



## IACP Resources

The IACP Center for Social Media has resources that can help law enforcement agencies enhance their social media presence. The tools can be accessed or requested online. Resources include the following:

- Fact sheets
- Case studies
- Directory
- Webinars
- Tutorials
- The Social Media Beat Blog
- Chiefs' Corner

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# INCREASING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE FACT SHEET

With more and more law enforcement agencies using social media, the question shifts from "Should we use these tools?" to "How can we use them better?" Increasing your social media presence as a law enforcement agency will enhance the success of your efforts whether your goal is crime prevention, soliciting tips to solve crimes, recruitment, or improving community relations. Below are a few suggestions on how to increase your agency's social media presence.

## Launch

- Have a strategy—Before launching, be sure that your agency has a strategy for social media use. Set goals and determine who will have responsibility for content management.
- Launch in conjunction with an event—Some agencies have had success launching their social media platforms in conjunction with an event such as National Night Out, another community activity, or with the anniversary of an unsolved crime. This strategy allows an agency not only to publicize its social media presence but also to bring renewed attention to an event or case.
- Involve your local media—Use the traditional media outlets in your area to help increase the effectiveness of the launch of your new social media strategy. Involving your local media outlets could help you increase their involvement later. They may also run a story about your new efforts, increasing your promotional outreach.

## Promote

- Place a link on your Web site—Most social media platforms allow users to embed a badge or widget on their traditional Web page, which advertises and links to their social media sites. Doing so not only makes Web site visitors aware of your pages but also informs the public that those specific social media pages are the official voice of your agency.
- Display on print materials—Integrate your social media into other methods of outreach and communication. You can put your Twitter name, Facebook page URL, or other social media link on print materials such as brochures, posters, or press releases. Agencies are also experimenting with Quick Response (QR) codes displayed on posters and other physical objects. Smartphone users can scan the QR codes and link to a message, video, or Web page.
- Incorporate into speeches—Whether it's the chief addressing the media or the crime prevention officer talking to a Neighborhood Watch group, talk about your new social media efforts. Let people know where they can find you on Facebook,

Twitter, YouTube, or some other site.

- Add to department personnel e-mail signatures—Think of how many e-mails leave your department servers each day. These e-mails go out to other agencies, community members, elected officials, members of the media, and so on. Add links to your social media accounts to your e-mail signature and people will click over to view your pages.
- Partner to increase promotion—Don't be afraid to reach out to people in your community who are active on social media and ask them to spread the news of your new online presence. Local bloggers and those active on other platforms may have a substantial following and can bring your message to diverse populations.

## Engage

- Answer community questions—The public has many questions when it comes to law enforcement and community safety. Your agency is the trusted authority, so be ready to answer questions and provide information when your community asks for it.
- Ask for feedback—People communicate and share across all social media channels, and they are ready to communicate with your agency. Your community members have valuable insight that they can provide to help you enhance your services. All you have to do is ask.
- Diversify your content—Increase the appeal of your posts by incorporating other types of media such as photos and videos. You can also experiment with different content topics or uses of humor in your posts.
- Ask for investigative help—The public is the eyes and ears of the community, and is a great resource to tap into for investigative assistance and information about suspicious activity. Many agencies are now crediting social media platforms with helping them prevent and solve crime.
- Connect with traditional media—Social media can help you create a new relationship with your local, traditional media outlets. Share the links to your social media platforms with them and encourage them to follow or "like" your pages in order to receive updates and even story ideas.
- Build partnerships—Follow other agencies, organizations, and businesses in and around your community. You can then share messages, maximizing outreach. Following your peers will also help refine your strategy as you see trends and get ideas from other agencies using these tools.