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Guide to

**RECRUITING
COMPONENT
MEMBERS VIA
SOCIAL MEDIA**

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Introduction

Since its beginnings as a means of connecting with others in the virtual sphere, social media has rapidly become a viable business tool.

People now come to social media to connect with others for a variety of professional reasons, such as looking for a new job, finding candidates for open positions, general networking, to learn about new products or services, professional development resources, industry news and much more.

This guide focuses on helping you recruit members to your chapter, council and/or community of practice via social media.



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Platforms

This guide focuses on the “big three” of social media: LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

Other prominent social media outlets include image-based platforms — such as Instagram, Flickr or Pinterest — and video-based platforms, including YouTube as well as newer outlets that are gaining in popularity, such as Vine, Blab, Periscope, Meerkat and Peach.



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Platforms

LinkedIn

LinkedIn was founded in 2003 and currently “operates the world’s largest professional network on the Internet.”¹ As of October 2015, LinkedIn reported 400 million cumulative members, about a quarter of whom are active on a monthly basis.²

LinkedIn registered user profiles are set up like resumes (fields include professional experience, skills, education, etc.). Users can engage with others by sending invitations to connect and by following individuals, companies and groups.

LinkedIn’s format is best suited for sharing relevant content, posing and responding to questions and career-focused networking.

[Resource: Maximum LinkedIn Character Counts for 2016](#)



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Platforms

Facebook

Founded in 2004 as a networking site for students at Harvard University, Facebook has been open to the public since 2006 and boasts “more than 1.44 billion global monthly active users, including close to 1.25 billion mobile monthly active users.”³

In order to interact on Facebook, each user must create a personal profile page which can include basic “About” information, pictures and posts. From the profile, users can search for others and request to add them as friends in order to see their updates, as well as send direct (private) messages. Facebook allows posts to contain text, multiple images and hyperlinks with fewer length limitations than Twitter and LinkedIn.

Facebook’s format is well-suited for lengthier updates, event photo series and promotions.



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Platforms

Twitter

Famous for its short-format content sharing, Twitter was established in 2006 and now estimates 320 million monthly active users.⁴

Each registered user sets up an account with a unique identifier preceded by the @ symbol, called a handle. Registered users begin seeing information in a real-time feed format as they select other user accounts to follow. The content that users post is currently limited to 140 characters per post (or “tweet”) and can include hyperlinks and embedded images.

To learn about specific topical areas, users can search using hashtags — words or phrases directly preceded by the # symbol — and can also join these conversations by including hashtags in their tweets. Twitter’s format is well-suited for updates, event coverage and topical chats.

Tip: Posts beginning with a handle will only be seen by the owner of the handle. To make these posts more visible, include a period directly before the handle (e.g., start with “.@ifma” instead of “@ifma”).



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Setting up accounts

When establishing a new account, it's important to first have a goal in mind. Our goal in this guide is recruiting members to your component. Whether your component has existing social media profiles or you're starting from scratch, there are some best practices to follow.

For component account management (or any account that is to represent an entity rather than an individual), make sure to set up the account with multiple administrators or managers. This is important for continuity in the event of a leadership or volunteer change, as it can be very difficult to gain access to or retrieve an account owned by a single user.

In addition, it's recommended that you include a member of the core IFMA staff as an admin on your social accounts, not necessarily as an active participant or monitor, but as an added measure of continuity assurance for your component.



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Setting up accounts

LinkedIn

All owners, managers and/or members of a LinkedIn group must use an individual LinkedIn profile in order to participate. On LinkedIn, the person who creates a group page is considered its owner and can designate other individuals as managers.

The owner and any managers will see a “Manage” button on the main group page which allows them to make changes to the page settings and add or remove managers within the Admins area of the Members tab. Managers can update group settings, approve or decline requests to join the group, moderate group member posts to the page, select posts to feature at the top of the page, send announcements to group members and more.

Tip: Set your LinkedIn group page settings to Standard rather than Unlisted to make sure that your group is searchable.



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Setting up accounts

Facebook

For Facebook pages, multiple admins can be assigned within the Page Roles tab of the Settings area.

Admins can update the page appearance and settings, make posts on the page, respond to comments and private messages, and more.

As with LinkedIn, admins must have an individual Facebook profile in order to participate in the page.



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Setting up accounts

Twitter

On Twitter, each account has a unique user name and password, so for handles that represent your chapter, council or community of practice, a shared password will allow anyone to manage and post on behalf of the account. Note that this is different from LinkedIn and Facebook, both of which require individual profiles to contribute to group pages.

The Notifications area of Twitter allows the person logged in to the account to see when others mention the account or share its posts.



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Setting up accounts

Using a group management approach to social media can (but doesn't have to) be complicated. To make it run smoothly, establish and record some basic agreed-upon rules of play for those with admin roles on your accounts.

These should include:

- Roles, duties and responsibilities
- What is appropriate or inappropriate to post
- How to speak on behalf of your component in a consistent voice
- Who posts what, and when
- Rules for monitoring, moderating and responding to user feedback
- Crisis management plan (what to do if things go wrong)

Social media platforms frequently make tweaks, such as changing image dimensions for profiles or updating the parameters for use, to better meet user needs. If you don't receive a notification upon logging in but something appears to have changed, you can usually find an answer via the site's help page or a quick Google search.

[Resource: The Ultimate Cheat Sheet of Photo & Image Sizes on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn & Other Social Networks \[Infographic\]](#)



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What and when to post

Social media: It's not about you

Social media can serve as an excellent venue for highlighting the value your component has to offer, but this works best if you show rather than tell.

The key to gaining and converting prospects on social media is much the same as it is in other contexts: engagement.

While it can be tempting on social outlets to spend most of the time speaking about yourself, remember to keep your prospects' perspective in mind — this should serve to guide all of your social media efforts. If your posts don't consistently offer value, users have no incentive to pay attention to what you're saying.

Build and maintain credibility with your audience by sharing useful content. Sometimes a direct approach is appropriate; however even direct calls to action should demonstrate a value proposition (i.e., clearly show “what's in it for them”).



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What and when to post

Content types

The content you share via social media will likely fall into one of two categories: curated content (resources from related companies, groups and contacts) or original content (resources created/owned by your component).

The delivery of this content can take many forms, such as:

- News and general information
- Tips, tricks, how-tos and other explanatory pieces (often in list format)
- Best practices
- Questions/polls
- Answers/responses
- Case or comparison studies
- Media/interactive (photos, infographics, videos, podcasts, etc.)

According to a recent post, the following are the six content types most likely to generate high interest:⁵

1. Infographics
2. Interactive content
3. Content that evokes strong positive emotion
4. Content with images
5. List posts
6. Newsworthy content



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What and when to post

Making the most of your resources

The most successful social media tactics operate using what's called an inbound marketing approach. This approach is based on providing quality content (i.e., offering something useful) that interests the people you want to attract and draws them to you naturally.

If done correctly, this positions you as an indispensable information resource and allows you to cut through the clutter of millions of posts to reach your audience. This means establishing trust and engaging users by fostering a sense of community.

So, how do you undertake this approach using limited resources?



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What and when to post

Making the most of your resources

Make it easy on yourself by:

- **Sharing existing content**

You don't always need to create everything from scratch. A great way to get started is by sharing curated content — resources you find via related accounts, media resources, etc. This is appropriate when linking directly to the original source and/or including source attribution.

- **Joining conversations**

Believe it or not, social media is as much (or more) about listening than about speaking. Pay attention to what's going on in the FM industry and what your members and prospects are talking about. In addition to weighing in, you can also keep the conversation going by posing relevant questions and sharing your audience's answers and opinions.

- **Incorporating automation**

There are several free tools available that allow you to schedule posts in advance and automatically respond to certain actions (such as sending a pre-drafted welcome to new friends, members or followers). These can be extremely helpful for lightening the daily workload, to provide timely information during live events, etc. However, use these tools with caution: double check the timing and formatting before scheduling and make sure admins are aware of scheduled posts in order to avoid overlap.



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What and when to post

Have fun, but be appropriate

Social media is just that — social. The following will help you develop and maintain an online persona that engages rather than alienates your audience.

- **Show some personality**

Keeping your audience engaged involves more than simply providing useful information, and showing your personality and a sense of humor (e.g., sharing your favorite FM meme) can help.

- **Maintain relevancy**

Remember to keep all content relevant to your audience — if a cute cat video is going viral but has nothing to do with FM, don't post it.

- **Keep it appropriate**

Avoid content that is overtly opinionated, exclusionary, confidential or that could be considered offensive. Keep in mind that you are representing your component and the IFMA brand as well as (in the case of LinkedIn and sometimes Facebook) yourself.

Before you post, consider whether the content would be appropriate in the context of your members. If it's something you would not be comfortable saying to a stranger or if you're unsure whether it's appropriate, do not post.



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What and when to post

Post scheduling and frequency

The school of thought on optimal post timing and frequency varies nearly as much as the social media platforms themselves.

A recent article suggests an ideal of one LinkedIn post, two Facebook posts and three tweets per day.⁶ Automation can help you achieve this goal, but for many components this target may be too aggressive.

Rather than aiming to push out a certain number of posts per day, week or month, focus on:

- Quality
- Consistency and regularity
- Transparency

As you grow your audience, you should be able to better gauge the best times and ways to interact with them. Keeping the transparency focus in mind, you can also start a dialog by asking when and how they would prefer to hear from you.



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IFMA's outlets

IFMA is active on social media. Links to IFMA's social outlets are available at www.ifma.org.

IFMA's LinkedIn group

www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=38141

- Network with FM and related industry peers from around the globe
- Pose questions and engage in discussions with group members
- Find and share FM-related content

IFMA's Facebook page

www.facebook.com/internationalfacilitymanagementassociation

- Follow IFMA updates, news and upcoming events
- Write comments or give feedback on IFMA's posts, photos and videos
- Post your own links and photos

IFMA's Twitter page

<http://twitter.com/ifma>

- Follow IFMA and FM-related news and events in real time
- Engage in discussions with IFMA and other FMs



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IFMA's outlets

IFMA's YouTube channel

www.youtube.com/ifmaglobal

- View all of IFMA's new footage and share with friends
- Comment on videos and subscribe to IFMA's channel

IFMA's Flickr photo stream

www.flickr.com/photos/ifma

- View and comment on photos from IFMA events
- Join groups and contribute your own photos

IFMA's Online Community

<http://community.ifma.org>

- Engage in discussions with other community users
- Share documents such as PowerPoint presentations and spreadsheets
- Browse professionally vetted FM content on the Knowledge Library
- Subscribe to updates on forum and topical/component-specific discussions

FMJ magazine's Twitter page: <http://twitter.com/thefmj>

FMJ magazine's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ifmafjmj

- Watch for new issue announcements and news from FMJ and IFMA
- Find and share valuable FM-related content



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References and resources

References

1. <https://press.linkedin.com/about-linkedin>
2. <http://venturebeat.com/2015/10/29/linkedin-now-has-400m-users-but-only-25-of-them-use-it-monthly/>
3. <http://www.statista.com/topics/751/facebook/>
4. <https://about.twitter.com/company>
5. <http://coschedule.com/blog/social-media-content/>
6. <https://blog.bufferapp.com/how-often-post-social-media>

Additional resources

- HubSpot Blogs: Social media:
<http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/topic/social-media>
- Moz. The Beginner's Guide to Social Media:
<https://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-social-media>
- WebLink International. Social Media Policy: A guide for associations (download):
<http://info.weblinkinternational.com/social-media-policy-guide>



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