

# Important Do's and Don'ts For Using Social Media

## DO:

- Define your goals. Always think first before starting to use social media. Be sure that using the tool will help you to achieve the results that you want.
- Participate actively. Contribute constructive comments and updates. You will gain trust and others will appreciate you.
- Be flexible. Social media tools are often upgraded, so stay flexible and up-to-date on what's current.
- Be yourself! Social media allow us to show our personalities—in fact, doing so is welcomed and appreciated.
- Provide value. Carefully consider everything you publish. How does this help the people that your organization serves? If you discover that it is not helpful, try to find a way to improve it.
- Keep a consistent voice. If you are using more than one social media tool or channel, be consistent to maintain the same tone and personality.
- Create a response plan. It is very important to respond as quickly as possible. If you do not, the conversation can die or others will drop it out of boredom. However, it is vital to be prepared. Develop a plan to prepare for negative situations that may affect your organization online, and include suggested guidance for responding.

## DON'T:

- Forget that social media is powered by real people. Be yourself and avoid sounding overly scripted.
- Ignore your community. If your organization has a page or group in a social network, be sure to keep the content fresh. Respond to people quickly if they reach out to you.
- Lose track of the real world. Social media tools might be great, but nothing will ever come close to live interaction with real people.
- Forget to monitor. Keeping track of news about your organization and issue will allow you to provide more relevant content and information to the people who need it most.
- Spam! Be sure that updates and messages to others online are relevant and timely. If they are not, you may lose trust if those on the receiving end consider them spam.
- Try to do too much too fast. Remember, every organization is different. Choose the tools that make the most sense for your organization. With time, and after evaluating what is likely to be effective and practical, more tools can be folded into the mix.
- Engage in dishonest behavior online. Do not lie, scam, or plagiarize other content that you find online. If you would like to use a sentence of two of someone else's blog post in a Twitter update or on your organization's blog, be sure to cite the reference with a link.