From Null to Notable: Creating a Brand on Social Media

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ABSTRACT

Navigating social media as a programmer requires a blend of technical knowledge, personal branding, and community engagement. The foci of this presentation are the best social media practices and strategies for enhancing visibility through tagging individuals/companies, establishing regular posting schedules, and leveraging fun and interactive content. Resources for free design software will be provided as well as practical tips for integrating branding elements in the creation of visually striking graphics. By following these guidelines, you can effectively promote yourself and engage your followers.

INTRODUCTION

Social media refers to the digital infrastructure of online platforms that enable users to create, share, and exchange content and while interacting with others (Tufts University, 2024). Popular platforms like LinkedIn, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok specialize in various media types, including text, images, videos, and live streams.

Organizations that lack a social media presence are missing out on the rapidly expanding opportunity that social media presents. Nearly two-thirds of the world's population (about 5.24 billion people) using social media (Kemp, Digital 2025: Global Overview Report, 2025). Every day, the average American spends two and a half hours scrolling on their social media feeds (Howarth, 2025). Social media is an established platform where people are already engaged. Having this online presence will expand your organization's reach far beyond email and website traffic. This paper introduces the six major social media platforms of 2025 and provides strategies for branding and growing your organization's online presence.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Platforms like LinkedIn, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok each have unique features and user demographics. This overview highlights key aspects of these top-performing platforms, offering insights into their audiences, content formats, and usage patterns. Understanding these details will help you tailor your social media strategy to reach and engage your target audience effectively.

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is a professional platform primarily used for text posts and sharing articles. It is most popular among Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z, aged 18 to 60 years. These users typically have completed higher education and have entered the workforce. As of January 2025, the U.S. has 250 million registered LinkedIn members (Kemp, LinkedIn Users, Stats, Data & Trends for 2025, 2025). This large American user base translates to 1 in every 4 daily LinkedIn users living in America, with India as a close second. LinkedIn users seek educational information being and followed by community engagement (Sheikh, 2025). On average, people spend about 10 minutes daily on the LinkedIn (Semrush, 2025), which is significantly less time than other social media platforms.

YOUTUBE

YouTube is a video-sharing platform that caters two main types of videos: Shorts, vertical videos that are less than 60 seconds (Spangler, 2022), and Long-form videos, landscape videos that are over 10 minutes. A balanced mix of video formats helps brands maintain engagement while catering to different audience preferences (Sheikh, 2025). YouTube's user demographics are the widest, with a fairly uniform distribution of over 1 billion users spanning all ages from 12 to 65+ worldwide. Creating YouTube content requires a camera, microphone, and basic editing skills, making it the most resource-intensive platform. Users spend the most time on YouTube – about an hour a day – compared to other social media platforms (Newberry, 2024).

X (FORMERLY TWITTER)

X is best used for releasing real-time, concise information in bursts of text posts of 280 characters or less. Around the time of the change of management in 2022, the growth of X has stunted compared to other social media platforms. X, however, retains its largely popular userbase of 600 million (250 million active users per day) (Kemp, X Users, Stats, Data & Trends for 2025, 2025) and is one of the most popular platforms for breaking news. The majority of X users are mostly male and less 35 years old (Newberry, 2024).

FACEBOOK

Facebook is the largest and most robust social media platform to date, with over 3 billion monthly active users (Sheikh, 2025), which is especially notable considering that Facebook is blocked in China (Kemp, Digital 2025: Global Overview Report, 2025). It supports diverse content types, including articles, photos, videos, text posts, polls, events, messaging, and groups. While still widely used, Facebook is most popular among users aged 45 and older, with declining engagement among Gen Alpha, Gen Z, and Millennials aged 18 to 44. The average user spends about 20 minutes per day on Facebook (Sheikh, 2025).
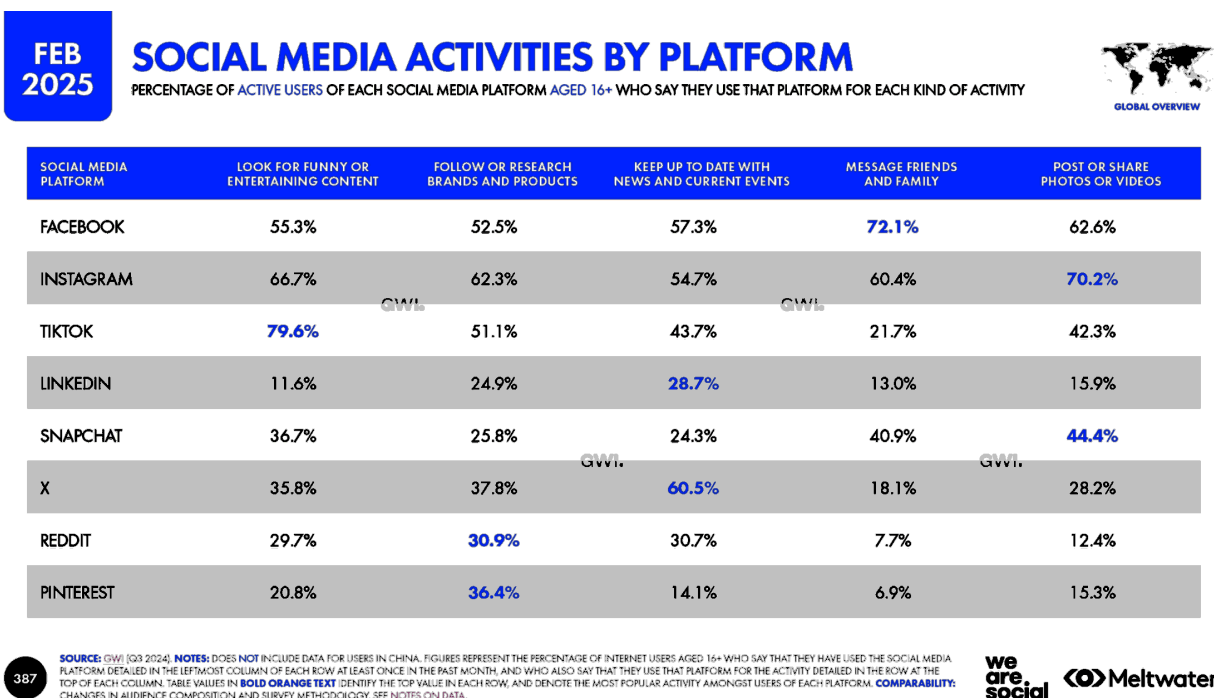
INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a visual storytelling social media platform that initially rose to popularity with its 1:1 aspect ratio and photo filters. It has since expanded to include live videos, Reels, Threads, and more (Instagram, 2020). Instagram's user base predominantly 62% of its userbase is under 34 years old (Sheikh, 2025). The platform has 2 billion users who spend an average of 20 minutes per day on it.

TIKTOK

TikTok features videos ranging from 60 seconds to 3 minutes and is one of the fastest-growing social media platforms. 62% of its userbase is under 34 years old, although there is a recent and growing popularity among Baby Boomers. TikTok is still growing in popularity and has about 1.6 billion active users each month.

WHICH PLATFORM(S) TO USE

The average American actively uses 6 to 7 social media platforms per month (Wong, 2023). This multiplicity renders an overlap in the audiences of each platform, so it is neither necessary nor advised to expend high effort on having a small presence across all social media platforms Instead, a strong, targeted presence on one or two platforms that align with your audience's preferences can yield better engagement. Each platform serves different user needs, so selecting the correct combination based on your objectives is crucial for an effective social media presence. (Kemp, Digital 2025: Global Overview Report, 2025). Figure 1 below provides a detailed breakdown of preferred activities by social media platform.

Figure 1 Social Media Activities by Platform[1]

SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES BY PLATFORM
FEB 2025

PERCENTAGE OF ACTIVE USERS OF EACH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM AGED 16+ WHO SAY THEY USE THAT PLATFORM FOR EACH KIND OF ACTIVITY

GLOBAL OVERVIEW

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM	LOOK FOR FUNNY OR ENTERTAINING CONTENT	FOLLOW OR RESEARCH BRANDS AND PRODUCTS	KEEP UP TO DATE WITH NEWS AND CURRENT EVENTS	MESSAGE FRIENDS AND FAMILY	POST OR SHARE PHOTOS OR VIDEOS
FACEBOOK	55.3%	52.5%	57.3%	72.1%	62.6%
INSTAGRAM	66.7%	62.3%	54.7%	60.4%	70.2%
TIKTOK	79.6%	51.1%	43.7%	21.7%	42.3%
LINKEDIN	11.6%	24.9%	28.7%	13.0%	15.9%
SNAPCHAT	36.7%	25.8%	24.3%	40.9%	44.4%
X	35.8%	37.8%	60.5%	18.1%	28.2%
REDDIT	29.7%	30.9%	30.7%	7.7%	12.4%
PINTEREST	20.8%	36.4%	14.1%	6.9%	15.3%

387 **SOURCE:** GWI (Q3 2024). **NOTES:** DOES NOT INCLUDE DATA FOR USERS IN CHINA. FIGURES REPRESENT THE PERCENTAGE OF INTERNET USERS AGED 16+ WHO SAY THAT THEY HAVE USED THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM DETAILED IN THE LEFTMOST COLUMN OF EACH ROW AT LEAST ONCE IN THE PAST MONTH, AND WHO ALSO SAY THAT THEY USE THAT PLATFORM FOR THE ACTIVITY DETAILED IN THE ROW AT THE TOP OF EACH COLUMN. TABLE VALUES IN **BOLD ORANGE TEXT** IDENTIFY THE TOP VALUE IN EACH ROW, AND DENOTE THE MOST POPULAR ACTIVITY AMONGST USERS OF EACH PLATFORM. **COMPARABILITY:** CHANGES IN AUDIENCE COMPOSITION AND SURVEY METHODOLOGY. SEE NOTES ON DATA.

we are social   ⟨O⟩ Meltwater

Different platforms cater to different user needs. LinkedIn, YouTube, and X are primarily used for consuming news and industry updates; Facebook is favored for personal connections; Instagram focuses on image sharing; and TikTok is centered around entertainment (Kemp, Digital 2025: Global Overview Report, 2025).

A professional organization whose primary goal is hosting conferences should consider having a presence on LinkedIn, X, and YouTube. LinkedIn is good for sharing documents as well as leveraging the social network of content creators (authors, speakers, instructors) by tagging these individuals and their companies. X excels at real-time updates, making it perfect for live tweets and event announcements. YouTube is an ideal location to host videos of quick tips (5 minutes or less) as well as recordings of longer, more informational presentations (20 – 50 minutes).

BEST PRACTICES

SETTING UP ACCOUNTS

Use a single organization email as the primary for all social media accounts. This centralized approach simplifies management of access, reduces the risk of losing access, and facilitates user transitions.

It is highly recommended use a password manager for maintaining passwords in a centralized, secure, and easily accessible manner.

CENTRALIZED DRAFTING/SCHEDULING SYSTEM

Having a centralized location to draft and schedule social media content aids in tracking progress, managing the posting schedule, preventing overlaps, and ensuring timely content delivery. A central location facilitates collaboration and coordination and even provides the ability for the review and approval of drafted posts prior to publication. There are free and paid scheduling service providers that offer varying drafting, scheduling, and analytics (Statler, 2024). It's best to research which service best fits your organization's needs

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[1] Source: a recolored screenshot of a table from (Kemp, Digital 2025: Global Overview Report, 2025)

GRAPHICS

The primary purpose of graphics is to capture the audience's attention and engage them: read the text of the post, click the link, attend the conference.

Graphics play a crucial role in social media branding, so it's essential that the signature is always visible and unobstructed to enhance brand recognition.

Figure 2 PharmaSUG Horizontal Signature

The signature contains: the wordmark, the letters "Pharma" in dark blue and the letters "SUG" in light green; the icon, a green semicircle with the legs of the Coronado Bridge and the San Diego skyline; and the location and year of the conference. Combined, these elements create the signature for the PharmaSUG 2025 conference and should be clearly visible on all posts and graphics pertaining to this year's conference. Variations of this signature are encouraged but should adhere to a standardized format, such as vertical or horizontal configurations, inverted color configurations (e.g., replacing dark blue with white), one-color configuration (e.g., all dark blue on a transparent background).

Consistently using company colors across all posts reinforces brand identity. For instance, the PharmaSUG 2025 signature contains dark blue (#173654), light green (#98C83E), and red (#ED1C24). These three colors should be the predominant in every graphic and may be accompanied by complimentary colors. Neutral colors like white, black, and gray work well with any design, while warm complementary colors such as gold and beige, and cool complementary colors like teal, cyan, and mint, specifically work well with dark blue and green (Piktochart Team, 2024).

When creating multiple related posts, following a template ensures that the posts are visually similar in structure, color, and content. This visual consistency in structure, color and content enhances the message delivery and reinforces brand recognition.

TEXT

When crafting text for social media posts, several key practices should be followed. Always mention the organization's name, event, and/or product to reinforce brand identity. Keep posts short yet provide value. To combat the short attention spans of the average social media user, the text of social media posts should not exceed three sentences and should prioritize directing users to a specific resource (e.g., URL) with relevant details. Include a call to action to encourage engagement and, where applicable, provide direct URLs for easy access to more information. Tagging relevant accounts of companies, products and/or individuals can increase visibility and interaction. Using hashtags to highlight key ideas and phrases from the text of your post. Most social media platforms encourage users to follow specific hashtags in addition to specific accounts, so leverage what you can. Always revise posts to ensure clarity, accuracy, and professionalism.

#PharmaSUG #PharmaSUG2025 #Short #CallToAction #HashTag #Tagging #Revise

POSTING

Maintaining a regular posting schedule is essential for keeping your audience engaged and informed, but it is important to monitor the scheduled posts, and avoid anything that may appear insensitive or out of

touch during significant events or tragedies. For example, if California is engulfed in forest fires and decreased air quality, it would be untimely to make a post about going outside and taking a gulp of fresh air.

To prevent follower fatigue and a decrease in followers, avoid overwhelming your audience with constant requests for sponsorships, content, or registrations. Instead, balance promotional content with educational, inspirational, and informative posts to create a more engaging and varied feed. Additionally, actively monitoring and promptly responding to questions, feedback, and interactions helps foster a sense of community and enhances overall engagement.

REMEMBER, THE INTERNET IS FOREVER

- Building a reputation takes years, but it can be destroyed in seconds.

- Never share confidential information.

- Always verify the accuracy of the information before posting to avoid spreading fake news.

- Controversial topics, including political, religious, holiday, and pandemic-related issues, should be avoided to prevent alienating segments of your audience.

- Although copyright laws may not restrict personal use, they do apply to organizations. Before using any existing media (such as pictures, videos, animations, music, etc.), ensure that you are using the graphic appropriately—whether that means purchasing a license, providing proper attribution, or confirming that no usage restrictions apply.

- High-frequency or repetitive posts can overwhelm and annoy your audience, so maintain a balanced posting schedule.

- posts with your organization's policies and guidelines to maintain consistency and professionalism.

FREE RESOURCES

Graphic editors:

- Canva: https://www.canva.com/
  - Canva is a popular online graphic design platform that provides users with:
    - Pre-made, easily customizable templates
    - Library of photos, videos, graphics, icons, shames, and fonts
    - Designs can be downloaded in various formats such as PNG, JPG, PDF, MP4, GIF, and more.
- Gimp: https://www.gimp.org/downloads/
  - Gimp is a free and open-source raster graphics editor that can be used for free-form drawing, image manipulation, image editing, and more
- Paint.net: https://www.getpaint.net/
  - Paint.NET is image and photo editing software for PCs that run Windows.

Virtual Assistant

- ChatGPT: https://chatgpt.com/

- Microsoft's CoPilot: https://copilot.microsoft.com/chats

- Google's Gemini: https://gemini.google.com/app

- X's Grok: https://x.ai/grok

Media File Repository

- Wikimedia Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
    - A library of images, sound, and video clips that you can search and filter by license to find media that you are free to use in your organization's social media content

CONCLUSION

Effectively leveraging social media requires a strategic approach that balances engagement, branding, and consistency. By selecting the right platforms, maintaining a regular posting schedule, and utilizing engaging content, organizations can expand their reach and strengthen their online presence. Use compelling and consistent graphics and text to establish and build your organization's brand identity. Social media is not just a supplementary tool but a crucial component of modern communication. A well-executed social media strategy ensures that your message reaches the right audience, fostering engagement and long-term growth.

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