MAEA
Maine Adult Education Association

Social Media
Best Practices Guide

Prepared by pulse

Intro

This document will provide guidance and suggestions to the Maine Adult Education Association and its members regarding social media marketing strategy. Below is a table of contents for the social media guide. If you would like to navigate to a particular section, simply click on it and you will be brought directly to it. This document is part of the MAEA 2022 Marketing Toolkit. The full toolkit can be accessed at:

[FUTURE LINK TO BE INCLUDED]

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Guidelines prepared for Maine Adult Education Association by Pulse Marketing Agency.

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Overview

Social media marketing positions your organization as trustworthy and cultivates trust and loyalty to your brand. With a solid marketing strategy, your organization will obtain several benefits, including:

Brand Awareness & Development

The advantage of social media is the ability to get your brand and messages in front of a large audience and be seen consistently by people who are invested in your organization. As you develop your social strategy, your organization and programs will become more memorable and attract new students, shining a spotlight on your organizational values and story.

Making Connections

Social media allows you to communicate with your audience in real time and build relationships. Conversations with your audience give you the opportunity to show them your organizational values, answer any questions they have, and help you be seen as a resource within your local community. You can also use social media to engage with other like-minded organizations and share posts that support your core message.

Understanding Your Audience

Using social media tools, you can monitor what your audience is saying about your organization, identifying audience opinions, collective trends, and industry news to influence your digital presence strategy.

Website Traffic

One key advantage of social media is the ability to bring users to your website. For example, when offering a new course, you can drive traffic to your application page from an interested and invested audience. This information can be tracked, and by doing so, you can refine your wording to ensure that your message is understood. Using social media platforms, you can grow your follower list and increase your website's SEO rankings, strengthening your website's position in the search engine results page.

Growing Awareness

Being in front of an audience grants you the opportunity to spread awareness of the topics and ideas at the core of your mission. The content you post and share can help your audience understand the value of adult education and the positive impact it makes in their communities.

Many small, medium, and large organizations depend on social media to amplify their messaging and brand. However, with an abundance of social media options available, many organizations wonder, "What platforms should I be on?", "How often do I need to post?", and "What should I post about?" among other questions. This social media guide will help you answer those questions and more from the planning stages to the execution of a social media strategy.

Note: the majority of this guide is focused on basic social media knowledge and practices. For those who have a more advanced marketing acumen, see our "Advanced Tactics" section at the end of this guide.
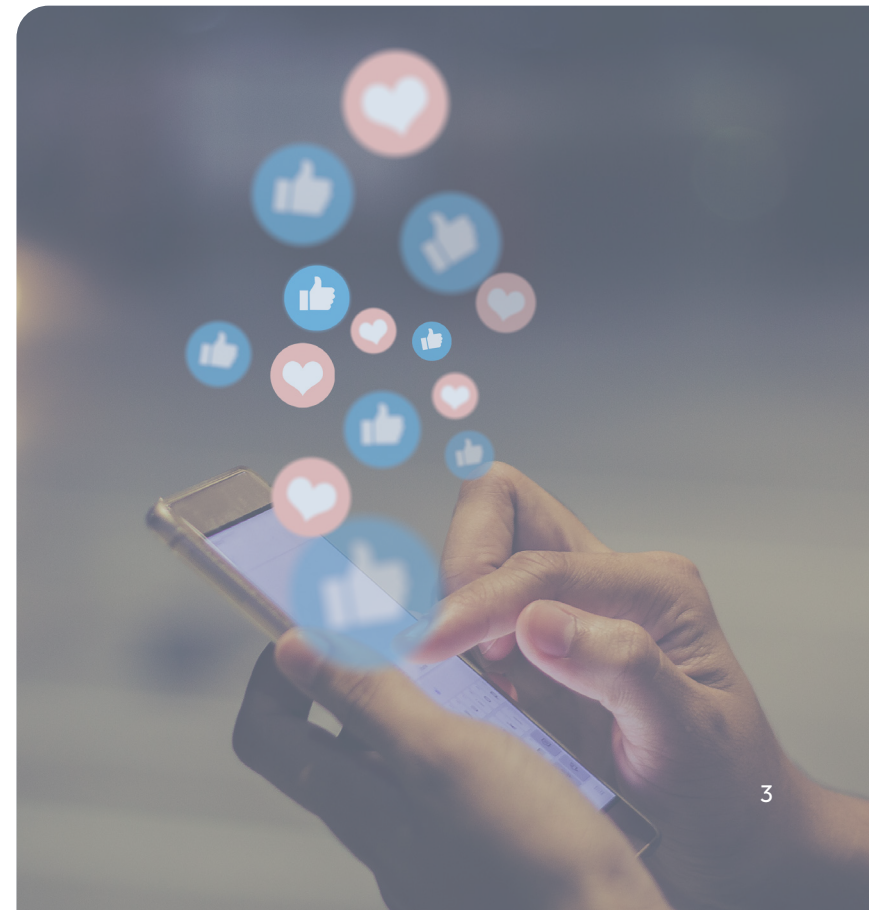
Social Media Essentials

This section provides a basic guide of what you need to get started on managing your organization's social media profile. Using this guide will help you understand the basics of social media platforms, general best management practices, and provide you with some examples of effective posts on different platforms.

If you already have some experience with social media management, you may be more interested in the Advanced section of this guide found here.

Developing a Strategy

Every successful social media strategy shares some common traits – Most importantly, being strategic in how you post content and present your "voice" to your audience. The platforms you use and the frequency of your posts will also contribute to your organization's visibility.

If you've ever attended a marketing seminar before, you've probably heard that social media is an essential tool that every business and organization needs to use. The reason is simple: it's where your audience is. Year after year, social platforms continue to grow across all age demographics, and organizations should have a presence if they want to connect to their audience, share their products and services with interested customers, build brand recognition, and build relationships.

In this guide, we will provide MAEA with specific platforms you should be on, how often to post, how to use and repurpose content for posts, and how to curate content.

Media Channels

Before you open any social media accounts, it's a good idea to have an understanding of each platform and what segment of your audience you might find there. This information will help you make decisions about which platforms are most important for you to be on, and what kind of posts you should make.

Below, you can find demographic data for six of the top social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram, as well as examples of successful content on each platform and a visual representation of each example.

Platform	Monthly Active Users	Largest Age Group(s)	Gender Split	Time Spent Per Day
Facebook	2.91 Billion	25-34 (31.5% of users)	43% female, 57% male	33 minutes
Instagram	2 Billion	25-34 (31.2% of users), 18-24 (31% of users)	48.4% female, 51.8% male	29 minutes
TikTok	1 Billion	10-19 (25%)	61% female, 39% male	89 minutes
Twitter	211 million	18-29 (42%)	38.4% female, 61.6% male	31 minutes
LinkedIn	810 million	25-34 (58.4%)	48% female, 52% male	63% of users access it weekly, and 22% daily
YouTube	2+ billion	15-35	46% female, 55% male	30 minutes

www.sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/
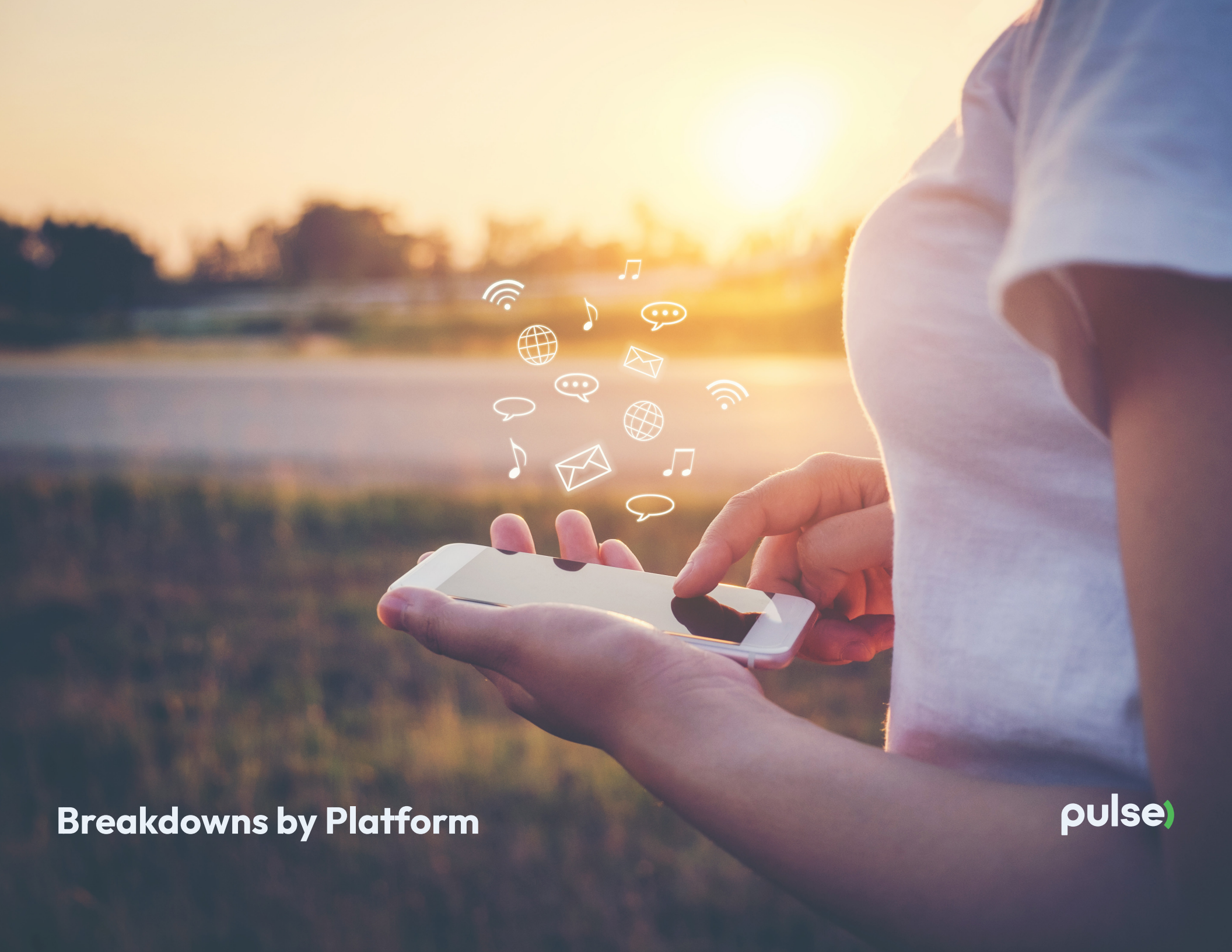
Breakdowns by Platform

pulse

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LinkedIn

(target audience: business professionals primarily between 25-35 years old)

LinkedIn is a free social media platform that is primarily targeted to working professionals looking to post about career achievements/advancement, job opportunities, informative articles, and/or general advice. Users can "connect" with others to add to their networks and directly message them. Businesses can take advantage of the robust LinkedIn Jobs feature, where they can create job postings and find the right candidate for the role. Because of the nature of the platform, LinkedIn is a great place for lead generation, and for finding individuals interested in advancing their work skillsets.

Maine Adult Education Association

🌐 Anyone ▾

Voxy EnGen is an online language upskilling platform for organizations and institutions designed to support English learning for workers, immigrants, and refugees. Students will have access to an easy-to-use app, so they will be able to learn on the go, 24/7. Find out more: https://maineadulted.coursestorm.com/msad1/course/i-english

IWC

iEnglish Project

Add hashtag   #learning   #students   #language

🖼 ▶ 📝 💼 🏅 📊 ⋯ | 💬 Anyone   **Post**

Twitter

(Worldwide, 38.5% of Twitter users are 25-34, excellent for creating brand awareness)

Twitter is a free social media platform that is primarily used to share quick snippets of news or personal updates due to its 280-character limit per "tweet". Users can "retweet" or share other tweets to their personal profile, and they can also comment on tweets and directly message other users. One third of Twitter users have attended college and have annual incomes of $75,000 or more.
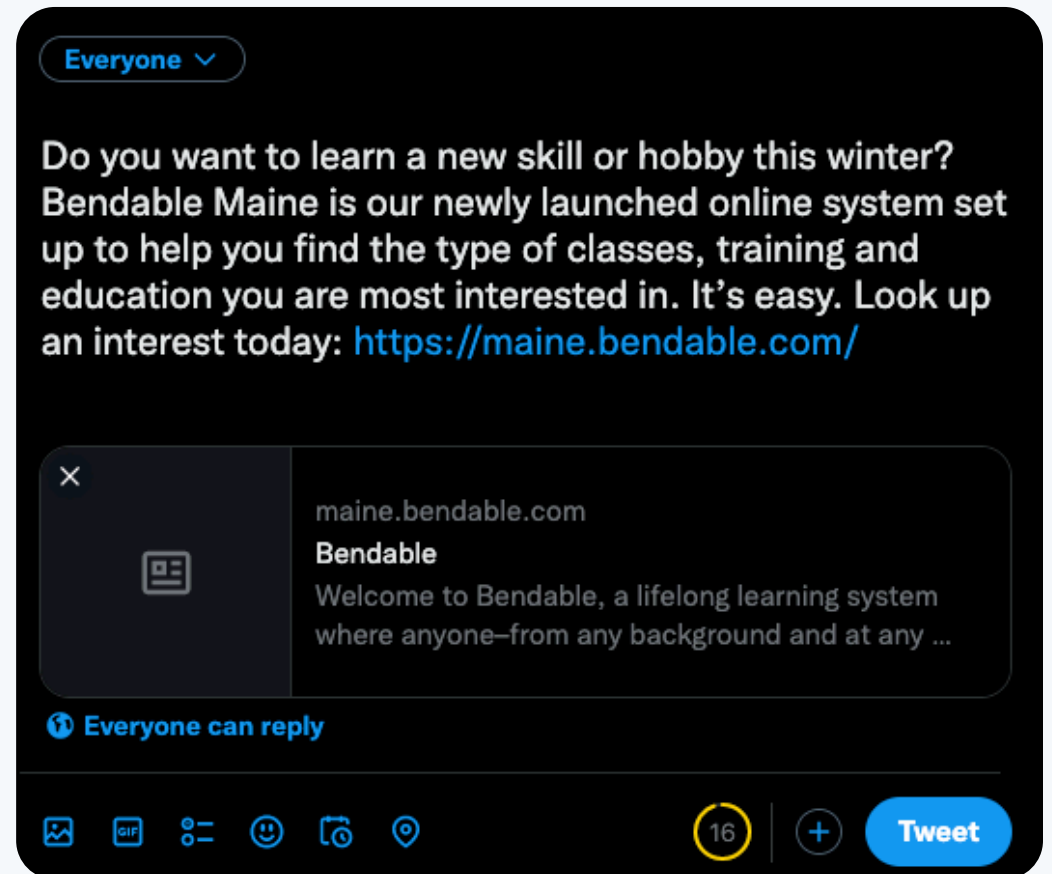
Facebook

(87% Millennials, 90% Gen X and 96% Boomers use Facebook at least once weekly)

Facebook is a free social media platform that allows users to connect with their friends and families, share posts with text, photos, and videos, create and sign up for event listings, buy and sell items through Facebook Marketplace, and more.

Facebook is the most popular social media platform, particularly for older demographics. While the average time spent per day has fallen in recent years and the growth rate of users has slowed, ad expenditure grows year on year and Facebook shows no signs of being dethroned any time soon.

Maine Adult Education Association
🌐 Public ▾

Does it sometimes seem as if your age is working against you in your job search? Whether exploring a new career or searching for a job, this online event (Nov. 10 at 1 p.m.) will provide tips for overcoming bias and promoting confidence in reentering the workforce. Free! Sign up now:

https://maine.bendable.com/learning_objects/4055?bg_img=8

MAINE.BENDABLE.COM
Bendable
Welcome to Bendable, a lifelong learning system where anyone–from any background and at any age–can learn...

Add to your post

Boost post
You'll choose settings after you click Post.

Schedule your post from planner in Meta Business Suite

Post

Instagram

(target audience: between 18 and 24 years years old)

Instagram is a free social media platform that allows users to post photos and videos to share with their followers. Users can also comment on posts and videos from people they follow. The user base has doubled to 2 billion over the last 3 years and is very popular with Gen Z and Millennial consumers. Instagram has also started to emphasize ecommerce and shopping features on the app. As a visual-focused platform, Instagram is excellent for posts that want to show, not tell.

* Tips: unless you use an app with Instagram such as Linkin.bio, you cannot post links through Instagram. Instead put the Bendable URL in your Instagram bio. Best for adult ed programs that are highly visual; i.e. crafts, culinary classes, etc.

**To draft and schedule Instagram posts on a desktop computer, we recommend using a tool such as INSSIST, a Google Chrome extension. More information about Social Media tools is available in our Monitoring Platforms section. Learn more here: www.inssist.com
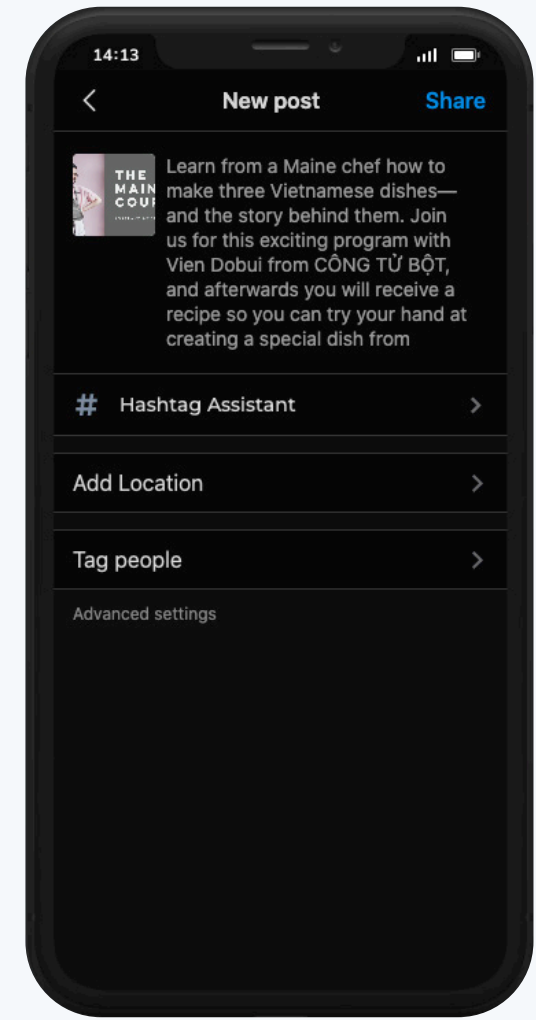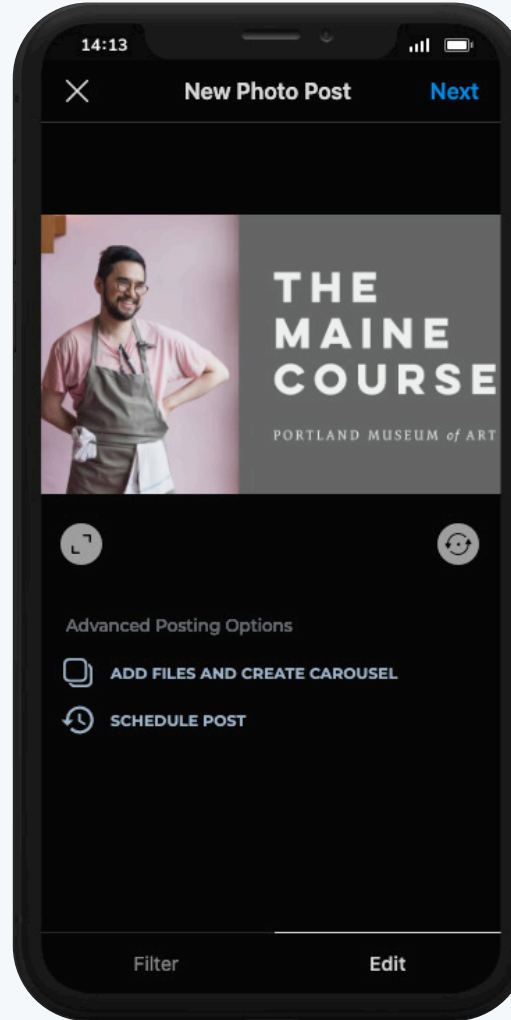
TikTok

(target audience: between 18 and 24 years years old)

TikTok is a free social media platform that allows users to share videos up to 10 minutes long with their followers. Users can "stitch" these videos, where they can respond directly to them with their own videos. They can also comment and directly message other users. For many users, TikTok is a very interactive platform where they can interact with friends and content creators in a personal manner, leading to an average of almost 90 minutes per day spent on the app.

TikTok entices users to stay on the app for almost three times as long as Facebook and Instagram, making it very valuable for advertisers. 39% of Gen Z users reported being directly influenced by products they see on the platform.
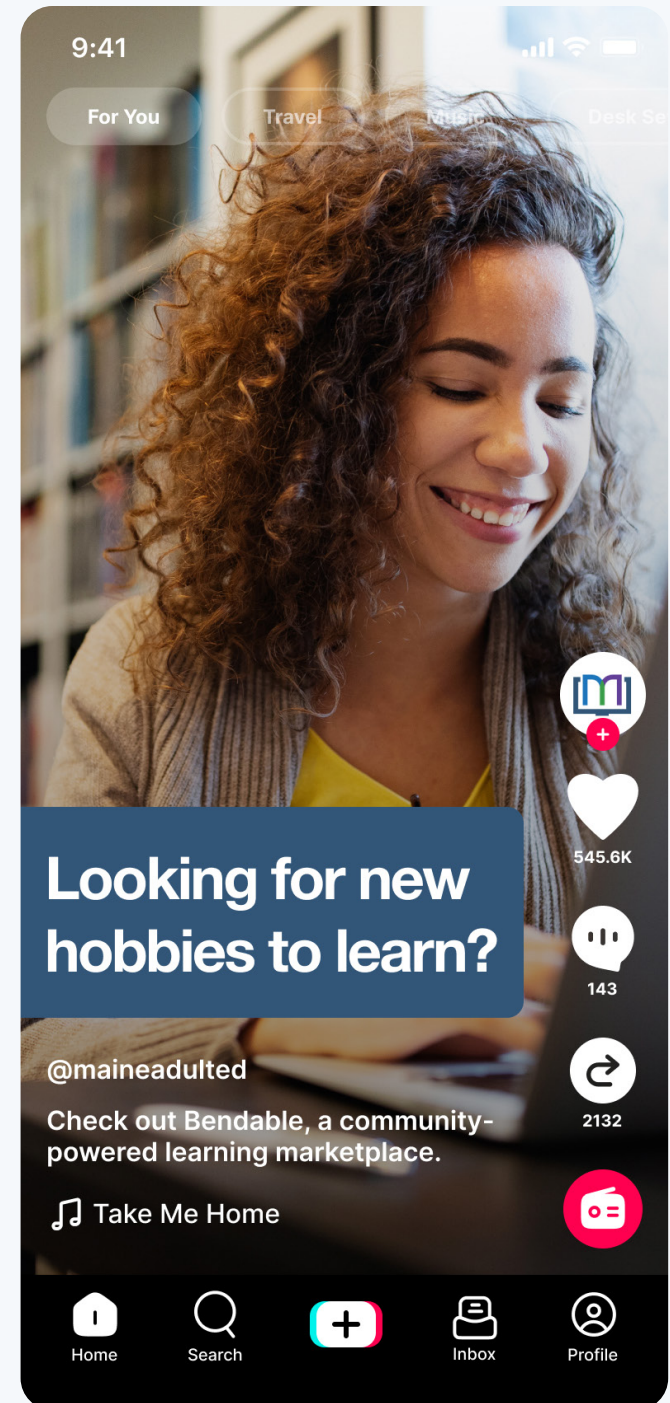
YouTube

(target audience: 18-35, Generation Z and Millenials)

YouTube is a free video-based website that allows users to post videos to their subscribers. YouTube allows users to search for content that interests them, where they can comment, like, and interact with their favorite creators.

YouTube's ad revenue has increased 43% Year over Year, showing the appeal of YouTube as a streaming service and social network.

Social Media Best Practices

As you continue to develop your social media presence, here are some are tips that Pulse Marketing Agency uses both internally and for client social media accounts:

Post Frequency

How many times you post content a week is entirely up to you. If you're unsure of where to start, a wise rule of thumb is to post 3-5 times a week, predominantly on weekdays during standard business hours. Scheduling content weeks in advance using an editorial calendar keeps you on track and prevents trying to find and post content at the last minute. You can research additional best practices for when to schedule content. For example, it's ideal to post in the morning on weekdays before your audience begins their workdays, but it's also more effective to post in the afternoon on weekends as it's more likely your audience will be actively online. Experiment, find out what works best for your organization, and stick to it.

Account Management Privacy and Security

- Make sure to set up a separate email address to link your social media accounts to and share the credentials internally. This allows multiple members of your organization to have access to it should any alerts or crises occur (more on handling these later). Additionally, this will prevent an employee's information from potentially being compromised should a security issue occur.

- Your organization should have a dedicated, secure space to store passwords for all of your accounts. To start, a shared internal spreadsheet or document can house your passwords, but for added security, consideration should be given to online password-sharing tools, such as NordPass Business.

Optimizing Content for Different Platforms

When creating or curating content, be prepared to optimize it based on each platform. For example, Facebook has an unlimited character count and is capable of uploading dozens of photos per post; however, a tweet only allows 280 characters with a limit of four photos. Keep these guidelines — a.k.a specs — in mind when creating content that will be published across multiple platforms.

Platform	Character Limit	Image Specs	Video Length
Facebook	No Limit	940 x 788 px	No limit
Instagram	No Limit	1080 by 1080 px	10 minutes
Twitter	280 characters	1200 x 675 px	2.20 minutes
LinkedIn	No Limit	1200 x 1200 px	30 seconds
TikTok	2,200 characters	1080 x 1920 px	10 minutes
YouTube	100 characters (title)	1920 x 1080 px	15 minutes for unverified accounts, up to 12 hours otherwise
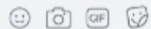
Engaging with Your Audience

Social media engagement is an important part of any social media strategy because it allows you an opportunity to interact with your audience directly and strengthen relationships with the people who are the most interested in your pages. Plus every chance you have to answer questions or respond to a comment on your page is an opportunity to show the rest of your audience who you are and how you interact with your community.

For effective audience engagement, you will want to respond to questions and comments on each platform in a timely manner. Think of messaging and responding to your audience no differently than customer service. Keep it professional, light, and efficient - you will want to find a tone that is friendly but confident. Here are a few sample responses to some potential inquiries, as examples.

> Hello @name, thanks for your interest in our programs. Please send us a direct message or email us. We are happy to assist you with your inquiry!

> @name, your feedback is incredible; thank you for sharing that with us! It's wonderful that you've learned so much from our program and that it has made such a difference for you!

> Hey @name we're so to hear sorry you're experiencing this inconvenience. Please DM us and we will resolve this for you right away.

> Hey @name, thanks for informing us know about this issue. We'll make sure this gets shared with the right people here and we'll let you know as soon as it's fixed.

Your response should directly address what your audience is expressing in their comment. You don't necessarily need to respond to every comment, but should aim to engage with every comment, even if just through reactions.

If you receive negative comments, do not be afraid to moderate your pages and remove any aggressive language by hiding or deleting comments. You should aim to make your pages a positive space where comments and questions are welcome, but not one where visitors are allowed to attack yourself or others. Beyond this, it is important to remember that not every negative comment represents a problem. Every page gets negative comments now and again– it comes with the territory of being active online.

> More on dealing with negative comments can be found within the Public Relations Crises Best Practices section of this document.

Editorial Calendars

A social media editorial calendar is an essential tool that allows you to collaboratively plan and manage your social media strategy days or weeks. Typically, editorial calendars take the form of spreadsheets with columns for essential criteria such as the post date, text content, any graphics or links, and the platforms you intend to post on. More detailed calendars may include columns to keep track of internal approval and scheduling, assignment of responsibility for collaboration, content categorizations (to prevent overuse of specific content types), post variations by platform, hashtags, and more. Plus, the sheet margins can be used to plan for future posts, and provide an easy-to-access record of what you've posted in the past. Spreadsheets rarely sound exciting, but use of an editorial calendar can be a game changer and help provide structure to your social efforts.

If you plan to have multiple people collaborating on the social media calendars, we recommend using Google Sheets. Being part of Google Workspace, Sheets can be easily shared with members of your organization, giving you the ability to assign comments and tasks internally, as well as determine a process for post creation, review, and scheduling. Sheets also allow you to import images, streamlining the graphic design approval process.

Example Editorial Calendars

Below is a simple example of an editorial calendar template. Using an editorial calendar can simplify the writing and review process for social media accounts. While the exact fields you use may vary, we strongly encourage building a simple editorial calendar to keep track of your posting schedule.

View Template Here

Written	Publication	Channels	Content	Type/Topic	Retweet	Status	Reviewed	Link
READ: This Google Sheet is intended to be a template for your own internal social calendar for your organization. To create your own copy, go to File -> Make a Copy in the menu to the top left of your screen. If you're wondering how this calendar works, just hover over each of the column headers to view a note explaining each field. For a full explanation, read the Editorial Calendar section within the Maine Adult Education Social Media Guide document. [LINK TO BE ADDED WHEN FINALIZED] If you have any questions, please send them to team@pulsemarketingagency.com.								
Written	Publication	Channels	Content	Type/Topic	Retweet	Status	Reviewed	Link
11/7	11/7	TW	Launch your career and sign up for our upcoming programs. Visit our website to see all of our openings at maineadulted.org. Classes begin soon!	promote educational programs	Yes		Approved	
11/7	11/8	TW	Continuing education with a business schedule sometimes feels impossible. Earn credits while also earning an education with our flexible and accessible programs all across Maine. Visit our website to find programs in your area.	promote educational programs	Yes		Approved	https://maineadulted.org/
11/7	11/9	TW	Are you yearning to earn your degree? Looking for a career change? Maybe you'd just like to learn to play the guitar. MAEA provides you with resources for your academic success. Learn more on our website at maineadulted.org.	promote educational programs	Yes		Approved	https://maineadulted.org/
11/7	11/10	TW	Class is in session! Our program is full. Stay updated with all of our latest and available programs on our website.	Class is full	Yes		Approved	
11/7	11/10	TW	Classes for our program begin one week away. Sign up today to secure your spot. The program begins on xx/xx/xx!	promote educational programs	Yes		Approved	https://maineadulted.org/
11/7	11/11	TW	#TeacherSpotlight: We take pride in recognizing every one of our educations. Meet xx… learn more about the rest of the team by visiting our website.	Teacher Spotlight/brand awareness	Yes		Approved	
11/7	11/12	TW	We offer several program options from business, to literacy, to personal growth and enrichment. Learn more on our website at:	promote educational programs	Yes		Approved	https://maineadulted.org/
11/7	11/13	TW	We're hosting an open house for our programs. Sign up to learn about all the classes available you. They'll be in the campus center today. Make sure to stop by!	Event promotion	Yes		Approved	
11/7	11/13	TW	Did you know? MAEA first started offering classes in …. to a total of … students. Today, MAEA offers classes to over … full and part time students across a number of educational disciplines. We've certainly come a long way!	Brand Awareness	Yes		Approved	
11/7	11/14	TW	We're celebrating all month as November is National Education Month! #Education #MaineAdultEducation #NationalEducationMonth	Brand Awareness	Yes		Approved	petersons.com/blog/15-scholarships-designed-for-adult-learners
11/7	11/15		Need tips of how to motivate yourself to be productive? Here are tips to motivate yourself to studying:	Curated Content	Yes		Approved	https://www.how-to-study.com/study-skills-articles/motivating-yourself-to-s
11/7	11/16	TW	We offer memberships Individual memberships are available for retirees, students, and individuals not affiliated with adult education programs or partner agencies. Visit our website to learn more.	Membership promotion	Yes		Approved	https://maineadulted.org/
11/7	11/17	TW	In our [program name], the class was engaged as students learned about [lesson plan] and [lesson plan] Interested in enrolling in this class? Visit our website to learn more.	Program promotion	Yes		Approved	https://maineadulted.org/
11/7	11/18	TW	Learning doesn't have an age limit and these scholarships don't either. Learn about these annual scholarships offered exclusively for adult learners:	Curated Content	Yes		Approved	scholarships.com/resources/study-skills/study-smart/tips-for-overcoming-p
11/7	11/19	TW	Adult learning is self-explanatory, but have you heard of Adult Learning theory? Find out more in this article: https://hsi.com/blog/what-is-adult-learning-theory-and-why-is-it-important	Curated Content	Yes		Approved	https://hsi.com/blog/what-is-adult-learning-theory-and-why-is-it-important
11/7	11/19	TW	Visual, Tactile, and Auditory learning are all ways we support and teach our students. What's your learning style?	Brand Awareness	Yes		Approved	
11/7	11/20	TW	What's your learning style? #AuditoryLearning #TactileLearning #VisualLearning	Brand Awareness	Yes		Approved	
11/7	11/21	TW	Online classes are very beneficial and convenient, but it's not always the easiest to remain focused. Here are tips for overcoming procrastination:	Curated Content	Yes		Approved	https://www.scholarships.com/resources/study-skills/study-smart/tips-for-c
11/7	11/21	TW	Learn how adult education is supporting professionals at this time of changing careers: https://www.bizjournals.com/charlotte/news/2022/02/09/some-professionals-turn-to-adult-education.html	Curated Content	Yes		Approved	https://www.bizjournals.com/charlotte/news/2022/02/09/some-professiona
11/7	11/22	TW	Happy Holidays to you from us at MAEA!	Xmas Holiday Post	Yes		Approved	
11/7	11/23	TW	You're never to old for acadamia. Here are tips and what you can expect when going back to school:	Curated Content	Yes		Approved	https://www.bridgeport.edu/news/adults-going-back-to-school-what-to-exp

Measuring Performance

How you measure the performance of your social media presence is going to be largely dependent on your program's goals and long-term social strategy. It's important to decide from the beginning what success will look like and which metrics to analyze. For example, are you looking to increase awareness of your programs? You may measure success based on followership increase and post impressions. Would you like to increase the number of classes offered? Tracking referrals to your site from advertising for signup forms or inquiries about class expansion are metrics you may want to track.

Combining this with website analytics (available for free through Google Analytics) and internal tracking (phone calls, emails, etc.) can help you determine how people are learning about your program, whether it's through social media or other outreach channels. Train employees on how to track metrics that are most important to you by having them ask, "How did you hear about this class?" or "Where did you learn about our program?" Once you're collecting this data, we recommend have a central place to store this information so you can keep track of the progress and effectiveness of your marketing efforts.

Below is a sample of the Insights section of the Meta Business Suite, which is where you are able to access performance results from your owned Facebook and Instagram accounts. For more detailed information on navigating the Business Suite, visit this webpage from Facebook.
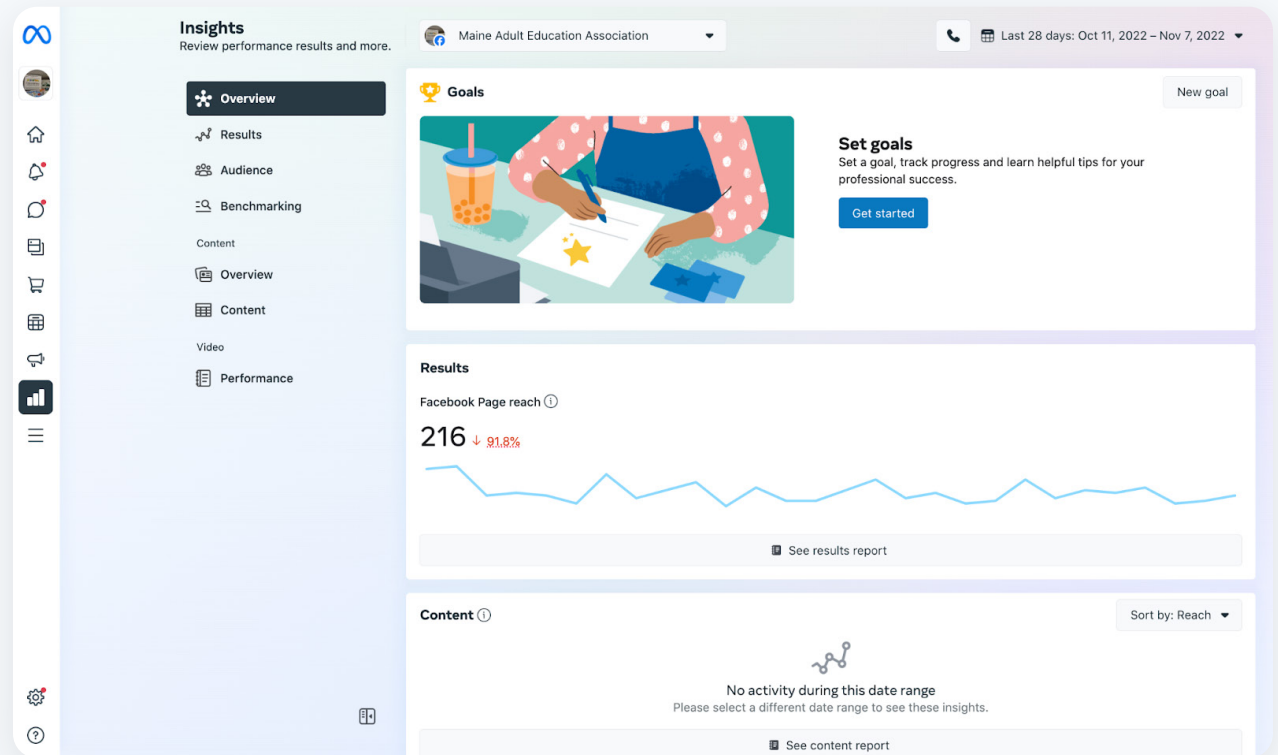
For more information about understanding your social media analytics and creating objectives, read more in the advanced section of this guide.

Part II - Advanced Tactics

Speaking to Your Audience:

Brand Consistency

Once you choose which social media platforms fit your brand's voice and style, the next step is to think about how you want to present yourself to your audience and how you want to be perceived. It's important to establish some rules that everyone on your team will follow when putting your posts together. After all, every post shared and image posted is an opportunity for someone to see you for the first time!

- **Your Brand Color Palette:** One of the best ways to stay consistent on social media is simply sticking to the same color palette when designing your post templates. For example, using the MAEA brand, you would stick to colors that are in the logo, like Navy, Green, Purple, Blue, and White. Posting a graphic with colors outside this set could clash with other posts and weaken your brand consistency. The more consistent you are, the better your brand recognition will be with your audience.

- **Your Logo:** In order for someone to be able to quickly distinguish your posts from the hundreds of others they will see on a daily basis, including your logo prominently within the graphic is key. Usually, one of the corners of the post is a safe spot to place it, as you want whatever the primary focus of the post is to stand out, but still be able to be branded effectively.

- **Use Consistent Brand Voice:** The way you speak to your audience is a big part of the way you are perceived online. By having a consistent voice, you can give an impression of who you are and what your values are. Generally, we recommend speaking to your audience with a friendly but professional tone that will give the impression that you are approachable but still an expert resource. However, a consistent brand voice isn't just about the way you talk-- it's also what you share as well. Whenever you post, think about whether your post content represents the way you want your audience to see you.

- **Hashtags:** The purpose of hashtags is to help people find your content when they search for similar posts. While not every post (or platform) needs hashtags, it's a good idea to scout a few in advance that work for your brand and include them when you post. For example, you might include your location or your organization name as a hashtag, or the type of course you are posting about (#nursing, #adulted, #lifelonglearning, etc.) The easiest place to get started is to look for similar posts and see what hashtags they use— often, these will be the same for you.

The information below represents the colors shown within the Maine Adult Education brand - this is the information you would enter into any graphic design program or hand off to a printer.

With any brand, it's important to use consistent visual language (colors, symbols, shapes, etc.) to help your audience internalize who you are and recognize you by sight alone. This is equally true for social media as through other media like printed materials, website content, and advertising, and it is a good idea to keep

When creating a graphic for social media, think about the colors that you plan to use, including those found in logos like the one below, so that you can maintain a consistent visual style from post to post.

Maine Adult Education
EDUCATE • EMPOWER • ENRICH

R: 51	G: 85	B: 121	
C: 87	M: 66	Y: 32	K: 14
HEX: #335579			

R: 27	G: 117	B: 188	
C: 85	M: 50	Y: 0	K: 0
HEX: #1B75BC			

R: 98	G: 63	B: 153	
C: 75	M: 90	Y: 0	K: 0
HEX: #623F99			

R: 59	G: 157	B: 75	
C: 78	M: 14	Y: 98	K: 2
HEX: #3B9D48			

Hashtags

Hashtags are keywords that index content that you publish, helping people find your content when they search for similar posts– for example a post tagged with #AdultEducation is more likely to show up when searching for posts about education or learning. Because of this, inclusion of hashtags can be a good way to increase the audience of your posts and help people find you who may not otherwise be directly recommended your posts.

However, another use for hashtags is for branding purposes - by using a consistent set of hashtags with each of your posts, including tags like your program location and name, you can help people connect your organization with the content that you post and see you as a community resource.

However, not every post (or platform) needs hashtags to be successful. While hashtags can be useful for helping people find your posts, they also take up space, and sometimes it can be better to keep to the basics.

The table to the right features our general recommendations for hastags use on each platform.

Getting Started

The easiest way to get started using hashtags is just to make some up. There are no limits to what you can type, so typing in related keywords is a good place to start. For example, if you are posting about a nursing program, you might want to use hashtags like #nursing, #adulted, #lifelonglearning, and so on. You can also research other posts about similar topics by searching these same hashtags, and then looking at what other tags are used alongside them.

Once you have a few hashtags that you plan on using consistently, creating a word bank of frequently used hashtags is a great way to save time. We recommend creating a document and writing them down, or include them within your editorial calendar, so that you can keep track of them and add new hashtags from time to time.

Platform (Number to Use)	Recommendations
Facebook (0-2)	Use hashtags to highlight relevant topics for your post. These are a great way to increase awareness beyond your typical audience without having to pay for boosted posts, but make sure to not overuse them.
Instagram (3-5)	Use a mix of popular and more niche hashtags to attract both a broad audience and an audience dialed in to adult education and similar topics. To avoid clogging the caption of your post, publish the post and then leave a comment underneath with all of the hashtags you want to use. You can search terms in the main search bar and see which variations are getting the most traction.
Twitter (1-2)	Twitter allows you to see what hashtags are currently trending in the Explore section, which can sometimes give ideas on topics to emphasize in your posts, as long as they are relevant. Since Twitter's character limit is much lower than other platforms, make sure to choose your hashtags carefully to save space.
LinkedIn (0-4)	Due to the audience of the platform, hashtags can be useful for MAEA programs for building awareness of new courses or sharing insightful articles on topics related to education. Like Instagram, a mix of broad and specified hashtags is ideal for building an engaged audience.
TikTok (3-5)	Use a mix of broad and niche hashtags in your TikTok posts. Since TikTok skews towards a younger audience, taking time to research trending hashtags through the Discover page can increase your potential viewership.
YouTube (1-2 in title, 2-3 in description)	Hashtags will help the YouTube algorithm recognize what your video is about, which can help increase search results. Hashtags added to the title will be clickable in the feed, so this can be used for overarching topics covered in the video to draw in more viewers. If you have hashtags you don't feel the need to use in the title, you can place them in the description, where YouTube will automatically place three above your video title.

Curating Content

Curated content is the process of gathering existing articles, information, or resources online relevant to topics you care about and sharing these directly with your audience. Curation is an effective way to compliment the posts you make, and sharing well-written content can help your brand be seen as an authoritative source of information. Ultimately, the content you share will be seen by your audience as content that you have chosen to share with them and think is relevant or important to them.

To get started, as you put together scheduled posts, do a little research around each topic. You can do a Google search, or search relevant hashtags on Twitter and Instagram to find posts, articles, or resources. For example, going back to the mockup of an Instagram post of an upcoming class with Maine chef Vien Dobui from CÔNG TẾ BẾT (below), do a Google search on his name. What comes up is that Vien Dobui was part of the Portland Museum of Art's exhibition "Stories of Maine: An Incomplete History."

Or for another example, go to the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education (MCAE) Twitter page. Looking up some of their commonly used hashtags such as #AdultEdu and #literacy, you'll find adult education success stories. This is curated content, already written and published that you can now repost, while touting the benefits of MAEA.

For your organization, a few sources that could provide consistent sources of curated content might include:

- www.coabe.org

- www.national-coalition-literacy.org

- www.lern.org

- www.lincs.ed.gov

- www.oecd.org/skills/piaac

- www.worlded.org

- ...and other similarly education-focused sources.

Another easy way to start curating content is to find organizations similar to yours and see what they're posting. Take a look at the sources of their content and evaluate whether these would be consistent sources for you. From there, you can compile a short list and check back in when you're looking for something to add.

Another strategy that can be helpful is setting up Google alerts. This can easily be done by setting up Google Alerts in your inbox, which allows you to curate content based on specific keywords, the type of site, the part of the world the sources are based in, and more. This will save you time from endlessly searching through Google for a relevant article to post, as these articles and videos will be delivered straight to your inbox daily. Visit this link for more information on setting up and using Google Alerts for your organization.

One word of caution– when searching for curated content, it's important to verify the trustworthiness of the sources you pull from. Spreading misinformation, even unintentionally, can lose trust from your audience, and the same with quoting from controversial sources. Look towards established and trusted sources for information to share, but even then, always double check whether the content you curate presents your brand in the best light. Anything you post will reflect on you regardless of whether or not you are the original creator.

Creative Tools

Creating eye-catching and engaging graphics for your social media posts is a great way to maintain the attention of your audience and increase their recall of your post as they scroll through their feeds. With so many accessible tools available for graphic design, you don't have to be a skilled professional to start making effective designs. Here are some tools that we often use at Pulse:

Canva

Canva is a free graphic design tool that our team and many other creative professionals use daily to create and edit graphics and videos. Even though it does not have as many capabilities as programs like Adobe Photoshop or Illustrator, Canva is much more user-friendly, and makes it easy to create professional-looking graphics even without having any kind of design background.

What separates Canva is the extensive template library available to its users. With a simple search, you can find pre-made templates for almost any purpose and platform, such as celebrating a coworker's birthday, holiday-themed designs, or announcing a new program. In Canva, you can easily create your own custom templates and project folders, simplifying the creative process. You can sign up for an account at www.canva.com/free/

Free Stock Image Libraries

While text informs, images are the posts' visual appeal and can help your posts stand out from the rest of the feed. However, it's not always easy to find the right photo.

Stock images (a large online catalog of images) bridge the gap by offering graphics for nearly every type of situation to enhance your text. While you can invest in a high-quality stock image library that is subscription-based, such as Adobe Stock, there are actually free libraries with high-quality images as well. Of these, we find that our favorites are www.pexels.com and www.pixabay.com which have a consistently good selection. www.unsplash.com is another option that is more tailored to images of people and places in more real settings, to avoid looking too much like generic stock images.

Another benefit of using stock image sites: avoiding licensing disagreements. Photos that are taken directly from other sites or from a search engine result are often copyrighted, and if you violate a brand's copyright, even inadvertently, you may be liable for damages. Under the law, your brand is liable for breaking image rights agreements, even if you claim it was a mistake.
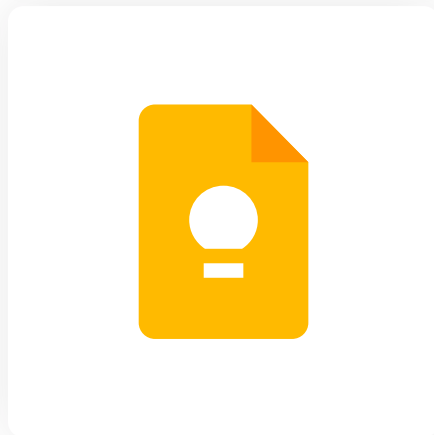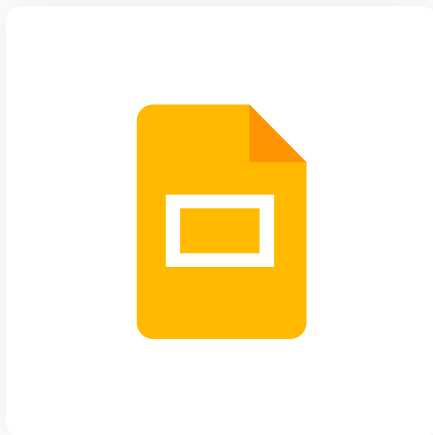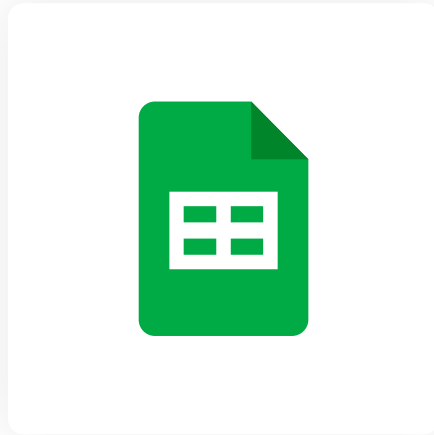
Google Workspace

While this is more of an organizational tool, a Google Workspace account will give you access to many tools that will streamline your process and productivity, such as Google Docs, Drive, and Sheets–the key being their relative ease of collaboration. If you plan to take on social media as a team, using tools that promote communication and collaboration can make a big difference in what you're able to accomplish.

Here are some useful links with more information on setting up a Google Workspace account, as well as how to use your new Google Workspace account within your organization.
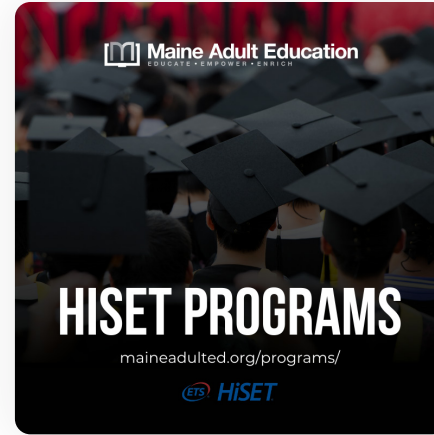
Social Media Templates

When creating social media posts, it can be helpful to use templated post language and designs to efficiently publish posts on similar topics and maintain consistency in branding and visual language. For example, if you consistently highlight the accomplishments of your staff members, you will likely want to use a graphic template that formats their photos in a consistent way.

Some templates have been created for your use within the MAEA Marketing Toolkit, which you can access here. However, if you find yourself consistently wanting to create posts about a specific topic, we recommend standardizing as much as possible to make the process of creating the post quick and easy.

Monitoring Platforms

Social media monitoring — also referred to as social media listening— is a great way to keep track of how your posts are performing across multiple channels and manage your brand's reputation online. Depending on your program's goals, you may have different keywords and topics that you would like to track, in addition to brand mentions, comments, and reviews. Advanced monitoring tools can be costly, but fortunately there are a few helpful tools that offer full or limited versions of their platform for free:

Facebook Business Manager

Business Manager for Facebook allows you to connect Facebook and Instagram pages into one manager to schedule posts ahead of time, analyze post statistics and audiences, set up advertisements, and more. It's free and convenient to use. For more information about setting up a Business Manager account, visit: www.facebook.com/business/help/

Tweetdeck

Similar to Facebook's Business Manager, Tweetdeck is a tool specifically designed for Twitter accounts. Its multi-column view allows you to monitor different feeds at once and keep track of keyword searches, interactions, and other accounts. Every Twitter account by default has the ability to use Tweetdeck. To sign in, just visit www.tweetdeck.twitter.com.

Hootsuite

Hootsuite is an independent social media tool that lets you manage all of your social accounts in one place with similar features as Business Manager and Tweetdeck. If you have multiple social accounts, or want a better dashboard for content curation, Hootsuite is a good product to try. Schedule posts and respond to comments across multiple platforms, plus track topics by hashtags or mentions. Visit www.hootsuite.com/create-free-account/ to get started with a free account.
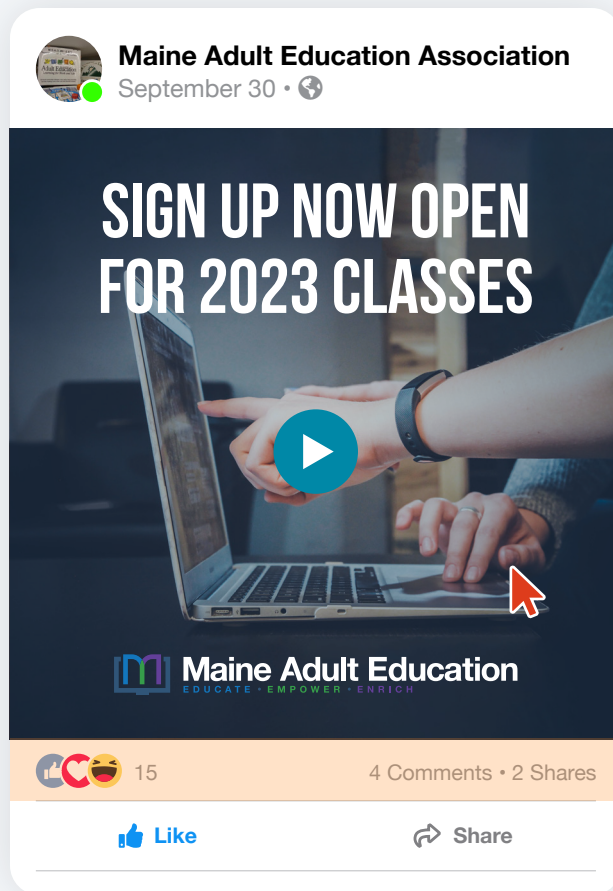
Buffer

Buffer offers similar features as Hootsuite with a limited free version as well as a low-fee version with more features, including analytics, insights, and reporting. For a price comparison, visit www.buffer.com/pricing/.

Measuring Success through Social Media KPIs

Key performance indicators, or KPIs, are metrics that can be used to track the success of your social media efforts by their results. Depending on your post objective, different KPIs will be important to you– for example, on a post celebrating student success you might care about engagements (likes, shares, comments, reactions), versus on a different post you might be looking to drive traffic to your website.

While KPIs never tell "the full story" of how your posting efforts are going, they are an important part of your digital presence to pay attention to and can help you identify what is and isn't working. Plus, these metrics are easy to track through built-in social media analytics and tell you a story of how

Here is a list of some common key performance indicators (KPIs) to become familiar with:

- **Impressions:** the number of times a post has appeared in front of a user. The number of impressions does not indicate the number of people who saw the post, but rather the number of times the post was displayed.

- **Engagements:** how many people interacted with a post on a social media account, such as a Facebook reaction, share, or comment.

- **Click:** when a user physically clicks or taps on a post link.

- **Click-through rate (CTR):** the percentage of people who clicked on your post, calculated by dividing the number of users who clicked on the post by the number of users who saw the post.

- **Conversions & Conversion rate:** the number of times a user performs a desired action such as a signup or purchasing a product. Conversion rate is calculated by dividing the number of conversions by the total number of ad interactions over a set period of time.

- **Video views:** the number of times users viewed a video post.

- **View-through rate (VTR):** the number of completed views divided by video impressions.

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Impressions: The number of times a post has appeared in front of user.

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Engagements: How many people interacted with a post. Such as a Facebook reaction, share, or comment.

Video views: The number of times users viewed a video post.

View-through rate (VTR): The number of completed views divided by video impressions.

Okay, so now you know what KPIs to look out for, but how do you create one to grow your organization? Here are tips to consider when goal setting for your social media metrics:

- **Get familiar with analytics:** The best place to start is with understanding the platforms you're working with. Nearly every social platform has an analytics suite which contains valuable information about your post performance, your audience, data trends, and more. While the way to access these analytics varies by platform, generally you need to set your account to a business profile first, after which the analytics tools become a menu item.

- **Work backwards from your goals:** The simplest way to know what metrics matter is to have an idea of what you're trying to accomplish. For example, if you're most interested in connecting with students and keeping them in the loop, maybe engagement is most important to you. If you're looking to raise awareness of your programs, post reach may be more important. Looking to drive conversions? Website visits could be your most important stat.

- **Follow industry standards:** If you don't know where to start, staying on top of best practices within the education industry is an easy way to keep your marketing efforts and goals fresh. Research the general digital presence requirements for academic organizations such as what kind of content is being published, what is your audience talking about, and what kind of content is your audience most receptive to. Use these questions as a jump-off point to determine goals for your metrics.

- **Review your performance:** After you've set your goals and have an idea of what metrics are most important to you, you have a basis on which to compare. We recommend setting a time each week to check in on your post performance and seeing what worked best. From this information, you can make conclusions about what strategies are successful for you, or what to do differently in the future.

- **Create both short-term and long-term goals:** If you ever feel overwhelmed by all the numbers, metrics, and data, don't fret—even experienced users sometimes feel overloaded with all the information to keep track of. Think back to your goals, and how you can achieve them based on what you already know about what's working for you, and set yourself short and long-term objectives. Start with quick wins! Maybe set an objective to gain 100 engagements on a social media post. Then think bigger—maybe a long-term goal is to increase page followers by a specific percentage within a month. Start small and then grow from there.

Public Relations Crises Best Practices

Having a dedicated and unified public relations strategy is critical for all organizations, but especially those as tied into their communities as adult education groups. Having a presence online, it's likely that at some point you will encounter a "crisis" of some kind– even if it's something as simple as a student with a negative experience and an online megaphone. In these kinds of situations, it's important to be prepared ahead of time and have a good idea of how to de-escalate the situation before it affects public opinion. When in a crisis:

- **Be Transparent:** Never try to hide or cloud details from the public. If the crisis arises from an internal error, it is always best to get out in front of it and admit where you were wrong, and the next steps of how you intend to fix it.

- **Be Timely:** Living in the 24-hour news cycle, your organization will need to respond as soon as possible. Doing so will show your audience that you care and are working as hard as possible to amend whatever situation occurs. Failure to do so can lead to further questions about your morals, values, etc.

- **Do Not Assign Blame to Outside Parties:** Even if an outside party may have had a part in the crisis, it is a very bad look for an organization to be blaming other entities for an error that happened on their watch. These discussions need to be had internally and should never be made public.

- **Take the Conversation Offline:** When talking with an irritated follower, try to take the conversation into a private chat or have them call you to discuss the issue directly. By taking the conversation offline, you can de-escalate the situation and speak directly to the concerns they have without having to have a difficult conversation in the public eye. By suggesting that they contact you directly, you also show to any viewers that you are taking action and resolving any issues that have been brought up.

- **Determine Potential Problems, and Have Talking Points Ready to Use:** Being in education, there are multiple potential problems to be aware of, including billing issues, poor communication, negative experiences with teachers/other students, etc. Having some drafted responses ready as a starting point will allow you to address the situation more effectively. However, each incident is unique, and the same response should NEVER be directly copied-and-pasted without initial research into the situation.

You Can Always Call Pulse!

Need help? Feel free to give us a call at **207-947-9333**, and we will be happy to assist you and answer any questions you have. You can also contact us at team@pulsemarketingagency.com

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