

Social Media Planning: Factsheet




What is social media planning?

Social media planning is simply thinking ahead about how you want to communicate online. It's about deciding what you want to say, who you want to say it to, and when is the best time to say it. Instead of posting in a rush or posting inconsistently, a plan helps you be consistent and effective, making the most of your valuable time and resources.

Why is it helpful?

A good plan turns your social media from a noisy distraction into a powerful tool for promoting your organisation. It allows your charity to be consistent and intentional without you having to spend all your time on social media.

A good social media plan allows you to: 

1. Build your brand: Your brand is your reputation and identity, the impression people have of your organisation. Consistent, posts help people trust and remember you.

2. Find supporters: Reach new people who care about your cause and turn them into donors, volunteers, or campaigners.

3. Share your impact: Show donors exactly how their money or time is making a difference with real stories and updates.

4. Save time & reduce stress: Planning your content for the week or month at once is faster than creating posts every day. It also helps you plan around key dates and events.

Core aspects of social media planning



Audience

Your audience is who you will be engaging with on each social media platform. Whilst social media can have a wide reach, it is best to focus on targeting specific audiences, those who might benefit from your services and those who might wish to support you.



Brand

Your brand is just your identity, your reputation. It includes your logo, your design style, how you speak, etc. Having a brand on social media that matches how you interact with people in person builds consistency and shows both funders and services users that you are reliable and trustworthy.





Engagement

Engagement is all the interactions you have on social media such as comments, likes, shares, and other interactions. It is the measure of how you are connecting with your audience. It is a great way to see how interested your audience is, and a way to build community in online spaces.



Calendar and scheduling

At the heart of social media planning is a social media calendar. By creating a 'social media calendar' you can plan and track what you are posting. The calendar allows you to be intentional, varying what you post and focusing on key topics, dates or times.

Using a scheduling platform means you can get all your posts done in one sitting, saving you time and keeping you consistent.

Step-by-step guide

How to create your simple social media plan

Follow these five easy steps.

1 Set your goals (the "why")

What do you want to achieve by posting on social media?

Start with broad goals. Do you want to connect with service users, raise money or awareness, or link with other charities or stakeholders?

Once you have a clear idea, think about a few specific goals.

Example: "Get 10 new regular donors by the end of the quarter."

Example: "Get 50 people to sign up to volunteer at our summer event."



2 Know your audience (the "who")



Think about your audience in two groups:

Current Audience – who you already reach

Desired Audience – who you want to reach

Current audience : Use platform insights or analytics to see who you're reaching, look at followers, likes, reach, and audience data.

Desired audience: You don't need to reach everyone. Focus on groups linked to your work.

- Who is your ideal supporter or service user? Are they local parents, young campaigners, or corporate donors?
- What platforms do they use (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)? You can find this out by asking service users, or through sites like:

<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-statistics-uk/>

2

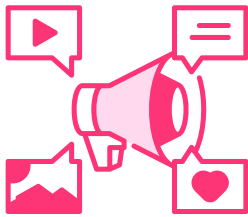
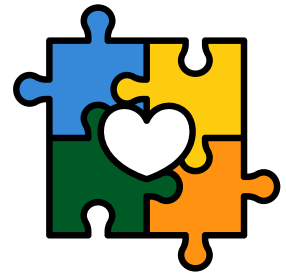


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Define your brand voice & look (the "how")

This is how you come across online. Being consistent builds trust. Your social media 'voice' should match that of your organisation. It should be an extension of how you interact with people in the organisation's work.

- **Voice:** Are you formal or chatty? Serious or hopeful? Tip: Be friendly and human.
- **Look:** Use your logo and your brand colours in your profile pictures and on the images you post. It makes you look professional.



Plan your content (the "what")

This is the heart of your plan. It may initially be hard to think about what to post, but we've got a few ideas below. Once you start, you will quickly find more and more content to post.

Use a simple mix of content types.

4

Content type	What it is	Example for a non-profit
Inspirational	Show your mission in action	A photo of a volunteer helping with a short, positive story, or an event or group you're running.
Educational	Teach people about your cause.	"5 surprising facts about homelessness in our city."
Engaging	Start a conversation.	Ask a question: "What's the best part of volunteering?"
Promotional	Ask for something.	A clear link to donate or a sign-up form for an event with why people should do so.
Behind-the-scenes	Show the human side.	A quick video from your team setting up for the annual fundraiser.
Community	Sharing other people's work	Promoting a local food bank your service users may find useful, or reposting content from a similar charity or stakeholder.

A simple rule: For everyone "ask" (donate/sign up), try to post four pieces of helpful or interesting content.

5

Create a content calendar (the "when")

A calendar is just a diary for your posts. You can use a free template online, a spreadsheet, or even just a whiteboard.

When thinking about when to post, consider what your audience will be doing, and try to target times they will be using social media.

Social media platforms/schedulers can also offer analytics on the best time to post for your audience. For general trends, check out:

<https://www.socialpilot.co/blog/best-times-to-post-on-social-media>



Date	Platform	Content (text + image/video)
Mon 3rd	Facebook	Educational Post: Infographic with 3 key stats about our work. Link to blog for more.
Wed 5th	Instagram	Inspirational Post: Photo of a happy beneficiary. "Thanks to your support, Sarah has a safe place to call home."
Fri 7th	LinkedIn	Engaging Post: "It's #Friday! What's a small act of kindness you've seen this week?"

Although each platform will have a slightly different audience, a lot of the content can be posted across all platforms, with only minor changes. This will save you lots of time.

When scheduling on a specific platform, ask yourself, is this post right for this audience? Does it need any changes (for example, style, wording, image size)?



Top tips for non-profits

- **Use free tools:** Canva makes creating beautiful graphics easy. Buffer or Hootsuite have free plans to schedule posts in advance.
- **Lean on your community:** Share posts from your supporters and partners. Thank people publicly for their help.
- **Track what works:** Most social media platforms show you which posts get the most likes, comments, and shares. Do more of what works!
- **Use hashtags wisely:** Use 1-2 relevant hashtags so new people can find you (e.g., #UKCharity #CommunitySupport #Newham).
- **Don't spread yourself too thin:** It's better to do one or two platforms well than to have five neglected accounts.

Remember: Social media is about being social. Talk with people, not at them. Reply to comments, thank people for sharing, and be a friendly face for your cause.