

## 9 Simple Social Media Tips

### 1. Understand your audience and their needs.

- ▶ Who do you want to follow you?
- ▶ What content do they want and need from you?
- ▶ What social media do they use? If nobody's on Twitter, it's probably not worth the effort to share content that way, at least in the beginning.

### 2. What time/resources do you have to...

- ▶ Learn how each social media platform works?
- ▶ Consistently gather, schedule, post and monitor content — not just posting, but also getting others to contribute ideas and content?

### 3. Your answers will help you figure out:

- ▶ Which platforms to be on (Facebook first, expanding to Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube?)
- ▶ How often you'll post
- ▶ What kind of information you'll post and share
- ▶ Who you want to follow to grow your audience

### 4. Produce content that matters.

- ▶ Quality over quantity
- ▶ Share MU Extension info and timely news and events: promote events, classes, publications, etc.; show people participating in events, classes, etc.
- ▶ “Evergreen” content refers to issues and topics that regularly repeat, e.g., March is a good month to share gardening tips; post relevant canning and preserving tips throughout summer and fall; posting links to publications about developing bobwhite habitat might work well around hunting season.
- ▶ MU Extension news service releases are timely and usually have photos.

- ▶ Share or retweet posts from our main MU Extension account; most are applicable for a statewide audience.
- ▶ It's OK to share non-extension content too, as long as the content is relevant to extension's mission and is from a trusted source. Examples of acceptable sources include: Missouri Department of Agriculture, Missouri Department of Conservation, local newspapers, local partners and community agencies.
- ▶ Use plain, short sentences and a more conversational tone.
- ▶ Include photos! Make sure you have photo releases for any recognizable faces!

Find the photo release form under *Resources* on our main website.

### 5. Get organized and plan ahead.

- ▶ Pick one or two social media platforms and do those well and consistently. Build a following before adding another platform.
- ▶ Again, quality over quantity. Post at least two to three times a week, consistently. If you have good content, expand to once a day, Monday through Friday.
- ▶ Plan and write what posts you can ahead of time in a Word document so all you have to do is copy and paste the text and “attach” photos.
- ▶ Hootsuite is a free service that lets you schedule up to 30 messages at a time on Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram. You can also schedule posts directly on Facebook, too.
- ▶ Be flexible about pre-scheduled posts. Review them for relevance: e.g. mold prevention tips probably aren't going to play well during a hot, dry spell. Substitute something else and reschedule.

## 6. Engage with and build followers.

- ▶ Interact. Post a survey. Ask people to share experiences or memories related to your post.
- ▶ Follow others to get more followers. Find the social media accounts of civic, school, club and community partners in your area:
  - ▶ Follow them.
  - ▶ Tag them in your posts.
  - ▶ Regularly share, like and comment on their posts, when appropriate.
- ▶ Use relevant #hashtags. It's an art you'll pick up over time. (Do search the hashtag before using it to make sure it brings up related — and appropriate — content.)
- ▶ Use the social media profile and cover photos found under the social media resources on the Communications and Marketing webpage: [extension.missouri.edu](http://extension.missouri.edu), and search for “communications and marketing” in the website's search box. These templates are easy to read and contain engaging photos that show what we do. Avoid using pictures of people or your extension office.

## 7. Promote.

People can't find you if they don't know where to look. Include your social media info in email signatures, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, videos, webpages.

## 8. Monitor analytics.

- ▶ What posts do well and which bomb?
- ▶ What do the analytics tell you about your followers?
- ▶ When do most people view your posts?
- ▶ Whoever manages the account(s) will have access to that info.

## 9. Relax and have fun.

Think of social media as a simple way to keep in regular touch with people all over your county, share extension's and the university's valuable info with them and discover what they need from you.

Find more social media resources on the Communications and Marketing webpages.

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### Have more questions? Need help? Contact:



**Laura Lindsey**, senior marketing coordinator  
573-884-2394  
[lindseylau@missouri.edu](mailto:lindseylau@missouri.edu)



**Katherine Foran**  
573-882-5583  
[forank@missouri.edu](mailto:forank@missouri.edu)