



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

SOCIAL MEDIA PLAYBOOK



Personalized Experience

Social technologies are changing the way we collaborate and communicate with each other. Many traditional forms of marketing and advertising have been replaced by online word-of-mouth and the consumer's ability to share their experiences with everyone they know.

Here at the Boy Scouts of America, we're no different. We have a product that delivers personalized experiences that American families absolutely must have and can't get anywhere else. According to Forrester Research, a premier technology research company, 75 percent of people in the US use social tools (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.). That means for many Americans, those personalized experiences are going to start with online engagement. Our most important marketers are those of you who interact with Scouts and potential Scouts every day: Unit Leaders and Volunteers. We want to equip you, and everyone within the organization, with the knowledge to use social media effectively.

The BSA Social Media Playbook will be your guide as you seek to use social media to communicate, recruit, retain, and inspire those in your community.

Understanding Your Audience

Unit Level Leaders drive Scouting by interacting regularly with Scouts, parents and community members. Does your unit have a Facebook page? What online social efforts can help you recruit new members and increase unit activity? You're probably already friends with someone online who has Scout-age children ready to participate but doesn't know where to start. Sharing online can be the first step.

Council Professionals and Staff are responsible for the big picture initiatives within a larger community. How do you communicate BSA initiatives with units in your area? Do you have a social presence, and is it populated with relevant content? How can social media play a role in things like fundraising or general awareness? You have a large audience, and social can help you reach people effectively.

Key Takeaways

Unit Level Volunteers

Council Professionals

Unit Level Volunteers

- How to leverage social media to open up Scouting to kids and parents in your area.
- How to Post and respond on at least one social media platform (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
- How to post quality content regularly.
- How to create a relevant social platform for communicating with Units in your council.
- How to engage Unit leaders and volunteers through social media.
- Understanding the BSA social media guidelines.
- Read the *BSA's List of Key Considerations for Social Media*. You can't manage your social channels properly without it.
- Post regularly. Don't go more than one week without an update.
- Subscribe to other BSA social media channels and share their content.

Blogging

Blogging is a way for you to keep readers informed about the latest in your area. Did you hold a successful fundraiser? Did you improve the neighborhood with a recent Eagle Scout project? It doesn't have to be more than a paragraph, but it should be timely and relevant (don't wait three months to share the photos from last weekend's camping trip). This is your chance to tell readers why being a part of Scouting is so valuable.

Creating an Effective Blog Post

Post interesting content. This is Scouting we're talking about, so that's not too hard. Camping trip reports, schedule updates, major events, and award announcements are all good examples of content worth posting.

- Use images. Studies show people are 75% more likely to read a blog post that contains a picture or video than one without.
- Show your appreciation when people participate. Acknowledge them in the comments or somewhere else on your blog.
- Ask for participation. If you want people to interact with you online, you have to ask them what they think. Ending a post with a question, like "What are your thoughts about..." can, make a big difference.

Important Things to Know about Blogging

- Your blog is the hub of your social media presence.
- Your blog is a journal. It's the place online to keep things fresh and up-to-date, like Chief's Corner.
- Your blog doesn't have to be housed on a council or unit website. It could be on a platform such as WordPress or Blogger, or you could focus your attention instead on sharing information via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or another social media platform. Use what's easiest for you and what's easiest for your audience.

Action Items to Help Ensure Your Blog is Relevant

- Update your blog at least once every week.
- Your entries should entertain, inform, and/or help visitors complete a task.
- Get right to the point. A blog post is not a book; it's a little blip of the Scouting experience.
- Use information and content from BSA websites in your blog.



Facebook

Facebook is the world's largest social website with 1.23 billion active users per month. It's user friendly and makes engaging others in your community a relatively easy task. Plus, with that many users, it's likely most people within your Scouting community are already involved.

33% Increase

Using emoticons increases comments by 33%

Getting Started with Scouting on Facebook

- You need to create a Facebook "Page." This part of Facebook is your own personal Facebook profile.

100%

More Comments

Question posts get 100% more comments

23% More Interaction

Shorter posts get 23% more interaction

- Facebook makes this process as simple as possible by walking you through easy-to-follow directions and descriptions.
- Invite your Scouting community to “Like” the page, and start populating it with quality content.
- If you’re having trouble getting set up, Facebook has a ‘Help’ section with tutorials and detailed directions.

Using Facebook Like a Social Professional

Whenever possible, **post pictures or video**. Photo posts get 39% more interaction. If you’re lacking content, you can go to the BSA Flickr page and scour our new image library. Once you find something you like, download it and post away!

- Post when your audience is likely to be on Facebook, typically **right before lunch** or **right after rush hour**.
- Respond to people who respond to you. It’s the **golden rule** of social media.
- Share content from other Facebook Pages often, especially **the national BSA Facebook Pages**. There is a lot going on in Scouting. The more you share, the better.



Instagram

With over 150 million users, 16 billion photos shared, and 1 billion likes happening each day, Instagram photo and video sharing is one of the most engaging channels on social media. You can share pictures and short videos with those in your network, giving them a glimpse at what Scouting has to offer.

33:1 Comment Ratio

For every 33 likes you get 1 comment, on average

Use Hashtags

More hashtags equal more engagement #trustus #theywork

Post on Sunday

Sunday posts have the highest engagement

What Makes Instagram Unique

- Instagram is phone-only. You can’t post to Instagram from a computer. You can, however view Instagram on your computer.
- Instagram is designed to integrate easily into your Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Uses image filters. As soon as you choose an image to post, Instagram will direct you to a menu of easy-to-use options to treat your photos.
- There’s no text at all in the Instagram app. Don’t be afraid of the icons, just use them and explore.

Proven Ways to Use Instagram

- Add hashtags to your image descriptions. Pictures with hashtags get nearly double the amount of interaction as those that don’t.
- Follow people, and like their content. There’s a big *you-scratch my-back-I’ll-scratch-yours* element to Instagram. If you want interaction, you need to interact.
- Choose a filter and make it your own. It’s fine to use different filters for different images sometimes, but if you want people to learn to recognize that a picture is coming from you just by looking at it, choose one and stick with it.
- Use Instagram video. Instagram will allow you to take 15-second videos and post them to your account. One thing you can’t do, however, is post video from other platforms like YouTube.



Twitter

Twitter is the world’s most popular platform for “microblogging.” In other words, if you can’t get your point across in 140 characters or less, this isn’t the platform for you. Twitter is about quick updates,

reminders for events, or powerful quotes that can motivate and inspire. The key to making Twitter successful is to keep content timely and relevant.

Techniques for Mastering Twitter

A hashtag is a digital label used to keep track of messages and create uniformity in campaigns. By simply adding a “#” before any word or phrase, you can create a searchable topic to track your activity. For example, if you’re doing an orienteering activity for Scouting you could tag #orienteering and #boyscouts. Then, anyone that’s interested in that subject can search for everything on Twitter that includes that label.

Follow people. Businesses in your area that support Scouting, charitable organizations you’ve worked with, or individuals who are on Twitter that are connected with Scouting are all good examples of who to follow.

@MikeRoweWorks for example.

Retweet what other people are saying. When someone tweets something you want to share, you can click “ReTweet” to send that message to everyone who’s following your account.

Mark other people’s tweets as “Favorite.” It’s exactly like clicking the Like button on Facebook.

Reply to other people and join their conversations. If, for instance, you see a tweet pop up from @BoyScouts, click “Reply” and Twitter will automatically begin your message with our handle. Then just type out your message and click “Send Tweet.”

Understanding Twitter

When you sign up, you’ll choose a Twitter handle which starts with the @ symbol (like @BoyScouts).

- A post is called a ‘tweet’ and cannot be longer than 140 characters
- You can follow what specific people on Twitter are saying by following them. If you follow @BoyScouts, you’ll get an update every time we tweet.
- Twitter is an open network, which means any one of Twitter’s 265 million users can read your tweet at any time, even if they aren’t officially following you.
- **Listen first.** Before you start tweeting, click around (you won’t break anything) and get a feel for what and how people are using the platform.
- There are lots of BSA channels already active on Twitter. Connecting with them is a simple way to get started.



Pinterest

Welcome to the visual web. Pinterest is a virtual ‘pinboard’ where users can save things they’ve found online to keep track of them. Recipes, pictures, videos, DIY projects, and more.

Simple Ways Pinterest is Keeping It Social

On Pinterest, you can follow users or specific pinboards.

Re-pinning allows you to share other people’s content on your pinboards.

It also identifies whose content you re-pinned.

17%

Higher

Twitter engagement is 17% higher on the weekends

2x

Engagement

Tweets with images get 2x the engagement as those without

86%

More Likely

Tweets with links are 86% more likely to be retweeted

Users:

20% Men

80% Women

50% have kids

50% of Pinterest users have kids

Share your pins on Twitter and Facebook. Pinterest will give you this option every time you pin something new. It's a convenient way to let your other digital communities know that you're active on more than one platform.

42%
higher click through
Tutorials and DIY pins see a 42% higher click through rate than other pins

Tips for New Pinner on Pinterest

- Pinterest allows users to **create pinboards**, or virtual bulletin boards with whatever themes they'd like. Users browse the web and pin images they like from different websites to their Pinterest.
- Pin pictures of things that are **useful or interesting** to your audience. There are literally millions of pins for recipes, crafts, games, and all kinds of other stuff that's relevant to Scouting.
- Remember, this is the visual web. **Striking images** will get the most interaction.
- Keep the number of pinboards you create to a minimum. It's **better to have one board** that is consistently updated than to have 20 that aren't.
- To get started, add the **Pin It** button to your browser by to quickly pin your favorite sites.

Social Media Management

Although social media can be one of your most valuable marketing resources, finding time to manage multiple channels can be hard. That's where social media management tools come into play. You can schedule posts, search for more followers, and manage all your social properties with one, easy to use tool.

How Can a Management Tool Help You?

A management tool allows you to sync all of your social media channels (or accounts) on to one dashboard, giving you a one-stop shop for access to your social networks. Also, many of these tools are low cost or free.

You can save time and maximize efforts online by scheduling posts to go out over multiple channels automatically. Spend a little time Monday scheduling posts for the rest of the week, so you can focus the rest of your time elsewhere.

Many services are completely functional across multiple platforms. Whether you're using an Android or iPhone, tablet or notebook, you can work seamlessly across the board.

Multiple users can have access without having to share passwords to all of your social media accounts. The fewer people with password knowledge means the less likely you are to experience a mishap with poorly placed content. Security is always a bonus.

Data management can be a hassle, but a good social media management tool can help you easily gather data about your social efforts, giving a better idea regarding what's working on your platform.

What Tools Are Available?

There are plenty of different management tools for you to choose from, but here are a few suggestions to get you started.

Each tool will have its own unique way of implementing the management protocols you need,

- Hootsuite
- Buffer
- Sprout Social
- Bitly
- Crowdbooster

744
of the Fortune 1000
companies use management tools

50
different programs
to provide support

5x
faster when
publishing to multiple accounts

so shop around and find the one that best fits your needs.

BSA Content Sources

Here's a chance to grab some of the digital content we were talking about. Follow the links to see the best in Scouting online.

Scout Wire
Scouting Newsroom
Chief's Blog
Scouting Magazine
Boys' Life

BSA Home
Cub Hub
Venturing
Scout Stuff
Facebook

Social Media and Youth Protection

- First, everyone should review and strictly adhere to the terms of service and existing guidelines outlined by each individual social media channel (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.).
- All Scouts and adult leaders should abide by the Scout Oath and Law when participating in social networking.
- As with a Scouting activity, safety and Youth Protection should be a key focus.
- Scout leaders using social media must stay true to the commitment of the BSA to be an advocate for youth and to keep children and their privacy safe at all times.
- To help ensure that the use of social media remains positive and safe, the channels being used must be public, and all communication on or through them must be public. No private channels (e.g., private Facebook groups or invite-only YouTube channels) are acceptable.
- This will allow administrators to monitor the communication and make sure there is no inappropriate interaction between adult leaders and Scouts or between Scouts themselves.
- The two-deep leadership policy that governs all Scouting activities also applies to use of social media. There should be no private messages and no one-on-one direct contact through email, Facebook messages, Twitter direct messaging, chats, instant messaging, or other online tools.

General Considerations for Social Media Use

The BSA expects adults using social media on behalf of Scouting to adhere to the following:

- Social media use must be monitored. A qualified staff member or volunteer should have the responsibility of monitoring social media channels daily, and backup administrators/monitors should be designated so there is no gap in the monitoring.
- Talk to your audiences, and let them talk to and about you. By posting content on a consistent schedule, you can tell your story and encourage conversations in the community.
- Social media use requires a thick skin. Don't delete negative comments unless they violate the terms laid out in the BSA Social Media Digital Contract.
- Be prepared to respond to negative or inaccurate posts if response is warranted. Some negative comments do not require a response, while others should be taken seriously and addressed. Factors such as the number of followers and the severity of the conversations should help determine your response.
- Be Scout-like. If you disagree with others' opinions, keep your response appropriate and polite.
- Build trust by being open and transparent. Share information about the challenges and opportunities for Scouting in your community.

Some Do's and Don'ts for Your Facebook Page

- Do create multiple administrators.
- Do maintain two-deep leadership online.
- Do post consistently.
- Do encourage interactivity.
- Do conform to the Scout Oath and Law.
- Do check your page frequently.
- Don't post last names of youth members.
- Don't share a Scout's identifying information.
- Don't create a fan page that you can't maintain.
- Don't say anything online that you wouldn't say to a person's face.

For more information, tell participants to refer to the BSA Social Media Guidelines handout or go to For more information on the <http://scoutingwire.org/?s=social+media+guide> .

Resources for Internet Resources

Interest Topic

- www.scouting.org/cyberchip.aspx
 - www.netsmartz.org/scouting
 - Cub Scouts® Cyber Chip Emblem, Item No. 615495
 - Cub Scout™ Cyber Chip Pocket Certificate, Item No. 615437
- www.scouting.org/Home/CubScouts/Leaders/newslettertemplate.aspx
- How to Create a Troop Facebook Page: <https://www.youtube.com/v/eFYtQGCftds>

Social Media and Scouting

The BSA acknowledges that social media is here to stay and embraces its proper use to promote Scouting.

Social media vehicles enable current and past Scouts and Scouters and those who are interested in participating or are just interested in Scouting in general—to communicate directly with each other about Scouting.

Using social media to connect with others interested in Scouting can create very positive messages about your unit and Scouting in general.

However, the creation and maintenance of these channels requires forethought, care, and responsibility.

Remember also that the chartered organization may have its own policies about social media. Units should work with the chartered organization so that their social media presence does not conflict with existing policies.

For that reason, the Boy Scouts of America has developed guidelines to help you navigate the use of social media channels.

These guidelines are in addition to the BSA's existing Youth Protection policies and training. That includes the practice of no one-one-one communication between adults and youth. Any form of communication between them should always involve a second adult.

Follow Terms of Service for the Channel

Review and strictly adhere to the terms of service and existing guidelines created by each individual social media channel (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.).

- Always post according to the rules of the channel so your account won't be blocked.

Follow the Scout Oath and Law

- Media inquiries coming through social media should be referred to the Scout executive or a designee for an official response.
- All Scouts and adult leaders should abide by the guidelines outlined in the Scout Oath and Law when participating in social networking.
- Content contrary to the Scout Oath and Law reflect badly on the unit, the poster, and Scouting as a whole.
- Comments on social media “live forever” on the internet, sometimes even if the post and/or the account have been deleted.

Other Social Media Considerations for Units

- Include a notice that the site is not an official BSA site.
- In your social media communications, you must be clear that you are not on an official BSA social media channel but instead your own personal/unit channel. You can use the following template as an example:
“This site is the personal [specific social media channel] of [your name or organization] and is reflective only

of my personal views, thoughts, and opinions. This site does not have the endorsement of the Boy Scouts of America, and it is not an official communication channel of the Boy Scouts of America.”

Respect copyrights.

- Photos, music, and video are commonly reused on the web without permission. Plagiarism is also common.
- Such practices violate the ethics of Scouting. They are also violations of law, and could expose the publishers legally.
- No ads on unit social media sites.
- “Free” web services used to create unit-level sites often contain advertising. This practice may reflect poorly on the Scouting brand, and should be avoided.

Of more serious concern are unit sites that engage in fundraising activities not previously approved by the local council.

- Any independent sales, solicitation, or collection of donations is prohibited by the Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America and charter agreements.
- Social media must be monitored. A qualified person should have the responsibility of monitoring social media channels daily, and backup administrators/ monitors should be designated so there is no gap in the monitoring.
- Integrate your communications by creating and using a strategy that surrounds your intended audience with your key message(s) through print, the web, email, social media, and word of mouth.
- Talk to your audiences and let them talk to and about you.
- Post content on a consistent schedule.
- Stale sites cause people to lose interest. They lead the public to believe your unit isn’t exciting or viable.

Other Internet Safety Considerations for Scouts

Do not give anyone online your real last name, phone numbers at home or school, parents’ workplaces, the name or location of your school, or your home address without parental permission.

Never give your password to anyone but a parent or other trusted adult in the family.

If someone sends or shows you email or any type of direct message/wall post with sayings that make you feel uncomfortable, trust your instincts. You are probably right to be wary. Do not respond. Tell a parent or trusted adult what happened.

If somebody tells you to keep what’s going on “a secret between the two of us,” tell a parent or guardian immediately.

Anyone who starts talking about subjects that make you feel uncomfortable is probably an adult posing as a kid.

Pay attention if someone tells you things that don’t fit together. If an online “friend” says he or she is 12, and another time says he or she is 14, that is a warning that this person is lying and may be an adult posing as a kid.

Never talk to anybody by phone if you know that person only online. If someone asks you to call—even if it’s collect or a toll-free 800 number—that’s a warning. That person can get your phone number this way, either from a phone bill or from caller ID.

Never agree to meet in the “real world” someone you have met only online.

Watch out if someone online starts talking about hacking or breaking into other people’s or companies’ computer systems; phreaking (the “ph” sounds like an “f”), the illegal use of long-distance services or cellular phones; or viruses (online programs that destroy or damage data when other people download these onto their computers).

Honor any rules about how much time you are allowed to spend online and what you do and where you go online.