

Key social media

Facebook

www.facebook.com

With over half a billion active users, Facebook offers marketing opportunities for businesses, and a platform for non-profit and community groups to forge an online presence. Facebook's initial purpose was to facilitate the sharing of photographs amongst friends. It has since expanded into a platform for social networking, providing blogging, real-time chat and gaming functionality. In the online world, where people encounter much more information than they can realistically process, handpicked and personalised recommendations are becoming very important. Facebook has come to the world's attention for its business model, which puts social recommendations and discovery at its heart.

Facebook is based on connections between personal profiles but organisations are also highly active on the network through fan pages. Fans of, for example, a business, website, venue or activity can interact through pages and groups, and subscribe to get the latest information. Updates posted by the page owner flow through to its fans' Facebook news feeds – something that can help an organisation to expand its presence and influence on the network and create a high level of engagement with its following.

Facebook tips

- Follow other individuals, organisations and groups (by hitting the 'like' button on their pages and posts) to get the latest news about community initiatives, business support programmes and everything relevant to your organisation, all of which – and more – can be found using Facebook's inbuilt search tool.
- Creating a Facebook page for your own organisation enables you to have one-to-one conversations with members of your target audience, who can like your page, read your posts and share them with friends, and check in when they visit. When you set up your page, you can request a web address like [www.facebook.com/\[organisation name\]](http://www.facebook.com/[organisation name]), which makes it easy to find. To maximise impact, include this address on your business card, website and other marketing materials.
- Remember that Facebook is relational – it is all about connecting. Use it to tell stories about real people – the 'before' and 'after' of them benefiting from your time, project, product or service.
- Facebook Groups are the place for small group communication, allowing people to share their common interests and express their opinion. Groups allow people to come together around a common cause, issue or activity to organise, converse, post photos and share related content. When you create a

group, you can decide whether to make it publicly available for anyone to join, require administrator approval for members to join or keep it private and by invitation only. Like with pages, new posts by a group are included in the news feeds of its members.

- Remember: your Facebook presence is an extension of your organisation. It is an easy way to share updates and more with the people who matter most to your work. It is ready to help you engage your audience on desktop and on mobile, with messages tailored to their needs and interests.

Twitter

www.twitter.com

A social networking and micro-blogging service that allows its users to send and read text-based posts of up to 140 characters, known as tweets, Twitter offers both organisations and individuals a far-reaching public platform. Whilst unregistered users can read tweets, registered users can post tweets through the website interface, SMS, or a range of apps for mobile devices. Organisations can maximise their time and impact in using Twitter to connect, communicate, market, sell, advocate and raise brand awareness.

Creating a Twitter account helps to make your organisation more discoverable on the web. What is more, great

interaction and customer service gets talked about, which in turn can raise further awareness about your work, leading to more audience satisfaction. Twitter is one of the most viral platforms around, which can make one happy fan of your organisations into a national – even international – story. Twitter can be used to create a connected community, bringing together many of the most interesting voices and talented practitioners in your particular area of interest.

Twitter tips

- When creating your Twitter profile, utilise as much of the 160-character limit bio (biography) space allows. Include keywords your followers or potential followers may be searching for.
- Try to make all of your tweets useful, informative or thought-provoking – this will increase the chances of them being retweeted (tweeted by other Twitter users) and makes your profile more interesting to current and potential followers. Keep some space available in your tweet to allow others to retweet it.
- Add hashtags to your tweets. A hashtag (#) is simply a way for people to search for tweets that have a common topic. For example, if your tweet is about funding, consider adding #funding to the post.
- Make an effort to tweet frequently. No one is going to follow someone they do not know who has not tweeted



in months. Try at the very least to tweet a few times a week – ideally, tweet daily.

- You can use Twitter’s search function to find people who you may enjoy following by searching for keywords that are of interest to you and your work.
- Retweet and participate in conversations with people with many followers – as well as demonstrating your interest and passion for a subject, it helps to raise awareness of your work.

Google+

www.plus.google.com

Google+ (pronounced and sometimes written as Google Plus) is a social networking and identity service owned and operated by Google. Google has described Google+ as a ‘social layer’ that enhances many of its online properties, unlike conventional social networks generally accessed through a single website. The service features an option where users can create a page representing their business, organisation or group. Google+ is a great place to start a discussion or share a link, a video clip or an image. When you create an account, you can add ‘circles’ where people from different interests can be placed, helping you more easily digest the information available.



Google+ tips

- The main home screen of Google+ is known as the stream. In the stream, updates from people you are following show up in card-like boxes. Google+ can help you target your message to certain groups of people, which can be managed separately in circles. Think of circles as a segmented Twitter list or a Facebook group. You can manage circles by dragging and dropping people from your contacts list into the circles you create, which could be named to reflect your organisation’s different audiences: ‘Employees’, ‘Clients’, ‘Supporters’, ‘Volunteers’ and so on.
- Becoming an active participant in your niche – whatever it may be – can really help you to gain new Google+ followers. Try to follow people who talk about the same sorts of things that are relevant to you and then interact on their posts whenever possible. As well as having discussion value, you are more likely to find people will circle you when you make the effort to add insightful or interesting comments in the right places (and most of those people are inherently bound to be interested in the same topics you discuss).
- Your posts can be targeted at a specific audience to get maximum impact from your content without creating extra work. You can post to as many or as few groups as you like by tweaking the wording of your message to make it suitable for all target groups.
- As with Facebook, Google+ features the ability to create a page to provide your business, product, brand or organisation with a public identity and presence on

the network. Google+ pages interact in the Google+ world in a similar way to an individual’s Google+ profile – they can add people to circles, edit their profile and share content. Use your page to help promote your work and share interesting photos. Remember that Google+ pages are returned in Google search results, which can also help you to boost your profile.

- Google+ features Hangouts – a free video chat service that enables both one-on-one chats and group chats with up to ten people at a time. Hangouts can be used to stream live events and let people talk about the event rather than just typing what they think, making for a more personal experience. You can also choose to share pics and videos during the chat. Community groups and public sector organisations could use this feature for group Q&A sessions, whilst businesses might consider using it to demonstrate a product or service.

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com

LinkedIn, a site used by nearly 50 million users from over 200 countries, is often described as the professional face of social networking. LinkedIn offers members the ability to create company pages as well as a personal profile. Individuals can build contacts and promote their CV and skills, in addition to establishing a network for their organisation. Members are also able to join groups that have a connection to their area of work, and become involved in

discussions. LinkedIn has many useful features, including the ability to encourage customers, clients or vendors to give an individual or business a recommendation on their profile.

As with similar media, LinkedIn allows organisations to create pages through which they can interact with their audience, and allows followers to ‘like’, share and comment on posts. This ability to give and receive ‘likes’ and ‘recommendations’ effects powerful social signals and a measure of authority to followers. Whether you are in business, trying to put your start-up on the map, new to a particular working sector or focus mostly on non-profit work, LinkedIn is a very good networking tool to help you achieve your professional goals.

LinkedIn tips

- A LinkedIn profile is similar to a CV, where you display your past education information, work experience, skills, current work position and profile picture. You can follow LinkedIn’s profile completion tips when editing your profile but remember to use keywords effectively – in your headline, summary and throughout your entire profile. Use keywords that reflect your profession or main passion, as this will help your LinkedIn profile turn up more often in search results for those terms.
- It is common practice for investors to partner up on investments with their peers. Even in a less business-

orientated context, if you want your community project or initiative to get talked about in influential circles, it is important to establish a presence on LinkedIn. Making contacts, joining groups and following relevant organisations can help you achieve this.

- Think about who you know. Find out what they can do for you and what you can do for them. Whilst it is unlikely that your immediate network will be able to provide all of the support you need, it is possible that a contact will have a workable connection to a key person within your sector.
- As with other social networks, the most important thing to remember is that relationships matter. Make sure you are contributing equally and regularly to each of them.
- Groups on LinkedIn is a place for members to share and participate in a professional setting in a specific industry or area of interests. There are plenty of groups for job seekers, your university alumni, specific professions and a variety of associations from all over the world. Being actively involved in these groups could lead you to make new connections and generate interest in your organisation and its work.
- A great way to get connected with clients or people you are working with is to add your LinkedIn profile link to your email signature. This indirectly increases the exposure to your LinkedIn profile, helping you to make connections, even when you are not actively doing so.



the purposes of creating an animated or promotional video.

- A large budget is not necessary to begin using YouTube, however – only basic video editing skills will be required for creating short clips, something that a colleague or contact within your organisation may be able to provide. Think about your network of contacts and which of them could help with creating a video.
- Great content is the key to successfully optimising your videos. If your goal is to obtain a substantial amount of views, make sure your content is engaging, entertaining or informative – and most importantly, shareable.
- Make videos short, precise and up-to-the minute so that more people are encouraged to watch them.
- Share your video through your other social network profiles, such as Twitter, Facebook and Google+ to help gather more views and a wider spread of coverage.
- Make use of YouTube's Watch Later feature to keep handy lists of video resources that will help boost your own learning and development – there are thousands of inspirational tutorials, interviews, documentaries and much, much more to be found.

Pinterest

www.pinterest.com

Pinterest is a social network that offers 'visual bookmarking' – an interface that allows users to 'pin' any

image from the internet to a 'board' on its site. It might be compared to an online version of a scrapbook – or, as the name suggests, a pin board. Pinterest's bookmarklet functionality allows users to group together images and snippets of information from across the web in a meaningful way.

The site allows you to create multiple boards to organise your collection of images. Boards can be named to reflect your interests, activities, projects, products and more – the possibilities are endless. The site also allows you to re-pin the images posted by other Pinterest users, so every image you like and pin will appear on your board. Firmly inside the world's top websites for socialising, Pinterest has become a powerful tool for marketing, promoting and advertising.

Pinterest tips

- Pinterest's boards are beautiful and clearly laid out. Remember that when you pin an image, you are also linking to the image's source on the web – try to ensure that these sources reflect the work of your organisation or project to help capture a sense of your area of interest and expertise.
- Make the most of boards by giving them creative names. Your images will attract those who are interested in them but having intriguing names for boards will draw people to click on them and explore

YouTube

www.youtube.com

YouTube allows people to search for, watch and share videos. Constantly developing and adding features, it is an attractive social site for small businesses, public bodies, social enterprises and everything in between. Whilst it is not necessary to create videos to take part in the world of YouTube, businesses might consider adding a simple video to help with their marketing. Similarly, public bodies can create instructional videos that are easily accessible to a large number of people. Community groups are able to create videos that expose their work and help them gain a wider audience. For all organisations, embedding video content in their websites or blog posts can help to deliver the sights and sounds of their work in action.

YouTube tips

- YouTube offers a great way to improve your organisation's visibility and enhance its image. Aim to make videos using a high definition camera of the best quality available to you. Consider engaging the services of a professional digital media company for

the content.

- One of the most effective ways to get more followers for your Pinterest profile is to follow other Pinterest users. You will gain followers through your pins but when you make the effort to follow and engage with others, you will get more interest in your pins and, in turn, more repins (posts of your pins by other users).
- If you need some ideas for posts, do a search on Pinterest with relevant key words from your niche. Note which pins have a lot of repins and/or comments. These are hot topics. Find your own unique angle and write and share images on the topics people are engaging with.

Blogging

A blog (short for *web log*) is a discussion or informational site published on the internet and consisting of journal-like entries, or 'posts'. Through their posts, blogs offer individuals and organisations an effective way of establishing a network, demonstrating the activities and services they provide and developing a reputation within their focus area.

Setting up a blog or dedicated news page on your website is a great way to raise your organisation's profile. Depending on your budget, this can be done in a number of different ways:

- If you have no website, use your organisation's Facebook page as a news feed.
- If your existing website is relatively recent, you can incorporate a blog into the site with easy-to-use software such as WordPress (www.wordpress.org).
- If your website is over three years old or cannot be altered, you may want to think about investing in a new site with a built-in news feed using WordPress or other platforms such as Drupal (www.drupal.org) or Joomla (www.joomla.org).

All of the above can be easily integrated with other social media platforms – for example, Twitter can be easily configured to 'feed' Facebook automatically, WordPress can be set up for both Twitter and Facebook, whilst Twitter can update LinkedIn (or vice versa). You should make it easy for your readers to tell their networks about you and share your content.

Blogging tips

- Keep blog posts short, informative and lively. Don't write too little or too much – good guidelines are to write at least 300 words and no more than 1,000 words. More importantly, though, only write as many words as it takes and cut the rest.
- Bring the content to life by including a video, image or infographic (a visual representation of information or data).
- Remember that a blog offers a great opportunity to showcase your work and successes with a particular project, be it a business development, community activity or volunteering initiative. Find ways to regularly get inspired from your work and channel this into your writing. This, in turn, will inspire and attract others.
- Maintaining a blog can provide evidence of how you used funding for a particular project, helping to satisfy funding providers' monitoring requirements. Doing so

will help you keep in mind your goals and record how the funding benefitted the people and organisations intended (including your own).

- Whatever setup you choose for your blog, make sure you post updates on a regular basis. This can vary, according to the sector or profession you are in, but at the very least it should be done weekly or ideally once a day. Regular updates will keep your audience coming back for more.
- It is positive to share your enthusiasm but take care when discussing topics you feel passionate about. Remember that blog commentary – as with all social media – is not the same as a private discussion with close friends or colleagues but a public account. Write with confidence and conviction but don't resort to a diatribe.
- Make the effort to write guest posts for other bloggers. This will help you to build up your authority in your area and generate interest in your own work.

Getting the best out of the social web

The tools considered in this guide offer a great way to establish a network and build relationships within your sector. With your knowledge and insight ever increasing, you will be in a strong position when it comes to identifying sources of funding for your projects – and, of course, when making those all-important applications.

Why not get started with your social media activity by following GRANTfinder on your favourite networks? Join the conversation and get useful links at:



[@GRANTfinder_uk](https://twitter.com/GRANTfinder_uk)



[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GRANTfinder_uk)



[Google+](https://plus.google.com/GRANTfinder_uk)

More help

The process of securing funding for almost any project is like completing a large jigsaw puzzle – where many of the pieces do not appear to exist. **Idox** – a leading specialist in funding solutions for private, public and voluntary sector organisations – is here to help you make sense of the funding world and to meet your objectives.

Further information on our full range of capabilities and the support we can offer, ranging from funding and policy information services to training and grants consultancy, can be found at www.idoxgroup.com or by contacting us on:



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