GO FOLIC!
SOCIAL MEDIA
BEST PRACTICES

Photo via: http://www.pamorama.net/2011/01/30/65-terrific-social-media-infographics/
Welcome to the wide world of social media!
These days it seems like everyone is online. From tweens to grandmothers, everyone is networking via sites like Twitter and Facebook. It can be a lot to manage for your personal life, not to mention your small organization.

Fortunately there are TONS of resources out there to help small organizations navigate the virtual frontier. This manual was created to help get you on your way. We are specifically hoping that this document will provide useful tips to program planners, program coordinators, and social networking site managers.

We start by providing a brief overview of program planning basics: how to set goals and define a target audience. This is a mini-version of a “how-to” program planning guide with a social media bent. If you’d like more in-depth information about program planning and goal setting, check out the Resources section at the end of the manual.

We then move into more online-specific information: choosing a platform and finding up-to-date statistics on internet usage. This portion of the manual should help you plan your outreach strategy and give you a deeper appreciation of your target audience.

Next you’ll find information about everybody’s favorite thing: monitoring and evaluation. We’ll give you some online-specific recommendations about monitoring your campaign’s progress, tracking your data, and maintaining your campaign evaluation. We’ll then discuss how you can translate that data into action – that is, using actionable measurement to increase your return on investment (ROI).

From there, we’ll talk more about utilizing social media itself: what to talk about online (messaging), how to talk about it (social media etiquette), and how to get people to listen (promotion).

Finally, we’ll introduce some platform-specific recommendations, focusing on Twitter, Facebook, and blogs (specifically, Wordpress.com). We have narrowed the platform overview down to just three in order to keep things manageable.

Unfortunately, that means that this manual could be irrelevant in just a few months (we’re looking at you, Google+...), but hopefully you’ll be able to continually add to your knowledge through the sites listed in the Resources section.

We hope this manual will help you create strong campaigns online and affect change among your audience. Happy socializing!
Program Planning: Setting Goals
In the same way that you define goals and target audiences for your “on the ground” programs, it’s important to clearly define your intentions for your social media campaign. Although it may seem like “everyone” is doing social media right now, it doesn’t make sense to invest time in a Web 2.0 campaign if it doesn’t fit in with the goals of your program.

Start off by asking yourself what your overall goal is for your online social media sites. Facebook “likes” and Twitter “retweets” are great, but those things don’t necessarily make a program successful... right? So, why are you online? Are you networking with other organizations? Are you looking to raise money? Are you providing resources to community members? Are you trying to encourage certain behaviors? Are you publicizing your outreach events?

Here are some examples from the eBook “Is Your Nonprofit’s Facebook Page Worth It?” to get you started.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Type</th>
<th>Social Media Goal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disaster relief organization</td>
<td>Solicit donations to fund relief work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homebuilding organization</td>
<td>Recruit volunteers to work onsite to build homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue education organization</td>
<td>Bring attendees to an issue debate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage information sharing with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public health organization</td>
<td>Share information about health issue(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage health behavior change</td>
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</table>

Your goals for each social media site should be clearly articulated in a statement of intent. Ask your team: if your online social media efforts were working perfectly, what would you expect them to accomplish? You should have a clearly articulated endpoint for all your online social media platforms.

These are often called your **outcome goals**. Outcome objectives are those over which your program has direct control. These objectives are generally short-term and relate to the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior of a given group. They will look very similar to the outcome goals of your “on the ground” program.

**Here are some examples:**

- “We know our Facebook efforts are worth further investment if the percentage of our female Facebook ‘fans’ who are daily vitamin takers increases from 5% to 25% in the next 6 months.”
- “We know our Wordpress blog is successful if the percentage of women ages 24-30 picking up free vitamins from our office who have heard about this service through our blog increases from 10% to 35% in the next year.”
- “We know our Twitter campaign has been successful if the number of online donors who have accessed our donation page from our Twitter link increases from 25 to 50 people by September 2013.”
In the examples above, you’ll notice how important it is to not only set a goal, but to be specific and assign a numeric measure of “success.” In fact, you could say these goals are SMART:

**S:** specific (what are you hoping to achieve and who are you reaching?)

**M:** measurable (how you are going to be able to tell what you’ve achieved?)

**A:** achievable (is this even possible??)

**R:** relevant (is this goal related to your program’s purpose?)

**T:** time-bound (what is the time frame?)

You’ll also notice that the goals don’t just tell you how much you’ve achieved (in terms of percentage or numbers), but also **where you started.** It’s important to note the baseline support for your social media campaign before you begin your program. If your social media campaign starts out with 5 clients per week hearing about your program through Twitter, it will be a **much** bigger deal to have 30 Twitter referrals per week in three months than if you started out with 25 Twitter referrals per week.

### How to format an output objective:

- To [deliver]
- a [specific and quantified product or service]
- by [health workers or system]
- to [population of interest]
- by [time frame]

While your outcome goals are important, you’ll also need to set smaller goals to help you figure out how to achieve them. These short-term objectives that will help you meet your outcome goals are called **process goals.** Process objectives are directly related to the activities that your program or participants are expected to complete. **This** is where your “likes” and “retweets” can come in.

To outline your process goals, ask yourself: **what steps need to happen for our online social media program to meet our outcome goals?**

**You process goals might look something like this:**

- “By November 2013, our Facebook page will have at least 200 new young adult fans (ages 13-24) from the San Francisco Bay area.”
- “In the next 6 months, our blog posts will be promoted by at least 30 new Bay area partner agencies via Twitter, Facebook, and NetworkedBlogs.”
- “In the next year, we will promote our social media resources with information cards at ten San Francisco community clinics.”

Again, these process objectives are not only **SMART,** but they should also be realistic given your program’s funding, time frame, target population, and outcome goals.

Another helpful way to think about your social media planning process is in terms of a “funnel.” At the top of the funnel are all those people who have profiles on a given social media site (say, Facebook). All these people have the potential to help you reach your goal. However, as you move further and further down the funnel, fewer and fewer people will participate in the steps that ultimately lead to your goal. Your outcome goal (#s of vitamin takers, donors, event attendees, etc.) is the little triangle at the bottom because the smallest number of all social media participants will ever engage in that activity.
Think about the parts of the funnel as steps towards meeting your goal. How do you move those millions of Facebook users to interact with your site? How many web visitors will lead to success for your program? The answers to these questions will help you define your process and outcome measures.

Once you have your **process** and **outcome** goals established, you can think more clearly through the nitty gritty elements you need to have in place in order to achieve them. Let’s say your outcome goal is to increase uptake of multivitamin supplements among women of reproductive age in San Francisco through your web-based outreach. Your process outcomes involve increasing web traffic and building community partners.

What **inputs and activities** do you need to make these goals happen? Do you have staff members to run your websites? How much time per week will they be expected to devote to website maintenance? Do you already have your websites up and running? How will you be tracking your progress towards your goals? Are evaluation systems in place?

It should be increasingly easy to create a plan once you have your goals outlined. Now you can start checking off your To-Do List!

So what is the goal of your social media work? Make sure to outline your goals in writing and ensure that all your team members are on the same page.
Program Planning: Getting to Know Your Target Audience

Once you have defined your goals for your social media campaign, you need to think carefully about your general target audience. For example, let’s say you’re using Facebook to promote preconception health. WHO is going to be receiving this message? Teenagers? Uninsured parents? Women in their 20s? Grandmothers? GLBTQ couples? Male partners?

The answer to this question will be directly related to the program you are promoting via social media. If you are working on a teen pregnancy prevention project, then your general audience is probably “teens,” although you’re probably going to have to be a bit more specific later.

If you don’t have a clear sense of who your target audience is – or even if you do – you should be asking yourself some questions so that your social media campaign is effective.

Ask yourself:

• What motivates members of this group?
• How ready is your target audience to help you meet your campaign goal – that is, how much push from you will they need to make a donation, change their behavior, or join your coalition?
• What kind of barriers might prevent this group from reaching your goal?
• How will participating in your campaign benefit your audience?
• Who else or what other groups are currently competing for their attention?
• Is this a goal that group members will experience once (making a donation) or does it need to be maintained over time (taking a vitamin)?

You can answer these important questions in a number of ways. You may already have a good sense of your audience from the planning of your “on the ground” program. You can also draw from existing data gathered by other organizations (such as the Department of Health, CDC, journals, or other research organizations). You can research other campaigns that have successfully achieved similar goals.

You can also go straight to the source! Ask the community you serve to inform your program and online content. Conduct your own research using surveys, focus groups, or individual interviews. This formal process can be extremely effective, but it is also more time- and resource-intensive. It is also beyond the scope of this manual. You can find more information about conducting social marketing research on the CDCynergy Social Marketing Edition manual or the California Youth Social Marketing Toolkit.

It is, however, extremely important for you to have a thorough understanding of your audience before you begin your social media work. Everything about your target audience will inform the work you do on your social media platforms – from your messaging to your networking, and even which social media platforms you choose!

It can also be helpful to break your audience into segments with similar characteristics so that your campaign can have the greatest effect. Groups of people can be segmented in a couple of ways:

1. By community: grouping people according to where they live (neighborhoods, ZIP codes, cities, states, geography, etc.)
2. By lifestyle: grouping people according to certain deeply held beliefs, interests, attitudes, and/or values (religion, hobbies, political affiliation, etc.)
3. **By demographics**: grouping people according to sociodemographics (income, race, ethnicity, gender, etc.)¹

This exercise is not intended to build stereotypes or operate on assumptions. The goal here is to group people in meaningful ways so that your campaign message is effective! You must rely on your understanding of the community and/or your relationships with partner organizations in order to make sure that your groupings reflect the reality on the ground. The research you have done to develop your program will help you create meaningful target audience segments.

For example, if your program intended to prevent pregnancy among teens, you should ask yourself: which teens in particular are you targeting? Low-income teens? Young teens (12-15) or older teens (16-19)? Teens of color? These groups can be incredibly different – with different concerns, motivations, and influences – and your campaign may need different types of messaging and resources in order to engage them.

Again, your program and the amount of resources at your disposal will determine your definitions here. But it’s important to be specific so that you can build a strong social media campaign.

¹ (Alcalay, June 2000)
## Spectrum of Online Friendship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passive Interest</th>
<th>Active Interest</th>
<th>Sharing</th>
<th>Public Dialogue</th>
<th>Private Dialogue</th>
<th>Advocacy</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I follow your work, visit your site, read your blog, follow you on Twitter, etc.</td>
<td>I've voiced my interest in your work by leaving comments, posting Twitter replies, posting Facebook wall comments, etc.</td>
<td>I publish links to your work on my own websites and profiles</td>
<td>We exchange public messages through referrals on our websites and profiles</td>
<td>We exchange private messages through email, IM, direct messages, etc.</td>
<td>I explicitly encourage my friends to follow your work</td>
<td>Your wins are my wins because I share your arguments, and I care about the success of your ideas</td>
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</table>
Before you start your online outreach, you should think about **how** your target audience relates to your organization. This is to say, is your audience part of the **community**, **network**, or **crowd**? 

Your **community** is the group with the established relationship to your organization. The community can include community allies, partner organizations working with you to achieve goals, donors, and clients. They are engaged with the work you do.

The **network** is generally the friends of your community. They are probably somewhat interested in your work, but haven’t had much direct interaction. They will most likely be ripe for conversion from inactive to active user. This group is ready to make the behavior change, accesses services, or would feel good about making a donation.

The **crowd** is not connected to your organization at all—they are the millions of Facebook and Twitter users who have never accessed your web page.

These boundaries can be blurry—for instance, some people may have formerly been fairly engaged as members of the community, but have recently moved into the broader network.

Where your target audience is located within these circles can help you think about the amount of work it’s going to take to get them engaged. Here are some examples of different engagement strategies for the community versus the cloud:

**Designing for the Community:**
- Customizable – let the community own your message and cause by personalizing their involvement or output
- Consistent/clear/compelling goal – your supporters have joined you because they care about your cause (some times, even if it doesn’t seem like anyone could care any more about it than your organization, they do!) so provide clear and inspiring goals to meet together
- Aggregate and promote – be sure you are pulling together all of the contributions from the community and promoting people in real-time

**Designing for the Crowd:**
- Shareable – messages, content, and actions that are shareable and don’t necessarily include a link can be picked up and pushed around the network and cloud easily
- Consistent messaging – to ensure that this layer of people who do not know you are able to understand what you do and who you are, your messages need to be consistent
- Compelling story – research continues to show that one of the most important triggers to donations and actions are compelling stories

So where does your target audience fit within these circles?

2 http://amysampleward.org/2011/05/18/crowdsourcing-vs-community-sourcing-whats-the-difference-the-opportunity/
Choosing a Platform³,⁴

There are a lot of social networking sites out there – and they’re changing all the time! So how do you know which social sites you should use to promote your program? Should you try to maintain a presence on everything from Twitter to Google+? Or should you stick to just one or two? Once again, your program’s goals and target audience will help you answer these questions.

Let’s say you’ve decided to reach out to young high school students with your teen pregnancy prevention campaign. A recent report by the Pew Research Center⁵ concludes that 71% of teenage (13-17) social media users have a Facebook profile. By contrast, only 8% of internet users ages 12-17 have a Twitter profile (although 13% of young women ages 14-17 do). So, in this case, it might be smart for your campaign to create a Facebook page in order to reach its goal of providing resources to young teens.

At the same time, a recent study from the Pew Research Center’s Internet and American Life Project⁶ indicates that 35% of Americans own smartphones, 87% of whom use these phones to access the internet. If your campaign is planning to reach out to a population with high smartphone usage rates (e.g., 44% of African Americans⁷), you could tailor your social media outreach to mobile-friendly platforms.

Although it’s tempting to get your brand out on every social media site available, it’s more important to be smart about which networking sites you use. Think about your goals and how they might relate to the ways in which your target audience is using social media. The ways in which people use social media (and why!) can vary widely according to different population segments (such as age, gender, and income).

Again, let your campaign goals inform your choices here.
Think carefully about:

1. **Who** you are reaching
2. **How** this target group is using social media
3. **Why** this group goes online
4. **Which** ways this group is connecting (platforms and methods)
5. **What** online tools will help you reach out to this group

Marketing research groups can be great resources in helping you understand the influence of social networking sites, including the differences between platforms. These groups often issue free reports or articles with data on click-through rates, perceptions about the “trustworthiness” of information, and the way in which information is shared within networks.

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For example, in a recent study by ROI Research\(^8\), 53% of survey respondents reported that they would be at least somewhat likely to purchase a product if a friend recommended it via Facebook. Among the same respondents, 61% said they would be at least somewhat likely to talk about a brand via Twitter if they started “following” a company’s tweets. It can be helpful to explore this available research when choosing your social media platform(s).

One important thing to note is that the research for the Pew report was conduct in 2009. The audiences for social media change so rapidly, that it’s easy to feel like you’ve been left in the dust. Fortunately, there are a number of great resources on the web to help keep you on top of current statistics for social media use.

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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BizReport</td>
<td>For-profit research organization for online social marketers</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bizreport.com">http://www.bizreport.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eMarketer</td>
<td>Research and analysis on digital marketing and media</td>
<td><a href="http://www.emarketer.com/">http://www.emarketer.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Medical Internet Research (JMIR)</td>
<td>Open access research studies about internet usage for medicine and public health</td>
<td><a href="http://www.jmir.org/">http://www.jmir.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement Standard</td>
<td>For-profit research organization’s blog about social media and measurement</td>
<td><a href="http://kdpaine.blogs.com/themeasurementstandard/">http://kdpaine.blogs.com/themeasurementstandard/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Post</td>
<td>Analysis of recent research regarding social media and marketing; articles on online trends</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mediapost.com/publications/">http://www.mediapost.com/publications/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit Technology Network (NTEN)</td>
<td>Research and resources on social media use for nonprofits</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nten.org/learn/bytopic">http://www.nten.org/learn/bytopic</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pew Research Center’s Internet and American Life Project</td>
<td><strong>User-friendly</strong> research on social media trends, internet use, etc.</td>
<td><a href="http://pewinternet.org/">http://pewinternet.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>ROI Research</td>
<td>For-profit research firm that explores social media and marketing</td>
<td><a href="http://www.roiresearch.com/news/news.asp">http://www.roiresearch.com/news/news.asp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ypulse</td>
<td>News, research, and strategy on youth internet usage</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ypulse.com/">http://www.ypulse.com/</a></td>
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Another good way to decide which platform to use is to look to other campaigns for examples. MTV’s Teen Mom series effectively uses Twitter\(^9\) to create conversations with young viewers, promote sexual health resources, and to foster “interactive” television viewing. The Teen Mom Facebook page\(^10\), on the other hand, is updated less frequently and is used primarily to promote upcoming episodes among its “Fans.” Facebook Fans can comment on updates, but this conversation is generally unmediated by Page Administrators.

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\(^9\) [http://twitter.com/#!/MTV/teen-mom](http://twitter.com/#!/MTV/teen-mom)

\(^10\) [https://www.facebook.com/teenmom](https://www.facebook.com/teenmom)
MTV’s Teen Mom thus uses different social media platforms to reach out to its teen audience in different ways. Twitter seems to be an important tool for MTV to promote health resources and to actively engage young teenagers in conversations about sexual health (and the channel’s programming). Facebook serves more as low-cost advertising.

Other organizations use the same social media platforms in completely different ways. For example, the US Fund for UNICEF raises money for disaster relief programs online. Following the Haiti earthquake, they experienced the greatest success in directing potential donors to the UNICEF website through the UNICEF Facebook fan page. In the relatively short time frame following the disaster, Facebook became an important way to reach out to young people looking for ways to help out in the crisis. Potential donors were more likely to be Facebook users and/or search for the ‘like’ link to the UNICEF Facebook page when looking for ways to donate.

Look to successful partners and allies who are serving similar target audiences for similar purposes. And don’t be shy about copying their methods!

11 Via: Is Your Nonprofit’s Facebook Page Worth It?
Measurement

Now that you’ve defined your goals and target audience, it’s important to set up your system of measurement. This is a critical step **even before you create your online presence**. You’ve taken the time to establish goals – it’s important to know when and if you’ve met them!

**Why measure?** It’s important to measure your program’s progress for a few key reasons:

1. Track your progress: ensure you’re reaching the goals you set for yourself
2. Inform your strategies: ensure you’re using the right methods to achieve your outcome goals
3. Contribute to the field: share your successes and failures with other organizations doing similar work

In the chapter on goal setting, we talked about how important it is to **be specific** about what you want to achieve with your online social marketing. These specific goals will help you decide what type of evaluation you will do, as well as what kind of data you need from your social media sites (and your “on the ground” programs) in order to track your progress. That might sound obvious, but in a world of trillions of bytes of data, it can be an important thing to remember!

There are lots of different types of evaluations you can do for your online social media campaign. You may already have evaluative systems in place for your “on the ground” programs. You social media evaluation isn’t really any different, although there are some specific online tools that can help you out.

**Types of evaluation:**

1. Formative evaluation: evaluates baseline knowledge, attitudes, behavior, and beliefs of your community of interest. **Asks:** what is the target audience like before your intervention?
2. Process evaluation: evaluates the intervention **itself** in terms of inputs, activities, and some output goals. **Asks:** how is your social media campaign being delivered?
3. Impact evaluation: evaluates if your social media program is having an effect and can establish causality. **Asks:** is your program working?
4. Other service-based research:
   a. Cost/benefit analysis: evaluates the costs of your intervention as compared to the overall effect among your target audience. **Asks:** is your program worth it?
   b. Prevention analysis: evaluates what did not happen as a result of your social media campaign. **Asks:** what bad things did your program prevent?

**Evaluation methods**

Once you have established the type(s) of evaluation you will need for your social media campaign, you can start to think about designing and implementing your evaluation.

These steps are beyond the scope of this manual, but fortunately there are some great resources online to help you create an effective evaluation plan.

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14 Crosby, Richard et. al “Research Methods in Health Promotion.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centers for Disease Control</td>
<td>CDCynergy: program planning resources and how-to guide</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/CDCynergy/">http://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/CDCynergy/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCSF</td>
<td>National Training Collaborative for Social Marketing</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ntcsm.org/">http://www.ntcsm.org/</a></td>
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</table>

**What to measure?**

1. **All** your objectives and goals!
2. Other, earlier steps as needed for:
   a. Routine management of your social media campaign
   b. Adjusting known areas of potential problems for your program
   c. Clarifying/testing uncertain steps in your social media plan (such as messaging, platform selection, etc.)

**You should gather more data for your organization’s self-management than is required by your funding/grant agencies**

**Indicators of success:** What specific indicators will you use in order to know if your social media campaign has been successful? You will find this information in the goals you set for yourself! This might sound obvious, but it’s very important to have these measures and indicators clearly outlined so you will know what your program is working to achieve and what your progress has been.

**Some example indicators:**

1. % of clients at a clinic who heard about clinic services online
2. # of community based organizations that share a link to your website on their site
3. % of online donors who access your donation page via Twitter
4. # of clicks on bit.ly link
5. % of Facebook fans who are members of your target audience

Let’s say your teen pregnancy prevention program has decided to use Twitter as a platform to promote online discussions among young teens. What aspects of those discussions are important to you? Have you set goals around number of participants? Numbers of retweets? Number of organizational partners promoting your live Twitter discussions? If these things are important to your goals and your program, it’s important that you track these data as you go along.

Your web statistics sites also provide a wealth of information. There’s information on some statistics sites for everything from number of clicks to type of operating system! You might not want to track all of these data, but some might be helpful.

What is important to your social media program? Number of hits? Referral websites? Search terms? URL clicks? You should outline which data are important and regularly track and record them.
You can also track **qualitative data** from your social media campaign work. What kinds of comments are you getting on your website posts? What kinds of posts are you creating – information, stories, conversations? How do these posts correlate with your website hits?

It’s also be helpful to track what times and days you’re posting online. Do you get a bigger response on Tuesdays? How about mornings versus afternoons? Track the time of your posts and see how they correlate with hits, retweets, or comments on your sites.

**Sources of data:** You can find data for all of these indicators in a number of key places:

1. **Observed data:** via medical records, clinic databases, other existing organizational systems (for the on-the-ground tracking that relates to your social media work)
2. **Self-reported data:** via client surveys, online polls (Survey Monkey, Facebook polls)
3. **Online-specific sources:**
   a. Facebook insights
   b. Google analytics
   c. HootSuite or Seesmic (for Twitter)
   d. Bit.ly or ow.ly: to track clicks on links
   e. Other, fee-for-service sites:
      i. Clicky (http://www.getclicky.com)
      ii. Involver (http://www.involver.com)
      iii. Klout (http://www.klout.com)
      iv. Quitter (http://useqwitter.com)
      v. Radian6 (http://www.radian6.com)

You can also use social media sites **themselves** to generate informal qualitative data. Start a Twitter chat, ask a question on Facebook, end your blog posts with discussion topics. This is a best practice in itself, but can also give you some important feedback about your progress towards your goals and the ways in which you might want to **adjust** your goals and strategy.

**Tracking your data – Your IRL programming**

You probably already have systems in place to track the progress of your programs on the ground. As you set your goals for your social media campaign, think carefully if you need to update or track any additional data from your “in real life” programs.

For example, let’s say your social media campaign’s goal is to increase visits among young teenagers to community health clinics. You may already be tracking referral sources for your clinic clients. But it would be important for you to update your tracking systems to include “social media” or “websites” as a referral source for client surveys. Set aside time and resources to update all relevant employees as to the changes you’re making.

Also, if you are promoting your online resources through direct, in-person outreach, it could be helpful to document things like: # of people talked to (and their demographics), type of event, contact information, etc. Make sure to have these updated systems in place before your social media campaign gets off the ground so that you’re prepared to compare your social media stats with those from your on the ground programs.

**Tracking your data – Online Social Media**

The way in which you regularly track your data will depend on your organization’s capacity and current systems. Whatever your current policy, it’s very important to make sure that your data are gathered regularly from the internet. It may seem like a tedious task, but it will pay off big when you’re trying to assess your program’s progress.
It’s great to monitor your progress via the tools listed under the “Sources of Data” section, but it’s even better to centralize your data offline. This way you can track your data over longer periods, create your own meaningful graphs, and synthesize data from multiple platforms. One helpful way of centralizing your data is through Excel spreadsheets.15 Create a set of Excel spreadsheets with grids for the data you consider important for each site.

Of course, something like Google Analytics is ideal for tracking all your sites at once. However, if this isn’t possible (because of compatibility with your chosen platforms, like Wordpress.com or Facebook), you can also do things manually.

Some sites make it easier than others. For example, it’s relatively simple to export your insights data to an Excel file through a social networking site like Facebook. Simply hit the “Export” button under your Insights tab and save the .xls or .csv file to your computer. Open in Excel and sync with existing data files.

For other sites, this process is not so easy – or even possible at all. For example, blogs hosted on Wordpress.com cannot directly export statistics via .xls or .csv. You can, however, request and obtain .csv stats manually if you have your API key and know the correct data request scripts. Once the data are requested, they will display in your web browser window and can be copied/pasted into your spreadsheet.

You can find more information about this process here: http://phoxis.org/2011/04/24/wordpress-com-stats-api/

The same is currently true for statistics on certain web domains, such as http://www.gofolic.org/log/report/. Web statistics can be viewed on the web page provided, but they cannot be downloaded via .xls or .csv.

For sites such as these, your best bet is to request your reports at regular intervals and record your data in your prepared Excel spreadsheets. It won’t be fun, but you’ll be glad to have this data safely secured in one file on your computer.

**Frequency of data collection**
The frequency of your data collection will depend on your goals, as well as your organization’s capacity. Monthly data collection and recording is probably the most feasible for smaller organizations, but if you have the staff (or intern!) time, weekly data collection could also be extremely helpful.
You are going through all this effort to gather data from your social media sites for a number of reasons, but one key piece is to make sure your online campaign is relevant and effective. That’s why it’s so important to make sure your data are actionable.

Actionable data means:
1. Measurement should inform specific decisions and/or actions
2. Measure what’s more important to your goals
3. Your data should help you learn

As we mentioned in the previous section, it’s important to focus your data gathering efforts on those areas that will help you understand your progress towards your objective, but also to help you adjust your day-to-day social media outreach. You will know which particular data are important for you to gather by checking in with your outcome and process goals, as well as inputs.

Here are some examples of data you might need to gather:

But you can also supplement this information with some qualitative data on your spreadsheets:

**Type of post:** these can be as detailed as you would like:
- Question
- Link
- Comment
- Retweet
- Etc.

**Post Content (or tags):** to describe what your post was about:
- Event promotion
- Contest
- Breaking news
- Health tips
- Partner resources
- Etc.

**Post timing information:** specific details about when you posted:
- Day of the week
- Time
- Other important events that could have raised or lowered interest in your posting (e.g., holidays, local promotion, etc.)

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16 Via: “Guide to Actionable Measurement”
Site promotion: the ways in which you have promoted your websites over time:
- Direct (in person) outreach
- Advertisements (both online and offline)
- Suggesting sites to friends
- Status updates
- Tagging photos
- Tagging individuals
- Requests of other websites
- Cross-promotion
- Contests
- #FFs, RTs, etc.

If you’re using your social media work to affect change in your “on the ground” programs, how are you tracking and measuring that? Do you need to create new systems or just integrate your old systems with new social media tracking sheets?

Here are some examples of data you should be carefully tracking in your IRL programming to correlate with your online outreach:
- # of clients with online referrals
- % of vitamin takers educated online
- # of partnerships initiated online

Spreadsheet Aerobics
Your tracking systems can take many forms. Maybe you’ll record all the data you need by downloading .xls reports from Google Analytics or Facebook Insights. Maybe you’ll pick the important data you need from your website’s statistic programs.

Here’s one example of this from NTEN’s Amy Sample Ward:

You can also thoroughly document the posting you do on each social networking site.

Here is an example of this tracking system from Beth Kantor (of Beth’s Blog fame). Beth has a specific Facebook spreadsheet in which she tracks each post she makes on the site. Notice how Beth includes a description of each post, a qualitative “post quality” scale, ways in which the post was promoted, page views, and new fans, among other metrics.

18 http://amysampleward.org/2011/06/06/social-media-in-30-minutes-a-day/
Again, this level of tracking may be beyond your organization’s capacity (or may not be what you’re looking to track at all). But this level of data collection can be helpful to those organizations trying to fine-tune their online outreach.

**Next Steps**

Now you have a wealth of information – it’s time to analyze it! Use the power of Excel or other data analysis programs to see how your social networking sites are working for you.

Ask yourself:

- What types of posts appeal to your target audience?
- What time(s) garner the most responses?
- How often are you posting? Should you post most or less frequently?
- How is your target audience finding your site?
- How are people using your websites? Do different people respond to the same posts on different social media platforms?
- (If applicable) How is your online outreach affecting your on the ground programming? Are your in-person clients/audience/community interacting with your online presence? How?
- If you notice any dips or increases in your web traffic, what do you think could explain this? Look at referral websites, search engine key words, etc. for clues.

You’ll find a lot of different answers to these questions from self-purported experts on social media. That’s why it’s so important to gather your own data! You can figure out the answers to these questions that are most meaningful to you and your target audience.

**Return on investment (ROI)**

Once you get a sense of patterns or trends in your audience’s social media interactions, you’ll be able to adjust your online campaign accordingly. Say you’re getting lots of web traffic on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, but not so much on Fridays. In the future, you’ll know that you’ll get
the greatest returns on your efforts when you post updates or information on the days with the highest traffic.

So you have to play around online! Do some controlled experiments: try different post topics, ask new questions of your followers, post at different times, draw new collaborators in, etc. Use your analytic data to tell you how your experiments are working. If your experiments suggest your campaign is losing support, try something else!

Simple, right? But that doesn’t mean you can sit back and relax once you think you have a handle on things. Trends change, audience members change, and your impact can change. Be consistent with your data collection efforts and look for differences in your social media impact. If something comes up, think carefully about why those changes occurred – and adjust again!

Measurement is an iterative process. It involves gathering insights through data collection, crafting an informed strategy, and then planning based upon that information.

Here is a visual representation of the process:

In short, you should:
  o Listen to what your audience is saying (through good data collection practices)
  o Learn what works (via analytics, response, etc.)
  o Adapt what you’re doing to what is effective – the quicker the better in the fast-moving world of social media!

Reflection
Here are some questions to help guide you in your reflection about your online campaigns:

• What worked really well in this project?
• Did it accomplish goals or outcomes? In what ways?
• Did it fall short? Why?
• What would you do differently?
• What surprises came up during the project? What unexpected happened? What could you learn or capture from that?
• What insights did you get during the project?
• What processes did you use that worked well? Which didn’t work so well? Why do you think that was?
• How did people work together? Were there conflicts? How were they handled? Did people get any new insights or perspectives as a result?

• Were there people or perspectives missing from this project that you would include next time?
• What skills and processes did you help people learn as part of this project? What skills and processes would you spend time on if you did this over again?
• What were the most innovative aspects of the project? How did they work?
• What did you do in this project that you could transfer to other projects?
• What is the most troubling aspect of the project? What might you do to deal with it differently?
• What skills came in most handy during this project? What skills did this project make you realize you need to acquire?
• What really puzzles you about this project? What are unanswered questions you have about what happened?
• What intrigues you about this project?
• What would you like to learn more about that would help this (or other projects) in the future?
• Where did we mess up? Make mistakes? Fall on our face? What can we learn from this?
**Tips on posting**

So now that you’ve got your plan, your platforms, your tracking, and your strategies... what on earth do you post?

You’ve done your background research, but you still are going to have to keep some questions are considerations in mind:

Hopefully your research and planning has given you a solid understanding of your target community so that you can begin to answer these questions. You won’t have some of the answers immediately - they may come around eventually from trial and error.

Here are some tips to help get your started:

1. **Post for your audience**: you went through all this trouble to know and understand your audience, so you should have some idea of what they would like to see online. Use this background knowledge to start conversations, share news, post pictures, promote events... whatever your research has told you that your audience might enjoy!

2. **...but also post what you know**: if you’re not comfortable speaking about a particular topic or to your target audience, share posting responsibility with someone who is. Your planning process should have included many voices from your organization, partners, and community members. Give them the opportunity to put the collective plan into practice by posting on your social media sites.

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24 *Photo credit: Ibid.*
3. **Learn what’s successful:** your tracking systems – as well as your gut feelings – will tell you what your social media followers are responding to online. If a certain post doesn’t receive must feedback, think about why that might be. Wrong time? Wrong topic? Learn from your mistakes and adjust accordingly!

4. **...but give yourself enough time to find patterns:** we know you’re impatient to figure out what’s working on your site, but you might need to wait a bit until patterns start to emerge – especially if you’re just getting started online. How is your site looking after a few weeks? A few months? Step back and think about what’s working for you.

5. **Be quick to respond:** if you’re encouraging conversation on your social media sites, be quick to respond to comments and questions! Fans and followers will feel more appreciated if you take the time to thoughtfully answer their questions. This doesn’t mean that you need to be constantly hovering over your computer, waiting for comments. But you should generally have a response within 24 hours of a post.

6. **...but don’t over-solicit:** most people are using social media to connect with friends and/or family and to have fun. The last thing they want is to feel harassed by an organization on their Facebook page, Twitter feed, or email list. You want to strike a balance between being helpful and harassing – your followers will definitely let you know where you fall!

7. **Track your posts:** via a free service such as bitly or owly so that you know who is clicking on your links and how they found them. **Make it a habit of always using these services (instead of just posting direct links) for everything you post.** This will help you get a sense of how successful your posts are (or not!).

8. **Create a content schedule:** being intentional about your posting is also important. You can keep things interesting, yet organized on your sites by creating a schedule. The types of posts in your schedule should be informed by your goals and messaging strategy. For example, maybe Tuesday is recipe day, Wednesday features interviews, and Friday links to videos. You can also set one day aside for guest contributors, which has the added bonus of taking the pressure off of you! The schedule can vary from week to week, but will help you make sure you’re covering topics that are important to your organization and your audience.
   a. You can stay on top of your content schedule and keep yourself organized by documenting everything on a spreadsheet. Here is an example from Amy Sample Ward:26

![CONTENT PLANNING TEMPLATE](image)

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26 Photo credit: [http://amysampleward.org/2011/06/06/social-media-in-30-minutes-a-day/](http://amysampleward.org/2011/06/06/social-media-in-30-minutes-a-day/)
9. **...but be flexible:** you want to be able to respond when something important comes up, like legislation, local event, natural disaster, etc. Give your organization time and space to respond to important happenings and publicize your reaction/response on your sites.

10. **Keep on top of what others are posting:** via trending topics on Twitter, RSS news feeds, Google alerts, or free services such as Netvibes (http://www.netvibes.com). These tools will help you be aware of what’s going on in the world and what people are talking about online. Then you can contribute and be part of the conversation!
Promoting your social media campaign

Now that your social media sites are up and running, how do you promote them? There are a few “best practices” that you can practice everyday to get the word out about your webpages to your target audience.

1. Cross-promote: create easy to find links to your other sites on all your social media pages. In your “about me” sections, list your website, Twitter name, and/or Facebook page URL. Create colorful buttons for your blog that link to your other sites. Some sites, such as Facebook, allow you to link directly to Twitter and Wordpress so that your posts appear automatically as Twitter messages or that your blog posts automatically appear on your Facebook wall.

2. Make it mobile: as we said before, people are increasingly using their mobile phones to get online. How does your website look from a mobile web browser? If it takes too long to load or doesn’t load smoothly, most potential visitors will just pass you by.

3. Reward your fans: remember that your fans are following your posts for a reason. They are visiting your sites for information, resources, friendship, networking – and they’re hopefully getting their fill! But it’s also nice to give them something extra. Actively solicit their website feedback through polls or conversation threads. Give fans or partner organizations the opportunity to write guest posts, submit photos, or link to videos. Provide something tangible for interaction. For example, Tyson Hunger Relief donated 100 lbs. of food for every Facebook “like” they received. With consistent engagement and adaptation, you’ll soon grow your regular old fans into SUPER fans.

4. Be a partner: partner organizations or public figures can be great resources on social media sites. These partners likely have the same goals as you – and are probably also trying to figure out how to gain support for their online sites! It’s easier if you do it together. Help other groups out by sharing their links, commenting on their posts, and promoting their events. If a (legitimate) group “follows” you, follow them back! Give them a shout out via Twitter message or Facebook post. You’ll not only get to help out with some great projects, but you’ll be rewarded when you’re looking for some online props too!

If you’re promoting your web presence via your on the ground programs, there are a few helpful tricks of the trade. These days, people are receiving an avalanche of invitations to “check out our website” or “visit us online.” You need to help them sort through these messages and prioritize your invite.

27 Via: http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/21-creative-ways-to-increase-your-facebook-fanbase/
How do you do this, you ask?

1. Make yourself easy to find. Don’t make people work to try and find your websites. Assign an easy to remember Facebook URL or Twitter name (facebook.com/gofolic is a great example!).

2. Be consistent with your URL and avatar names. If your website is www.gofolic.org, try to use the keyword “go folic” for your other websites too! (e.g., gofolic.blogspot.com or twitter.com/gofolic)

3. Another possible way to directly promote your online sites is by creating a QR Code for your print materials. This way your smart phone-using audience can connect to your website immediately when they see your promotions. (For a recent study on QR code usage, see: http://www.bizreport.com/2011/08/smartphone-users-asked-where-and-why-they-scan-qr-codes.html)

4. Tell people WHY they should come to your site. It’s one thing to let people know that you have a Facebook page, but why should they bother visiting it? Instead of saying “Visit us on Facebook,” why not make it interesting? For example, “Find out how your can get free vitamins from Go Folic by visiting facebook.com/gofolic” or “Get the inside scoop on beauty, safe sex, and vitamins at facebook.com/gofolic.” Make it sexy, make it interesting and your audience will be motivated to check out your sites.

Create good “headlines”
Another good way to promote your social media pages is by capturing your audience’s attention through effective headlines. Research has suggested that only about 1 in 4 people read beyond the headline if it doesn’t immediately capture their attention.31

Here is a list of 8 attention-getting headlines from copyblogger.com32:

1. Direct Headlines go straight to the heart of the matter, without any attempt at cleverness. For example, “Pure Silk Blouses – 30 Percent Off” is a headline that states the selling proposition directly. A direct blog post title might read “Free SEO E-book.”

2. An Indirect Headline takes a more subtle approach. It uses curiosity to raise a question in the reader’s mind, which the body copy answers. Often a double meaning is utilized, which is useful online. An article might have the headline “Fresh Bait Works Best” and yet have nothing to do with fishing, because it’s actually about writing timely content that acts as link bait.

3. A News Headline is pretty self-explanatory, as long as the news itself is actually, well... news. A product announcement, an improved version, or even a content scoop can be the basis of a compelling news headline. Think “Introducing Flickr 2.0” or “My Exclusive Interview With Steve Jobs.”

32 http://www.copyblogger.com/how-to-write-headlines-that-work/
4. The How to Headline is everywhere, online and off, for one reason only – it works like a charm. Copywriter Bob Bly says that “Many advertising writers claim if you begin with the words how to, you can’t write a bad headline.” An example would be “How to Write Headlines That Work” by copyblogger.com.

5. A Question Headline must do more than simply ask a question; it must be a question that, according to Bly, the reader can empathize with or would like to see answered. He gives this example from Psychology Today: “Do You Close the Bathroom Door Even When You’re the Only One Home?”

6. The Command Headline boldly tells the prospect what he needs to do, such as Exxon’s old “Put a Tiger in Your Tank” campaign. Bly indicates that the first word should be a strong verb demanding action, such as “Subscribe to Copyblogger Today!”

7. Another effective technique is called the Reason Why Headline. Your body text consists of a numbered list of product features or tips, which you then incorporate into the headline, such as “Two Hundred Reasons Why Open Source Software Beats Microsoft.” It’s not even necessary to include the words “reasons why.” This technique is actually the underlying strategy behind the ubiquitous blogger “list” posts, such as “8 Ways to Build Blog Traffic.”

8. Finally, we have the Testimonial Headline, which is highly effective because it presents outside proof that you offer great value. This entails taking what someone else has said about you, your product or service, and using their actual words in your headline. Quotation marks let the reader know that they are reading a testimonial, which will continue in the body copy. An example might be “I Read Copyblogger First Thing Each Morning,” admits Angelina Jolie.

Use headlines like these to grab your audience’s attention online. Twitter makes it easy by limiting you to 140 characters. This may be a good rule of thumb for bloggers and Facebookers too – now that people are getting used to digesting information in short, 140 character bits, they may overlook your post if the headline is too long.

Ask questions
It’s one thing to have a page of posts for fans to read when visiting your site. But you can help your fans move from observers to actors when you get them involved in online conversations. You’ll not only increase your web traffic, but you’ll also engage your followers on a deeper, less superficial level.

Here are some helpful rules for asking questions on your social media sites:33

1. Be specific: you don’t want to make your followers do homework when they’re answering your questions. Most social media users will respond to specific questions that require shorter answers, rather than broad, philosophical questions.

2. Ask directly: if your page is new and you’re afraid of low response rates, call out specific fans to answer questions. Of course, you want to make sure that your chatter is welcome, so be sure to ask someone you know well.

3. Ask list questions: the question list (above) provides some good guidelines for different types of questions you can ask your page followers. Try different question structures and find out which work best for your social media sites.

4. Reply and pay attention: when your fans answer your questions, reply and deepen the conversation!

5. Don’t give up: you don’t want to overwhelm by asking your audience too many questions, but don’t silence yourself if you’re not getting an immediate response either. See what questions are getting the strongest response from your fans and adjust your strategy to what works.

**Be consistent**
Managing all your social media sites is trickier than it looks and you can always use help from others. But if your organization decides to have multiple people update your social media sites, make sure they’re all on the same page.

What does this mean? First, make sure everyone has a clear understanding of the messaging you’re using for your sites, your target audience, and your social media campaign goals. It’s important that everyone have a thorough appreciation of your aims so that the posts don’t stray off message or address unrelated issues (unless you’re experimenting and this is what you want!).

Also, if someone decides to take charge of a particular medium (such as Facebook), make sure that they’re keeping track of the work happening on other platforms. Otherwise you risk looking scattered or disorganized in your communications with other organizations or with your target audience.
Social Media Etiquette
Successful social media campaigns are not only about what you post, but how you interact with other users online. Blogger Chris Broden has some handy tips for social media user etiquette.34

Social Media Etiquette: Conversation
• Commenting about other people’s stuff and promoting other people’s stuff is very nice.
• If someone retweets your post or calls you out for a Follow Friday, be sure to thank them!
• But... retweeting people’s praise of you comes off as jerky. Just thank them.
• If you retweet something interesting, always give credit for who found it first.
• Thank Facebook fans or partners for sharing your link. You can do this discreetly by simply “liking” their repost
• Promote others more often than you promote yourself. (If it doesn’t work at first, it’s because maybe you’re not sincere in your promoting of others).
• Listening is important and commenting is important. Be the #1 commenter on your blog. (See next one)
• It’s okay to NOT comment back for every single comment you receive. It’s nice when you can respond, but don’t litter the comments with a bunch of “Thanks, Judy.” People know you care, if you’re doing it right.
• If you are talking about someone in a blog post, link to them. Steve Garfield is a pro at this.
• If you’re really nice, you’ll think about link text and help them even more by linking to Internet video expert Steve Garfield. Make sense?
• Links do matter to Google and to the people you care about. When you can, give them a link.

Social Media Etiquette: Friending
• You’re not obligated to follow/friend anyone. No matter what. Not even your mother.
• If you decide to unfollow someone, don’t make a big stink and announce why. Just leave.
• But if someone does follow your organization, give them a chance to see if they would make a good ally

Social Media Etiquette: Promoting
• Promote as if you’re at a cocktail party. It’s not the same as your email blast list.
• Promote others, and it’s much more likely people will help promote you when it’s your turn.
• Leave room for retweets. Writing 139 characters won’t get you anywhere.
• Promoting on Facebook is MUCH nicer on my wall than in my private messages
• Direct messaging people for promotion help is often annoying. It happens much more than you know.
• Your cause isn’t always our cause. If we don’t want to help, don’t badger.

34 http://www.chrisbrogan.com/socialmediaetiquette/
Social Media Etiquette: Content Production

• You can post as often as you want on your blog. It’s your blog. Monthly will probably fade from our memory. Weekly could work. Daily is my favorite. Some people post many times a day. It’s up to you.
• You can tweet as often as you want, but people unfollow “noisy” tweeters
• You can update Facebook often, and if you’re running pages, you might want to update 3-4 times a day – although this will vary based upon your organization and audience!
• Depending on your blog’s purpose, be wary of over-selling. Make sure you’re still providing great community value.
• If you find great content from other places, use it only after you understand whether you have permission to do so, and under the terms that the people have set.
• If you’re linking and sharing someone else’s blog post (which is good to do), it’s also wonderful when you add something to it. Add some commentary. Add a thought or two as to why it matters to your community.
• If someone’s work inspires your own post, it’s a nice thing to “hat tip” them with a link to the post that inspired you, somewhere in the post (usually down at the bottom).
• If you go a long time between blog updates, don’t write a “sorry I haven’t written lately” post. No one cares. Just publish something good.

Social Media Etiquette: Sharing is Caring

• Every blog I know has a share/like/tweet/stumble button at the bottom or somewhere. They’re there for a reason. If you like the article, pushing those buttons is a “tip jar” for the artist. Push it. It doesn’t take long.
• Tell the blogger when you love something they’ve done. People’s #1 complaint to me when they’re starting out blogging is that they lack any feedback. It’d take you 30 seconds to do, and would change a person’s perspective for a whole day.
• Comments in Twitter are temporary moments in a stream. Comments on the blog post itself are forever, in the best (and worst) of ways.
• The web thrives on links and social sharing. The more YOU do to participate, the more people will create material for free for you to enjoy.

Social media is just that: social. Similar social rules and expectations exist online as off-. Use your common sense. Keep this (and the above rules) in mind and you’ll have yourself a successful social media campaign!
Platform-Specific Recommendations: Twitter

Twitter can be a great tool to keep abreast of trending news and information, as well as to create conversations about shared topics of interest. People go on Twitter for lots of different reasons – from tweeting about their everyday lives to networking with partner organizations to having conversations.

The data are mixed about who exactly is on Twitter. Some suggest that older teens are increasingly moving away from Facebook and onto the Twitter platform. Others suggest that the audience is somewhat older and more affluent. For smartphone users, Twitter can be a handy, low-hassle tool to keep up to date with current happenings.

Your organization can turn to the resources found in the “Choosing a Platform” section to decide if Twitter is right for your audience. If you do decide to go with Twitter, here are some helpful suggestions to get you right into the mix:

1. Use # (aka “hashtags”) to tag trending topics: this way, when Twitter users search for common terms that interest them, your tweets will appear. Twitter users will be more likely to find and follow your Twitter feed this way. Search for what’s trending and jump on.
   a. But don’t hashtag every word! It’s #annoying #when #people #breakup their sentences with #hashtags – and it wastes your valuable characters!

2. Use @ to tag other Twitter users: when you tag other Tweeters, they will receive a notice from Twitter, which will most likely draw them to your Twitter feed. Use the @ tag when:
   a. Retweeting something another user posted
   b. Responding to a question posted by another user
   c. Recommending other Twitter users to your Twitter followers (e.g., on “follow Fridays” or #followfridays, #ff)

via: http://www.pamorama.net/2010/03/03/35-great-social-media-infographics/
3. Do your own searches: to find the people who are posting topics relevant to you. Search via hashtags or find out who your partners are following.
   a. Don’t be shy to retweet (RT) what others are saying! This will not only help you keep on top of relevant happenings, but also build your Twitter followers.

4. Don’t go over 140 characters: in fact, if you want to be retweeted, use less than 140 characters. This way, when a follower reposts your tweet, they can link to your profile without cutting out parts of your post.

5. Link love: don’t just shorten your links via Twitter, use a traceable link shortener like owly (via Twitter client Hootsuite) or bitly. Also, if you’re posting about an event, news article, or important piece of information, **always** link to it!

6. Maintain the conversation: if you can’t be around to tweet at all hours of the day, schedule your tweets in advance. This can also be a useful tool to help you figure out what time(s) generate the most followers for your Twitter profile. Experiment by scheduling tweets at different times of the day and check your web stats.

7. Use Twitter clients to help you manage your tweeting: Use a client like Hootsuite or Seesmic (or Involver or Social Oomph or MarketMeSuite or...) to help you track your tweets, followers, and messages. Some clients even let you manage your other platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) from one dashboard. The more advanced features of these programs (e.g., data tracking) usually require you to pay, but the very basic applications are often free.
   a. See the screenshot of the Seesmic dashboard (below) to help you get a sense of how Twitter clients can function.

8. Find your favorite Twitter resources: There are TONS of helpful Twitter applications out there that can help you do everything from finding users to figuring out who unfollowed you. Here’s a quick list of some resources. Quick tip: these are ALWAYS CHANGING and ones that used to be free quickly erect pay walls. Ask around (and tweet about it!) to find the best Twitter applications.35
   a. Does Follow: (http://doesfollow.com) shortcut to help you figure out who’s following whom
   b. My Tweet Map: (http://www.mytweetmap.com) generates a map of your followers
   c. Trendistic: (http://trandistic.com) displays trends for users and keywords
   d. Twalala: (http://www.twalala.com) allows you to “mute” noisy tweeters
   e. Twazzup: (http://www.twazzup.com) is AMAZING and provides real-time news
   f. Twellow: (http://www.twellow.com) the yellow pages of Twitter
   g. Twibbon: (http://twibbon.com) allows you to start a campaign for a cause and create a profile “ribbon” to publicize your cause. Also generates automatic tweets about your campaign.
   h. Twitaholic: (http://twitaholic.com) consistently ranks the top Tweeters
   i. Twitscoop: (http://www.twitscoop.com) keeps you up to date with trending topics
   j. Twitervision: (http://twittervision.com) displays Tweets occurring in your area in real time
   k. Twitpic: (http://twitpic.com) lets you share photos via Twitter
   l. Qwitter: (http://useqwitter.com) sends you a weekly email summarizing who has unfollowed your Twitter profile.

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35 Find **EVEN MORE** applications at: http://www.squidoo.com/twitterapps or http://links.visibili.com/share/FMtOev
m. WeFollow: (http://wefollow.com) lists Twitter users by topics and tags
Seesmic application screenshot

- Switch to other screens to see messages, accounts you follow, and your Klout score.
- Type your tweets here and schedule tweets for the future.
- Search hashtags and trending topics to keep on top of news you need.
- Twitter news feed
- Twitter "mentions" - who's tweeting about you?
- Scheduled tweets display here - tweet schedule menu is on toolbar above.
- Switch to other screens to see messages, accounts you follow, and your Klout score.
- Type your tweets here and schedule tweets for the future.
- Search hashtags and trending topics to keep on top of news you need.
Twitter etiquette: Twitter is definitely a social platform with certain social mores. Here are a few quick do’s and don’ts.36

1. **Don’t** be loud. No one likes to have their Twitter news feed monopolized by one person. Don’t drown everyone else out.

2. But if you do have a lot to say, **do** space out your tweets so that they display in somewhat regular intervals (that is, greater than every minute). This will allow you to have your say on Twitter without monopolizing everyone’s news feeds.

3. **Don’t** promote your own pages, resources, and information excessively. Similar to #1, but underscores the social nature of Twitter. It’s important to talk up your friends and followers, not just to shout about your own organization.

4. But **do** contribute to the conversation. It’s generally good policy to tweet a few times a day, especially if something is happening that’s important to your organization.

5. **Do** respond to and thank other users who retweet you or refer other users to your Twitter page (via #ff, etc.). It’s really important to reciprocate any love you’re getting from others right back at them.
   a. RT = retweet for complete reposting of someone else’s tweet
   b. via = information received from. Use this if you’re not completely reposting someone else’s tweet and just relaying (reworded) information
   c. HT = hat tip or heard through. Used less often than RT or via.

An example of good (that is, short & sweet) thanking is:

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6. **Do** give props to your followers or other Twitter users who are doing work you appreciate:

![Image](image_url)

7. **Don’t** overwhelm followers with direct messages, but **do** respond to people who message you (see #4). Be conscientious of the public nature of Twitter – some of your followers may not want to be called out in your newsfeed. When appropriate, ask to move your conversation to DM or another platform.

8. **Do** follow people who “add value” to your Twitter followers. Some Twitter users have more followers than others and it can be smart to follow their tweets. If they’re particularly good at engaging their communities, it can be helpful to see the ways in which they interact with other users. Once you feel comfortable, jump in the game and engage these users. This can help you draw some of their followers onto your site.

9. If you decide to host an online chat, **do** think about relocating to another site such as CoverItLive. You may alienate followers who feel you are flooding their streams.
Platform-Specific Recommendations: Facebook
Facebook is another great tool for your social media campaign – if you use it right!

Here are some helpful tips to get you started:

1. Tag your fans: Facebook allows you to use the @ symbol to tag others in your post. It not only helps promote other organizations, but it also lets others know when you’re giving them props. Use it!

2. Share alike: just like a Twitter RT, Facebook allows you to share articles from other people and fan pages.

3. ...but be smart: although it’s good to share, refrain from directly clicking that “share” button. Instead, copy the link to bit.ly or another tracking program and tag the original poster in your post. Just like with other platforms, this will give you a sense of who (if anyone!) is clicking on your links.

4. Ask questions: if you want your Facebook page to be active, ask questions of your fans. Moderate the conversation if necessary.

5. Experiment: use your insight data to learn what people will respond to on your Facebook page. Is there a particular story that gained more “likes” or comments than others?

6. Post regularly: your fans will quickly lose interest if you don’t keep your Facebook page content fresh. Post a few times a week at minimum. Upload photos, videos, and/or links to draw more fans to your site.

7. Encourage chatter: if you’d like people to comment or answer polls, provide an incentive. This can be a real life incentive, like movie tickets, or just verbal validation of comments you receive.

8. Don’t give up!: if your page isn’t gathering the attention you want, don’t throw in the towel. Take a look at the content you’re posting and see what’s not working. Think about your target audience and how it relates to your Facebook fan base.
9. Multiplatform link love: the Facebook fan page sidebar is more interesting than you think. Facebook allows developers to create different applications, which you can use to link to yourself or other resources. There are applications to create tabs for your Twitter feeds and blog posts, as well as pretty much anything you’d like!

10. Landing page: some web gurus recommend creating a custom landing page for your Facebook page. New visitors to your page will land on your welcome screen instead of the Facebook “wall.” This has not been definitively proven as an effective strategy (some people find these pages annoying), but it’s becoming more popular among companies and some larger nonprofits. Learn how to make your welcome page simpler by visiting: http://www.johnhaydon.com/2011/07/how-make-busy-facebook-welcome-tabs-more-simple/
Platform-Specific Recommendations: Blogs

Blogs can be great tools for organizations. These days, blogs are great in themselves, but can be even more effective when linked to other social media platforms (such as Twitter or Facebook).

If a blog fits in with your social media plan, here are some helpful tips to get you started:

1. Know/remember your audience: who is the target audience for your blog? Are you speaking to teenagers? Moms? Professionals? Who your audience is will shape everything about your blog.

2. Keep your content fun: people won’t visit your blog if it’s loaded down with dense text. Blog about things your audience wants to read in a way that’s easy for them to understand/read.

3. Always include images! This will help make your blog more accessible and fun. But also be careful to not overload every post with photos...

Add a link to the original article or your website by embedding a link into the photo. This way, when viewers click on the picture, they will be redirected where you want them to go! Wordpress looks like this:

On Wordpress, if you’ve already added a photo, you can edit it and include links by clicking here:

*The photo above links to the CDC National Girlfriends Day website*
4. **Always** acknowledge where your information came from, if pulled from another website. This will help you build your viewer base (via referrals), but is also a best practice according to [Fair Use Standards](#).

5. Use hyperlinks: if you are referring to another website, embed a link into the post. You can even embed hyperlinks to your own websites when you mention them in a post.

6. Make it easy for people to find other ways to connect: don’t you hate it when you have to search to find an organization’s website, Facebook page, or Twitter feed? Make it easier by providing big, clear, visual links on your blog.

7. Increase your traffic via links: promote your blog by creating clear links from Facebook, Twitter, your website – even your signature on your email! For example, there is a Facebook app called “Networked Blogs” which can be displayed as a tab on your Facebook fan page. Once installed, Facebook will update your page with a link to your posting every time you create a new blog post. This application can also connect you with other organizations using the same applications.
8. Follow a schedule: use your content schedule (information about developing one under “Tips on Posting”). It can be good to be predictable and that’s where content planning comes in. You may develop a devoted following once people start to learn to check in with your blog on Tuesdays – because they know they’ll find great recipes!

9. End your posts with a question: it’s great when your readers are provoked by your blog’s content. Encouraging blog comments will not only bring more attention to your blog, but also encourage your readers to think about what you posted. Because in the end, you’re not just looking for people to read your blog and forget about it – you want your postings to contribute to your campaign goals, right?

10. Join or host a blog carnival! Some organizations will open up their websites to guest bloggers for a certain time period. Bloggers will be asked to contribute articles about certain topics, which will then generate discussion among bloggers and readers. This can be a great way to drive traffic to your blog and to promote discussion about topics that matter to your community.

11. Follow your stats: check your statistics regularly and figure out what generates the best response. Do people seem to react to a certain topic area? Does the time of day or the date of posting affect your blog traffic? How are people being referred to your blog (is it a Google referral fluke??). Your stats will help provide the answers to these questions.

12. Find a rhythm that’s right for you. Your stats and reader feedback will help you to figure out how often you should be posting. You don’t want to be too loud, but you also want to have fresh content for frequent visitors. It may take a bit, but you’ll figure out what works.
Social Media Specific Resources

- Amy Sample Ward: http://amysampleward.org/  
  Blogs about community engagement and social media

- Beth Kantor: http://www.bethkanter.org/  
  Web guru, best practices, tips, and resources. Archive at: http://beth.typepad.com/

- CDC Social Media Toolkit: http://www.cdc.gov/SocialMedia/Tools/guidelines/  
  Great tool from CDC, lots of links to helpful resources

- Chris Brogran: http://www.chrisbrogan.com/  
  Blogs about social media and digital landscape

- Community Roundtable: http://community-roundtable.com/  
  Resource sharing site for social media campaigners

  Blogs about social media for nonprofits

- Mashable: http://mashable.com/  
  Social media best practices and news.

- Media Post: http://www.mediapost.com/publications/?fa=Articles.blogHome  
  Aggregate of Web 2.0 blogs.

- National Public Health Information Coalition: http://www.nphic.org/  
  Webinars, best practices, etc. for public health campaigns

- New American Media: http://newamericamedia.org/  
  News and information about new forms of communication

- Nonprofit Tech 2.0 blog: http://nonprofitorgs.wordpress.com/  
  How-to guides, helpful tips.

- Nonprofit Technology Network (NTEN): http://www.nten.org/  
  Some free resources on best practices, social media utilization, etc.

- Packard Foundation: http://packard-foundation-oe.wikispaces.com/home  
  Wiki for best practices, webinars, data, resource sharing, lessons learned, etc.

- Pulse + Signal blog: http://pulseandsignal.com/  
  Blog about health and social media

- Rescue Social Change Group: http://rescuescg.com/  
  Resources, best practices, how-to videos

- Social brite: http://www.socialbrite.org/  
  Collection of blogs for best practices, social media news, etc.
• Social Marketing Quarterly: http://www.socialmarketingquarterly.com/read
  Online magazine about social marketing – subscription only

• Social Media Examiner: http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/
  A little simplistic, but sometimes has helpful tips, etc.

• Social Media Today: http://socialmediatoday.com/
  Social media news and information.

• Social Shift: http://socialshifting.net/
  Resources for social media and public health

• Techcrunch: http://techcrunch.com/
  Technology news and happenings

• techsoup: http://home.techsoup.org/pages/default.aspx
  Resources for nonprofits, how-to guides, etc.

• We are Media: http://www.wearemedia.org/
  Wiki project from NTEN – best practices, news, information, networking, etc.

  Membership management software, helpful blog


