Best Practices in

Social Media:

A Resource Guide for Associations

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Welcome to the Social Media Revolution!

Association Management Center (AMC), like many organizations, has recognized that social media tools are a valuable and important addition to traditional marketing methods. As social media permeates every aspect of 21st century professional and personal life, AMC has assembled a team of frequent, casual, and nonusers to establish resources for your association. This handbook, as well as its accompanying introduction booklet, is the result of this in-house, interdisciplinary study of social media use across associations.

Whether your association is new to social media or has been using these tools already, this handbook contains valuable ideas about
- how these tools function and how each can be integrated into your marketing plan (Chapter 1)
- what steps need to be taken to protect your group and its users online (Chapter 2)
- which metrics are appropriate for measuring success in your social media strategy (Chapter 3)
- how to organize your team to effectively manage these tools and their content (Chapter 4).

As with any marketing strategy, you get out what you put in. Although many of these resources are free or relatively low cost, the time commitment involved can be significant and will vary by organization or campaign. Establishing good practices and a clear strategy can go a long way toward maximizing the effectiveness of social media. We hope this handbook provides a strong jumping-off point for adopting these tools or an impetus for your association's next level of involvement.

For more information about Association Management Center or to submit a request for proposal, please contact   Marilyn Jansen | 847.375.4811 | mjansen@connect2amc.com

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Social Media Tools Best Practice Briefs

Introduction

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The following best practice briefs address the "how to" of getting started with specific social networking tools. The briefs address when to use each tool, how to get started, things to consider, resources needed, training and reference materials. They provide you with an easy jumping-off point into the world of social media.

At right is a list of these tools arranged by proposed stages of engagement. It is not necessary to follow this series of stages literally; choose whatever feels right for your association.

Basic Awareness

↓

Community Building

Stage 0
Wikipedia entry
Associapedia entry

Stage 1
Some combination of:
Facebook
Twitter
LinkedIn

Stage 2
YouTube or Vimeo
Flickr or other photo-sharing tool

Stage 3
Event-based social networking, such as:
Blogging around a conference
Foursquare at an exhibit hall

Stage 4
Community based social networking, such as:
Webinars
Regular blogging

Stage 5
Specialized platforms for social networking

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Social Media Tools Best Practice Briefs

Wikis and Wikipedia

Overview of Tool

Wikis are often used to create collaborative documents or websites in a simple markup language using a Web browser. A wiki allows for evolving interaction and connection. Most wikis keep a record of changes made to wiki pages, and often every version of the page is stored. This means that authors can revert to an older version of the page, should it be necessary. It is typical in a wiki to create links to pages that do not yet exist as a way to invite others to share what they know about a subject new to the wiki.

Wikipedia is just one, although arguably the most extensive, wiki.

Audience Served

Many wiki communities are private and are used as internal documentation for in-house systems and applications. Wikis have also been used in the academic community for sharing and disseminating information across institutional and international boundaries, having proved useful for grant writing, strategic planning, and committee work in groups such as

- boards
- committees
- task forces
- special interest groups
- chapters
- internal departments and teams.

Applicable Uses for Associations (Beginner to Advanced)

As a prime source for knowledge entered into the databases of Google and Facebook, Wikipedia.com is an essential website on which to share your association's information.

Other private, password-protected wikis that may have interactive business applications include the following:

- PBWorks
- Socialtext
- Microsoft Office Live Workspace
- Google Docs.

Resources Needed

Before an entry is created in Wikipedia, you will need access to the following information about the association or organization: history of the company, member count and composition, mission, vision, goals, objectives, key initiatives, special programs within the industry, special accomplishments, scholarships, grants, information about the industry, and history of the industry. You will also need any referenced research that will justify or clarify any of these points. Most associations will want to have access to a volunteer leader for approvals on the entry.

Considerations (Pros, Cons, and Lessons Learned)

The wiki software architecture is a type of collaborative software that runs a wiki system, allowing Web pages to be created and edited using a common Web browser. Content is stored in a file system, and changes made to the content are stored in a relational database management system. The open philosophy of most wikis (allowing anyone to edit content) does not ensure that every editor is well-meaning. Vandalism can be a major problem. In larger wiki sites, vandalism can go unnoticed for a period of time. The amount of vandalism a wiki receives depends on how open the wiki is.

Instructional Videos

How to Create a Wikipedia Article
www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CwiZIsaM7s
Wikis in Plain English
www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dnL00TdmLY
Google docs in Plain English
www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRqUE6IHTEA&feature=related
PBWiki Tutorial
www.youtube.com/watch?v=neHt9G3R7TE&feature=related

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Wikis & Wikipedia *continued*

Reference Materials

Comparison of wiki software

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_wiki_software

Head to Head: Document Sharing Sites

www.mashable.com/2008/05/02/sites-to-share-documents-online/

So You Want to Build a Wiki?

www.webjunction.org/technology/web-tools/articles/content/438218

Associapedia - The Wiki of the Association Community

www.asaecenter.org/wiki/

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Overview of Tool

Facebook is a social networking website launched in February 2004 with more than 500 million active users as of July 2010.[1] By the close of 2010, Facebook surpassed Google as the United States' most visited website of the year.[2] Users can add people as friends and send them messages as well as update their own personal profiles to notify friends about themselves. In addition, users can join networks based on workplace, city of residence, or college. Originally targeted to college students, the website's name stems from the colloquial name of books given to students at the start of the academic year by university administrations to help them get to know each other better. Since its inception, Facebook has crossed demographics to connect people 13 and older. The largest growth area is in women over 55. [3]

[1] Wikipedia 07/2010.

[2] Experian Hitwise Report 12/29/2010.

[3] Marketing Resources Spring 2010.

Audience Served

- There are more than 500 million active users. 50% of Internet users log on to Facebook in any given day.
- Facebook is primarily used by consumers ages 13 and older.
- The site lends itself to a B-to-C marketing approach.
- Celebrities and speakers have good results with fan pages.
- Early assessment from AMC's Social Networking Task Force indicates that Facebook would be a good way to draw nonmembers into a relationship with an association.

Public

Since pages are open to the public, Facebook also provides the opportunity for a public face (i.e., creating awareness with new audiences). It also can be combined with blogs to drive people to the association's website.

An average Facebook user has 130 friends. People spend over 500 billion minutes per month on Facebook. There are over 160 million objects that people interact with (e.g., pages, groups, events). An average user is connected to 60 pages, groups, and events and creates 70 pieces of content each month. More than 25 billion pieces of content (Web links, new stories, blog posts, notes, photos) are shared each month.[4]

The largest user group continues to be 18–35-year-olds, who represent over 58% of Facebook users. Since Gen Yers are strong users of Facebook apps, Facebook offers a viable marketing channel to prospect and engage with new, young association members.

[4] Facebook Press Room 12/2010.

Applicable Uses for Associations (Beginner to Advanced)

When an organization creates a Facebook page it prepares to move from having a "place-holder" presence online to being a strategic and tactical part of an integrated marketing plan. As with all social media, the ability to invest time moves this marketing activity from an informal process that is randomly performed to a formal, planned, budgeted, and integrated function of the marketing mix that accomplishes some or all of the following:

- increases Web traffic or search engine rankings
- improves awareness of organization, activities, or members
- improves the reputation of the association
- increases the prospect of attracting new members
- increases revenue
- improves customer support
- improves support of members (e.g., drawing patients to a physician finder)
- improves public relations
- reduces costs to acquire new members.

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Facebook *continued*

Resources Needed

Set Up

The resources needed for the initial page are minimal. It should only take a few hours to set up a Facebook fan page that includes a logo. Here are some steps you will want to take:

- Create a Fan Page at www.facebook.com/pages/create.php.
- Customize the page by uploading a profile picture (200 by 600 pixels maximum, but 180 by 540 is better) and complete relevant details about the association (e.g., mission, website).
- You have a choice of posting all the updates yourself or engaging the community. If you allow the community to engage, you need to monitor this closely so that you can interact and respond to any posts that may not be positive.
- You can conduct polls; post teasers to your website; blog; promote your annual meeting or products; or even post statistics from your website to gain attention, SEO, or tweets.
- The more you engage your community, the more visible your page will be, which in turn helps you to gain more fans. You will receive a weekly e-mail from Facebook, "Your Weekly Facebook Page Update," that features your fan-page statistics.
- Don't forget to link or promote your Twitter and other social media accounts with their logos, links, and icons. Blogs can be easily linked to Facebook fan pages through the "notes" tab, and most other social networking sites, (i.e., Twitter, Foursquare) can link directly to Facebook as well. Some applications are available to automatically duplicate postings (i.e., those made on Facebook automatically duplicate to Twitter); however, these Facebook applications are not as stable as those that work in the reverse.

Outreach

- Groups: Join SIGs within your market by using Facebook's search function to find other relevant groups. Watch interactions and discussions to learn about that market segment. Determine whether you offer any benefit to the group.
- People: Add people within these groups in hope that these individuals will be interested in your association.
- Members: Reach out to your existing board members and prominent members and invite them to join.
- Post links from your website, e-newsletter, twitter, blog, etc.

Super-User Status (Advanced)

- A dynamic Facebook page would include open dialog/discussions with prospects.
- Facebook would be used tactically, strategically, and proactively across many campaigns. It would engage users, drive revenue (memberships or product sales), and increase brand awareness.
- It would intentionally coordinate with other social, print, and electronic campaigns.
- Use it to create opportunities that can be tracked with specific offers and special response codes to allow tracking of ROI.

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Facebook *continued*

Considerations (Pros, Cons, and Lessons Learned)

- Facebook is fairly easy to establish and (if you don't relinquish control to post items on the website) it is an effective place to begin social media outreach.
- Some of AMC's client associations' members in the past set up their own Facebook page when one for the organization did not exist.
- Facebook pages that allow open dialog should be closely monitored for negative comments and complaints. However, there are many cases where strong customer service responses not only stop negative comments from getting out of control but can actually turn a bad situation into a positive one. For example, "Dr. Negative, we apologize that you had such a difficult time with ….; I have looked into it and will send you that plus a…. Please be sure to contact me personally the next time you want to… and I will be sure you are taken care of."
- Positive customer service and quick responses make a more dynamic and engaging experience for your Facebook fans.
- As Facebook is one of the most frequently used social networking tools today, converting members into participants should be easier than with a specialized platform or otherwise unfamiliar tool. For some users it may be even easier to access than your association's website.

Instructional Videos

How to Use Facebook: Video Series
www.ehow.com/videos-on_108_use-facebook.html
Facebook Essentials (in-depth training)
www.lynda.com (paid training for $25 per month)

Reference Materials

7 Ways to Market Your Business on Facebook
www.dannybrown.me/2010/06/03/free-facebook-marketing-ebook/
How to Market Your Business With Facebook
www.nytimes.com/2009/11/12/business/smallbusiness/12guide.html
2011 National Healthcare Holidays
www.staywellcustom.com/SHSMD-2011-Calendar.pdf

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Social Media Tools Best Practice Briefs

Twitter

Overview of Tool

Twitter is a social media tool that lets users send out short messages ("tweets") that are picked up and read by anyone who decides to follow you. This is also referred to as microblogging. Its popular uses include

- personal contact among peers, colleagues, friends, and acquaintances
- personal promotion and broadcasting
- business promotion and broadcasting
- reputation/brand monitoring
- competition monitoring
- event monitoring
- information and news gathering/research
- search engine.

Each message is a maximum of 140 characters and is designed for quick review by the receiver. As a result, each tweet should be succinct but still enticing, particularly if a link is included for the receiver to click. Links (shortened by a service such as tinyurl.com) are an excellent way to draw your Twitter followers back to your website, point them toward a common topic of conversation, or alert them to a related news item.

Audience Served

Twitter is most popular with users age 35–49, with the least amount of use now by teenagers. Membership populations older than 50 may not latch on to a Twitter campaign as readily, however, members who use smart phones and blackberries for business are ideal followers.

Applicable Uses for Associations (Beginner to Advanced)

You may use Twitter to

- draw followers back to your website (increasing your Web traffic)
- quickly send out association news and updates in a joint effort with other media (letters, blogging, e-newsletters)
- send out emergency alerts that are time sensitive
- advertise products or a conference (in a nonaggressive manner)
- report on conference panels as they happen
- engage members in specific conversation about shared interests (tweetchat).

Resources Needed

One dedicated staff person (or a set rotation of dedicated staff members) to tweet at least once per day, respond to @ messages, direct messages promptly, and watch for or find interesting and related content to retweet (RT) is needed.

Considerations (Pros, Cons, and Lessons Learned)

It is critical to consider the audience when using Twitter to communicate. The more targeted your message, the better your response will be. It is also critical, as with other social media tools, to find a voice for your communication that is unique to your organization, be it a point of view, a particular personality, or a manner of delivery.

You have to give followers time to find you, and advertising your Twitter account on the home page of your website is one way to facilitate that. Do not be discouraged if a Twitter campaign does not take off immediately. Like most grassroots marketing campaigns, it needs time to take root and grow organically.

Instructional Video

Twitter in Plain English
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddO9idmax0o

Reference Materials

How to Set Up Your Twitter Account
www.searchenginewatch.com/3633223
How to Help New Twitter Users Stay Engaged
www.mashable.com/2010/06/23/Twitter-quitter-trend/
How to Affect Social Change Through Twitter
www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBocwdiJhPI
2011 National Healthcare Holidays
www.staywellcustom.com/SHSMD-2011-Calendar.pdf
Twitter Daily
www.paper.li/

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Twitter *continued*

Strong Examples of Not-for-Profit Uses of Twitter

www.twitter.com/livestrong

www.twitter.com/water

rt.water.org/

www.twitter.com/ctsinclair

www.twitter.com/brianjohnriggs

www.twitter.com/associationHQ

www.twitter.com/drakeco

www.lamaze.org/OnlineCommunity/TwitterforParents/tabid/812/Default.aspx *(embedded into their website)*

www.lamaze.org/OnlineCommunity/TwitterforEducators/tabid/813/Default.aspx *(dividing content via targeted audience)*

LinkedIn

Overview of Tool

LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking site. It is mainly used for professional networking. As of August 2010, LinkedIn had more than 75 million registered users in 200+ countries and territories worldwide.

Personal Connections

The purpose of the site is to allow users to maintain a list of contact details for "connections" that require either a preexisting relationship or an introduction from someone in their list of contacts. The connections can then be used to do the following:

- create a contact network of direct professional connections, second-degree connections (contact of contact), and third-degree connections
- find jobs, people, and business opportunities recommended by someone in your contact network
- post job listings and candidate searches
- post users' own photos and view photos of others to facilitate identification
- follow different companies and get notifications about new memberships, groups, and offers
- save (i.e., bookmark) jobs that users would like to apply for.

Company Research

LinkedIn also allows users to research companies with which they may be interested in working. When typing the name of a given company in the search box, statistics about the company are provided.

Polls

The "LinkedIn Answers" feature allows users to ask questions for the community to answer. This feature is free. The questions are business-oriented, and the identity of the people discussing questions is known.

Industry Research and Connections

The searchable "LinkedIn Groups" feature allows users to establish new business relationships by joining alumni, industry, professional, and other Centers of Influence (COI). LinkedIn groups can be created in any subject and by any member of LinkedIn. Monitoring groups can provide valuable data (if time permits).

Applications

LinkedIn allows other online services to be embedded within a member's profile page including an Amazon Reading List as well as WordPress or TypePad to display latest blog postings.

Audience Served

As of June 2008, the average LinkedIn user is 41 years old with an average household income of $109,703. The user mix is 64% male and 80% educated professionals. However, as the medium continues to expand, the user mix may expand.

Public

LinkedIn provides an opportunity for associations to attract nonmembers by linking them to professional circles and friends who are connected with association members.

Applicable Uses for Associations (Beginner to Advanced)

When an association joins LinkedIn it prepares to move from having a "place-holder" presence online to being a strategic and tactical part of an integrated marketing plan. As with all social media, the ability to invest time moves this marketing activity from an informal process that is randomly performed to a formal, planned, budgeted, and integrated function of the marketing mix that accomplishes some or all of the following:

- increases Web traffic
- improves search engine rankings
- increases awareness of the organization, activities, or members
- improves the reputation of the association (branding and preference)
- increases prospects for new members
- reduces costs to acquire new members
- increases revenue by promoting memberships, events, products

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LinkedIn *continued*

- provides customer support
- supports members' businesses (drawing patients to a physician finder)
- improves public relations, including
  - media outreach
  - issues/advocacy/fundraising
  - internal communication or chapter communications
  - crisis management
  - corporate reputation management.

Resources Needed

Beginner

Setting up a LinkedIn page including a logo will take about an hour. It will be convenient to have a quick reference to your association board members, logo, mission/vision, etc., to help you build your pages. Then, simply

- join LinkedIn and complete a profile as a staff member, then create your Association page
- import contacts to find existing LinkedIn members—perhaps leaders from the board or committees
- continue to add people such as new contacts from personal meetings and Web connections
- don't forget to link or promote your Twitter and other social media accounts with logos, links, and icons
- include keywords and your "elevator pitch" in your description.

Intermediate

- Connect. Although it takes a bit of time, this will get your association involved in the LinkedIn community.
- Groups: Join SIGs within your market.
- People: Add the people within these groups who may be interested in your association.
- Members: Reach out to board members and other prominent members and invite them to join.
- Post links from your website, e-newsletter, white papers, etc.
- Include real-time updates to add to your brand and keep your association fresh.

Super-User Status (Advanced)

Engage with connections, reach out to new prospects, and interact with them to draw them into the association's community. The relationship marketing and engagement should be done at least once a week. Updates will appear on the overview and news pages of your network and group e-mails that members get either daily or weekly. Some suggestions include the following:

- intentionally coordinate with other social, print, and electronic campaigns
- post specific offers, special response codes, etc. to track ROI
- network by starting conversations to promote Web content videos, pictures, or other campaigns
- create applications to communicate your value (i.e., tools specific to the industry)
- create online events to reach a larger audience (e.g., webinars)
- post article URLs and a summary
- post a question
- take a poll
- lead a discussion
- link to other content to help promote organic searches to your page
- connect with applications like blog links, WordPress, and SlideShare that allow new ways to promote events
- promote both your own events and the events of others.

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LinkedIn *continued*

Considerations (Pros, Cons, and Lessons Learned)

- Keys to success on LinkedIn: find your target demographic, provide compelling content, and participate on a consistent basis.
- Some associations (in the past) did not engage LinkedIn soon enough, and some members began to grumble about the association staff. These pages need to be monitored, and negative comments should be addressed.
- Social media best practices show that the easiest way to stop negative chatter from getting out of control is to turn a bad situation into a positive one. For example, "Dr. Negative, we apologize that you had such a difficult time with ….; I have looked into it and will send you that plus a …. Please be sure to contact me personally, the next time you want to … and I will be sure you are taken care of."

Instructional Video

What is LinkedIn?

www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzT3JVUGUzM

Reference Materials

LinkedIn New User Guide & Training Seminars

learn.linkedin.com/new-users/

100+ Smart Ways to Use LinkedIn

www.linkedintelligence.com/smart-ways-to-use-linkedin/

How to Use LinkedIn to Market Your Business

www.pamorama.net/2010/03/29/how-to-use-linkedin-to-market-your-business/

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YouTube

Overview of Tool
The second largest search engine, YouTube, is a video-sharing website on which users can upload, share, and view videos. YouTube uses Adobe Flash Video technology to display a wide variety of user-generated video content, including movie clips, TV clips, and music videos as well as amateur content such as video blogging and short original videos. Most of the content on YouTube has been uploaded by individuals, although media corporations including CBS, BBC, and VEVO offer some of their material via the site as part of the YouTube partnership program.

Audience Served
The public—unregistered users can watch the videos whereas registered users are permitted to upload an unlimited number of videos. Videos that are considered to contain potentially offensive content are available only to registered users 18 years and older.

Applicable Uses for Associations (Beginner to Advanced)
Beginning use of YouTube could involve annual meetings, for example. The possibilities for advanced usage are truly endless. Video content can be featured on a website or in a blog. A brand identity video could be a useful tool for each client.

Resources Needed
- Flip cam(s)
- Training for staff (filming and editing)
- Willing participants from membership
- Staff time to film, edit, and promote videos

Considerations (Pros, Cons, and Lessons Learned)
Because there are so many videos on YouTube, some real creativity and focus on relevance is needed. A thoughtful approach could prove incredibly valuable to creating useful, dynamic content.

Forrester Research has found that videos are 53 times more likely than traditional Web pages to receive an organic first-page ranking. By uploading your video to YouTube, you are 100% guaranteed to have its content indexed by Google, thus expanding your online brand presence. The down side is that this indexing drives your member or interested party to YouTube rather than your association's website, not producing the SEO value you would otherwise get by posting to your own website directly.

Pros
- Inexpensive and easy to use
- May save some marketing expenses
- Learning opportunities
- A lot of information may be disseminated to many people in a short amount of time.

Cons
- It's a public service and anyone can view material.
- Copyright and privacy issues may arise.
- Other videos that are posted as suggestions and displayed near an association's material may be offensive or not credible and might be associated with the association's material.

Instructional Video
How to Upload a Video on YouTube
www.youtube.com/watch?v=_O7iUiftbKU

Reference Materials

Association Use of YouTube

www.jeffthomascobb.com/2010/05/association-using-youtube/

YouTube's Wikipedia listing

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YouTube

6 Tips for Experimenting with Web Video

www.mashable.com/2010/06/18/tips-for-web-video/

4 Tips for Producing Quality Web Videos

www.mashable.com/2010/06/04/producing-quality-web-videos/

Potential Vendors

Rush Powers Media (*You can find samples of their work here. Use the left column to check out different categories of video projects.*)

www.rushpowers.com/Rush_Powers_Media/Samples_Video_Promo.html

Gable Silvian (*quick, inexpensive video editing*)

gsilvian@gmail.com, 248.345.0496

Flickr

Overview of Tool
Flickr is an image hosting and video hosting website, Web services suite, and online community created by Ludicorp and later acquired by Yahoo! In addition to being a popular website for users to share and embed personal photographs, the service is widely used by bloggers to host images they embed in blogs and social media. Flickr today claims to host more than 5 billion images worldwide.

Audience Served
Only registered users can host images and videos, but the public can view whatever is shared so long as the user does not make their material private.

Applicable Uses for Associations (Beginner to Advanced)
Beginning use of Flickr could be to host photos for a website or a blog that does not have enough space itself.

Resources Needed
- Photos
- Photographers at events
- Permission to share photos
- Possible design time for photo editing/formatting

Considerations (Pros, Cons, and Lessons Learned)
There is hesitation about recommending Flickr at this point. It would be preferable to see photos on Facebook and in blogs. The only advantage to posting on Flickr (in addition to other outlets) is to expand your brand presence on the Internet and increase the number of Google appearances for your association.

Instructional Video
How to Use Flickr
www.youtube.com/watch?v=3R_MWGFvDEE

Reference Materials
Flickr's Wikipedia entry
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flickr
10 Tools to Upload Facebook Photos
www.allfacebook.com/upload-facebook-photos-tools-2010-08

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SlideShare

Overview of Tool

SlideShare is a business media site for sharing presentations, documents, and PDFs. It features a vibrant professional community that regularly comments, selects "favorites," and downloads content. Content also spreads virally through blogs and social networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. Individuals and organizations upload documents to SlideShare to share ideas, connect with others, and generate leads for their businesses. Anyone can view presentations and documents on topics that interest them. The site is growing rapidly with over 25 million monthly visitors. SlideShare is an efficient way to post slides online, and this allows ideas to be found and shared by a wide audience.

Audience Served

Public or private access

Applicable Uses for Associations (Beginner to Advanced)

With SlideShare you can do the following:
- embed slideshows into your own blog or website
- share slideshows publicly or privately (There are several ways to share privately.)
- synch audio to your slides
- market your own event on SlideShare
- join groups to connect with SlideShare members who share your interests
- download original files.

Beginning use could be an internal process for teams. Once you are familiar with SlideShare, it could be rolled out to various boards, committees, and task forces. An advanced level of engagement would provide shared resources to the memberships at large.

Resources Needed

- Training
- Quality presentations

Considerations (Pros, Cons, and Lessons Learned)

Before using this tool each organization must decide what it wants to give away and what is intellectual property (either of the organization or the presenter).

Instructional Video

How To: Using the Slideshare Synchronization Workspace
www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKtyUPuL-Bs

Reference Materials

About SlideShare
www.slideshare.net/about

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Blogs

Overview of Tool

Weblogs, Web logs, or simply blogs, as they are known, are easy-to-use websites (no HTML knowledge required) where you can quickly post thoughts, publish articles, and interact with people. Blogs are typically accessible to any Internet user. Not only do blogs provide a secondary, ever-changing site where you can locate an organization's online information, they also provide invaluable links back to a parent website. An integrated blog can improve an organization's website's SEO faster and more efficiently than many other forms of tagging or tricky maneuvers. Your blog can also serve as the voice of your organization, giving your members a concrete place to go to read more from your group rather than searching out specific information.

Audience Served

Over the last 5 years there has been a significant shift in the media landscape from traditional media (including newspaper, radio, and television) to online media. The most prevalent of the online media sources are blogs. The audience can be as broad as anyone who uses the Internet but more likely consists of people who consider the Internet their primary source of news and media content. An estimated 61% of the public view the Internet as their primary news source, and blogs are at the center of that growth.[1] More than 40% of the American public are frequent blog readers.[2] Like many other social networking tools, blogging is familiar to many organizations' target audiences, minimizing concerns about its adoption.

[1] Pew Internet and American Life Project 01/2010.

[2] Harris Interactive Poll 07/2010.

Applicable Uses for Associations (Beginner to Advanced)

With a blog, you can do the following:
- announce or report on special events, such as a conference or annual meeting (one season per year)
- write about new products or publications that your organization is offering
- highlight the benefits of membership in your organization
- send organizational updates, such as leadership changes or new initiatives

- minimize customer service or technical issues by answering popular questions on your blog
- publish how-to or instructional articles that apply to a member's daily work
- inform your members of changes in your business or field as a whole (trend watching).

The above options are not exclusive and are arranged from shortest calendar commitment to year-long endeavors. No matter how extensive your commitment to blogging is, the key to success is offering useful information that will feel critical to your membership while always relating back to the central mission of your organization. Blogging should also be done regularly so that your readership has a pattern of publication upon which to rely, whether that means daily for a short period of time (during a conference season) or once or twice a week all year.

Resources Needed

It is necessary to have one dedicated staff person to manage blog entries and monitor blog comments that arrive from the general public. It is always advisable to review blog comments before they are posted to weed out any spam messaging or otherwise inappropriate content without damaging the free expression of your membership.

A resource pool of contributors is also necessary. An organization's blog should have a point-of-view or central voice, but that doesn't mean one person has to do it all themselves. This could lead to a very quick burn-out on enthusiasm and available hours. Members, staff, and other experts in the field should be engaged as much as possible to contribute articles that will interest readers and add variety to the content.

If maintaining a central voice is a concern, editorial staff can be engaged to tweak and correct articles, as they would for a book or other print publication utilizing multiple authors.

A long-term plan or schedule produced in advance, like for any publication for print, is advisable to stay on track and not lose momentum after the initial push.

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Blogs *continued*

Considerations (Pros, Cons, and Lessons Learned)

Pros

- Blogging can take many forms, depending on the culture of your organization. It can be written as formally or informally as you like.
- Blogging helps to improve the SEO of your parent website by providing fresh, ever-changing content; this improves your organization's Web presence more than many other method of SEO enhancement.
- Blogging has no character limits or base cost attached to it. Both Blogger and WordPress (the most popular sources for blog hosting) are free for public use.
- Blogging is familiar to a large proportion of the Internet-using public, so there are little adoption concerns on the part of your membership.
- Blogging is interactive, like most social networking tools, but controllable through built-in, back-end approvals on comments.
- Blogs can serve as the initial content for an unlimited number of reposts and link-backs (e.g., on Twitter, Facebook, Digg), expanding your organization's Web presence exponentially.

Cons

- Blogging, like all writing, takes time.
- For blogging to be successful, it must maintain a regular schedule, whether that is for a portion of the year (around a conference) or year round.
- Blogging for an organization most often requires coordination of multiple authors if one staff person is not to be burned out.
- Blogging is interactive, so be prepared to face criticism in the form of comments. While it is considered acceptable to block commentary that is derogatory, spam, or otherwise inflammatory, it is likewise considered unacceptable by Internet standards to only publish positive commentary while ignoring polite but negative commentary.

Instructional Video

Blogs in Plain English
www.youtube.com/watch?v=NN2I1pWXjXI

Reference Materials

Example of a Business Blog Using Keywords Effectively
lincolnpark2520.wordpress.com/
Create Your Own Blog at Blogger
www.blogger.com/start
Create Your Own Blog at Wordpress
www.wordpress.com/
Blogger v. WordPress Comparison Chart
pulsed.blogspot.com/2007/07/blogger-wordpress-chart.html
9 Tips to Start Blogging Successfully
www.problogger.net/archives/2008/02/28/9-tips-to-start-blogging-successfully/
How to Create a Successful Company Blog
www.mashable.com/2010/03/01/company-blog/
How to Build a Beautiful Blog
www.mashable.com/2010/01/28/build-beautiful-blog/
How to Add Multi-Media to Your Blog
www.mashable.com/2010/07/28/add-multimedia-to-blog/
How to Live Blog a Conference
www.mashable.com/2008/07/04/live-blog-conference/
2011 National Healthcare Holidays
www.staywellcustom.com/SHSMD-2011-Calendar.pdf

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Webinars

Overview of Tool

A webinar is a specific type of Web conference. It is typically one-way, from the speaker to the audience, with limited audience interaction, such as in a webcast. A webinar can be collaborative and include polling as well as question-and-answer sessions to allow full participation between the audience and the presenter. In some cases the presenter may speak over a standard telephone line while pointing out information being presented on screen, and the audience can respond over their own phone lines. In many cases webinars may be recorded and housed on a Web server for future or continuous access.

Audience Served

- Board for orientation or midyear board meetings
- Membership for online learning, special interest topics, and professional development

Applicable Uses for Associations (Beginner to Advanced)

Webinar uses may include the following:

- Slideshow presentations—PowerPoint or Keynote slides are presented to the audience with markup tools and a remote mouse pointer to engage the audience while the presenter discusses slide content.
- Live or streaming video—Full-motion webcam, digital video camera, or multimedia files are shared with the audience.
- VoIP—Real time audio can be communicated through the computer via use of headphones and speakers.
- Web tours—URLs, data from forms, cookies, scripts, and session data can be shared with other participants, enabling them to go through Web-based logins, clicks, etc. This type of feature works well when demonstrating websites where users themselves can also participate.
- Meeting recording—Presentation activity is recorded on the client side or server side for later viewing or distribution.
- Whiteboard with annotation—Presenters or attendees can highlight or mark items on the slide presentation or simply make notes on a blank whiteboard.

- Text chat—Live question-and-answer sessions are limited to the people connected to the meeting. Text chat may be public (to all participants), private (between two participants), or may combine both options.
- Polls and surveys—Presenters can conduct questions with multiple-choice answers directed to the audience.
- Screen sharing/desktop sharing/application sharing—Participants can view anything the presenter currently has on their screen. Some screen-sharing applications allow for remote desktop control, which allows participants to manipulate the presenter's screen, or, in some cases, the presenter may "pass the ball" to a participant and the participant may share their screen with the other participants.

Considerations (Pros, Cons, and Lessons Learned)

Pros

- Many people are visual learners.
- Webinars are a one-to-many system where visuals and audio come "streaming" through the computer.
- You can easily create a "hybrid" with audio conferences, meaning attendees can choose a webinar option or audio-only option; both groups would hear the same presentation.
- Webinars are an interactive medium generally resulting in greater satisfaction.
- Webinars may be recorded and accessed at a more convenient time for participants.
- Many webinar services provide useful features such as instant polls, live chat (good for Q&A), live desktop share, and the ability for several users to control slides.
- Post call reports are available showing log in times, duration, and other information.

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Webinars *continued*

Cons

- More prep time is needed, including rehearsal time.
- A polished presenter or speaker is necessary.

Resources Needed

- Content
- Staff oversight and time
- Moderator (if applicable)
- Speakers
- Technology such as phone line, speakers, microphone (if recording), Internet access, etc.

Instructional Video

Vendors provide specialized training.

Reference Materials

Secrets of Webinar Production and Management
whitepapers.techrepublic.com.com/abstract.
aspx?kw=webinar&docid=1378109
The Costs of Putting Together a Webinar
www.slideshare.net/doncameron/whitepaper-webinar-cost

Potential Vendors

Adobe Acrobat Connect
www.adobe.com/products/adobeconnect.html
Glance
www.glance.net/
GoToMeeting
www.gotomeeting.com/
Microsoft Office Live Meeting
office.microsoft.com/en-us/live-meeting/
Vodium/VCall
www.vcall.com/vcall/index.aspx
WebEx
www.webex.com/

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Specialized Platforms

Overview of Tool

A specialized platform brings people, such as members of nonprofits and member-based organizations, together based on specific, common interests. Generally, specialized platforms will provide a suite of technology products and services, including threaded discussion forums, document storage and retrieval, document sharing and collaboration, microsite content management system extension to component levels, an interactive member directory that incorporates aggregate data from the organization's database and user-generated data input and individual member profiles, an event calendar, and blogs. A specialized platform can offer a better user experience than a public one because its interface can speak directly to an association's database and is therefore more focused and rich. Specialized platforms are available at a cost that varies from vendor to vendor unlike many other public social networking platforms, which are available for marketing use at no cost other than time and corporate resources.

Audience Served

Association staff, boards of directors, committees, task forces, component leaders, special interest groups, chapters, overall memberships

Applicable Uses for Associations (Beginner to Advanced)

- Document sharing
- Discussion forums
- Interactive membership directory
- Event calendar
- Blog
- Best practice resources
- Board orientation and policy material
- Committee workspace

Resources Needed

- Content
- Buy-in from board of directors
- Community champions

- Legal advice
- Staff oversight and time
- Marketing plan
- A vendor partner

Considerations (Pros, Cons, and Lessons Learned)

Plan for Success

- Get buy-in from all levels in the organization.
- Know your audience.
- Know what your goals are for your private network.
- Establish objectives to achieve your goals.
- Determine who will own the network.
- Decide who will have access to the network.
- Determine your content creators.
- Have a promotional plan.
- Have a growth plan to keep content flowing.

Pros

You can leverage your database. These platforms can interface with your database for single sign on, recognize current involvement or leadership within the association, and allow members a private place to communicate.

- Access to the site is not likely to be blocked by an employer.
- Site restricted to members only, creating a member benefit for the organization
- Engagement reporting is available.
- There is great potential to target information and capabilities to your membership.

1

Specialized Platforms *continued*

Cons

- All users have to sign on and join a specialized platform network rather than participating in familiar and social networking tools (e.g., Facebook, Twitter).
- This is not a free service.

Instructional Video

Vendor will provide specialized training.

Reference Materials

Socious Online Community Resources
www.socious.com/community-resources/
Higher Logic News & Resources
www.higherlogic.com/HL/HL2/NEWSRESOURCES/Default.aspx
10 Tips to Pick Your Best Social Networking Platform
www.asaecenter.org/Resources/ANowDetail.cfm?ItemNumber=47335
Six Online Community Vendors for Associations
bit.ly/3LdNCC

Potential Vendors

The Port
www.theport.com/
MemberFuse
www.memberfuse.com/
Higher Logic
www.higherlogic.com
Vignette
www.vignette.com/
Socious
www.socious.com/
MemberToMember
www.membertomember.com/

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Introduction / Copyright

Where social media is employed, it is important to set rules for online behavior and expectations for content ownership. Doing so when beginning your social media campaign may help avoid confusion or legal conflicts down the road. The following are some of the policies or procedures that you should consider in connection with your social media profile or site. Many of these can be easily posted as notes or provided through a link back to your association's website. Please note that this list is not exhaustive. Associations that are developing any policy or disclaimer should consult with their legal counsel.

Copyright

When material is posted on an association's website, the issue of ownership must be addressed. Any or all of the copyright owner's exclusive rights may be transferred to the association. Establishing ownership via an agreement is important for many reasons, including assigning indemnification, obtaining a warranty stating that the work does not violate any copyright, determining the level of exclusivity, and creating a record of the transaction. It is important to note that some types of transfers require a signed agreement.

The following areas of copyright are typically addressed:
- One of three types of copyright ownership is established: assignment, exclusive, or nonexclusive use.
- Any user who posts third-party copyrighted material has obtained releases for that material from the original copyright owner.
- Acceptable alternatives to obtaining permission include providing a link to copyrighted material, paraphrasing, or posting brief excerpts. The original source should be cited whenever possible.
- Any submissions or posts made to the website are voluntary additions to the intellectual materials held by the site owner.
- The author warrants that the material is not libelous or otherwise unlawful.
- There is no right to royalties or other payment for voluntary submissions or posts to the website.
- The site owner can repurpose any submissions or posts without additional permission.
- The user agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the site's owner and others when applicable against all damages, liabilites, costs, and expenses that result from a claim arising out of a breach of the author's warranty.

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Policies and Legal Procedures

Terms of Use

Terms of Use

Terms of use describe how an association intends for information on the site to be used by visitors. They also include rules regarding how visitors must use a site or a social networking tool. In addition, they document the association's level of responsibility for the content's accuracy and that the content does not represent the official stance or opinion of the association, its members, boards, etc.

Terms of use policies generally are accessed via a link at the bottom of the homepage. A higher level of protection for the association can be achieved by posting a notice indicating that by accessing the site users agree to the terms or by requiring users to read terms and click on an "I accept" button. Some of the factors to consider when creating terms of use are provided below.

- Comments posted on a website do not necessarily represent those of your association.
- Information contained on a website cannot be guaranteed as up-to-date, complete, or accurate.
- Information posted to a website should not be considered a substitute for professional research and personal judgment.
- Website terms and conditions are subject to change at any time.

Terms of Use for a Member Community or Discussion Forum

The terms of use for a member community or discussion forum may include language (in addition to the standard terms of use at left, such as the following:

- Members are prohibited from posting content that could be considered offensive, threatening, illegal, or inflammatory.
- Commercial posts, advertisements, spam, or solicitations are not allowed.
- Members are asked to act courteously, use the search function to find information, and self-police the community for inappropriate posts.
- The site owner reserves the right to monitor the site for inappropriate posts, edit or remove posted material, or prohibit future participation for those violating site rules.

Defamation

Risks associated with potentially defamatory statements being posted on social media are similar to the risks arising from a website, magazine, or other print publication. However, social media has the potential to communicate these defamatory statements much more quickly than in print media. Although defamation law varies slightly from state to state, the basic principles of defamation are common across all 50 states:

- Libel is written defamation.
- Slander is verbal defamation.
- The alleged defamatory statement must be a statement of fact as opposed to an opinion.

Make sure that your terms of use preclude the posting of defamatory statements.

Privacy

Privacy Policy

A privacy policy pertains to information collected from visitors to a website as well as how that information will be used and protected. Protecting the privacy and personal data of your members or visitors is of utmost importance and can assist in creating, organizing, and implementing an association's activities on- and offline.

A privacy policy for a website or social networking channel may include the following language.

Visitor Data Collection & Sharing

- Registration on this site is optional. However, some access to some private areas may be contingent on registration.
- This site collects visitor data of two types—data volunteered upon registration and data automatically recognized by the Web server, such as IP address and file or page requests.
- The site owner views visitor information as a confidential asset and takes great care to ensure its safety.
- Visitor data collected is used to measure page popularity and to judge the usefulness of individual pages and the site as a whole.
- Visitor data may be preserved indefinitely in a secure, PCI-compliant manner.
- Visitors to this website have the right to request a copy of all personal data collected or to have such data deleted, so long as proof of identity can be provided.
- This site does not knowingly collect personal information from any person under 18 years of age.
- The site owner may be legally obligated to share visitor data if required by law, as in the case of a legal process or court order. In all other cases, the site owner will not knowingly share, sell, or distribute visitor data with any third party.
- Continued use of this website constitutes your acceptance of the privacy policy.

Cookies

This site may collect anonymous information through the use of "cookies." A cookie is an element of data that a website can send to your browser, which may then be stored on your hard drive. Cookies may last for only a single session or may span multiple sessions. Cookies may also be used throughout private sections of a website in order to prevent security breaches and track user activity.

Links

The site owner is not responsible for the privacy policies or content located on third-party websites linked on this website.

Photo Usage / Anti-Trust

Photo Usage

A photo usage disclaimer may include language such as

- By posting on this site or participating in this event, a site user is granting the right to reproduce photos taken for educational, news, or promotional effect.
- All photos or posts placed on this website become the property of the site owner.

Photo Considerations for Pediatric-Based Associations

The photo disclaimer for a pediatric-based association may include language in addition to the above, including

- Although this website and its links offer general information regarding health issues of infants, toddlers, adolescents, and minors, this website does not solicit or accept information from any person younger than 18 years of age.
- All photos depicting any person younger than 18 years of age must have a consent form signed by their legal guardian on file with the site owner.

Anti-Trust Considerations

Anti-trust laws were designed to promote and protect competition by helping to ensure a level playing field among competitors. The content of websites and social networking tools are not immune to these laws. Therefore, a disclaimer that provides guidelines regarding the type of content that can be communicated are important. Some of the factors to consider when creating an anti-trust disclaimer are provided below.

- Site visitors are prohibited from discussing the raising, lowering, or stabilizing of prices or fees for the industry, including credit terms.
- Site visitors are prohibited from advocating for the regulation of the production or availability of products or services.
- Site visitors are prohibited from allocating markets or customers, encouraging boycotts, or fostering uncompetitive practices in any online posts or comments.

Raffles

Always seek legal counsel before implementing a contest or raffle via social media, especially if a prize having cash value will be awarded or if consideration is required to enter. Numerous state laws and regulations govern online contests, lotteries, and sweepstakes.

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HIPPA Considerations for Healthcare Associations

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' HIPPA guidelines are designed to define and limit the ways in which an individual's identifiable health information may be used. Associations of medical professionals should take steps to ensure that the HIPPA privacy standards are maintained online.

The following considerations should be taken into account when developing a policy to ensure that an online presence is compliant.

- Medical professionals should maintain all legal standards of patient privacy and confidentiality.
- Medical professionals must refrain from posting identifiable patient information online.
- Medical professionals should use privacy settings to safeguard personal information and content to the extent possible, with the understanding that no privacy protection on the Internet is absolute.
- Medical professionals should routinely monitor their own Internet presence to ensure that their personal and professional information is accurate and appropriate.
- Medical professionals are responsible for policing their colleagues and bringing unprofessional material to their attention so that removal or other appropriate action can be taken.
- If online behavior significantly violates professional norms and is not resolved, the medical professional should report the matter to appropriate authorities.
- Medical professionals should not comment, post, or act online in a way that would undermine public trust in the medical profession or the professional him- or herself.

Reference Materials

Social Media and the Law (Jeffrey S. Tenenbaum and A.J. Zottola)
Associations Now, December 2009
www.asaecenter.org/Resources/ANowDetail.cfm?ItemNumber=46330

Internet Defamation in the Age of Social Media (Matt Hutchins)
bit.ly/fyuBWW

Social Media, Liability and Insurance (Leslie White)
www.socialfish.org/2010/06/social-media-liability-and-insurance.html

Social Media Risk Management for Associations (Leslie White)
bit.ly/dEcwxJ

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3 Metrics and Tools of Measurement

Measuring the success of your social networking efforts can be difficult. It takes time for social networking efforts to gain traction, and you will need to manage the expectations of your staff team and boards accordingly. Social networking initiatives should be viewed as an extension of your overall marketing plan and should support the objectives and metrics identified in the master plan.

We suggest setting up a dashboard that provides a quick snapshot of critical data including some or all of the following types of information.

Views

The number of times a user visits a particular page is considered a "view." Often the distinction is made between *unique views* (or visitors) and *total page views*. Whereas a user may view a Web page multiple times, each unique view represents a different person visiting your website, social networking profile, or specialized platform. This number represents the reach of your social media exposure across multiple channels and tools.

Dashboard items can include the following:
• Facebook page views
• LinkedIn profile views
• YouTube channel or individual video views
• Flickr individual photo views
• blog page views
• specialized platform unique logins
• e-news message open and click-through rates.

Most social networking sites provide these numbers publically next to or near the actual post or item in question. Some, like Facebook, provide them clearly next to every post only if you are an administrator for the page.

Statistics associated with your blog, specialized platform, or e-news can be determined through individual metric reports offered by your vendor/provider. These numbers should be sent to you in a reader-friendly e-mail or be available for download from a privately accessed page on your vendor's website. If you do not know where to access this information, contact your vendor directly for instructions.

Followers

Followers are the users who have visited your page and have officially expressed an interest in your association or brand. This interest is considered the next step beyond just passively viewing a website. Followers are committing to hearing more from you through your social media messages.

Most social media sites that give users the ability to follow a person, company, or brand make doing so as easy as possible. If he or she chooses, a follower can receive e-mail notices or an addition to their program feed when you update your page content with new messages, photos, videos, links, or other content.

Your social media dashboard can include the following types of followers:
• blog subscribers
• Facebook fans/likes
• Twitter followers
• YouTube channel subscribers
• Flickr channel subscribers
• LinkedIn group members.

The number of followers your association has on any given social media site is a publicly available number and usually appears toward the top of your profile or landing page.

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3 Metrics and Tools of Measurement

Links

A Web link is essentially a shortcut back to your website, eliminating the need for a user to directly type your Web address in their browser's navigation bar. The more opportunities that exist for members or interested parties to find your association, the larger your potential audience becomes. Therefore, linking back to your social media channels encourages growth in the number of views and followers. Although the number of links is not an easy measurement for your dashboard, it is important to consider for your overall marketing plan.

Critical practices in linking to your social media profiles include

- placing links on every page of your association website in a prominent or reliable position such as the footer
- integrating the Facebook "Like" button into the structure of your website
- cross-linking between social media profiles on different sites (e.g., listing your Facebook profile link on your LinkedIn profile page and vice versa)
- including messages on your print advertising or direct mail that alerts the reader to your presence on particular social media sites
- asking other associations or industry colleagues to link back to your social media profiles and reciprocating the courtesy
- encouraging your members to follow you on sites like Facebook so that your association's page will appear to the friends and colleagues with whom they are connected
- including links to your association's profiles in the signatures of staff e-mails and other Web-based correspondence.

Audience Engagement

Audience engagement is a measure of how actively your audience interacts with your messages, staff, or other members through your social media outlets. A few of the key items to be considered active engagement include

- comments on your blog or discussion posts
- comments on your Facebook posts
- comments on your YouTube videos
- comments on your Flickr photos
- unique posts on your Facebook wall

- @ Tweets on Twitter, where a follower will respond to your post publicly using the @ symbol in front of your association's username
- new discussion posts generated on LinkedIn or within a specialized social media platform.

Most of the above statistics accompany the original post. You may need to weed through the occasional *spam message* (a message generated not by an original user but by an automated, electronic advertising program), but the remaining results represent the depth of your social media exposure.

What benefits lie in audience engagement? By providing repeated value to the user and encouraging a space where open communication can thrive, your organization now has an efficient vehicle to

- improve customer service and loyalty
- conduct a member needs analysis
- receive feedback that can lead to new product development
- incite action on an issue critical to your membership
- recruit volunteers for an association event
- produce additional revenue through fundraising
- extend a member benefit that would have been too costly offline.

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Metrics and Tools of Measurement

Reposting

Reposting, most famously integrated into the Twitter platform as *retweeting*, is simply rebroadcasting another user's message to your own set of followers or friends. The number of reposts your original post receives can represent a significant broadening of your audience. The number of impressions your message receives increases exponentially with every repost—classic word-of-mouth marketing come to life in the 21st century.

As a generator of buzz, reposting has played a significant role in helping spread the word about important issues worldwide. From exposing violence in otherwise media-dampened developing countries to helping an association like the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine stop the FDA from withdrawing a critical drug from the market, reposting is a critical method of spreading an organization's message quickly and across a wide audience.

On Twitter, the number of retweets an original post receives can be accessed by clicking on the upper right corner of any tweet. Statistics on retweets, hashtags, and other related data will then appear to the right of your screen.

Financial Contributions

Many nonprofit organizations use social media outlets to solicit donations or to promote fundraising events. Current statistics reflect that fundraising is not as successful or popular as community- or awareness-building through social media tools. Nevertheless, dollars raised are a critical measurement for associations whose primary goals include acquiring funds for charitable effect and should not be ignored.

Direct Effects

Although the direct effect of a social media campaign is often very difficult to measure, there are a number of ways to begin quantifying the reach of your message.

One such method is to provide a specialized code solely through your social media posts that will track where a user received his or her information. This code can then be required for online event registration, association store purchases that could include a special discount, or to receive an advertised membership renewal incentive. While specialized codes have been used for years alongside traditional marketing tools such as direct mail and print advertising, they are perfectly suited for online use as well. In fact, a code can be different for each social media tool you use, making the effects of your campaign easy to track.

Even without solid metrics, anecdotal evidence of your social media reach can be compelling. Be on the lookout for stories you may hear from members or staff where a view or link to your social media profile resulted in the following:

- media coverage
- membership growth or retention
- connections being established between organizations or members
- increased satisfaction in the customer service of your association.

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Metrics and Tools of Measurement

Staff Time

Time spent on your social media plan is also an important metric to consider. Although there is no hard and fast ratio of time spent to measurable results that constitutes "success," staff time should be recorded to a standardized code to ensure accurate tracking. Doing so will help you understand where additional time is necessary for future budgeting purposes. Your staff can then provide evidence of accountability to a manager or board of directors, quantifying the time commitment social networking demands.

At AMC, time can be allocated to specific codes:

Code	Code Description
ANNL CONF SOC	Annual Conference-SocialNetwkg
MEM SOC NETWKG	Membership-Social Networking
GEN WEB SOCNET	General-Web Social Networking

Metrics can be an important element to justifying the time and expense associated with implementing social media. However, it is equally important not to lose sight of benefits that can't be quantified. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Is my social media plan helping our members and staff solve industry or member-related issues more effectively?
- Is my social media plan keeping my members and staff informed on issues important to our mission to a greater degree than with non-social media outlets alone?
- Is my social media plan reinforcing my association's brand to my members or the public in a positive way?
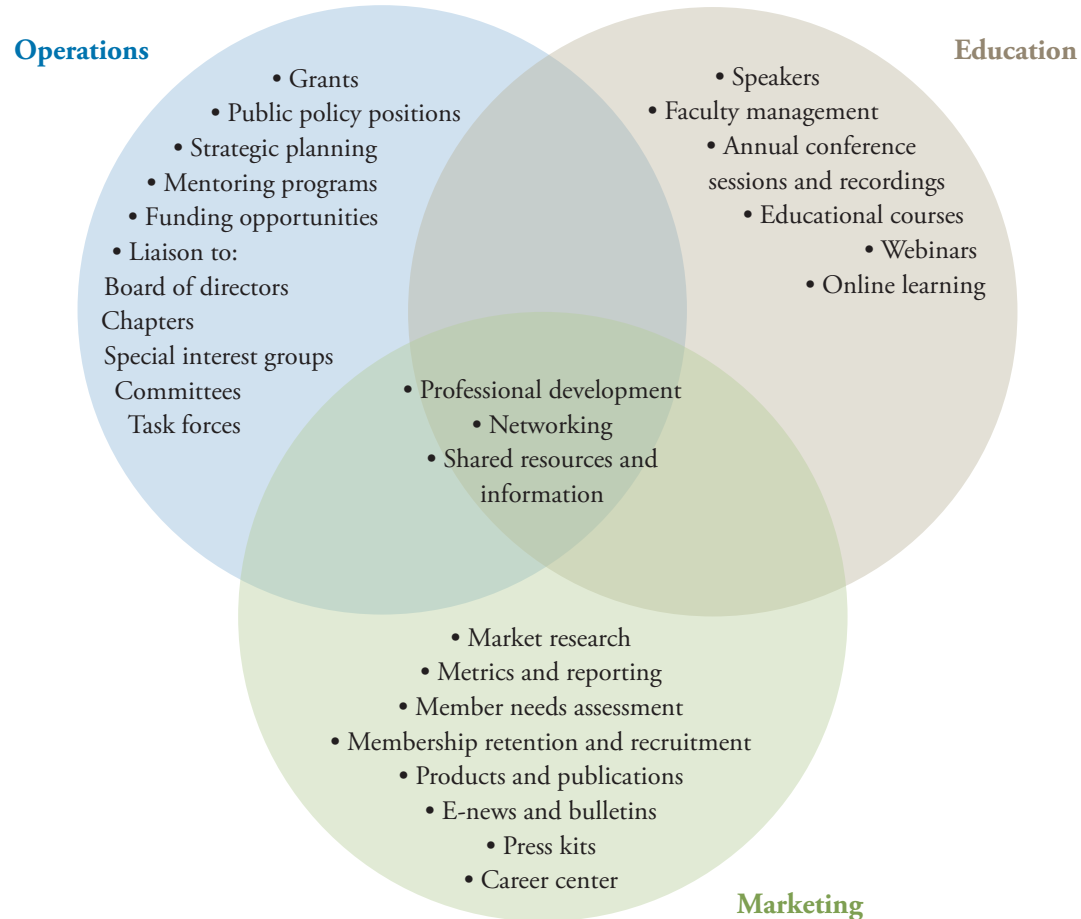
Team Roles and Responsibilities

To ensure the success of your social networking efforts, it is important to make sure your entire staff team is on board and understands the plan. While it is critical to have one process owner or "curator" to coordinate efforts, staff members who support key strategic initiatives should have an active role in the plan. Content generation, member engagement, and communication around your efforts are just a few areas where staff can play a role.

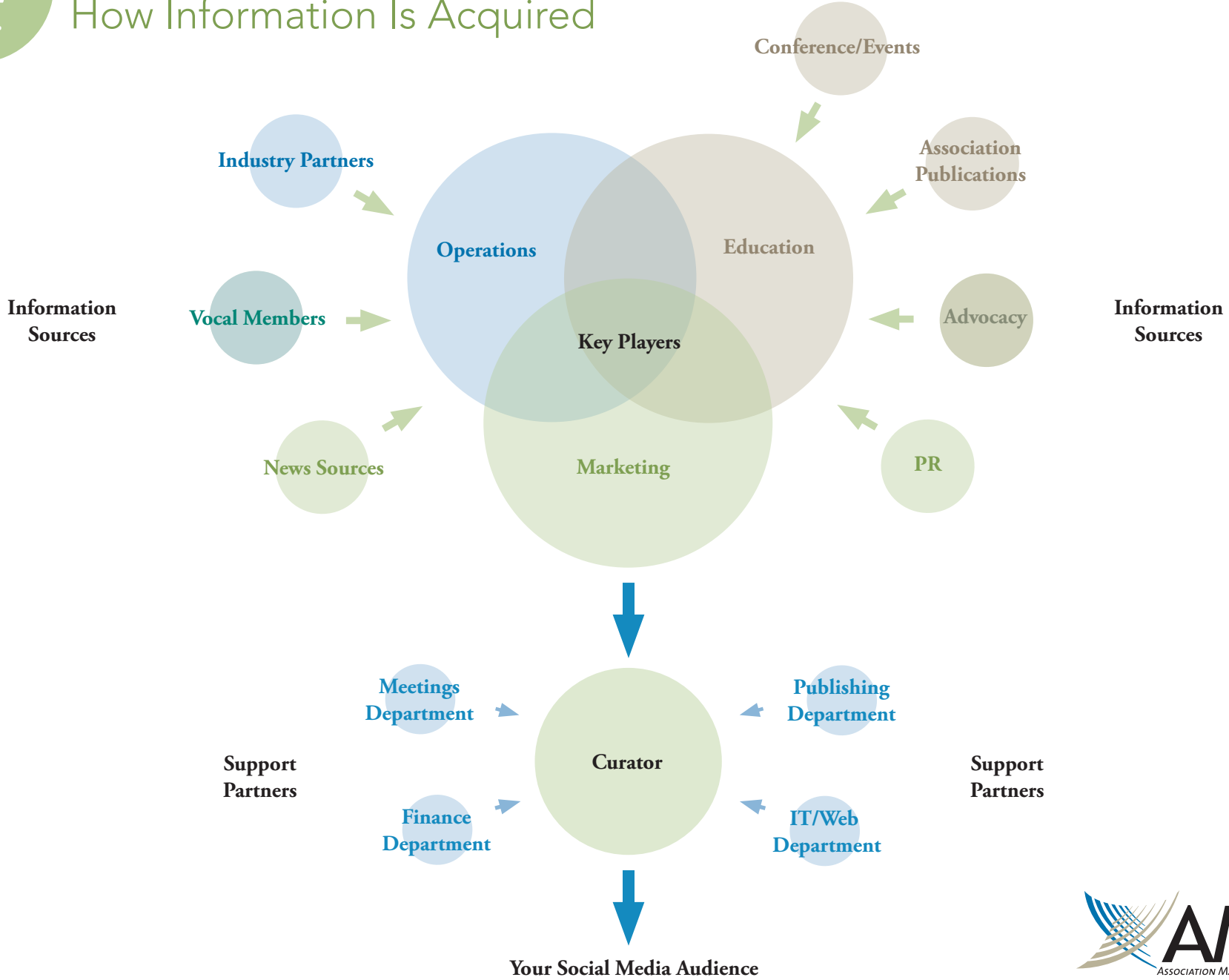**Associations and Online Communications Content**
The diagram below illustrates the logical relationships among the three primary areas where content is generated within your association. The topics identified within these areas may help determine staff responsibilities in delivering pertinent information via social media. A global distribution diagram is on the following page.

Operations
- Grants
- Public policy positions
- Strategic planning
- Mentoring programs
- Funding opportunities
- Liaison to:
Board of directors
Chapters
Special interest groups
Committees
Task forces

Education
- Speakers
- Faculty management
- Annual conference sessions and recordings
- Educational courses
- Webinars
- Online learning

- Professional development
- Networking
- Shared resources and information

- Market research
- Metrics and reporting
- Member needs assessment
- Membership retention and recruitment
- Products and publications
- E-news and bulletins
- Press kits
- Career center

Marketing

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How Information Is Acquired

Conference/Events

Association Publications

Industry Partners

Operations

Education

Information Sources

Vocal Members

Key Players

Advocacy

Information Sources

News Sources

Marketing

PR

Meetings Department

Publishing Department

Support Partners

Curator

Support Partners

Finance Department

IT/Web Department

Your Social Media Audience
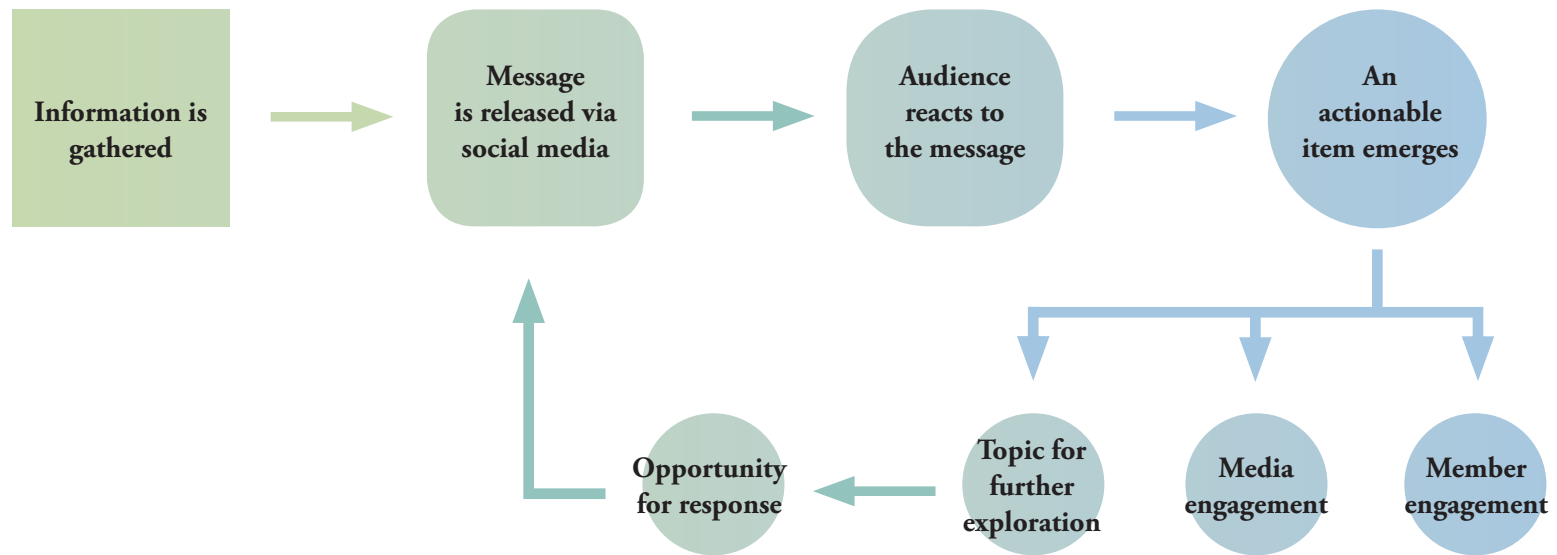
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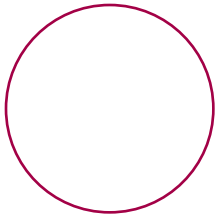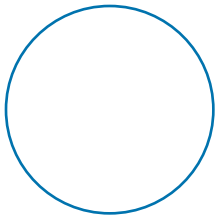
Team Roles and Responsibilities

How Information Is Shared
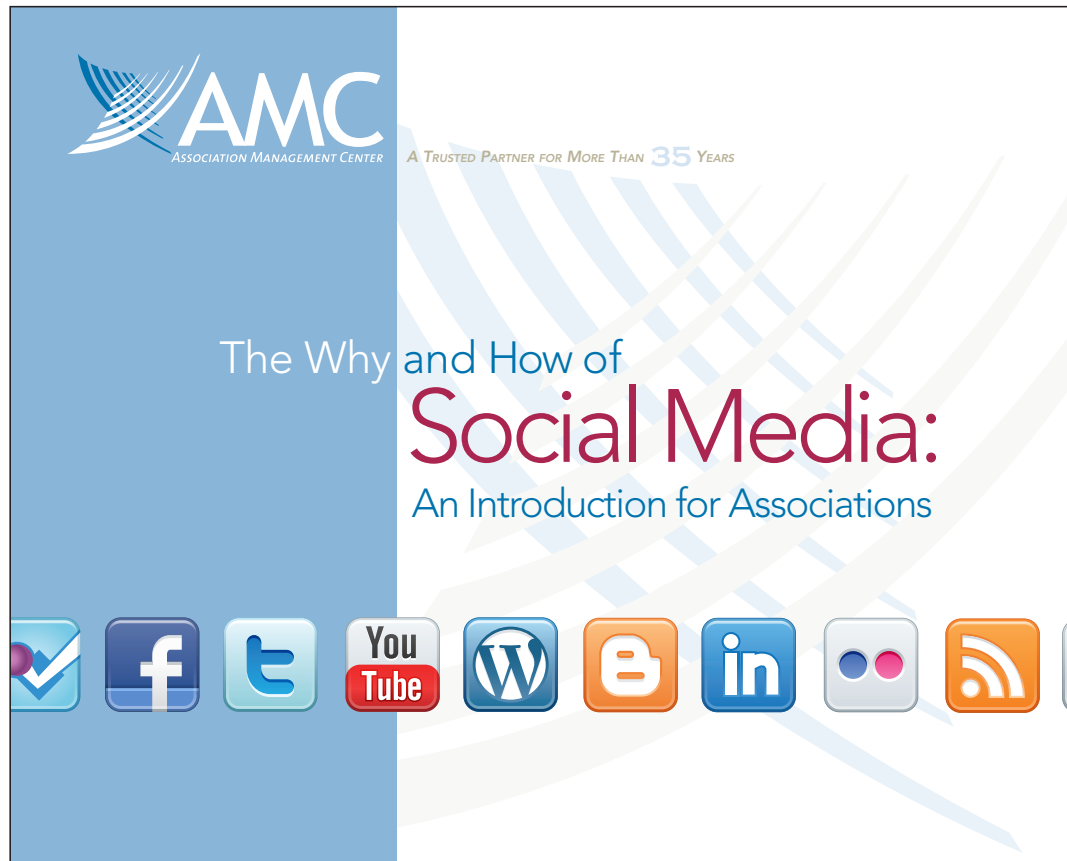
Process for Information Sharing

A piece of sharable information can originate from a variety of sources, including the media, a social networking site or blog, a fellow staff member, an industry expert, a member, or a piece of research. The information is curated by the designated staff person, and the message is created and distributed via the appropriate social network(s).

Once shared, the message may be picked up by another social media user and pushed out to a larger audience. The message could elicit a response (a comment, question, or criticism). If the audience is engaged with the message, it may then become an actionable item, providing an opportunity for response, creating a topic for further exploration, causing media attention, and/or eliciting member engagement.

```
Information is      →    Message          →    Audience       →    An
gathered                 is released via        reacts to           actionable
                         social media           the message         item emerges
                              ↑                                           │
                              │                         ┌────────────┬────┴────────┐
                              │                         ↓            ↓             ↓
                    Opportunity    ←    Topic for       Media          Member
                    for response         further        engagement     engagement
                                         exploration
```

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