

*THE SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS*

# 2016 HANDBOOK

NOV 2015  
*Social Media*  
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# INTRODUCTION

2016 is nearly here, and it's bound to be a big year for social media. For most of the major social networks, they've been going from strength to strength - and they don't show any signs of slowing down. To bring Social Media Month to a close, we thought it was only appropriate to look forward and see how social media may evolve in the new year.

In this eBook, we explore the following topics, all of which are essential to having an effective presence on social media now and in 2016:

- + A social media checklist covering the fundamentals of what you need to account for your brand's presence
- + Communicating with social media users during a brand crisis
- + The social media trends for 2016:
  - + Advertising
  - + Immersive experiences
  - + Influencer marketing
- + A social media editorial calendar - usable both digitally and as a hard copy printout



# SOCIAL MEDIA CHECKLIST

Here's a quick checklist of what you should have figured out on social media:

- + **Key Social Objectives:** What would you like to achieve from your time on social media? Start with an initial goal (e.g. increase brand awareness), but you are free to revise and refine these objectives over time.
- + **Social Media Platforms:** Which platforms are you going to opt for? It's important to seriously consider each one. You don't have to be on all of them in order to be successful.
  - + **Facebook** - has more than half of Australia's population on it; ideal for awareness
  - + **Twitter** - microblogging platform that is beneficial for both B2B and B2C businesses
  - + **LinkedIn** - professional social network, ideal for B2B and includes 4 paid versions all under the LinkedIn Professional banner
  - + **Instagram** - photo and video-sharing social network that relies on a mobile app; has proven beneficial for brands that can utilise a strong visual presence (e.g. fashion brands, restaurants, etc.)
  - + **Snapchat** - Ephemeral messaging platform that allow users (personal users or brands) send out photo or video-based messages that eventually delete themselves
- + **Periscope** - Live-streaming app owned by Twitter that can allow brands to engage with users in real time and provide them with a glimpse into their work culture or significant events
- + **Determine Your Voice:** Know what kind of voice/tone you want your social media accounts to have. You can base this voice off what your ideal audience is. The voice you use will differ depending on your demographic (e.g. you're going to use a different voice for business managers vs the voice you'd use for parents).
- + **Know How to Respond to Comments:** Whether they're good or bad, you need to know how to respond to comments made on your different social media accounts. Start off by writing 3 form responses to positive comments and 3 form responses to negative comments. If you're on Twitter, try and base the responses on the 140-character restriction as a safety. They can be adapted and expanded on different networks.
- + **Have a Plan for a Crisis:** When a brand crisis occurs that threatens to severely damage your brand's reputation and financial future, you need to have a response plan in place. Research how other brands have effectively responded to social media crises and map out your own response plan. Also refer to the next session for more information.

# CRISIS COMMUNICATION

At this point in time, more than half of Australia's population is active on Facebook. Even when you take the other social networks out of the equation (which you shouldn't), that's still a massive audience that cannot be ignored in the event of a social media crisis. We touched on this earlier in Social Media Month, but the simple reality is that online complaints and social media crises can no longer be pushed aside. You need to respond. So if you don't already have clear response plans in place, make sure you start fleshing them out now so that you do by the time 2016 rolls around.

**And, as we noted in the last eBook on dealing with social media crises, don't forget the following:**

The important point of difference with social media is the fact that if someone complains, chances are their complaint is public. Anyone who visits your Facebook page, Twitter timeline, Instagram profile, etc. will be able to see the negative comments someone has made against your brand, which in turn increases the life and exposure triggered by some brand-related crisis.



For any public social media complaint you receive, your initial reply should acknowledge their complaint, state your intention to resolve the issue, and then encourage them to discuss the issue further with you away from the public eye. When we say “take the conversation offline”, we don't literally mean they have to visit your physical location or call you; but rather they should send you a private message on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or wherever the complaint originated from. This keeps public exposure to a minimum and better your chances of being able to resolve the crisis without it becoming a verbal fisticuffs on a public platform.

# SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS

With 2016 only a month away, it's worth exploring the possible trends we may see in the new year in regards to social media. Of course, it's important to keep in mind that these are educated guesses, so there's still the possibility that they may not come to fruition. However, if social media in 2015 has shown us anything, it's that the medium is a rapidly changing one.

## Advertising

Whether you're a fan of ads on social media or not, the main means in which the majority of social networks make their money is through advertising.

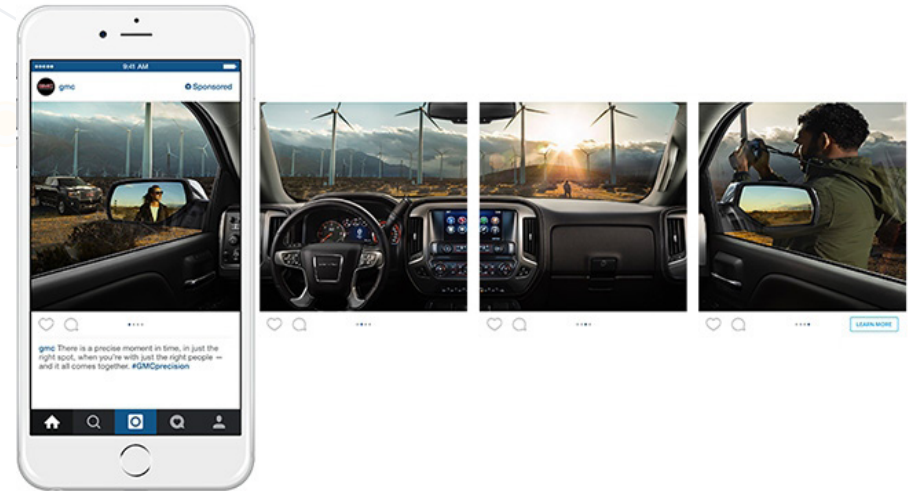


# TRENDS FACEBOOK

In order to keep its 1.4 billion user base-heavy platform going for free, Facebook understandably relies on advertising that comes in several varieties including Sponsored Posts, Suggested Pages, display ads, and video ads. Recently, [Facebook reported](#) that its carousel ads format (which initially started on desktop) had yielded some of the best results for brands, stating: “carousel link ads drive 30-50% lower cost-per-conversion and 20-30% lower cost-per-click than single-image link ads.”

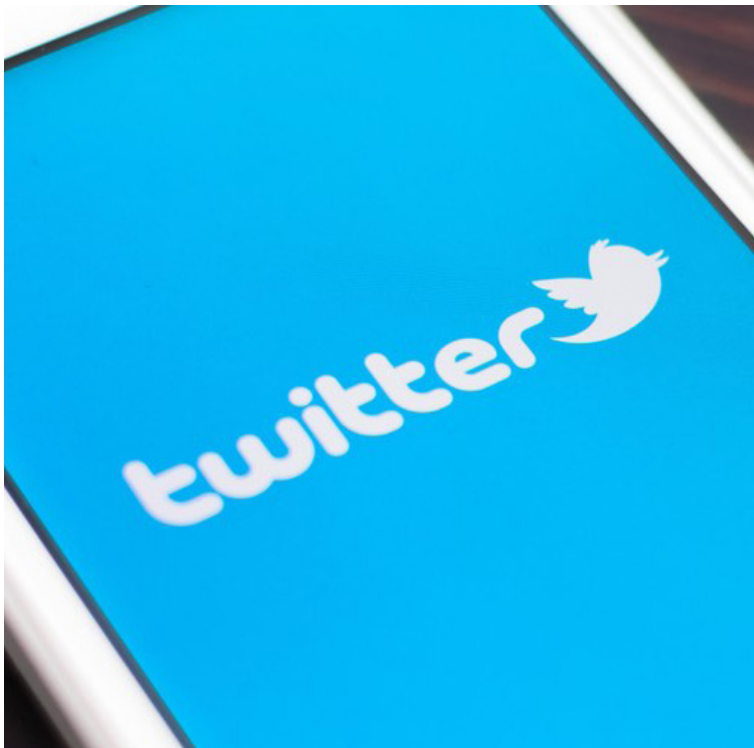
As a result, Facebook has made a conscious effort to invest more into carousel ads, including making them available for mobile app ads. Moving into 2016, don't be surprised if you do come across more of these carousel-style ads on the social network.

Another interesting - but as of yet unexplored - area where ads could come into play is with Facebook's 360° videos. In case you missed it, the social network released 360° video functionality a couple of months back, which allows users to actively manipulate videos in any direction while watching them. The feature was initially rolled out to desktop and Android, and recently became available on iOS.



While the feature is certainly a unique one for Facebook, how it could be applied in the future is an interesting question. One key point worth noting is that Facebook's acquisition of Oculus VR and the impending Q1 release of the Oculus Rift virtual reality headset in 2016 could lead to a greater evolution of 360° videos. In terms of advertising, there could be a possibility to utilise these types of videos as a means of advertising, but it would also mean brands would need to have the required equipment to produce such immersive content.

# TRENDS TWITTER



Twitter has been struggling in recent times to increase its current user base, which has led to a number of new and revised features over the last couple of months. First there was Moments, then changing the favourite to a like (heart), and now signs that they're testing out varied emoji reaction options similar to Facebook.

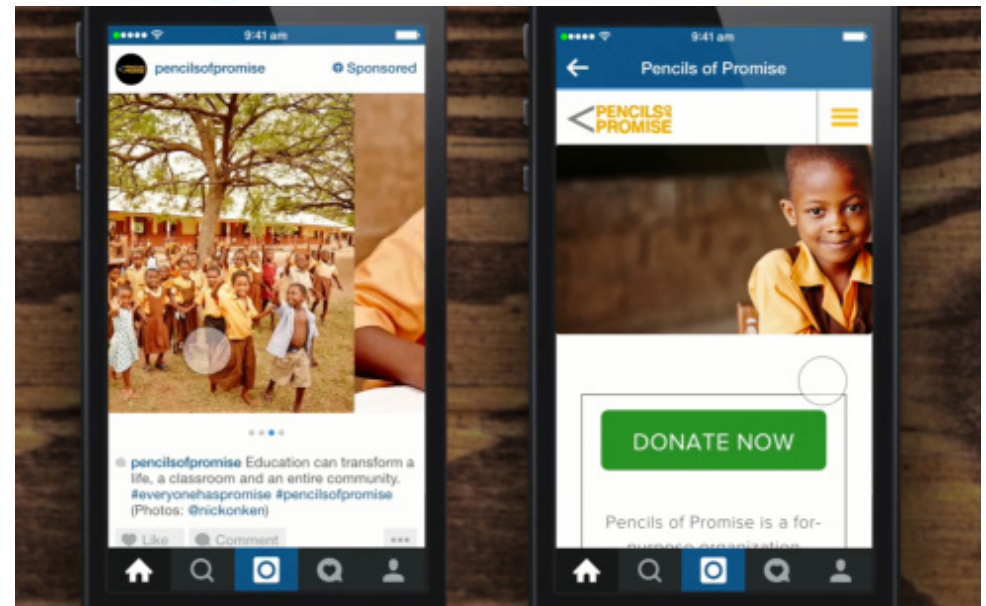
It's in Twitter's Moments where a new advertising option is likely to emerge. Moments are human-curated collections around a specific trending story (e.g. an election) that are arranged in chronological order from the start of the Moment until the end - a departure from the usual reverse-chronological order people are accustomed to on Twitter.

As noted by Twitter, however, Moments won't exclusively be organic. [The company is currently testing Promoted Moments](#), which will allow brands to pay to have a moment placed front and centre when people access the Moments tab. Promoted content has always been the advertising mainstay on Twitter, so it's not that surprising to see that it will carry over to its latest feature. While currently in testing, it's a safe bet you'll come across more and more Moments that were actually paid for on the social network in 2016.

# TRENDS INSTAGRAM

At the end of September this year, advertising on Instagram opened up to the majority of brands (from big to small) around the world. As long as you have a Facebook account tied to your Instagram account, you can set up Instagram ads via Facebook itself. Those available come in two primary forms: photos and videos. The key difference between a video ad and a normal video is that video ads can run up to 30 seconds length - double that of a normal video.

Again, this is a case where advertising will undoubtedly grow over the coming months and especially in 2016. Whether or not Instagram release more ad options remains to be seen, but it's safe to assume they will. How many ads users see in their Instagram feeds is dependent on a couple of variables, particularly whether or not their Facebook and Instagram accounts are linked. If they are, brands can utilise the users' Facebook data (e.g. their age, location, likes, etc.) to create more targeted Instagram ads.



# TRENDS SNAPCHAT

In terms of monetisation, Snapchat is still in the early stages of figuring out ways to turn a profit. The company's main efforts in recent times have come in the form of in-app purchases/ microtransactions that allow users to gain access to more Snap replays or purchase more Selfie Lenses that they can then keep forever. These cost 99 cents per transaction, which could bring about some decent profits provided users actively embrace these purchases.

Moving forward, however, [there are reports that Snapchat may introduce branded Selfie Lenses](#) where a brand can pay Snapchat to put up a Selfie Lens that has their branding on it. This is certainly an interesting move if true, and whether or not users would embrace such branded Lenses remains to be seen. Other advertising options are being considered, but no concrete information has really come to the fore regarding this.

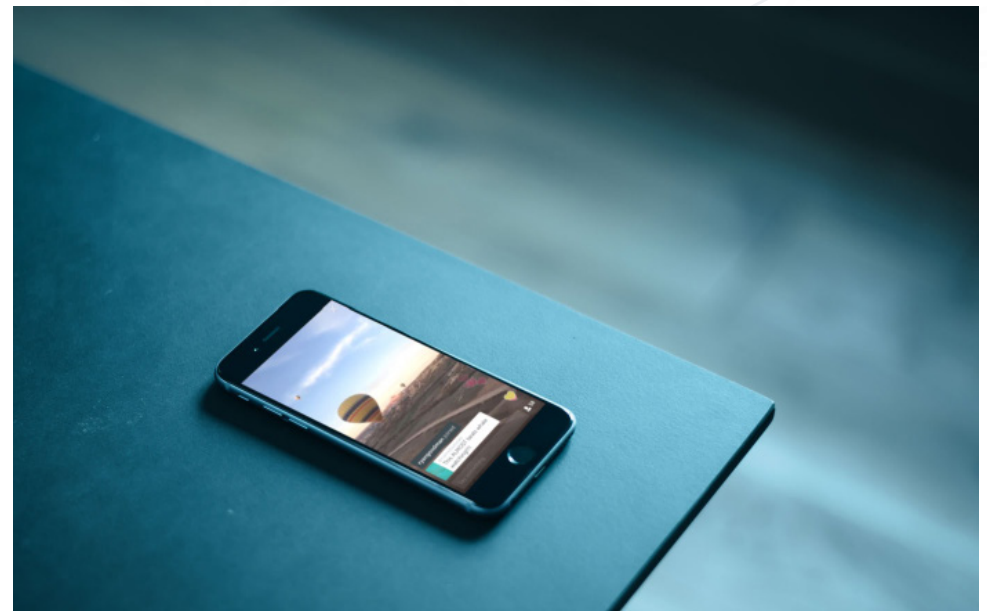
In 2016, it's likely more in-app purchases will be introduced and, possibly, the branded Selfie Lenses.



# TRENDS PERISCOPE

When it comes to the likes of Periscope and Meerkat, the question of advertising is a little harder to answer. As both apps are in a relative infancy, neither have really spent that much time actively discussing how advertising will work. Periscope, which is owned by Twitter, will undoubtedly want to be able to turn a profit from live streams, but it's all a question of how.

Some possibilities could include promoted live streams, where a brand can pay to have its stream pushed through to more Periscope users when it's holding a stream it believes will truly benefit its brand reach and growth. Another option could be something like display ads, though it's possible an approach like this may not go down well with users. Just like when watching a video on YouTube, banner ads that pop up down the bottom may be seen as too intrusive and turn people away from the platform.



# IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

An interesting shift that has occurred in the social media world throughout 2015 has been the active effort among many platforms to provide more immersive, and/or real-time experiences. Whether it's the likes of live streaming via Periscope, real time curation in the form of Twitter Moments or Facebook's 360° videos, these more immediate or interactive experiences are growing in popularity.

It's hard to say just how more extensive these will become in 2016, but the wheels in the space of social media and virtual reality certainly appear to be turning. Recently, the joint venture between Samsung and Oculus VR saw the release of the Samsung Gear VR, which allows you to experience virtual reality at a relatively cheap price. The full version of the Oculus Rift is expected to have a commercial release in the first quarter of 2016 (as noted earlier).

Given that Facebook acquired Oculus VR (the company that got its initial Oculus Rift funding via a Kickstarter campaign), the

fact can't be ignored that the social media giant will likely want to utilise the technology for more immersive social experiences. The 360° videos are likely to be integrated with Oculus down the line, allowing an individual to (as close to) literally immerse themselves in the experience. Other discussions relating to Oculus Rift's applications in the social space include [recreating currently unreachable/uninhabitable places](#) (e.g. Mars) and allowing friends and family to virtually explore them together.

Imagine your family is across the world and instead of Skyping them, you throw on some version of Oculus and explore another world with them instead. These kinds of experiences are probably still a few years down the line, but 2016 will be the year where the transition to virtual reality being more widely adopted will take place. As a point of reference, [Samsung's Gear VR has sold out on Amazon at the time of writing.](#)

# INFLUENCER MARKETING



While the majority of the big social media players offer advertising options, brands have experienced mixed fortunes when it comes to how effective these ad options are. This, in turn, has given rise to a different type of advertising/marketing known as influencer marketing.

This is where a brand pays a social media influencer (aka a social media celebrity) to promote their brand/product in a more subtle manner to their followers across one or several social media platforms. The end result could be, for example, a candid Instagram photo with one of the products in it.

The idea of influencer marketing is that a brand can increase its reach and product exposure to an audience in a way that feels more organic. While Australian laws do not require a social media user to disclose when they're creating a post that is sponsored

by a brand, many influencers do with a simple hashtag denoting its sponsored nature or by directly tagging the brand itself. The more logical the relationship between the brand and influencer (e.g. a fashion brand getting a fashion lover to do a post), the more successful this type of marketing is likely to be.

With the launch of [TRIBE Influencer](#) in Australia, an app specifically designed to connect brands with social media influencers, the regularity of influencer marketing-based posts could become more frequent in 2016. Even if an app such as TRIBE did not exist, more and more brands appear to be turning to this marketing method as a way of circumventing the limitations of more typical advertising approaches on social media and the web at large.

# EDITORIAL CALENDAR


Month \_\_\_\_\_ Week \_\_\_\_\_

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
 FACEBOOK						
 TWITTER						
 GOOGLE+						
 INSTAGRAM						
 LINKEDIN						
 YOUTUBE						



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 [www.marginmedia.com.au](http://www.marginmedia.com.au)

 1300 798 848

 [mat@marginmedia.com.au](mailto:mat@marginmedia.com.au)

