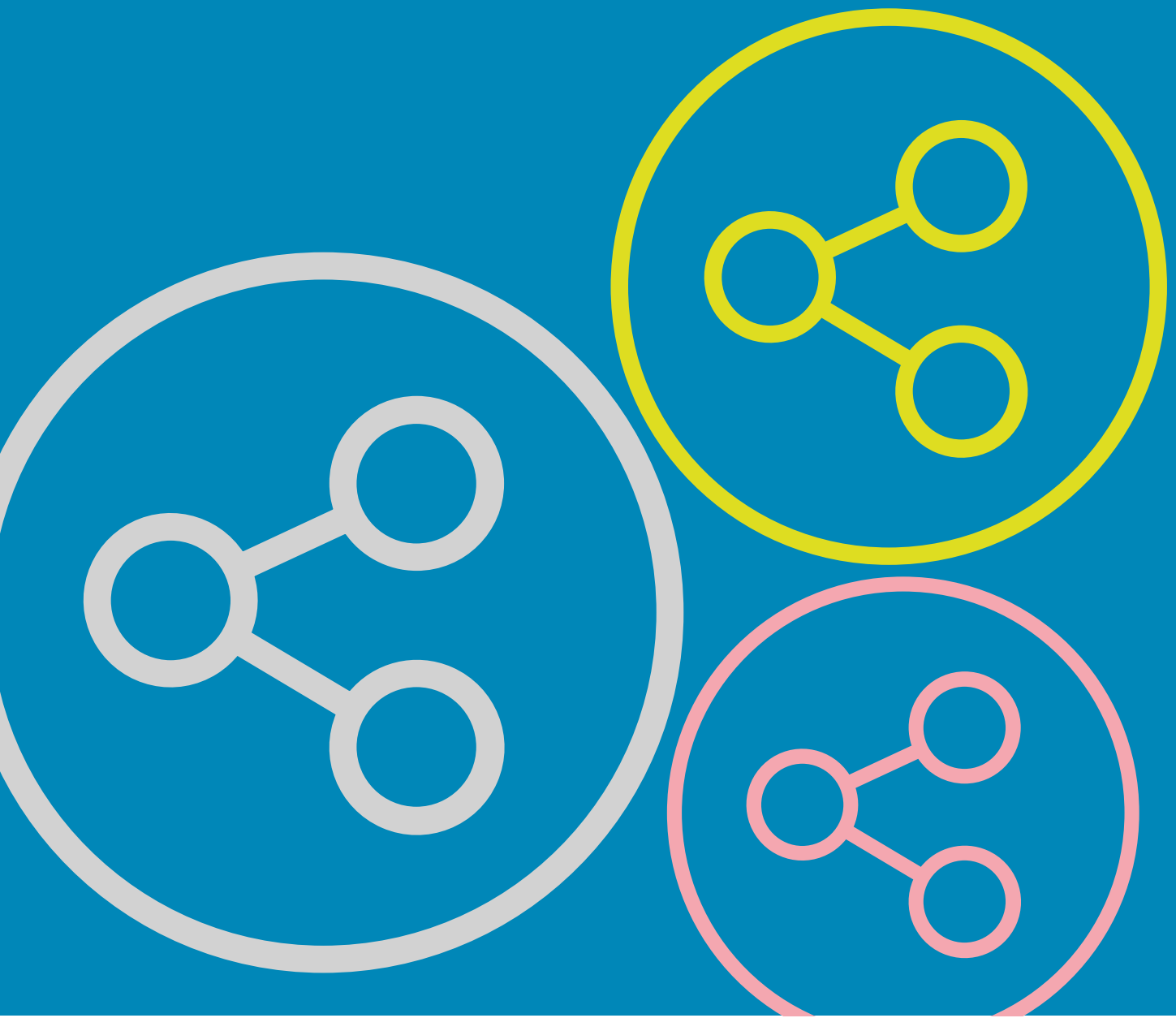


Raising your profile on social media



Social media is a great way to reach out to new users and supporters and engage with them. Focus on two main aspects; creating shareable content and engaging with your audience to make the most of the platform.

Remember, the 'social' is the most important thing here. The 'media' is secondary. Things change so quickly in the social media world, that it's better to focus on your audience, engaging with them and building relationships. Don't get caught up in the technology, that's not the important part.

Making the most of social media networks

Instead of worrying about how big a platform is and how many users there are, the first thing to think about is how you can effectively use a channel. Focus on where your audiences are and consider their demographics; are they young, tech savvy or part of an older generation? What are their online behaviours like? This might give a hint about where they spend their time.

When deciding on your platforms, use our list of tips:

- Sign up to as many social media platforms as you can. This allows you to get your preferred username whether you use it or not. Fill in the profile and avatar for brand recognition. Add a link to your website
- Facebook is still the biggest social media platform and the most likely to create a 'conversion'. However, it has also become very difficult to get a lot of followers on Facebook free of charge
- Facebook has a lot more features than other platforms. Think about using closed groups for more discussion-based activities (which may be appropriate for a group of marathon runners or volunteers, for example), whilst fan pages work better for wider awareness-raising campaigns. Facebook also (currently) has a live streaming facility and events pages
- Twitter is good for building relationships with people and great for engaging audiences at events
- If your organisation's work can be expressed well visually, image led platforms like Pinterest and Instagram might be useful. With over 500 million active users and high engagement rates, Instagram is a powerful tool
- YouTube is a well-placed used platform and video is becoming a key way that audiences engage with content
- Other video and live streaming platforms could have a big impact, such as Periscope, which lets you broadcast live from your phone and now integrates with Twitter, which owns the platform
- Snapchat is a big platform for a younger audience - in 2016, Crunchie spent one third of its annual digital budget on Snapchat, reporting positive results.

Best practice guidance for engaging audiences

To engage your audience, you'll first have to understand what makes them tick. That being said, there is some simple best practice that you can use when engaging with your followers.

Just think about how you would engage with people face to face, how do you manage your offline contacts? Can you apply similar things to your social media presence?

Respond

Responding to your audience's feedback on social media, whether good or bad, is crucial and shows that you are listening to your customers. Even a negative experience can be turned into a positive one.

Ask

Asking followers questions is a great way to start a conversation or get feedback on specific things, such as issues or any recent content you've created. But make sure they're good questions, ones that you actually want an answer to.

Support

Promoting other people's content or opinions is a great way to start a conversation, especially if it's on a topic that concerns your audience.

Show personality

Finally, show your followers your personality, rather than appearing to be just another big organisation. But take care with this. You are still an organisation and need to appear appropriately professional.



Tips for managing social media activity

Social media content calendar

Creating a social media content calendar is a good way to ensure that high quality content can be published on a regular basis. It also allows for planning around important dates,

lets you identify which content is performing well/poorly and helps prevent spamming or your social media accounts becoming neglected.

Managing and scheduling using Hootsuite & Sprout social

When it comes to publishing social media content, using a scheduling tool like Hootsuite is a great way to manage posts on multiple platforms simultaneously or delegate tasks between people in your organisation. Sprout Social takes things a step further: it offers in-depth analysis of engagement, trends and social media channels, and it integrates with Google Analytics. Hootsuite has a free version for up to three users, if you have more you'll need to pay. To purchase either version be sure to make direct contact and request a non-profit discount. The same principle applies to any other online tool as these offers are not always promoted.



How to get others to engage and share your content

Your content, whether it's a news article, photograph or video should be designed with your aims in mind, so start by defining the purpose of the content and decide who it's for. Can the same content be delivered to multiple audience groups or will you have to adapt the content?

All content should either be interesting, or useful to one of your audiences. If it isn't, then it's pretty much useless. Start by defining what the content is for; what is the problem that you're trying to solve, who is the audience you're trying to connect with, and what format would be the best way to deliver this content?

When you've got a piece of useful or interesting content, you're then more likely to be able to generate shares and engagement.

Online tips for content creation:

- Use images: online audiences are more likely to engage with visuals
- Videos are important for sharing and will account for 80% of internet traffic by 2019
- Capture attention immediately: you have a lot of information to compete with online
- Try appealing to emotions with your content, as this is much more likely to encourage sharing and engagement
- Ask questions
- Where appropriate, try to be provocative - it will get you attention.

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