

# Getting Social: The Dos and Don'ts of Establishing Your Company's Social Media Presence



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Let's be realistic—today, if you want a successful publication business, whether it's a group of journals or just one, social media usage isn't really a choice. It's a must.

The statistics don't lie; according to a recent study from the Pew Research Center, about three of every four American internet-using adults (and about 65% of all internet-using adults) use at least one social media site. Gone are the days when social media was just how teenagers communicated with each other about hot gossip—it is now a part of the business world that's fully engrained into our everyday lives, and it's not going anywhere. And if your business happens to be a journal or group of journals, you're certainly no exception.

But there's also a right way and a wrong way to promote your journal using social media. Go about it correctly, and you're likely to see your business picking up steam pretty rapidly. Go about it the wrong way, and you might get yourself into a hole that you may not be able to climb out of.

That being said, there are a few essential dos and don'ts when it comes to promoting your journal *via* social media outlets. First, the things that always should be done:

1. *Designate at least one person in your company to handle social media.* Does this person need to be a complete expert on everything relating to the Internet and technology? Not at all. However, he/she should probably have at least some background in sales/marketing using the Internet. If your company has the budgetary means to do so, it probably wouldn't hurt to hire someone solely for this purpose, but, again, it's not absolutely

mandatory. It is, though, crucial to have someone (or, in a smaller company, perhaps a small group of people) who can devote a substantial amount of time to tracking how many people are engaging with your journal through social media outlets and finding ways to increase those numbers if need be.

This person or people should also be skilled in coming up with posts that are catchy and that cover all the necessary information without being overly wordy. Not many people want to take the time to read page-long social media posts (in the case of Twitter, there's even a character limit to keep this from happening), but it's still critical to include enough detail to spark a viewer's attention. In some cases, using a combination of words and images (particularly with Facebook/Instagram) is more effective. In any event, whoever is designated to updating the team's social media platforms should be proficient on these grounds.

2. *Use analytics tools to measure social media traffic.* Many social media outlets include services, most of which are free of charge, that measure how often people are actually visiting the links and pages that you post to your pages—a critical element to how well your company is being promoted. With Facebook Metrics, for instance, you can quickly determine the number of people who have seen a Facebook post, the number of times a person clicked any link(s) in that post, or the percentage of people who saw the post who took the time to hit the "like" button, share it, *etc.* Twitter provides a similar service, which measures, for example, how many times your journal's handle is mentioned in others' tweets.

A number of free third-party services also exist that can be linked to your company social media page(s) to help analyze your social media audience. No matter which route you choose to go, using this kind of tool is critical to increasing your page's hits, as well as upping the number of visitors who are actually interacting with the page.

3. *Take time to hit the “like” button on other companies’ social media pages.* Think about it—when you’re on social media for your personal use, every time you hit the “like” button, your name shows up on the other person’s page. So, if the person at the other end sees your “like,” he/she has immediate access to your page.

It works the same way with professional social media pages, and it’s a great way to get your name out there quickly and efficiently. While logged into your business profile, browse around the various social media outlets, and find the pages for journals/companies that are similar to your own. Hit the “like” button and/or leave comments (keeping them professional, of course), so that others within your target field will be able to click on your company name and see your page.

4. *Set a schedule for posting to social media sites.* There’s a delicate balancing act when it comes to how often your journal is sharing material on social media. If you don’t use it enough, the page isn’t going to pick up steam or gain sufficient followers. On the other hand, if you post too much too quickly, that’s not going to be productive either because no follower is going to take the time to read/engage with a new social media post every few minutes.

It is therefore necessary for your company to decide, as a team, on a concrete schedule for when social media pages will be updated, how they will be updated, and who will be doing the updating. Once you’ve decided on that timetable, stick to it—although you might need to modify it every few months or so depending on its efficiency and success (or lack thereof).

Those are the “dos” of social media in terms of journal promotion—so, what about the “don’ts”? Well, there are plenty of those too, some of which can arguably be considered even more important to a successful journal than the “do” part of the equation:

1. *Don’t use your personal social media page to promote your journal/editorial company.* I imagine that some might disagree with me on this point—posting the latest news about your business to your personal page is a great way to get the word out about your journal to everyone on your friend/follower list, right? Maybe, but I have always been, and will always be, of the opinion that it’s just not a good idea to mix your personal life with your professional life when it comes to the Internet—it’s just too risky. Many of us have our own online social media personas outside of work, and that’s fine, but mixing that part of your identity with your professional one is playing with fire. Although it is sometimes necessary to log into your personal social

media account to set up the business account, there’s no reason to link one to the other. There are plenty of ways to promote your business’ social media presence other than on your personal social media profiles; use them instead.

2. *Don’t try to compete with journals/companies that have been around significantly longer than yours.* It’s no doubt annoying to see a competing journal’s Facebook or Instagram page generating hundreds or even thousands of “likes,” while your company barely makes it into the double digits. If your company is just getting off the ground, or if you’ve been around for a while but have just recently hopped on the social media train, you’re just not going to get there overnight. Getting to that point takes time (which might mean months or even years, as frustrating as that might sound) and effort.

Oftentimes, it also takes trial and error—you must navigate all sorts of variables. For instance, certain types of content might be wildly popular on your social media pages, while other types don’t attract much interest at all; it might be awhile before you can figure out what’s engaging with your audience and what isn’t. It may take just as long, if not longer, to pinpoint exactly who your target audience is, along with how to effectively reach everyone in that demographic. More than likely, your publication will appeal to people who are in a certain age range, profession, etc., and tailoring your social media posts to those specific groups is a (sometimes involved) process.

3. *Don’t limit yourself to one particular audience demographic.* If your journal is a scientific magazine, chances are you’re looking to reach other scientists, and that’s completely fair. At the same time, keep an open mind as to who might be more likely to engage with your journal’s social media posts.

For example, a medical journal probably is going to be geared primarily toward physicians, but what about patients? Your content might be just as relevant to them, if not more so. It’s therefore important, when you’re posting to your journal/company page, to use language that is likely to appeal to those who have no formal medical training but who can still use the information in your publication.

And then there’s also pharmaceutical specialists; their role is substantially different from that of a doctor, but that doesn’t mean they wouldn’t also be interested in what your journal has to say. So when you’re crafting posts for the journal Facebook or Twitter page, don’t forget to include language that might appeal to that possible target audience.

Don’t get me wrong—I’m not trying to say that social media can, or should, ever replace more tried and true

techniques for getting your journal's name out there. The "old fashioned" methods, such as advertising, face-to-face networking events, and business cards, must always be kept on the table.

Social media, while not the only ingredient in successful journal promotion, is an essential one; the key is find-

ing the right balance between that and the strategies that existed prior. And while that balance is not something that any company is going to be able to find right away, it's never too late to implement the steps necessary to getting started.

## Committee Update

### 2017 European Conference

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The European Meeting Planning Committee is excited to announce the 2017 meeting will take place in London at the Cophorne Tara Hotel in Kensington on November 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>. Public transportation is excellent with an underground tube station just two minutes away from the hotel for your convenience.

The topic for this year's meeting is "Empowering editorial offices around the world," and the committee is busy putting together an exciting itinerary. The meeting will feature an engaging mix of practical workshops, presentations, and discussion groups.

2017 is a special year because it is ISMTE's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This milestone will be celebrated at the European conference—I can confirm there will be cake!

More details will follow nearer to the date of the meeting. Please check our [website](#) for updated information.

## Join an ISMTE Local Group today!

ISMTE Local Groups have formed through the efforts of members who would like to meet with peers and colleagues in their local area for networking and discussion. Participation is not limited to ISMTE members, and the only cost associated with participation will be your meal, if the group meets at a restaurant.

Active Groups:

- Boston, Massachusetts
- Chicagoland Area
- Heidelberg, Germany
- New York, New York
- North Carolina - Research Triangle Park Area
- Oxford, United Kingdom
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Rochester, New York
- Washington, DC Area
- Tokyo, Japan
- London, United Kingdom (NEW)

Visit the [ISMTE Local Groups page](#) to join a local group or to find more information.