



On social media: What municipal clerks should know

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Before we start: Some goals

- Overview of content development – because knowing what you can and should post can save time and hassle deciding if and how to use social media.
- Why and how you need policies, procedures, and protocols for any social media communications.
- Understanding strengths and pitfalls of Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram.
- Work uses vs. personal uses for social media.



Social media explained with beer

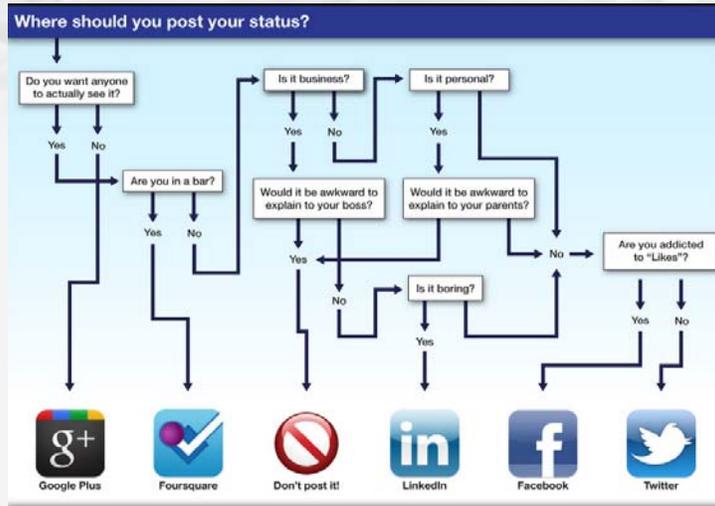
Social Media Explained with Beer

facebook - I like beer	LinkedIn - my skills include beer
twitter - I am having a #beer	Instagram - here is a photo of my beer
foursquare - this is where I drink beer	P - listening to a song about beer
yelp - you will like the beer here	Pinterest - here are beers that I like
YouTube - here I am having a beer	GROUPON - find half priced beer here

www.apollorans.com/blog



Another abbreviated perspective...





A key insight: Content matters most.

- **The magic wand rule:** Social media offer new ways to talk, not new things to say. Twitter is not a magic wand to make a dullard clever or a bore interesting.
- Social media *can* differ from normal PR or web pages:
 - Speed and nimbleness: Social media move faster.
 - Voice: People expect social media to be livelier.
 - Reach: Younger audiences rely on social media.
 - Involvement: Social media involve users actively.
- If you can't or won't be faster or livelier – **why bother?**



1. Know why you're creating content.

- As always, content for **any** strategic communications must be driven by clear, specific goals.
- If you can't **write** your content goals, they're too imprecise. (Again: That's true for **all** strategic communications.)
- When contemplating content for social media, create these same written goals – and specify why using social media will **create added value**.



2. Know how social media differ.

- For individuals, social media's value is in **community**.
- For institutions, the value of social media lies in **harnessing** that community.
- Social media seeks to change behavior.
- Social media have changed what it means to be online:
 - Online used to be about visiting websites.
 - Now, it's about having and sharing experiences.

• Source: Matt Hames, Colgate University



TRADITIONAL MEDIA

SOCIAL MEDIA

Space defined by media owner	→	Space defined by consumer
Brand in control	→	Consumer in control
One-way, brand speaking	→	Two-way/a conversation
Repeating the message	→	Adapting the message
Focused on the brand	→	Focused on the consumer
Entertaining	→	Involving
Brand-created content	→	User-created content/co-creation



3. Know who is creating content.

- Content is often visualized, created, and managed by **departments** or **programs**. At its best, social media content is driven by a **specific social media policy**.
- But creators of content are **individuals**, and the talent and commitment of individuals will make or break it.
- Individuals are especially important in social media, where content thrives or falters on the power of **voice**.
- Ideally, a strong **individual** will create your social media content. **This individual must. . .**



4. Know your best social media voice.

- Journalistic?
- Dull?
- Institutional?
- Funny?
- Perky?
- Snarky?



5. Know what type of content you have.

- News and web aggregation?
- Commentary-driven?
- Echo-chamber content from other strategic communications vehicles?
- Event-driven/promotional?
- Comment-enabled?
- Some combination of the above?



6. Know for whom you're creating content.

- What is your audience's demographic profile?
- Where do they live? Work? Shop?
- What issues matter to them?
- The more precise you can be, the better.
- Identifying your stakeholders as specifically as possible helps you select what social media to deploy.
- Ideally, identifying stakeholders means ***naming names.***



7. Know what will trigger content.

- Identify specific events that will trigger posts –
 - Your own announcements, events, and news.
 - Mainstream news/web posts/other social media posts.
- Create a content calendar to schedule content, and fill gaps with timely ad hoc posts. “When stuff comes up” is not enough to answer to the “when” question.”
- Posting patterns should be **regular and predictable**.
- Pick default time(s) and day(s) for posting – and be able to explain why.



8. Know your SM's strategic fit.

- Will you cross-link social media sites/main website?
- How will you cross-link between media?
 - Will you link from your Twitter feed to your web page?
 - Will you tweet all news releases automatically?
 - Will you tweet at all?
- How will stakeholders comment? Who will respond to stakeholder comments or questions? The content creator or someone else?



9. Know your approval processes.

- Craft and vet approval processes *before* you launch.
- Make sure the approval process balances interests that can be competing –
 - The need for caution.
 - The need for nimbleness.
 - The need for voice.
- Understand the effects of slow or delayed approvals.
- Consider a system of presumptive approval.



10. Address all this in a written plan.

- If you can't answer these questions in a simple one- or two-page memo before you launch social media. . .
 - You have not fully considered the questions.
 - You probably don't have clear answers.
- Your plan should say how you will measure success.
- This plan must conform with your social media policy.
- **You don't have a written social media policy?**

Uh-oh. . . .



Now let's look at key social media

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Instagram
- YouTube



Facebook: 1.7B active monthly users

- **Personal:** You see what interests you – *your* nieces, *your* friends, *your* hobbies, *your* political interests.
- **Self-curated feed:** You can choose this stuff. Typical feed: Nieces' swimming medals; kittens; Kardashian updates; musicians' gigs; political rants.
- **Flexible:** Allows link sharing, crowdsourcing, photo sharing, video streaming, and life stalking.
- **Ad potential:** Highly targeted, inexpensive ads.
- **Caveat:** Is this a good forum for municipal info?



LinkedIn: 450M members

- **Employment search:** Profession- and employment-oriented networking, talent scouting, and job-seeking.
- **Network building:** Amass and track professional friends connections: “Facebook with a business suit.”
- **Endorsements:** Share references, skill appraisals.
- **Professional reading:** Publish and read essays on professional practice and employment issues.
- **Question:** What municipal stakeholders read LinkedIn for access to the information you wish to share?



Twitter: 313M monthly active users

- **Microblogging:** Service that lets users send and read ultra-brief messages with links, #hashtags.
- **Echo chamber:** Easily share/comment on your own info published elsewhere (your own website, e.g.).
- **Aggregation:** Powerful tool for aggregating news and opinion, policy commentary, conversation generation.
- **Caveat:** One can tweet in seconds – and tweeting in haste can lay waste to jobs, careers, and programs.



Instagram: 500M monthly active accounts

- **Photo-sharing:** Mobile app for sharing photos and brief videos publicly or privately, on the app or on other social media. Owned by Facebook.
- **Highlight activities:** Photos can spotlight specific activities you sponsor/conduct and wish to promote.
- **Showcase culture:** A good photo – planned well and visually interesting – can call attention to the positive attributes of your culture. (*Google “photography tips.”*)
- **Caveat:** Do municipal clerks *need* to highlight many activities or spotlight a municipal or office culture?



YouTube: >1 billion users

- **Video-sharing:** YouTube lets users upload, view, rate, share, and comment on videos.
- **Huge repository:** Countless how-to and educational videos, rants, and clips of music, sports, film, TV, etc.
- **Search:** Most popular search engine after Google.
- **Ad potential:** Highly targeted, inexpensive ads.
- **Questions:** What municipal stakeholders tap YouTube for information *you* wish to share?

