

## **FACEBOOK POSTING GUIDE FOR LOCAL AND STATE LEAGUES**

While Facebook is no substitute for a robust website, it provides an easy and effective way to promote your content and communicate with both League members and the public at large. Through a Facebook page, you can help the public become more involved with your League, educate them on the League's issues and positions and help move them up the ladder of engagement. Growing numbers of the League's traditional membership are joining social media channels like Facebook, making the platform a successful way to engage both new fans, as well as strengthen relationships with existing supporters. ([Forbes](#), 12/2013).

### **GOALS**

In efforts to promote your work and engage with your community, your League's Facebook page should be used to –

- Elevate the good work your League is doing
- Highlight the impact your League and other Leagues are having across the country
- Share information on priority issues
- Increase engagement by sharing information and fostering dialogue

### **TONE**

To best engage fans, the tone of Facebook posts should be relatively informal and conversational. Encourage conversation, and invite fans to comment or respond to a question. Your Facebook page provides a way for your fans to get to know you, so, you need to show some personality. Keep in mind that you will likely have new fans joining your page on a regular basis, so it is important to always explain the context and background for what you're posting to enable users understand your position on the topic at hand. Relatedly, it is important to remember that Facebook is an external tool to reach beyond your membership; internal messages and communications should be shared on other channels and not on Facebook.

Facebook is meant to encourage interaction and dialogue, and fans expect to be treated respectfully and not just "sold" information and materials from the pages they follow. Pose questions when you share information and then "like" or reply to the comments you receive. You may receive also questions or comments via Facebook either as a comment on a post or through Facebook's internal message center; it is important to respond to these requests in a timely manner. Show your fans that you aren't just pushing information to them, but are available to answer questions and are eager to hear from them.

### **POSTS**

Your Facebook posts should update your followers on your League's progress at the local, state and national levels. Facebook posts that include links and photos perform exceptionally better than those that do not. As a general rule, each post should include a link or photo and do one of the following: a) direct fans back to your website; b) quote or cite your work or a topic related to your work; or c) quote/cite LWVUS or state/local League work, or redirects to their website or Facebook page. These practices will help engage more people with your work, especially your



website and with your position on the various issues that concern the League both in your community and more broadly.

Facebook is also a good place to share blog posts, news articles, press releases or fact sheets from your coalition partners, including relevant content that does not directly cite the League, but focuses on the League's issues and supports your work. Sharing content from partner organizations builds goodwill and avoids the appearance of being shamelessly self-promotional. Additionally, if you tag a partner organization in your post, it will expand the audience for your post because you'll reach your fans, as well as some of the fans of the tagged group. This may also encourage fans of your coalition partners to like your page as well since they'll become more familiar with your work and how it overlaps with a group they're already supporting.

Until recently, it was a recommended practice to increase your Facebook interactions by explicitly asking users to "like" or "share" your content. But recently, Facebook announced that it will penalize posts that use "like-baiting" measures by making that content less visible on newsfeeds. In order to keep engagement up, avoid like-baiting, and think about how you can provide content and updates that encourage engagement organically.

It is important to make sure that the content you share communicates the messaging you're trying to send on a given issue. For example, you wouldn't want to share an article that talks about "voter fraud" because voter fraud is not a message frame that the League likes to reinforce. Additionally, it is important to include introductory text and context when sharing links to introduce and frame the content being shared.

Types of content to consider sharing –

- News articles quoting or citing your League, other Leagues or on priority issues
- Blog posts by your League, other Leagues and partner organizations
- Press releases or statements
- Photos/videos from your events, including voter registration drives, candidate forums, etc.
- Political cartoons or relevant graphics/memes
- New resources from your League, other Leagues or partner organizations
- Action alerts or other calls to action on local, state or national issues

Your Facebook page should not be the place where you promote internal League events and meetings. Rather, it should speak to members and non-members alike. Ultimately, we hope most of your members are following your activity on Facebook, but your priority should be to make your page accessible to someone who is new to the League and may not know the intricacies and nuances of membership with the League.

To help you keep an eye on what other Leagues are sharing, we've put together [a list of all the state and local Leagues we know of who are on Facebook](#). If your League is not included in this list, please contact Stephanie Drahan with the link for your League's Facebook page and we'll make sure to add you.

## **FACEBOOK'S ALGORITHM**

Facebook is known for continually tweaking its news feed algorithm, or the criteria it uses to determine what content appears on different users' newsfeeds. Facebook implemented a major shift to its algorithm this winter that caused companies and nonprofits to experience a major decrease in organic Facebook reach, or the number of their fans who saw their posts. Insiders and tech experts believe this is the start of a push by Facebook to encourage companies and nonprofits to pay for promoted posts or Facebook ads. This change clearly has made a strong impact on nonprofits pages, generally, but it has impacted small nonprofit pages the hardest.

When a user interacts with your post by liking, sharing or commenting, a "story" is created and will enter their newsfeed, thereby elevating our content along with it. So while this recent change means that we must work harder to find engaging content, if successful, an original post can still reach well beyond the total number of fans for your page.

Luckily, there are some easy ways that you can help boost your page's engagement, including analyzing your page's Facebook Insights, or analytics, to get a better gauge of what type of content performs well with your audience (see "Analytics," below, for more information). Other simple ways to keep your page fresh are to change your cover photo periodically, increase post frequency, share content from fellow Leagues and partner organizations, respond to comments, ask and answer questions, and make sure the details in your "About" section are accurate and up to date.

Due to Facebook's algorithms, not all of your fans will see all of your posts, so it is okay to occasionally repeat content, such as elections information, action alerts, important reminders, etc. You may also want to change up how you message around the same action in order to see if one message resonates better with your fans.

## **STAFFING**

Anyone who is made an administrator of your League's Facebook page can post as the page when signed-in through their personal Facebook page, or you can log-in and then switch to using Facebook as your League. To use Facebook as the League, go to the gear at the top right of the page and select to use Facebook as the page. Whether you're using Facebook as the League or as yourself, once on your League's page, you'll have the option to comment and interact as the page or as through your personal profile. It can be a good practice to like new posts from your personal page to help kickstart the engagement process.

It is up to your League to figure out what works best in managing your Facebook account. Do you have members who love social media and want to volunteer? This is a perfect responsibility for them. If you don't have an obvious choice, you can rotate the responsibility to see if certain members are more adept: Do they get more interactions and fans? Do they have more time to devote to it? Do they enjoy it? A great place to start is to gather what you know is coming up and create a social media calendar so that whoever is managing the account knows about different events or press hits that are in the works and can make sure to highlight them appropriately.

In terms of approval of content, you'll need to work with your League to figure out what works best for you. It is important to get content up in a timely fashion in order to remain relevant to current events, including your events, bill signings, hearings, etc. We recommend having no more than a handful of people weighing in on what can and should be posted, and over time developing trust in the manager of your page to make appropriate decisions, and therefore only needing to check in when complicated or new issues arise in order to finesse messaging.

## **FREQUENCY**

While each League can determine its own capacity, we recommend posting to Facebook 3-5 times a week. Once you master that, you can kick it up a notch and try to post daily, or even up to two times a day. As Facebook continues to alter its algorithm, it has been reported that regular and consistent posting helps increase engagement and views. If posting multiple times a day, we recommend spacing your posts out, so as not to overwhelm your fans, and also to give each post time to receive adequate attention. You should also vary the time and days of your posts to see what works best for your audience, and adjust accordingly. Posts can even be scheduled ahead of time so you can plan ahead. To schedule a Facebook post, simply click on the clock symbol when making a status update, and you'll be able to select a publish date and time. The scheduling tool is a great way to make sure that you don't forget major holidays or anniversaries, or to simply plan ahead based on your capacity. You can also easily edit the time or content of scheduled posts by going to your page's Activity Log.

## **GROUND RULES**

One of the great things about Facebook is that it promotes active dialogue and creates many opportunities for interaction and relationship-building, including between Leagues and their fans, as well as amongst members and supporters. As a general rule, we recommend not intervening when there is a civil debate happening on your page. In order to manage the interactions on our page, we've set some [guidelines](#) for our fans to follow. This sets ground rules for our page and lets our fans know what type of posts we'll remove from our page. We recommend that other Leagues use this as a guide to setting their own parameters. When overtly partisan content is posted or commenters become harassing or aggressive, we will block them from our page.

## **EDITING LINKS**

When posting a link to Facebook, you can control much of the content that is auto-generated. Simply click on the title and the blurb underneath it to be able to edit the text. If you hover your cursor over the article, the parts that are editable will be highlighted in yellow. You may want to do this to highlight a pull quote in the article from a League member or to remove extraneous information that appears automatically. You may also be able to choose from multiple images for an article or add an appropriate image if one does not autodisplay.

If a link you are inputting does not autogenerate with a title or blurb in place of the URL, you need to run it through the [Facebook Debugger Tool](#). This tool will strip the code and process the information. Once the link has been stripped, you should be able to input the original link into Facebook and have it autogenerate correctly.

## **TAGGING**

On Facebook, like Twitter, you can tag or mention other organizations that you're working with. You can tag an organization or media source in your posts by first "liking" them and then typing their page name prefaced with an "@" sign. Facebook should autogenerate the page name after a few letters. This will create a link to that organization's Facebook page within your update. They will receive a notification that they've been tagged in your post, and your post may show up on their Facebook page, thereby introducing some of their fans to your update and page. You should tag your League in all of the photos you post. You can also "de-tag" your page from posts or photos, to remove a link to your Facebook page from another organization's post.

## **ANALYTICS**

Facebook provides Insights, or analytics, for all fan pages that receive over 30 likes. Facebook periodically changes how its analytics work, but its Insights page is a good starting place to see how your posts are performing. Through Facebook Insights you can see your fan growth, as well as how each post performs. Useful analytics that Facebook provides are how stories created from your original post performed, link click throughs, and a breakdown of the reach of a post by fans v. non-fans. Whereas photos continue to rule Facebook, Facebook has altered how links display to show a larger image, which has helped improve the click-through rates to articles outside of Facebook.

You can also use Facebook Insights to see the reach of each post and track what type of issues and posts perform better or if there is a time of day that performs better. The Insights help you learn more about your fans, including their age, gender, location, etc. and helps you build a strategy for how your League can most effectively use Facebook moving forward.

In addition to Facebook Insights, we recommend using [Crowdbooster](#), which can track both your Twitter and Facebook accounts. It can provide you with additional feedback and tips on how to better engage with you followers.

## **DON'T FORGET TO FOLLOW VOTE411!**

Like the LWVUS Facebook page, our VOTE411 Facebook page shares election-related content that is useful to your audience, including reminders to update their voter registration records, state-specific voting information and more. If your area has elections coming up, post your content to VOTE411's wall and we'll do our best to help spread the word about your local voter registration deadlines, candidate debate forums and more!

## **RESOURCES**

Our private [Facebook group for League Members using New Media](#) is a great resource to learn more about how to use social media to leverage your work. Group members crowdsource for answers to questions or to brainstorm new ideas, as well as share articles on changes or best practices for online communications and social media. You'll need to request to be added to this group.

Facebook also provides a number of great resource pages including [Facebook Marketing](#), [Facebook Pages](#) and [Non-Profits on Facebook](#) fan pages. These pages provide a



range of information from how to set up your Facebook page to how to best utilize and optimize your page. While much of the information is more directed to corporations and larger organizations, they do a great job of putting together materials and holding webinars to discuss changes to Facebook.

Facebook is still relatively young, and it changes often. With each change there are new opportunities for how groups can use Facebook. Their resources will help explain any changes and provide some basic how-to guides for Leagues that are interested in starting a Facebook page.

**QUESTIONS? CONTACT STEPHANIE DRAHAN – [sdrahan@lww.org](mailto:sdrahan@lww.org)**