Basic Social Media Practices To Follow

Writing and Posting Content

➔ Always try to have a call to action (CTA) somewhere in the post. CTA on social media is a phrase or prompt designed to encourage an audience to take a specific, immediate action, such as visiting a website, signing up for a newsletter, purchasing a product, or liking and sharing a post.
  ◆ **Example**: Could be something like "Use the link in our bio to sign up now." This draws the reader to actually engage with your content.
➔ Use active voice and an engaging, attention-grabbing tone.
➔ Be explicit and clear.
➔ Be judicious about self-promotion; consider whether promoting the organization strengthens or weakens the post's shareability.
➔ Keep the caption short (exception for Linkedin). There's a reason so many platforms have a character count! If the caption is longer than 300-400 characters, usually people will scroll past, unless it's essential and breaking news.
  ◆ **Why is Linkedin different?** That's a very different audience than most platforms. Linkedin tends to prioritize more informational content rather than a short and punchy caption.
➔ Avoid abbreviations. More obvious ones are avoiding 'u' over 'you', or 'tn' over 'tonight.' Ampersands (&) can be used only when you want to cut words in your caption to fit a character count.
➔ If you use a quote from someone as part of your caption, the quote should encapsulate the event, issue, or topic or your post. For example, if you are pulling a quote related to an event that was hosted, don't choose a quote that is so specific only someone who attended the event will understand. Choose a quote that encapsulates the event in its entirety so that a reader can understand what the event was about.
➔ Posts should include just one main idea.
➔ Ensure that the post fully encapsulates the idea being communicated.
➔ Prioritize new information in captions.
➔ Be selective when sharing opinion-based content e.g., op-eds, letters to the editor).
➔ It's important to post frequently and consistently, as this helps you score points with the algorithm. Generally accepted frequency varies by platform, and depends on your group's capacity. **Generally accepted rules** are:
  ◆ Instagram: Post 1-2 posts a day.
  ◆ Facebook: Post about once a day.
  ◆ LinkedIn: Post between 3 to 5 times per week.
  ◆ X: Post between 2 to 5 times a day.
  ◆ TikTok: Post about 1 to 4 times a day.

Grammar/Spelling

➔ Always double check spelling. It's really easy to misspell names in particular. A good way to avoid this is to copy and paste into the caption whenever you can. Always check your post after it's published for errors, and delete and repost if necessary.

➔ **Links:**
   ◆ Double check that they work before posting. For Linkedin posts, put the link in the comments. [The Linkedin algorithm flags posts with links in them](#) and will show them to less people in order to keep users on the site. Putting the link in the comments has been shown to increase engagement.

➔ Double check that any tags are correct. Many usernames are similar, so it's important not to mix them up and tag the wrong person. You can double check this by searching the person/organization you want to tag before sharing.

➔ Double check for any awkward spacing. It's pretty obvious when it is spaced wrong, but it's still better to double check in case.

➔ If you are sharing an op-ed, it is more generally accepted to use op-ed over OpEd.

➔ Double-check that formatting looks clean and readable.

➔ Break up walls of text with line breaks (one line break between paragraphs; one space after sentences).

Increasing Engagement

➔ **For news articles only:**
   ◆ Always tag the journalist and outlet if you can. Often, journalists repost posts that they're tagged in, increasing the engagement on the post.
   ◆ Often, this only applies to X and Bluesky, as many journalists have platforms on there. Less have Instagram and Facebook accounts, but it's still worth it to look.

➔ Try not to post similar content back to back. Many people will come to the page to learn about a variety of topics related to your organization and if they only receive the same content (ex: event posts) then they will likely get bored and be more inclined to unfollow.

➔ Don't editorialize. Editorializing is the act of injecting a person's or organization's personal opinions in something that is supposed to be factual. This is particularly important for grassroots groups. If posts come off as biased in any sort of way it can turn people away from what you do. The easiest way to editorialize is with politics, but anything that signals your own opinion on any matter can affect the way people view your platform.

➔ Repost directly from original sources where possible to reduce caption length.

➔ Follow other nonprofits and similar organizations and reshare their posts. There's a mutual social media bond that if you share another group's post, they'll reshare yours. It's important to make those connections through social media.
   ◆ **Instagram specific for resharing**

- Instagram has [a new feature](#) that allows you to repost content onto your followers feeds. This is the first time Instagram has had an option to do this. Not all accounts allow you to repost their photos on Instagram. If they do, there will be two arrows, one pointing left and the other pointing right. Just tap it once and it's reposted.
- ◆ **X/Bluesky specific for resharing**
  - 'Retweets' or reposting has always existed on these platforms, but the process is similar. At the bottom center of a post, there will be the same left and right pointing arrows. When you tap that, it will say 'Quote' or 'Repost.' Quote means you will include commentary with the repost, Repost just means that the person's post will appear for your followers.

➔ Read the room. For example, if you are resharing a serious article that involves some pretty heavy topics, that's not the right post to do any sort of self promotion. It can come off as insensitive.

➔ Hashtags allow a bunch of posts that are similar to be featured on one page.

➔ For example, you can find every post that's tagged with #housing if you click on the hashtag or search it manually. This is great if you are trying to find other housing organizations for example– they will probably have #housing in their posts. How to choose them:

- ◆ Community hashtags (For the housing example: #EndHomelessness and #HousingFirst) are safe year-round and show that you're part of a larger conversation.
- ◆ Trending hashtags are also fine so long as they are related to what you're posting about. For example, if during the recent election, a candidate made a comment about policy that you are sharing, it would be safe to use #Election2024 or something similar.
- ◆ To read the room with hashtags you should avoid any explicitly political hashtags. An extreme example would be something like #MAGA. You should also avoid using any hashtags related to breaking news. For example, if the LA fires were still going on, it would be inappropriate to use that as a hashtag, even though it's a popular one.
- ◆ Avoid hijacked hashtags. Some hashtags are filled with spam posts and if you use it, the social media platform may flag the account as spam. In relation to what we do, it'll be rare to get a hijacked hashtag. But a good way to avoid it is to just search the hashtag on the platform to double check some of the other posts under it before you use it.
  - **Note for Instagram hashtags:** Instagram still has hashtags, but their algorithm has been updated to place less weight on them. Therefore, with instagram, if you feel like you can not think of any good hashtags, it's less necessary.

Graphics and Visuals

→ For graphics, make sure your design is consistent with any established branding. A cohesive visual feed makes you look more professional to viewers.

→ Make sure any posts or videos shared are of good quality–not overly zoomed in, not grainy, etc.

→ Ensure visuals fit platform-specific dimensions and length by drafting directly on the platform.

→ Consider turning dense information into bulleted or visual formats.