

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

How to use social media as a recruitment tool for health care professionals.

The Alabama Office of
PrimaryCare
RuralHealth & 

ADPH.ORG/RURALHEALTH

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

Why Use Social Media?

Two words: Recruitment and Retention. Your job candidates, current employees and patients, and potential clients are all using it. According to Pew Research, 72 percent of young adults and 73 percent of online teens are a member of at least one social network. Approximately 83 percent of adults age 33 and younger currently use social network websites, such as Facebook and LinkedIn.¹

The definition of social media is media disseminated through social interaction using Internet- and mobile-based tools. Marketing professors and consultants Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein organize social media into six types: collaborative projects, blogs and microblogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual communities.²

Social media...“the creation and exchange
of user-generated content.”
- Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein

Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn allow you to connect with patients, businesses, and professionals in your community and inform them about

your services, new developments in medicine and disease prevention as well as wellness events at your facility or in your community. You may create a personal or business profile for your facility and link to others. Job candidates and potential patients can read about your hospital or practice—physician information, business operating hours, services, etc. Those connected to you can recommend you to others in their network which further promotes you and your hospital/practice.

“ While the youngest generations are still significantly more likely to use social network sites, the fastest growth has come from internet users 74 and older: social network site usage for this oldest cohort has quadrupled since 2008, from 4% to 16%. ”
- Pew Research Center

1 Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 29 - May 30, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=2,252 adults 18 and older.

2 “Social Media.” Glossary of Online Marketing Terms. <http://www.onlinematters.com/glossary.htm>

FACEBOOK

Facebook is the largest social network, with over 500 million users in July 2010.³ Facebook allows users to share information at a high capacity in various formats, including interests, contact information, blog postings, photos, videos, documents, links, and more. Users can communicate with Facebook friends and users publicly or privately, or use a chat feature. Users may join networks organized by school, college, or workplace and create their own “like” pages and interest groups. A few notable statistics:

- 50% of active users log on to Facebook in any given day.
- The average user has 130 friends.
- People spend over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook.
- There are over 900 million objects that people interact with (pages, groups, events, and community pages).
- The average user is connected to 80 community pages, groups, and events.
- The average user creates 90 pieces of content each month.
- More than 30 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photo albums, etc.) is shared each month.⁴

Those with Facebook accounts can add friends, join interest groups, and “like” a page which enables them to interact with other users and receive notifications when new content has been added by a friend or a page. To create a “like” page or interest group, users must have a personal or business Facebook account. For more information on business accounts, visit the Facebook Help Center and click “Business Accounts.”

Creating an account is free. To create an account, go to <http://facebook.com> and type your full name, email address, desired password, gender, and date of birth where it says “Sign Up.” After you click the “Sign Up” button, you will receive a confirmation email from Facebook at the email address you provided. Clicking on the confirmation link will complete the sign up process.⁵

Facebook offers special features for businesses, including pages, groups, and places. We recommend visiting the Facebook Help Center at <http://facebook.com/help> to learn more about Facebook apps, features, and business solutions.

If you have any questions or problems using Facebook, visit their Help Center at <http://facebook.com/help>.

3 doubleclick ad planner by Google – <http://www.google.com/adplanner/static/top1000>

4 Facebook Press Room Statistics – <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>

5 Facebook Help Center – Login and password › Sign Up – <http://www.facebook.com/help/?page=173>

TWITTER

Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging service that allows users to post short text updates called “tweets” of 140 characters or less on their profile page. According to Twitter.com, “Twitter is a real-time information network powered by people all around the world that lets you share and discover what’s happening now. Twitter asks ‘what’s happening’ and makes the answer spread across the globe to millions, immediately.”

Anyone with access to the Internet can view a public Twitter profile page. Those with a Twitter profile may subscribe to other user tweets and lists which contain more than one user. This is known as “following” and subscribers are known as “followers.” Users may also share links to blog postings, photos, videos, documents, links, and more. When a user tweets, the tweet is displayed on their followers’ home pages. Followers may reply or “retweet” the tweet. When retweeting a tweet, a follower shares that tweet with their followers.

As of September 2010, Twitter has 175 million registered users and there are approximately 95 million tweets sent per day.¹

Creating an account is free. To create an account, go to <http://twitter.com> and click the “Sign Up” button. Type your full name, desired username, desired password, and email address. If you need assistance in creating an account, visit the Twitter Help Center at <http://support.twitter.com>. We

recommend you visit to the Twitter Business site at <http://business.twitter.com> to learn more about Twitter and how to promote your business using Twitter.

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is the largest business-oriented social networking service, with 90+ million professionals worldwide, including executives from all Fortune 500 companies. More than one million companies have company pages.⁶ Anyone with access to the Internet can view a public LinkedIn profile or company page. LinkedIn allows you to connect with classmates, past and present colleagues, other professionals in your field, potential employers, and job candidates.

Creating an account is free. To create an account, go to <http://linkedin.com>, type your first name, last name, email address, and desired password and click the “Join Now” button. Once you have created an account, you may create your profile, search for jobs, post a job, join a group or company, and add a company profile for your business. If you need assistance in creating an account or have any questions or problems using LinkedIn, visit the LinkedIn Help Center at <http://help.linkedin.com>.

Getting Started

Research – Before you create an account on a social network site, do your own research. Approach social networking like you would any other business strategy. Go to the home page for the social network site and read more about the service. Also, visit your local, state, and federal partners' websites and find out what they are doing with social media marketing. You can begin with the Resources section of this toolkit.

Selection – You will need to decide which sites are worth investing your time (and money if you are paying someone to coordinate your social media efforts). One mistake people make is to sign up for too many sites. Choose one of two sites that specifically target your audience and then if time permits, expand your collection.

Plan – Create a social media marketing plan. Your plan does not have to be a formal business policy. It may be an informal document for your eyes only. Either way, it is important to outline your goals and how you plan to achieve them. The plan may include: a definition for social media marketing, an explanation of why and how you are using social networking to promote your business, and ways you are measuring the return on investment.

Image – Most, if not all, social networking site accounts have a place for an image. A professional logo is preferable for business accounts. If you do not have a logo then a quality photograph of your facility or employees will suffice. Posting pictures of staff and events can help inform the public of the positive atmosphere/workplace, fringe benefits for employees, and community involvement. If you use a photograph of a patient, be sure you have written permission from that patient to do so.

Description – Each site has place holders for information describing the person/facility. Often times, there are a limited number of characters that you can use, which requires you to shorten vision or mission statements, or slogans.

Contact – All social networking sites allow you to provide contact information. Be consistent with the contact information you provide if maintaining multiple sites. Always provide your phone number, website address if one exists, and email address.

Disclaimer – Make sure to include a disclaimer somewhere on your business profile(s) to protect you and your business. Your disclaimer should include the purpose of your profile, your relationship to the profile, and what can and should not be posted on your profile by others. You may have to shorten your disclaimer if there is limited space to publish it. Disclaimers give your readers boundaries. You can use your disclaimer as a reference or protection in the event you take disciplinary action against a reader. Here is an example of a Facebook "like" page disclaimer:

Disclaimer: The ___ fan page was created to share health information, news, and events with the public. Posted comments and images do not necessarily represent the views of ___, its officers or employees or of ___. We encourage feedback and information sharing, but ask that you stay on topic and be respectful. You may not sell, promote, or advertise any products or services on the ___ Facebook page nor represent any such as being endorsed in any way by ___ or ___.

We reserve the right to delete comments we deem inappropriate, profane, defamatory or harassing in nature and to block repeat offenders without notification.

Social Media Etiquette

- **Be genuine and honest**—People appreciate and value these qualities, along with authenticity and integrity. It is important that you develop and maintain your network's trust. Think of yourself as a politician. What you say is public record. If you do anything to dishonor that trust, you should acknowledge it as quickly as possible.
- **Think before you speak type**—As with email, online communication is void of emotion and nonverbal queues. This can lead to content misperception. But you can ask yourself some questions that might prevent you from making a faux pas. Ask yourself: "Does what I am about to post make sense? Is this an overly biased opinion? Can my comment stand alone without a reference? Could someone read this and perceive what I am saying in a negative light? Should I wait until I have the whole answer before responding?"
- **Rethink disciplinary action**—Think twice before banning, blocking, or unfollowing people and removing posts by others in your network. Just because you do not agree with something they have said or something published on their profile does not mean you should delete their posting or remove them from your network. If you delete their posting, it is possible that they may retaliate. In some cases it would benefit you to contact them privately to explain to them why you took action against them. Others in your network will most likely notice if you have taken disciplinary action on someone or their post. If a person feels that you are infringing on their freedom of speech, they will not trust you or what you represent. This is why it is important to provide your disclaimer.
- **Reply promptly**—If someone communicates with you directly, reply promptly. If you know it is going to take some time before you can provide them with an answer, let them know that you are working on it and will respond as soon as you can.
- **Personalize messages**—When responding on a public forum or privately to someone, be sure to address the person(s) by name. Doing so makes the person(s) feel important and prevents confusion when there are multiple conversations.
- **Obey doctor-patient confidentiality**—Assume that everyone can see private messages. Request a phone call or visit during regular business hours when dealing with patient information. Do not publish anything about clients, directly or indirectly. This is the ultimate betrayal of trust. On the same note, be careful when using hypothetical situations because someone may identify with the situation and think you are indirectly referencing them.
- **Less is more**—Do not bombard your network with automatic messages or too many messages in a short amount of time. You may overwhelm them with too much information. They may respond by leaving your network if their news feed or home page is filled mostly with posts by you. See Social Media Pros and Cons for tips on posting frequency.
- **Communicate effectively**—Avoid business/medical jargon and abbreviations and acronyms. You want to use language that everyone can understand and that which does not exclude anyone.
- **Reference others**—If quoting or linking to information that you did not create, give credit to the original source. This is an opportunity for cross-promotion which benefits both parties.

Social Media Pros and Cons

Pros

Free!—Most social network sites and features are free unless you are hiring someone or paying someone extra to coordinate your social media efforts.

Advertising and Reach—Social media marketing provides you the opportunity to promote yourself and your business and to reach a large number of people and markets that you may not normally reach with traditional media. And did we mention it's free?!

Brand/Consumer Loyalty—Social media marketing allows you to build relationships and your brand. You can use social networking sites to promote yourself and express your personality, and interact with clients/customers and show them that you care, which, in turn, breeds brand and customer loyalty.

Advocates—Every customer and employee can be a media outlet for your business. As a member of your network, they can use social networking sites to further advertise and reach more clients, and generate brand and customer loyalty.

Customer Feedback—Social networking sites facilitate more two-way communication between you and your clients. You can learn how to improve your services by reading what your clients have to say about your business. You will most likely receive feedback without having to prompt them. However you can also ask specific questions of your advocates.

Research and Development—New ideas are often created when people are brought together by common interests. By plugging into networks of similar interests, you will gain competitor insight and stay updated on news and recent developments in real-time.

Cons

Time-Consuming—Social media can consume a considerable amount of time. To be considered active, you should post to LinkedIn once or twice a week, post to Facebook one to two times a day, and post to Twitter three to four times a day. There are free and low-cost social media management tools, e.g. HootSuite, Ping.fm, and hellotxt, which allow you to update multiple networks at the same time using one program.

Miscommunication/Impersonal—With the exception of using video conferencing, communicating using social networking sites reduces face-to-face interaction, diminishing interpersonal communication. As with email, online communication is void of emotion and non-verbal queues. People will perceive what you publish how they perceive it, which may result in miscommunication.

Lack of Control—As the administrator of a social network profile or page, you should not attempt to control the messages/conversation. You can participate in the conversation and assuming you are considered an expert on the topic by other participants, you may influence the message. Some social networking sites display advertisements that you cannot remove. The ads displayed are often chosen based on key words found on the user's profile or page. The ads you see may not be the same that the others in your network see.

Safety—Social networking sites have no way to verify the identity of an account holder which leaves members of the network open to solicitations for products, services, and information-sharing. Many people, especially teenagers, are guilty of over-sharing personal information. Over-sharing has led to cases of military information exposure, sexual and financial predation, cyberbullying, and lost employment and job opportunities.

Return on Investment—ROI is not immediate.

Redundant—Many of the social network sites have the same features and topics. This requires duplication of information and makes it difficult to choose which site best fits your social media marketing goals.

Healthcare Resources

This brief list of key healthcare resources is intended to connect you with organizations that provide valuable information and online resources to healthcare professionals. The list below includes a brief description of each organization and how they can be an important resource for your organization. On the following pages you will find web addresses for each resource and some of their social media outlets.

Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)—ADPH touches many different aspects of health care in Alabama. The Office of Primary Care and Rural Health's webpage (adph.org/ruralhealth) connects staff members and communities, and allows organizations to post job opportunities on the state's Practice Sights database. Both services are completely free to the community and candidate. In addition, Primary Care and Rural Health facilitates National Health Service Corps and Alabama loan repayment programs, health professional shortage area designations, small rural hospital programs, and the J-1 program.

Alabama Rural Health Association (ARHA)—The ARHA is dedicated to improving healthcare in rural communities through activities such as hands-on technical assistance, workforce development and grass-roots advocacy.

College/Universities—These organizations are specific to the facility and can vary greatly depending on the needs of the organization. It is always beneficial to create a relationship with the learning institutions that make up your organization pipeline. Simply search the specific institution(s) and enroll for email lists, RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds and social media networking opportunities. This relationship can help create awareness and drive candidates to your organization.

Grants.gov—This grant application website was established as a governmental resource to improve services to the public. Grants.gov is the central hub for grant applications and helps bridge the gap between government agencies awarding grants and the applicants requesting funds. It lists grant opportunities and should be checked on a regular basis.

Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA)—HRSA is the primary federal agency for improving access to health care services for populations of significant need. Connecting with HRSA gives an instant feed of information about the many programs they administer.

National Health Service Corps (NHSC)—NHSC is a direct recruitment incentive program that offers two options to medical professionals: scholarship program and loan repayment program. If your organization is an NHSC approved site, NHSC can provide information on the programs, and changes and direction for the future. A new feature allows you to submit site applications through the NHSC website.

National Rural Health Association (NRHA)—NRHA links rural health stakeholders within an online community and a vast source of information for broad scale rural health issues. This is a unique resource within the rural health community because it offers an opportunity to post job openings and search through candidate profiles.

Rural Assistance Center (RAC)—RAC Online is source of information on national and state policy for rural health care. The data contained at RAC Online varies from Rural Health Clinic guidance for new and existing clinics to assistance locating grant opportunities and other healthcare organizations.

Student Doctor Network (SDN)—SDN is a network that targets healthcare professionals and partners with nonprofit organizations. The goal is to create a community of healthcare professionals that starts during the education phase and continues to mentor through retaining non-student members. The Network can link you directly to medical professionals.



3RNet

Website: <https://www.3rnet.org>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/3RNet>

Twitter: http://twitter.com/3_RNet

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?mostPopular=&gid=3145377>



Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)

Website: <http://www.adph.org>

RSS Feed: <http://media.alabama.gov/rss/rss.aspx?id=23>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/alabamapublichealth>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/MediaAlabamaGov>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/alabamapublichealth>



Alabama Rural Health Association (ARHA)

Website: <http://www.arhaonline.org>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=167682583681>



Alabama Tourism Department

Website: <http://www.800alabama.com/aboutalabama>

Newsletters for specific events: <http://www.800alabama.com/events/newsletter>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/AlabamaTravel>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/TweetHomeAla>



Colleges and Universities

UAB Department of Medicine: <http://www.dom.uab.edu>

UAB School of Medicine: <http://medicine.uab.edu>

UAB School of Medicine News and Publications:
<http://medicine.uab.edu/about/44662>

UAB Internal Medicine Residency Facebook:
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=17737364704>



Grants.gov

Website: <http://www.grants.gov>

Blog: <http://grants-gov.blogspot.com>

RSS Feed: <http://www.grants.gov/help/rss.jsp>

Subscription Services: <http://www.grants.gov/search/subscribeAdvanced.do>



Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

Website: <http://www.hrsa.gov>

HRSA eNews: <http://www.hrsa.gov/about/enews.html>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Health-Resources-and-Services-Administration-HRSA/199893476843>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/hrsatube>



National Rural Health Association (NHRA)

Website: <http://www.ruralhealthweb.org>

RSS Feeds: Available for members

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/ruralhealth>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/ruralhealth>



National Health Service Corps (NHSC)

Website: <http://nhsc.hrsa.gov>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/nationalhealthservicecorps>

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=2142470&mostPopular=>



Rural Assistance Center (RAC)

Website: <http://www.raconline.org>

Email Subscriptions: <http://www.raconline.org/updates>

RSS Feeds: <http://www.raconline.org/rss>

RAC Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/RAConline>

RAC Twitter: <http://twitter.com/racevents>



Student Doctor Network (SDN)

Website: <http://www.studentdoctor.net>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/medcodeblog>

LinkedIn: http://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=43363&trk=anet_ug_hm

The Alabama Office of
Primary Care &
Rural Health 

ADPH.ORG/RURALHEALTH