

GET INVOLVED

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

Social media can be an enormously useful tool for promoting your local project. It's a great way to take control of your message and to build a community around it. However, you should never underestimate the amount of time that it takes to manage a good quality social media presence - consider a minimum of one hour per day.

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU ALONG YOUR WAY:



Build a database.

When running your project think about how you can gather email addresses or social media contacts for people who might be interested in learning more about what you do. Make your quest for relevant contacts an integral part of how your project operates.

Know what you are and let this inform everything you do.

Think about your project and what it stands for. Can you choose a few words that would communicate to a stranger what your project is about? Can you identify other projects, campaigns or ideas that your project would support? Is there anything that your project would not support? Write down your answers. This very short document should inform what your project communicates online and how it interacts with others online. Provide it to anyone who will contribute to your social media.

Use your energies wisely.

Think about which social media channels are most appropriate for your project. You may want to concentrate on one or spread yourself across a few to target different people in different ways. Here's a very brief introduction to the benefits of each of the most popular social networks:

- **Facebook** is useful if you want to communicate with people of all ages in your area. It is well-suited to local projects and Facebook advertising will allow you to promote your page, post or business to a local audience.
- **Twitter** has a smaller number of users in Ireland but allows you to find people with similar interests and get their attention quite easily. Twitter is all about capturing a moment and is really useful if you hold live events that you'd like to promote and amplify to an audience beyond those in attendance.
- **Instagram** is growing in popularity in Ireland, particularly amongst the under 35s. As it is an image-based social media

it will be most relevant to projects that have lots of great imagery to share.

- **Snapchat** is popular amongst younger people. It is also image-based but in this case the images have a short lifespan - maximum 24 hours. Snapchat comes into its own if you want to communicate what you do every day throughout the day.
- **YouTube** is a video-sharing network and you can share this content to other places like Facebook and Twitter in order to connect existing followers with your video content.

Tell everyone where they can find you.

If you sell something, share your social media contacts on the packaging, receipts, or anywhere else that people might read it. If you have signage, include your social media contacts on it.

Share the love to grow a flock.

To build a community online you have to either have a well known brand that people seek out or you have to communicate with people directly through likes, shares, follows and comments. Be genuine in your love and ensure that you retain your own consistent voice, even when giving support to others.

Be positive.

Celebrate, support, cheer on and commiserate with people within your local community. Frame your messages in positive terms. Be the bright side.

Give your followers a reason to keep turning up.

To maintain a community online requires creativity and effort. You need to produce content that's useful, interesting or emotive. Giving your community something for their troubles is a nice touch so let them know about any discounts you can offer or any competitions open to

your social contacts (but be sure to check the social media network's rules around competitions first).

Have a giggle.

Even if you are saving the world and recognise this as a serious concern, give your online community a reason to smile from time to time. This will present your project as being more approachable and relatable, plus it might give you a giggle too.

Put a time limit on it.

Most of the time people underestimate how much time it takes to maintain a social media presence. However, once you get started you may find that social media starts to eat into the time that you set aside to complete other tasks. Give yourself a time limit each day or week. Use scheduling features built in to social networks or rely on an app like Hootsuite to help you schedule your activity across networks over a period of time. Get in. Get out again. Live your life. Make time to do the work you need to do to build a more sustainable community offline.

Enjoy it.

If you're having fun with your social media it will never seem like a chore and your communication will be more interesting for others. Social media allows you to connect with like-minded people in your local area, nationally and globally. Get involved and be open to what you might discover.

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<https://www.facebook.com/getinvolvedlocal>

