

a guide to social media



GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS GUIDE

Term	Definition
Channel	The social media medium you are using (ie Twitter, Facebook)
Character	A letter, symbol or space - used to measure the length of a post
Follower	Someone who is connected to your social media channel
Hashtag	A keyword used in a post that is preceded with the # symbol
Meme	An image/video/piece of text copied and spread via social media
Post	The message/item shared on your social media channel
Tagging	Including another user
Tweet	The term used for posts on Twitter
@tag	Tagging a person or organisation within a post by using their username preceded by the @ symbol

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social media

Social media is a relatively new phenomenon that, like it or not, is here for the long term. It has become an essential tool for businesses to have in the 2010s - simply having a website does not mean that you will get web based interaction with your audiences.

Social media is a different way of operating from your traditional static advertising methods (print, radio, television) because it is interactive. It requires constant attention and up to date and topical content. Simply posting something on a social media site does not guarantee any engagement - it needs to be relevant and interactive.

It is generally accepted now that businesses need to have social media, but creating a Facebook page or Twitter account requires work. It can be more detrimental to your organisation to have a social media account that is stale and not updated, than it is to not have one at all.

Businesses need to think about what message they want to get out, who they want to target and what results they want to get from their social media campaigns. Having a plan will ensure that a consistent message is being sent out to the world, and will ensure that social media channels are kept up to date and relevant. This guide is a tool to help you along the way with managing your social media channels.

The guide give tips about using the channels well, planning a campaign and using up to date and relevant content.



social media channels

Choosing the right channel is important if you want to reach your targeted audience. As a general rule, pick one or two channels and focus your time on these - the more channels you have the more time you will have to spend maintaining them.



Facebook is by far the most widely used channel in New Zealand, and is used by the widest number of age groups. The fastest growing age group of Facebook users is people aged 50 - 60. Facebook has recently built in a hash tag function.



Twitter has not taken off in New Zealand as much as it has in other countries. It is used mainly by public figures and organisations in New Zealand, but is a great way to connect with groups and individuals with a high profile. Twitter is earmarked to grow in popularity in New Zealand.



Instagram has been earmarked as the next big social media platform. The platform is used mainly by a younger audience.



LinkedIn is great for building up a professional network and is also used by job seekers and talent seekers. The channel is also used as a way to drive sales. Used by an the 30+ aged professionals.



Pinterest is a virtual 'pin-board' and allows you to post visual items such as photos and infographics. This channel is growing very fast and is used by a more affluent age group.



Google+ was earmarked as the 'next big thing' in social media, but failed to take off. Many organisations created an account in anticipation of this channel taking off, but very few actually use it. Some online blogs refer to this channel as 'the walking dead.'



General Rules

MODERATE YOUR CHANNELS

Don't leave your social media channels to their own devices. Check them daily - remember anyone can write material on social media, and a negative message left unattended can cause damage to the organisation's reputation.

THINK BEFORE YOU DELETE

Sometimes negative messages can be posted by people on your channels, but deleting these can be worse than leaving them unattended. Where possible, write a positively framed response to the comment.

DON'T CREATE MORE CHANNELS

The more channels you have, the more work is required to keep them current and up to date. Every time you create a new channel, you also need to build a new audience. Where possible, use the channels that are available to execute your social media plan. These have pre-established followings and associated reputation you can build from.

USE THE CHANNELS THAT SUIT YOUR AUDIENCE

Picking a channel that suits your audience is important, as different channels have a different type of following.

- 50 years + are unlikely to use Twitter or Instagram, keep campaigns for this age group to Facebook.
- Teens are more likely to engage with Instagram, using this will suit your market and up your engagement level.
- Twitter is mostly used by celebrities or organisations in New Zealand, but its use is rising. Getting a Twitter following is good future proofing.



Increasing postinteraction

WHERE POSSIBLE, POST WITH A PHOTO OR VIDEO

Statistically speaking, posts that include a photo get 39% more interaction than posts that only have text. Ensure that any photos you post adhere to the channel's image guide to ensure that the integrity of your image is maintained, and the image is displayed in its entirety.

KEEP IT SHORT

Shorter posts get more interaction. Keep it between 70 and 140 characters long (this is also the same length as a tweet - this length will also ensure that your entire post is viable on linked posts to Twitter from another channel's account).

This is just to show you want 120 letter characters looks like, this is all the space you have to compose your thoughts.

ASK A QUESTION IN YOURT POST

Question posts get 100% more interaction than non-question posts. You can include a question with informative material and still keep the posts short.



Using questions starting with *should, would or who* will get more interaction than *where, when or how*.



Increasing postinteraction

PICK THE BEST DAY TO POST

Posts later in the week get more interaction than posts earlier in the week. If you have a post that is particularly important to get noticed, post it on a Thursday or Friday.

The more people don't want to be at work, the more likely they are to check their social media account - the wind down to the weekend is a classic example.

PICK THE BEST TIME TO POST

Posts made between 3pm and 7pm are more likely to have interaction than posts outside of these hours.

SOCIAL MEDIA TIP

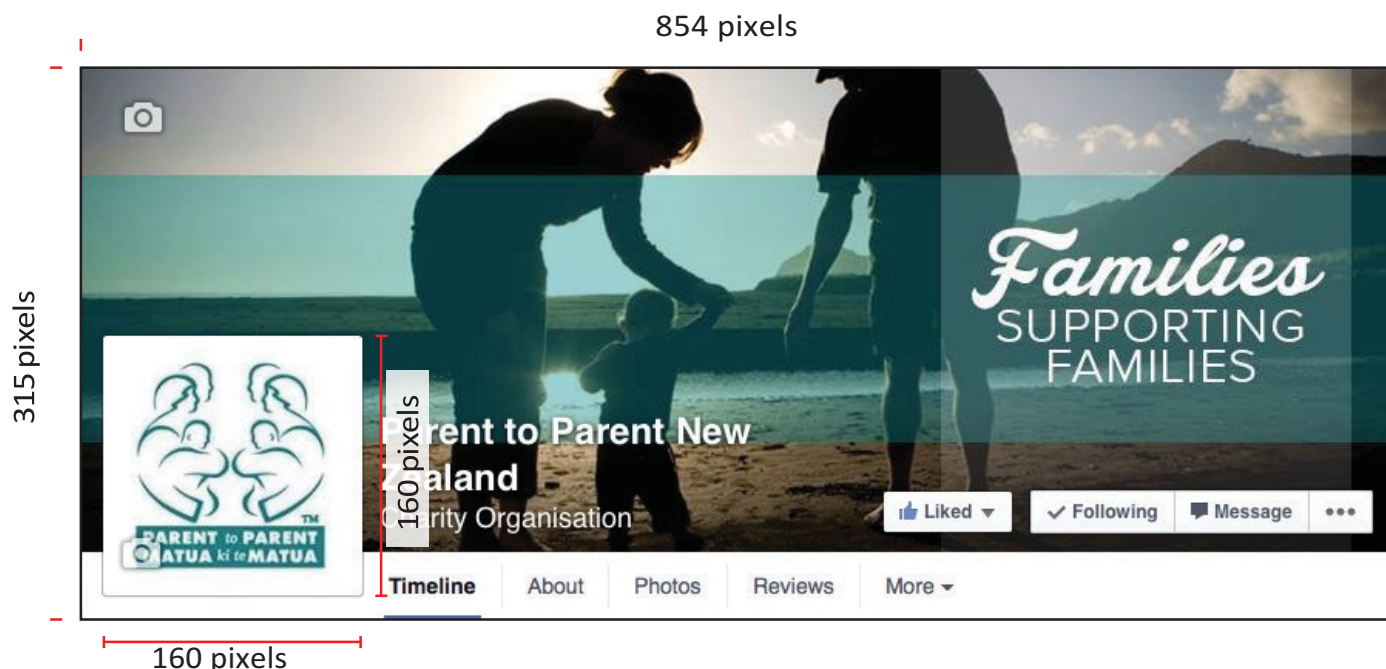
You can use the post scheduling function in some channels (Facebook being one) to schedule your post to be released at a later time or date. This function allows you to queue all your posts for the day or week at once, instead of spending time every day updating your page.



Image sizes

Editing your images to the correct size for the social media channel you are using is important, as this will ensure the entire image is visible. All social media platforms have their image specifications online, but for the purpose of this guide, we will provide you with Facebook and Twitter image sizes.

FACEBOOK COVER AND PROFILE IMAGES



The cover photo should be 845 X 315 pixels. The resolution should be set to 150dpi to maintain the quality of the photo when Facebook compresses it.

Take note of where the profile photo, the 'Like' and 'Follow' buttons, and the page name and category are. You do not want to put elements in

your cover photo that are going to be hidden by these.

The profile picture is 160 X 160 pixels. Upload at 150 dpi so the quality is maintained when the image is compressed. Facebook automatically adds a white border around the image.

POSTING PHOTOS/IMAGES



When you post a photo or image on Facebook it creates a 'preview' image in the timeline. If the image you post is not the correct size, the preview will not display the entire photo.

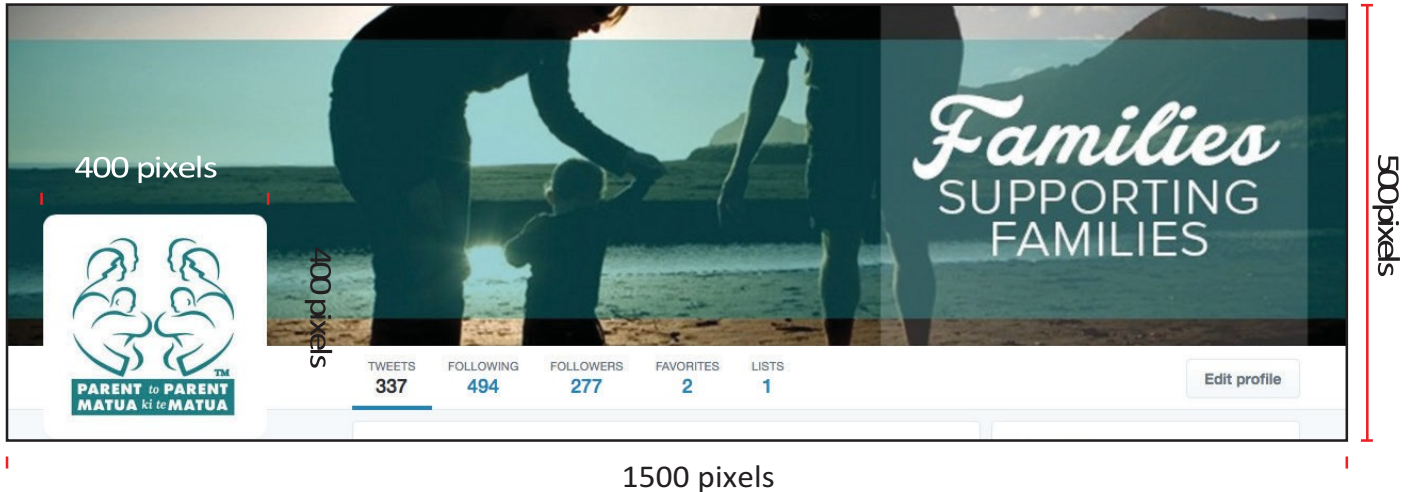
While people can click the photo to see it in its entirety, you're more likely to get interaction if the photo is displayed whole.

Upload your images/photos at 1200 X 1200 at 150dpi - this will ensure the image quality is maintained when Facebook compresses the image.

Don't forget the 70 - 140 character rule with the caption you put with the photo.

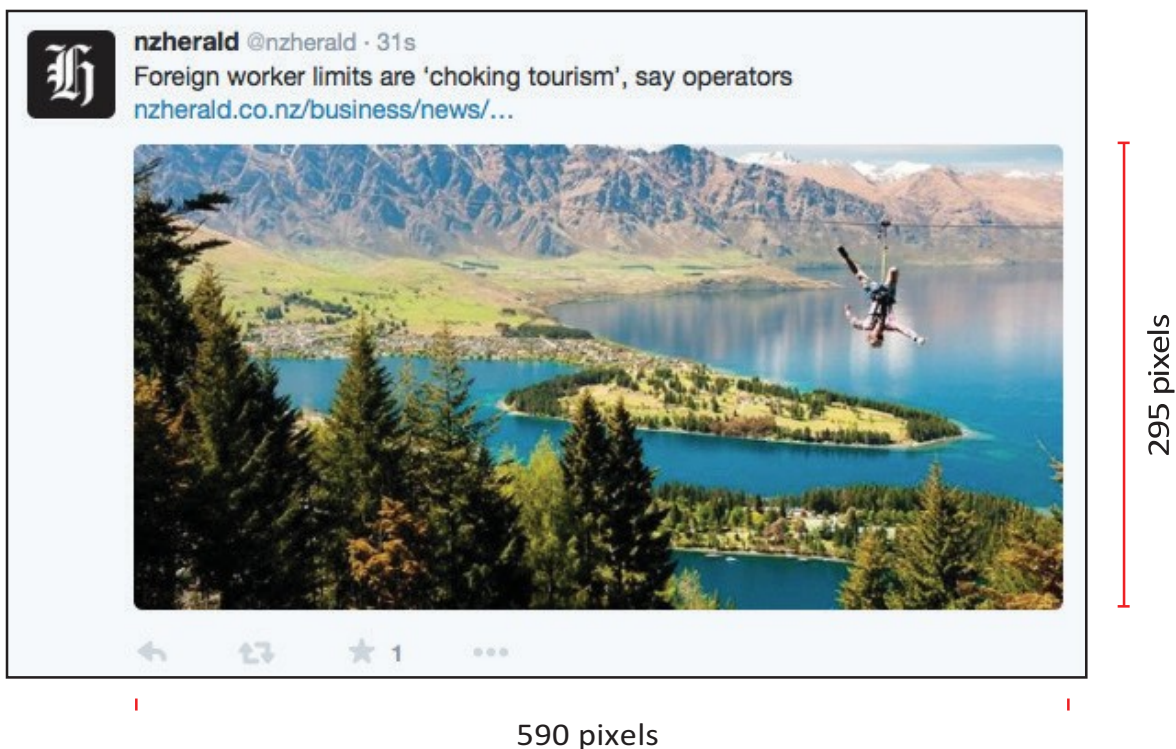
Image sizes

TWITTER PROFILE AND BACKGROUND IMAGE



The image for the Twitter background must be no more than 5MB in size.

TWITTER SHARED IMAGE



Hash Tags (#)

Hashtags are a way to categorise your tweets and posts by keywords. The hashtag makes the keyword a hyperlink, and when clicked it will display all tweets/posts the contain that keyword.

Hashtags originated in Twitter, but Facebook and Instagram have opened their applications to include a hashtag function.

They are useful because they open up another way that people can find you and interact with you or your subject matter, but there a few rules that should be followed when using the hashtag.

Don't put too many words together unnecessarily

#ihadahorribledaytoday is a bad way to use a hashtag. No one is going to click on it and no one is going to read it. Plus, they chances of another person using the same hashtag are very slim, so you won't achieve any interconnectedness. An alternative hashtag would be #badday.

Don't use too many hashtags in one post or tweet

One or two are fine, as these can refine your subject matter, such as #hamiltonnz #sports will refine subject matter to sports in Hamilton. If you want to use more than two, make sure they are in the body of the message such as

"A great day in #hamiltonnz for the #golf #sports tournament." If you finish off your tweet/post with a whole bunch of hashtags, people will not read them.

Do not hashtag unrelated matter

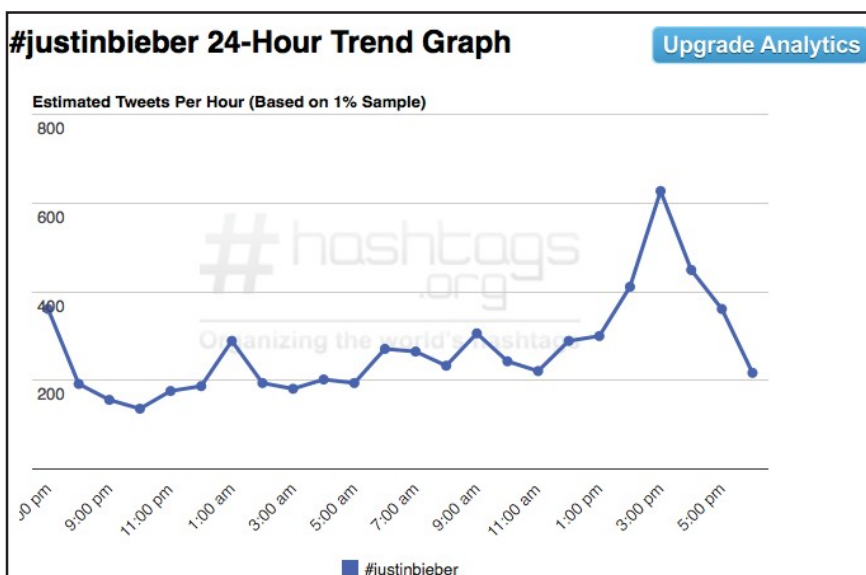
This is bad etiquette and can be seen as hijacking another person's conversation, and defeats the purpose of the hashtag and the linking of subject matter.

Trends

A trend is just a term used for what hashtags are popular right now (what's 'trending' on Twitter). It is the ultimate goal of tweeters to have their hashtag trending, as it will mean their profile will get a lot more attention.

Using a trending hashtag to reach more people

You can broaden your post's reach by using a hashtag that is currently trending (if it is relevant of course). Visit www.hashtags.org/analytics to check what the top hashtags are, and to check the trends of they hashtag you want to use over the past 24 hours.



For example, to the left you will see the hashtag **#justinbieber** was entered into hashtags.org and the use of the hashtag is graphed.

Posting Frequency

There is a fine line between being informative and annoying. If you don't post often enough you can lose connections, and if you post too often you can annoy people and lost a connection.

The posting frequency differs for each social media platform - the life of a post on Instagram and Facebook is a lot longer than that of Twitter.

Facebook

Ideally, you want to post something everyday on Facebook - but no more than twice a day. Any more than two a day and you will annoy people. At the very least, there will need to be at least 5 points made a week. Make sure you use the ideal posting time guide and schedule your posts for the optimum viewing time/days.

Instagram

Contrary to Facebook, research shows that the more images you post on Instagram the more you post the better the engagement rate. Most brands with a good level of post engagement post 1.5 times a day on average.

Twitter

The minimum number of tweets you need to send for maximum engagement is at least three tweets a day, and ideally five tweets per day.

5 - 7 tweets a day will correlate to the greatest number of retweets and responses. Keep in mind, it takes only 18 minutes for a tweet to become old or swallowed up by the number of other people tweeting.

SOCIAL MEDIA TIP

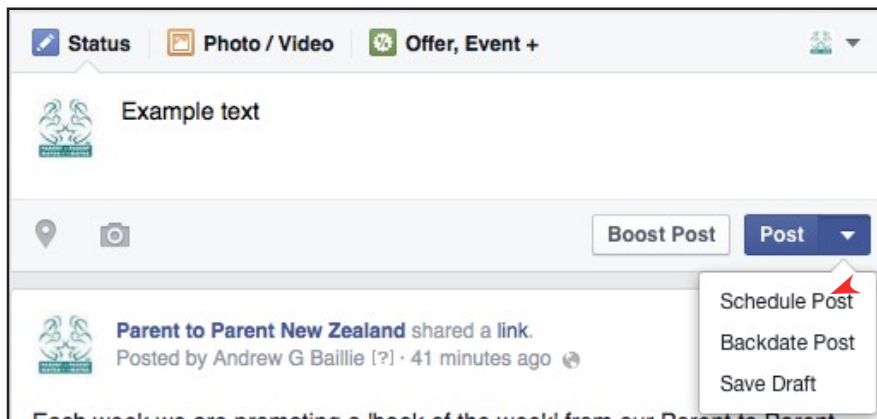
Allocating time each week and scheduling your posts for the week in one go will mean that you can ensure your social media channel is always fresh, especially when you have a busy week and the social media channels are not a high priority. This also means that your posts can be scheduled for times when they are more likely to have a higher engagement level.



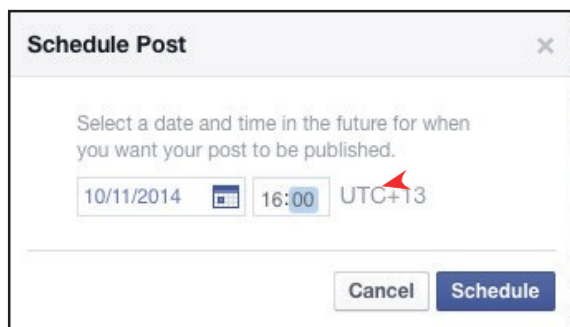
scheduling posts

The scheduling feature on Facebook is a great way to manage this channel, and to keep it fresh without spending too much time on it. Free scheduling is not yet available for Twitter in New Zealand.

Facebook



Create your post as normal, adding images and/or text. Click the blue arrow next to 'posts' in the bottom right corner, and select 'schedule post.'



Choose the time and date you want the post to be posted.

Click schedule.



The scheduled post will display like this until its scheduled time.

Click 'see post' to edit



Click the drop down arrow to edit the time, delete the post or publish immediately.

Creating a Content schedule

A content schedule is a plan for what is going to go up on your social media channels over a period of time. These are useful because:

- You can think strategically about what you want to post, and get more interaction from your audience
- Ensures that your channels are more likely to be kept fresh and up-to-date
- Multiple people can be involved in maintaining the channel, while not affecting the continuity
- You can hyperlink the images/URLs you want to use in your post

The content schedule will look something like this:

	Channel	
	Facebook	Twitter
11 - 17 August	<p>Monday 4pm: Highlights from the weekend's conference. Question: "Who do you think was the best speaker at the conference?" Link: www.conference.co.nz</p> <p>Wednesday 10am: Event post "A great workshop this weekend in Dunedin for siblings of people with disabilities. Check out www.weblink.co.nz for more info" Photo: s:/photos/workshop/anna</p>	<p>Monday: Great conference on #disability issues in #auckland last week. Wonderful to hear @personname speak so well</p> <p>Wednesday: #sibling workshop in #Dunedin this weekend www.weblink.com for more info</p>

ETC.....

Use this schedule in conjunction with your social media strategy to ensure you are meeting your objectives in the plan.

SOCIAL MEDIA TIP

Because scheduled posts are not available in Twitter and Instagram, write your tweets/posts in the social media schedule as you would write them in Twitter or Instagram (include hashtags and @tags), this way you can just copy and paste the text into Twitter and send your tweet.

Social media plan

Simply posting information on your social media channels does not guarantee that you will use your channels effectively. Creating a plan first will ensure that you are reaching your target audience, and getting your desired message across.

- **Key messages** (i.e. “People with disabilities can live good everyday lives”)
- **Define your audience:**
Age: People aged 30 - 50
Have a family member with a disability, work with people with disabilities, influential members of the community, potential employers
- **Choose your content**
Articles from trusted sources to back up key messages, testimonials and success stories, images of people with disabilities doing everyday activities, videos of successfully employed people that also have disabilities, advertisements for upcoming events
- **Memes**
Create or find memes that sell your message. These are small images with messages that are easily shared on your social media channels.
- **Choose your channel**
E.g. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- **Choose how often you will post**
Once a day on Facebook between 4pm and 8pm
Twice a day on Twitter (including Twitter posts originating from Facebook)
- **Timeline**
1 August - 30 November 2014
- **Assign a person to manage the campaign and moderate the page**
- **Assign people to provide content for the campaign**
- **Sponsored Advertising**
Consider allocating a budget to sponsored advertising. This will increase the engagement levels and not rely entirely on organic interactions.

Having a plan makes finding content to push your message and increase your engagement easier. Remember, social media is not a static advertising tool - it is an interactive medium that requires constant attention and refreshing.

SOCIAL MEDIA TIP

Do some web research into the habits and generic interests of your target audience, or look back in your timeline and see what has worked well for your audience in the past. See what kind of content appeals - i.e. Quizzes, videos, images, inspirational memes, quote.