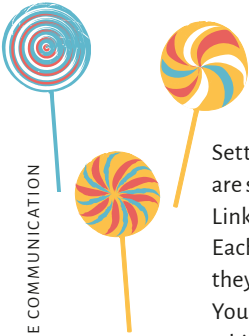


Channels of social media



IV. CHANNELS OF SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

by ASWIN LUTCHANAH

Setting up a social media appearance can be overwhelming. There are so many channels to choose from. Popular ones include Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok. Each social media channel has its own unique features (although they tend to copy each other), best practices, rules and user base. Your social media strategy will help you have a clearer idea of which channels to use. Choose those that best fit your strategy and the objectives you want to achieve. Consider the audience of the platform to ensure that it has the right demographics to help you reach your goals. Consider how much time you want to devote. In the beginning, when building a community, you will need to invest more time. This is a steep process. Consistency and regularity are key. Work out your ideal frequency. Don't be spammy. Don't post five times in one day and then go silent for four weeks. You could post once a week, every week. Consider your resources. Do you have the personnel and skills to invest in the platform? Some video-based platforms like TikTok and YouTube require more resources to create content. Social media platforms change quickly. You need to keep up to date with the latest features to take advantage of them and accelerate your "road to success".

Fill out all your profiles and check regularly that they are up to date. A complete profile conveys professionalism and shows that you are active on the platform.

Visuals are very important on social media. They attract attention and encourage engagement. Use the right ones. Check the required dimensions for each platform (profile, cover photo, feed, link). Using the right dimensions will optimise your content and make it more effective.

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Be authentic! Do not use language that is not yours. Show your achievements rather than telling what you can do. Use your keywords to have an impact on your audience, but don't use/overuse buzzwords. Always think about your followers and what they will gain from your publication. Don't make it all about you. Remember that social media is about social contact, and people love to connect with other people rather than brands and/or organisations. Have the personal touch that makes your brand/organisation more human.

Your voice is your mission statement and your tone is the execution of that mission. The same content will be disseminated differently depending on the audience and the platform. You need to tailor your content to the platform and audience. You need to connect with your audience to keep the sparkle in their hearts. They will love you more and engage with you more.

Diversify the types of content to take full advantage of the platform. Think about providing content at the right time and the ideal frequency. Adapt your posting strategy as your channels grow. Use the platforms' analytics to help you. Experiment to fine-tune your strategy. As your community grows, the effort needed for community management will increase: respond to comments and private messages, and interact with your audience.

Consider paid campaigns to promote your page/content to potential followers and grow your community. Influencers and micro-influencers are also opportunities you can explore to reach your target audience.

