

eLearning: Building a Sustainable Social Media Strategy

:10-:20

Narrator: Most organizations know that social media should be part of their toolkit. But there is a big difference between a social media page and a real presence. The difference is strategy.

:20-:35

Narrator: Welcome to CDC's video on "Building a Sustainable Social Media Strategy."

In this video we talk about the nuts and bolts of creating a strategy – a deliberate plan to accomplish specific goals. Your goal is not to be "on" social media, but to use it regularly to change what your audience knows, believes, or – especially, does.

To build engagement with your audience, you'll want to consider the five Cs of social media strategy:

Channels

Content

Calendar

Consistency

Community

:35-1:00

Narrator: First, consider which channels make sense. Facebook? Twitter? Instagram? LinkedIn? Pinterest?

Start where your audience is. The easiest way to find out which channels they use is to ask them.

You can find good data about the platforms some groups prefer. Older adults are more likely to be on Facebook, than on Twitter or Snapchat, for example. Trends shift quickly, so look for the latest data. One organization that frequently researches this area and posts its findings is Pew Research.

And don't underestimate your target audience's use of social media. People of all education levels, ages, and races use social media regularly.

Ideally you'll have several platforms. If you're new, start with two. Base your selection on the social channels your target audience uses.

Next, think about the "second C" – content.

What will you post?

Think about what you are trying to accomplish with your social media strategy. What are your communication or behavioral goals? Driving people to a program? Changing their attitudes or habits? Promoting an event?

Design your posts around your communication objectives.

You can create your own posts and share messages others have posted. For example, share CDC's messages since they post frequently!

Social media is best when it sparks interaction. You might take a poll, ask for feedback, or prompt people to leave comments. For example, start a conversation about how people plan to eat healthy over the holidays by asking, "What are your tips for making a favorite Thanksgiving food lower in fat, sugar, or calories?"

Visuals are a must. Wishing people a happy Valentine's Day? Hearts abound. Look for tie-ins to health, such as American Heart Month, in February.

Encouraging people to get more physical activity? Show people in action.

Adding video content can be easy and quick— even if it's a selfie-video testimonial.

The more visuals and videos, the more the social media platforms will automatically boost those posts, and the more people you'll reach.

Before you launch, build a long list of potential content. If you can list 20 great post ideas, you may have enough content to sustain a social media presence!

The reason for lots of ideas is the "third C" – your social media calendar. You'll want to plot your ideas for the next 2-3 months.

How often should you post? A good rule of thumb is at least 2-3 times per week. You can always do more, but be certain you can commit to this minimum before launching.

Some research has indicated there are "best" times of day to make social media posts, and those times vary by platform. Because those trends are constantly evolving, do a search on "best times to post on social media" to find the latest information.

Note all the events and moments you may promote. Let's say you're hosting a health fair. About three weeks ahead: a save the date post. Next, once-a-week reminders. And then daily posts for the week leading up to the fair.

Plot all the things that are time-sensitive on the calendar. Keep a list of "evergreen" ideas good for anytime that you can post where you have gaps.

Block enough time on the calendar to find visuals, create memes, and write posts.

Plan ahead, work ahead. A well-thought-out post with just the right visual won't happen under deadline pressure. And planning ahead is a must if you must get your materials approved or cleared by your organization before posting.

Next "C": consistency. Don't start a social media presence you'll have to abandon. You need a person who can dedicate at least an hour a day every day to create content, post it, then respond to comments. Someone should receive alerts about new posts throughout the workday – and depending on your audience, maybe even into evening hours and weekends.

Find a person on your staff who already uses the chosen social media platform. It's even better if they have a knack for clear communication and enough basic graphic design skills to create a meme

1:00-1:50

Narrator: The "fifth C" is community. Aim for communication that pulls people in. Actively recruit followers, ask them questions, and make sure you respond to their comments.

Pay attention to which posts engage people, and which don't – to shape future posts.

Maybe you're worried you'll lose control of your page or attract negative comments. You can set ground rules for civility on the page. Keep things friendly by not "feeding the trolls" – that is, don't get sucked into arguments or respond to negative comments.

If people post offensive, racist, profane, or violent comments that you must delete, do so without fanfare, and block repeat offenders.

With these Five Cs in place, you have the beginnings of a solid social media strategy.

4:45-4:50

Narrator: Congratulations on taking the step of establishing a social media presence and taking the time to do it right!