

# I Care... Ambassadors

Activity for *I Care...Ambassador* services

## **Top tips for... using social media**

### **What is social media?**

Social media is the social interaction of people, through which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities. Social media is a growing channel of communication which is made up of countless internet based tools and platforms which support, encourage and enhance information sharing, making it easier to communicate texts, photos, audio, videos, and other information easier. Social media has grown to such an extent that it is now seen to be an important part of everyday life and is used by individuals on a personal level and as part of their business.

### **What are the popular social media channels?**

Listed below are the main social media platforms which are freely available to help promote your *I Care...Ambassador* service.

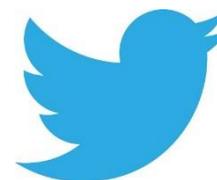


#### **Facebook**

Facebook is a popular social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. Facebook can also be used to create a business page, group or interest page. For more information go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

#### **Twitter**

Twitter is a micro blogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Each tweet can be a maximum of 140 characters long. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices. For more information go to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)



#### **LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally. LinkedIn provides a great way of sharing business activity, advertising jobs and sharing industry news. For more information go to [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

## YouTube

YouTube is one of a growing number of video hosting website that allow members to store, watch and comment on video content. For more information go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)



### What are the benefits of using social media to promote my service?

#### Build awareness for your service

An online social media presence will help generate awareness for your service from people you may not have the opportunity to meet through your day to day / *Care...Ambassador* activity.

#### Instant engagement with others

Having an online presence means that you can respond to / share information instantly. This could be to share sector developments, news about forthcoming service activity or respond to feedback from a sector colleague. It can also enhance your customer service as social media allows you to respond quickly to feedback.

#### Cheaper than traditional advertising and promotional activity

Although there is an option to pay for targeted advertising packages, most basic social media accounts are free to businesses. The basic profile will provide a sufficient online presence to help your service get started and build its online presence.

#### Promote your website

Using your social media accounts you will be able to signpost your followers to new and interesting content on your website by using hyperlinks in social media posts.

#### Increase loyalty and advocacy of your customers

Connecting with sector contacts through social media platforms is a creative way of strengthening those relationships. Having contacts follow your social media account will encourage loyalty from them and will increase the likelihood of them advocating and sharing your news with their contacts.



## What are the risks of using social media?

### **Something gets posted you don't want others to see.**

One of the perils of using social media to promote your business is that once you say something you can't take it back. It is possible to delete a post at any time, however once it's been sent from your account it is in the public domain.

### **You create a social presence but no one is participating.**

There is never a guarantee that your posts will capture the participation of others and it's important to always think about your intended audience before posting information.

### **Finding the time to manage your accounts**

Social media is all about instant engagement which is why it's important to find the appropriate amount of time to manage your accounts. Creating and maintaining a strong online presence is an on-going task and it's important someone in your team takes responsibility for checking your account/s on a daily basis.

## Tips to help with your social media

### **1. Use a social media management tool**

It can be difficult to find the time to keep checking all of your social media accounts each day.

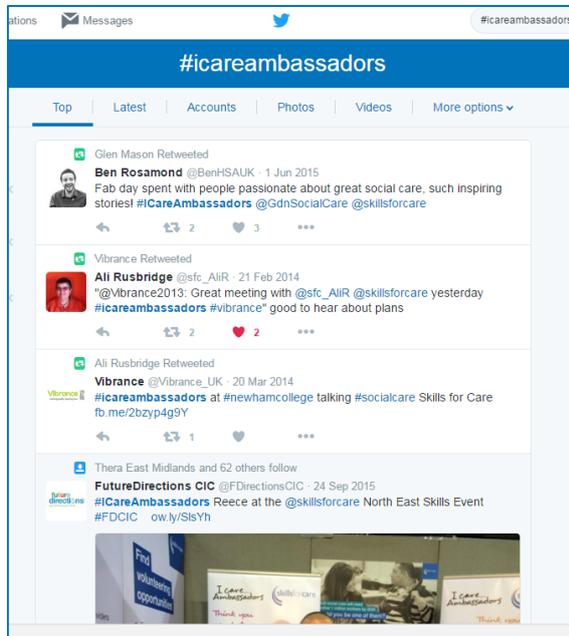
To keep updated across your different accounts try using a social media management tool which will allow you to monitor and analyse online conversations across your social media channels. This software will make it easier to plan your activity each day, allowing you to schedule your posts to be sent across the day.



Hoot suite is a useful software which can be used across a number of social media accounts, for more information go to [www.hootsuite.com](http://www.hootsuite.com)

## 2. Use hastags

Hash tags are a growing trend which allows you to categorise your post. Using the # symbol before a relevant keyword or phrase (no spaces) as part of social media post will group that post with others using the same hash tag key word.



For example using #icareambassadors in a tweet would result in your tweet being grouped alongside other tweets using #icareambassadors. This makes it easier for the audience to find all the information which is relevant to *I Care...Ambassadors*.

Hash tags are mainly used on Twitter and Facebook.

## 3. Plan social media posts

To ensure that you are making the most of your individual accounts and that you are sending the right messages to your audience, spend some time at the start of each week to plan your forthcoming social media activity. Think about what you have coming up that week and how you would like your audience to engage with you.

## 4. Don't try and do everything

With the best will in the world nobody has time to do everything and anything. Think carefully about how much time you'd like to dedicate to social media activity and what you'd like to achieve before signing up to lots of different accounts.

Start out with one or two accounts - Facebook and Twitter are probably the easiest to build up your confidence. If and when you are ready to take on additional accounts do so but it's more beneficial to have one or two accounts which you can afford to engage with on a regular basis rather than 4 or 5 accounts which become neglected. Stick to the channels which best suit your business and don't feel pressured to sign up to the latest trend each month.

## 5. Use pictures



Pictures and images are a great way of making your social media posts stand out. When you only have a small amount of text to work with and with competition of posts from other people on the same news feed its important to grab the attention of the audience. People love pictures and are more likely to engage with you if upload an image with your post.

## 6. Ask questions

People love to give an opinion which is why you are more likely to receive a response from the audience to your post if you ask them a question. Sometimes we can spend too much time overloading people with information when it would be more useful to get their opinion.

You could try something like 'What did you think of our #icareambassadors event in London today?' or 'Tell us about someone who loves working in #socialcare'

## 7. Review your activity

To make sure you are making the most out of your social media, review your activity on a regular basis. Look at which posts have had the most engagement, whether your followers are linking, commenting on or sharing your posts. This will help you decide what works best with your audience and help to inform the sort of information you post in the future.



You can track your Facebook and LinkedIn activity from your main account. Twitter analytics is a separate website to track your tweets.

## 8. Learn the terms and conditions

Each platform has its own unique terms and conditions and it's important that you are familiar with the rules and etiquette of each platform to make sure your account isn't deactivated.

For example, Facebook has a special program when it comes to promoting products and services which you will need to be aware of as they will regularly monitor your activity.

## 9. Take responsibility

It's important that someone takes responsibility for your social media activity. Everyone can chip in with ideas and posts however having someone to oversee the accounts daily, even if it's just twice a day will help to ensure your accounts are being utilised and engagement with the audience is being maintained.

## 10. Post at different times in the day

Everybody is different when it comes to social media. Working patterns, lifestyles and type of job are just some of the factors which will influence when an individual will check their social media accounts. Try posting at different times of the day to find out when your audience is most likely to respond to your post.

Facebook tells you when most of your followers are online.

