Program Ideas: HOW TO…

association for experiential education

…NETWORK SOCIALLY

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media are the software applications and websites that allow users to create, share, and communicate about personal content within a network or community of other common users.

Utilizing social media for networking can help your experiential education (EE) program to spread the word about events or opportunities, connect members or clients, create a "buzz" of interest around your initiatives, and provide an online space for meaningful conversations.

Through social media, programs have the ability to create an online community that is informed and engaged with your EE activities. Media can also be used as fun spaces to show behind-the-scenes adventures. Many tools are available to network depending on your needs and goals.

EXAMPLES

During a trip, clients and leaders can use social media to share real-time moments. By using creative writing and photojournalism, they may:

1. share experiences (Facebook, LinkedIn);
2. post messages (Twitter, Snapchat, Tumblr);
3. upload videos (TikTok, YouTube, Vimeo);
4. save images (Flickr, Instagram, G-Photos);
5. access information (Pinterest, Google); and
6. identify by crowdsourcing (iNaturalist Seek).

Clients can conduct interviews, document key historical events, maintain trip journals, edit movies, create slideshows, and more. Not only do these become educational endeavors, but the results can also inform friends and family at home. This also brings these additional people into the EE program community as prospective clients and provides sources of photographs and testimonials for future marketing.

CONSIDERATIONS

Like most EE programs, social media comes with obvious risks. Before you get started, be certain to set clear expectations and prepare with a comprehensive plan. Consider these points.

1. **Have a strategy and consider your goals**. Who is your audience? Why are you using this platform to connect with them? What will you share? How often? Who is in charge of sharing?
2. **Designate important roles**. Who is primarily responsible for the platform? Who will routinely check and monitor the community page and for any issues arising?
3. **Set guidelines**. Make a communications plan for any potential crises or issues that could arise. Publicly state expectations, policies, and procedures for the community.
4. **Post regularly and consistently**. If you have multiple staff contributing to the social media account, create a brand guide or tone for them to ensure a constant voice.
5. **Understand your capacity**. As your social media platforms progress and grow, you may find that utilizing automation and planning tools can be helpful to each.

REPUTATION

Remember that social media use will have an impact on the reputation of your organization, so be sure to follow the guidelines you set and inform all staff of how best to post content. When created with clarity and intentionality, social media can provide an extremely valuable space for networking and connecting people.

Anna Miano & Simon Priest

aee.org

Anna Miano
ASSOCIATION FOR EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION
https://www.aee.org/aee-leadership
anna@aee.org
303-440-8844 x101

FURTHER RESOURCES

BLOGS, ARTICLES & GUIDES

How to Use Social Media in Your Career
> New York Times

Do you think you should be on social media but don't know where to start? What should you post, and how often should you post it? What's more powerful, a like or a retweet? Here's what you need to know about the most popular social media platforms for professional settings, whether you are looking to expand your network, build a business or find a new gig.
https://www.nytimes.com/guides/business/social-media-for-career-and-business

How to network on social media like a pro
> Bdc

Social media has revolutionized networking. Sites like LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram can be extraordinary tools for expanding and deepening your connections with business contacts, clients and potential partners.
https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/entrepreneurial-skills/improve-networking/5-tips-to-network-on-social-media-like-a-pro

11 Ways to Grow Your Nonprofit Social Media Followers
> Classy blog

With engaged followers on one or more of the major social networks, organizations can effectively spread the word about fundraising campaigns, new initiatives, and advocacy work.
https://www.classy.org/blog/11-ways-grow-nonprofit-social-media-followers/

Social Media Tips from 32 Leading Nonprofits
> Positive Impact

In recent years, the nonprofit world has begun to learn what potential social media really has. Many nonprofits had already understood the importance of sharing their story with the world around them (whether for to raise support or to generate exposure for their organization), but hadn't adapted the platforms on which the new generation were telling their stories.
https://positiveimpact.me/social-media-tips-from-32-leading-nonprofits/?gclid=CjwKCAiAo4OQBhBBEiwA5KWu_7VVIwUa1-L2GbbJTZliXzjp-GXAhRYzgROWtuBB8p6AahEV3kshaBoCx5cQAvD_BwE

How Nonprofits Can Use Social Media To Increase Donations And Boost Visibility
        Forbes
Amidst the Covid-19 crisis, nonprofit organizations have faced onerous financial burdens. There has been a high demand for their services, which taxes their resources, yet their ability to bring in volunteers and host in-person fundraising events has been limited.
https://www.forbes.com/sites/allbusiness/2021/03/06/how-nonprofits-can-use-social-media-to-increase-donations-and-boost-visibility/?sh=20dd5da42bb7

The Ultimate Social Media Guide for Nonprofits
        Wild Apricot
Is your nonprofit succeeding on social media? Are you having trouble keeping pace with Facebook changes, new social media trends, and telling a social media fail from a win? And what, exactly, is TikTok, anyway?
https://www.wildapricot.com/blog/social-media-guide-for-nonprofits

SOCIAL MEDIA & COMMUNITY PLATFORMS

Facebook https://www.facebook.com/
Photo and post sharing, commenting and group discussions

Twitter https://twitter.com/
Photo and post sharing (short)

Instagram https://www.instagram.com/
Photo and post sharing

LinkedIn https://www.linkedin.com/
Photo and post sharing

Snapchat https://www.snapchat.com/
Quick, real-time photo sharing

Discord https://discord.com/
Group discussion board

YouTube https://www.youtube.com/
Video posting

Slack https://slack.com/
Group discussion board

Podcast Platforms https://www.wpbeginner.com/showcase/best-podcast-hosting-compared-most-are-free/
Audio recording (podcasting) platforms

Flickr https://www.flickr.com/
Photo sharing

Google Photos https://www.google.com/photos/about/
Photo sharing

Vimeo
https://vimeo.com/upgrade?optoutAb=1&plans=plus%2Cpro%2ClivePremium%2Centerprise&isCollapsed=%E2%80%94&topFeatures=summary&vcid=33313&utm_medium=cpc&utm_source=google&gclid=Cj0KCQjw_4-SBhCgARIsAAlegrU7GybN-zwxjuSP0rP_uF20GOCi3omPzF-KNWkqHswKsYKj_6a_5RgaAkTYEALw_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds
Video sharing

Pinterest https://www.pinterest.com/
Photo sharing, blogging and curating

Tumblr https://www.tumblr.com/
Photo sharing, blogging and curating

TripAdvisor https://www.tripadvisor.com/
Reviews, recommendations and tips

Yelp https://www.yelp.com/
Reviews, recommendations and tips

iNaturalist Seek https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app
Nature identification from image database and by crowdsourcing