

NATA Social Media Best Practices

Social media platforms (i.e. LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, etc.) have the potential to increase your public profile. Through them you can create grassroots campaigns, engage with your target audience and industry influencers and build expert and brand awareness. If you create and share worthwhile content, you can also position your social site as a resource for influencers, AT enthusiasts and ultimately increase your followers/fans. ²

**If you have additional questions about setting up or monitoring your social media accounts, contact Todd Christman (toddc@nata.org), who oversees NATA's social media efforts.*

Setting up your social accounts

If you want to set up a social media account that is affiliated with NATA or a specific district, please contact Todd Christman (toddc@nata.org) so he can set it up for you.

Image size guide

Facebook

Profile picture: 180×180 pixels

Cover photo: 851×315 pixels

Twitter

Profile photo: 400×400 pixels

Header image: 1,500×500 pixels

Image details for other social media channels can be found here:

<http://www.dailydesignbreak.com/infographics/cheat-sheet-the-designers-guide-to-social-media-sizing/>

Content Management Tips

Management systems such as Hootsuite (<https://hootsuite.com>) and Tweetdeck (<https://web.tweetdeck.com/>) make it much easier to view not only your own content but content posted by others that involves or is about you. Features of these systems include scheduling posts, setting up a dashboard where you can easily see other timelines you create to view searches, mentions, favorites and hashtag tracking.

Measurement & Analytics

There are a variety of ways to delve into the statistics of your social accounts. Twitter and Facebook offer their own analytics services (<https://analytics.twitter.com> and <https://www.facebook.com/insights>). You can also employ outside services, some of which are free (or offer free options), or explore other options that are offered at a variety of price points. A free and easy place to start is <http://twittercounter.com/>, which tracks your number of followers over time.

Social Media Best Practices

1. Determine the strategic areas of focus for your state/district/target group.

This discussion and/or work should happen prior to engaging socially. Your social media plan should support overall strategic goals.

2. Establish a social media community team.

Your community team is comprised of people who are most actively listening and engaging on behalf of the brand/group and through the group page. These are the individuals that will develop content, listen and engage in conversation on behalf of your group. This does not mean that other members of the group/organization are not actively involved in the conversations. Ideally, your entire group/organization is social. However, your community team will be the facilitators, deliberately listening and engaging on behalf of your group/organization.

3. Identify roles, responsibilities and expectations.

Content Creator and Distributor: Develops the editorial content calendar, schedules delivery and posts on social site(s).

Listener: Social listening is simply monitoring social scenes for relevant topics/brand mentions. Being an active listener means that you can alert appropriate parties when necessary to any issues as they occur.

Engager: Appropriately engaging with and responding to social fans/followers.

4. Establish your voice/tone for your social communication.

NATA has adopted a professional but conversational approach to social media engagement. You also want to be transparent. Openness goes a long way in social media. It's a big part of building trust with your social community.

Also, if your goal is to be a resource, consider that when engaging with followers/fans. In addition to content, what can you provide that will enhance their experience with you socially (i.e. resource sharing, video from a district leader, etc.).

5. Determine and educate yourself on what to respond to and what not to respond to.

As a part of the listening process, you must determine the types of comments/posts you will and will not respond to.

When posting content on behalf of the AT profession and/or NATA, different rules apply. If the conversation is peer-to-peer and there is no ask of you (your page), should you jump in? The general rule of thumb is – no. Let the conversation grow organically. If, however, there is a question about NATA, formal positions/statements, resources or the like that warrants your engagement, feel free to respond. However, please keep your response objective and short. If you are not sure how to respond to a post or would like someone to review your response, prior to posting, contact the national communications team.

The following are a few good opportunities for engagement:

- Mentions of NATA, your district or your committee's participation in industry events or presentations
- Compliments

- Customer service/support issues or inquiries
As a rule-of-thumb respond to the good, bad but not the ugly. Though it may be tempting to respond to positive feedback and delete the negative, don't. If you receive negative feedback, consider it constructive criticism and an opportunity to improve. If someone is complaining, they're more than likely looking for a resolution. Very rarely do people merely want to complain. Therefore, respond as quickly as possible and avoid the urge to purge.²
- Questions/inquiries about processes, policies, recommendations, etc. that provide you with an opportunity to educate or direct the fan/follower to support resources
- Membership inquiries
- Membership benefit inquiries

When is responding not advised?

Consider the saying "don't feed the trolls?" Knowing when to take the high road and when not to engage is as important as knowing when you should respond. On occasion there will be people who want to engage in a public debate and perhaps embarrass the brand. If you respond to these types of posts, you will be feeding that need. Most people see through the effort of these people and they don't expect you to feed the trolls – so don't. Instead, please forward this information to the national communications team.

The following are some examples of posts that you may choose to avoid responding to:

- Generic mentions among a sea of other associations or health care professionals, without commentary that's positive or negative
- Sarcastic, snarky or potentially inflammatory comments
- Straight retweets of company content or company news without any additional commentary
- Peer-to-peer conversations that mention your company in passing, in which your involvement could be perceived as intrusive
- Posts that require national office intervention, negative post or misinformation you need to correct (Please forward this posts to the national communications team.)
- Rumors, law suits, negative media attention/press for NATA or any company/organization and/or 3rd party entity (Please forward this information to the national communications team.)

Information that you want to avoid sharing includes:

- Any NATA national news that has not been formally communicated by the national office
- Political announcements/endorsements
- Corporate and/or product mentions
- Public apologies or explanations of action
- Profanity or inappropriate subject matter

The best rule of thumb is if in doubt, don't post.

6. Utilize supplemental tools to add content variety

Using Twitter as an example, Instagram and Vine are two of the most popular services and can be used to easily add short video posts to your normal content.

Social media K.I.S.S (Keep It Significant and Shareable)

The most critical component of social engagement and success is your ability to develop content that initiates and encourages organic conversation and sharing.

Develop an editorial calendar that addresses the various needs of the social fans/followers in your network. Create content that's engaging, contextually relevant and shareable. Think beyond the basics and use polls, promotional content and questions to your advantage.³ As with our natural conversation, which is never one dimensional, your editorial calendar should include a balance of content that is educational, resourceful, entertaining and that encourages engagement and action.

Growing Your Network

While large numbers are impressive, the most effective measure of social success is engagement. Therefore, while you want to grow your network, focus on organic (earned) fans/followers based on providing relevant, significant and shareable content. While there are several paid options to expedite fan/follower growth, NATA recommends organic and earned, which traditionally results in greater engagement.

- Create editorial content that fans will share. The more they share, the larger your network grows.
- Retweet and share influencer content.
- Include relevant handles/usernames in posts. When people see they are mentioned, they are more likely to retweet and favorite, which can help make their followers your audience.
- When posting a link, include at least some descriptive text. A link without any context does not lend itself to clicks.
- Use hashtags. Although most associated with Twitter, Facebook uses them now as well. Hashtags can be used to help spread the word about an event or campaign. They also allow for easier categorization and can be used as effective search terms.

Helpful Resources

Here are a few resources from social/digital communication experts that we frequent as a resource of information. We used the following resources to build this best practices document:

1. <http://mashable.com/2011/04/28/14-best-practices-for-long-term-social-media-success/>
2. <http://www.exacttarget.com/blog/social-media-best-practices-for-brand-engagement/>
3. <http://mashable.com/2011/04/28/14-best-practices-for-long-term-social-media-success/>