

Social Media

Tips, Tricks and Best Practices



GEORGIA STATEWIDE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK

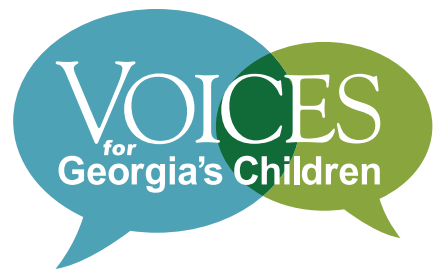


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SECTION ONE

Understanding Social Media & The Big 3



Amplifying Your Content with Social Media

Social media is not optional. It's been proven to increase website visitors, to drive more leads and to generate more interest in your organization. But do you know how to best navigate the social media landscape? Who to target, and which networks are best for your audience?

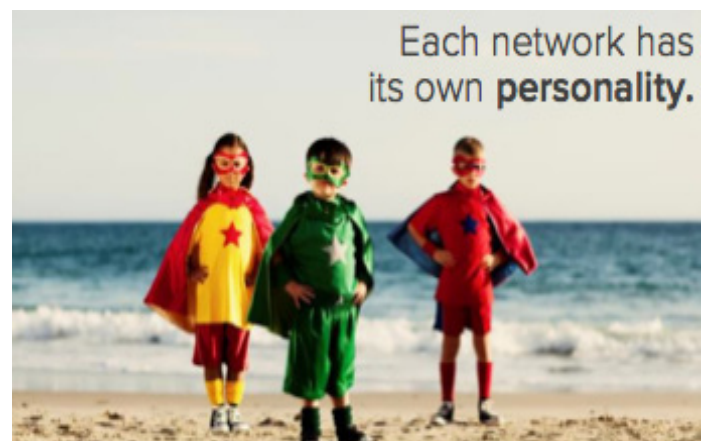
Questions

1. How are you using social media to attract potential supporters and persuade them to join your cause?

2. Research at least five articles from 3rd party sources that you can share

The Big 3

An important part of your social media strategy is understanding the different social media platforms there are, and the best content practices for each.





Twitter: The Buzz Generator

****It only takes 1 week to send a billion tweets****

Checklist: Twitter Best Practices

- Keep tweets short. 120-130 characters. It is much more likely to be retweeted if you keep it short
- Include twitter handles
- Know reply vs. mentions
- Use hashtags judiciously — including more than 2 is probably overkill
- Don't force trending hashtags — 17% of the top 1,000 search terms on twitter churn over on an hourly basis
- Incorporate visual content
- Direct upload photos to twttier — don't auto upload from instagram
- Place links in middle of tweet, and use shortened links
- Include links in profile bio
- Optimize your posting schedule. ****Highest clicks between 1 - 3pm, M-Thurs. Highest retweets from 4 - 5 pm on Fridays**



Facebook: The Humanizer

****1,500 possible stories filtered through news feed per day****

Checklist: Facebook Best Practices

- Remove links from copy — use photos over links
- Highlight horizontal photos
- Post photos to timeline before album — you can move them later
- Links/Titles less than 100 characters
- Keep post copy succinct
- Use hashtags judiciously
- Don't auto post your tweets to your Facebook timeline



LinkedIn: The Professional

****2.6 million company pages. 87% of users trust LinkedIn as a source of information that affects decision making****

Checklist: LinkedIn Best Practices

- Include shortened link in copy
- Rally around one post.
- Share more creative offers. (ie sweepstakes)
- Engage in groups (join groups related to your industry or create your own)
- Use LinkedIn announcements
- Don't recommend posting photos to LinkedIn

SECTION TWO

The Scoop on Instagram, and How to Use It



What is Instagram?

Instagram is a photo sharing application that lets users take photos, apply filters to their images, and share the photos instantly on the Instagram network and other social networks like Facebook and Twitter. The app is targeted toward mobile social sharing, and in just over one year, it has gained almost 15 million users. Currently, it is only available for iPhone devices.

Why It Matters

- There are over 14 million users, growing at a rate of **2 million users per month**.
- Instagram is quickly outgrowing Foursquare, the largest mobile social network.
- 91% of US citizens have their mobile phone within reach 24/7. 25% of people in the US have totally abandoned their laptops for exclusive use of their mobile device.
- Social media is not just for twenty-somethings; it is part of everyone's daily life. In 2004, it was just for college kids. In 2008, the age of the average user jumped to 33. In 2010, it was up even further to age 38.
- People love visual content. We're visual creatures, and photos are engaging pieces of content that transcend the boundaries of language. Also, Photos tell stories. Storytelling is crucial to the social success of your content, and the emotions associated with photos carry a lot of weight.

Are You Saying I Should Use It?

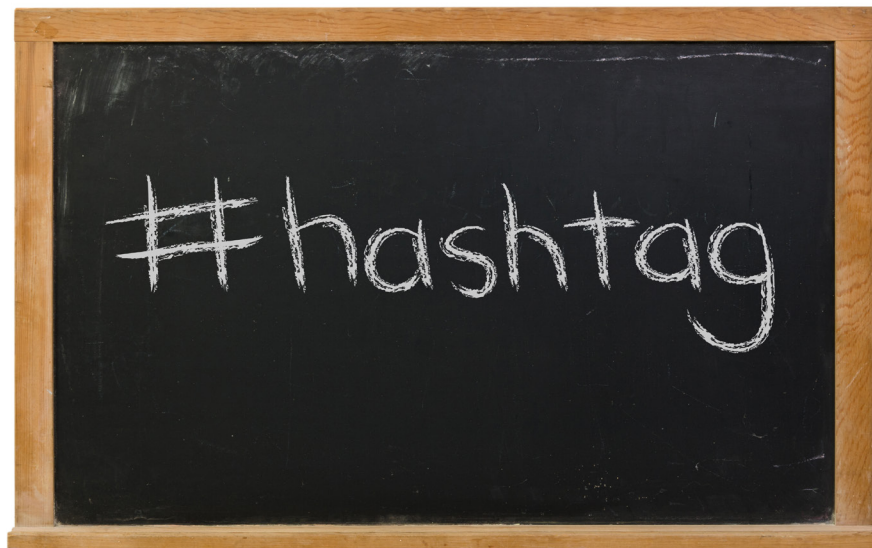
No. What this data means is that Instagram has created something that successfully taps into the mobile and social marketing trend, but that doesn't mean it will inherently help advance everyone's marketing objectives.

If I want to try Instagram, what best practices should I follow?

- Maintain a consistent posting frequency. People should come to expect the same amount of content on a daily or weekly basis if you want to see follower growth.
- Care about quality photography. That's the medium in which Instagram operates, so people on there tend to care about it. Focus on posting interesting images with good production value.
- Tap user-generated content. This helps increase engagement, feed your content machine, and get more followers.
- Integrate your Instagram strategy with other social media networks. You can use hashtags and share images on networks like Twitter and Facebook
- Engage in the conversations that are going on, both on your account and others. You can do this via likes and comments. You won't increase your follower base by staying in your own little corner!
- Research what people in your industry are posting by searching relevant #hashtags. This is also a good way to find new people to follow.
- Speaking of which, start following people in your industry and interacting with them. You've got to let them know you're out there!

SECTION THREE

Hashtags, explained



What is a hashtag?

A hashtag is simply a keyword phrase, spelled out without spaces, with a pound sign (#) in front of it. For example, #inboundchat and #ILoveChocolate are both hashtags.

What does a hastag do?

A hashtag ties the conversations of different users into one stream, which you can find by searching the hastag in the Twitter, Facebook or Instagram search bar or by using a third-party monitoring tool such as HootSuite.

Which means that. . .

If Twitter/Instagram/Facebook users who are not otherwise connected talk about the same topic using a specific hashtag, their content will appear in the same stream. Popular hashtagged words often become trending topics -- topics so many people are talking about that they are a "trend." Hashtags are great for centralizing conversations around live, in-person events or conferences, live webinars, or other marketing campaigns you're running.

How do you create a hashtag?

Contrary to what you might think, you don't need any tools to create a hashtag. Hashtags are simply text, and they can be placed in the beginning, middle, or end of a post. Just decide on the keyword you are targeting, place a pound sign in front of it, and you are all set!

Best Practices for Using Hashtags



- Check If It's New** - After you decide on a keyword or a phrase, search for it. Visit [Search.Twitter.com](https://search.twitter.com) and enter your preferred hashtag in the search box. Did you get any results? Is someone else already using that hashtag for their event or campaign?

If there is a lot of conversation around it already, you might want to revisit your decision and pick something that isn't as frequently used. In that way, you will reduce the chances of people who are not a part of your target audience entering/diluting the conversation you want to take place.

- Pick Industry or Brand Keywords** - Hashtags can also help communicate a message to those not actively searching for them. For example, if someone you're following is tweeting about an event using a hashtag, you will still be able to see their updates in your main Twitter feed without accessing the entire hashtag conversation. And if the hashtag reflects an industry or branded keyword that is interesting to you, you might be inclined to check out the rest of the conversation happening around that hashtag

- Promote the Hashtag by Using Across Multiple Marketing Channels** - A hashtag is only useful if people know about it. So to start generating conversations through your hashtag, start adding it your existing resources and channels.

- If Possible, Keep it Short** - Be sure to keep your hashtag short and easy to remember. Remember that Twitter users are only allotted 140 characters in each tweet, with or without a hashtag. By keeping the hashtag brief, you'll save your audience some room to include more commentary about your content.

SECTION FOUR

Blogging



Blogging: The Fundamentals

Blog posts not only allow you to demonstrate thought leadership, but they allow you to educate your prospects, answer their questions and solve their problems. Blog posts are also incredible at enhancing the search engine optimization of your website. They help you generate more visits and interact with more potential voters.

Checklist: Blogging Best Practices

- Write compelling titles — your title is often more important than your content
- Address one topic per post
- Write relevant, educational content - build thought leadership, be a problem solver
- Blog consistently and frequently
- Optimize for humans and search engines
- Don't forget about great formatting and imagery
- Don't miss out on lead conversion opportunities