



VAAC Blog

“Let’s get social” – top tips for getting the most out of social media

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Social media can be a really effective, free marketing tool and can allow you to reach a much wider audience. However, it can be tricky and much more time-consuming than you might think. But by spending a little time thinking about your strategy and how you are going to use your channels, you can really increase their effectiveness and make them easier to manage. Here’s our top tips for getting the most out of your social media.

Create a social media strategy

Spend some time thinking about what you want your social media channels to do for you. There is no point posting just for the sake of it, you need to have an idea of what you want your messages to be, who they are aimed at and why you are posting them.

I’m sure that like most people working/volunteering in the voluntary sector, you have 1001 jobs to do and not enough time to do them all, so it may be tempting to just post on social media as and when you get a chance/think about it; however, by

setting a little time aside at the beginning to really think about these things, you can not only make your life easier by having more idea of the sorts of things you want to be posting about, but you will also save time each week as you are not sitting at your desk desperately trying to think of something to post! It will also mean that your posts are more impactful and actually achieve something for the organisation. It really is time well spent! Here's a few pointers to get you started:

1. Define your goals - do you want to increase awareness, get donations, drive people to your website? Use these to develop the messages you want to share
2. Who is your audience? Do you have different audiences for different channels? You might have a 2 or 3 audiences for each channel but you need to target each post towards a specific audience
3. Think about your tone of voice and brand personality – do you want to come across as personable and approachable or academic and serious? Make sure that each post expresses the image of your organisation that you want to portray
4. Use analytics provided by the social media channel – i.e. when are your followers online, which of your posts have been most effective etc. and then adapt future posts accordingly (you need to have a business account/page to access these)
5. Consider scheduling posts (via Hootsuite or similar, or the platform itself)

* Bonus tip – I like to plan the themes for my social media posts a month at a time. I have specific things that I try to post on particular days (i.e. upcoming events on Tuesdays, Funding opportunities on Fridays etc.) and this helps me to plan my posts. I try to fill up my whole month with at least one theme/topic a day (Monday – Friday) and then each week I formulate the actual posts for the following week; what the post will say, what I will link to, what image I will use, who I need to tag etc. For more information and a free social media calendar template read this brilliant blog from HubSpot: <https://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/33415/the-social-media-publishing-schedule-every-marketer-needs-template.aspx>.

The image shows a HubSpot social media calendar template. At the top, it says 'HubSpot' and '[INSERT MONTH + YEAR]'. Below this is a grid with columns for the days of the week (SUNDAY to SATURDAY) and rows for each week. The grid is filled with various content themes and campaigns, such as 'New Product Launching', 'Holiday Campaigns', 'Social Media Blog Post', and 'Funding Opportunities'. The themes are color-coded: blue for product launches, orange for holiday campaigns, green for social media blog posts, and yellow for funding opportunities. The grid is designed to help marketers plan their social media content for a month in advance.

Create engaging content



The chances are, the people that you are trying to reach are bombarded with messages from every direction all day long. Think about your own Facebook/ Twitter timeline, how many of the posts that you scroll past do you actually stop to read? You need to create content that makes your audience stop and pay attention to your message. Remember as well that not everything that you post to your

channel will get shown to your followers (thank you Facebook algorithms!) and the more engagement your posts get, the more likely they are to be shown. So you need to create engaging and attention-grabbing posts to get the largest reach. To help you do this, consider these tips:

1. Post regularly
2. Use hashtags that are relevant to the post and/or your organisation, if you can use trending hashtags then all the better, but only if they're relevant!
3. Tag partners (in the post itself, i.e. the photo/image, and in the caption)
4. Link in with national campaigns (i.e. Volunteers Week/World Mental Health day) and use relevant hashtags
5. Tell a story/try to make people connect to your posts – the human element will always be more captivating than dry facts and figures
6. Use photos and videos when you can
7. Consider the use of emojis 😊
8. Try sharing 'clickbait' posts in local Facebook groups etc.; i.e. share a pretty photo of the local area (use the caption to make it relevant to your organisation) – then invite 'likers' to follow your page
9. Try to engage with followers – ask questions, polls, ask for photos etc.
10. Respond to comments

More isn't always better

Finally, don't feel like you have to use every social media channel going. It takes time to manage a channel and cultivate an engaged audience, so you may be better off focusing your time on one or two channels that you feel will be most useful for you, than trying to post everywhere! Think about your audience and what the best way to reach them is. For example younger people are much more likely to use TikTok and Instagram, but you might be more likely to reach professionals on Twitter or LinkedIn, and Facebook is a great tool to engage with local communities. So go back to your strategy, think about your goals and target

audiences and how you might best be able to reach them, and then focus your time and energy on the channels that will help you to do that. Charity Digital have just posted a blog all about this: <https://charitydigital.org.uk/topics/topics/why-charities-should-use-fewer-social-platforms-9408>.

So in conclusion, yes social media is a brilliant free marketing tool but to get the most out of it you really need to put some time and thought into it. Hopefully the advice above will help you to do that and will see you reaching new audiences, and creating more engaged communities of followers. If you would like more advice on social media, or other marketing techniques, please fill in the [VAAC referral form](#). And don't forget to tag us in your posts so that we can share them for you (Facebook – [Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester](#), Twitter - [@VAAC_Community](#)).

