2024

astho™

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT
FOR HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This social media toolkit was crafted to support health departments as they develop their communications strategy and overall strategic planning processes while exploring the realm of social media engagement. This social media toolkit provides tools to amplify an agency's reach in the community and elevate its perceived value to the public, policymakers, funders, and other stakeholders.

This guide acts as an introduction to cultivating a strong social media presence, mapping out the steps toward fortifying a more resilient online identity for health departments. It simplifies the process into manageable steps, offering a comprehensive roadmap toward effective social media engagement and planning. Continuously updated, the guide adapts to incorporate new insights and trends in social media engagement.

INTRODUCTION TO **SOCIAL MEDIA**

By 2024, you're likely well-acquainted with social media's pervasive influence. Serving as a pivotal means of connection, it deeply impacts our daily routines. We define social media as forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos).

Social media platforms are often divided into six categories: social networking, social bookmarking, social news, online forums, media sharing, and microblogging.

Social Networking

Refers to using internet based social media sites (such as Facebook) to stay connected with friends, family, colleagues, or customers.

Bookmarking

The process of tagging a website page with a browser based tool so that you can easily visit it again later.

Social News

A website (such as Reddit) that links to articles and content on the internet, allows the sender to vote as public, and helps filter out articles and contents that are deemed most interesting.

Online Forums

An internet space structured around and dedicated to conversation, usually through posting questions, answers, and responses.

Media Sharing

A website, such as YouTube, that enables users to store and share their multimedia files (photos, videos, music) with others.

Microblogging

A short blog post designed for quick and typically direct audience interactions. These concise blogs are shared using **social media** platforms like X or Instagram, and can include different content formats such as audio, text, images, or video.

1. Kenton W. "What Is Social Networking?" *Investopedia*. February 27, 2022. www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-networking.asp. Accessed February 22, 2024.
2. Science Direct. "Social News." Available at www.sciencedirect.com/topics/computer-science/social-news. Accessed February 22, 2024.
3. PCMAG. "Media sharing site." Available at www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia/term/media-sharing-site. Accessed February 22, 2024.
4. TechTarget. "What is Microblogging?" Available at www.techtarget.com/searchmobilecomputing/definition/microblogging. Accessed February 22, 2024.
5. Mighty. "What Is A Forum? A Beginner's Guide (Definition + Examples)." Available at www.mightynetworks.com/resources/online-forum. Accessed February 22, 2024.
6. Arens E. "What is Social Bookmarking?" *Sprout Social*. February 19, 2019. https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-bookmarking. Accessed February 22, 2024.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN BUSINESS

For businesses, social media has become a key marketing tool. Companies use social media to:

- Increase brand awareness.
- Build engaged communities.
- Advertise and sell products and services.
- Measure brand sentiment
- Provide customer service.
- Identify consumer trends.
- Track performance, collect consumer data, and adjust larger marketing strategies accordingly.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PUBLIC HEALTH

For public health agencies, leveraging social media parallels strategies employed by for profit businesses. While the objective isn't sales, the aim remains influencing behavior. Utilizing social platforms to spotlight your health department, foster community, and inspire healthy actions will underpin your social media endeavors.

We're witnessing a momentous shift where social media's role in communication strategies is paramount. As traditional news outlets wane, more individuals turn to social channels for information, particularly during health crises. With consumers increasingly tethered to online platforms, opportunities to engage abound, whether individuals are at home, commuting, or at work.

In a competitive realm, businesses, especially in the for profit sector, vie for differentiation. They strive to establish unique identities, appealing to consumers by championing societal values like environmentalism and diversity. Consumers demand that brands contribute meaningfully to positive change that transcends product sales.

In this landscape, your public health department holds a distinctive advantage. Your mission inherently aligns with fostering a healthier world.

Unlike for profit entities, your brand embodies a commitment to societal well being, garnering your genuine support from the outset.

1. Hootsuite. How to Create a Social Media Marketing Strategy in 9 Easy Steps. Available at https://blog.hootsuite.com/how_to_create_a_social_media_marketing_plan. Accessed February 22, 2024.
2. Pew Research Center. News Platform Fact Sheet. Available at www.pewresearch.org/journalism/fact_sheet/news_platform_fact_sheet. Accessed February 22, 2024.

PRIMED FOR IMPACT: **PREPARING FOR YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA JOURNEY**

Every piece of communication your health department puts out should be optimized for social media. To be effective at translating your message across platforms, you must understand your communications goals and the audience you are trying to reach. Additionally, unlike some other forms of communication, social media is almost always visual, and attention spans are short, making it imperative that you can communicate your point in a matter of seconds.

Before beginning to create a social media strategy:

Determine Your Capacity to Manage and Populate Social Media Accounts.

Do you need to hire? Do you need to train staff? Can you make a commitment to prioritizing social media initiatives?

Review Your Budget.

Can you afford a paid social media strategy, or common subscriptions needed for social media maintenance? Do you need additional funding streams?

CRAFTING YOUR DIGITAL PRESENCE:
BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE
SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

1 **Set S.M.A.R.T Communication Goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound)**

- Example: "Increase website traffic by X%."

- Example: "Increase awareness of the health department within a target community."
  (Note: this would be measured in reach or engagement).

2 **Learn Your Audience**

- Who are they currently, and who do you want to reach that you aren't currently? Think about demographic markers such as age, location, income, and interests, etc. Why are these individuals **not** interacting with your social media currently?

3 **Know Your Competitors**

- While it may seem like you're not engaged in traditional competition, the reality is quite the opposite! Your partners may share common goals, which is fantastic. However, you still aim to capture the community's attention on **your** social media platform to ensure your initiatives receive ample attendance and funding. While for-profit businesses in your community may operate in a different sphere, if their actions impact health behaviors, whether positively or negatively, they become your competitors.

- Conduct a competitive analysis or utilize social listening to learn more about the digital environment that surrounds you.

4 **Audit Existing Social Media Accounts**

Ask yourself a few of the following questions:
- What's working and what's not?
- Who is engaging with you?
- What are your most valuable partnerships?
- Which networks do your target audience use?
- How does your social media presence compare to the competition?

Once you answer these types of questions, you should be able to understand the purpose of each of your social media accounts (if it is unclear, you may not need them). To get further clarity, try asking these questions:
- Is my audience here?
- If so, how are they using this platform?
- Can I use this account to help achieve my goals?

Note: It is always better to run fewer accounts well than more accounts or platforms while feeling stretched thin.

5 **Set Up And/Or Optimize Existing Accounts**

- Decide which platforms to use and how to use them.
- Fill out all profile information (see tools & resource section for best practices).

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1. Hootsuite. "How to Create a Social Media Marketing Strategy in 9 Easy Steps." Available at https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-create-a-social-media-marketing-plan. Accessed February 22, 2024.

DECODING SOCIAL MEDIA DEMOGRAPHICS

Companies	Urban	Suburban	Rural
facebook	66%	68%	70%
Instagram	53%	49%	38%
LinkedIn	31%	36%	18%
X	25%	26%	13%
YouTube	85%	85%	77%
TikTok	36%	31%	33%

Companies	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian*
facebook	69%	64%	66%	67%
Instagram	43%	46%	58%	57%
LinkedIn	30%	29%	23%	45%
X	20%	23%	25%	37%
YouTube	81%	82%	86%	93%
TikTok	28%	39%	49%	29%

Companies	Rep/Lean Rep	Dem/Lean Dem
facebook	70%	67%
Instagram	43%	53%
LinkedIn	29%	34%
X	20%	26%
YouTube	82%	84%
TikTok	30%	36%

Companies	High school or less	Some college	College graduate+
facebook	63%	71%	70%
Instagram	37%	50%	55%
LinkedIn	10%	28%	53%
X	15%	24%	29%
YouTube	74%	85%	89%
TikTok	35%	38%	26%

Companies	Men	Women
facebook	59%	76%
Instagram	39%	54%
LinkedIn	31%	29%
X	26%	19%
YouTube	82%	83%
TikTok	25%	40%

Companies	<$30k	$30k $69.9k	$70k $99.9k	$100k+
facebook	63%	70%	74%	68%
Instagram	37%	46%	49%	54%
LinkedIn	13%	19%	34%	53%
X	18%	21%	20%	29%
YouTube	73%	83%	86%	89%
TikTok	36%	37%	34%	27%

Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

1. Pew Research Center. "Social Media Fact Sheet." Available at www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/?tabId=tab-5b319c90-7363-4881-8e6f-f98925683a2f. Accessed February 22, 2024..
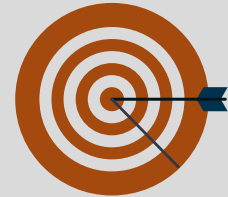
MASTERING MULTI-PLATFORM ENGAGEMENT: **BEST PRACTICES**

Consider limiting posts on the weekend.

Shorter text is better.

Text and imagery of a post should be tailored to the tone, audience, and correct dimensions of each platform.

Posts with images and video perform better.

Don't forget about accessibility—build in time to your post to ensure readability for all audiences.
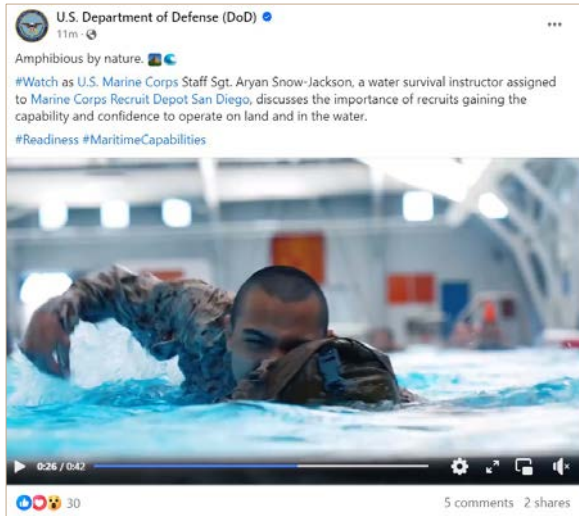
Always optimize posts to be mobile-first.

CONTENT STRATEGIES TO EXPERIMENT WITH

Discover these engaging public sector accounts! Learn from their successful content strategies to effectively engage audiences. They're proof that every account can spark interest and effectively convey its message.

→ Tell a Story

→ AMAs

A QUICK LIST:

1. Ask a question.
2. Post an Ask Me Anything (AMA).
3. Discuss trending topics and observances.
4. Tell a story.
5. Give tips.
6. Promote contests or giveaways.
7. Post countdowns.
8. Post round-ups.
9. Post listicles.
10. Employ episodic content.
11. Share a call to action (interactive content).
12. Share educational content.
13. Share branded graphics.
14. Share statistical graphics.
15. Share a behind the scenes post (BTS).

1. West C. "15 Facebook post ideas to increase engagement." *Sprout Social*. April 23, 2020. https://sproutsocial.com/insights/facebook-posting-tips/. Accessed February 22, 2024.
2. Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego Swim Training. #Watch as U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Aryan Snow-Jackson, a water survival instructor assigned to Marine Corps Recruit Depot... | By U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) | Facebook. www.facebook.com. Accessed February 23, 2024.. https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3729730174016868.
3. NASA (@NASA) | x. x.com. Published 2007. https://x.com/nasa
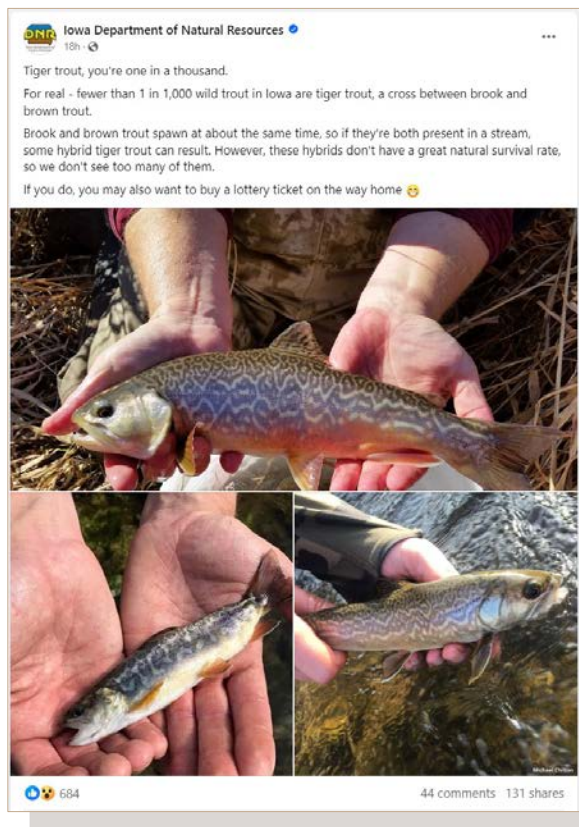
CONTENT STRATEGIES TO EXPERIMENT WITH

↦ Trending Topics or Observances

↦ Call To Action or Interactive Content

↦ Educational Content

1. West C. 15 Facebook post ideas to increase engagement. Sprout Social. Published April 23, 2020. https://sproutsocial.com/insights/facebook-posting-tips/
2. Instagram. www.instagram.com. Accessed February 23, 2024. https://www.instagram.com/p/C3NvBUgRC2u/?hl=en
3. Facebook. www.facebook.com. Accessed February 23, 2024. https://www.facebook.com/iowadnr/
4. Instagram. www.instagram.com. Accessed February 23, 2024. https://www.instagram.com/p/C3IpUJmxZ_A/?hl=en

CONTENT STRATEGIES TO EXPERIMENT WITH

→ Tips

→ BTS

1. X. https://x.com/. Accessed February 23, 2024. https://www.x.com/USCPSC
2. Instagram. www.instagram.com. Accessed February 23, 2024. https://www.instagram.com/p/C3qNkeMhAV6/
3. West C. 15 Facebook post ideas to increase engagement. Sprout Social. Published April 23, 2020. https://sproutsocial.com/insights/facebook-posting-tips/
4. Hazmat Team - A Day in the Life. www.youtube.com. Accessed February 23, 2024. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qt3XuzMNK8k
5. Facebook. www.facebook.com. Accessed February 23, 2024. https://www.facebook.com/NewJerseyDOT

FACEBOOK
FUNDAMENTALS

Platform 101

Key Statistics at a Glance

- Facebook is the second most utilized social media website in the United States as of 2023, with **68%** of Americans using the app.
- Facebook use is declining among teenagers, with only **33%** having an active account.
- Posts with images have the highest level of engagement.
- Link posts have the lowest engagement rate.
- The average Facebook user spends **20 hours** a month on the website.
- The average engagement rate for government is **1.51%**.

Maximizing Facebook Engagement:
Timing, Target Audience, And Content Style

Who to Target: 30–49-Year-Olds
Facebook has a reputation of catering to older demographics, and while there are many active Baby Boomer communities, the platform tends to be utilized more often by users in their 30s. The platform is often accessed for specific needs— e.g., mommy groups, buy/sell items, etc.—rather than for general scrolling.

Style of Content
This social media platform excels in handling longform posts (heavy copy), but its best-performing posts typically feature a visual element and short, clear copy with a concise takeaway.

Sample Strategies for Health Departments
Post Q&A sessions with health experts, share behind the scenes glimpses of daily operations to humanize state health efforts, and utilize interactive polls and quizzes to educate and engage the community effectively on health-related topics.

Best Time to Post
Mondays from **11 a.m.** to **1 p.m.**
Tuesdays from **10 a.m.** to **4 p.m.**
Wednesdays from **11 a.m.** to **1 p.m.**

Review your analytics! This is the trend by sector, but different dates and times may result in more engagement for **your** audience.

Best Practices

- Content on the platform can be highly political, so utilize neutral language.
- Explore Facebook groups to understand communities.
- Stay away from trends.
- Engage in the comments.
- Avoid hashtags.
- Tag relevant partners and ask for reshares.

1. Gottfried J. "Americans' Social Media Use." *Pew Research Center*. January 31, 2024. https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2024/01/31/americans-social-media-use/#:~:text=While%20a%20somewhat%20lower%20share. Accessed February 26, 2024.

2. McLachlan S. "45 Facebook Statistics Marketers Need to Know in 2024." *Hootsuite.* January 11, 2024. https://blog.hootsuite.com/facebook-statistics. Accessed February 26, 2024.

3. Keutelian M. "Best times to post on Facebook in 2024." *Sprout Social*. April 15, 2024. https://sproutsocial.com/insights/best-times-to-post-on-facebook/#nonprofits. Accessed February 26, 2024.

INSTAGRAM
FUNDAMENTALS

Platform 101

Key Statistics at a Glance

- Instagram is the third most utilized social media application in the United States as of 2024, with **47%** of Americans using the app.
- Instagram Reels (and Facebook Stories via integrated in-app cross promotion) are the most popular format to share content via direct message.
- For business accounts, carousel posts have the highest level of engagement.
- The average Instagram user spends **12 hours** a month on the app.
- The average engagement rate for government is **1.92%**.

Maximizing Facebook Engagement:
Timing, Target Audience, And Content Style

Who to Target: 18–29-Year-Olds
More women than men utilize the platform. Although originally geared towards a younger demographic, the app is experiencing a decline in usage among young teenagers. Instagram emphasizes an individual's peer network more than other similar apps, such as TikTok, making it an ideal platform for sharing life updates.

Style of Content
This platform boasts one of the most product-heavy environments, with a strong presence of brands. Advertising and influencer partnerships play a significant role, creating a social media platform perfectly primed for marketing goods to consumers.
The gold standard on this platform is aspirational and glossy imagery, rather than "real" or unpolished depictions of life.

Sample Strategies for Health Departments
Partner with local influencers or health advocates to amplify messaging, share visually compelling and informative infographics or carousels, and utilize Instagram Stories to provide quick health tips, updates, and behind the scenes glimpses of health department work.

Best Time to Post

Monday from **11 a.m.** to **2 p.m.**
Tuesdays from **10 a.m.** to **4 p.m.**
Wednesdays from **9 a.m.** to **4 p.m.**
Thursdays from **9 a.m.** to **1 p.m.** and **2 p.m.**
Fridays at **11 a.m.**

BEST PRACTICES

- Post often.
- Use Instagram Reels.
- Be interactive.
- Be mindful of time sensitivity.
- Tag others in your posts.
- Respond to followers.
- Emphasize your agency's beliefs and values.

1. Statista. "Distribution of Instagram users in the United States as of January 2024, by age group. Available at www.statista.com/statistics/398166/us-instagram-user-age-distribution. Accessed February 26, 2024.

2. Newberry C. "Social Media Benchmarks: Q4 2023 [Data & Tips]." *Hootsuite.* January 17, 2024. https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-benchmarks. Accessed February 26, 2024.

3. McLachlan S. "35 Instagram Statistics That Matter to Marketers in 2024." *Hootsuite.* November 21, 2023. https://blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-statistics/ . Accessed February 26, 2024.

4. Keutelian M. "Best times to post on Instagram 2024." Sprout Social. April 15, 2024. https://sproutsocial.com/insights/best-times-to-post-on-instagram/. Accessed August 12, 2024.

X FUNDAMENTALS

Platform 101

Key Statistics at a Glance

- X is the ninth most utilized social media website in the United States as of 2024, with **22%** of Americans using the social media website.
- Usage of X is growing **30%** faster among Generation Z compared to Instagram.
- X has the largest gender gap of the social media platforms, leaning in favor of male users.
- X is the most popular platform for news and media updates.
- Posts with videos have the highest level of engagement.
- The average X user spends **4.4 hours** a month on the website.
- The average engagement rate for government is **1.31%.**

Maximizing Facebook Engagement:
Timing, Target Audience, And Content Style

Who to Target: 18–29-Year-Olds
Income and education are crucial factors that impact X's user base, with users typically having higher levels of both. As the platform is oriented toward news media and politics, users predominantly utilize it to engage in larger-scale dialogues or to learn, rather than for connecting with friends and family. X also serves an important function in some individuals' work lives, akin to LinkedIn, providing a platform for professionals to connect and stay updated on industry-related matters.

Style of Content
Content on X should be concise, with a clear point of view and an impactful tone. Since users often skim the platform for headlines and quick bites of information, there's constant competition for limited attention.

Sample Strategies for Health Departments
Host X takeovers, engaging public health professionals, community leaders, or influencers to temporarily take control of your account to share their expertise. Host health challenges that encourage your followers to participate in health-oriented challenges that promote tips, progress, and experiences using a designated hashtag. Utilize Tweet Threads to delve into complex topics and offer resources or expertise.

Best Time to Post
Mondays from **10 a.m.** to **3 p.m.**
Tuesdays from **9 a.m.** to **5 p.m.** and at **8 p.m.**
Wednesdays from **9 a.m.** to **3 p.m.**
Thursdays from **9 a.m.** to **5 p.m.**
Fridays from **10 a.m.** to **noon**

Best Practices

- Concerns about X's future are real, but it's still an important platform for rapid communications.
- Move away from advertising on this platform.
- Write original content.
- Don't be afraid to be bold.
- There is no edit button except for premium users; link out to other tweets/outside links/other campaigns.

1. Martin M. "36 X (Twitter) Stats That Matter to Marketers in 2024." *Hootsuite.* April 3, 2024. https://blog.hootsuite.com/twitter-statistics. Accessed February 26, 2024.
2. Mikolajczyk K. "Average Engagement Rates for 12 Industries [January 2024]." *Hootsuite.* February 12, 2024. https://blog.hootsuite.com/average-engagement-rate. Accessed February 26, 2024.
3. Keutelian M. "The best times to post on Twitter (X) in 2024." *Sprout Social.* April 15, 2024. https://sproutsocial.com/insights/best-times-to-post-on-twitter. Accessed February 26, 2024.

TIKTOK
FUNDAMENTALS

Platform 101

Key Statistics at a Glance

- TikTok is the fifth most utilized social media website in the United States as of 2024, with 33% of Americans using the app.
- TikTok continues to see the most platform growth over recent years, with an increase of 12% since 2021.
- Tutorials are the most popular form of content.
- TikTok is not a good fit for the public sector due to bans.
- 40% of Americans use TikTok as a search engine.
- 43% of users get news on the app
- The average TikTok user spends 23 hours a month on the website.
- The average engagement rate for government is 0.68%.

Maximizing Facebook Engagement:
Timing, Target Audience, And Content Style

Who to Target: Under 30 Years Old With Emphasis on Children and Teenagers

Two-thirds of U.S. teenagers are daily TikTok users, indicating widespread adoption among younger generations, who often describe themselves as being online "constantly." While the platform is also used by older demographics, its primary user base skews heavily toward Generation Alpha, Generation Z, and Millennials.

Style of Content

The most engaged-with content on TikTok heavily follows internet trends, blending high-quality videos with sounds that reflect the current cultural moment and offering a unique perspective. Users are drawn to the platform for entertainment, education, search, and product research purposes.

Sample Strategies for Health Departments

Test out educational challenges, such as trying a healthy recipe, a workout, or destressing technique. Use the power of storytelling through short videos, focusing on public health success stories or individuals creating an impact in their community, or try a myth busting series that dispels common misinformation.

Best Time to Post
Tuesdays from **3** to **5 p.m.**

Best Practices

- Be mindful of the TikTok ban on public devices.
- Share content through trusted partners.
- Use high quality video.
- Utilize niche hashtags.
- Engage with trends wisely.
- Use calls to action that promote engagement.
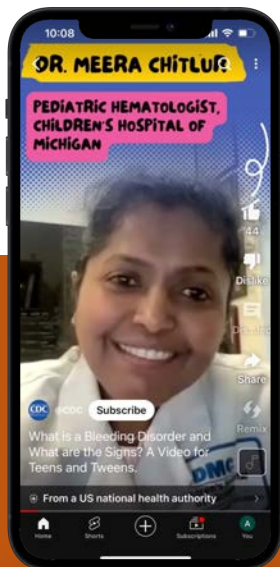- Cross promote across platforms.
- Use the Duet/Stitch features.

1. Mikolajczyk K. "Average Engagement Rates for 12 Industries [January 2024]." *Hootsuite*. Published February 12, 2024. https://blog.hootsuite.com/average-engagement-rate. Accessed February 26, 2024.
2. Macready H. "37 Important TikTok Stats Marketers Need to Know [2024]." *Hootsuite.* January 30, 2024. https://blog.hootsuite.com/tiktok-stats. Accessed February 26, 2024.
3. Matsa KE. "More Americans are getting news on TikTok, bucking the trend seen on most other social media sites." *Pew Research Center*. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/11/15/more-americans-are-getting-news-on-tiktok-bucking-the-trend-seen-on-most-other-social-media-sites/#:~:text=Among%20adults%2C%20those%20ages%2018. Accessed February 26, 2024.
4. Keutelian M. "Best times to post on TikTok in 2024." *Sprout Social.* April 5, 2024. https://sproutsocial.com/insights/best-times-to-post-on-tiktok/#nonprofits. Accessed February 26, 2024.

YOUTUBE
FUNDAMENTALS

Platform 101

Maximizing Facebook Engagement:
Timing, Target Audience, And Content Style

Key Statistics at a Glance

- YouTube is the most utilized social media website in the United States as of 2024, with 83% of Americans using the social media website.
- YouTube functions more like a search engine (like Google but with videos only) rather than a traditional social media website.
- Every minute, around 500 hours of video content are uploaded to YouTube.
- More than 70% of YouTube watch time comes from mobile devices.
- The platform reaches more 18–49-year-olds in the U.S. than any TV network, cable, or broadcast.
- The average YouTube user spends 26 hours a month on the website.

Who to target: 18–49-Year-Olds
Users of YouTube vary. Many users utilize the platform for a specific purpose—e.g., to listen to a song or look up a how-to video—and then leave the site. Other users have interests and niches—such as beauty or gaming—and they watch and explore on the site for longer periods of time.

Style of Content
The platform is less social in nature because it isn't linked to friends or family, and there are limited ways to engage directly with content (beyond sharing or commenting).

Sample Strategies for Health Departments
Try creating mini-documentaries that feature local health initiatives or success stories, or create an interactive Q&A series where users submit health questions and experts answer.

Best Time to Post
Fridays from **3 p.m.** to **4 p.m.**
Tuesdays at **2 p.m.**
Thursdays at **6 p.m.**

Best Practices

- SEO is important: Optimize keywords in titles and descriptions.
- Keep titles short.
- Quality video is important.
- Utilize short form video content for YouTube Shorts.

- Link to other social media websites.
- Use playlists.
- Set channel tags.
- Design an attractive thumbnail.
- Utilize YouTube's automatic captions for accessibility.

1. Statista. "Monthly time spent on the YouTube mobile app per user in selected markets worldwide in 2023. Available at www.statista.com/statistics/1287283/time-spent-youtube-app-selected-countries. Accessed February 26, 2024.

FOUNDATIONS OF PAID SOCIAL MEDIA PLANNING

In addition to your organic (or non-paid) social media strategy, your agency would benefit from creating a modest paid social media strategy. There are several benefits to paid social media, such as:

Provides guaranteed reach of your audience.	Allows you to target your desired audience.	Gives greater insights into analytics, helping you understand your audience and their behavior better.

A paid social media campaign can be initiated with as little as a few dollars. As with any strategy, a paid social media plan yields better results when structured with clear objectives, metrics, budgets, and timelines.
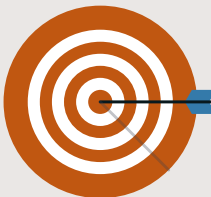
To run a successful simple, paid social campaign, follow these guiding principles:

Ensure that your account is well-established and receives organic engagement. Posting ads from a dormant account can trigger concerns among users.

Conduct an audit of your organic social media posts. Identify those with the highest engagement rates and use them as models for your paid posts.

Establish a budget and define clear objectives for your campaign.

Prioritize platforms that best align with your overarching goals.

Utilize social media analytics to optimize ads during their run, and review ads after completion for future best practices.

1. Barnhart B. "Paid social 101: The basics of running effective ads." *Sprout Social*. March 29, 2021. https://sproutsocial.com/insights/paid-social-101. February 26, 2024.

ELEVATING YOUR PAID SOCIAL STRATEGY: **ADVANCED TACTICS FOR SUCCESS**

After running a few straightforward campaigns or promoting several posts, you might start feeling confident enough to delve deeper into the potentials of paid social media. Paid social is a huge factor on select platforms (like X). As you gain experience, consider expanding your knowledge by exploring, testing, and experimenting with the following tactics:

1 Audience Targeting

Refine your target audience based on demographics, interests, behavior, and other relevant criteria to ensure your ads reach the right people.

2 Ad Creation

Develop compelling ad creatives that resonate with your target audience and align with your campaign objectives. This may include images, videos, ad copy, and calls to action.

3 Ad Placement

Explore the most appropriate ad placements on social media platforms to maximize visibility and engagement. Consider factors such as newsfeed ads, stories, sponsored content, and sidebar placements.

4 Campaign Optimization

Continuously monitor the performance of your ads and adjust as needed to improve results. This may involve tweaking targeting parameters, refining ad creatives, or reallocating budget towards high-performing ads.

5 Tracking and Measurement

Implement tracking mechanisms to monitor key performance metrics such as click-through rates and conversion rates.

6 Testing and Experimentation

Experiment with different ad formats, messaging strategies, and targeting options to identify what resonates best with your audience. A/B testing can help you optimize your campaigns and refine your approach over time.

7 Scaling and Expansion

Once you've identified successful tactics and strategies, consider scaling up your campaigns to reach a broader audience or expanding into new markets or platforms.

CHEAT SHEET:
SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS

For a health department, comprehending and utilizing metrics and analytics is crucial for any social media campaign. This work offers valuable insights into community engagement, the effectiveness of health messaging, and the impact of public health initiatives. Leveraging this data can enable a department to make informed decisions, tailor interventions, and effectively communicate vital health information, ultimately contributing to the promotion of community well-being and disease prevention efforts. See below for a few common types of engagement metrics and how to utilize them for your social accounts:

Engagement:

Measure likes, comments, shares, and retweets to gauge audience interaction with your content.

Reach and Impressions:

Track the number of unique users who see your content (reach) and the total number of times your content is displayed (impressions).

Click-Through Rate:

Calculate the percentage of users who click on a link or call-to-action in your post relative to the number of impressions.
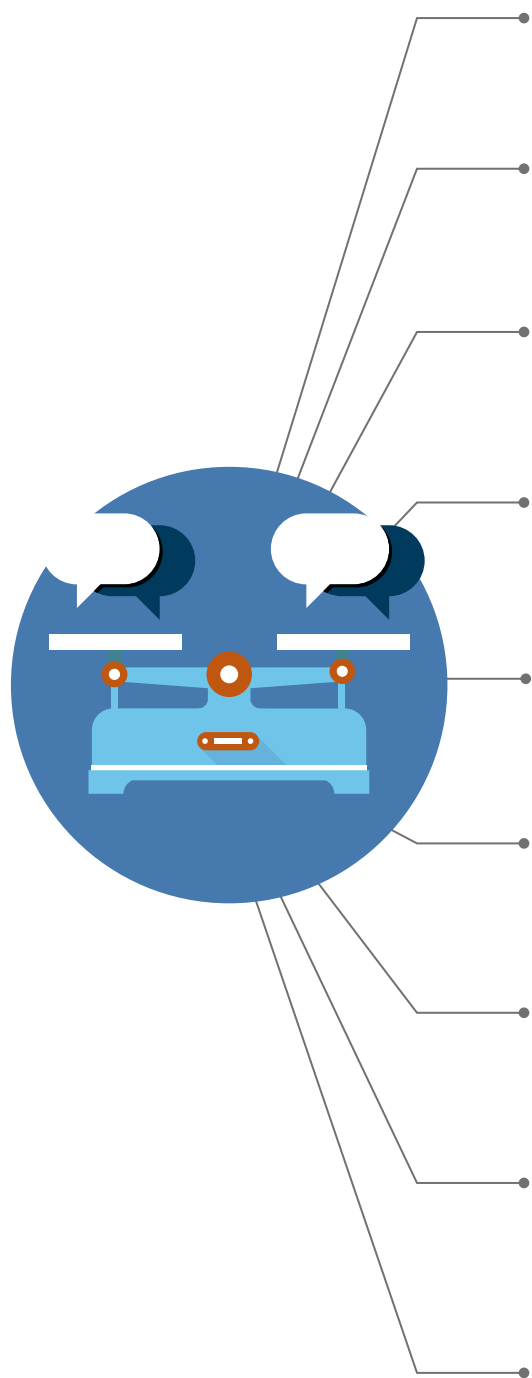
Follower Growth:

Monitor the growth of your social media audience over time to assess the effectiveness of your content and engagement efforts.

Conversion Metrics:

Evaluate the number of users who take desired actions, such as signing up for a newsletter or filling out a form.

A FEW PRACTICAL WAYS TO UTILIZE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PUBLIC HEALTH INTERVENTIONS

Sentiment Analysis: Evaluate the sentiment (positive, negative, neutral) surrounding health-related discussions to gauge public perception toward health campaigns and initiatives.

Health Literacy Metrics: Measure the level of health literacy among your audience by analyzing engagement with educational content, understanding of health messages, and the ability to take appropriate health actions.

Behavioral Change Tracking: Track changes in health-related behaviors among your audience, such as smoking cessation, physical activity levels, or dietary habits, to assess the impact of health campaigns on behavior change.

Impact Assessment: Conduct surveys or focus groups to assess the real-world impact of health campaigns on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to specific health issues or public health interventions.
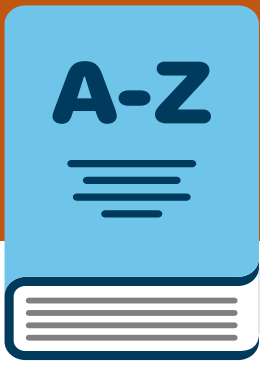
Community Engagement Index: Develop a community engagement index to quantify the level of engagement and interaction with your health department's social media content, taking into account factors such as likes, shares, comments, and mentions.

Public Health Outcomes: Measure the ultimate outcomes of health campaigns, such as changes in disease prevalence, vaccination rates, emergency room visits, or hospital admissions, to evaluate the effectiveness of public health interventions.

Partnership and Collaboration Metrics: Track engagement and collaboration with community partners, influencers, and stakeholders to assess the reach and effectiveness of collaborative health promotion efforts.

Cost-effectiveness Analysis: Conduct cost-effectiveness analysis to evaluate the return on investment of social media campaigns compared to traditional outreach methods, such as print materials or community events.

Continuous Improvement Strategies: Use insights from advanced metrics to inform continuous improvement strategies, refine messaging, target interventions more effectively, and allocate resources efficiently to maximize the impact of health department social media efforts.

Organic Social Media:
Free, non-paid content shared on social media platforms.

Paid Social Media:
A method of displaying advertisements or sponsored marketing messages on popular social media platforms and targeting a specific sub-audience.

Social Media Audit:
A process used to measure the success of your social strategy across accounts and networks.

Social Media Listening:
The process of analyzing online conversations about your brand and your industry at large to find out more about your audience.

Social Media Marketing:
The use of social media platforms to connect with your audience to build your brand, increase sales, and drive website traffic.

User Generated Content:
Unpaid or unsponsored content your customers create related to your brand—think reviews, photos, videos and even social posts.

1. Buffer. "What Is Social Media Marketing?" Available at https://buffer.com/social-media-marketing. Accessed February 24, 2024.
2. Coursera. "Social Listening: Definition, Tools, and Strategies for Business Growth." Available at www.coursera.org/articles/social-listening. Accessed February 24, 2024.
3. Martin M. "How to Run the Easiest Social Media Audit [FREE TEMPLATE]." *Hootsuite*. November 2, 2022. https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-audit-template/#:~:text=A%20social%20media%20audit%20is%20a%20process%20used%20to%20measure. Accessed February 24, 2024.
4. Shahid K. "User Generated Content: 5 Steps to Turn Customers Into Advocates." *Sprout Social*. November 28, 2023. https://sproutsocial.com/insights/user-generated-content-guide. Accessed February 24, 2024.
5. Coleman B. "Paid Social Media: Worth The Investment?"*Hubspot*. https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/paid-social-media#:~:text=Paid%20social%20media%20is%20a. Accessed February 24, 2024.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

To Create and Optimize a Social Media Account:

Use these tools to set up a social media account for your health department that follows the current best practices to ensure optimal growth and engagement for your profile.

Create a Facebook Business Page

https://blog.hootsuite.com/steps to create a facebook business page/

Create an Instagram Business Account

https://blog.hootsuite.com/how to use instagram for business/#howto/

Create a TikTok Business Account

https://blog.hootsuite.com/how to use tiktok/

Draft a Strong X Bio

https://blog.hootsuite.com/twitter bio ideas/

Create A Snapchat Account

https://blog.hootsuite.com/how to use snapchat beginners guide/#account

Create a LinkedIn Company Page

https://blog.hootsuite.com/linkedin company page business guide/

Create a Pinterest Business Account

https://blog.hootsuite.com/how to use pinterest for business/

Create a YouTube Channel

https://blog.hootsuite.com/how to create a youtube account channel/

TOOLS & RESOURCES

To Schedule a Social Media Post:

Use these tools to improve timing, content planning, account management, consistency, analytics, and preparation.
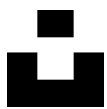
Socialbee
https://socialbee.com

Pallyy
https://pallyy.com

SocialPilot
https://www.socialpilot.co

Sprout Social
https://sproutsocial.com

Buffer
https://buffer.com

To Find Compelling Imagery and Video:

Use these tools to find high quality imagery for social media posts.

Unsplash
https://unsplash.com

Pexels
https://www.pexels.com

Nappy
https://nappy.co

iStock
https://www.istockphoto.com

TOOLS & RESOURCES

To Design a Social Media Post:

To create customized assets for print and digital that stand out and have a clear visual story.

Canva
https://www.canva.com

Adobe Express
https://www.adobe.com/express/

Pablo By Buffer
https://pablo.buffer.com

Vista Create
https://create.vista.com

To Review Social Media Metrics:

Use these tools to gain deeper insights on data surrounding social media.

Hootsuite
https://www.hootsuite.com

Meltwater
https://www.meltwater.com

Sendible
https://www.sendible.com

ADDITIONAL
HOW-TOS

How to Find the Correct Dimensions for Your Social Media Post

https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-image-sizes-guide/

How to Perform a Social Media Audit

Https://Blog.Hootsuite.Com/Social-media-audit-template/

How to Set a Social Media Budget

https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-budget/