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Trade Association Forum
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SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BUSINESS

With social media's exploding popularity, it is increasingly risky for trade associations to ignore this medium. Whether promoting a new service or gauging consumer reactions, organisations today are dangerously close to becoming "behind the times" if they are not present on social media.



TAF AND MILES SMITH SUPPORTING
YOUR ASSOCIATION AND YOUR MEMBERS





WHY IS SOCIAL MEDIA SO IMPORTANT?

- The possibilities for spreading content and ideas on social media are endless; word of mouth knows no barriers with social networks
- Social media creates influence and scale in a way traditional media simply cannot, for a fraction of the cost
- Most likely, people are already talking about your organisation on social media. If you aren't involved, you're missing an opportunity to engage and address both positive and negative feedback
- Your members are likely to already be on social media, meaning if your organisation is not, you are missing a crucial opportunity to interact with them



FACEBOOK

If your customers are individuals rather than companies, and your organisation isn't on Facebook yet, you're missing out on a hugely valuable tool; as of June 2019 there are more than 2.4 billion monthly active users on Facebook, [click here for more information](#). Are you ready to get your organisation started on Facebook? As with any social media venture, you shouldn't jump in without a plan.

IDENTIFY YOUR OBJECTIVES

At this point you have likely identified overall goals for your social media initiative; each social media tool may be conducive to different objectives. Think about specific goals for Facebook. Do you want to drive people to your website? Are you trying to connect with your members? Or is your aim to influence your organisations' reputation? How you develop your page and execute your strategy should relate back to specific goals.



CREATE YOUR PAGE

[Click here](#) to create your business Facebook page. A business Facebook page is different from a personal profile or a group. Pages will appear in Facebook search results, and users can also display pages they like in their 'Like & Dislikes' section on their personal profile. When users 'like' your page, your status updates will display on their home page, called a 'news feed', along with posts from their other Facebook friends.

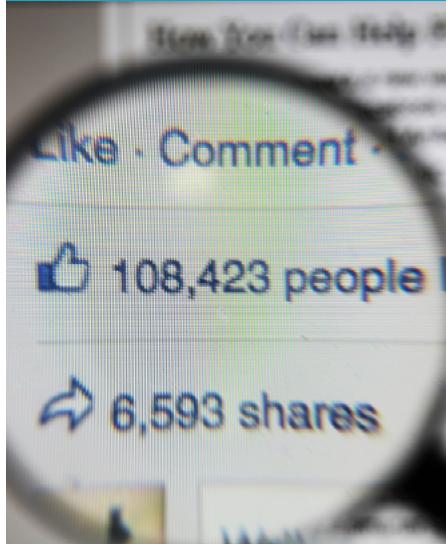
When setting up your page, consider these suggestions:

- Use a professional title that reflects your organisation's name; you will not be able to change it later

- After you have 25 fans, you can create a username and personalised URL to easily direct people to your page
- Be sure to customise your page. Add an image, details about your organisation, contact information, etc
- Select and crop your main image carefully, so that it displays well as your thumbnail image throughout the site
- Also choose a cover photo. Be creative with this space, but be sure to follow [Facebook guidelines](#)
- You also have the ability to further customise your page, integrate with your website and more, [click here for more details](#)



» TIPS AND TECHNIQUES



- Facebook allows you to import an email list and invite those contacts to become a fan of your page
- Give exclusive deals to your Facebook fans, to bring extra value to your Facebook relationship
- Engage with your Facebook fans; don't just spit out information. Post

interesting updates and questions and give them a reason to communicate with you

- In your page settings, you have the option to let fans post directly on your 'wall'. This can be a great strategy as fans become more engaged, however, it is far more time consuming. Despite this it is important that you tend to your wall regularly. Respond to questions or comments so people know that someone is actively participating on behalf of the organisation
- When others post on your wall or respond to you, comment on their posts to build relationships and encourage their interaction. Post photos or videos and encourage fans to do the same!
- Ask engaging questions to get people talking, even if they're not directly related to your business. For example, if you're a mechanic, try asking about people's favourite

road trip or the lowest price they remember paying for petrol

- An easy way to encourage response is simply to ask fans to 'like' a statement if they agree with it. If you choose an interesting statement that people connect with, you're more likely to get 'likes'
- Ask for business or product reviews from your fans and display them. If you get a negative review, it offers an opportunity to reach out to the customer and try to remedy the problem or repair the relationship
- Promote relevant events you are hosting or attending, such as conferences, volunteer events, or other community or industry functions. This can show how active your organisation is in the community or industry
- You have the ability to post milestones on your page, even ones that happened in the past. Use this feature to highlight significant events or news



>> FACEBOOK ADVERTISING

Another beneficial way to use Facebook is to post ads. Facebook ads appear throughout the site, and you have several options when creating your advert, including tailoring your target audience and your call to action (what the advert will link to). [Click here for more details.](#)



1. AUDIENCE

Be sure to choose the right target audience. This may take some market research and some trial and error to determine the ideal audience.



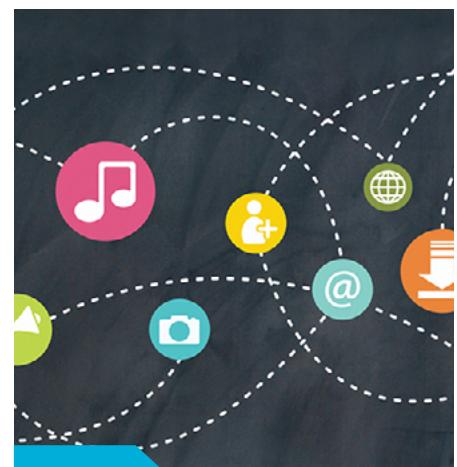
2. TEST YOUR ADVERT!

Test your advert! For instance, try different targets (e.g. one gender rather than both) to see which performs best, and then use these results to target your future adverts. Try testing different variables to create the best value for your money.



3. DECIDE NEXT ACTION

Decide what "call to action" you want the viewer to take: become a fan of your page, sign up for a newsletter or visit your site. Your advert can link to your page or an external website, or can include a 'like' button for fans to like your page without leaving the page they're on.



4. STAND OUT

Make sure your advert stands out. You're competing not only with other ads, but also with photos and messages from the user's Facebook friends. Speak to your target audience and be direct to ensure you are noticed.



TWITTER



Twitter believes that "as a business you can use Twitter to quickly share information, gather market intelligence and insights, and build relationships with people who care about your business. Often, there is already a conversation about your business happening on Twitter."

DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

THE FIRST STEP TO UNDERSTANDING TWITTER IS LEARNING THE LANGUAGE. HERE ARE SOME OF THE BASICS:

FOLLOW:

on Twitter, you follow someone to see the messages he/she posts. For others to view your posts, they must follow you. This is not a reciprocal relationship like some other social media sites, so each party can choose whether or not to follow the other.

TWEET:

a tweet is a post or status update, with a maximum of 280 characters.

USERNAME:

this is the Twitter naming convention: For example, your business Twitter name could be @XYZbusiness.

This is also how people communicate with each other on Twitter. If a customer wanted to reach out to you, they might tweet "@XYZbusiness, please tell me more about your services".

RETWEET (RT):

reposted information that someone else has posted. For example, if @jonsmith

posted "Check out this interesting study" you could repost it onto your own profile by clicking the retweet button at the bottom of the tweet. To add additional value when retweeting, you can quote tweet and add your own comment e.g. "These stats are surprising".

REPLY:

another way to communicate with someone (besides a tweet using their username or retweeting), is to reply to their tweet.

DIRECT MESSAGE (DM):

use a direct message to send a private message to someone who is following you. This can be useful when exchanging contact or other personal information, since all other Twitter communication is public.

HASHTAG (#):

using a hashtag (#) helps categorise your post based on keywords you designate. Users can find all posts with a particular hashtag in it, to help filter results on a specific topic.

You can search for hashtags to find topics that you may be interested in, as when you search for a hashtag it shows all tweets/popular tweets that contain that hashtag.



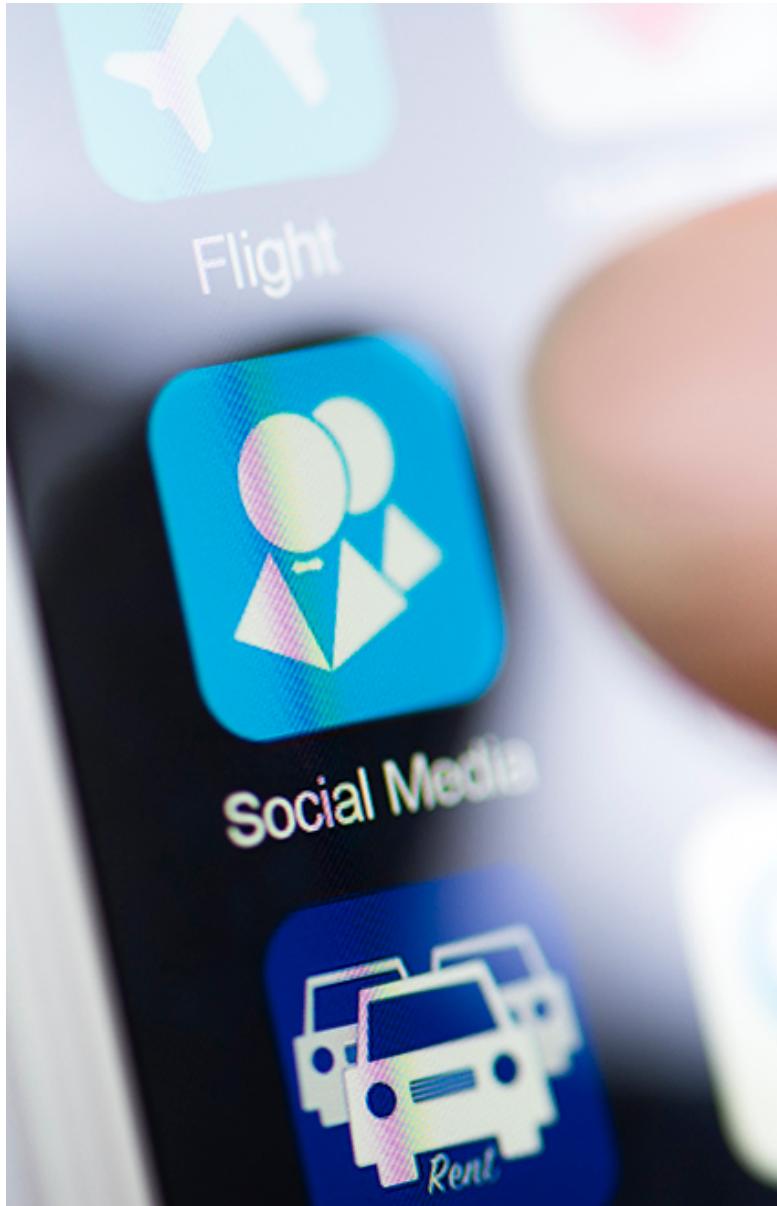
SUGGESTIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

ONCE YOU'VE MASTERED THE LANGUAGE AND CREATED YOUR TWITTER ACCOUNT, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES TO GET OFF TO A STRONG START:

- Actively search for your members, competitors and key personnel in your industry to follow. If you have a database of member email addresses, you can import them into Twitter to find any matching Twitter accounts. [Click here](#) for instructions on how to do this

Use the search feature to find people. Try searching for various keywords related to your industry, niche or related topics to find companies, prospects and members that would be useful to follow

- Make sure your tweets are shorter than the 280 characters maximum
- You can use Twitter to look for leads, using the search function. Search targeted phrases that match your location and service, and reach out to people who have tweeted about your topic (for instance, send a DM about your trade association). Some third-party Twitter applications can automatically scan for search terms and notify you of matches
- Remember to use meaningful hashtags to reach a broader audience than just those who follow you, particularly when tweeting useful insight, information and expertise. This will attract people interested in the topic to your organisation, which can lead to later enquiries
- Engage your followers. Don't just throw out information; post interesting questions, provocative statements, fun facts, contests, etc
- If someone mentions your brand, whether talking directly to you or not, respond. Answer a question, address a concern or find another way to continue the conversation, and always be timely in your reply! In today's digital world, people expect quick responses, so you should ideally write back within an hour or two of their tweet



TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW WORKING WITH MILES SMITH CAN BENEFIT YOU, PLEASE EMAIL IAN COOK, SALES & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR – ICOOK@MILESSMITH.CO.UK OR CALL HIM ON 020 7977 4800.

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