

Leveraging Social Media to Move Your Message, Engage Your Champions, and Grow Supporters

Social media is often a critical way to organize, inspire, and collaborate with individuals from across the street or across the globe, and can be an important element of your communication effort. In the chart below, Advocacy & Communication Solutions, LLC (ACS) reviews common outreach objectives and how to use social media to achieve them. We also have included a glossary of common social platforms for reference. Of course, since social media is an ever-changing communication medium, it is best to do your research and affirm if social media is used by your target audiences, in what ways, and why. This will help justify any investment (time and money) to implement and evaluation new platforms and tools. ACS has discovered across the country that social media is not used by all audiences in the same way for the same purpose. As a result, the shifting and evolving forward movement of social media related to your-target audiences should be assessed on a regular basis to ensure you leverage this powerful communication vehicle in the most appropriate and strategic manner possible.

Did You Know?

Here are some facts about commonly used social media platforms.

- ▶ **Facebook** continues to be the most popular social networking site in terms of number of active users with more than 2 billion active users worldwide. Roughly 75% of users visit the site daily. Sixty-nine percent of U.S. adults say they use Facebook (the same percentage as in 2016).¹
- ▶ **YouTube** has a large reach among adults—73% of U.S. adults report using the site.² There are an estimated 1 billion users.
- ▶ **Instagram** is experiencing rapid and steady growth. Thirty-five percent of U.S. adults say they use Instagram.³ Instagram skews younger: 72% of 13–17 year olds say they use the platform, up from 52% in 2015.⁴
- ▶ **Twitter** has 326 million monthly active users who send 500 million tweets a day.⁵ In the U.S., 22% of adults say they use Twitter. There are significant age differences in use: 44% of 18-24 year olds say they use the platform, compared to 26% of 30-49 year olds.⁶
- ▶ When it comes to the type of content consumers prefer to see on social media, 58% prefer **visual-first content**, with their main preferences being graphics and images and produced video.⁷
- ▶ 69% of Americans feel social media platforms are important for getting politicians to pay attention to issues, and 67% feel they are important for creating sustained movements for social change.⁸

For the most up-to-date statistics on social media use, visit <https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/social-media/>

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Looking for additional help?

Check out ACS' [Giving Jargon the Boot](#) tool for tips to create and deliver great messages!

Objective	Social Media Strategy	Platforms to Use	Key Tips
Grow supporters and move your message.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use social media to have an ongoing presence as a resource for information on your issue. Follow individuals or organizations to stay up-to-date on new information about your issue. Post messages that are relevant to your followers, move your issue into the forefront of discussions, and make priority stakeholders think about your issue. 	Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Medium, Vimeo, Periscope, Snapchat, WordPress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay on message; use your core talking points to support your online activity. Tag appropriate individuals and organizations. Reply to positive comments and questions to gain new supporters and deepen the conversation about your issue. Do not engage in arguments within the platform.
Cultivate and engage champions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share pictures, news, and event updates. Follow individuals or organizations you are seeking to engage as champions, including members of the media. 	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategically tag appropriate individuals and organizations Share posts from other individuals or organizations to build a coalition around your issue.
Position your organization as an expert.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish articles or resources (as full articles or links). Engage in conversations that allow you to demonstrate subject matter expertise, such as Twitter chats with other experts. 	LinkedIn, Medium, Facebook, Twitter, WordPress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reply to positive comments and questions to gain new and supporters, and to deepen the conversation about your issue.
Get followers to take action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and post a call to action with a timeline and measurable goals. Post about an existing campaign or initiative within your organization and ask your followers to join. 	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Vimeo, Periscope, Snapchat, WordPress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay positive; state the problem and the solution. Don't attack individuals or organizations that oppose your mission.
Tell a story, share successes, and give recognition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include relevant photos or videos in all posts whenever possible. Provide followers an inside look into your world by using photos, audio, and/or video. Share photos and videos of a successful campaign or initiative led by your organization. Use photos and videos to recognize and thank a champion or critical team member. 	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Medium, Vimeo, Periscope, WordPress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay on message. Share only visuals that are related to your core objectives. Ensure your content is well edited, has clear visual and audio quality, and is related to your core objectives.


When devising your social media strategy and tactics, consider how often and when to post and share content. The table below gives examples of an approach. Create your own table for all the platforms you use and then ensure you have internal capacity (including online tools that allow you to schedule posts for the weekends) to make use of these platforms worthwhile.


Example of Posting Strategy			
Platform	Posting Frequency	How Often to Monitor	Time Commitment
Facebook	Mon–Fri: 1–2x per day Sat/Sun: 1x per day	5–6 times per day during normal business hours 1–2 times in the evening 2–3 times each weekend day	30 minutes per work day (to be combined with Twitter)
Twitter	Every day: At least 3–5x per day	5–6 times per day during normal business hours 1–2 times in the evening 2–3 times each weekend day	30 minutes per work day (to be combined with Facebook)


You can get more information about how to use social media platforms here:

- ▶ <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/nonprofit-social-media-guide/>
- ▶ <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-marketing-resources>
- ▶ <http://blogs.constantcontact.com/social-media-quickstarter/>
- ▶ <https://nptechforgood.com/category/social-media/>
- ▶ <https://trust.guidestar.org/8-ways-to-grow-your-nonprofit-social-media-followers>

Social Media Glossary:

 **Twitter** is an online social networking service that enables users to post and read short 280-character messages called “tweets.”

 **Facebook** is an online social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages, and keep in touch with friends, family, and colleagues.

 **Instagram** is an online mobile photo sharing, video-sharing, social networking platform that allows users to take, edit, and share videos and photos. The IGTV feature allows users to share long-form videos with followers.

 **YouTube** is a video sharing website that allows users to upload, view, rate, share, and comment on videos.



LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.



Medium is an online publishing platform with no character limit. Medium's content is organized by topic and is open to any user who has something to say.



Snapchat is a multimedia messaging app originally designed to delete messages moments after receipt. This function remains, but the app now also allows users to feature 24-hour "stories." Users can also interact with virtual stickers and augmented reality objects.



Vimeo is a high definition video-sharing website in which users can upload, share, and view videos.



Periscope is a mobile application that enables users to broadcast live video through their mobile devices. Periscope is most commonly used alongside Twitter, and users can opt to share their videos via Twitter.



WordPress is a content management system best known for allowing users to host blogs.

¹<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/10/share-of-u-s-adults-using-social-media-including-facebook-is-mostly-unchanged-since-2018/>

²<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/10/share-of-u-s-adults-using-social-media-including-facebook-is-mostly-unchanged-since-2018/>

³<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-statistics/>

⁴<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-statistics/>

⁵<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-statistics/>

⁶<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/10/share-of-u-s-adults-using-social-media-including-facebook-is-mostly-unchanged-since-2018/>

⁷<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-statistics/>

⁸<https://www.pewinternet.org/2018/07/11/activism-in-the-social-media-age/>