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Social media: 16 questions to ask before you pay

Not every question applies to every project: the right questions depend on what you are aiming for as an end result. Pick the ones that directly relate to the final product or the goal you want to achieve. Asking all of them without relevant judgement is more likely to confuse the person on the other side.

C1

Who owns the page and the business account?

WHY YOU ASK

A page created by a provider on their own account can stay with them. Recovery is slow, sometimes impossible, and meanwhile you have no access to your own audience.

A GOOD ANSWER

You are the owner, they get a role with permissions. They agree immediately, with no explanation of why it cannot be done.

A BAD ANSWER

"We will create it and transfer it to you at the end." "At the end" is the word that creates the problem.

HOW TO CHECK

Open the page settings from your own account. If you cannot remove an administrator, you are not the owner.

C2

How many posts a month, and what is the occasion for each?

WHY YOU ASK

The count is easy to promise and easy to deliver. The occasion is the hard part and the reason anyone stops to read.

A GOOD ANSWER

Ties posts to what is happening in your business: a new product, a season, a real customer question. Prefers fewer and more specific.

A BAD ANSWER

"12 posts a month" and nothing else. Twelve times nothing is still nothing, only busier.

HOW TO CHECK

Ask for next month's plan before approving it. If you cannot say why a given post exists, probably nobody else can either.

C3

Who replies to messages and comments, and how quickly?

WHY YOU ASK

This is where real orders are lost. Many contracts include posting but not replying, and nobody notices until a month has passed.

A GOOD ANSWER

States a response time in working hours and clearly separates which questions they handle from which they pass to you because they need product knowledge.

A BAD ANSWER

The topic does not appear in the offer. Then the default answer is "nobody".

HOW TO CHECK

Message as a customer from your personal profile on a Friday afternoon. You will learn more from that test than from three reports.

C4
How will we know this brings sales rather than likes?

WHY YOU ASK
Reach and follower counts move for reasons unrelated to revenue. The service can still be good, and you should still know this.

A GOOD ANSWER
Admits the link is indirect and proposes something measurable: messages, enquiries, visits to the site, use of a code.

A BAD ANSWER
A report showing reach growth as the only evidence. Reach is the output of an algorithm you neither ask nor control.

HOW TO CHECK
Run a code or an offer only on social for one month and count redemptions. One number that cannot be argued with.

C5
What do we do about a negative comment?

WHY YOU ASK
It will happen. The difference between a good and a bad provider shows exactly here, not in the good months.

A GOOD ANSWER
Has a rule: what is answered publicly, what goes to a private message, what gets deleted, and when they call you before doing anything.

A BAD ANSWER
"We will delete negative comments." Deleting is what turns one unhappy customer into a post seen by a thousand people.

HOW TO CHECK
Ask them to describe how they would answer a specific complaint from your sector. A two-sentence answer tells you everything.

C6
Why exactly these platforms for my business?

WHY YOU ASK
The platform choice is the first strategic decision, and by default it is made from the provider's habit, not from your customers.

A GOOD ANSWER
Ties the choice to where your customers are and what you sell, and is willing to say "you do not need this platform".

A BAD ANSWER
A package for every network at once, because "presence matters". Presence without a reason is cost without a reason.

HOW TO CHECK
Ask: why here and not there. The answer must contain your customers, not their skills.

C7
Who will shoot and edit, and is production included in the price?

WHY YOU ASK
Content lives off material, and without agreed production your page will fill up with stock photos and other people's footage.

A GOOD ANSWER
Says precisely: how many shoot days or sessions per month, who comes on site, who edits, and what is expected from you.

A BAD ANSWER
"We will work with what is available." The available runs out in two weeks; then the stock libraries begin.

HOW TO CHECK
Look at a profile they have run for at least a year. If the footage turns stock after month three, that is the answer.

C8
How will I approve content, and how much time do I get?

WHY YOU ASK
Without an agreed process, approval becomes the bottleneck: publishing either stops, or happens without you.

A GOOD ANSWER
Proposes a clear rhythm: next month's plan in advance, a deadline for your notes, and a rule for what happens if you do not respond in time.

A BAD ANSWER
"We will send you everything for approval." Without deadlines that is a mechanism for shifting the blame for delays.

HOW TO CHECK
Agree how many days you get for review, and write it down. Then keep it yourself too: the process breaks from both sides.

C9
Is paid promotion included, and with what separate budget?

WHY YOU ASK
Organic reach is small, and relying on it alone is planned disappointment, unless said honestly.

A GOOD ANSWER
Separates clearly: a fee for the work, a distinct budget for promotion, and what to expect with and without it.

A BAD ANSWER
One number for everything. Later it turns out promotion is not in it, or is symbolic.

HOW TO CHECK
Ask: how much of this amount goes to the platforms as budget. The answer must be a number, not "as judged".

C10
Who defines how the company sounds, and with what?

WHY YOU ASK
Tone is what people remember, and without a definition every author writes differently and the page sounds like several people.

A GOOD ANSWER
Produces a short tone document with examples: we write like this, not like this, we use these words, not these.

A BAD ANSWER
"We will capture your spirit." Spirit is not captured, it is written down; otherwise it is lost at the first staff change.

HOW TO CHECK
Read ten consecutive posts of one of their clients. If they sound like one person, a document exists. If not, it does not.

C11
Who replies in the evening, on weekends and on holidays?

WHY YOU ASK
People write when they have time, which is exactly when the office is closed, and silence then is a lost order.

A GOOD ANSWER
Says honestly when there is coverage and when not, what an auto-reply handles, and when the thread is passed to you.

A BAD ANSWER
The agency's office hours, without anyone having said so. You find out on a Sunday, from an angry customer.

HOW TO CHECK
Message a page they run on a Saturday evening. The reply, or its absence, is the real service.

C12

How do we run games and giveaways without breaking the rules?

WHY YOU ASK

Giveaways have rules, the platforms' and the law's, and breaking them can cost the page or a fine.

A GOOD ANSWER

Knows the requirements, prepares terms of participation, and can say which popular mechanic is actually forbidden.

A BAD ANSWER

"Everyone does it this way." Everyone does, until it is precisely your page that gets shut down.

HOW TO CHECK

Ask for the participation terms from the last giveaway they ran. A one-page document that either exists or does not.

C13

Who holds the access, and how are the profiles protected?

WHY YOU ASK

A stolen business page is recovered slowly, sometimes never, and the door is usually one employee with a weak password.

A GOOD ANSWER

Describes an order: who has access with what role, two-factor for everyone, and a procedure when someone leaves on either side.

A BAD ANSWER

A shared password in a chat message. That is what the whole page is worth right now.

HOW TO CHECK

Open the settings and count the people with access. Anyone you do not recognise is a question for today.

C14

What does the monthly report contain besides reach and followers?

WHY YOU ASK

Reach and followers rise and fall for reasons outside everyone's control, and a report of only those is a weather report.

A GOOD ANSWER

Reports actions with value: messages, enquiries, site visits, redeemed codes, and one sentence of why for each.

A BAD ANSWER

Charts going up and "a good month". Next month the charts go down and the month is still good.

HOW TO CHECK

Pick one number from the report and ask: what did you do to make it so. The answer separates work from watching.

C15

What happens to all the created content if we stop working together?

WHY YOU ASK

The photos, videos and texts are an asset you paid for, and without an agreement it leaves together with the provider.

A GOOD ANSWER

Puts it in the contract: raw materials and finished posts are yours, handed over in an organised way on termination.

A BAD ANSWER

"We will give you what is needed." What is needed, judged unilaterally after a fallout, is little.

HOW TO CHECK

Ask for the folder of raw materials in the first month, not the last. The habit of receiving them is the guarantee.

C16

What do we do with reviews: both the good and the bad?

WHY YOU ASK

Reviews are the content with the most trust, and most companies neither ask for them, nor answer them, nor use them.

A GOOD ANSWER

Has a process: request a review after purchase, reply to every one including the bad, and weave the good ones into the content.

A BAD ANSWER

Reviews are not mentioned anywhere in the offer, as if they were not part of the presence.

HOW TO CHECK

Look at the last five reviews of one of their clients. If none has a reply, that will be your page too.

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