



**AIA**  
Michigan

# AIA Michigan's Social Media Marketing: Visual Platforms

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## **You've Officially Made It!**

Welcome to the third video of social media marketing course with the AIA of Michigan. This video will bring to light the possibilities you have with the following platforms: Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and Tumblr.

Social media is a critical part to any business. It offers a platform to reach your customers, and potential customers, directly. You can engage in their interests, share industry-related information and receive feedback to open up a dialogue about their experience with your business.

Remember, social media is about people, content, conversations and relationships. The key is to engage them in a meaningful way that creates a lasting relationship of trust.

Get prepared by grabbing your laptop, smartphone and any inspirational muses to jump into using these four creative platforms.

## **Did you know?**

Less than 10% of us trust advertisements, while over 90% of us trust word of mouth!

More referrals than ever before are happening on social media sites like Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and Tumblr.

## **Let's Start Off With Twitter**

Twitter is a fascinating platform that is not only popular with everyday people, but also celebrities, politicians and thought leaders who go to Twitter to post their insights on the world.

People use it as a way to express short ideas, facts, opinions, and beliefs in order to join in on relevant or trending conversations. With a 140-character limit to every tweet, succinct writing is key. Twitter also allows you to interact with other users by retweeting, favoriting and mentioning, and this includes the use of hashtags.

With only 3 in 10 businesses yet to join Twitter, the momentum is growing and the value for businesses on Twitter is extremely potent. I've seen many clients, friends and business owners skyrocket their brand authority and awareness of their business just based on their Twitter following. With a high number of followers on Twitter, you gain instant credibility that otherwise only luck and excellence can provide.

### **What are your goals on Twitter?**

Businesses are growing their brand by achieving the following goals on Twitter:

- Grow an engaged and relevant following
- Generate brand awareness and business leads
- Expand reach and create buzz
- Share thought-leadership & participate in industry conversation
- Monitor your brand's reputation in real time
- Build relationships with community
- Find and cultivate influencers and brand advocates
- Obtain customer feedback
- Establish relationships and get onto the radar of journalists
- Establish brand leadership position by communicating, reinforcing vision, purpose, differentiation, relevance, etc.

When all is said and done, your business will have found a new method to build a reputation in a way that is cost-effective and fun – based on the content you share.

### **Where should you start on Twitter?**

Your profile is what people see when they click on your username, and this gives people a sense of what you do and who you are. Be sure to take the time to insert a profile picture, create a bio and upload a header photo. People are unlikely to follow you unless you have all the following in place.

**Username:** Your @username, also known as your handle, is your business's unique identifier on Twitter. It should be 15 characters or less and should be memorable and representative of your business so that you can be easily found.

**Profile photo:** Choose a photo that visually represents your business and fits well in a small space. This image isn't just on your profile page; it will be shown as the icon in every Tweet you post. Choose something that is instantly recognizable. Logos work, but you can also feature a person or character. Recommended image size: 400x400 pixels. Image is automatically resized to fit.

**Bio:** You have 160 characters to tell your story with a clear, concise bio that describes your business, products or services. Tell people why your business is unique and why they should follow you. You could also add in useful information such as operating hours, locations and hashtags. Include your website's URL.

Header Image: Get extra creative with your header and showcase your business with a large, rich image. You could feature products or services, or you could edit the image to include copy, which highlights a special sale or promotion. Recommended size: 1500x500 pixels. Image is automatically resized to fit.

You can find out more information, here:

<https://business.twitter.com/basics/create-a-profile-for-your-business>

## **The anatomy of a Tweet**

What is a tweet? A tweet is an expression of a moment or idea. It can contain text, photos, and videos. Texts generally consist of 140 characters or less.

Reply: You can also reply to other user's tweets. You click 'reply' to respond to a Tweet. Replying to a Tweet is a nice way to build relationships with your followers and join in conversations.

Retweet: A retweet is where you choose to take a Tweet from someone else and Tweet it to your own followers. This is a great function to start building relationships with influencers and other businesses on Twitter.

Favorite: Favoriting something is a great way of acknowledging or showing your appreciation for a Tweet. It can also be useful to use as a bookmarking tool if you want to easily find a Tweet again. You can find in your profile where you have your favorites listed.

Hashtag: A hashtag is any word, or phrase without spaces, beginning with the # symbol. People use hashtags to organize conversations and make it easier to find all content related to a given topic. Click on a hashtag to go directly to the search results for that term. Twitter always informs you on the left-hand side what hashtags are trending in conversations going on in Twitter at any given moment.

Mention: Bring a Tweet to another person's attention by including their @(username) in your message. You could use it to ask someone a question, to thank them or simply to highlight a piece of content.

## **Your Twitter hashtag strategy**

You should hashtag relevant or trending words that appear in your tweets. If you are talking about a certain event, holiday, or topic, be sure to include a # with the key words.

### **Hashtag rules:**

- Do not over use them
- Make sure the hashtags are relevant to the posts
- Should hashtag 1-3 words per tweet – but try to stay away from three-worded hashtags

- Good: #Architects are known for their #design skills, hire one for your next #home project.
- Bad: #Architects are known for their #design skills, hire one for your #nexthomeproject.
- Research what is trending and know what people are talking about
  - This link can help!
    - <https://www.hashtags.org/trending-on-twitter/>

## Your content strategy on Twitter

Twitter is all about that content. People are reading tweets with purpose, intention and looking for a gain. So businesses need to deliver!

### Things you can post

- Architectural-related tips
  - How to find an architect
  - What you should look for in an architect
  - Solutions to common problems in your industry
- Facts about architecture
  - What's the average home in America like
  - What do people miss out on the most when hiring an inexperienced architect or construction company
- Valuable information about current trends and news
  - What's the latest in design
  - New software or programs designed for architects
  - Use of skylights in offices or houses
- Inspirational quotes
  - Quotes that resonate with you or your target market
- Provide valuable content from other sources
  - Share and retweet what other architectural thought leaders are up to
  - Share and link to articles for new home buyers/builders
  - Showcase ideas that your firm can offer
- Your story
  - Talk about your story
  - Customer stories
  - Testimonials
  - Your current and past projects
  - Fun information about your staff
  - Awards or recognition that you have received
  - Events that you are attending

The best place to start is to look for other architects or architect thought leaders to see what kind of content works for their audiences. We want to gain an insight into their Twitter successes, so that your business can emulate them.

### Don't Tweet

- Cryptic or vague tweets
- Repeating old news

- Thanking your followers for following you
- Do not use too many hashtags

## How to gain a following

The secret is out! How to gain a following on Twitter is simple.

- Follow 50+ users per week
- Retweet up to 10 tweets per week
- Favorite up to 10 tweets per week
- Talk to people using mentions or retweets

This will show that you are active, attentive and worth following. By following others you are introducing your company to others and letting them decide if they want to follow back.

If you ever hit that glorious Twitter follow limit, try using the platform [www.Crowdfire.com](http://www.Crowdfire.com) to unfollow inactive following and users that do not follow you back. It is a free tool to use if you follow their daily guidelines of only unfollowing so many people per day and week.

## Takeaways...

Get in the user's shoes and see Twitter through their eyes. They want to gain, learn, laugh and get inspired and you should post tweets that reflect those goals.

You can get started by creating a Word document that will host all of your tweets; this will be considered your post bank that you can add to over time. You can dump your quotes, facts and announcements here to tweak, edit and then post over time.

The best times to post on Twitter are 12 p.m., 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. The best frequency of posts should be 2-5 times per day in order to maximize the ability of your tweets to be seen. Be sure to use a warm, conversational tone that gives excitement to your tweets. The goal is to have your followers be excited to see more of what you are up to.

If you find that you are really interested in Twitter and it brings lots of opportunities to your business, you can also try out Twitter ads. They will help bring you more followers and website traffic. To learn more about what they can do for your business, visit here: <https://biz.twitter.com/ad-products>.

## Let's Put a Pin in Pinterest

Pinterest is a visual bookmarking site that allows users to store their favorite recipes, interests and information onto boards. Businesses that are using it are gaining the benefit of increased website traffic, amongst many other things. We use Pinterest to find inspiration on what to make, do or buy. This is a great platform for businesses to learn about new content and things to share onto their other social media sites, as well.

## Your goals on Pinterest

Increase your brand authority: you can do this by having Pinterest boards that provide useful and educational information to your followers while promoting your services in fun ways.

Increase your reach: With 85% of Pinterest users are women, and over 50% of the women using Pinterest have families, you now can have access to the part of your target market that is women.

Get more website traffic: Pinterest drives more referral traffic than LinkedIn, Google+ and YouTube combined.

## Where should you start on Pinterest?

Create a business account (*www.Business.pinterest.com*) and confirm your website. This adds your logo to any Pin that came from your site, and lets you see what people are Pinning from your website.

Then pick a profile image that will help people recognize you (logos work great). Profile images look their best at 160 x 165 pixels. You should also write a profile description to introduce your brand and what inspires you.

Create a range of boards that showcase your brand's personality and taste, and make sure each board has enough Pins to make it feel substantial. Remember that people can choose which boards they want to follow, so not every board has to appeal to everyone. Also, the more the boards you have, the more likely you will get followers. Your goal should be to have between 18-30 boards to have a general appeal.

Expert tip: Put the most relevant boards to your target market at the top and repin and pin content to Pinterest three times a week.

## Anatomy of a Pin

Pin: Is an image, description and link. You can upload an image from your website or your device, then insert a description and then click edit to add a link to your site.

Like: You can "Like" any pin and it will save to your profile. This is a great way to show users you are active and interested in their content.

Repin: A Repin is taking someone else's pin and pinning onto one of your boards. This action gains you followers; once you are in the notifications feed of a user, they will be drawn to your profile.

Follow: By following boards or other followers, you will then see great content that they post and possibly get follows in return.

Board: A board is a collection of pins that are grouped in a similar fashion or are related to a certain topic. The more boards you have on Pinterest, the better.

## How to create the perfect Pin

Your pin should be helpful, informative and useful to people. It should also be beautiful - so compelling and creative that other pinners have to take a closer look.

Once you have an image, create a detailed description. The best descriptions make Pins more inspirational and also provide extra information so people can figure out if something's right for them. Your description should mention the most compelling aspects of the Pin and inspire people to do something.

## What you should Pin

- Offer instructions and how-tos
  - Best feng shui tips at home
  - How to get ready for a move
- Create lists that are relevant to your industry
  - Top 10 things you need to know when you are building your dream home
- Showcase your services, designs and team
  - Behind the scenes, creative pieces, and finished projects
- Repin other content 80% of the time to maximize your efforts on Pinterest
- Use high-quality images that are appealing to your target market

## Necessary component of every Pin!

You need to link every pin to your website, or blog post, that can lead the pinner back to you. Every pin must go somewhere. This is why having a blog or visual display on your website is KEY in Pinterest. Every pin's job is to take the pinner to a website - that's it. If your website is not set up to accurately convey what you do, then that is wasted website traffic, lost customers and poor branding.

## Bring your website up to Pinterest Par

This is where you might have to bring your tech-y person in to help!

Add a Pin It Button: A Pin It button makes it easy for people to add Pins from your website. By copying and pasting just a few lines of code, you can put Pin It buttons on top of or next to images and content that you want people to Pin. Pinners will do the rest!

Here are the instructions: <https://business.pinterest.com/en/pin-it-button>

Add a Widget to Your Site: A widget will allow your website visitors to see you are on Pinterest and can follow you without leaving your site.

Here are the instructions: [https://business.pinterest.com/en/widget-builder#do\\_pin\\_it\\_button](https://business.pinterest.com/en/widget-builder#do_pin_it_button)

Verify Your Website: Verification of your website will add a level of professionalism you can only have with a verified icon next to your name.

Here are the instructions: <https://help.pinterest.com/en/articles/confirm-your-website>

### **Takeaways...**

In order for you to benefit from Pinterest, users first have to be attracted to your pins and repin them to their boards. Having an interesting image that is visually appetizing is the first step. Then connecting the user to your website for inspiration, information and current trends is next.

If Pinterest is where it is at for your business, then consider running a Pinterest Promoted Post. To find out more about this function, and when it will be available to the general public, visit here: <https://ads.pinterest.com/>

## **Welcome to the Instagoodness of Instagram**

Instagram is a mobile-based platform that is designed to share images straight from your smartphone to your followers. Instagram's simple design allows captivating visuals to take center stage. Each image or video fills the screen with nothing to clutter the experience.

### **Your goals on Instagram**

Your goals are to be seen as current, elegant and visual. On Instagram your brand's story will be surrounded by other beautiful content in a creative and inspiring environment. Instagrammers are passionate about the platform and their love for amazing imagery. You'll reach people who are open to new perspectives and can be influenced in their purchase decision-making process by the images that you share.

### **Where should you start on Instagram?**

Your profile is the key place to begin. Create a username, bio and then get started on producing great visuals. These three steps will be what you need to take in order to lift off!

**Username:** Make this is the same as your Twitter handle or Facebook URL. This should be easy to spell, recognize and find.

**Bio:** A short and sweet description of who you are and what you do. It is a 150-character introduction to your business that should be charming or witty. Instagrammers are used to consuming creativity in image form ... your bio should pair nicely with the fun environment Instagram creates.

**Photos:** Photos can be taken with your smartphone, or camera if you then transfer them to your smartphone, and can be posted onto Instagram. Get creative in the angles that you take your perfect shots at and colors that you incorporate. Use lighting in every photo. The photo is the only thing that can draw a user in, so the visual element needs to be as high quality as possible.



## Instagram basics

Homefeed: Your homefeed is where you can see all the people or businesses that you follow and the daily content that they post. You can interact with the people that you follow from here by liking or commenting on their pictures.

Search: This is where you search for hashtags, people or places. This is where you get to find users using the same hashtags and start following them. You can also search by place.

Camera: The camera button is where you upload a picture or take one to be posted on Instagram.

Activity: Any notification of user engagement is found within your notifications feed. You will be able to see who has liked, commented or followed you.

Profile: This is where you can see all the pictures you have posted to Instagram, and you can also edit your profile settings by clicking the gear in the top right corner.

## Filters and fun

Once you have a great picture on tap or a visual waiting to be snapped with your phone, you can upload it to Instagram. You can apply different filters to your photos to see the difference it can make. Choose the filter that makes your photo pop or have sass! You will have a blast seeing what a simple picture can be turned into with the right filter.

## Hashtag strategy

After choosing a desirable filter with your image, you can enter in a description. The description should be a simple dialogue about what you are doing and how the picture came to be. With every description you will need to include a hashtag strategy.

Your hashtag strategy should include:

- Popular Hashtags
  - #tags4likes #follow4follow
    - Popular hashtags on Instagram
- Brand-Related Hashtags
  - #YOURBUSINESSNAME #AIAMichigan #TAGLINE #WeLoveArchitects etc.
    - The name of your business and tagline if you have one
- Picture-Related Hashtags
  - #k12 #familyhome #design
    - What are you taking a picture of? Enter the words that relate to your image.
- Location Specific Hashtags
  - #WhiteLake #Rochester #Clarkston
    - What city, county and state are you in?

Here is a list of the most popular hashtags on Instagram:

#love	#followme	#selfie
#instagood	#photooftheday	#picoftheday
#me	#happy	#fun
#tbt	#tagsforlikes	#smile
#cute	#beautiful	#friends
#follow	#food	#likeforlike
#like	#instadaily	#fashion
#igers (Instagram users)		#instalike

You can always see what is trending, by visiting here: <http://top-hashtags.com/instagram/>. Be sure to include these hashtags into your images!

Finally, you can add a location to your image, by clicking on the location button and share it onto Instagram.

### What to post?

- Showcase what you do
- Your team
- Current projects
- Office culture
- Create a personality with your images
- Fun quotes
- Funny images
- Events
- Worksites
- Clients
- You having fun!

With your phone at your fingertips, it isn't hard to show off who you are and what you do!

### How to get a following?

The easiest way is to follow, comment and like other users and their photos. You can find users by searching the "places" function or going to your competitors on Instagram. The trick is to think ... where are my followers on Instagram already? Go after businesses that will have a similar following to you, and target their followers.

Post every week, at least 2-3 times per week. This will provide people who find you a reason to follow you. Also let your friends and family know you are on Instagram. They are the best first support and initial boost in your following.

## Takeaways...

The quality of your pictures will matter, so pay attention to lighting and angles. Check out tutorials online on how to take the best picture with your camera phone or experiment to get the hang of it.

The only place you can have a live link on Instagram is in your profile, so the goal is to really share with no strings attached. Leave the sales talk and spam language at home, and use genuine and open language to get users engaged.

## Ready to Tumble onto Tumblr?

Post text, photos, quotes, links, music, and videos from your browser, phone, desktop, email or wherever you happen to be. Tumblr is described as a micro-blog due to its preference for short-form content. People often think of it as a mix between Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and a blog.

You get all the visual appeal of Instagram, short-form content of Twitter and fun aspect of Facebook that is integrated into a platform that is set up like an online blog, allowing you to surf other users and content that will spark your creative ticklers.

### Your goals on Tumblr

**Brand Relatability:** Big brands and businesses use Tumblr to show that Tumblr users can relate and connect with them through the content that they post. Choose to share content that humanizes your brand and establishes trust with your audience.

**Brand Awareness:** Get exposed to a young-skewing population of educated adults.

**Creative Content:** Tumblr is a creative outlet for businesses. It's a platform that shows their fun side, ability to create and inspire people - and it cultivates a culture around their brand unlike any other platform.

### Where should you start with Tumblr?

Create an account on Tumblr and start following your interests. Be sure to include a range of interests to get started, so you can start seeing wonderful content. After you create your account, edit your profile to include your logo, a header photo and information about your business.

**First impressions matter:** To build a solid brand presence on Tumblr, ensure you make a good impression and select a catchy design for your page. There's an abundance of free and paid themes on Tumblr. Choose from one-, two- and three-column or grid-style layouts and find a design that matches your image. Browse the available themes, select one that fits your business and install it in seconds:

<https://www.tumblr.com/themes/>

## **Tumblr basics**

For those who are new at blogging, this will be a great platform to stretch your wings and give it a go. Tumblr allows you to post a variety of content including text, images, quotes, links, chats, audio and video. The best part of Tumblr is that all kinds of posts are welcomed and wanted. To find inspiration on what you can share or offer, search and find other users and start re-blogging. Re-blogging is a concept like retweeting on Twitter or sharing a post on Facebook.

With every post be sure to include your tags. Tags are like hashtags in that they identify the type of content that you are posting and will categorize it for other users to find.

## **What to post?**

- Create memes
  - These are images that have quotes in them used to make people laugh or feel inspired.
- Combine humor with promotion
  - Talk about your business and have some fun with different aspects of your regular business day or industry stereotypes.
- Showcase your projects, designs and finished work
  - Tumblr appeals to an artsy crowd, so seeing and sharing your majestic masterpieces is a must!

## **How to get a following?**

First, use at least 3-7 tags per post. Use tags that describe the nature of your business and what you are posting. This is the only way people will find you on Tumblr, and it is key to gaining a following.

Second, start posting fun and interesting content that intrigues other users. This could be a quote with depth, pictures that highlight your work, or unique information that your business knows that the general public does not.

## **Takeaways...**

Tumblr reaches a younger demographic that is moved by art, fun and visual appeal. In your industry, you have access to all of these things just by the nature of your business. People and businesses are using Tumblr to get inspired and to inspire others.

Think visually: a large portion of Tumblr users are non-American, so draw a general population in by including a visual element to every post.

Finally, if you don't have a blog set up on your website yet and you want to have a go at the art of blogging, Tumblr is a perfect place to start. You will start refining your writing skills and area of interest, and with very little practice it will result in you becoming a confident blogger.

## **Let's Wrap this Baby Up!**

Social media can be a fascinating journey that allows you to hone your marketing skills. Your business will enjoy the quality of social buzz that you receive by investing the time into this form of marketing. As you progressively join new platforms, know that each one takes time, commitment and attention in order to flourish. Remember to always ask your current clients, biggest fans, family and friends first to follow you on any of the above platforms. They will be your biggest upfront resource in building an audience and spread the word about your business.