

A Compendium on the use of social media  
compiled by the Press and Public Information  
Division of the European Union Advisory  
Mission Ukraine



## WORKING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA



Kyiv, August 2020

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## Working with Social Media

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# Who can use this Compendium?

The purpose of this Compendium is to serve as an “easy-to-read” guide to institutional (as opposed to individual) social media presence. It addresses various aspects of social media activity with the aim to make the best use of four common and widely used social media platforms.

Ultimately, this Compendium aims to ensure that social media presence contributes to strengthening the reputation, standing, and trustworthiness of public organisations and agencies, by listening to, informing and engaging their audiences.

The Compendium is compiled to guide and assist less experienced social media managers as well as press officers/secretaries acting as social media managers as part of their work.

The Compendium focuses on the role of the Social Media Manager (or Community Manager), i.e. the person who is responsible for executing the organisation's Social Media Strategy, managing its social media accounts on a daily basis, and advising the organisation's senior management on social media issues.

The Compendium can also be used to assist members of the middle and senior management of public organisations and agencies to better understand basic social media dynamics.

The ‘Working with Social Media’ Compendium offers present-day ideas, tips, tricks, and checklists, but should not be considered an exhaustive or permanent curriculum in the field of social media.

# Why go social?

**With 3.5 billion people using social media - and a million more joining every day - no communication strategy can survive without it.**

Almost 24/7, a billion people or more carry a valuable part of their lives with them in their pockets: their smartphones. As the first thing in the morning and the last thing before going to bed, they check their devices and scroll through newsfeeds on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. Today, people spend a huge part of their time on social media. This is where they get and share news, information, experiences, recommendations, concerns, celebrations - laughter, smiles and heartaches.

## **Gets you a better grip of your target audience**

Social media is a *direct communication channel* to the public. It gives you more control over your narrative and connects you better and faster to your target audiences.

Social media allows you to upgrade your one-way communication to two-way communication, enabling you to both listen to and engage with your community of followers. You can respond directly to your audience and address any misunderstanding or disinformation. In short: the better grip you have on your social media presence, the better grip you have on the public. Social media is probably the most effective channel to execute your communications strategy.

## **Be present, but not at all costs**

Before you go social, establish clearly how other parts of your organisation are communicating via social media. It is your job to coordinate this activity, and to ensure that everybody is speaking with one voice.

Remember, once you go social you need to create a constant stream of high-quality content to which your audiences can relate and respond. However, creating content is only the beginning. If you are on social media, you also need to monitor and reply to comments and direct messages on a daily basis.

Going social is time-consuming, but it is worth the effort!

# The role of the Social Media Manager

**The Social Media Manager has the overall responsibility for your social media platforms.**

In some organisations, the Social Media Manager is called the 'Social Media Specialist' or 'Community Manager'. Other organisations have a social media team, who work together to maintain the organisation's permanent presence on social media. They plan, execute, and measure social media activity to build a stronger presence and closer ties to the organisation's target audiences.

Depending on the size of your organisation, the Social Media Manager is expected to perform more or less of the tasks below:

- ☐ **Overall responsibility** for all social media platforms (including evaluating and recommending new platforms).
- ☐ Develop the organisation's **Social Media Strategy** in line with the overall Communication Strategy (see pages 5 and 7).
- ☐ Implement the organisation's Social Media Strategy considering any platform-specific requirements.
- ☐ Translate communication objectives into **social media goals**.
- ☐ Create and curate **informative and appealing social media content**, including text, images, and video (see page 23).
- ☐ **Edit, schedule, and publish all posts** for all social media platforms.
- ☐ Maintain a **social media content calendar** (see page 26).
- ☐ Design and implement **social media campaigns** (e.g. on recruitment, awareness, competitions, national events, partnerships, etc).
- ☐ Conduct **social media monitoring** and evaluation using appropriate tools.
- ☐ **Engage with followers** and fans, and **respond timely to comments** on all social media platforms (see page 33).
- ☐ **Measure, report and suggest optimisation** based on social media statistics, metrics and use of analytics tools (see page 29).
- ☐ Create **social media partnerships** with other organisations and/or influencers (see page 35).
- ☐ Contribute social media capacity to the organisation's **crisis management planning** (see page 39).
- ☐ **Stay informed** about best practices, trends and tools in social media use and technology.



# Why a Social Media Strategy is necessary

**A Social Media Strategy summarises how your organisation will execute its Communication Strategy on social media.**

Without a Social Media Strategy, you might end up posting your content on social media for the sake of posting. If you are not clear on what your objectives are, who your target audiences are, and where you want to meet them, it will be difficult to achieve results on social media. Your Social Media Strategy will help you make every post and comment serve a purpose.

Whether you want to increase your public trust rates through social media or to use social media to support your operational efforts, having a Social Media Strategy is essential.

The Social Media Strategy outlines what you plan to achieve through your social media presence (where and how).

## **More focused, more effective, more transparent**

A Social Media Strategy will make your presence on social media more focused, as it helps to maintain consistency across different platforms. It will assist you in making your messaging more effective in particular if you have to manage a crisis situation. In addition, it will contribute to making your organisation more transparent. Transparency is imperative in raising public trust and your social media platforms provide the perfect avenue to transparency and clarity with the public.

## **Goes hand-in-hand with your Communication Strategy**

It is important that your Social Media Strategy taps into and supports your organisation's Communication Strategy. The two strategies must work together to achieve the same objectives through different means.

In some cases, instead of an independent Social Media Strategy, the overall Communication Strategy will include a chapter dedicated to social media. In this case, such a chapter performs the same role as a Social Media Strategy.

If your organisation does not have a Communication Strategy, the Social Media Strategy becomes even more critical, as it must define the communication objectives, target audiences, key messages, etc, that will guide your social media activities.

**Take the time and get it done!**

Usually, the responsibility for developing the Social Media Strategy rests with the Social Media Manager.

The time it takes to develop (thinking, discussing and refining) the Social Media Strategy and to draft it, is well invested. The result will enable your organisation to be more capable in the social media world and thus be perceived as more professional by your audiences. See how to get started on the next page...

# Developing your Social Media Strategy

**Here are eight steps to draft your basic Social Media Strategy.**

Your Social Media Strategy defines the overall aim of your Social Media presence and sets the parameters for what you will deliver, where, to whom and how.

It must be concise and limited to define only the basic principles that guide your organisation's social media presence. Ideally, the written strategy will be no more than 3-4 pages long.

Your strategy will guide your social media activity and content planning, so it should not be set in stone. It needs to be flexible to respond to changing situations. Therefore, it will be useful to review the strategy annually.

## **1. OUR SOCIAL MEDIA MISSION**

**State why you want to be on Social Media**

- Describe in two or three sentences, why your organisation needs to be on social media.

## **2. PURPOSE OF OUR SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY**

**State the purpose of your Social Media Strategy**

- Write a short, concise summary of what the strategy is aiming to achieve for your organisation, broken down into bullet points. For example, are you a national organisation seeking to consolidate a fragmented regional approach to social media, or are you a regional headquarters looking to build your social media presence from the ground up?

## **3. OUR SOCIAL MEDIA GOALS**

**List your social media goals aligned with your strategic objectives and communication objectives**

- Translate your organisation's strategic objectives into communication objectives (if this is not already done in your Communication Strategy), then translate the communication objectives into social media goals. See below examples:



Strategic objectives	Communication objectives	Social Media goals
<i>Increase public trust.</i>	<i>Raise awareness of who we are, what we do, and why we do it.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Publish three posts on each of our platforms each week.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase in reach to 2% in 2021 and 3% in 2022.</i></li> </ul>
	<i>Project the results of our services and how they create value for society.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Post a weekly employee portrait showcasing how he or she is contributing.</i></li> <li>• <i>Grow followers by 100 per month in 2021 and 2022.</i></li> </ul>
<i>Reduce Violent Crime and Promote Public Safety.</i>	<i>Promote our Community Safety initiative and provide tangible solutions to enhance citizens' safety.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Post a weekly testimonial showcasing how safety has or can be improved in our communities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase referral rates to the crime prevention pages on our website by 20% in 2021 and 20% in 2022.</i></li> </ul>
<i>Promote Rule of Law, Integrity, and Good Governance.</i>	<i>Shape the public attitude towards our integrity and professionalism.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Post a weekly example showcasing applied good public governance.</i></li> <li>• <i>Respond constructively to all relevant questions within 24 hours on weekdays.</i></li> <li>• <i>Manage negative cases visibly to demonstrate we take issues seriously.</i></li> </ul>

#### 4. OUR SOCIAL MEDIA TARGET AUDIENCES

##### List your social media target audiences

- If your organisation has a Communications Strategy, this will most likely detail or even rank your target audiences.
- If your organisation has not yet listed the target audiences for its communication, this must be done.
- In the context of social media, you can further group your target audiences into three segments based on their level of

social media affiliation with your organisation. See the following example:

<b>Potential</b>	People who are regular users of social media, but who have never visited your social media platforms or website. You want to use social media to bring them into contact with your organisation, and ultimately move them to loyal followers.
<b>Existing</b>	People who occasionally read your social media posts, but have not connected as followers yet. You want to bring them closer to you and convert them to loyal followers or fans.
<b>Loyal</b>	Followers, most often fans, who are already connected to you via social media. They subscribe to and receive your updates. They are the most likely to share, comment or like your posts. You want to retain them and increase their engagement.

## 5. OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

### Select your social media platforms

- List the platforms you will be active on (see page 12) and define which platform you will focus most of your effort on to build a presence.
- For each social media platform:
  - Decide the most relevant segments of your target audiences;
  - Spell out what you will be doing to enhance your performance, grow your presence and audience, and accomplish your social media goals.
  - Detail how and how often you will measure your progress and results.

## 6. OUR SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

### Describe your content scheme

- Your content scheme must be guided by an overarching idea or purpose, which has to be associated with the mission of your organisation, e.g. “We are a Police Service for all citizens”.

- A smart way to structure your content is by defining 3-5 ‘Content Pillars’, each with a theme that supports the overarching idea or purpose (see page 23).

## **7. SOCIAL MEDIA INTEGRATION WITH OUR OTHER COMMUNICATION**

**Describe how your social media activities integrate with your other communication**

- Describe how your social media activities will align with and support your other communication channels so that your colleagues doing this work understand the wider picture.
- Describe how each social media platform can assist to promote your newsletters, support recruitment campaigns or enhance operational efforts (e.g. search, disaster management, witness engagement, etc).
- Describe the role of social media in your organisation's crisis management set-up.
- Do not forget, it is a two-way street, so also describe how other communication channels can support social media, e.g. how you can drive email sign-up by including social media links in the email footer (auto signature).

### **Social media and your website work side-by-side**

Information on websites is often perceived as “heavy” and does not offer the same easy options for your followers to share, comment or like the information presented.

Therefore, social media cannot yet replace your organisation’s website. Your website remains an essential pillar of your public presence and a cornerstone in providing the formal and basic information about your organisation and what it is doing.

However, it is common to use social media platforms for “drive to web” messaging where you present a short teaser, which links to more substantial information or long reads on your website.

Social media is current and offers an up-to-date feeling. It is much better suited to depicting the more human side of your organisation and contributing to a friendlier and more inviting position.

## **8. OUR SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES AND COORDINATION**

**List available social media resources, clarify how coordination is done, and mention how the strategy is evaluated**

- List the functions of personnel responsible for executing social media activities on behalf of your organisation (nationally and regionally). Explain their roles and responsibilities.
- Describe briefly how coordination with other units, subordinated offices, and headquarters are carried out (day-to-day coordination, approval procedures, releasing authority).
- Finally, include a paragraph on when and how the Social Media Strategy is evaluated and reviewed and a short explanation of the evaluation and review process.

# Selecting your social media platforms

**Social media is a crucial part of people's everyday life. Here is how to select the social media platform that best reaches your target audiences.**

Selecting which social media platform to use can be tricky, but your choice is essential when it comes to communicating your organisation's services to the public, raising the level of public trust and enhancing your dialogue with the public.

There are several aspects to consider when you have to select your social media platform(s). You have to reach and engage your target audiences, promote the activities and services your organisation offers, and find the most efficient way to communicate the type of content you are able to create.

- **Your goals:** You need to understand your organisation's **communication objectives** and **social media goals**. Once you have clarified the goals, you will have a better understanding of what target audiences you have to reach and what type of content you will need to create. This will assist you in selecting the best suited platform(s) to achieve what you are aiming for.
- **Your audiences:** Know your audience's demographics and psychographics! Understand who your **target audiences** are, what social media platforms they use, what type of content they are looking for, what their age is, what their preferences, needs, and habits are.
- **Your content:** Consider what **type of content you are able to create** and how it best suits different platforms: photos, videos, news, short messages, public service information, campaigns, etc.

When you summarize your findings, you are ready to select the social media platforms that best match the ambitions of your Social Media Strategy.

### **How many social media platforms can you manage?**

To expand your reach, you typically want to be present on more than one of the bigger social media platforms. However, if your organisation does not have the resources and capacity to maintain frequent presence and continuous activity on several platforms, you should limit your social media presence to the one platform that best accommodates your Social Media Strategy.

## **Facebook**

Facebook is the largest social media platform so far (2020), with approximately 2 billion active users per month, with most users aged 25-54.

Initially, it was created to connect individuals, but today, it is used by organisations, companies, influencers and political figures to present themselves and their activities and to be more approachable for the public. The type of content suitable for Facebook is:

- **Photos, infographics and short videos** - it has to be high quality, visual content;
- **Blog posts** - sharing insights, opinions, and results from your organisation;
- **News releases** - announcing news and updates from your organisation;
- **Stories** - now Facebook offers a possibility to upload *stories*. These are short videos that will disappear after 24 hours.

### **Long-reads**

Facebook can also be used to promote and link to long-read materials on your website. This is called “drive to web” and drives the public to click through to your official webpage.

### **Facebook Groups**

Facebook allows users to create themed groups. These are fora where group members connect and communicate about shared interests. Some Groups let anyone join whilst others might be private. Groups can also be created by members of organisations to exchange news and information about specific topics (see internal communication, page 44).



## **Instagram**

Instagram is a social media application designed primarily for sharing photos and videos from mobile devices and share them further on other platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Flickr. Since 2012, Instagram is owned by Facebook.

Instagram has more than 500 million active daily users (2020). It is especially popular among younger generations and is the second most frequently used social media platform used by teenagers after Snapchat.

Users can follow people and organisations and engage with their posts by liking and/or commenting. Since Instagram focuses on visual content, your profile must appear visually consistent and contain good quality photos and videos.

Instagram allows for a maximum of 2,200 characters in each caption and up to 30 hashtags (although it is not advisable to put so many in one caption or to use the same hashtags in every post).

It also allows live streaming which tends to engage followers and the public in general and, as such, can be used to demonstrate openness and visible online contact.

During live streaming, users can ask questions in the comments section and you can answer them directly by speaking on the video.

## **Twitter**

Twitter has a high number of users including many influential people, celebrities, organisations, and media people. 85% of Twitter users are under the age of 50.

In many countries, journalists are using Twitter as a primary news source. Hence, they are able to immediately publish or broadcast your information from Twitter to their subscribers. For this reason, Twitter is a preferred channel for instant communication and seen as the fastest way to reach a larger audience with short breaking news, immediate messages, crucial information, announcements, etc.

Twitter allows tweets of up to 280 characters as well as photos, GIFs and videos up to 512MB file size and 30 seconds. You can include up to four photos, one video or one GIF in a Tweet. Generally photos and illustrations work better on Twitter than videos.

A key Twitter feature is the possibility to retweet other users' tweets in a matter of seconds, which allows for information to be cascaded instantly to an increasing number of people.

### **Twitter retweets**

- A retweet is a re-posting of a tweet. Twitter's retweet feature helps you and others to quickly share tweets with all of your followers. Twitter allows you to retweet your own tweets, but this is not recommended.
- Sometimes people type "RT" at the beginning of a tweet to indicate that they are retweeting someone else's content. This isn't an official Twitter command or feature, but signifies that they are quoting someone's tweet.

Each day, Twitter shows the most trending hashtags, which allows you to see which topics or news are discussed. Images and videos can be shown as links.

## **YouTube**

If your organisation has video capacity, YouTube is the service that allows you to upload, share, and edit videos as well as to search and watch other users' videos.

YouTube is owned by Google and has around 30 million active daily users (2020). Here users can follow other users' content and channels and comment on videos. YouTube is also good for Vlogs (video blogs/logs) - a social media platform where a person or organisation regularly posts short videos.

YouTube allows its users to upload videos of up to 15 minutes by default and longer for verified accounts. The maximum size of the files you can upload is 128 GB or 12 hours.

Keep in mind that the quality of videos and sound must be good, and the content and length of the videos appropriate for your target audience and in line with your set goals for this platform.

# Setting up and managing your social media accounts

Once you have decided which platforms to focus on, it is time to create your profiles.

Make sure you fill out all profile fields, use keywords people will use to search for your organisation, and use images that are correctly sized for each platform.

## Facebook

Follow this link [<https://www.facebook.com/gpa/>] to get inspiration from Facebook's own training website tailored for government organisations. Below are some general issues to consider before setting up your organisation's new Facebook page. Discuss these issues and agree on the main principles before launching the page.

- **Have the resources and capacity in place.** Often government organisations have sub-divisions at the regional/local level. Align your Social Media Strategy to your available resources before deciding on the number of Facebook pages your organisation will open. The main principle is “less is more”. If you are not sure whether you have the capacity to professionally manage regional or local pages, stick to one main Facebook page for the entire organisation.
- **Choose a page, not a profile.** Make sure that you set up a Facebook page. A page is different from a personal profile, it is open to the public and anyone can become a “fan”, compared to a Facebook profile where people connect by requesting to be a “friend”. You will not be able to change this later.
- **Pick the right name.** Choose the right name for your Facebook page. Sometimes the official name of your organisation or sub-division needs to be shortened or simplified in order to be understandable and searchable for regular Facebook users.
- **Select the right profile image and cover photo.** The perfect profile image will be one your followers already know and

associate you with — such as the insignia of your organisation. The cover photo is the first thing users will see when they visit your page, so it has an impact on people's impressions. Try not to clutter your cover photo with too much text, pick a photo that is visually strong and depicts the essence of your work.

- **Have your procedures in place.** Before launching a page, consider your internal resources and information flow. For example, who will respond to comments and answer direct messages from your followers? What if it is not a general question but an official complaint or information about a possible crime?

## **Instagram**

Follow this link [<https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-use-instagram-for-business/#howto>] to see how you create an Instagram business account. Check also this link [<https://www.facebook.com/gpa/blog/instagram-for-gpa>].

- Your **Username** (starts with @) should be easily searchable and recognised;
- Fill in your **Bio section** - it is one of the most important parts of your profile because there you can shortly (maximum 150 characters) explain what your organisation does and what is its Instagram profile has to offer;
- Put in a **hyperlink to your website**;
- **Choose a category** of your profile (e.g., Public & Government Service, Police Station, Government Organisation, etc.);
- **Select your contact options** (if any). Your contact information will enable people to make contact using the buttons that will be on your profile. You can also choose not to show your contact details and in your Bio section ask users to *Direct Message* (DM) you if they want to contact you. If you have a business account, it should definitely be public (it means that all users can see and follow it) to best support the goals set out in your Social Media Strategy.

## **Instagram terminology**

- **Post:** Publication on Instagram in the Feed.
- **Feed or Newsfeed:** The screen where you can see the posts from accounts that you follow.

- **Bio:** The section of text under a username where you can put short information about your agency, organisation etc. This section is important because it is the first thing that users read about your profile and decide whether to follow you or not.
- **Followers:** Instagram users who follow your account.
- **Following:** Instagram users that you follow. You can follow open profiles on Instagram just by clicking on “Follow” button. In case of a private account, you will be able to follow only upon the approval from the account user.
- **Hashtag** is a searchable word with a (#) sign in front, which helps you to look for posts on a specific topic. E.g., #EUAM, #euamukraine, #policeua, #ukraine, #throwbackthursday, #springisintheair etc. On Instagram you can follow not only users but also hashtags. Hashtags can be added in the post`s caption or in the comments under the post. It is recommended to create your own unique hashtag(s) - also known as *branded hashtags* - and make them visible in the bio section to make it easier for Instagram users to find your profile and your publications, as well as to put your posts in categories.
- **Geotag:** The location of your post. Your geotagged post will show up in users` search under the selected location.
- **DM or Direct Messages:** On Instagram, you can send/receive *Direct Messages* to/from other users. They are visible only to users participating in the conversation. Instagram *Direct Messages* allows to create group chats, send voice messages and make video chats.
- **Gallery**, also known to Ukrainian users as a “*Carousel*”: Multiple (up to 10) pictures, photos or videos (up to 60 seconds) in one post.
- **Stories:** Short (15 seconds maximum) publications at the top of the Instagram newsfeed, which disappear after 24 hours. You can post videos, photos, pictures, text, questions or voting in your stories. They are used to increase interaction with your followers. You can also save your stories in your profile under *Highlights*.
- **Instagram Live:** Live streamed video for your followers. The live stream can be saved in *Stories* for users to watch later. You can also make joint live streams with other users.
- **IGTV (Instagram TV):** Video service on Instagram which allows to post long videos (up to 1 hour).

## Universal tips to improve performance on Instagram

- The gallery in your profile should be **visually coherent**. Post only edited **high-quality photos** to underline and enhance the specific style of your profile. There are many free apps, which you can use to edit your photos (see page 28).
- **Write catchy and interesting captions** to your photos, which resonate with your followers and readers.
- **Post regularly**. Your profile should be active, otherwise you will disappear from your followers feed and eventually they will unfollow you. Another thing is that if you do not post often enough, Instagram can limit some of your business profile features. The optimal number of posts per day is from one to three.
- **Post at the right time** when your audience is most likely to respond. For this, you will need to look into your followers' demographics to understand when they are most active.
- Your posts can include a **mix of different content**, including:
  - Informative (news; success stories; behind the scenes; the life of your organisation; information/awareness campaigns);
  - Useful (explanations, instructions, sharing experience, etc.);
  - Entertaining (so that your followers do not get bored).
- **Use Instagram Stories to interact** with your audience. You can use *Stories* (see next page) to display news, immediate information to your followers or just to remind them to check out your latest posts.
- You can **create interactive games** engaging your followers through questions with multiple choice answers, "YES/NO" voting, etc. You can use masks and filters, embedded in Instagram *Stories*, funny GIFs, etc.
- Use **Instagram Insights** to manage your activities on Instagram and to see how your audience interacts with your content.
- Instagram offers **many useful tools**, which will help you make your content more interesting and engaging. Try to explore and use them. The more time and effort you invest in Instagram, the more responsive is the Instagram algorithm.



## **Twitter**

Follow this link [<https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-setup-twitter-search-hashtag-and-login-help/>] to see how you create a Twitter account.

- Fill in **your name** (the name of the organisation) and a **telephone number or e-mail address**.
- The "full name" that you provide will be your **display name**, but unlike Facebook, you can change your display name to whatever you want as many times as you want.
- Upon completing the above sections you will receive the **verification code**. Enter this code in the provided section.
- Select your **password** - make sure it is strong.
- Choose a **profile picture** and fill in the **Bio section** (up to 150 characters).
- Choose whether you'd like to **synchronize your contacts**. This may help you find Twitter followers you know, but if you don't want to, just hit "not now".
- Search for **interests**. Based on your interests, this will help Twitter recommend good profiles for you to follow.

After finishing setting up the account you are ready to tweet.

### **Universal tips to improve performance on Twitter**

- **Keep your account alive**. It is not enough just to set up your Twitter account. You need to be present frequently and Tweet/Retweet information;
- **Tweet daily** or even several times a day to be visible in other people`s feed. Look through your content and Tweet about the activities or the news in your organization.
- **Retweet at least once daily**, but **do not retweet your own Tweets** or Tweets which substantially resembles your own;
- **Check your Twitter** in the morning, afternoon and evening;
  - Look through your feed and **listen** to what your followers and people you follow talk about.
  - **Engage** in conversations with your followers: like, reply and retweet them.
  - **Reply** to Direct Messages (DMs) and worthy tweets where your organisation is mentioned.
- When managing an organisational Twitter account remember to **tweet on behalf of your organization** and not yourself.

## YouTube

Follow this link [<https://influencermarketinghub.com/how-to-create-a-youtube-business-account/>] for a quick start-up guide to your organisation's YouTube channel. For advice and practices on producing content and managing your channel, follow this link [<https://www.youtube.com/creators/support-and-guidance/>]

To upload videos, you need a YouTube Channel, not just an account. When filling in the channel information be precise and patient. YouTube is owned by Google, so the more detailed information you provide, the higher search visibility your channel will get in Google and on YouTube itself. To set up your YouTube channel you need to:

- **Name** your channel and provide the **keywords** to be associated with it. Your keywords serve two purposes.
  - Firstly they make it easier to search for your organisation. For this purpose select keywords, which describe the different aspects of your work.
  - Secondly they will allow you to add different spellings of your organisation's name. Consider possible misspelling and abbreviations. Try to predict, how people will search for your organisation in Google.
- Select the **category** your content belongs to. This will enable audiences with matching interests to see your content.
- Insert a **hyperlink** to your website.
- **Upload a cover photo and logo** of your organisation.
- Upload a **video trailer** explaining what the channel is about. This will be shown only to new visitors.
- Select your **country and language**. This is important if you want your videos to be shown to the citizens of your country.
- Select a **featured channel** - e.g. another YouTube channel of your organisation or its partners.
- Set up **community filters**. You can select specific words e.g. obscene words. YouTube will automatically hide comments containing them.
- Set **standard upload settings** for your videos. Standard keyword and privacy settings will prevent you from unintentionally making your upload public without proper description, image or tags. The best privacy setting by default

is private as this will enable you to double-check all information before publishing your video.

- Select if your content is **suitable for children**. If you do not select it from the beginning, you will be asked every time you upload a video.

## Universal tips to improve performance on YouTube

- Write **descriptive and figurative headlines** for your videos, they should not exceed 70 characters and contain current, interesting or catchy topics.
- Select appropriate **keywords** for your video. You will need about 5-10 of them, they should link to the content, headline and description.
- **Repeat the headline in the description**. This will add to the search potential of your video. Primarily, keywords and descriptions are written for search engine crawlers. Use video keywords/tags in the description. One or two keywords per 2-3 sentences will do. Add variants of your organisation name in description - full name and abbreviation for example.
- If your video is long (briefings, longer interviews) you can **insert timecodes** in the description with links to specific topics.
- Upload a **cover photo** to your video. Use catchy high quality photos or photo collages with key messages of the video. Your cover must be recognisable and readable as video preview, which is quite small.
- Add **subtitles** and provide **translation** for your headline and description. This will widen your audiences as many subscribers can search for content in different languages as well (Russian for example)
- **Categorize your content** into thematic playlists. You will only get subscribers if your channel is useful and interesting for them. The best way to showcase your work is to categorize it into specific topics people understand. Later you can drop playlists, you are not updating frequently, to the bottom of the channel interface.
- **Be the first to like and comment** your video on YouTube. In your comment, ask the audience some questions in order to start the discussion.
- Add **subscribe button** and a **watch more** playlist with selected videos at the end screens.
- Post regularly, preferably twice a week, If this is not possible try to post on the same day and at the same time every week.
- Upload **only original videos** to your channel, **use only royalty free music/sound effects**, for example:

<https://www.youtube.com/audiolibrary/music?nv=1>

# Planning, creating and curating your content

Your content must be guided by an overarching idea or purpose, which should be associated with the mission of your organisation.

**Content Pillars provide a structure**

By creating 'Content Pillars', you develop a structure where each pillar represents a wider topic. In principle, each topic must adhere to the organisation's Social Media or Communication Strategy and be associated with its mission.

The 'Content Pillars' will allow you to continuously create new posts and messages, each with different content, but within the broader topic of each pillar.

By using this method, you will ensure a more coherent messaging. This will contribute to strengthening your organisation's communication and bolstering its position. Below is an example:



Keep the number of pillars from three to five. They should remain for as long as they are relevant, usually for at least three months. Otherwise, continuity and consistency can be weakened or lost.

Over time, the pillars can be changed or rotated. You can replace a pillar with a new one, once the topic has been exhausted or becomes less relevant to your audiences or when new, more significant, themes emerge.

Of course, situations will arise where it can be necessary to address topics which are not covered by the pillars. As long as this happens occasionally, it is not an issue.

### Post social media content that works

As mentioned earlier, *reach* is important. The most effective way to achieve *reach* is when your content is shared by your followers and by their followers. The more your content is shared, the wider your *reach* is and the more successful your content performs.

Consequently, when you draft social media content, it is crucial to make that content as shareable as possible. Here are some universal tips to increase the share:

#### 1. Keep your audiences in mind

Usually, your target audiences are listed in your organisation's Communication Strategy. Before creating or publishing content, you have to think of what your target audiences want. In this process, it might be useful to regroup your target audiences into specific segments, each reflecting their desire for different types of content.

Browsers	Followers (or Subscribers)	Searchers
<p>↓ want <b>Inspiring</b> content ↓ to engage with your organisation</p>	<p>↓ want <b>Engaging</b> content ↓ to make loyal followers of your organisation</p>	<p>↓ want <b>Educational</b> content ↓ to answer specific needs regarding your organisation</p>

## 2. Be relevant and add value

Informative content is good, but if your followers can benefit from what you publish, it is far better. Your content will add value, if it is relevant, useful, address your followers' problems and shows how to overcome them. As long as the content you create is genuinely helpful, it is also far more likely to be shared.

## 3. Create high-quality content

It is the content that keeps your audience interested and engaged. There are no shortcuts: shareable content must be high-quality, fresh and specially adapted to each social media platform. Content creation can take time and effort, but your time will be well invested.

## 4. Structure your content

Social media users read quickly, but a "wall of text" will turn them off. Be brief and format your written content cleverly by using catchy headlines, clear captions, short sentences, and bullet points.

Tailor your content to each of your social media platforms, but try to maintain editorial consistency across your platforms in order to preserve your organisation's "voice".

## 5. Use images, video, and Infographics

Never post anything without an image. Video content is even better to catch your audience. If you have video production capacity, make video a frequent element in your social media content. If you can, add captions or subtitle the video to enhance your messaging on mobile devices. Video is particularly effective to reach younger audiences. Infographics can replace images and text. An infographic is a collection of imagery, graphics, and text that gives an easy-to-understand overview of your topic.

## 6. Reply to comments

Reply to comments from your audience. The more people comment, the better it is for your engagement rate (See page 33). When you reply, use easily understandable language and relate to the topic of your post. Stay positive and be polite. Do not use rude language.

### **Content is King**

It is commonly said, that *Content is King*, meaning that, if your content is not relevant to your target audiences, they will gradually stop engaging and following you on social media.



You might face trolls, haters, and bots commenting and writing negative comments, which may have no relation to the topic of your posts at all. A bot is an autonomous program that can interact with systems or users. It is useless to engage in conversation with bots since they are not real users. Do not engage in the exchange of arguments with trolls or haters.

### It pays off to plan your social media activities

If your social media activities are not fully planned and integrated into your daily/weekly routines, a social media ‘Content Calendar’ will help you to structure your social media presence.

It is a simple planning tool that allows you to maintain a better overview of future content and when to post it.

Social Media Content Calendar for Month 20XX						
DAY	DATE	HOURL	FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM	TWITTER	YOUTUBE
Monday	1	AM				
		PM				
Tuesday	2	AM				
		PM				
Wednesday	3	AM				
		PM				
Thursday	4	AM				
		PM				
Friday	5	AM				
		PM				
Saturday	6	AM				
		PM				
Sunday	7	AM				
		PM				
Monday	8	AM				
		PM				
Tuesday	9	AM				
		PM				
Wednesday	10	AM				
		PM				
Thursday	11	AM				
		PM				
		AM				

The ‘Content Calendar’ lets you plan ahead and assists you in building a *content library* of possible future stories and creative ideas. It enables a balanced variety of content, whilst helping you to maintain continuity and consistency across your social media platforms.

Using the ‘Content Calendar’ you can plan your posts days or weeks in advance, which allows you to fact-check and edit your content and even vetting it with other stakeholders in your organisation. In addition, it permits you to *schedule* social media posts ahead of time, e.g. on Facebook.

## Managing all your social media platforms from one single 'dashboard'

Being successful on social media requires continuous presence. This calls for a constant ongoing production of content, which has to be planned, drafted, and scheduled for publishing. In some cases, or always, your content may require clearance or approval before being published on your different platforms.

Also, in your effort to publish relevant up-to-date content, you may benefit from being able to monitor in parallel what others have published on the same topic.

All these tasks related to the management of your social media platforms can be handled via a single dashboard application, which will make it easier to manage and structure your social media presence.

Dashboard applications such as [Social Pilot](#) (but many others exist) allow you to use one single platform for all your different accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.).

Using such applications enables you to plan and draft your posts in advance, ensure their clearance, and schedule them for later publication. Many dashboards also provide useful monitoring tools, using specific keywords and @ tags to quickly give you an overview.

It is advisable to investigate if one of these dashboard apps matches your needs and then to experiment, as many of them offer free trial periods.

## Social media content curation - sharing the best

There is a relatively easy way to maintain frequent contact with your followers and avoid gaps in your social media 'Content Calendar'. This is where content curation comes into the picture.

'Social Media Content Curation' is done by filtering through interesting content across the web and social media and sharing the most relevant news, articles, videos, and infographics on your own social media platforms.

In general, the external content you share should be in line with your 'content pillars', but first and foremost it must be relevant, high-quality content that your audiences want to read and share.

## Don't miss to post on relevant occasions!

- National holidays such as Women's Day, Easter, Victory Day, Independence Day, Constitution Day, Day of the Defender, Christmas, and New Year;
- International Days such as Europe Day, World Press Freedom Day, International Day of Families, World Day for Cultural Diversity, World Blood Donor Day, International Youth Day, International Day for Tolerance, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and Human Rights Day;
- National sport events, major regional events or Ukrainian achievements in the Olympics (Tokyo 2021 and Beijing 2022), and Paralympic Games;
- Other popular events, e.g. 'Black Friday' (Seen on Social Media: "Get a free uniform this Black Friday, join the Police - Recruiting Now!").

## Free online help to improve your content

There are a number of online services available, which will assist you in improving your content. Explore the hyperlinks below or find the services through Google.

### Help to making videos

- [Facebook workshop](#)
- [Boomerang](#)
- [Hyperlapse](#)
- [Stayfilm](#)
- [VidLab](#)

### Help to improving photos

- [Juxtaposer](#)
- [Layout](#)
- [Snapseed](#)
- [Lightroom](#)
- [TouchRetouch](#)
- [Facetune](#)

### Help to Graphic Design and Infographics

- [Piktochart](#)
- [Pixlr](#)
- [Adobe Spark Post](#)
- [Canva](#)
- [Emojipedia](#)

### Royalty Free content

#### Images

- [Burst](#)
- [Pexels](#)
- [Unsplash](#)

#### Logos

- [Flaticon](#)
- [Noun Project](#)

#### Gifs

- [GifCam](#)
- [Giphy](#)

#### Fonts

- [Google Fonts](#)

# Statistics, metrics, and analysis

**Metrics make you perform better. Here are three steps to improve your social media presence.**

Once you have completed your Social Media Strategy and selected your social media platforms, you are ready to post content on those platforms. Soon, these platforms will allow you to access statistics on how well you are doing.

How is your social media planning going? Does your community of followers connect with your content? Do they actually match the target audiences you want to reach? What content could be more interesting to them? How can you readjust the profile of your followers?

The statistics automatically generated by your social media platforms represent an invaluable source of information and answers. Provided that you know how to read them! Without analysis, daily metrics will seem superficial and meaningless.

It is the responsibility of the social media manager to follow statistics and metrics, to analyse it and to put the findings into perspective within the organisation's Social Media Strategy.

## **Step One: Read your statistics**

Practically all social media platforms provide automatically generated statistics. Some, like Twitter and YouTube, give you full access to all the statistics you need and for the period you select (yesterday, last week, last month, last year...). To access the statistics linked with these platforms, visit the dedicated sections (e.g. [www.analytics.twitter.com](http://www.analytics.twitter.com) or [www.youtube.com/analytics](http://www.youtube.com/analytics)) and enter your login.

For other social media platforms, like Facebook and Instagram, you can only access the statistics for predefined periods. On Facebook Insights you can see “Yesterday”, “the last 7 days” or “the last 28 days”; on Instagram Insights only “the last 7 days”.

So, if you intend to generate a monthly report, you will need to visit the “Insights” page regularly on a very specific date (sometimes even on a day off). For an easy monthly comparison of your metrics, you should register your statistical data in a table. One table for each of your social media platforms.

## Step Two: Register your metrics

When you register your metrics, you have to distinguish between two types of statistics that are complimentary. Some are *quantitative indicators* and others are *qualitative indicators*.

Together these figures will allow you to understand the holistic performance - positive or negative.

Strong growth means your messages are echoing well among your community of followers. This is a positive signal, especially in the beginning!

Nonetheless, stagnating or slightly decreasing numbers are not necessarily an alarm signal. They can portray a strong community that cannot expand further. In any case, they need to be complemented by *qualitative indicators*.

### Typical quantitative indicators

- Number of posts.
- Number of unique users who saw your post or page. (“impressions” on Twitter) called your “Reach”.
- Number of mentions.
- Number of pages views or previews (led by your content, other mentions or other users surfing online).
- Number of new followers/subscribers (Facebook distinguishes between “Fans” and “Followers”, choose which figure you want to follow and stick to it!).

### Typical qualitative indicators

- Number of post clicks.
- Number of link clicks.
- Number of likes.
- Number of comments (or “replies” on Twitter).
- Number of shares (or “Retweets”).
- Average view duration (for videos).

Qualitative statistics give you a more holistic visualisation, with more details. You can assess your influence on a given topic through the response given by your community of followers. Do they like it or not? Are they real “Fans” or mere “Followers”? And what about their engagement?

The *engagement rate* is one of the most important indicators to follow in your metrics routine. Some platforms like Twitter and YouTube will display it automatically. But on Facebook and Instagram, you will need to calculate it yourself. To do so, you need to divide the total amount of interactions (clicks, likes, comments and shares) by the reach (the total amount of views).

$$\text{Engagement rate} = \frac{\text{Interactions}}{\text{Reach}}$$

You can calculate the *engagement rate* for a single post, a social media campaign (see page 37) or a specific period.

## Facebook terminology

- **Engagement:** Anytime a user engage with one of your posts.
- **Engagement metrics:**
  - Shares: How many times your content is shared by others, increasing *reach*;
  - Comments: The number of comments posted on one of your posts;
  - Likes: The least valuable metric as users can hit *like* without reading the full content;
  - Mentions: How many times is your organisation mentioned in other posts.
- **Impressions:** The total number of times your content is displayed, no matter if it was seen, clicked or not. A viewer does not have to engage with the post in order for it to count as an impression.
- **Reach:**
  - Organic Reach: The number of people (unique users) who visited your page or saw one of the posts in the news feed (for free);
  - Paid Reach: The number of people (unique users) who saw your paid content, such as a Facebook ad or a *Boosted Post*;
  - Viral Reach: The number of people (unique users) who saw your page mentioned or one of the posts, published by a friend. These include actions such as sharing, and liking.
- **Video Views:** The total number of times your video is viewed for at least three seconds.

### Step Three: Analyse your metrics

To follow your social media platform's evolution from one month to the next, you need to keep track of your metrics regularly.

Once you have comparable metrics, you can begin to analyse your metrics. A meticulous analysis will enable you to constantly improve your social media presence including matching your target audience's expectations in terms of content, format (pictures, articles, videos...) but also regularity (is daily posting necessary?).

Another worthy practice is to identify your best performing post each month or week; and to understand the interconnection between these peaks of attention: What was the message? What type of content was it? Are you successful in using this recipe for other messages or in other formats?



Social media platforms allow you to access useful pre-set statistics depicting your community of “Fans” or “Followers”, the number of people reached and people engaged.

For each group, you can have access to a large amount of data: gender, age, location, language. Altogether, you end up with a good picture of your community of followers to compare with your Social Media Strategy target audiences. Your analytical work is also an opportunity for setting new challenges, for instance, “How to engage with younger generations?”

### Instagram terminology

**Post Insights:** The section of statistics under your post where you can see how many people liked, commented, shared and saved your photo. It also provides the information on impressions, reach, how many people (including those who are not your followers) viewed your post and how did they find it (hashtags, newsfeed, your profile, other sources). Post insights also shows:

- **Engagement:** Anytime a user likes, comments, shares or saves one of your photos.
- **Engagement rate:** The number of engagements (shares, likes, and comments) for a post divided by the reach.
- **Impressions:** The total number of times your content is displayed, no matter if it was seen, clicked or not. This means that the same viewer will trigger multiple impressions for the same piece of content, when it is displayed several times.
- **Insights/Statistics:** General statistics of your profile for the last 7 days (impressions, reach, engagement etc.).
- **Reach:** The number of unique users who saw your post.
  - Organic Reach: The number of people (unique users) who visited your page or saw one of the posts without following a paid promotion;
  - Paid Reach: The number of people (unique users) who saw your paid/promoted/sponsored content.

# Engaging your audiences and responding to their comments

**To build lasting relationships with your followers, move from one-way to two-way communication.**

One of the common unfortunate habits of government organisations is the limiting of their social media activity to one-way communication.

Having numerous followers on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter is a good start, but it is not an end goal. The end goal is really to build lasting positive relationships between an organisation and its target audiences.

To begin the move from one-way to two-way communication, an organisation must engage its followers on social media. Engagement is not a single interaction but a process of gradually establishing a thriving community of followers who want to engage actively with the posted content, share it, provide their comments to it or like it.

Here are some tips on how you can engage your audiences effectively:

## **Be relevant**

If the public is interested in reading news or press releases about crimes, cases, verdicts or accidents, they will most likely go to a news site or your organisation's website.

Instead it is far better to create high-quality content, which provides value for your followers. Your content adds value, if it is relevant, useful, address your followers' problems and shows how to overcome them. As long as your content is genuinely helpful, it is far more likely to be shared and will give your audience a reason to comment or like it.

## **Encourage the conversation**

Encourage your followers to interact with your social media posts. Civilian security, for example, is something that actually matters to people. Publish content that encourages your followers to vocalize their opinions and concerns. Invite them to ask questions, provide reviews or sign up for mailing lists. You can ask a question

through a visual post or conduct a short survey. Make sure that you take your audiences' input into account and show them that you did so.

### **Pursue opportunities beyond your platforms**

As a government organisation, you have a privilege. Often public conversations concerning your services or line of work take place beyond your social media platforms.

Find out which platforms people are using to interact with or talk about your topics. Explore these opportunities and have a say in the conversation under your profile. This will invite more new followers to your social media accounts and raise your rank as opinion leader.

### **Hold contests**

Another way to engage your audience is to invite them to take polls or enter contests. Keep in mind that polls and contests have to be thematic and tied to the work of your organisation. Launch contests that consider the values you stand for. It could be, for example, a contest for children's drawings on road traffic safety or a contest of ideas in the area of cybersecurity.

Whatever they are, try to keep them positive. When giving out prizes, think of non-material things. For example an opportunity to join a helicopter patrol.

## **How to respond and not respond to comments!**

### **DO:**

- Always respond to questions asked on your timeline.
- Respond in a timely manner.
- Address critique quickly.
- Personalize your message, remember that you're talking to a real person.
- Stay positive and friendly.

### **DO NOT:**

- Use jargon or technical terms.
- Forget to respond to positive comments.
- Copy-paste the same response to every comment.
- Delete comments (even negative comments, if they are not directly harassing or vulgar).
- Raise your voice or lose your cool.

# Targeting your audiences, partners, and influencers

**A collaborative mind-set is key to reaching additional audiences through the social media platforms of others.**

Once you have established routines to post regularly on your own social media platforms, your community of followers will gradually transform into a loyal fan base. Still, there are additional initiatives you can take to ensure further reach and more active engagement with new audiences.

## **Hit your audience with boosted posts**

*Boosted Posts* is a paid method to reach your target audiences even more precisely. By using this tool, you can make certain that your followers and their friends see the posts you are about to publish.

*Boosted Posts* also allow you to identify a specific group that does not belong to your regular target audience. You can reach a selected audience depending on where they live or even how old they are. It is therefore a helpful tool when you have a specific group in mind (young people for instance) or when your subject is talking about a regional or local issue.

## **Boost your messages on Facebook**

For Facebook Business pages, *Boosted Posts* are available. These are regular Facebook posts for which you pay to reach a wider audience or to be seen more often by users who are likely to engage with its content. It is up to you how much you want to spend. The minimum cost of a boost is one USD per day.

## **Engaging new audiences through “official allies”**

Ordinarily, your social media fan base is comprised of your colleagues and their families, your organisation’s direct partners or maybe other social media platforms belonging to organisations that address topics similar to yours.

Typically, each of them also has its own community of followers. Consequently, each of their communities is an opportunity for your organisation to reach new audiences.

Every time one of your followers shares, comments or likes your content, his/her community is allowed to see what you have published. That is why a collaborative mind-set is key in adding a cascading effect to your social media presence.

To engage - indirectly - these additional communities, begin by listing your organisation's "official allies" e.g. partner organisations, theme-related pages, and other influential or relevant accounts.

Once your list is prioritized and ready, begin - through your organisation's account - to openly follow each of these accounts.

At the same time, you can begin to mention or refer to them in your own posts whilst tagging their handle (@username). In this way, you have more chances to create interaction with them and to reach their communities.

Also, out of reciprocity, be sure to share, comment and like their posts now and then.

### **Working with influencers**

Usually, influencers are highly respected by their own communities. If the community of an influencer matches a target audience of your organisation, this influencer can become an ally of considerable value to your work, visibility and reputation.

Do not hesitate to reach out to potential influencers directly with a private message to get to know each other. Complement them on their content and let them know that you are able to offer them regular content on specific topics.

You can also support them by tagging them when you think they might be interested in a topic, but also by using their own hashtags to enable their participation in an ongoing conversation.

#### **What is an influencer?**

An influencer is an opinion leader, often in the form of a popular blogger, creating content in his/her niche. An influencer has his/her target audience with specific demographic or psychographic parameters. Typically, an influencer has more than 10,000 followers.

# Campaigns and campaign planning

**If you looking for high impact in a short time, a social media campaign might be the answer.**

Sooner or later your organisation may experience a need for raising awareness about a specific issue or address an explicit topic or problem with short notice.

Within the scope of social media, the best way to address this is through a *social media campaign*.

Such a campaign is a consolidated, coordinated and focused effort specifically designed to reinforce sentiments or promote behavioural changes.

Your social media platforms are well suited to execute your campaign. They are ultimately aimed at influencing social media users to feel or act in a certain way and have measurable metrics, which will enable you to monitor progress.

## **Focus on a single goal**

Your social media campaign should focus on a single goal. Preferably your goal should be very concrete, narrow and measurable. If you want your campaign to achieve too much at the same time, you will fail and it will achieve little or nothing.

## **Consistency is key**

Your campaign must be totally consistent. The narrative, tone of voice, graphic elements, photo style, 'look and feel' of all campaign elements must be alike. Apply the specific branding on your entire online presence to reinforce the campaign. Include it on headers, landing, websites, and email autosignatures.

### **What's a social media campaign?**

A social media campaign is a planned intense communication effort to reinforce or assist a specific purpose (e.g. achievement of the campaign or communication objective) during a limited period of time, using one or more social media platforms.

Campaigns differ from everyday social media efforts because of their amplified and specific focus, targeting and measurability.

### Use all your platforms and channels

Different target audiences have varying preferences on social media. Pick your best-suited social media platform as the lead platform to reach your target audience. Then promote your campaign across your other social media platforms and your website. If possible, integrate your other communication channels into your campaign. Remember internal communication (see page 44) to inform your colleagues about the campaign, what you want it to achieve, and their role in it. If they know about the campaign they might even be motivated to actively support it.

### Measure your results

Before launching your campaign, try to obtain a baseline measure of your metrics so you can track performance and progress throughout the campaign timeline and beyond. Before starting your campaign, have all the tools for tracking metrics in place (see page 29).

### Plan, plan, plan!

Do not neglect planning. Careful planning gives your campaign a considerably higher chance of success. So plan and prepare in advance as much as possible:

- Schedule a **timeline for the campaign**. Having a firm start and end date is important.
- Prepare **solid and logical messaging** for your campaign.
- Develop catchy, easily communicated, and easily understood **key messages** (see “Interacting with Media” Compendium).
- **Prepare all the content you will post in advance**, including infographics and photos. Then plan and schedule your posts on the various platforms e.g. using a social media ‘Content Calendar’ (see page 26).
- Create a **short and catchy hashtag** for your campaign to make it easier to track reposts and mentions (e.g. on Instagram, when searching for a specific hashtag, you can see how many posts mention it has).
- **Use your organisation's resources**: Identify people in your organisation who can act as ambassadors for your campaign on social media and spread and promote your key messages so that more people will find out about it.



# Using social media to manage a crisis

**It is never easy to start planning for crisis response if you are in the middle of one.**

There is a distinction between a *tangible crisis* - a disaster or state of emergency - involving victims, casualties or loss of values or property and a virtual *intangible crisis*, putting the credibility, reputation or esteem of an organisation at risk.

Social media has a role to play in managing both types of crises and the key to managing them effectively is to foresee them, or at least to be able to identify them once they gain traction.

This is why planning plays a crucial role in crisis management. Even a minimum of planning will enable you to respond faster and more coordinated to an emerging crisis.

Here are some steps to consider before, during and after a crisis (tangible and intangible) hits:

## **Before the crisis**

For a *tangible crisis*, the role of social media in your organisation's crisis management set-up should be described in your Social Media Strategy or included in your organisation's Crisis Communication Plan. This will detail how your social media platforms, in an emergency, will be used to communicate to various audiences including in different regions and languages. In minutes, if well planned, social media can warn the public about a potential risk and inform them how to avoid it.

Not every bad news or critical comment is an *intangible crisis*. But your organisation can be put under severe public criticism or blame, in which case your timely response may stop or slow a rising antipathy or counter negative information.

Prepare for a crisis. To actively utilize your social media presence as

## **“Shitstorm”**

The term *shitstorm* originated in Germany in 2010 and describes an avalanche-like appearance of antipathy, insulting statements or abusive criticism against a person, an organisation or a company in the context of social media networks, blogs or comment functions on websites.

a crisis management instrument, try to envisage different threats and assess the risk of each to happen. Then anticipate how they can emerge to crisis scenarios. Consider the roles of your own staff, and how you keep them updated and best prepared to assist. Then discuss how social media can mitigate the situation getting out of hand, and develop response roadmaps beforehand. All this will save you valuable minutes and hours at the beginning of a crisis escalation.

As Social Media Manager, you must take an active part in the organisation's crisis or disaster management planning and exercises.

Listen to your social media. Responding timely depends first and foremost on when you realise that things might get out of hand. Set up social media monitoring procedures in your organisation.

There are several social media listening tools available, but you can also monitor your social media by setting up keyword searches and Google Alerts. With some of these tools, you are able to engage and manage crisis communication from a monitoring dashboard.

### **During the crisis**

Pause all planned social media activity. When it becomes clear that a crisis is emerging, stop all of your planned/scheduled posts immediately. There are plenty of examples of things going worse when scheduled posts, with no relevance to the crisis, appear in the organisation's timeline.

Acknowledge the issue. You probably have no clear answers at this moment, but staying silent while everyone else seems to be discussing your issue might come across louder than words. Your first posts do not have to be comprehensive. Acknowledge the obvious, confirm you are working to clarify the situation and will provide further information as soon as possible.

Collect information. Collecting factual information is crucial. Get as much first source information as possible. Are there staff in your organisation who were personally involved? Are there videos or photos available? Try to do a short FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) to address the main questions the public might have on this issue.

Post your follow-up messaging. Once you have gathered sufficient information, you are ready to follow up on your initial acknowledgment. Your post should include a summary of the situation, steps you have taken and will be taking, call to action or tips to the public. If relevant, express support, grief or sympathy to victims or casualties and their friends and family. Try to be as transparent and open as possible e.g. by publishing your FAQs. Use simple language, be empathic, own up to your mistakes.

#### **What not to do on social media during a crisis**

- Do not stay silent and hope it will pass.
- Do not lie or mislead.
- Do not delete negative comments.
- Do not close down the comment section.
- Do not blame others.
- Do not argue, but voice your opinion.

Follow the response. Monitor how the public responds to your posts. You will probably get new questions that you can add to your FAQs. Try hard to respond immediately to the questions and comments, but keep in mind that you should never argue or become angry towards your followers. At this moment, it is not about winning the argument, it's about minimising the damage. Adjust your further steps based on the feedback you get.

#### **After the crisis**

Evaluate the experience. Once the dust has settled, take time to identify the lessons learned. Gather the team who dealt with the crisis and do a debrief. Try to understand why it happened in the first place and how similar incidents can be avoided in the future. How was your reaction time in managing the crisis? How did your response protocol work, does your Crisis Communication Plan need to be adjusted? How was the crisis communicated internally, were your employees informed timely?

# Recruiting through social media

## Attract the smartest applicants by strengthening your brand as a public sector employer.

Some social media platforms, headed by LinkedIn, thrive around professional networking, career opportunities and job vacancies; mostly, but not only, in the private sector.

At the same time, the more generic social media businesses develop their platforms to include dedicated career-related content. Facebook opened a Careers page ([www.facebook.com/jobs/](http://www.facebook.com/jobs/)) where private and public sector organisations can announce job vacancies and where individuals can respond directly.

Today, each of your social media platforms matches a community of subscribers who are following you. An important part of this online audience might be following you precisely because they want to become part of your organisation. This is why social media plays an increasingly important role in the recruitment of new staff.

### Build your brand as an employer

Although social media might not fully replace the traditional recruitment channels of your organisation, these platforms should not be neglected. On the contrary, they can be a driver to accomplish specific human resources objectives.

If your organisation is looking for a certain type of candidate (with specific experience, education or geographical location), social media allows you to target these people directly through related content.

### Employer branding

Employer branding is how an employer - through a holistic use of branding initiatives - influences potential and existing employees positively towards its brand as employer.

Importantly, to avoid setbacks, the expectations an organisation creates through its employer branding must match the experiences of its employees in the workplace.

By applying employer branding wisely, your organisation will be able to improve its ability to recruit, and also retain its staff.

This applies to the recruitment of experienced seniors as well as attracting fresh graduates and students who are about to finish their university studies.

The key to attracting the best-qualified candidates and distancing your organisation from “competing” employers, is to work systematically with ‘Employer Branding’.

### **Tell your best stories online**

One way to brand your organisation as an attractive employer is to share success stories from your colleagues’ daily life or even highlight “champions” or “heroes”, who can portray or speak for the organisation. This is an active way to embody your values and to offer a behind-the-scenes insight into your organisation.

You can also present interesting angles to various departments, divisions or professions in your organisation.

Even for people who are not interested in joining your organisation as employees, this type of content is perceived positively as a sign of openness, confidence, and transparency.

Also your colleagues could find inspiration in such content and discover the work of other colleagues, to whom they may never have talked!

In other words: Keep on posting your usual content and add, once in a while, ‘employer content’ like job offers and your colleagues’ success stories.

# Internal communication on social media

## A tool to keep your organization more cohesive and your colleagues better informed.

The previous chapter focussed on the value of working systematically with “Employer Branding” to attract qualified potential employees.

For any organisation - and in particular its leadership - it is equally important to retain its employees. The cost of recruiting and training new employees is high and every time an experienced staff member quits, the organisation loses some of its know-how and institutional memory.

Internal communication is a function that serves to retain staff through higher motivation and connecting them more strongly to the organisation and each other. Internal communication aims to:

- Keep all staff members well informed about issues of general interest;
- Offer staff members a more holistic understanding of the organisation they work for;
- Build and strengthen the organisation’s culture and values;
- Keep people calm in times of crisis;
- Serve as a channel for feedback, debate and discussion.

In this way internal communication becomes an additional leadership instrument for your senior management which can help to ensure a better informed, higher motivated and more cohe-

rent staff across departments and geographical regions.

For instance, your senior management, through internal communication, can express their will to promote internal mobility as an initiative to retain qualified staff.

### **This is not internal communication**

Do not mistake daily duty orders and operational instructions for internal communication. These are important necessary working directions, which serve a completely different purpose.

## Let your internal communication go social

In addition to verbal communication through the chain of command, the best tool for internal communication is a well-distributed *Intranet* to which all staff members have regular access. As not all public organisations have established their own *Intranet*, instead, social media and social media methodology can be utilized, if already in place.

Before expanding your social media presence to include internal communication, be sure to check that the majority of your staff is actually following your organisation on e.g. Facebook. Also, a certain level of privacy must be ensured (see box below).

Various social media platforms offer different solutions for different needs.

- Facebook private group: Many organisations use private groups to share content internally. As the group administrator must allow each staff member to join one-by-one, this platform is mostly useful for internal communication at the subdivisional, departmental or local level - and in smaller organisations, even for the entire organisation.
- Yammer: A “very easy to use” platform. Yammer is the internal equivalent of Twitter. It allows you to share posts, pictures, videos and let your colleagues comment and chat on different issues.

## Information security is important

While encouraging staff to interact through feedback, debate and discussions in the context of internal communication on social media, remain very clear on what content your employees are allowed and not allowed to share online within the scope of their official activities (photos, videos, internal documents, etc).

You might decide to draft a *Social Media Policy*. This is a code of conduct that provides guidelines concerning posting of content on your organisation’s own social media platforms, both personally and professionally. It can also include guidelines to employees on posting duty related content on their private social media accounts.



# Notes

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