

# Social Media Champions



Quick question, who leads your social media strategy? You may be lucky enough to have a dedicated social media team but many leisure operators don't. Your marketing manager may take the lead and assign responsibilities to individuals to actually post content, but some may not even have a marketing manager. Regardless of your team structure, creating a group of social media champions is essential in delivering a truly engaging social experience for your customers. The champions role may vary from creating and posting content, to monitoring and reporting on activity, but here are some tips for creating this dynamic team.

## Enthusiasm for social media engagement

Recruit the right people into this role. It goes without saying that some people just aren't cut out for it – and they'll probably happily admit it themselves. Look for team members who are active on their own social channels. Does anyone have their own YouTube video? Has someone got a following on TikTok? This can often be younger members of staff who maybe don't have certain skills that older employees might, but we're creating a team so aim for a combination of life experiences, commercial focus, engaging personalities and social media experience.

## Aligned to company brand values

Your social channels are at the forefront of communication with your local community, and even more so through lockdowns and periods of closure. Your branding, values, aims and objectives should all steer the content and reason for having the social media channels you've chosen. Don't simply replicate your website for content and styling. Social media is meant to be social by definition so encourage conversations, be humorous, ask questions and drive engagement.

## Plan Content in Advance

Inevitably there are times when content needs to be reactive but 80% of your content should be mapped out the month before. This allows the whole team to get involved and contribute to the plan. If junior members of the team are creating and posting content then planning ahead means that proposed content can be drafted and screened by an editor before posting.

## Define the Goals

Your core values will help answer this question but what are your objectives for having social media channels? What does a successful social channel look like for your brand? There is plenty of data to analyse in Facebook's insights but choosing 4 or 5 key metrics to monitor each month will help keep everyone focussed on the goals. Here are our 4 suggestions for insights you should be monitoring:

- 📊 Post Reach – how large is the audience that you're engaging with
- 📊 Post Engagement – how engaging is your content
- 📊 Message Response Time – how responsive are you to inbound messages
- 📊 Review Score – what are your customer saying about you and your brand

## Time and Resources

A big barrier to operators having successful social media channels is a lack of dedicated time given to the task. We started this article by accepting that not everyone has a dedicated social media team but by choosing the right social media champions will often mean that these characters give up their time to contribute to the process. However, giving your social media champion a few hours each month to create content, schedule content and report on activity is an investment worth making.

Other resources need to be made available to your champions:

- Posting Platform – if you operate more than 3 social media channels then it's worthwhile investing in a platform like Hootsuite or eClincher
- Video and image library – posts with video get over 10x the engagement than just text posts, so allow your social media champions access to libraries of your own stock of footage
- Technology – champions will need access to the appropriate devices so they can post on your channels, e.g. Instagram is designed to be a mobile-only channel so your team will ideally need to be posting from a mobile device and not a PC or laptop.

### Local Focus

Building a team of social media champions will provide confidence in larger organisations to have channels per local facility. Every business will have a company channel but consider whether the public will affiliate themselves with that profile. Take a moment to consider if you and your friends follow your local leisure centre or club, or would you follow a brand as well. We advocate setting up channels linked to a *local* centre or club. This means that content can focus on the local community while still sharing stories and updates from the company-wide activity.

### Manage Expectations

If you decide to create a social media champion then agree what that role entails and what is possible in the allocated time given to them. One key area to consider is how, and if, they are responsible for responding to incoming messages. Handling inbound enquiries should be a task shared amongst the team with access to your channels and who have had some training. These staff could be classed therefore as social media champions and expand your team of people focussed on your social activity.

### Next Steps

Creating social media champions doesn't happen overnight, but you have to start sometime. Start by identifying individuals and discuss your plans with them to see if they're interested in the role – don't assume and push the responsibility onto staff. Review if you've got the resources in place necessary to help them succeed and whether your channels are setup correctly. And before pushing the button and going for it, define your objectives and what success will look like.

Social media is a team effort that involves everyone from the senior management team through to the frontline staff. Your social media champions are just the glue in the middle that gathers content, monitors your channels, proposes new ideas and updates everyone on activity. Easy right?!

For help creating social media champions, reviewing your social media strategy or staff training please get in touch. <http://www.allianceTA6.co.uk/contact>