

Social Media Best Practices Checklist



Social media can be a key part of your overall communication plan. If you are using social media or want to use it more to help you achieve your communication goals, follow this checklist. It will help you make sure you are creating content that will be noticed by your audiences on the platforms that they use (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter).



Use the other social media resources in the *Communication Resources Toolkit* to help you: Social Media Calendar template, sample social media posts and images, National Observances Calendar, Social Media Cheat Sheet.

Understanding your Audience

Define your audience.

- Learn which audiences are following your social media channels, liking your posts, etc.
- Define the audience(s) you want to reach through social media. For example, “We want to reach parents of middle and high school students in our district.”
- Consider how these audiences fit with those you identified in your communication plan.

Choose which social media platforms to use and which to ignore.

- You do not have to be on every social media platform.
- Start with the platform that makes the most sense: where you know your audience is.



WHO USES FACEBOOK?

- The largest segment of U.S. users is **adults aged 25-34**, meaning more adults use this platform than kids and teens.
- **More women** than men use Facebook.
- Facebook has the **largest number of daily users** compared to Twitter and Instagram.

WHO USES INSTAGRAM?

- Instagram users tend to be **younger and very diverse**.
- **More women** than men use Instagram.
- Instagram has **fewer active daily users** than Facebook or Twitter but is still growing.

WHO USES TWITTER?

- Twitter users tend to be younger and use the site to find and consume **news-related content**.
- **More men** than women use Twitter.
- Twitter users tend to have a **higher level of formal education**: 45% of new users have college degrees.



Planning and Writing Content

Identify your social media goal.

- What do you want to accomplish through social media?
- For example, do you want to increase the number of parents who are aware of school events or changes in curricula? Do you want families to become more aware of support services available to them through the school system?

Establish your tone and voice for each social media platform you use.

- Think about how you want to come across to your audience. Do you want to seem knowledgeable? Approachable? Energetic?
- What are the qualities you value most, and how do you want your audience to perceive you?

Plan your posts in advance.

- Use a monthly calendar to organize your posts throughout the year around relevant observances or other important dates and events in your community.
- Advance planning also provides more time for writing, editing, and proofreading.

Add a call to action to your posts when relevant.

- For example, “Learn more” with a link.
- “Visit _____ to learn more.”

Don't #spam #with #hashtags.

- Avoid over-tagging a single post or adding them to every word.
- Keep in mind that Instagram allows for the use of many hashtags but on Facebook, more people engage with posts when only one hashtag is used.

Monitor related social media accounts.

- If you have the time and resources, keep an eye on social media accounts that are similar or related to yours (such as neighboring school districts, the state department of education, or local educational leaders and organizations).
- Observing, interacting with, and learning from more established accounts can help you understand what kinds of content your community values most. It also can help you build followers because users may notice your comments on accounts they follow.



Tracking Performance

Use data to determine when and how often to post.

- Keep it simple. Try publishing content at different times of day (or days of the week) and note what posts seem to receive the most likes, comments, and shares.
- Use the page/account management tools within Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other platforms to explore the data provided to you about your audience.

Assess your results and adjust your social media goal(s) as needed.

- After a few months of posting consistently, take a look at the engagement you are getting (likes, comments, shares/retweets), and on which platforms.
- It is okay to drop (or add) a platform as you learn more about your audience and what content they want.

