

NextGen: HN unit specification

Social Media for Business (SCQF level 8)

Unit code: JF40 48

SCQF level: 8 (16 SCQF credit points)

Valid from: August 2026

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It is for lecturers and assessors, and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver and assess the unit.

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Unit purpose

This unit provides learners with advanced, industry-relevant knowledge and skills to use social media in professional business contexts. It develops learners' confidence in:

- applying social media strategies to meet business goals
- evaluating their effectiveness through data evaluation
- adapting approaches to suit evolving market needs
- using content creation techniques to produce multimedia campaign materials

It is suitable for learners studying administration and business. It is primarily intended for learners who want to pursue a career or further study in business management, administration, or information technology, but is also appropriate for those who want to develop their social media and content creation skills.

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion. Before they start the unit, we recommend learners have one or more of the following:

- basic IT skills
- previous experience of using social media platforms
- have achieved or be working towards a relevant qualification at SCQF level 7

Learners can study this unit as part of HND Administration Management and Digital Business Technologies or on a stand-alone basis.

Learners who complete the unit as part of the HND can progress to degree-level study or find employment in digital marketing, social media management, IT, or entrepreneurship.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

1. analyse the strategic role of social media in business contexts
2. design and implement a comprehensive social media strategy to meet business objectives
3. create and optimise multimedia content for social media campaigns
4. evaluate performance using analytics and social media marketing strategies
5. apply legal, ethical, and risk management practices in social media operations

Evidence requirements

Assess all outcomes under open-book conditions.

You must ensure authenticity and originality of all submitted work.

Outcome 1

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- analyse the strategic role of social media in a business context:
 - examine at least **two** of the following areas: marketing, customer engagement, and data analysis
 - explain how it supports and improves key business functions
- evaluate the strategic importance of social media in business operations:
 - identify how it is applied in practice
 - explain its role in at least **two** of the following areas: marketing, customer engagement, and data analysis

- evaluate at least **two** advantages and **two** disadvantages of using social media in business, analysing its effects on:
 - growth
 - brand development
 - reputation management

Outcome 2

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- assess the strategic benefits social media provides to businesses in terms of:
 - growth
 - branding
 - customer engagement
- evaluate the risks and challenges social media presents to businesses, including reputational, ethical and operational considerations
- analyse social media platforms and select the platforms most appropriate for different business purposes
- analyse the customer profile to determine their impact on marketing approaches
- apply specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound (SMART) planning principles to define clear business aims and objectives for the social media strategy

Outcome 3

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- explain the characteristics, uses and technical requirements of different multimedia formats
- apply appropriate multimedia formats when creating content for social media campaigns

- analyse and select content creation techniques to produce multimedia campaign materials, ensuring brand consistency across visual, textual and multimedia elements
- apply principles of accessibility, ethical practice and legal requirements when creating and optimising digital content for social media

Outcome 4

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- analyse performance metrics to show how breaking down data supports effective decision making
- evaluate the strategic use of social media metrics to measure progress towards achieving business objectives
- interpret quantitative and qualitative data to assess the effectiveness of social media activity and marketing strategies
- evaluate results to identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement

Outcome 5

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- define key legislation and regulations that are relevant to social media
- apply ethical principles in social media, including:
 - issues of transparency
 - privacy
 - responsible content creation
- implement ethical practices in social media strategies and content development
- apply effective risk management strategies to mitigate potential issues

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 1 Learners should understand: - the role of social media - key social media platforms - the changing role of social media in business	Outcome 1 Learners can: - critically analyse the strategic role of social media - evaluate the strategic importance of social media - evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of social media in business
Outcome 2 Learners should understand: - social media platform features - customer profiles - content management tools and software - benefits of social media in business	Outcome 2 Learners can: - assess strategic benefits of social media - evaluate risks and challenges of social media to businesses - analyse customer profiles - select appropriate social media platforms based on business purpose - develop SMART objectives
Outcome 3 Learners should understand: - multimedia formats - content creation techniques - the importance of maintaining brand consistency - the principles of accessibility - ethical considerations - legal requirements	Outcome 3 Learners can: - apply appropriate multimedia formats to improve digital content creation and communication strategies - select suitable content creation techniques to maintain brand consistency - apply principles of accessibility, ethical practice, and legal requirements when creating content

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 4 Learners should understand: • social media metrics • social media analytics platforms • how social media metrics can be used to measure progress towards business goals and objectives • social media marketing strategies	Outcome 4 Learners can: • analyse social media metrics to measure engagement • analyse metrics to measure • evaluate progress towards achieving business objectives • evaluate the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies • identify the benefits and recommendations for future social media campaigns
Outcome 5 Learners should understand: • key legislation and regulations surrounding social media • data protection law • advertising standards • intellectual property rights • ethical considerations in social media • issues of transparency • privacy • responsible content creation • risk management strategies • reputational damage • data breaches • misinformation • the principles of risk management strategies	Outcome 5 Learners can: • apply key legislation and regulations to ensure compliance in social media practices • apply ethical practices in social media strategies and content development • apply risk management strategies to mitigate potential issues

Meta-skills

You must give learners opportunities to develop their meta-skills throughout this unit. We have suggested how to incorporate the most relevant ones into the unit content, but you may find other opportunities.

Self-management

This includes focusing, integrity, adapting and initiative. The most relevant are:

- focusing:
 - managing time effectively, setting goals and maintaining concentration when applying social media knowledge and skills
 - staying on task and avoiding distractions when applying social media knowledge and skills
 - organising and logically structuring information about social media and metrics
- integrity:
 - approaching problems with a solution-focused mindset when evaluating the effectiveness of social media in achieving a business's objectives
 - applying reasoning and being open when evaluating a business's social media presence
- adapting:
 - adjusting communication styles to help gather information on different social media strategies
 - carrying out tasks that develop knowledge of how to use social media as a competitive tool
- initiative:
 - being proactive and working without direct supervision to learn new social media skills, identify market opportunities through social listening, and engage with potential customers or collaborators

Social intelligence

This includes communicating, feeling, collaborating and leading. The most relevant are:

- communicating:
 - sharing ideas and progress
 - clearly and concisely communicating the benefits of using metrics to analyse a business's social media presence
 - structuring evidence clearly and concisely
- feeling:
 - understanding the needs of diverse social media audiences when engaging with internal and external stakeholders of a business
 - actively engaging with others when working in a team and making sure everyone feels included
 - understanding the importance of values when developing and presenting evidence on effective social media in a business's extended marketing mix
- collaborating:
 - working with others on ideas and distributing tasks
 - finding common ground in team assignments
 - distributing responsibilities fairly and supporting others in team activities
 - encouraging open communication in team activities ensuring all members can contribute to tasks
 - setting clear timescales to complete social media activities
- leading:
 - taking a leadership role when carrying out social media team activities
 - carrying out effective team activities and tasks to encourage others to contribute
 - ensuring all outcome deadlines are met

Innovation

This includes curiosity, creativity, sense-making and critical thinking. The most relevant are:

- curiosity:
 - being interested in evaluating social media metrics to measure how effective the metrics are
 - exploring how businesses use social media as part of their extended marketing mix to engage and retain customers
 - researching the effectiveness of social media platforms as a competitive tool
 - creating engaging, innovative social media strategies
- creativity:
 - developing different ways to evaluate social media use in a business
 - producing outcome evidence
 - producing unique ways to generate innovative social media content
 - exploring innovative platforms to promote and advertise business ideas
- sense-making:
 - interpreting feedback and social media metrics to help evaluate a business's performance in achieving its objectives
- critical thinking:
 - using social media analytics and metrics to evaluate how effective social media has been in achieving business objectives
 - evaluating key social media strategies
 - researching the effective use and terms of social media
 - analysing the pros and cons of different types of social media metrics

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you should encourage learners to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

This includes:

- a general understanding of social, economic and environmental sustainability
- a general understanding of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- a deeper understanding of subject-specific sustainability
- the confidence to apply the skills, knowledge, understanding and values they develop in the next stage of their life

As a future social media professional, understanding sustainability is not just about being socially responsible, it's also about creating and embracing ethical and impactful digital strategies.

Learners use metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of social media campaigns. You should guide learners on how to embed sustainable practices into their social media practices and evaluations from the outset.

What learners explore as a social media professional

Environmental responsibility

Learners explore how social media professionals can help reduce the environmental footprint of digital campaigns. This includes:

- considering the energy consumption of digital platforms
- considering the sustainability of promotional events
- encouraging audiences to adopt environmentally responsible behaviours through content and messaging

Economic viability and fairness

To ensure long-term success, social media strategies must reflect fair and ethical practices. This includes:

- promoting transparency in partnerships
- supporting brands that value equitable pay
- ensuring that marketing messages align with principles of fairness and economic sustainability

Social impact

Social media professionals play a vital role in shaping online communities. Learners consider how campaigns can:

- promote wellbeing
- champion diversity and inclusion
- encourage responsible behaviours among stakeholders (for example customers, employees, and wider online audiences)

Aligning the business idea with global goals

Social media campaigns can play a vital role in addressing real-world issues and contributing to the UN SDGs. Learners explore how digital strategies can:

- raise awareness
- influence behaviour
- support organisations in aligning with global challenges

By engaging with the SDGs, social media professionals can shape campaigns that are impactful, ethical and sustainable.

Goal 5: Gender Equality

Social media professionals can demonstrate their commitment to gender equality by how they create, share and represent social media content. This includes:

- developing inclusive campaigns that represent all genders fairly
- amplifying voices from underrepresented groups
- promoting initiatives that support equality across industries and communities

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Social media has the power to highlight ethical business practices and promote organisations that provide fair employment opportunities.

Campaigns can showcase brands that value decent work, safe conditions, and equitable pay, thereby influencing public perception and encouraging responsible consumer choices.

Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Social media professionals can design campaigns that:

- encourage sustainable consumption
- highlight eco-friendly products
- promote waste reduction

By raising awareness of responsible choices and advocating for circular economy practices, social media activity not only drives positive environmental change but also strengthens brand reputation and consumer trust.

Delivery of unit

This is a mandatory optional unit in HND Administration Management and Digital Business Technologies. You can deliver it as a stand-alone unit or partially integrate it with other units in the HND.

The unit is structured around five outcomes, we recommend you deliver these in order, 1 to 5.

The notional time for delivery and assessment is 80 hours. The amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your discretion. We suggest 16 hours an outcome.

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

We have provided the following guidance to support your teaching. It is not a full syllabus and does not go into every outcome, knowledge or skill. Instead, it helps you focus on key areas and highlights key areas and important teaching points. It does not reflect the actual time allocated to specific competencies or their relative importance.

Content and context for this unit

This unit provides learners with an understanding of how businesses can use social media to their advantage. It has five outcomes: three theoretical (outcomes 1, 2 and 5) and two practical (outcomes 3 and 4).

The theoretical outcomes focus on understanding the core concepts, such as designing ethical digital strategies and analysing metrics for campaign effectiveness and the legislative implications.

The practical outcomes emphasise hands-on application, like creating and evaluating a social media campaign.

You can contextualise content to specific areas, such as influencer marketing or content curation to help make sure its relevant to learners' career goals.

By engaging with emerging trends like AI automation, AR/VR marketing, and social commerce regulations, learners can anticipate future developments in the field.

This unit develops learners' transferable skills in strategic thinking, critical analysis, creativity, digital communication, and problem-solving. It gets them ready for professional roles in digital marketing, social media management, IT, or entrepreneurship. It also improves academic progression and employment options by developing adaptability to evolving digital landscapes and market needs.

When we reference specific platforms or tools (for example, Instagram, Facebook or X), they are illustrative examples. Alternative platforms or tools, such as TikTok or Sprout Social, can be used to achieve the same learning outcomes.

Outcome 1 content

Learners analyse the role and evolution of social media in business, understanding its impact on marketing, customer engagement, and data-driven decisions. They:

- evaluate how social media platforms have evolved and shaped business communication
- apply critical thinking to assess the strategic significance of social media platforms using evidence-based insights
- analyse the strategic role of social media platforms such as Instagram, X, TikTok, LinkedIn, Threads, YouTube and Reddit
- evaluate platform-specific demographics and usage trends, assessing:
 - benefits such as enhanced brand visibility, customer engagement, and social commerce opportunities
 - challenges like misinformation, data privacy, and reputational risks

Outcome 2 content

Learners design and implement comprehensive social media strategies aligned with business goals. They:

- set SMART objectives, for example:
 - awareness
 - lead generation
 - conversions
- segment target audiences using analytics and data tools such as, Meta Audience, Insights or TikTok Analytics
- select suitable platforms based on audience and objectives

- create effective campaign plans, integrating market analysis and strategic planning with independent judgement

Outcome 3 content

Learners create and optimise multimedia content for social media, ensuring brand consistency and audience engagement. They use management tools to produce and refine content, evaluating performance to improve campaign impact while maintaining accessibility.

Learners produce and optimise diverse multimedia content, including:

- videos
- reels
- stories
- live streams

They tailor them to platform algorithms, while using AI tools, such as MidJourney and ChatGPT, ethically.

Outcome 4 content

Learners evaluate social media performance using analytics and key metrics like engagement and conversions. They interpret data to assess campaign success, using insights to make strategic recommendations for future campaigns with analytical precision.

They measure campaign performance against benchmarks using:

- advanced analytics, such as Meta Business Suite and Brandwatch
- paid advertising strategies, including:
 - audience targeting
 - A/B testing
 - influencer partnerships

To drive evidence-based optimisations, they interpret metrics like:

- impressions
- engagement rates
- return on investment (ROI)

Outcome 5 content

Learners apply legal, ethical and risk management practices in social media, understanding regulations like data protection and ethical principles like transparency.

Learners navigate complex legal and ethical frameworks, including:

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2025 updates)
- the Digital Services Act
- UK-specific laws like the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025

They develop robust compliance and risk management plans to address issues such as copyright infringement, misinformation and crisis management.

Resources

You can use a wide range of learning and teaching resources relating to social media to facilitate and deliver the unit, including case studies, industry publications, articles and podcasts.

At the time of writing, we recommend the following resources to support delivery. They support the unit's blend of theory (for example, ethics and metrics) and practice (for example, campaign creation). You can use them for assessments like multiple-choice tests or practical assignments.

Books

- Berger, J. (2013) *Contagious: Why Things Catch On*, New York: Simon & Schuster
- Godin, S. (2018) *This Is Marketing: You Can't Be Seen Until You Learn To See*, New York: Portfolio/Penguin
- McDonald, J. (2024) *Social Media Marketing Workbook: How to Use Social Media for Business*, San Francisco: JM Internet Group
- Vaynerchuk, G. (2013) *Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook: How to Tell Your Story in a Noisy Social World*, New York: Harper Business

Podcasts

Listen for ongoing strategies and case studies:

- **Social Media Marketing (Social Media Examiner)**: weekly expert interviews on trends, scripting, and analytics. Episodes like 'YouTube Sales Scripting Framework' support campaign measurement.
- **The Science of Social Media (hosted by the Buffer team)**: data-driven episodes on myths, analytics, and ROI. Great for theoretical outcomes.
- **Online Marketing Made Easy (Amy Porterfield)**: business-focused social strategies, including ads and audience building.
- **Social Media Lab (Agorapulse)**: busts myths with science-backed tips on engagement and paid social.

- **Mindful Marketing (Andréa Jones):** interviews on real-world strategies for business growth.

Episodes average 30 to 60 minutes. Available on Spotify or Apple Podcasts.

Videos and webinars

Visual learners can use YouTube channels and webinars:

- **Social Media Examiner YouTube channel:** free videos on strategies, tools, and case studies (for example, '5-Part Framework for Positioning' strategic approach) tie directly to unit's business focus.
- **Gary Vaynerchuk (GaryVee):** daily tips on content creation and platform algorithms. Search 'social media business strategy'.
- **HubSpot Academy YouTube:** webinars on metrics, SMART objectives, and campaigns. Free with timestamps.
- **Coursera and Meta Video lectures:** cover platform policies and audience journeys.
- **Loomly blog videos:** tutorials on trends like AI in social ads.

Approaches to delivery

The unit's outcomes are structured sequentially. You can:

- generalise your delivery or contextualise it to a broad range of specialised industries to captivate learners
- blend tutor-led guidance, real-world applications, and digital tools

Activities such as group content planning, mock campaign creation, and reflective analytics exercises, paired with social media webinars and events develop skills in self-evaluation, strategic content development, and professional communication, ensuring alignment with SCQF level 8.

You should emphasise the importance of:

- ensuring inclusivity in campaign design
- balancing engagement metrics with ethical impact
- the need to adapt to evolving platforms, like emerging social media tools or AI-driven analytics

A flexible and interactive learning environment

We encourage you to use a learner-centred approach to deliver this unit. There are lots of free resources — including videos, articles, and podcasts — that learners can use for independent research. When taking this approach, your role is to:

- provide essential contextualised content
- set clear learning goals
- regularly check in with learners on their progress

To make the learning more dynamic, consider incorporating learner discussions, especially for topics like the broader social and economic effects of social media.

Using social media itself is a great way to facilitate learning. Creating a dedicated social media account for the class can serve as a central hub for sharing information and fostering collaboration. This helps learners better understand how to effectively use social media as a competitive business tool.

Outcome 1 delivery

Use lectures and case studies to explore social media's role and evolution.

- **Lectures** explain its impact on marketing and customer engagement, using real-world campaign examples like Nike's campaigns.
- **Case studies** examine businesses using platforms like Instagram, with group discussions to debate strategic importance, supported by industry reports from social media management tools like Hootsuite.

Outcome 2 delivery

Use workshops and projects to develop strategies.

- **Workshops** can teach the SMART framework to set business goals.
- **Projects** can involve:
 - creating a strategy for a fictional business
 - selecting platforms like LinkedIn based on audience needs
 - using task management tools like Trello

Peer feedback and guest talks improve learning.

Outcome 3 delivery

Use workshops and group projects to create content.

- **Workshops** can use tools and apps like Canva to design posts or videos, focusing on brand consistency and accessibility.
- **Group projects** to produce campaign content like Instagram posts, using social media management tools like Buffer to track performance and optimise engagement.

Outcome 4 delivery

Use case studies and project evaluation to teach learners about performance.

- **Project evaluation** can engage analytics tools like Instagram Insights to measure metrics like engagement.
- **Case studies** analyse campaigns using provided data, with group exercises to suggest improvements, supported by online tutorials.

Outcome 5 delivery

Use seminars and scenarios to teach legal and ethical practices.

- **Seminars** cover laws like GDPR and ethics like transparency.
- **Scenario activities** involve managing risks like a brand crisis and drafting a social media policy, with quizzes to reinforce legal knowledge.

Approaches of assessment

You can use various assessment methods to gather evidence. The following examples are suggestions only, you may want to use other methods that are more appropriate for your learners. Using a range of assessment methods help learners develop a broad skill set that they can use in employment, and further and higher education.

We recommend you use summative and formative assessments.

Summative assessment could include:

- a report and/or presentation to generate knowledge evidence
- a multiple-choice test and/or an extended response assignment for theoretical knowledge (outcomes 1, 2 and 5), with four options a question, one correct, and a 60% pass mark

You could use a practical assignment to:

- generate product evidence
- assess outcomes 3 and 4, where learners:
 - select a social media platform
 - set and implement SMART objectives
 - measure campaign effectiveness

For example, learners could:

- create a Facebook, Instagram or X social media business account
- use relevant hashtags to promote a real or simulated product or service
- analyse in-built metrics to evaluate success against objectives

Equality and inclusion

This unit is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

You must consider the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and those with additional support needs is available on the [assessment arrangements web page](#).

Information for learners

Social Media for Business (SCQF level 8)

This information explains:

- what the unit is about
- what you should know or be able to do before you start
- what you need to do during the unit
- opportunities for further learning and employment

Unit information

What you learn

This unit is for learners interested in how businesses use social media. It is especially relevant if you are studying business, although can be contextualised to a diverse range of industries, offering a broad overview of key concepts.

The unit covers:

- **The role social media plays in a business context:** how businesses use social media as part of their operations.
- **Business objectives and metrics:** how businesses set goals and measure success on social media.
- **Benefits and drawbacks:** the advantages and disadvantages for businesses using these platforms.
- **Design and implement a comprehensive social media strategy:** create and implement a social media campaign for a concept or business to meet objectives using multimedia content.
- **Measuring effectiveness:** methods for analysing the success of a social media strategy using analytics and social media marketing strategies.
- **Key legislative processes:** how to apply legal, ethical and risk management practices in social media operations.

What you need to know or be able to do before you start

We recommend learners have one or more of the following:

- basic IT skills
- previous experience of using social media platforms
- have achieved or be working towards a relevant qualification at SCQF level 7

What you do during the unit

While the content is primarily theoretical, you have the chance to apply your knowledge practically by using social media. You get hands-on experience using popular social media platforms in a real or simulated business context.

The teaching focuses on you as a learner and can include working with others, learning on your own, group discussions and research. The unit is designed to be accessible and engaging, often using audio and video to bring topics to life.

At the end of the unit, you understand how businesses:

- use social media to achieve goals
- measure their results
- evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of doing so

You are assessed in ways that fit the subject, like writing assignments or creating a blog. When you finish the unit, your Core Skills profile will be updated to show you have achieved critical thinking at SCQF level 5.

What you can do next

Learners who complete the unit as part of the HND can progress to degree-level study or find employment in digital marketing, social media management, IT, or entrepreneurship.

Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, you develop meta-skills that are useful for the social media sector.

Meta-skills are transferable behaviours and abilities that help you adapt and succeed in life, study and work. There are three categories of meta-skills: self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

Self-management

This unit focuses on developing crucial professional skills, including focusing, integrity, adapting and initiative. You learn to manage your time and stay on task while researching social media. You also apply a solution-focused mindset and sound reasoning to evaluate data and a business's online presence, acting with integrity. The unit also promotes adapting to new information and communication styles, as well as developing your initiative to learn independently and take proactive steps in a business context.

Social intelligence

This unit helps you build key interpersonal skills, including communicating, feeling, collaborating and leading. You learn to communicate effectively by sharing ideas clearly and organising their work concisely. The unit promotes feeling by encouraging you to acknowledge diverse perspectives and ensure inclusivity within your teams. By collaborating, you practice working with others to share tasks and meet deadlines. You also develop leading skills by guiding team activities and ensuring all members contribute and complete tasks on time.

Innovation

This unit helps you develop key cognitive skills, including curiosity, creativity, sense-making and critical thinking. You develop your curiosity by exploring how businesses use social media to engage customers and by researching innovative strategies. You practice creativity when developing methods to evaluate social media use and when producing your portfolios. This includes finding unique ways to use social media for marketing.

The unit also improves sense-making skills, as you interpret feedback and social media metrics to evaluate a business's performance against its objectives. This directly ties into critical thinking, where you use analytics, compare results to goals, and critically evaluate the effectiveness and pros and cons of different social media metrics and methodologies.

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you develop skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

You learn about social, economic and environmental sustainability principles and how they relate to the social media sector. You also develop an understanding of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

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