

Social Media Primer

A handout to accompany *Tweet an App., Friend!*, an education session at AMIBA's 2010 national leadership conference on using social media and the latest phone and web technology to serve members and build your organization



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These are the questions that we thought were most pressing to conference attendees:

- What kind of content to post?
- What not to post? press releases- ad speak does not belong
- Creating a voice/ making the presence compelling - use your own voice. you are a human, talking to other humans. We would never speak to our friends and family through messages, so why should we speak "at" the very people we want to reach and befriend?
- How often should I post/tweet? only you can decide frequency, but it should be at least 1x per week, or no one is going to engage with you.
- How to do it efficiently - in less time? use a platform that helps Which tools / technology for which goals? depends on goal. since main goal is education outreach, social media is perfect. pick the one you are most comfortable with and start with that
- If I only have time for one of these, which should I focus on? Facebook
- Tracking effectiveness
- What is (____)?
- What is the next big thing, how long will -- be around...? Who knows. Social media platforms change as people do, moving to where they are, doing what they do.

#1 Question: do you have a website? If yes, good - your org is ready to engage in social media. If not, you must start one. You can use a blog even - wordpress...

1. **Why is social media important?**

- a. It is taking the place of traditional media as the go to place for content - news and information as well as community.
 - i. Stickier than other forms of media - social media engages consumers in a way that encourages trust and increases message retention.
 - ii. Viral - can reach a huge audience in a short amount of time
 - iii. Interactive - this is why people like it.
- b. Why do people like it? It is a conversation, not a broadcast.
- c. You can give people something they can't get anywhere else.
 - i. It is a status symbol/marker of belonging when people are fans of specific organizations/groups - it makes a statement about identity
 - ii. Education and information
 - iii. Interesting conversations.

2. **Top social media mistakes:**

- a. Not having a goal/strategy in mind.
 - i. Who cares? For the sake of what? Always answer the question "Why are we doing this?" it will help you focus on your goals!
 1. If people don't understand why they are doing this, they will get burned out/not support the effort/effort will trickle off.
 2. Make sure that the statement matches the goal. An example: an ice cream company's slogan is "Serving fresh ice cream since 1934" - who cares? We want the ice cream to be delicious and a good value. We don't often care that the company has been in business for 75 years (though depending on who you are reaching out to this statement could match your goal).

- ii. it doesn't have to be precise, but an overarching goal will direct your efforts
 - b. Overexposure - trying to be too many places at once. You do not need to have a presence on every platform. Remember, go where your crowd is!
 - c. Overposting – watch out for it! People will hide your fb feed and unfollow you on twitter if they feel that there is no value and too much jibber jabber/ad speak.
 - d. Not thinking before you post - make sure it is part of your plan, but remember you can't control it all.
 - e. Why is it taking so long!!/Expecting social media to solve all of your problems
 - i. This is not a build it and they will come type of situation.
 - ii. This isn't a broadcast medium. You must give your crowd a reason to stay with you. If you look at this as a one way, controlled conversation, people will not stay with you. Social media are relationship based platforms – watch this: <http://bit.ly/bp21Kt>
 - f. Listen!!! Ask questions, invite participation. People like social media because of the participatory aspect. If you use it simply as another advertising medium, people are going to start ignoring you. Engage in every opportunity for interaction and create opportunities for it
 - g. Using ad-speak instead of storytelling. Remember, this is a personal medium not a broadcast medium.
 - h. Brand should be consistent across platforms - website should jibe with fb, twitter, blog. Part of what IBAs do is create a local brand for local business, the group marketing aspect. If you lose sight of your overarching goal, your social media efforts will be weak and frustrating.
3. **Goals and strategies What does your organization want to accomplish?**
 - a. People often start out with the idea "Everyone is on Facebook, facebook is cool, let's start a page. This doesn't give you the most bang for your buck. You need to have a goal in mind - just like any other application there should be a strategy.

- b. Your goal will tell you which platforms are most useful for meeting that goal
 - c. We are a bit different than other business uses, because our primary goal is education and outreach. Our visibility in the community is very important.
 - d. Go to where your crowd is! If your constituency is not on facebook, then there is little point in being on Facebook. Choose the social medium that reaches your crowd.
4. **Create a social media engagement calendar**
- a. At the very least set up a timeline: "We are going to post 2x per week"
 - b. Action steps and markers with dates for completion (start blogging 1x per week, up the ante to 3 times per week by June).
5. **A good social media plan could include 3 basic components:**
- i. ***Listening***
 - 1. Set up an RSS feed: google reader.
 - 2. Monitor what others in the movement are doing - follow other IBAs on Twitter, become fans of their fan page. This is a sharing organization that is member driven - we can find out what works from talking to each other!
 - ii. ***Speaking***
 - 1. Website
 - 2. Blog - can be a microblog even -you can integrate these together
 - 3. Make sure all media platforms point to your main website/primary media
 - 4. Make sure that all hard copy media point to your main website (business cards, pamphlets, email signatures)
 - iii. ***Community***
 - 1. Twitter and FB, LinkedIn, Meetup, Ning, social bookmarking (del.i.cious)
 - 2. Allow your supporters to use their voice to promote your cause. You want the

influencers/evangelists to repeat and promote your organization

6. **Facebook:**

- a. What is it good for? The most popular facebook pages are for musicians, second most popular - local businesses (700,000 fans). Local businesses and Local professional services together made up 14% of all facebook pages.

b. **basics**

- i. Have a goal in mind
- ii. Set up a social media calendar for this medium
- iii. Pick a good username that reflects your brand. As soon as you have 100 followers claim your brand by choosing a username:
<http://www.facebook.com/help/?page=900>
AMIBA's username is www.facebook.com/theAMIBA much easier to send people to than all those weird numbers and letters.
- iv. Give value in your posts: make sure most posts are goal oriented - bring your members in with tips, bring your member's clients in with news and info, spread the word about what you do with interesting news and content.
- v. don't be afraid to lose control:
 - 1. Put your settings on low for privacy and everything else.
 - 2. Let everyone post on your page (use moderators though)
 - 3. Actively moderate your page.
- vi. Put a fan box on your website (now called a "like" box): <http://bit.ly/fblikebox>
- vii. Add your fb to your twitter feed (a good way to populate your twitter page quickly).
- viii. Don't overwhelm your fans!!! According to a recent twtpoll, most non-profit page fans feel that updating 1 a day is enough. If you are doing more than that make sure that there is value in it.
- ix. Promote your page:
 - 1. In your e-newsletter - but don't expect your page to go viral. Fully half of the FB pages out

there have less than 500 fans. These things build slowly.

2. Post a link to your page on the following fb pages. it might garner you some attention...
 - a. www.facebook.com/nonprofitorgs
www.facebook.com/nonprofits
www.facebook.com/facebookforgood
- x. Don't split your feed between page and just fans. Keep them integrated. Take a look and make sure that your page is fully integrated, not separated into your posts and "others." This suggests a division that is antithetical to the idea of social networks/social media.
- xi. Interact!! Comment on comments, acknowledge thumbs up, start conversations, ask questions. I have noticed that the most commented on posts are often those that ask questions.
 1. Encourage your brand evangelists to post pics, videos, and comments. This is an easy way to build the sense of community that is so important with social networks
- xii. Use insights to figure out which posts work best with your fans. The most action I ever get is when I ask questions.
- xiii. Make the content count - refer back to your main website, post pics and links
- xiv. Don't assume that your twitter followers are also following you on fb and vice versa. Use twitter to publicize your fb account and vice versa.

7. Twitter:

a. **Basics:**

- i. Have a goal in mind
- ii. Set up a social media calendar for this medium (start slow and build up).
- iii. Pick a good user name that reflects your brand
 1. no numbers no special characters
- iv. Custom background (more opportunities for branding).

1. Don't just tile your logo or a pic, it is too busy and takes away from your message.
 - v. Make sure there is the right amount of info - always have your website info in the right hand bar!!!
<http://twitter.com/theAMIBA>
 - vi. Don't just distill down a press release into 140 characters. It needs to be personal and engaging and just like anything else, for the cause of what?
 - vii. Make sure to give value in your tweets - simply using ad speak will get you nowhere and no followers.
 1. Twitter coupons, scavenger hunts, post pics of events
 - viii. Use your tweets to get info:
 1. ask questions, solicit feedback
 2. talk directly to your followers with @soandso
 - ix. Use a url shortener - a hubspot study showed that bit.ly was substantially more retweetable than any other shortener. plus it is a measurable one
 - x. Write for retweetability:
 1. use the right words: retweet, free, help, how to, check out, help, and of course please
 2. Include the right content: news gets retweeted more often than any other content
 3. Post at the right time: afternoons and fridays get the most retweets (not sure why, but I read the study that backs this up...)
 - xi. Go for the retweet! asking for it nicely often gets a response
 - xii. Listen to what people are saying about you. Use the saved search function. I often search for what other people are saying about "buy local."
 - xiii. Follow interesting people or orgs that can help you find new info and ideas. Twitter is a great idea bank. You can find ideas for your own posts on FB, in your blog, or simply retweet good info to your followers.
- b. Resources: hubspot: how to use twitter for business,
<http://business.twitter.com/twitter101/>
 - c. build lists and add them to listorius

- d. twitter.grader.com
- e. build a user poll using twtpoll.com
- 8. **Blogs** (Micro vs. Macro):
 - a. wordpress, blogger, blog.com (macro)
 - b. tumblr, posterous (micro)
 - c. Best practices
 - i. Like anything else, have an overall goal, be part of your organization's strategy
 - ii. Think about who your target audience is: who are you trying to reach.
 - iii. Create a blogging calendar
 - 1. Start small then go big!
 - 2. Don't be afraid to lose control.
 - a. Idea: Establish guidelines for posts and let your board all do one post a month: editorials, reviews, whatever.
 - b. Think about letting your members do a bit - you can use an editorial board if you want to, or just let the guidelines do their work
 - c. Everyone is busy, delegate to passionate people
 - iv. Your blog should not be your press releases, but the human side of your organization
 - 1. Since we are staffed (or volunteered) and supported by people passionate about this cause, we are uniquely ready to tell this story. These do not have to be high art/literature, but they do need to feel real.
 - 2. Put the passionate people in charge of writing.
 - v. A lot of blogging well is writing well. A great resource is <http://bit.ly/probloggertips>
 - 1. Catchy headline
 - 2. Interesting and human stories - use this to tell your narrative
 - vi. Generate lists of ideas in advance so that you always have something to write about
 - vii. Link from website to blog
 - viii. Link from blog to website

- ix. Link to other websites than your own - make sure it adds value not just noise
 - 1. Think of ways to get people to want to read what your org is writing:
 - a. a section of business tips written by your members (weekly?, bimonthly?)
 - b. short interviews with people from your events - cross posted to facebook even (they don't have to be polished, just engaging)
- x. Refer back to earlier posts - add value for readers by linking in your text
- xi. As with anything else, engage with your readers:
 - 1. comment
 - 2. ask questions
- xii. Like any social medium, blogging is about creating community. You must give your audience something they want: news, info, tips and tricks
- xiii. If you are using a sidebar with links, make them relevant.

9. How to measure results:

- a. Your social media engagement is raising your search rank. Google has added social media engagement to their search algorithm.
- b. Most probably already use google analytics
- c. bit.ly <http://bit.ly/>
- d. Most basic: keep track of the number of fans/followers, comments, anything else you can count - count it. Make a spreadsheet showing the increasing number of followers over time.
- e. Traffic and interaction
- f. listening!
- g. Promotions!: *The Music Hall in Portsmouth, NH. When they have extra tickets to a show, they put out a discount notice on Twitter. He says he can measure the response to last minute coupon offers in milliseconds. Or @wildcat at Wildcat Mountain ski area in Jackson, NH. He fills his parking lot by Tweeting reminders about half-price specials.*

10. How to maximize time:

- a. Spredfast <http://spredfast.com/>
 - b. Tweetdeck <http://www.tweetdeck.com/>
 - c. Hootsuite <http://hootsuite.com//>
 - d. Postling <http://www.postling.com/>
11. Just a thought: why not use social media to collaborate within your membership too? Can you use a google group or a meetup or ning to be more responsive to your members? Use it to collaborate and brainstorm ideas? Get people motivated by feeling that they are involved?

Resources:

- Hubspot is a great resource with lots of white pages on social media: <http://bit.ly/hubspotwhitepapers>
- And many free webinars on social media: <http://www.hubspot.com/marketing-webinars/>
- Prologger is also a great place to check out info on blogging: <http://bit.ly/probloggertips>
- Twitter 101 for business: <http://business.twitter.com/twitter101/>
- As always, if there is something that you and your IBA have found particularly useful, please email me so I can make it known to the rest of our group.

List of IBA Facebook Pages (if I am missing any you know of, please email them to me!):

[Facebook | Sonoma County GoLocal Cooperative](#)
[Facebook | COLORS -- Columbia Locally Owned Retail and Services](#)
[Facebook | Build St Louis](#)
[Facebook | Meg Brownson](#)
[Mainstreet Stillwater MN | Facebook](#)
[Facebook | Shop Local Omaha](#)
[Facebook | Homegrown El Paso](#)
[Facebook | Local First of Greater Pocatello](#)
[Facebook | Local First Utah](#)
[Facebook | FIBA \(Flagstaff Independent Business Alliance\)](#)
[Facebook | Sonoma County GoLocal Cooperative](#)
[Facebook | Concord Independent Business Alliance \(CIBA\)](#)

[Facebook | Hometown Peninsula](#)
[Facebook | Mariposa County Independent Business Alliance \(MCIBA\)](#)
[Facebook | Think Local Umpqua](#)
[Facebook | Go Local Tacoma](#)
[Facebook | Shop Local Omaha](#)
[Facebook | Homegrown El Paso](#)
[Facebook | Local First of Greater Pocatello](#)
[Facebook | Humboldt County Independent Business Alliance \(HumIBA\)](#)
[Facebook | Mariposa County Independent Business Alliance \(MCIBA\)](#)
[Facebook | Think Local Umpqua](#)
[Facebook | Go Local Tacoma](#)
[Facebook | Concord Independent Business Alliance \(CIBA\)](#)
[Facebook | Buy Local ilm](#)
[Facebook | Buy Local Athens](#)
[Facebook | Sonoma County GoLocal Cooperative](#)
[Facebook | Local First Utah](#)
[Facebook | Shop Local Raleigh](#)
[Facebook | Austin Independent Business Alliance](#)
[Facebook | Asheville Grown](#)
[Facebook | FIBA \(Flagstaff Independent Business Alliance\)](#)
[Facebook | Will Buy Locally](#)
[Facebook | Buy Local Kalamazoo](#)
[Facebook | JXN Local First](#)
[Facebook | Lakeshore Independent Business Alliance](#)
[Facebook | ShoLo](#)
[Facebook | KEEP LOUISVILLE WEIRD!](#)
[Facebook | Smyrna Independent Merchants Association \(S.I.M.A\)](#)
[Facebook | Belknap Independent Business Alliance](#)
[Facebook | Portland Buy Local](#)
[Facebook | ShopPutnam.com](#)
[Facebook | Capital Region Independent Business Alliance](#)
[Facebook | Mainstreet Stillwater MN](#)
[Facebook | Buy Local Athens](#)
[Facebook | Our Town Gainesville and Alachua County](#)
[Facebook | Tampa Independent Business Alliance \(TIBA\)](#)

Here are the answers to the survey that went out prior to the conference:

Facebook:

- We use it, are comfortable with it and feel like it helps us meet our goals. 43.8%

- We have had some success with it but would like more tips. 31.3%
- We don't really know how to use it effectively, use it to meet our organizations' goals. 25%

Comments:

1. Just set up a site recently
2. We are looking for someone to take it on as a project
3. It's a time thing -- who has time to do everything

Twitter:

- We use it, are comfortable with it and feel like it helps us meet our goals. 28.6%
- We have had some success with it but would like more tips. 21.4%
- We don't really know how to use it effectively, use it to meet our organizations' goals. 50%

Comments:

1. We are experimenting first with FB but will consider Twitter in the future
2. Need someone to take it on as a project
3. We are at a loss to work twitter enough to get us traction. Again, who has time.

Blogs/Blogging:

- We use it, are comfortable with it and feel like it helps us meet our goals. 28.6%
- We have had some success with it but would like more tips. 7.1%
- We don't really know how to use it effectively, use it to meet our organizations' goals. 57.1%

- We don't really know what that is...but are interested in learning more. 7.1%

Comments:

1. Our new website will have that capability.

Other social media your organization uses:

- Youtube
- LinkedIn
- Plaxo (looked into pulse?)
- Wantandfound
- google groups
- yahoo groups
- foursquare
- Meetup
- ning

Other social media interested in learning about

- Smartphone/Iphone apps
- Social media dashboards that manage and aggregate multiple streams with read/write capabilities and measurements

Topics of interest:

- Best practices
- How ibas are using social media
- How to get local govt involved
- Without a staff member it is challenging to figure out who to sanction to post items for the group...without having it turn into a free for all.
- Is there something more effective than facebook? I feel it is not as interactive as it once was.
- Would love to know if/how other platforms are as effective as twitter/fb

- All of the above (best practices, maximizing platforms, how others are using platforms)
- How to squeeze 96 hours out of every 24 hour day

Please tell us if you/org has any practices or successes that you would like to share with social media session attendees:

- 300 fans for shop local on FB
- Social media is simply a new communications tool, same rules apply as with other media
- The monthly business meetings are held at 7:45 am, hosted by one of our members at their work location where they have the opportunity to introduce the attendees to their products/services. This has been a great way to get people to meet each other and to give our hosts an opportunity to introduce themselves more formally.
- One of the ideas we've had is to encourage people in the community to change their avatars to our logo (love Asheville, buy local) on special days/weeks (like independents day or chop local Saturdays). It is a great way to get people in the community to spread the word to thousands via fb and twitter.

What would you like to learn about social media that we did not mention?:

- Would like to know how to give our membership an opportunity to actually post their events and services in a structured fashion that will have the public looking for their entries
- Many of us are using constant contact newsletters along with the web site - it seems like at some point you diminish the website with too much chatter elsewhere. When is enough enough?
- Security? Is it an issue?
- I am more interested in seeing the teaching methods and understanding the experience for someone new to social media.