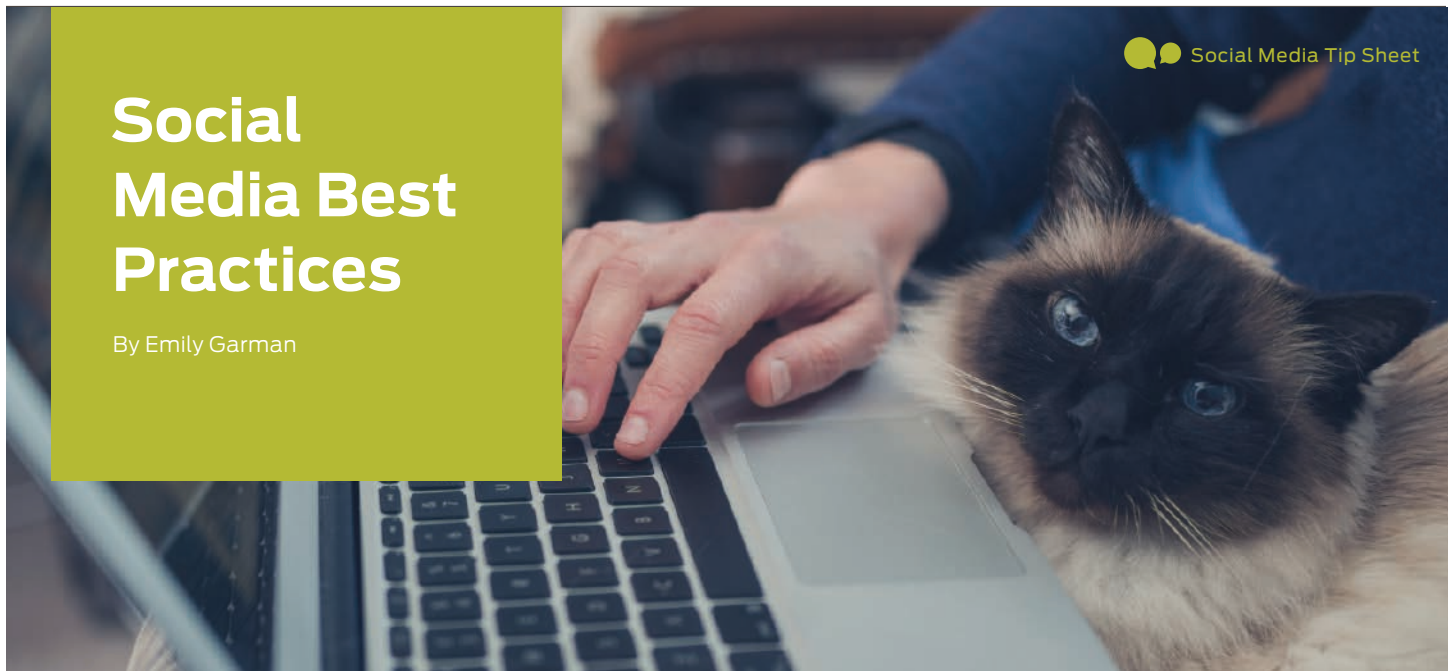


Social Media Best Practices

By Emily Garman




→ Connecting with potential adopters, donors and volunteers online can help develop lasting relationships. Learn the basics of social engagement, and you'll help more pets find homes, help increase donations and help find awesome volunteers.

No. 1 FIND YOUR AUDIENCE

How do you know which social network(s) your donors, volunteers and adopters are using? **ASK** them! While you're at it, ask them what kind of content they'd like to see. Ask as a poll on Facebook or Twitter, or even create an online survey using SurveyMonkey.com, a simple, free tool that helps you create surveys in minutes. When you know what your supporters want from you, you can give them more of it—and they'll be more engaged and loyal if you do!


No. 2 BE HUMAN

People join Facebook to connect with their friends and families, not with companies, so make sure you communicate like a real person. 

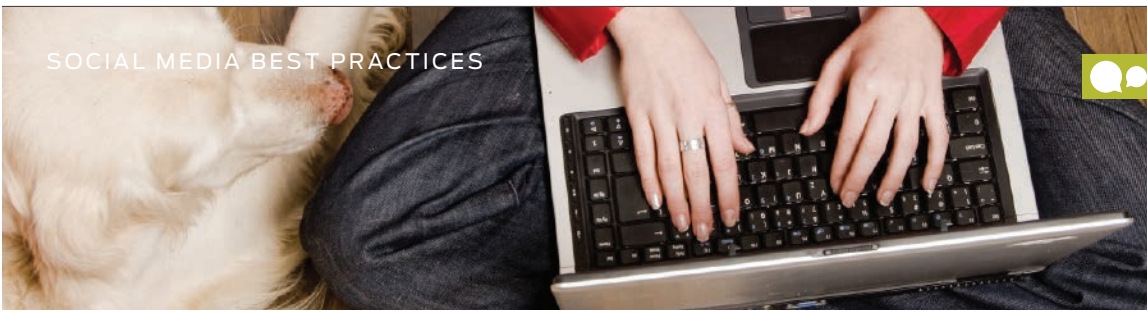
No. 3 GO BEYOND LIKES

Facebook success isn't about how many friends you have or how many likes you get; it's about actions. Do your fans do what you want them to do? Do you reach out to them so that they come back to your page? 

No. 4 INTERACT & ENGAGE

You must be relevant, interesting, concise and responsive. Plus, you must add value. Interact, ask for input, and make sure social media and Petfinder links are on all of your materials, including emails, websites and event registration pages. 

more →



SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

Social Media Tip Sheet

No. **5**

BE RESPONSIVE

Even if you've answered the same question a million times, answer it again. Answer absolutely everyone and answer them in a timely manner.

No. **6**

SHARE SUCCESSES

Social media is a great way to show people how their time, money and efforts are making a difference. Be sure to close the loop on fundraising and report back to your supporters.

No. **7**

CREATE A SAFE COMMUNITY

Make your page a safe place to visit with a commenting and privacy policy. You will inevitably have to deal with negative comments—create a response strategy that is positive and non-confrontational.

No. **8**

SHARE, SHARE, SHARE

Facebook users love to feel engaged. Post photos, videos and competitions (just make sure you know Facebook's rules). Also, beware of autoposting your Twitter feed onto Facebook (or vice versa). This will make your fans feel less valued, and may prevent your posts from being seen. The Petfinder scroller and sharing options make posting pets a breeze!

No. **9**

FIND YOUR BALANCE

People are becoming inundated by corporate, branded Facebook posts. If you take over your fans' feeds, they'll unlike you because they'll feel overwhelmed. On the other hand, if you never use your page, fans will be uninspired and you'll be missing out on an opportunity to energize them. Find the right balance.

No. **10**

IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU

If your fans want to read all about you, they'll go to your website. Use Facebook to interact and provide personalized responses, even to FAQs. Do not use it to push a message too hard, beg or post depressing photos. Be sure to include links back to your Petfinder pet page so you can track views!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



EMILY GARMÁN has been involved in animal welfare for 15 years. She founded TheSocialAnimal.com to teach animal advocates how to use social media to raise money and recruit volunteers and has spread her expertise internationally. She has consulted with and written courses for major animal welfare organizations. She is available for website development, fundraising, and social media consulting and training. For more tips, ideas and tutorials, subscribe to her blog at TheSocialAnimal.com.