

Social Media

Best Practices

Purpose

Integrating social media into health education and communication campaigns and activities encourages participation, conversation and a sense of community – all of which can help spread key messages and influence health decision-making. Through social media, health educators and communicators can deliver messages tailored to target audiences in a format that is customized to increase the availability and reach of content. Likewise, tapping into personal social networks, presenting information in multiple formats, and utilizing multiple sources to deliver information may make messages more widespread and effective.

This guide provides county health agencies and other local partners with strategies for social media planning and development, as well as best practices for participating and engaging in conversations about adult-use cannabis on Facebook.

Communications Strategy

Social media is just one tool in a larger, integrated health education and communications strategy. In addition to Facebook, the California Department of Public Health's Let's Talk Cannabis campaign uses several other channels to increase access to prevention messages, including digital ads, search engine optimization, and collaborative dissemination.

Over-arching communication goals should be considered when developing social media activities. The key to effective social media outreach includes identifying and determining target audiences, outreach objectives, social media outlets, and the amount of resources (time and effort) to be invested.

Creative Design

It is important to develop culturally appropriate creative content (images, videos, gifs, other) to correspond with each social media post. Be sure to evaluate proposed content for errors in research, data, statistics, language, cultural sensitivity, diversity in images, and video.



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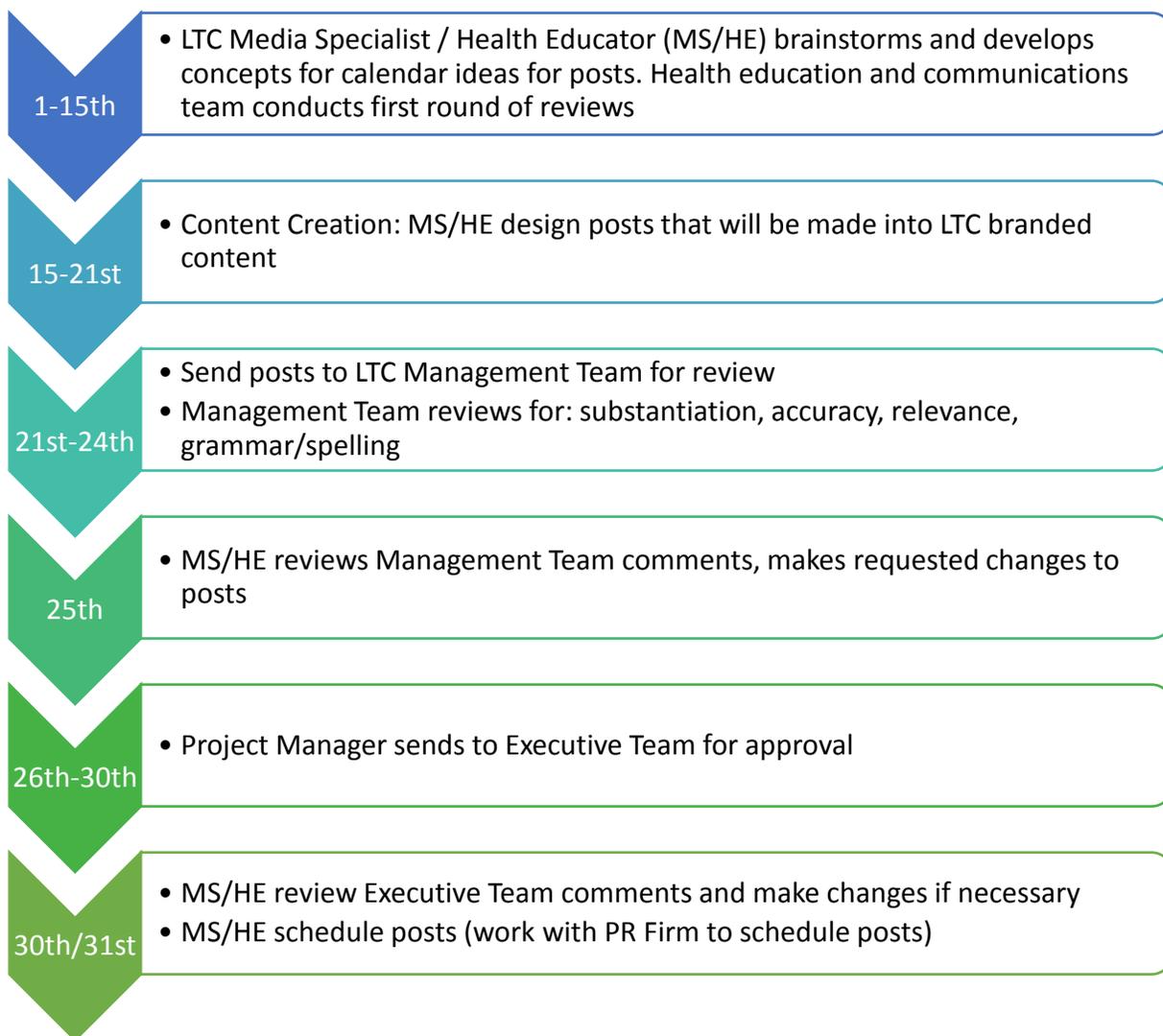
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Content Development, Clearance, and Approval Processes

Well-developed structure, policies, and leadership within your organization is key to effectively manage social media. Establish a workgroup to develop guidance, policies, standards, and recommendations for using social media at your organization. A standardized approval process for social media content will help to ensure the quality, accuracy, and timeliness of delivery.

Sample Approval Process



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Community Guidelines

Every social media account should have clear community guidelines posted publicly. Having a standardized disclaimer in place can protect your organization from legal issues that could arise in the fast moving social media environment and provide necessary justification for moderating community discussions or removing offensive content.

Sample disclaimer

Disclaimer: Posted comments and images do not necessarily represent the views of [name of organization]. External, non-[name of organization] links on this site do not constitute official endorsement on behalf of [name of organization]. While fans are encouraged to share thoughts and opinions on the [name of organization] Facebook page, it is expected that posted comments will be done in a respectful manner.

[Name of organization] does not necessarily agree with or endorse every comment that individuals post on [name of organization] pages. [Name of organization's goal is to share ideas and information with as many individuals as possible and to accept the majority of comments made to [name of organization's profile. Therefore, a comment will be deleted, at [name of organization's] sole discretion, if it contains:

- Hate speech
- Profanity, obscenity or vulgarity
- Nudity in profile pictures
- Defamation to a person or people
- Name calling and/or personal attacks
- Comments whose main purpose are to sell a product
- Comments that infringe on the rights of any third party, including intellectual property, privacy or public rights
- Spam comments, such as the same comment posted repeatedly on a profile



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Editorial and Content Calendars

An editorial calendar is a way to keep track of upcoming social media content, and the desired time frame to post. Editorial calendars can include a monthly content theme and help ensure communications staff are aware of holidays, commemorations, and other events of note during a given month.

Content calendars can be developed once the editorial calendar is fleshed out and a theme is set. Content calendars build the framework for what [your organization] will share and allow staff to schedule posts ahead of time, while maintaining your organizations' flexibility to manually share posts and respond to incoming messages.

Sample Editorial Calendar

March 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sunday
				1	2	3
LGBTQ Awareness Month Women's History Month Poison Prevention Month National Nutrition Months NCAA March Madness (13-April 2)						
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				International Women's Day	No Smoking Day	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Daylight Savings						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
		First Day of Spring				
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



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Sample Content Calendar

Date	Post Type	Post Copy	Link / Image
3/1/18	Adult Flagship Video	Hey there, California. Let's Talk Cannabis is here to help you understand the new marijuana laws in the Golden State. Watch this video to get a quick rundown.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vHL3bPnjgo&t=1s
3/5/18	Image	Your pot is not meant for kids and pets. Keep it out of reach by storing it somewhere safe. Check out Let's Talk Cannabis to learn more safety tips.	
3/8/18	Website	California has legalized the sale of pot, but there's a lot to know. So, Let's Talk Cannabis. Get the info you need by tapping the link.	www.letstalkcannabisca.com
3/14/18	Website <i>Promoted</i>	Under California's new cannabis laws anyone 21 or older can legally possess up to one ounce of weed. Learn more at Let's Talk Cannabis.	www.letstalkcannabisca.com
3/18/18	Website <i>Promoted</i>	Weed is now legal in California, but it is illegal to take it over state lines. So keep your weed in CA. Learn more about the new laws at Let's Talk Cannabis.	www.letstalkcannabisca.com
3/22/18	GIF <i>Promoted</i>	Weed's now legal under California law, but some employers, landlords, cities, and counties may have stricter rules. Check your local laws before using.	

Response Bank

Social media is a 24/7 medium, and followers may engage with your [organizations'] account at any time. It is important to set parameters for the type of comments and questions that warrant formal response versus those comments and questions that may be raised for your [organizations'] social media followers to address. With controversial topics, an approved response bank will allow your [organization] to quickly dispel misinformation and mitigate any escalating tensions.

Categorizing the types of engagement your [organization] anticipates by type and timeframe for response can be helpful when triaging comments and determining next steps.



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Top Lessons

1. Make Strategic Choices and Understand the Level of Effort

Be strategic and follow demographic and user data to make choices based on audience, communications objectives, and key messages. Ensure your organization has the staff resources to maintain a social media presence and provide accurate and timely responses to comments and questions.

2. Reach People Everywhere

Social media can help reach people everywhere—your organization can assess the relative popularity of social media sites in your organization’s area by reviewing user statistics and demographics. If your organization has the capability to promote posts, your organization can target specific groups, like parents, physicians, or racial and ethnic groups that may benefit the effective dissemination of cannabis related health information.

3. Make Sure Messages Are Science-based

As with all effective health communication, messages developed for dissemination through social media channels should be accurate, consistent, and science-based. This is especially true for messages related to cannabis and its effects on health. It is important to not overstate risks or benefits.

4. Encourage Participation

Social media allows for the tailoring of messages to express empathy and acknowledge concern, promote action, and listen to what people are saying about health-related topics. Two-way conversations can foster meaningful communication with your audience. Active engagement attracts social media followers and builds an on-line community by developing relationships, and facilitating sharing and interaction.

5. Leverage Networks

Sharing content created by partner organizations enhances health messaging and may be accomplished without increasing staff workload. As long as information comes from a reputable, trusted source, recycling, or upcycling content may help reach a broader audience outside of your established network.



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