

Social Media for Volunteers and Members

Guideline

Social Media for Volunteers and Members Guidelines

The pace and scale of change that social media has brought to society has been significant and will continue to be. In the IET, the use of social media has evolved from merely being a tool for the communication and marketing teams to push messages, to volunteers, staff and leaders at all levels taking part in spontaneous and social conversations across multiple platforms.

This guidance document has been created to equip volunteers and members with best practice advice and tips for creating great social content that facilitates conversation, collaboration and engagement.

Use this guidance document in conjunction with the Social Media Policy for Volunteers and Members:

- Volunteers can find the Policy in the [IET EngX Volunteering community](#)
- Members can find the Policy on the [IET website](#)

Planning Social Media - Developing a content strategy

Social media takes consistent effort. Developing a content strategy can help to shape the aims and objectives of your social media activity.

1. Establish social goals that align with overall communication goals

To have real quantifiable impact the social media goals should align with the ambitions of the campaigns communication goals. Examples could include:

- Driving traffic
- Awareness
- Lead conversions
- Increase engagement

2. Choose the right social media networks

To help with identifying the perfect platforms, complete an audit of the social media networks. Look at things like audience demographics, age, gender, where competitors are, so that you are not wasting time and budget by targeting your content in the wrong places. Some useful resources are:

- a [compilation of most popular social networks worldwide](#) on the Statista website
- this [Social Media Demographics Guide](#) on the Khoros website
- Our [content audit template](#) which has been created to provide a means to capture social media analysis

3. Decide on your social media persona

It's important to know how to talk to your social media followers. Analyse how followers interact on each social channel (including your competitor's channels) and adjust tone of voice and content creation type accordingly (see the next point).

4. Content creation

Understanding the motivations of your followers is the key to creation of shareable content. In a study by the [New York Times](#), they highlighted the key factors that cause people to share content.

- To define ourselves to others
- To bring valuable, emotive and entertaining content to others
- To grow and nourish relationships
- Self-fulfilment
- To get the word out about causes and brands they care about

By following these factors, the creation of stories that fulfil these motivations should increase the chances of content being shared. Your stories should:

- Appeal to your audience's motivation to connect with each other and build a community
- Tell a story
- Establish credibility and trust
- Keep the message simple
- Appeal to positive emotions like inspiration, illumination or amusement to build a positive brand connection
- Embed a sense of urgency
- React fast to a moment (e.g. breaking news)
- Earn employee/friend/colleague advocacy - It is thought that people are 16 times more likely to read a post from a friend

5. Tips to keep in mind when publishing your content

Subject - the subject of your post is important when it comes to the precise message and content you want to publish across your channels. You want all content to be relevant to your industry and audience. Make sure your posts don't have too many different subjects.

Style - the style of your post, whether it's a photo, a gallery of photos, a slideshow, or a video, should reflect the style and character of The IET. Vary the style of your post to keep your audience interested in your content. Also remember, all content on social media should be accompanied by a relevant photo or video. If you're unsure, please email socialmedia@theiet.org

Timing - knowing when your audience is online is extremely helpful when determining the best time to post. If you post at 8am but your audience isn't very active until 8pm, your content will not be as successful. For example, you can use Facebook Insights to view graphs showing when your audience is most active on Facebook every day of the week. This will help you craft your strategy by showing you the best times to publish your content.

Frequency - oversaturating your audience with content could cause them to ignore your page, yet posting too infrequently will not engage them. Find the right number of posts per day and week based on how active your audience is. Balance is the key! Guidelines are below on how often content should be posted on social channels.

- Facebook: 3-10 times per week
- Twitter: at least 5 times a day
- LinkedIn: 2-5 times per week
- Google+: 3-10 times per week
- Pinterest: 5-10 times per day

Post length - the length of your post is also important. Some channels make it easy and limit the number of characters allowed in a post like Twitter, which limits you to 280 characters. For those channels that have no character limit, you need to set a limit yourself. Posts that are 250+ characters are often too long and risk losing the interest of your audience.

6. Content Ideas

Coming up with ideas for good content, can feel like a daunting exercise, however if you pay attention to the world around you and listen to people, you'll get a flurry of potential ideas for posts.

7. Create a content plan schedule

Social media content is often in-the-moment and real-time but planning content on social media still allows for flexibility and provides opportunities to slip in real-time engagement.

Take the time to plan your social media calendar in advance, or you could end up scrambling to find regular content to share. Sharing quality content across your social channels is one of the most important things you can do to engage your audience and attract new followers.

There are many content calendar templates and tools available across the internet; some examples are listed below.

- [Hootsuite](#)
- [Sprout social](#)
- [Trello](#)
- [Hubspot](#)

8. Measurement

Measuring your social activities, through the initial social media goals set up, can help you understand what's successful, what isn't, and how you can improve.

The two types of social media measurement are:

- Ongoing Analytics – Ongoing monitoring that tracks activity over time
- Campaign-Focused Metrics – Campaign or event analytics with a clear beginning and end

Ongoing analytics are necessary for keeping up with the overall pulse of general conversation.

Campaign-focused metrics, help you understand the impact of targeted marketing initiatives and will vary from campaign to campaign, depending on your goals for each.

Metrics to measure goals:

- **Awareness** - if you want to measure awareness, then use metrics like volume, reach, exposure, and amplification. How far is your message spreading?
- **Engagement** - if you want to measure engagement, look for metrics around retweets, comments, replies, and participants. How many people are participating, how often are they participating, and in what forms are they participating?

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- **Traffic to a website** - if your goal is to drive traffic to your website, then track URL shares, clicks and conversions. Are people moving through social media to your external site and what do they do once they're on your site?
- **Increase influencers** - if your goal is to find advocates and fans, then track contributors and influence. Who is participating and what kind of impact do they have?
- **Share of voice** - if your goal is to increase share of voice, then track your volume relative to your closest competitors. How much of the overall conversation around your industry or product category is about your brand?

Example, to measure awareness through Twitter you might want to:

- Review tweet volume and reach of our Twitter chat
- Know how many unique people tweeted with our hashtag

The social media content audit template mentioned earlier and this [report template](#) on the Buffer website will help you to monitor the effectiveness of each channel.

9. Further support

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IET Communications Team – communications@theiet.org

Appendix

Control Sheet

Social Media for Volunteers and Members Guidelines

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Review/change history

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August 2018	Updated	1.1
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June 2020	Contact details updated	1.2
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