

Social Media Guide

This guide outlines general practices that will be used by representatives of We Live New York (WLNY) when communicating via social media. This program will be used to support and enhance the mission:

We Live New York is about building and retaining the next generation of talented future leaders. The coalition will rally around issues that benefit all young people in New York State. WLNY will work to foster and communicate economic and civic engagement opportunities to young professionals. It will further serve as a vehicle for advocacy. And, by serving as the agent for communication and collaboration between professional organizations across the State, WLNY serves the purpose of sharing information between New York based YPO's and communicating the needs of emerging leaders to interested parties.

Purpose:

The goal of social media is to communicate with your audience on a more personal level. It should be used to enhance the primary message of the organization by giving supplementary information that is relevant to the audience and will motivate them to subscribe to the various forms of media and actively participate.

Audience:

The target audience for We Live New York is young professionals in New York State around the ages of 18 – 35.

Message:

Unlike traditional marketing, social media gives you the ability to start a conversation and build a relationship with others, human-to-human. This relationship is based on trust and respect for your audience and it's a large responsibility to act as a voice for We Live New York.

That's why a person who is genuinely enthusiastic about WLNY will be the most qualified for social media. A good personality and the ability to be yourself are extremely important and will get the best reception from your audience. They will be able to tell when you're "faking it" and will quickly lose interest if you don't treat them appropriately. You need to be patient, approachable and you must never lose your temper when replying to WLNY's followers.

Another **important** aspect of social media is the "perceived value" that your audience sees in the content you provide. That content needs to be worth reading and it should compel them to take action – whether it's to sign up for a conference, share a post with their friends, start their own Young Professionals Organization, etc. You need to get your audience to be as enthusiastic as yourself and encourage them to help you share this message with others.

Keep these tips in mind while writing:

- Your message should be clear and concise. You're not writing a novel, so keep it short and sweet because it's easy to lose the reader's attention. Consider breaking up the information into bullet points (similar to this section).
- There's a reason why the word "community" is often used in association with social media. Your audience is a member of your family and should be addressed in a familiar way. They should feel comfortable communicating with you about anything related to WLNY – no matter if it's a question or criticism.
- Use action verbs. Descriptive verbs such as "Google," "share," "recommend," etc. will energize your writing and keep the reader engaged.
- Proofread your writing before posting. Make sure there are no spelling/grammar errors and that you can read through the post without any difficulties. Keep in mind that the quality of your writing is a reflection on you and We Live New York.

Content:

The various forms of content can include, but are not limited to:

Blog post: Basically, an online journal. Blog posts can cover a broad range of topics and can be as short as a paragraph or they can be much longer.

- Keep in mind the "short and sweet" tip from the previous section.
- Exceptions can be made for longer posts if they are full of details that are relevant to the topic and will be valuable to the reader.

Status update: It's a one-line post that gives a brief update to your followers.

- Inform them of current events.
- Tell them about new content you posted (blogs, videos, etc.).
- It can also be used to post other miscellaneous items (quotes, photos, etc.)
- Make sure that you **provide a link** to outside content if you write about it.

Event announcements: Event announcements can be shared by various methods, but some social media sites will create a page that will focus on just that event. It can give all the details and also create a list of confirmed guests attending.

- Make sure you provide **all** the details – What is it for? What the date for the event? Where is it? When does it start? How long will it last? Does it cost any money? Etc.

Videos: Websites such as YouTube can be used to share video of workshops, conferences, interviews, etc. They are usually more effective when combined with another form of content which can provide background information or anything that can add to viewer's experience.

Photos: Websites such as Flickr can be helpful in social media. Photos can be stored in a large file size and can easily be accessed from any computer with an internet connection. Photos are usually used in other content to enhance a reader's experience.

Links: Links will be used **all the time!** They will be used for linking the reader between the various content created by you and it will also be used to link to outside sources of information. Linking is a valuable skill to master in social media because of its power to direct the traffic of your audience.

There are other types of content available for use in social media. The possibilities are endless! Just be sure that it's relevant to We Live New York and any topics related to it.

Channels & Distribution:

The primary resources We Live New York will use for its social media plan are:

- **Facebook** – www.facebook.com ; **Help Center** – www.facebook.com/help/?ref=contextual

Facebook, Inc. operates as a social networking company worldwide. The company builds tools that enable users to connect, share, discover, and communicate with each other; enables developers to build social applications on Facebook or to integrate their Websites with Facebook; and offers products that enable advertisers and marketers to engage with its users. – Businessweek.com

Facebook is the world's largest social network with 443 million daily users and 845 million monthly users. It is estimated that over 10 million Facebook users reside in New York State which makes it a valuable resource for finding followers for We Live New York. Its strength lies in the ability to communicate with your target audience in several different ways. They have an easy to use help center (link above) and reading the "Ad and Business Solutions" section is highly recommended for using this website to its full potential.

- **Twitter** – www.twitter.com ; **Twitter for Business** – business.twitter.com

Twitter connects businesses to customers in real time—and businesses use Twitter to quickly share information with people interested in their products and services, gather real-time market intelligence and feedback, and build relationships with customers, partners and influencers. From brand lift to CRM to direct sales, Twitter offers businesses an easy way to reach an engaged audience. – Twitter.com

Twitter is convenient for its simplicity. It can be linked with Facebook and LinkedIn, so any "Tweets" posted on Twitter can be automatically posted as an update on Facebook and LinkedIn. This helps reach a larger audience without extra work. They have a very good help section and "Twitter for Businesses" (link above) is also highly recommended.

- **LinkedIn** – www.linkedin.com ; **Help** – <http://help.linkedin.com/app/home>

With over 100 million users representing over 200 countries around the world, LinkedIn is a fast-growing professional networking site that allows members to create business contacts, search for jobs, and find potential clients. Individuals have the ability to create their own professional profile that can be viewed by others in their network, and also view the profiles of their own contacts. – CrunchBase.com

In order to encourage others to participate in LinkedIn under the umbrella of We Live New York, a “Group” should be created. A Group is a place where discussions relevant to WLNY can be created and updates can be sent to members via email. The help section (link above) will be helpful when creating a Group. LinkedIn has other features that could be useful in the future. Job Listings and Product/Service Reviews are only a couple examples of what is possible.

- **Meetup** – www.meetup.com ; **Help** – www.meetup.com/help/

Meetup is the world's largest network of local groups. Meetup makes it easy for anyone to organize a local group or find one of the thousands already meeting up face-to-face. More than 2,000 groups get together in local communities each day, each one with the goal of improving themselves or their communities.

Meetup's mission is to revitalize local community and help people around the world self-organize. Meetup believes that people can change their personal world, or the whole world, by organizing themselves into groups that are powerful enough to make a difference. – Meetup.com

Meetup is valuable for the Young Professional Organizations (YPOs) that WLNY is trying to encourage. This website should mainly be promoted by WLNY to help the YPOs organize their own meetings and events. We Live New York should avoid creating their own Organizer account and instead stay in constant contact with the local YPO Meetup Organizers. The local Organizers can then be used to help promote any WLNY events, and this will also save WLNY from any fees associated with being an organizer.

Everyone can watch videos on YouTube. People can see first-hand accounts of current events, find videos about their hobbies and interests, and discover the quirky and unusual. As more people capture special moments on video, YouTube is empowering them to become the broadcasters of tomorrow. – CrunchBase.com

- **YouTube** – www.youtube.com ; <http://support.google.com/youtube/?hl=en>

YouTube is a convenient way to store videos and share them online. The options for sharing the videos are to “embed” (put) them into blogs or other posts, or you can include a link that your audience can use to see the video directly on YouTube. This is a great way to share workshops or lectures that your followers might not have the opportunity to see.

- **Flickr** – www.flickr.com ; <http://www.flickr.com/help/>

In addition to being a popular website for users to share and embed personal photographs, the service is widely used by bloggers to host images that they embed in blogs and social media. – Wikipedia.org

Similar to YouTube, using Flickr will mainly be used for storing photos for use in the other channels of social media. It can be easy to forget about maintaining a presence on these websites since they're mostly used as tools to enhance your social media posts, but some people actually look at these sites so it's best to keep them regularly maintained.

Maintenance:

Maintaining We Live New York's social media presence is key to making the program successful. The following suggestions for maintaining the various channels will be the **bare minimum** and you are strongly encouraged to go above these requirements.

Facebook Updates, Twitter Tweets, and LinkedIn Updates should be updated on a daily basis. This can be made easier by linking LinkedIn and Facebook to Twitter. By doing this, you can just create one post in Twitter that will then automatically update the other sites. Visit their respective Help sections to learn the simple steps for this.

Blog posts should be updated weekly. Weekly is often enough where you won't lose your following (any longer could risk losing followers) but it also accounts for those "slow" weeks where you don't have as much information to share. However, if there's a good supply of valuable information, daily blog posts are encouraged.

YouTube and Flickr should be updated monthly at a minimum but the best practice is to upload pictures and videos as soon as they were created. Videos and Pictures are "worth a thousand words" so there's no harm in uploading them – even if it's before you use them in a post/blog/etc.

Channel Specific Maintenance:

Facebook: Scan your newsfeed daily. "Like" posts from your "Fans" or comment on them if you feel it adds value to WLNY. Like it was mentioned before, the "human" element of businesses and organizations is what people desire, so don't let them down.

Twitter: Scan through the Tweets of the people/organizations you're following daily. You can often find valuable links from some of these people and you can then "Retweet" them to your followers. This can ease the burden of creating content.

LinkedIn: Look through the topics being discussed in the We Live New York group. This website is special because you will see more discussions compared to posts. Do your best to help others with questions, provide resources and refer them to other professionals in the network. The people who use LinkedIn generally take things more seriously because they're going to a website dedicated to their professional life. Don't forget to suggest that they start their own local Young Professional Organizations!

YouTube and Flickr: Make sure that all profile information (most importantly, contact information) is accurate. There have been too many times when a business will establish these profiles only to forget about them. The main form of contact on these sites will be through comments on the individual pictures or videos. Look though them and respond regularly.

WARNING!

There is such a thing as **posting too often**. Think of it like the nagging friend who calls you way too often during the day. People can get annoyed really quickly if they look at their News Feed and see 10 posts from WLNY in just one day. Overloading on updates is one of the easiest ways to lose followers!

Intellectual Property:

Copyright violations can be a common issue online, so in order to protect We Live New York from any potential problems concerning intellectual property, the following websites should be visited (before any work on WLNY's accounts) to gain a better understanding of copyright and fair use:

- **Social Media Examiner "Copyright Fair Use and How it Works for Online Images"**
<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/copyright-fair-use-and-how-it-works-for-online-images/>
- **Social Media Today "What Bloggers Should Know About Copyright"**
<http://socialmediatoday.com/node/470243>
- **United States Copyright Office**
<http://www.copyright.gov/>

Conclusion:

It needs to be stressed that this Social Media Guide is a **guide** for using social media effectively. It's to help you understand the principles that will make your endeavors successful and help you avoid the common pitfalls that many others will make online. No one can become a social media expert overnight and like anything else, consistent practice will make you better. Remember that you're part of a community and you will learn many things as you continue to represent We Live New York.