by a single tool, even if it's very comprehensive. You will likely find you need some combination.

Pros of fewer tools: less to learn and roll-out, possibly less cost.

Cons of fewer tools: single/concentrated points of failure.

Pros of many tools: fail-safes, varied staff skill-sets, possibly less cost than a single enterprise system.

Cons of many tools: added complexity, possible added cost.

Good tools create opportunity

The business of social media is about people, first and foremost. Both those inside your organisation and those you deal with in the wider world.

A good social media management tool-set should help save costs and boost productivity, but most importantly, the efficiencies they introduce free your team to invest in the human-to-human side of their work, and the new value this generates.

Good luck finding good tools to support the next step in your journey!



Quiip

**At Quiip our mission is to connect,
protect and support people online.**

Need our help or insights?

Contact us below, we'd love to chat.



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