SOCIAL MEDIA BASICS for LOCAL UNIONS

LIKE

COMMENT

SHARE

Where you should start...

1. REVIEW YOUR ASSETS

- What social media accounts does your local already have? What do you need/want?

- Who can run them?

  (Note: It's best to have one person and a backup in charge of all your social media for consistency. The president should not have this job.)

2. FIND YOUR AUDIENCE

- Who are you trying to reach?

- Facebook remains the most popular social media network among young parents and grandparents alike.

- Facebook pages are better for engaging members AND the public. Create a private Facebook group if you want to keep it to just your local.

- Twitter is popular among the under-40 crowd (including younger educators), while Instagram is where you can find many early career members.

3. BUILD A NETWORK

- Now that your profile is live, follow people and businesses in your community, as well as your members.

- Share/retweet and comment on your followers' posts. Like their photos. Respond when they reach out to you.

- Advertise your social media accounts in emails, on your website, in newsletters, etc., to gain followers.

Best practices

1. BE CONSISTENT

- Use the same name, images and descriptions for each social media profile if possible.

- Posting the same event/article/update across platforms? Keep the message consistent whether it's on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Keep it simple.

2. USE IMAGES WHENEVER POSSIBLE

- Research shows tweets with photos get 313 percent more engagement than those without.

- Facebook posts with images get twice as much engagement.

- Sharing an article and need an image? Right click on the picture in the article and save it to your desktop. Add when tweeting/posting to Facebook.

3. SHORTER IS BETTER

- Facebook cuts off text at around three lines on mobile devices. That is how 80 percent of users see you, so keep it in mind when posting.

- Twitter limits you to 280 characters or less BUT photos, videos and GIFs no longer count toward that number. Shorten links with free sites like bit.ly for even more room.

- Instagram stories are great, and remember that this site is hashtag driven.

4. WHEN (AND WHEN NOT) TO RESPOND

- Engagement is a key element of success on social media.

- BUT don't give opponents the platform they want by engaging in a back-and-forth argument. That is, unless they're asking a legit question and it's a constructive debate.

- Got a regular Negative Nancy on your Facebook page? Hide (don't delete) their comments by hovering over the comment, tapping or clicking on it and choosing "hide comment." That way, they still see their comment, but no one else can and therefore won't respond.

5. MODERATE YOUR PAGE AND FOLLOWERS

- Watch for inappropriate comments and delete them. If someone's being racist or sexist, using foul language, making threats or worse, block them. No questions asked. Make that policy clear in your profile/group description.

- Go through your follower list every few weeks and remove fake or suspect profiles.

RESOURCES

Bitly *(free link shortening)*
bitly.com

HootSuite *(free social media posting platform)*
https://hootsuite.com

Canva
(simplified graphic-design tool)
canva.com

Facebook Help Center
facebook.com/help

Instagram Help Center
help.instagram.com

Twitter support
support.twitter.com

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Getting Started:

Begin by setting up a profile. We highly recommend your local utilize a public page vs. a private group. The public page will help the community get to know your local and all the positive things your members are doing in the community and in the schools. This will help create a following and, when your local is in contract negotiations or experiencing a crisis, you'll have a built-in audience that already will be tuned into your messaging.

TIPS AND TOOLS:

- Think before you post. Each time you post a photo or information on Facebook, make sure you would gladly show it to your mother, your students and your superintendent/supervisor.

- "Like" other Facebook pages from your EA's page. Link to other unions, nonprofits and education-related pages that your members would find interesting. Share their content on your page.

- Participation is key on Facebook. Configure your page's settings to allow participation. Ask your officers, co-workers and friends to comment on and "like" your posts to get the conversation started.

- Ask questions to spark conversation and activity: yes/no, true/false, fill in the blank, who's attending a meeting, etc. Questions are a proven way to increase interaction, and create a more dynamic, community-driven look and feel.

- Update your page regularly, but generally no more than once or twice a day unless the information is important. Fresh material is essential, but Facebook users don't want you to monopolize their news feed. That's a common reason for being un-Liked.

- Get a personalized URL to make it easier for people to find you (ex: www.facebook.com/UtahEducationAssociation).

- Encourage your fans. Reply to their comments. "Like" their comments. Answer their questions. And use the first-person rather than third-person ("Thanks for your comments!" vs. "UEA thanks you for your comments.").

- Drive traffic to your website. You can't put everything on Facebook. Maintain current information on your website and link to it.

- Use these features to make it into your fans' news feeds. Facebook weights them in this order: live video, videos, photos, links and posts. Algorithms value fan interaction in this order: shares, comments and likes.

PICTURES

Show your members in action, helping out students or the community. Refrain from zooming in; cropping is better.

VIDEO

Convey emotion to your audience. Shoot them on your phone (make sure to hold the phone horizontally). These videos should be no more than 30 seconds to a minute, but can be as short as 10 seconds and still be effective. Make sure you add captions through Facebook.

FACEBOOK LIVE

A useful tool to bring your page followers to a rally or another big event. It can also be a good way to hold a town hall-type meeting.

STATEMENT

A powerful message can be even more impactful when it stands alone. They can be helpful during the negotiations process.

SHARE A POST

Check in with the UEA page or community groups for posts you can share.

HOW TO GROW YOUR REACH:

- Post often
- Like/comment/share
- Tag people, pages and locations
- Check your page regularly for inappropriate comments. You can't prevent them from being posted, but you can remove ones that use improper language. Don't be heavy-handed about removing your critics' comments, however. It's better to let your fans deal with trolls than be accused of censorship, which can worsen the situation. (For an example, Google "Nestle and Greenpeace.")

TWITTER BASICS *for* LOCAL UNIONS

- **Fill out the bio with a description of your local**. Don't leave it blank, which can indicate you're a spammer. Research shows that Twitter pages without a bio have significantly fewer followers. Upload a profile picture or a logo, which must be square.

- **Don't protect your tweets.** The purpose of Twitter (and any social media site) is to be social. Protecting your tweets sends the message, "Keep out!" Many people will not ask for permission to follow you.

- **Start following people and organizations.** Many will automatically follow you back. Don't feel obligated to follow everyone who follows you, but keep in mind you can't send direct messages (DMs) to someone unless you follow each other. Watch for spammers. It is OK to Unfollow or Block them.

- **Think before you post.** Each time you tweet, make sure you would gladly show your tweet to your mother, your students and your superintendent. Tweets last forever (the Library of Congress saves them).

- **Share the love. Retweet (RT) the tweets you like.** You can either use the retweet icon on Twitter, or add your comments to a RT by quoting the tweet. To add a comment to an RT, click on the RT icon and select "Quote Tweet".

- **Keep your tweets concise.** Don't use all 280 characters. You want to leave enough characters so others can retweet you easily without editing your tweets. Leave the number of characters in your Twitter username plus four for "RT @".

- **Remember that you are tweeting as your local union.** Keep the tone professional, and avoid tweeting about yourself personally.

- **Update your page regularly.** Don't start a conversation only to let it die on the vine. Users expect responses the same day. On the other hand, you shouldn't be tweeting every 20 minutes unless you have urgent information. In general, don't tweet more than four to six times per day, and space them out. HootSuite lets you schedule tweets.

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As educators, we are held to higher standards than the rest of the working world. It's a responsibility that we take very seriously. That's why UEA urges its members who have personal social media accounts to follow these simple practices to avoid any issues:

1. Make sure you read and follow your district's social media policy; it's required by law.

2. Review each site's privacy settings.

3. Do not affiliate your social media accounts with your work email address. People can search for you by your email address.

4. Do not use the same password for multiple accounts. For example, do not use the same password for your Facebook, Twitter, and email accounts.

5. Consider carefully how what you post could be interpreted. Humor, especially sarcasm, is extremely difficult to convey.

6. Never post information about your job online, especially about students. People have lost their jobs for things they have posted. Never post anything you mean to be funny about your boss or students.

7. Never post during work hours or using work materials, such as a computer. Even if you use your own personal laptop or smartphone at work, you could have a problem, particularly if you are posting when you are supposed to be performing your duties. Remember, Twitter, Facebook, and other social networking sites have time and date stamps on comments so people can see when you posted something. If you're on your district's WiFi, they can see what apps you are using.

8. Even if you are not "friends" or "following" a manager or co-workers, people can find your information online and so-called friends may share it with your boss by printing it out, taking a screenshot, or showing them the information on a smartphone.

9. Do not "friend" or "follow" students or their parents. If you are using social media for education-related activities, make sure to have it approved in writing by your supervisor and create a different account; do not use your personal account.

10. Be careful with abbreviations. Twitter only allows 280 characters per tweet; many times, you must shorten or abbreviate your message. Make sure you re-read your post carefully before you submit it.

11. Do not share where you are with any social media sites. You never know who is accessing your information, or why. Be safe and only post your location after the fact.

12. Always exercise good judgment when posting anywhere online. Don't let emotion overwhelm common sense. Be careful when using capital letters as this is considered "shouting" online.

13. Be judicious in posting photos online, especially if they are not something you would want to be shown at a school board meeting. User policies can vary – you may be allowing the company the right to use them any way they would like. Never post photos of yourself holding alcoholic beverages or wearing inappropriate attire.

14. Monitor photos in which you are "tagged." When someone uploads a picture of you and tags it with your name it can be viewed unless you have properly set your privacy settings. In addition, be careful of photos in which others are behaving in a risqué manner as you will be viewed as guilty by association.

The bottom line: Be safe online and think twice before posting... your career is worth the caution!