Thought Leader Working Group - Social Media Sub Group

Social Media Myth Busting

Don't believe everything you hear about social media.

AUTHORS

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INTRODUCTION

Don’t believe everything you hear about social media.

If you run a business in Aotearoa, you’ve probably heard plenty of advice about social media. Some of it from a mate at a barbecue. Some from that one person on every team who “saw a thing on LinkedIn.”

A lot of it is well-meaning, and a fair bit of it is simply ready for a refresh. So before you write off a platform, spend your budget chasing followers, or talk yourself out of it for being too small, here’s the good news for Kiwi businesses right now - six myths, busted.

THE SIX MYTHS

01 *“TikTok is just for teenagers”*

02 *“You have to be on every platform”*

03 *“You need a big following to get reach”*

04 *“Facebook isn’t relevant anymore”*

05 *“Social ads only work on young people”*

06 *“You need a big budget to win on LinkedIn”*

01

Almost 2M Kiwis are on TikTok.

"TikTok is just for teenagers." Tell that to Gail Jones, an 82-year-old florist from Hamilton who's built a following sharing her floristry tips and tricks at @gailsflorals.

And it isn't one kind of content for one kind of person, either. TikTok is home to just about every community you can think of. Whether someone's documenting their journey to buying a first home, swapping parenting tips, sharing recipes or quietly building a side hustle, there's a corner of it for them.

She's not the exception either. According to TikTok Newsroom, TikTok reaches around 2M Kiwis. That's not a kids' table. That's a huge chunk of the country, and plenty of them are scrolling with their wallets nearby.

02
Focus beats spread.

“You have to be on every platform.” Good news: you really don’t. The pressure to be everywhere is real, because there’s always a new app and someone telling you that you simply must be on it. But trying to keep five or six social platforms fed at once usually just spreads your time, energy and ideas too thin - and that’s exactly when posting starts to feel like a chore. Doing one or two platforms genuinely well will beat doing six in a half-hearted way every time.

Follow your customers, not the trends.

The trick is to follow your potential customers, not the trends. Have a think about who you're actually trying to reach and where they're already spending time. A tradie chasing local jobs might do brilliantly in Facebook community groups, a cafe might find their people on Instagram or TikTok, and a B2B consultant might get far more traction from LinkedIn. For most NZ businesses, that adds up to just one to three platforms worth really committing to.

And committing to a few doesn't mean starting from scratch every time. Film one good video, then trim it for TikTok, share it as a Reel, and pull a still or a quote out of it for a LinkedIn post. One idea, several homes. Start where you'll get the best return, and only add another platform once you feel comfortable.

03

Good content beats follower count.

"You need a big following to get reach." This is the one that holds the most people back, and it's also the most freeing to let go of.

We're in the attention economy now, not the follower economy. The algorithm rewards content people actually watch, save and share - not the number next to your name. In fact, the average organic reach on Instagram now sits at about 3.5% (Social Insider, 2025). So 100,000 followers doesn't mean 100,000 people see your post. It means around 3,500 do.

The flip side is genuinely good news for smaller players: make something worth watching and the platform will hand it to people who've never heard of you. You either pay to play, or you make stuff people can't help but watch and share.

04

3.4 million New Zealanders - and counting.

"Facebook isn't relevant anymore." People have been calling time on Facebook for a decade. Meanwhile it's quietly become the most-used platform in the country, with around 3.4 million New Zealanders on it, and it's still growing.

It's also where the money moves. The 2025 Sprout Social Index found **39% of social media purchases** were made on Facebook - the number one platform for social commerce, ahead of TikTok (36%) and Instagram (29%). Not bad for a "dead" platform.

Its ad reach equals around 65% of the population, and AI-driven optimisation has made it even better at finding likely buyers.

It also reaches the Kiwis younger platforms miss: it skews a little older - ideal when your customers are 35-plus - and the over-55s are one of its fastest-growing groups, and they often have real money to spend. Add Marketplace and local community groups, and Facebook earns its place from awareness to leads and sales.

05

Social ads now beat TV at most ages.

"Social ads only work on young people." Not so. GWI data from 2025 shows that 16–24s, 25–34s and 35–44s all rank social ads **above TV** when it comes to discovering brands. Budgets that used to go to linear TV are steadily shifting towards social, because that's where the attention has gone - across the age groups that actually do the spending.

It also helps to remember how much time older Kiwis now spend scrolling. With 79% of New Zealanders on social, at around two hours a day each, the over-45s are very much in the feed, and often have the most disposable income to spend.

And unlike TV, you can target by age, location and interest, so your budget reaches the people most likely to buy. No surprise some CEOs are moving 50–60% of budgets from linear TV towards Meta, YouTube and TikTok.

06

Organic thought leadership wins.

"You need a big budget to win on LinkedIn." Some of the best results on LinkedIn cost almost nothing. Posting consistently, leaving thoughtful comments, and building real relationships is organic thought leadership - and it works.

It's why smaller companies regularly out-punch much larger rivals on there. Not with ad spend, but by showing up, having a point of view, and being useful.

THE PLAYBOOK

So what should you actually do?

01 **Pick platforms by where your customers already are.**
Not where you feel like you "should" be. Meet people where their attention already is.

02 **Make content worth watching.**
Quality and entertainment beat polish and follower counts, every time.

03 **Show up consistently.**
Reach and relationships compound over time. One viral hit won't carry you.

04 **Don't write off the "old" platforms.**
Facebook is still doing the heavy lifting for a lot of Kiwi businesses.

You don't need to be everywhere, you don't need a massive following, and you don't need a big budget. You just need to look past the myths - and make a start.

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SOURCES · DATAREPORTAL, DIGITAL 2025: NEW ZEALAND · SPROUT SOCIAL INDEX 2025 · SOCIAL INSIDER 2025 · GWI Q2 2025 (WE ARE SOCIAL / MELTWATER) · TIKTOK NEWSROOM

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