



# 2020 trends in social media

By Anna Nixon

February 25, 2020

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## Key takeaways

- Lighthearted content that humanizes your brand and spotlights your employees will continue to perform well on social media.
- Stories will become more popular on Instagram and Facebook, as their format and page placement make them easily consumable.
- Customers are using chat and direct messaging as private communication channels.

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If you want to remain relevant and engage with your customers on social media platforms, you have to keep up with social media trends.

But we know that's a daunting task. So we did the work for you.

In this report, we identify the top five social trends for 2020 to help you stay ahead of the curve all year long. We include examples of great content from utilities and nonutilities to inspire you to integrate these trends into your own social media content strategy.

## Trend 1: Humanize your brand

Your utility is made up of people, not poles, wires, bottom lines, and rate structures. Your social media content strategy should show your human side. According to the Forbes article [Three Social Media Marketing Trends](#)

[To Watch In 2020](#), “If you want to connect with consumers, then you need to humanize your brand and create relationships beyond your products and services.” Be funny, be quirky. Replace utility jargon with lighthearted posts and memes to make your content more approachable and sharable (**figures 1 and 2**).

### **Figure 1: Post lighthearted content to bond with your customers**

Don't get stuck in a rut by posting only about outages and rebates. Sharing interesting stories, collaborating with local celebrities, or just having a little fun can go a long way toward humanizing your brand and inviting followers to interact with your content.

**ComEd hired a herd of over 200 goats to clear vegetation under transmission lines**

**Peoples Gas invited two local hockey players to compete in a quesadilla-cooking competition**

**Wendy's released a fast-food-themed mixtape on Spotify that went viral on Twitter**

Wow this really blew up. Make sure you check out my mixtape: <https://t.co/8GGxjfbeL0>

Or my TableTop RPG if that's more your thing: <https://t.co/7fMLDcNQLm>

— Wendy's (@Wendys) [January 24, 2020](#)

**Colorado State University made a cheeky video with the president of the university to welcome students back after a long winter break**

View this post on Instagram

[A post shared by Colorado State University \(@coloradostateuniversity\)](#) on Jan 17, 2020 at 11:22am  
PST

### **Figure 2: Use memes to show your wit and boost shares**

Memes are an entertaining and highly sharable way to communicate almost any message. Using stock images and a little creativity, you can create your own viral memes, as “Friendly Power” has here. Or,

add your caption to an already-popular meme.

## Friendly Power reminds us that Chad is hot but air-conditioning made cheaper through rebates is hotter



Friendly Power



Liked by xyz and 120 others

**Friendly Power** Thanks to Friendly Power's new AC rebate.

#linkinbio

[View all 16 comments](#)

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6 August

## Friendly Power jokes that even Glen has enough sense to participate in time-of-use rates



Friendly Power



Liked by xyz and 120 others

**Friendly Power** He also saves \$20 a month by participating in Friendly Power's new time-of-use rate. #linkinbio

[View all 16 comments](#)

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**Friendly Power knows kids are lousy at cooking, especially on outdated appliances**



Friendly Power



Liked by xyz and 120 others

**Friendly Power** But that's because they haven't developed fine motor skills yet. What's your old oven's excuse? Upgrade to a new, energy-efficient model with the help of Friendly Power.

#linkinbio

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© E Source

Friendly Power snarks that wasting money on old refrigerators is a bad joke



Friendly Power



Liked by xyz and 120 others

**Friendly Power** Upgrade to a new, energy-efficient model and we'll take your old one off your hands - for free. #linkinbio

[View all 16 comments](#)

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6 August

**Friendly Power thinks babies are keeping cool in the pool because they're not wasting money on air-conditioning**



Friendly Power



Liked by xyz and 120 others

**Friendly Power** Well, not without Friendly Power's new AC rebate. #linkinbio

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6 August

**Charmin used an animated gif for this timely Thanksgiving-related meme**

The actual wake up call the day after Thanksgiving. [pic.twitter.com/8EcARlh1eA](https://pic.twitter.com/8EcARlh1eA)

— Charmin (@Charmin) [November 29, 2019](#)

**Pop-Tarts used a humorous meme to illustrate the brain power behind different toasting methods**

[pic.twitter.com/58eVhcpDdB](https://pic.twitter.com/58eVhcpDdB)

— Pop-Tarts (@PopTartsUS) [November 7, 2019](#)

## Trend 2: Interact with customers

Use social media as a conversation starter, not as a loudspeaker. Reply to and repost customers' comments; interact with them to create trust and cultivate authentic engagement that goes beyond the obligatory like (**figure 3**). Metrics such as engagement rate and engagement quality are becoming more important because they represent real human connections, according to Entrepreneur magazine's article [12 Social Media Trends to Watch in 2020](#).

### Figure 3: Respond to customers and amplify their posts

Reply to customers and repost their content to foster a relationship with your social media followers and encourage brand-building interactions.

**Pacific Gas and Electric Co. took an active role in the comment section of this Facebook post about the utility's public safety power shutoff**

**ComEd consistently replies to customer comments, like in this Facebook post about grid improvements**

**JetBlue replies to customers on Twitter and gets a little goofy**

[.@Smoov\\_Monkey](#) But you'd still swipe right... right? <https://t.co/i1SleQDcy1>

— JetBlue Airways (@JetBlue) [January 22, 2020](#)

**Netflix retweets customer comments to start conversations about their favorite shows**

Me trying to explain the stranger's plot to my friends.

Trust me, this meme has never been more accurate. Watch and see, it's on netflix

[pic.twitter.com/lYk9zPYl9r](http://pic.twitter.com/lYk9zPYl9r)



## Trend 3: Post Stories

Instagram Stories generate around 300 million daily views, according to the Influencer Marketing Hub article [11 Instagram Stories Hacks You Need to Know](#). Stories may be available for just 24 hours, but they reach a larger audience and drive higher engagement than traditional posts. And you can save them to your profile for customers to watch anytime. The Business Insider article [The Stories Slide Deck: How Stories stack up across social platforms](#) says Stories afford companies more ad opportunities and create immersive user experiences.

On the [Hawaiian Electric Co. Instagram page](#), the utility uses Stories to welcome new employees and inform customers about new technologies. ComEd has an extensive library of Instagram Stories. On the [ComEd Instagram page](#), the utility promotes its many products and services. The [Efficiency Vermont Instagram page](#) features Stories that encourage efficiency-minded customers to interact with the organization.

On the nonutility side, sports retailer REI posts Instagram Stories to give gift ideas, spread climate awareness, and answer customer questions. Check out [REI's Instagram page](#) for examples. On the [Arc'teryx Instagram page](#), the sportswear and equipment company posts Stories to share its history, adventure content, design process, and event memories. The [Banana Republic Instagram page](#) gives style advice and seasonal tips through its Stories.

## Trend 4: Feature your employees

Your employees are the reason you're able to do what you do every day. Feature the faces that make it all possible by celebrating their wins and thanking them for a job well done. Customers will appreciate the human touch and relate to your staff's stories, further humanizing your brand. Employees function like beacons of trust for your company, according to the webinar [How to Prepare for the Future of Customer Engagement](#) from Hootsuite, a leading social media management software company. **Figure 4** shows some examples of how utility and nonutility companies are showcasing employees.

### Figure 4: Show employees at work

Your employees do some pretty cool things within their communities, and social media is a great place to show off their accomplishments to strengthen your positive culture.

**NorthWestern Energy posted a photo of town manager and utility employee Dan**

## C. and his grandson dressed as line workers for Halloween

View this post on Instagram

[Sheridan, Mont. town manager Dan C. was #twinning with his grandson for Halloween!](#)  
[#linemanlife](#) [#nextgeneration](#)

A post shared by [NorthWestern Energy](#) (@northwesternenergy) on Nov 6, 2019 at 9:15am PST

## Pepco thanked its employees for volunteering during the holiday season

## NV Energy featured line workers who took a snowmobile to get to a hard-to-reach site

View this post on Instagram

[Winter is here in northern #Nevada. ————— #snow #snowmobile](#)  
[#linemen](#) [#linemenlife](#) [#lineman](#) [#IBEW](#) [#ibewlocal1245](#) [#thankalineman](#)

A post shared by [NV Energy](#) (@nvenergy) on Dec 3, 2019 at 4:50pm PST

## Hydro One shared the story of two line workers who helped save a life while on the job

## Yoga apparel company Prana shared what positive change means to several of its employees

View this post on Instagram

[Positive Change Equals... prAna employees are taking the challenge and sharing what Positive Change means to them. Join the conversation by posting an image to your feed, tagging @prana and #c4pc. We'll be selecting our favorites to score a Spring prAna look and be featured in our Community Takeover series!](#)

A post shared by [prAna](#) (@prana) on Jan 24, 2020 at 9:09am PST

## Hootsuite shared photos of some of its teams from around the globe to ring in the New Year

View this post on Instagram

[This week we had the pleasure of kicking off 2020 with Hootsuite teams around the earth Get to](#)

[know our owls #hootsuitelife](#)

A post shared by [Hootsuite](#) (@hootsuite) on Jan 31, 2020 at 10:01am PST

## Trend 5: Offer a private communication channel

It can be overwhelming when customers take to social media with their questions. Anticipate your customers' needs and provide an outlet for their questions by integrating an automatic chatbot on your social media pages. Marketers can reach new customers through public channels and build deeper relationships using private ones like chatbots. Hootsuite's [Social Media Trends 2020](#) e-book says that a seamless combination of the two is crucial. Many utility and nonutility brands use Facebook chatbots to talk to customers on the platform where they spend the most time (**figure 5**).

### Figure 5: Use chatbots to build personal relationships

Chatbots are a simple and effective way to show your customers great customer service without having to pick up the phone or write an email. Many companies enable a chatbot to appear as soon as customers visit their Facebook page.

#### Evergy Inc.

**Evergy** [@EvergyPower](#)

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Community  
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**MOVING ENERGY FORWARD**  
**evergy**

Like Follow Share ... [Learn More](#) [Send Message](#)

Write a post...  
PhotoVideo Tag Friends Check in ...

**Photos**

**Our Story**  
Evergy is the energy company formed by the merger of KCP&L and Westar. KCP&L and Westar have served ...  
[See More](#)

**Community**  
Invite your friends to like this Page  
50,078 people like this  
50,851 people follow this  
265 check-ins

**About**  
Typically replies within an hour  
[Send Message](#)  
www.evergy.com

**Evergy**  
50K people like this Energy Company  
Typically replies within an hour  
50K people like this

Type a message...

Source: Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/EvergyPower>)

## Southern California Edison

**Southern California Edison (SCE)**  
@sce

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Write a post...  
Photo/Video Tag Friends Check in ...

Photos

**ABOUT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON**

**Clean Energy Future**

- Creating a #CleanEnergyFuture
- Electrifying transportation
- Supporting communities

See More

**Community**

[Invite your friends to like this Page](#)  
160 687 people like this

**Southern California Edis...**

160K people like this including Jessica Ballis and 1 friend  
Public Service

Typically replies within a few hours

160K people like this including Jessica Ballis and 1 friend

When you tap Get Started, Southern California Edison (SCE) will see your public info.

[Get Started](#)

Source: Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/sce>)

## Spotify

The image shows a screenshot of the Spotify Facebook page. At the top, the Spotify logo is in the upper left corner. The main header area has a green background with the text "Best New Artist 2020" in large, bold, black font. Below the header, there are buttons for "Like", "Follow", "Share", "Use App", and "Send Message".

The page is divided into several sections:
 

- Photos:** A large photo of a DJ performing at a club, with two smaller photos below it showing a woman and a man.
- Community:** Shows engagement metrics: "Invite your friends to like this Page", "22,227,531 people like this", and "22,235,075 people follow this". It also lists a user "Erik Taylor and 10 other friends like this".
- About:** Includes a "Send Message" button, the website "www.spotify.com/us", and "Product/Service - App Page - Software".
- Page Transparency:** A section with a Facebook logo and text explaining that Facebook shows information to help users understand the purpose of a Page.

An overlay window from the Messenger app is visible on the right side, showing the Spotify logo and the text: "22M people like this including Jessica Ballis and 10 friends". Below this, it says "Product/Service" and "Share the songs you love with your friends on Messenger." with a "Get Started" button.

Source: Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/spotifyusa>)

## Best Buy

**BEST BUY**

Best Buy  
@bestbuy

Home  
About  
Photos  
Events  
Stores  
Videos  
Questions & Answers  
Posts  
Jobs  
Community

Create a Page

Let's talk about what's possible.

Like Follow Share

Shop Now Send Message

Very responsive to messages

Community

Invite your friends to like this Page

8,654,007 people like this

8,281,473 people follow this

Austin Hennen Vigil and 2 other friends like this

About

888-237-8289

Typically replies instantly

Send Message

bby.me/BestBuy

Retail Company

Suggest Edits

Black History Black

Write the next chapter

8.6M people like this including Austin Hennen Vigil and 2 friends

Retail Company

Typically replies instantly

Let's talk about what's possible.

When you tap Get Started, Best Buy will see your public info.

Get Started

Source: Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/bestbuy>)