Building an Effective Social Media Program

Session Objectives

- **Explain** social media channel features and their respective features and benefits
- **Demonstrate** how effective social media can educate, inspire, and entertain those interested in the Order of the Arrow
- **Guide** the participants to develop an effective social media team.
- **Enable** the participants to provide value added content that supports their Lodge

Session Length: 55 Minutes

Appendix Resources

- Hootsuite (http://blog.hootsuite.com)
- Hubspot (http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/topic/social--media)
- Mashable (http://mashable.com/social--media/)
- Socialmouths (http://socialmouths.com/blog/)
- PostPlanner (http://www.postplanner.com/blog/)
- BSA Social Media Playbook (http://www.scouting.org/filestore/marketing/pdf/Social_Media_Playbook.pdf)
- The Language of Scouting (http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Media/LOS.aspx)
- There are always new / better resources; a periodic search engine query for "social media best practices" or "social media blog" will yield the most current examples of reputable 3rd--party social media guidance

Required Materials

- Materials required to deliver the content of the session (i.e. flip chart, projector, white board).
- Social Media Flip Chart if no electricity available (see resource sheet content)

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Session Narrative

Introduction **9 Minutes**

Introduce yourself and the topic. Quickly cover any necessary housekeeping.

Throughout the presentation today, I encourage participation, feedback, and sharing with the group so we may all walk away with a better understanding on how your lodge can use social media to activate, engage, and retain members.

Ask learners about their own social media interaction.

- Show of hands – who has a Facebook account? Twitter? Instagram? Slack? What other channels are you on? Does anyone here not have any kind of personal social media account?
- Why did you join a social media network? What did you hope to get out of it?
- Who uses social media on a desktop or laptop computer? How about a tablet? Phone?
- When do you use it? What time of day? Where are you? What else are you doing when you're on social media?
- What causes you to make your own posts? What causes you to like, share, or comment on others' posts?
- How does your Order of the Arrow lodge use social media? What sorts of things do they do that cause you to want to 'like' or share or comment on their activity?

It's no secret or surprise that social media is a powerful force. We're all familiar with it – some of us more than others; some of us, perhaps, a little too familiar with it. We connect to our families, our friends, and our favorite organizations and even favorite brands through social media. Today, we will expand your understanding of social media and challenge you to think differently about how we can effectively use this powerful tool.

Social media has much in common with any other form of communication, in that it is, essentially, a sender, a message, and a receiver. Social media is unique in several ways and several of social media's benefits offer excellent opportunities for membership organizations, including an Order of the Arrow lodge, to connect with their members.

First, it's where our members are. As a small sample, we just revealed our own participation in various forms of social media. Undoubtedly, a significant percentage of our brothers engage in social media on a regular basis as well. With so much competition for time and attention, it's no longer realistic to expect our members to seek us out – we need to be where they are if we want to reach them. We recognize that not all members are active in social media, so it can't be the only way we try to connect with our brothers – but social media use is only increasing, even among older people. It has become one of the primary ways we share information about our Order.

Secondly, the prevalence of social media across a wide variety of devices means that our members can engage in social media at any time and in any place. It's very follower-friendly; members can either 'subscribe' to or 'follow' favorite accounts to have relevant information "pushed" to them, or they can use search features and hash tags to seek out new content. For creators of social

media, we can reach people instantaneously at any time of day. We don't need to worry about the post office delaying a printed newsletter or finding the right time of evening for a phone call. We can share our content immediately, at any time, and it'll be there ready for our followers when and where they choose to receive it.

Lastly, social media may be one of the best ways we should quickly and easily interact with individuals on a personal, 1:1 level. Perhaps only secondary to a live, in-person meeting, social media enables a natural back-and-forth conversation, in near real-time, that printed materials and even static web pages can't offer. Instead of a one-way broadcast of information from us to them, we can receive real feedback and honestly engage with an individual, personalizing their communications experience and enhancing, ideally, their Order of the Arrow experience.

Understanding our audience and their needs   **10 Minutes**

Before we get into the nuts and bolts of building a social media program, as with any effective communications program we need to first define who our audience is, and what we want them to do.

Who are the different types of people who may want to learn more about the Order of the Arrow and your lodge? And, do some of these types of people, whom we'll call audiences, have sub-groups?

- *Ask for responses, and display responses – the final list should include:*
- *New candidates*
- *Lodge members*
    - *Brotherhood candidates*
    - *Different committees' members*
    - *Chapter members*
    - *Attendees to an OA event (NOAC, Conclave, etc.)*
- *Parents*
    - *Parents of new candidates*
    - *Parents of lodge members*
- *Unit leaders*
- *District and council leaders, committees, commissioners, and professional staffs.*
- *Lodge alumni*
- *Community members*
- *Others?*

While many of these people may be interested in general lodge news and happenings, each one has a unique relationship with the lodge, and probably has different sorts of questions, different levels of understanding, and different desires for engagement. The messages we share, and the ways in which we share them, need to be relevant to the audience. Proper use of social media allows us to easily personalize messages to an audience member.

For the audiences, we are normally trying to reach, most of our social media messages will fall into one of three general purposes:

Education: Sometimes there is a need for simple one-way dissemination of information; announcing an upcoming lodge event and sharing the details about it, for example. Other types of education may require more of a conversation, either through multiple people commenting publicly, or a private one-to-one conversation. In either case, social media allows us to share knowledge widely and quickly, helping to educate our audience members.

Inspiration: As a values-based membership organization, the Order can use social media to share content that specifically reinforces the ideals of our Obligation and Admonition. Quotes, images, and stories can be a daily reminder of what was learned during ceremonies and training. Asking questions and soliciting examples can help members think about how to apply the Order's principles in our daily lives. Regular posting of values-based content can, in effect, help members re-dedicate themselves to the Order every day, between the in-person events and meetings of the lodge. This is a tremendously powerful opportunity to affect how individual members think and act. In a best-case scenario, we can help people better live the Obligation daily, through a daily reminder of our principles and regular exploration of how to apply those principles to our lives.

Entertain: Being educational and inspirational doesn't have to be dry or boring. Social media conversations should be just that – a friendly conversation between brothers. Our social media posts probably shouldn't be overly casual or informal, but they can be friendlier and more familiar than the tone taken by other forms of communication. They can even be lighthearted and funny; however, care must be taken that our posts are not sarcastic, offensive, or misconstrued. Scout-like humor and wit are powerful tools for making a message engaging and memorable.

Through education, inspiration, and entertainment, we can use social media to both help change the way our followers think and change the way our followers act. The specific thoughts and actions we want to encourage will differ, perhaps, depending on the audience member we're trying to reach.

Understanding our audiences and their needs is the critical foundation for a successful social media program.

The right channel for the right audience and purpose   8 Minutes

There are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of social media opportunities. Even for our largest lodges, it's difficult to be active and effective on more than a couple. Leaders should, keeping in mind their audiences and what they want each one to do, focus on using a smaller number of channels well – the ones that your audience members regularly use – rather than doing a poor job of maintaining many different channels with limited value.

Each of the major social media channels has basic demographic trends and feature sets that may suggest it as being better for a specific audience or purpose. Social media is dynamic – leaders need to constantly be aware of shifting trends in social media usage and keep up to date with the features available in each channel to make sure that the chosen channel is an effective tool for reaching the desired audience.

Ideally, the lodge will be able to develop a unified 'brand' across their social media channels. Consistent use of avatar images, cover or banner photos, and channel names / handles will make

it easier for you to integrate your messages between social media outlets, and help your followers find related content across channels.

The lodge may also want to sign up for an account on major or emerging social media channels, even if you're not sure if / how you might use it, simply to prevent someone else from 'squatting' on your desired name. You can always post initial content in that channel that directs the follower to your more active channels.

Social media leadership needs to be vigilant about emerging channels. Faddish specialty channels may have short-term or project-specific uses and should be honestly evaluated. Realize, however, that learning the nuances of each network, posting appropriate content, and recruiting and retaining followers takes significant effort. There is a definite "return on investment" decision that needs to be made regarding each social media outlet.

With that in mind, lodges should consider the following major social media networks and understand the unique features and benefits each channel offers in an integrated communications program. Individually, and perhaps more effective when used in a coordinated fashion, these channels can help your lodge tell its story.

> *Trainer Tip:* The material on the Social Media channels is in the resource sheet; the Trainer should gauge the audience familiarity with the material and tailor the delivery accordingly. A flip chart could be developed or a handout to facilitate the delivery of the session.

Based on who you've defined as your audiences, and what message you're trying to communicate to them, you may choose to integrate one or more of these channels into your social media program.

- Which of these channels is your lodge using already?
- Who are you trying to reach, and what is the message?
- Was that the most effective channel? Why or why not?
- What will you do differently next time?

Best practices for creating engaging content   **8 Minutes**

As we noted, social media is unique in that it can facilitate a near real-time discussion. While one-way broadcasts of news have its uses, the best social media posts are those that engage the consumer, that cause them to think and act differently; and encourage interaction, that cause someone to respond with their own thoughts and content, or share the original message with others.

Not every post, of course, inspires an action. Earlier, we asked you for some examples of types of content that prompted your own engagement. What were some of the common themes?

(Group response)

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There are some general best practices that have been proven to increase engagement and interaction. These shouldn't come as a surprise, but they're good strategies to review and incorporate regularly.

- Emoticons increase comments by 33%. It might sound a little crazy (show 'crazy face' emoticon), but these characters instantly make communication seem friendly (show smiley face or hand waving) and informal – which only inspires conversation (show speech bubble). Use them judiciously; a little bit goes a long way. (Show 'thumbs up')
- Question posts get 100% more comments. Again, it's about conversation – and our brains are just wired to want to answer questions. Even those who may be less comfortable sharing publicly in a live setting could be more likely to share from behind the buffer of their screen. You may hear from people you wouldn't otherwise ever hear from.
- Short posts get 23% more interaction. Reading long posts? Nobody has time for that. We like to consume our news and information in small, digest-able chunks. Get to the point quickly to make it easier for users to receive the message.
- Always answer the "what's in it for me?" question that each consumer subconsciously asks. How is this information relevant to them? What are they going to do with it?
- Use photos and video. Photos, of course, are worth a thousand words. Videos even more so. Good infographics and illustrations tell powerful visual stories, too. Appropriate memes can entertain, inspire, and even educate, too. Most any story is made more interesting and memorable when accompanied by a relevant, high-quality graphic.
    - Facebook photo or video posts get 39% more interaction
    - Tweets with images are shared 2x more than those without
- Share good external content. There is so much quality content out there that supports our ideals. The judicious use of verifiable, contextual content from reputable sources lends external authority to our messages. Sharing messages of service, leadership, and other timely, relevant topics through quotes and stories will help inspire our consumers.
    - Be sure to get permission to share any content and confirm the validity of the information before sharing.
    - Give attribution where appropriate.
    - Many organizations have found the social media "rule of thirds" to be helpful.
        - 1/3 of your content is about "us;" things that are self-serving to the organization; (e.g. news and announcements about OA policies, activities, etc.)
        - 1/3 surfaces and shares ideas from "thought leaders" (reputable people related to your organization's value or activities, but not directly connected with your group; e.g., inspirational quotes from leaders, news stories, etc.)
        - 1/3 should be more personal interactions that "build the brand;" in our case, that support personal development. (e.g. questions about an individual's Order of the Arrow experiences that cause them to reflect on cheerful service, etc.
- Be (reasonably) provocative. A bold statement in a headline, or a thoughtful, challenging question will spark good conversation.
    - Be careful to not cross the line from "provocative" to "controversial." We want to inspire dialogue and conversation, not arguments and hurt feelings.

- Follow the Scout Oath and Law.
- Above all, be innovative! Social media is a dynamic, ever-changing environment. Anyone who tells you that they are an 'expert' in social media is working with outdated information. Social media is a great playground for continual testing and learning. Come up with a novel idea that supports your goal of reaching an audience and inspiring thought and action; play it out in a social media channel; and review the results to learn for the next time. Social media is not for the timid; it facilitates experimentation and innovation.

Team challenge   **8 Minutes**

So, we're going to do an exercise that puts into practice what we've discussed so far. Everybody should arrange themselves into teams of two to four. Based off what you've learned about network best practices, our mission to educate, inspire, and entertain, and what you've shared about content you think sparks engagement, come up with a Facebook post and two tweets. You have 5 minutes to do this.

At the end, we will have each group share. The top three Facebook posts and the top five tweets will be submitted to your communications team to be used on your lodge's social network. That way you will have a chance to see what content did the best, and gauge your social media audiences' responses to different content.

Remember this content should be innovative, out-of-the-box sort of stuff!

Managing social media   **10 Minutes**

BSA has guidelines for Social Media and Youth Protection[1]. The following is excerpted from those guidelines:

- 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.). As is true for participation in Scouting activities, all Scouts and adult leaders should abide by the guidelines outlined in the Scout Oath and Law when participating in social networking. As with a Scouting activity, safety and Youth Protection should be a key focus. Staying true to the commitment of the BSA to be an advocate for youth and to keep children and their privacy safe, both online and off, should always be at the forefront of any considerations where social media usage is concerned.

- To help ensure that all communication on social media channels remains positive and safe, these channels must be public, and all communication on or through them must be public. This enables administrators to monitor all communication and help ensure there is no inappropriate communication between adult leaders and Scouts or between Scouts themselves. Therefore, no private channels (e.g., private Facebook groups or invite-only YouTube channels) are acceptable in helping to administer the Scouting program. Private channels and private communication put both the youth and you at risk. If you feel the information you seek to share via social media channels should not be shared in public, you should not share that information via social media.

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[1] https://scoutingwire.org/marketing-and- membership-hub/social- media/social-media- guidelines/

- The "two-deep" leadership policy that governs all Scouting activities also applies to use of social media. Two-deep leadership means two registered adult leaders, or one registered leader and a parent of a participating Scout or other adult, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required for all trips and outings.

- As it relates to social media, two-deep leadership means there should be no private messages and no one-on-one direct contact through email, Facebook messages, Twitter direct messaging, chats, instant messaging (Google Messenger, AIM, etc.), or other similar messaging features provided through social media sites. All communication between adults and youth should take place in a public forum (e.g. the Facebook wall), or at a bare minimum, electronic communication between adults and youth should always include one or more authorized adults openly "copied" (included) on the message and all responses and message threads.

- It is recommended that as you and members of your group create personal social media profiles, the personal information on these profiles should be kept private (e.g., do not display your phone number, address, or personal email address on these profiles). It is recommended that any Scout's with personal profiles for social media make those profiles private so the Scout's personal information is not accessible by the public. In creating personal profiles, everyone should familiarize themselves with and abide by the terms of service of the sites where they create and maintain personal profiles.

Social Media Team - The successful implementation of an effective social media program requires the right sort of team, with just enough hierarchy and policy to ensure that our image and message are protected while giving the team the ability to be innovative within those boundaries. Successful lodge social media programs adopt the following operational practices:

- Based on your lodge's operational structure, determine where in the organizational chart social media falls. Social media works best when it's a coordinated part of an overall communications program. There should be strong integration between social media, your website, printed newsletters, mailings, and any other communications program your lodge uses.
- Working with the other communications functions in the lodge, the social media team should develop an "editorial calendar" that helps them create content around time-bound activities, e.g. pre-event promotion and post-event summaries and feedback, non-religious holiday messages, historical remembrances, themed days (#TBT), etc.
    - Then, in and among the pre-planned content, more "organic" and timely / topical content can be created more tactically.
- A youth lead and an adult volunteer adviser should be appointed. These individuals need to "get it" when it comes to social media. They should be strong interpersonal communicators who are active in social media themselves. They need to commit, along with their team, to regularly post content and constantly monitor your chosen channels. They should also commit to ongoing learning concerning best practices through blogs, webinars, and other resources. The lodge leadership should also be willing to delegate a fair amount of trust to this team to make quick decisions and responses on social media without a lengthy approval process through multiple layers of hierarchy.
- Along with the youth lead and adviser, the team will need additional members. As social media requires active contribution and management, a team of committed individuals will be able to better shoulder the burden. Depending on the depth and breadth of your social

media program, you may want to consider the following roles, noting that some of these roles, perhaps, may be shared among your lodge's communication programs:

- Individual managers for each channel, responsible for posting content and monitoring comments
- Content contributors and authors, who source or write new posts
- Graphic designers, illustrators, photographers, and video editors
- Analysts who will review social media metrics and make recommendations for improvement

- The team should set up their social media channels with an appropriate degree of security.

    - Social media accounts should be set up with generic / shared e-mail addresses (e.g. socialmedia@lodgename.org, if you have a lodge domain, or lodgesocialmedia@gmail.com) and not personal e-mail addresses. The youth lead and the adviser should both always have access to these email accounts.
    - Passwords for the email accounts and social media accounts should be changed regularly, or when there's a change in team membership or leadership.
    - The use of a social media management tool is strongly recommended. Social media management tools (e.g. Hootsuite, Buffer, Sprout) allow you to manage all your social media channels through one dashboard, giving you a one-stop shop for access to your social networks. You can save time and maximize efforts online by scheduling posts to go out over multiple channels automatically. Multiple users can have access without having to share passwords to all your social media accounts. The fewer people with password knowledge means the less likely you are to experience a mishap with poorly placed content. Good social media management tools also help you easily gather data about your social efforts, giving a better idea regarding what's working.

- You will need to develop an understanding of your lodge's tolerance for disagreeable or negative comments on your posts. Honest conversation includes critical feedback, and where appropriate, lodges should attempt to have a "thick skin" regarding constructive criticism. However, some commentary is not appropriate; the BSA's Facebook page provides one good model for a comment policy:

    - This digital Scouting community is governed by the Scout Oath and Scout Law. We will delete any comment that we believe does not reflect the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
    - This includes comments that use inappropriate language or are potentially libelous or injurious to the privacy of an individual or group. Users posting these comments will be banned from commenting on this site.
    - Off-topic comments as well as those promoting unapproved products and services will also be removed.
    - Users posting any comments, photos, videos, links or other items that fall into one or more of the congressionally mandated Cyber Topline reporting categories of the National Center for Missing & Exploited will be reported to the proper law enforcement agencies.

- As an active form of communication, social media requires active monitoring and rapid responses to comments and messages. Social media consumers have become used to timely responses; delays in responses erode the effectiveness of your social media program. The lodge social media team should develop a "duty roster" to ensure that a team member is checking each channel frequently and responding to questions appropriately.

- For clarity and consistency, posted content should follow the vocabulary and visual identity conventions of the Boy Scouts of America and the Order of the Arrow. Content contributors should regularly review publications including *The Language of Scouting* and the *Order of the Arrow Brand and Identity Guide* to ensure that their posts are using the proper terms, capitalization practices, and style conventions.
- Similarly, to enable people to find your content across multiple platforms, the social media team should develop a coordinated list of official hash tags, and encourage social media consumers to use these hash tags when commenting, sharing photos, etc.

The right team, with the right tools and structure, can effectively create and deliver a strong social media program.

Conclusion   **2 Minutes**

As we have discussed, there are many effective social media channels and if you can make your content relevant, timely and high quality, your lodge can educate, inspire, and entertain your members through social media. One person cannot create and implement a communication plan; it will take a team that is dedicated and consistent in furthering the message of the lodge. Social media is a powerful tool in the lodge's communications toolbox, and when used correctly, can empower Arrowmen to better live a life of servant leadership through daily interaction with the Order of the Arrow's programs and values.