**OPTA Guidelines for Using Social Media**

*Help us create meaningful dialogue with our members!*

**Introduction**

Social media affords the Ohio Physical Therapy Association (OPTA) the opportunity to evolve how it communicates with its members, moving from mostly monologue to a more interactive and engaging dialogue. Social media is a tool OPTA has chosen to leverage to actively listen to and learn more about its members, in an effort to create policies, products, and services that better meet members’ needs.

The guidelines are meant to be a dynamic set of ideas that will enhance your experience on our social media sites. New online norms will emerge, just as others will recede.

**Objectives**

What are some core objectives of an effective social media strategy?

- Build relationships with existing and prospective members
- Influence potential consumers and drive new business
- Create brand awareness, i.e. member benefits
- Communicate with a much larger, global audience
- Create validation and increase credibility by encouraging feedback/comments
- Increase visits and traffic on OhioPT.org website
- Establish thought leadership to promote our mission of providing the driving force for advancing physical therapy practice.

**Creating and Managing an OPTA-Affiliated Profile**

The OPTA strives to maintain consistency and oversight in its social media strategy. Before creating social media sites for your District or SIG, spend some time determining what you want to accomplish. Understanding this will help you choose the appropriate tools, create relevant content and understand the best way to reach your target audience.

For a group to be recognized by OPTA as an official social media account, the group administrators must seek approval from the association. Your account will be added to the official list of social media accounts held by the association.

All social media accounts recognized by OPTA Districts and/or SIGs must have an OPTA staff member as co-administrator at all times. Administrators are held responsible for managing and monitoring content on their officially recognized social media sites and are responsible for removing content that may violate OPTA’s conduct policies.

The OPTA logo is trademarked, and the OPTA must approve use. The logo cannot be altered.
Platforms

Facebook
The OPTA Facebook page is open to the public. Groups or sections wishing to start a Facebook page should title it the “The Ohio Physical Therapy Association: [Insert District or SIG]” and should contact OPTA request an OPTA logo and custom background.

Twitter
The OPTA Twitter feed is open to the public. Groups or sections wishing to start a Twitter account should contact OPTA to determine appropriate Twitter handle and should contact OPTA to request an OPTA logo and custom background.

Instagram
The OPTA Instagram feed is open to the public. Groups or sections wishing to start an Instagram account should contact OPTA to determine appropriate Instagram handle and should contact OPTA to request an OPTA logo and custom background.

LinkedIn
The OPTA LinkedIn group is for members only. Individual LinkedIn groups for Districts or SIGS are prohibited, as OPTA can host subgroups within its parent group. If you are interested in setting up a subgroup please contact us.

If you are setting up a social media profile for your district or SIG, please let us know so we can support you. We have a marketing and communications staff that will assist you as needed.

Monitoring of Social Media

The Ohio Physical Therapy Association (OPTA) monitors posts and comments to the OPTA social media communities. The association reserves the right to remove any material without obligation to defend that action. The association will respond to posts when appropriate. However, it is not responsible for any unanswered posts or inaccurate information posted by others. For the most accurate information about OPTA, visit OPTA’s website.

A member of the OPTA staff will be included as an administrator on any social networking site that is moderated and maintained as an official presence of OPTA. This ensures that these networks are managed when staff members leave and allows us to communicate efficiently during an emergency as well as track usage and quickly remove content that violates these guidelines or any applicable laws. The administrators reserve the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of these social media guidelines or any applicable laws.

Have a backup system. Make sure you have a social media back up system in place. If the person who generally handles social media is out of the office, someone else on the team should have log in access and be trained on how to monitor and update the pages.

Post a disclaimer, such as: Users are fully responsible for any content they load on any of OPTA’s social media sites. Comments posted here do not represent the opinions of OPTA; all content, information, views and/or opinions expressed on or within the social media pages belong to the individual(s) authoring that content, and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of OPTA.
Respect Others (& Keep it Clean)

Sexist, racist, libelous and other discriminatory comments or images will be removed immediately. Users are free to discuss topics and disagree with another, but please be respectful of others' opinions and don't resort to personal attacks—even those made in jest.

Speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, or acts and statements or other forms of speech that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, any religion, or any protected classes of individuals will not be tolerated.

Users are not permitted to publish or post false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization.

Do not post offensive, obscene or sexually explicit language or photos. Acronyms referring to this kind of language and such words or phrases in other languages will not be tolerated. Posts will be removed immediately without notice. OPTA will also remove any posts that refer to illegal activity. Remember, much of what is put on the Internet remains there forever. Consider whether you would be embarrassed if your employer or future employers were to discover it.

And...Carefully Consider What You Post

For your own safety and security, please refrain from posting personal or family contact information (home phone numbers, mailing or home addresses, personal email addresses, etc.) as well as other’s information. You may also want to be careful with information about your social life, family life, vacation plans, etc.

It’s important to occasionally review what information is public, as the default settings are sometimes changed. The general public can see much of what is posted on the social networking sites. Increasingly, there are for-profit websites that collect personal information from several web sources. Remember, even if you delete content from your social media profiles, it may still remain on the web and be accessible to others.

In general, when posting or sharing information or having discussions, ask yourself whether the information should be publicly available. If it shouldn’t, or if you are approaching a line beyond which the information should be protected, stop and move to a more secure forum.

Do not publish the creative work of another, trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.

Federal, state and local laws apply, including FERPA, HIPPA, and ADA, as well as any other applicable association rules and regulations. Do not post sensitive or proprietary information about OPTA, its board members or staff, or personal, medical or financial information on its members, or your fellow colleagues.

If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the telephone, or in another medium, it will not be acceptable for a social networking site. Ask yourself, is this something I want to see on the front page of the New York Times, or posted on a billboard tomorrow or 10 years from now?
Stay on Topic
We encourage open discussion among community members. However, postings that are deemed irrelevant to the OPTA community may be removed at our discretion.

Do not divulge information gained by reason of their authority; make any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements; or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of OPTA without express authorization.

Don't Spam
We encourage you to use the space as a platform to share information about the OPTA and your profession. However, overtly commercial advertisements, solicitations and promotions are not allowed and will be removed promptly. Exceptions are made for OPTA state, district and SIG events. Advertising on behalf of external vendors is prohibited.

Post are to be used only for noncommercial purposes. You may not solicit funds or promote commercial entities.

Gratuitous links, i.e., links without a compelling reason, to sites may be viewed as spam and may result in the comment being removed.

Report Violations
The OPTA reserves the right, at the discretion of the respective social media site administrators, to remove any post or to revoke a user's privilege to post to the OPTA pages.

Content may be removed at any time — or users blocked — without prior notice for any reason deemed to be in the best interests of the university community.

Abusive content can also be reported to the developers of the social media network in question.

Violation of this policy may result in revocation of administrator privileges, site privileges and, in severe cases, referral to the OPTA Ethics Committee.

Assessing/Evaluating Social Media Accounts
Measure results. To evaluate post activity and interaction with a community, make use of analytics and tracking tools, which can help to refine your strategy and better understand your audience's preferences and behaviors.

Adjust. Be prepared to re-align your strategy in response to who is viewing your site and how they are doing so.

If you realize that social media is not meeting your needs or the needs of your audience or public, it is best to close the account rather than leave it inactive.

Questions
Please direct any questions regarding OPTA social media guidelines and policies to the association.