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The official first day of summer is still a few weeks away, but now that Memorial Day is past, it's time to kick your summer marketing plans into high gear. For most small businesses, summer is the time when there are more opportunities than ever to participate in local events in the community, get outside and enjoy the weather, and generally "get social." To get the most out of your summer marketing, of course, you can magnify it all by sharing it on social media. Here are 7 social media marketing ideas your business can use this summer.

1. **Post photos and videos of your staff having fun.** Customers love to see a business that's authentic and one where employees enjoy working. (Bonus:

Posting about your company's workplace culture can also help you attract job candidates, if you're in the market for that.) If your company has a Friday afternoon potluck, beach barbeque or summer company picnic, posting photos or videos of the action so prospective customers can "meet" your team is one of the smartest social media marketing ideas.

2. **Share summer vacation photos and tidbits.** If you or your employees take time off this summer, encourage posting of fun vacation photos. You could even host a contest and have customers post their own vacation photos, then have your social media followers pick the wackiest/most adventurous/best photo of the bunch.
3. **Promote the events you're participating in this summer.** Is your business sponsoring a local chili cook-off or a 5K fun run? Promote the event well in advance to get your customers excited about it. You'll not only help boost attendance, but also boost your image as a company that cares about the community.
4. **Give it away.** If you've got promotional items prepared for trade shows or event giveaways this summer, try giving some away on social media, too. You can have people tweet a code or post their favorite menu item at your restaurant and draw someone at random to receive a promo item (ideally, one that's relevant to summer like a beach towel, insulated drink cup or Frisbee).
5. **Get your customers involved.** Take photos or videos of customers at events you attend or host, or at your store or restaurant. (Get permission before posting their images, of course.) You'll create an image of your business as a lively, enjoyable place for summer fun.
6. **Host a summer challenge.** A summer weight-loss challenge, fitness challenge, decluttering challenge or summer reading challenge—there are so many social media marketing ideas you can build around this concept. Pick a "challenge" that relates to your business (such as a kids' summer reading challenge for a children's bookstore) and encourage customer to join the challenge, then share their progress on social media every week. Give everyone who completes the challenge a discount or gift certificate, or give one winner a big prize. (Make sure you follow any contest rules appropriate to the social media network.)

7. **Share summer information.** “Summerize” your brand by using social media to share images and information relevant both to your brand and to summer. For instance, if you own a hair salon, you could create Pinterest posts of “cool summer hairstyles” or “hats to protect your hair at the beach,” etc. A company that sells auto aftermarket products online could share articles and photos with ideas for summerizing a car by tinting windows or changing up the coolant

How can your business help customers enjoy summer more? Put your mind to thinking about this, and you’ll undoubtedly come up with many more social media marketing ideas that spread the joy of summer on social media while building your business at the same time.

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