Social Media

Content

Keep it Short and Simple
Length of posts depends on the best practices of the specific channel, but should typically be no more than 250 characters for Facebook and LinkedIn. For Twitter although there is a 140-character count limit keeping it to no more than 130 characters will make it easy to share.

Include a Call to Action
All posts should include a call to action to incite the reader to engage with the post (share or comment), your chapter (register for an event or volunteer) or the main association (read an article or view a page on the site).

Style
Due to the limitation of characters by some social networks the following styles are acceptable when posting to social media channels:

• Use contractions whenever possible.
• Shorthand symbols such as >, =, &, % and @ are allowed.
• Use numerals, not words, for all numbers.
• Use am and pm rather than a.m. and p.m.
• No Copyright/Trademark/Registration symbol is used in character-restricted communication.
• Use acronyms whenever applicable making sure to link to content that defines the acronym.

Hashtags
Hashtags allow you to streamline discussions and make it easier for people to follow and engage in conversations related to your topic or event. While extremely popular (and originated) on Twitter they have spread to Facebook, LinkedIn and many other social channels.

Create hashtags that are short but meaningful – if hashtags are too long they will be harder for people to use in retweets and engagements. If the hashtag has no meaning to the message it will be easily forgotten and not used.

Graphics/Images

It is always a good rule of thumb to include graphics/images with your post. It has been shown that posts including graphics/images generate more reach and engagement.

Relevancy
The graphic/image you use should be relevant to the content you are posting.

Copyright Policies
It is illegal to post a graphic from any source, including Google Images, to display on social media, even if you credit the source. For this type of usage, you must first obtain permission from the owner in writing. If you are unsure do not post it.

Links

Social media posts should include a link that directs the user to your call to action – register, view article or visit a page.

Simple URLs
When posting a link that is not used to generate a preview (see below) the link should be a simple URL or a bit.ly link. This is the best way to post links to social channels and allows you to easily track traffic to the link.

Generated Link Previews
When posting, allow the link preview to generate and then delete the link from the text. Replace the preview thumbnail with an appropriately sized graphic or photo. Then, adjust Title and Summary by clicking on that text and changing the wording to best fit your topic.

Posting

When crafting your post, keep in mind that social media profiles are viewed as an official voice of your chapter group and you should always use the pronoun “we.”

Frequency
There is a lot of noise and a continuous stream of information being posted. It is good to put out reminders (at least once a week) to catch those fans/followers that may have missed previous updates. But remember you should also be posting about other topics as well. It is recommended to keep promotional posts to 20%. Too much self-promotion can be seen negatively.

Be Available
Don’t promote your own content and then not be available for people to reach out to you with questions and comments. If you are consistently posting content, you should also consistently interact with your readers. Sometimes they will reach out to you, but other times you will be initiating the conversation.

Law of Reciprocity
You cannot expect people to share your content and promote your ideas if you are not doing the same for others. Spend time reading through your channel feeds to find thought-provoking content that you feel compelled to share.
**Social Media and Email Best Practices Guide**

**Emails**

Emailing your members is a great way to keep in touch, create awareness of events and provide news and information. Below are the keys to keeping your readers excited to see your email in their inbox!

**CAN-SPAM**

The most important things to keep in mind is staying complaint with the CAN-SPAM act and avoiding SPAM and phishing words and phrases.

1. Make sure you stay compliant with CAN-SPAM. Here are the seven main requirements:
2. Don’t use false or misleading header information
3. Don’t use deceptive subject lines
4. Identify the message as an ad
5. Tell recipients where you’re located
6. Tell recipients how to opt-out of receiving future email from you
7. Honor opt-out requests promptly
8. Monitor what others are doing on your behalf

**Avoid SPAM Trigger Words and Phishing Phrases**

A spam filter is trying to remove commercial advertisements and promotions so words that are common in such emails should be avoided or used sparingly. Additionally, avoid phrases that would appear as an attempt to get the reader to click on a link malicious site or download a file where malware awaits, or phishing phrases.

**Addressing**

**The FROM Field**
Address the reader directly as you from the FROM field. Vague FROM fields such as Chapter Leader or Contact from Chapter can lead your email right to the SPAM folder or even worse to the TRASH.

**The TO Field**
If you are not using an email service provider do not include all email address in the TO or CC fields. Not only can this lead to the SPAM folder but also are providing the full email addresses of your subscribers to all receivers. This can lead to sensitive or private email addresses becoming public. This also makes your reader feel less important. Utilize the BCC field to protect yourself and your subscribers.

**Content**

**Short and Skimmable**
Emails should contain short, bite-sized content blurbs. The readers should be able to skim through the email content and have a basic understanding of the content. Emails that require the reader to thoroughly read the email are less likely to perform well.

**Related Theme/Topic**
Focus on one main theme or topic for emails, such as current news or an event. Keeping the content similar in nature helps the reader understand and focus in on the purpose of your email.

**Include a Call to Action**
All emails should include a call to action to provider the reader with direction as to the next step. Get the reader to engage with the content (share or forward), your chapter (register for an event or volunteer) or the main association (read an article or view a page on the site).

**Layout**

**Headlines and Subheads**
Utilize great headlines, subheads and link text for ultimate readability. Large amount of text with no breaks can make and email daunting and your reader is less likely to actually read and understand the content.

**Text to Image Ratio**
You want to utilize a good text to image ratio. Make sure your email doesn’t appear as an advertisement by containing only images but it is always helpful to include an image or two that is related to your content to keep readers engage and help with the flow of the content.

**Preview**
Design your email for the preview pane because that is how it will most likely be viewed and read. Take an extra minute to test your email by sending it to yourself and viewing it in your own preview pane.

**Bottom Line**

By taking a few extra minutes and utilizing the above tips, your email and social communications will be effective, personal and keep your readers wanting more! Contact us for more information.