Social Media: Tips and Tricks for ENGOs

Introduction

Social media is growing ever present in today's landscape and with 60 per cent of New Brunswickers on Facebook it can be an effective tool for the promotion of your organisation. However, there is some competition. The average person receives over 10,000 messages a day. Here are some tips and information for you to help you use your social media to benefit your organisation.

Getting Started

1. **Define your organisation's primary goal and objectives:** Create a strategic plan and revisit it every 3 to 5 years. Within your strategic plan, have a clear social media policy that helps support your organisation's objectives. Ensure that it has been reviewed by staff, so they know what can and what cannot be posted. Who are you? What do you post and why?
2. **Identify your audience:** Identifying your audience will help you target them more effectively and help ensure that you are posting information relevant to them. This will build a positive relationship, which, in turn can be used to further your goals and objectives. Social media is a two-way conversation.
3. **Pick your platform:** Different social media platforms are better suited for different uses. For example, Facebook is better suited to stories, while Twitter works better for quick events. Furthermore, if you cannot commit to a platform, get rid of it. Determine which platform better suits your purpose and use it.

In practice

1. **Planning and writing your posts:**
   - Organise your social media posts and plan ahead using a content calendar: set themes and dates for your posts. You can also make use of a shared content calendar to coordinate your post with partner organisations.
   - When writing your posts, always think of your call to action; what is your goal? Include something for your audience to do, even if it is just visiting your website for more information.
2. **Engagement and reach:**
   - Posts between 100-119 characters asking questions as well as polls and surveys drive more engagement.
   - Giveaways also encourage interaction, so clean up your office and give away some unused merchandise.
   - Using images with people in them help your post perform better.
   - Posting more than twice a day on Facebook will result in your page being penalised by Facebook's algorithms and reduce your reach.

- Make your audience ambassadors and ask them or other organisations to share your posts.
- Videos also perform well on Facebook. Video production does not have to be of professional quality for it to do well.
- Lack of authenticity leads to mistrust. Building a positive relationship is essential.
- Posts that tell a story tend to perform better.
- Generally, the best times to post are 10am, 3pm and between 5-7 pm.

3. **Responding to your audience:**
   - Always respond to private messages quickly; people expect quick responses on Facebook.
   - Know when to respond and when not to respond to comments. If you are dealing with a negative individual on your page, you might invite them to send you a private message to discuss further or you might ignore their comment (don't feed the trolls).

4. **Hashtags:**
   - Hashtags help organise your content and your audience's responses. For example if you are promoting an event or a contest, you can ask your participants to use your hashtag in order to sort responses and see what people are saying about your event. This can create a conversation/community around a specific item.
   - Generally speaking, do not use more than 3 hashtags.

5. **Bilingualism:**
   - If you use both official languages consider switching which language goes first on your posts from time to time.

Resources

1. **Tools for social media listening:**
   - Social media listening tools can help you identify and assess what is being said about your organisation on social media. They can also help you manage multiple platforms, plan and schedule your posts and track the impact of your organisation by analysing data from your social media.
   - Here is a list of programs:
     - Google alerts (free)
     - Hootsuite (free and paid versions)
     - Social Studio (paid)
     - Sprinklr (paid)
     - Sproutsocial
     - Keyhole
     - Addict-o-matic
     - Brandwatch
     - Buzzsumo
     - CyberAlert

- Digimind
- How Social
- Rocket
- Synthesio
- Sysomos

2. **Content Ideas:**
   - Tips and How-to's
   - Infographics
   - Q&As
   - Testimonials
   - Organisation news
   - Product reviews
   - Industry news
   - Predictions
   - Successes
   - Company goals
   - Lessons learned
   - Research
   - Facts and stats
   - Polls
   - Offers

3. **Example of social media content calendar:**
   - Using the labelled columns you can organise your social media and any other form of content for the month. For an example of a content calendar, please see Content Calendar and Content Sharing Template document.