SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

GETTING STARTED

When used strategically, social media is a powerful tool to increase awareness, spur engagement, and build peer-to-peer influence through thought leadership. With so many platforms and more coming online each year, it can feel overwhelming to get started. Should you have a presence on Facebook? LinkedIn? X, formerly known as Twitter? Instagram? Threads? All of the above?

With social media, it's not enough to publish an occasional post, and it's unique in that the communication (i.e., like, comment, share) runs both ways. An account with limited or outdated content that hasn't been posted to for months and has unanswered comments often tells its own story…and is usually not positive.

Only commit to platforms that will have the highest impact on your priority audience and that your program has the capacity to manage. Each platform has best practices (e.g., post twice a day vs. once an hour) that should be considered when deciding. Simply put:

- Facebook - a platform to connect and share personal information with friends and family; if the content is related to work, you must consider the best time to post to prevent unfollows; use 1-2 hashtags.
- LinkedIn – world's largest professional network on the internet; focused on users' networking and building strong relationships in their industry; great for content that provides just-in-time learning opportunities; a great place to establish self/organization as a thought leader; use 3-5 hashtags.
- X, formerly known as Twitter – allows people to share their thoughts with a big audience through the use of hashtags; content moves quickly; journalists widely use it; tweets are now called posts; 1-2 hashtags are ideal and can be woven into the content (i.e., this #childwelfare event)
- Instagram – a photo and video sharing social networking service; stories (live for 24 hours) outperform posts (evergreen; videos can be 60 seconds to 60 minutes); reels are a newer way to share content (30 seconds long and include music, effects, and other creative content); all content needs to be visually compelling; doesn't allow

user to click links but can use a product like linktr.ee to provide links in bio; separate content from hashtags using a space; 3-5 hashtags are ideal.
- Threads – an Instagram app for text-based conversation; the newest platform started well, but then usage plummeted 79% from July 7 to August 7 of 2023.
- TikTok – This app is not allowed on any information technology (IT) owned or managed by the Government and its contractors (S.1143). This includes computers and other devices utilized in the performance of federal grants and can not be on a device inside a lab where research funded by federal grants is occurring. Please check with your IT and Counsel for additional guidance.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Posts must represent the organization and be tied to its goals.

- Social media supports other parts of the communication strategy and vice versa – ensure they work together (e.g., social media and email newsletters drive traffic to the website, email marketing and website promote social media, etc.).

- Content should be compelling, conversational, authentic, valuable, and relevant.
  - Answer questions that people ask the most.
  - Promote upcoming events, webinars, resources, best practices, news stories, interviews, research, and survey results.
  - Reinforce prior learning.
  - Ask:
    - ✓ Is it fun and easy to read?
    - ✓ Are the words simple and uncomplicated? Clarity, not jargon.
    - ✓ Does it use the least words possible? Think radio copy!
    - ✓ Does it feel like I'm talking to a friend? A conversational tone helps lighten the mood and increases engagement.
    - ✓ Does it avoid passive language? Active voice is more energetic and draws us in.
    - ✓ Does it use people-first language?
    - ✓ Are the visuals relevant and inclusive? Be sure they do not reinforce negative stereotypes.

✓ If appropriate, does it include the relevant background (why) and WIIFM (what's in it for me)?

✓ Are calls-to-action included?

✓ Are all external sources properly cited (i.e., photos, data)?

- For the best effect, including audience preference and social media algorithms, the content strategy should follow the 30/60/10 rule.
  - 30% owned content: content you create - photos, videos, content from a blog, newsletter, or website.
  - 60% curated content: links to content created by others, with your commentary or point of view.
  - 10% promotional content: a call to action, invitations to events, requests for participation, etc.

- Post relevant visuals with written content to get more views and engagement. Each platform has unique image size requirements that change over time, so we refer to [Sproutsocial's guide](#).

- Understanding copyright is essential. Copyright is essentially the right to exclusively "own" what you create and the freedom to make money off of it. When it's created, it's copyrighted – even if it doesn't say ©. Be sure to read the fine print! Even though it may say free, there may be specific stipulations when it can't be used, and you may need to provide attribution. [TinEye](#) is a reverse image search engine to find out where an image came from, how it is used, if modified versions exist, or to find higher resolution versions.

- Monitor your platforms daily to stay tuned into the conversation after publishing content, and timely respond when appropriate. In some cases, it is as simple as liking a positive comment left on an event photo, while other times, it may entail drafting a reply to answer a question or apologize for a message that was not received as intended. Be sure the staff managing your platforms know who to contact when comments necessitate a more complex reply. There are tips on handling disparaging remarks in the [NCWWI Communications Guide](#), and [this blog post by HubSpot](#) is also helpful.

- Most social media marketing experts agree that anything between 1%-5% can be considered a good engagement rate. Ways to increase engagement and reach:

  – The content determines whether they will engage (see tips above)!
  – Experiment with different eye-catching formats: photos, graphics, videos, infographics, quotes, surveys, animated GIFs, etc.
  – When sharing content from another organization on the platform, tag them.
  – Use hashtags to reach those that don't follow your organization.
  – Engage with re-posts (like, say thank you, etc.).
  – On Facebook, invite those who engaged with your post to follow you (note: it does not repeat the invite and will indicate that you have already invited them).
  – Be on the lookout for new platform features that could draw attention.
  – Timely respond to all comments (see note above).
  – Encourage followers to like, share, and comment.
  – Try including a question that has the potential of starting a discussion and conversation in the comments section.
  – Use Two Attention Grabbing Words at the Beginning of a Post.
  – Use Emojis (2-3 max per post as a general rule).
  – Consider the best time to post the content. Social media management platforms provide suggested times. Meta Business Suite can be used to help schedule Facebook and Instagram posts, and Audiense is a good tool for deciding when to schedule on Twitter. When targeting the workforce, some agencies have succeeded with posting around the end of the workday.

- Analyze data quarterly to understand your audience preferences on content and to learn the best post times for maximum exposure. Change your strategy as needed. We recommend running a quarterly report like this one to optimize your content and approach.
- Have a clear content development and approval process.

  – Must post consistently! Creating a weekly or monthly editorial calendar across all your social media platforms helps you better plan in advance, ensure a variety of content that aligns with your key messages and goals and schedule posts with optimal timing and frequency. See the samples below.

- Highly recommend using a product like Hootsuite to schedule your social media postings in batches. Without a system like this, staff will spend more time than necessary.
- Tip: if using similar copy over multiple platforms, starting with X (Twitter) can be the most efficient because of the limited character count.
- Recommend having another staff member proof the scheduled posts for misspellings, broken links, and other errors.

Format for collecting content ideas as you see them or others provide them; recommend storing documents online so others have access.

Title/basics about suggested post	Hyperlink	Approved
xxx	xxx	X

Format for planning posts; recommend highlighting each day once the post(s) have been scheduled.

Week of	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
x/x/xx							

TOOLS

There are many resources, but these are our favorites because their simple to use and are free or low-cost.

Tool/Site	Use	Description
Hootsuite.com	Scheduling posts/ tweets/updates	Efficiently use time, ensure post consistency & monitor (mentions, hashtags).
Loomly	Social Media Management Platform	Create and schedule content for each platform, track analytics, and monitor interactions.
Platform Analytics	Data to target/engage the audience	Track data on followers, impressions, and engagement (clicks, likes, comments, shares, video views, saves, DMs).
Bitly.com	Use to shorten links	Tool for shortening long links & tracking usage.

Tool/Site	Use	Description
Quozio.com	Create Graphic Quotes	Creates text-only quote images. Very simple to use!
Canva.com	Create Images & Infographics	Our go-to tool! It makes products look like a graphic designer developed them! The free version is excellent, but upgrading to the Pro account for the resizing tool is worth it if you post to multiple platforms—a discount for education and not-for-profit.
Adobe Express	Create images and graphics.	Similar to Canva – it has a free and paid version—lots of templates to create graphics easily.
Snagit.com	Capture still image	Quickly snag an image in the document you're posting about—low cost & discount for education/ non-profit organizations.
PowerPoint	Create Infographics	Great for developing infographics! Check hubspot.com for free 'PowerPoint Infographics templates.'
Animoto.com	Create videos	Super easy to use! The free version includes their logo.
Videoscribe.co	Create easy whiteboard videos	Way to make animated videos.
Vyond.com	Create animated videos	Affordable, easy way to create animated videos.