10.0 Marketing and Communications

Social Media

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Introduction

Social media is an interactive, digital channel that facilitates the creation or sharing of information, ideas, career interests, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.

Many traditional media exposes audiences to information but with limited ability to give their thoughts on the matter.

Image: Two teenagers using social media

Social media provides a forum for a two-way conversation, giving you the ability to engage on a deeper level with your audience and build upon that relationship.

There are different ways in which to communicate with audiences via social media:

1. **Owned channels** – communicating via your own social media channels. This is called organic social media.
2. **Shared channels** – creating content that is engaging so it is shared on your audience's channels.
3. **Earned channels** – building relationships with external organisations to earn space on their channels (e.g. providing digital assets to stakeholders to use on their Facebook page, writing a guest blog on another organisation's website or being interviewed on another organisation's podcast)
4. **Paid-for channels** – paying for digital advertising on social media channels, targeting specific audiences.

This document will focus primarily on the first two – organic social media that is engaging enough for others to want to share. However, the information provided will be useful for earned and paid-for channels as well.

Social Media in the Voluntary Sector

Those within the voluntary sector are often involved with campaigning, fundraising and service delivery. Your job is to tell stories about the people you work with, the communities you are in and the issues you are passionate about. Your objective is to find and talk to people who can help you achieve change, deliver services, or make a difference.

Social media provides an opportunity to engage with your audience on a deeper level and reach new audiences with the same interests as you.

Choosing the Right Social Media

Like any marketing technique, different social media channels have different strengths, so it is critical to define your goals and audience before selecting your social media channels.

You will also need to consider how to integrate the channels with your other communications in tone, message, data and policies.

The ideal is to create a strategy to reach as much of your target audience as possible, attracting and engaging supporters, and keeping them interested and informed. This will mean tailoring your messages and tone to your different audience segments on the different social media channels you select.

Remember

Social media is not just a means to distribute one-sided requests or messages - it is a conversation. If you want your supporters to contribute to that conversation, you need to provide an appropriate forum that will encourage them to do that, and you will also need to ensure that you are listening to them.

This is a great opportunity to build a closer relationship with the right people, provided you use your channels in the most effective manner.

Should you just use one social media tool?

No, not necessarily. Choosing social media tools is not an either/or situation; it is a question of finding the right mix of channels for your needs. You need to think of each tool as part of an overall communications strategy that focuses on your audience and business goals.

To figure out the ideal mix that makes the best use of your time, devote some thought to three variables:

- Staff time (it is important to set aside at least a few hours each week, and daily during campaigns)
- Existing resources (consider what skills your staff have already and how to utilise those skills best)
- Overall timing (different social media tools work in different timeframes with some requiring very regular updates and others less so, which means you must choose the right tool for your campaign at a given time)

If you actively engage people anywhere through a social platform, your absence will be noticed and commented on if you suddenly disappear from the landscape. The rewards should far outweigh this responsibility though, so do not let that stop you from getting involved in social media available to you.

Social Media Channels

Facebook

Facebook is a website that allows users, who sign-up for free profiles, to connect with family, friends, work colleagues or people they don't know, online. It allows users to share pictures, music, videos and articles, as well as their own thoughts and opinions.

A business page on Facebook allows you to attach a face, name, and personality to your brand. While your Facebook page may represent your organisation, it also allows you to show your business's human side through one-on-one conversations and non-business interaction.

Facebook can be an effective way to direct traffic to your business website. Your posts, links, and other actions that are contained on your public Facebook page can give you a SEO boost if search engines index them. Ultimately, your business Facebook page can be a powerful way to expand your reach and increase awareness of your business online. In the 18 to 54 age group, between 85 per cent and 92 per cent of the population engage with the platform across all income groups (2020-21).

Instagram

Instagram is a hugely popular photo and video-sharing social media platform. Users can share photo or video posts; temporary Stories that live on your profile for 24 hours; Reels, which are 15-second-max short-form videos; IGTV videos, and users can also directly donate to charities.

What makes Instagram different from social media networks such as Facebook or Twitter is how people use it. Instagrammers frequently check the site, often several times a day, and engage with posts at a much higher rate than with other social networks.

Instagram is a great way to expand your business's reach and engagement with your customers. The platform appeals more to 18 to 34-year-olds who make up nearly 60 per cent of users (2020-21). However, to succeed with Instagram, you need a clearly defined strategy, an eye-catching visual style, a staff commitment to consistent posting, and an in-depth knowledge of your target audience.

Twitter

Twitter is a 'microblogging' system that allows you to send and receive short posts called tweets. It's an online news and social media platform that enables people and organisations to share their thoughts and discuss information with other relevant Twitter users.

Tweets can be up to 280 characters long and can include links to relevant websites and resources. Twitter can connect your organisation with other brands. If a credible brand retweets your post or has a conversation with you on Twitter, it builds your brand credibility within the non-profit sector and can generate new followers. While it's often seen as a platform for older people, 62 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds and 69 per cent of 25 to 34-year-olds have an account
(2020-21).

Top Twitter Tips

Tweet with an image
Including an image in your tweet can improve engagement. Tweets with a photo receive 18% more clicks than tweets without pictures, so if you have an exciting idea representing your cause, make sure you share it!

Link to your news pages
Tweets involve messages and links too; they're a good way to direct social media traffic to your website, and tweets that use links are 86% more likely to be retweeted, raising your organisation's profile.

Engage with your followers
Commenting on tweets increases charity engagement. Charity teams should comment and engage in conversations that matter in order to demonstrate interest in relevant areas and in doing so, reaching out to new audiences.

Use the Hashtag
People use the hashtag symbol before a relevant keyword or phrase in their tweet to help them show more easily in Twitter search. Clicking on a hashtagged word shows you other tweets that include that hashtag, and your tweet is, therefore, discoverable to more users looking at that hashtag.

YouTube

YouTube is a video sharing service where users can create their own profile, upload videos, watch, like and comment on other videos. YouTube is the second-largest search engine in the world. This gives your organisation a great opportunity to attract potential users' attention whereby they click through to your website following watching your video.

Another benefit of maintaining a YouTube social media presence is the ability to "tag" keywords to videos so that you will have a good chance of being seen when your terms are searched. This could result in exposure to a potentially huge audience for organisations on a tight budget. YouTube has the highest reach among users aged 15 to 25, with over 80% of this demographic group using the platform (2020-21).

TikTok

TikTok is a video-sharing social media platform. Users can customise their videos with filters, stickers, background music, and then share them with the TikTok community. Once shared, people can like, comment on, or share a video. Not only that but Tik Tok allows for cross-platform sharing. Users can share their content on other social networks such as Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, and Instagram.

TikTok has over 800 million active users worldwide with over 40% of TikTok users aged 16-24. This social media channel will grow audiences, activate supporters, and raise awareness around specific causes. TikTok is known for being a more relaxed, quirky or fun platform. The posts that work extremely well on TikTok are those that are very creative and which really pique the interest of the user – it is a platform that allows a brand to be more relaxed in the tone or style of posts.

Snapchat

Snapchat is a social media tool that supports short, temporary sharing of photos and videos. People under the age of 35 mostly use Snapchat. 82% of all Snapchat users are 34 years old or younger (2020-21). If your goal is to engage a younger demographic, Snapchat can be a great source of engagement through digital advertising.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional networking site, designed to help people make business connections, share their experiences and resumes, and find jobs.

59.9% of LinkedIn's users are between 25 and 34 years old. It's not a surprise that more than half of LinkedIn users are in the age group that is starting and growing their careers. A company page can also be used to promote your brand's core values, nurture leads and of course, improve the visibility of any job opportunities currently available.

Pinterest

Pinterest is a social media site that is based on the idea of sharing visuals. Users or "pinners" can organise, share images/videos from around the Internet and search for them as well. It has grown into a visual search engine with a vast array of inspirational visuals. Far more females use the channel than males (45% vs 27% of online UK adults, according to **Flint in 2018**).

Creating Effective Posts

Videos

One of the most popular forms of content for social media is video and it is the preferred content method for many social media users.

Short clips can deliver snippets of information while longer videos can deliver extended messages. Viewers' attention needs to be captured within the first few seconds though, or else they will click away and not continue watching.

When videos are well done and shared, this boosts awareness of your organisation.

Image: Woman creating social media content

For a video to be worth sharing, you usually need to invest some time and/or money. You need to create something worth watching if you want to make an impact. This doesn't necessarily mean every video must be professionally produced. Often, live clips or shots of someone just talking to a camera can go a long way.

Images

Like videos, images are all over social media. A strong, powerful or eye-catching image can grab your audience's attention and engage them in whatever you're sharing.

However, unlike videos, images cannot be used on their own to get a message across. They are used to supplement other content you're sharing.

Images have the benefit of being easier to produce. Many websites offer high-quality stock photos. You can also hire a professional photographer to snap unique images for a reasonable cost.

Hashtags

People use the hashtag symbol (#) before a relevant keyword or phrase in their post to connect social media content to a specific topic, event, theme or conversation. They also make it easier to discover posts around those specific topics, because clicking or tapping on a hashtagged word in any message shows you other posts that include that hashtag.

Hashtags can be included anywhere in a post and are crucial when you come to measuring the effectiveness of your social media. Although social media analytics can tell you to a certain extent how successful you've been, using a hashtag enables you to follow the conversation more closely, providing a precise metric with which to measure your reach and engagement.

Mentions

Mentions are great for reaching and connecting with influencers or celebrities who may support your cause; you mention someone by putting an @ symbol before their username.

What else should you consider?

Ensure you are aware of the legal issues that you may need to consider.

It is important that organisations explore social media and its benefits, but when doing so, there are legal issues that need to be considered, such as:

- **Right clearances** - before uploading any content on to your website, blog etc. the necessary clearances must be obtained from the intellectual property right owners
- **Infringement of third-party rights** - although user-generated content is an effective way to engage with the public, there is a risk that the material posted will breach other peoples' rights, so you need to produce clear Terms of Use regulating users' participation on the website
- **Privacy** - where users provide personal information, it is important that data protection legislation is complied with
- **Consent to use photography or footage** – a form that parents and guardians can sign to say that they give permission for their child to be photographed/filmed, and for the images to be used in certain ways

Creating Content that is Accessible

The **Government Communication Service (GCS)** has published their insights on producing accessible content, which includes excellent advice on all of the following and more:

- Writing accessible social media posts
- Emojis
- Hashtags
- Links
- Social media assets
- Fonts
- Imagery, GIFs, animations and video

WWW

External Link

GCS insights on producing accessible content can be found on the GCS website:
GCS Website

Welsh Language Standards

The **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011** makes Welsh an official language in Wales. This means it must be treated no less favourably than English.

While not all activity has to be translated in its exact context, an equal balance should be aimed for in terms of both English and Welsh speaking audiences being exposed to activity.

Scheduling Tools

TweetDeck is a free web-based social media management tool. It allows you to organise your Twitter timeline into one space through multiple columns so you can separate the content you see.

TweetDeck users can tweet, reply, retweet, favourite, send Direct Messages and manage and monitor multiple accounts and streams all in one single interface.

Creator Studio is a social media content management tool within Facebook that helps creators and publishers manage their content and track performance on Facebook and Instagram.

Facebook Creator Studio allows users to publish, schedule and manage posts across multiple Facebook and Instagram accounts from one place.

HootSuite provides a [free version](#) which allows you to manage up to three social media profiles and schedule up to 30 messages at any one time. From the Hootsuite dashboard, you can create, schedule, and customise posts for all of your connected networks.

Measuring the Success of Your Social Media Channels

Social media can be measured in two ways:

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

Before you start measuring every tweet, video, photo and Facebook comment posted about your organisation, you need to set some goals.

When you have defined goals, you need to match your goals with actual behaviours and metrics you can measure. For example, if you want to measure awareness, you should use metrics such as reach and impressions. The next step is to match your goals to actual metrics and behaviours you can measure.

Social Media Metrics

Here are some of the ways in which you can measure the success of your content.

Awareness

If your goals for social are focused around brand awareness and perception, firstly it will be important to try look at the following metrics:

- **Impressions**: how many times a post is displayed no matter if it was clicked or not
- **Reach**: the number of people (unique viewers) who have seen your post
- **Video views**: the number of times your video was viewed
- **Video play rate**: the number of users who had to click 'play' to begin watching your video

Engagement

The engagement rate is a metric often used to track how actively involved with your content your audience is and how effective your brand campaigns are.

Engagement metrics include:

- Clicks
- Shares
- Comments
- Tagging
- Retweets, Mentions and Direct Messages on Twitter
- Percentage of video watched (e.g. at least 10 seconds, rather than just a few seconds)
- Ratings on your YouTube videos

Conversion

Conversion is the measurement of many users who acted because of your social media messages.

Conversion metrics include:

- Registration for content downloads
- Online sales
- Form completions
- Email subscriptions
- Content subscriptions
- Webinar registration
- Donations

Social Media Listening

Social media monitoring looks at metrics like engagement, conversion and number of mentions, and **social listening** looks beyond the numbers to consider the sentiment behind the data. Social media listening means 'listening' to the conversation online, following it, gauging how positive or negative it is, identifying the barriers that exist to enable your message to get through effectively, and adapting your communications accordingly.

Monitoring social media conversations uncovers a heap of insight about what is working and—more importantly—what is not working for your audience. This insight will tell you what people think of your brand (brand health), sector insight, campaign analysis and even competitor insight. It tells you what your audience wants. If you don't know what your audience wants, how will you connect with them? One method is to follow your hashtag and identify how far it has travelled in terms of reach and engagement. Another method is to monitor social media channels for @mentions of your brand, competitors, services, and keywords related to your organisation.

There are many social listening tools available, some of which will incur a cost:

- Hootsuite
- Sprout Social
- Buffer
- TweetReach
- BuzzSumo

Other Social Media Tools

Blogs

Essentially, a 'blog' is an online diary where one or more people post frequent updates about what is going on in your organisation, told from a personal perspective. It will usually sit on your website and can provide the human aspect to your organisation.

Blogs are specifically useful in a few key areas:

Image: Man writing a blog

- Publicising your expertise
- Promoting your cause or educating people
- Telling stories about your day-to-day work
- Engaging people in your decisions, or your work, by encouraging a dialogue with and/or comments from them
- Promoting your services, training and events

For a video to be worth sharing, you usually need to invest some time and/or money. You need to create something worth watching if you want to make an impact. This doesn't necessarily mean every video must be professionally produced. Often, live clips or shots of someone just talking to a camera can go a long way.

Podcasts

A podcast is like a radio broadcast or programme but without the need for radio. You make it an MP3 and your audience can either download it from your website or from a digital media application such as iTunes, Google Play, etc.

A regular well-crafted podcast with news and features is a great way to promote the work that you are doing; think of it as an audio newsletter that your audience can receive regularly and automatically.

A podcast usually lasts between fifteen to thirty minutes and could include an introduction with a trail ahead to a main feature, then a news section, followed by a radio package (feature) or interview.

Any podcast could then be broken up into smaller parts and used elsewhere as part of your organisation's communications strategy. For example, if you had an important interview in one podcast, you could cut a shorter version of it and put it on the front page of your website or share it via your social media channels.

Paid vs organic social media

This document has covered Organic social media, which uses free tools provided by each social network to build a social community and interact with it, sharing posts and responding to customer comments.

Paid social media is paying to display adverts (whatever the format – text, image, video, carousel etc.) or sponsored messages to social network users based on a user profile or demographic. A cost is incurred depending on the type of ad planned; for example, many ads incur a cost per click (CPC).

If you have budget to spend on digital advertising on social media or other sites, there are a wealth of online courses available as well as information provided by the individual media owners to help you book their media space.

External Link
Useful infromation on paid and organic social media can be found at this link:
Paid and Organica Social Media Strategy

Further Information

KnowHow - Social Media
NCVO
https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/campaigns/communications/social-media

How to Develop a Social Media Strategy
NCVO
https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/how-to/how-to-develop-a-social-media-strategy-for-your-organisation

Resource Hub - Social Media
Media Trust
https://mediatrust.org/communications-support/resource-hub/

Cefnogi Trydydd Sector **Cymru** Third Sector Support Wales

Cefnogi Trydydd
Sector **Cymru**

Third Sector
Support **Wales**

Third Sector Support Wales is a network of support organisations for the whole of the third sector in Wales.

It consists of the 19 local and regional support bodies across Wales, the County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and the national support body, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).

For further information contact
https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/contact/

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