



Communications and Social Media

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Social media has revolutionized the way we connect with our friends, family and acquaintances in our network. Through their pictures and online posts, we can tap into their likes and dislikes. Social media has become a way to get the word out, and often, it is the only way young people communicate.

But succeeding in social media isn't as simple as just having a presence for your club on Facebook or Instagram. So, how can you effectively use social media for your club? First of all, it's important to understand that platforms like Facebook and Twitter cannot replace your website, they exist to support it. Secondly, you have to take it seriously, define your strategy, and break it down into executable steps.

- **Define your goal**

Before anything else, you need to define your goal for having a social media presence. What are you trying to accomplish through it? Who will your audience be? What captures their attention? It's important to figure out the purpose of having a social account (example: attracting younger members or promoting club events) so that you can create a plan.

- **Put a team together**

Companies today have social media teams that look after their online presence, so why wouldn't your club? Don't hand off this responsibility to the youngest member of the club or the person who posts the most photos of their dog on Instagram. You need to develop a real team of people with each member have his/her own responsibilities.

For example, one member can be in charge of just taking photos of club meetings and activities, while another can be in charge of coming up with appealing headlines to post online which intrigues readers to click on the link. Other responsibilities can include growing your audience by liking other similar pages on Facebook and following other clubs on Twitter encouraging them to follow you back. Beyond your team, you should encourage EVERY SINGLE member of your club to post to your social media, to like and retweet your club posts and post about Rotary on their own pages. Gone are the days when

everyone is asked to put their phones away during your program. Before your speaker steps to the microphone, you should empower your members to shoot video and photos and post about the great things your speaker is discussing.

Now, that you have a team and a goal, how do you make sure your posts are seen by the most number of people?

- **Hashtags and mentions**

Use hashtags to categorize your post to make it easier to find by people interested in the topic you've written about. Examples of popular hashtags in the Rotary world include #Rotary, #EndPolioNow, #Fundraising, etc. You might want to create your own club hashtag or use the District's #RotaryDistrict5280 and #whyrotary or #wearerotary. Hashtags turn into a link which when clicked on show you all the other posts associated with it. It becomes a way to build excitement and momentum.

- **Listen and share**

One of social media's greatest assets is as a platform for advocacy. There are conversations that allow you to tap into about virtually any topic. In fact, just clicking on a hashtag lets you dive into conversations. Knowing what others are saying and are interested in is a great way to piggy back on the impact these conversations have.

Your club can have a member in charge of simply scouring the internet for interesting and relevant stories to share with your audience that support your end goal. For example, let's say your club is holding a membership drive. A social committee member could look for and share a post from Rotary International about the top reasons why you should consider joining Rotary and link that back to your website. By sharing relevant and interesting data from multiple trustworthy sources, you encourage people to learn more about your initiatives.

- **Pictures & Videos**

When you're scrolling through Facebook or Twitter, how often do you stop to view videos and pictures? People react to engaging content, pictures and videos. Content is truly king, so be sure your photos are crisp and clear (you can access some great Rotary International photos at Rotary Brand Center) and be respectful of your audience by not sharing 100+ photos of your latest fundraiser. Pick out the handful of photos that tell the story, tag your members and write an engaging post to accompany the photos. Your club should regularly be sharing pictures of your members, new member ceremonies, hands-on activities (think Home Makeover, painting a mural, Habitat for Humanity build, etc.) club meetings (including speakers and their presentations) and much more. Link back to your website so people can read the story behind the photos and learn more about how they can be part of it, too.

- **Frequency of posts**

Make it a habit to post regularly. Share your club success stories, what your club is working on next, Rotary-related content and more, and make sure you post frequently. At a minimum, your club should be posting at least once a week so that your social platforms

look current. Because there are so many posts on our newsfeeds, don't be afraid to repost the same posts (worded slightly differently every time) and encourage people to like, share or retweet them to have your message reach a wider audience. Seeing the message several times, as opposed to once, results in a higher probability that your audience will engage with your content.

- **Pin and promote your posts**

Think about setting a small budget aside for social media promotions; it could be as little as \$5. The truth about social platforms is that your updates are bound to get lost in the sea of posts in everyone's newsfeeds, and paid promotions can significantly increase the number of eyes on your posts. Fortunately, advertising on social media is extraordinarily cheap considering the number of people with whom you can connect.

Imagine your club is holding a membership drive, which you tweeted about or added as a post on Facebook. Later that week, you added some other updates about your recent fundraising campaign, a few pictures of your meetings or shared some interesting content from other sources. Needless to say, your message about your membership drive has been buried making it difficult to find now, which means if a potential member can't find this information anymore, they'll simply lose interest. You can extend your reach with a little paid promotional push or pin your post to the top of your page so that it's always the first item people see.

With the sponsored feature, you can create a targeted custom audience who will frequently see your post in their newsfeed until your budget has depleted. The advantage? Prime real estate space on the newsfeed of those that you want to target, such as prospective members.

In conclusion...

Social media is a powerful tool but it's not something that can replace your website. It needs to work in conjunction with your website to drive traffic to your site and show the constant activity of your club. If you're promoting a story on social media, make sure that story is front and center on your website, too. When your social and website team work together, you are bound to see a boost in your public relations efforts.

Give your website visitors the option to share your stories easily on their own social platforms. Make sure you have the social "Share" toolbar on for your stories. Even add your social feed to your website.

Good luck and let's all get out there and spread the word about how amazing Rotary is!