How to Make Digital Media Work for You

Social media is a free tool that provides you an opportunity to engage in conversations and build relationships with your fans and followers. You can communicate to stakeholders, volunteers, parents, 4-H members and build support of your program by using social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube and blogs). Social media creates visibility and credibility for you, the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and Oklahoma State University.

The information below may help answer initial questions to give you the confidence to develop a professional and meaningful presence on social media.

How to get started
If you are new to social media, take it slowly at first. Choose a couple of platforms to dive into like Facebook or Twitter. Follow the site’s instructions for setting up an account. When choosing the name for your account, consider what your fans will be searching for, such as “(insert county name) OSU Cooperative Extension Service.” Make sure to include the OCES branding standards for cover photos and profile photos. Remember to be professional because you represent OCES and OSU.

Follow the examples of others
Once you have your accounts set up, it’s time to start following others. More than 75 percent of OCES offices have a Facebook account. Go ahead and “like” their page and check out what they are posting. This will help you get a feel for how you can use this platform for your county. You can follow DASNR on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest. Make sure to follow Oklahoma State University on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, as well.

What to post
You can utilize social media for posting meeting reminders, deadlines, events, contest results, community involvement, photos, links and videos. Offer information that is valuable to your followers. A great way to spread the word about Oklahoma State University’s research efforts is posting a link to fact sheets. If you keep a call log, you know what kind of questions you are getting from season to season. We want to promote a positive image of DASNR and Human Sciences. In addition, many news reporters and editors monitor social media for leads on stories. Thus, social media can be a way for you to build relationships with media professionals.

Best practices

- Make sure your posts are complete as possible (consider the who, what, when, where, why and how information).
- Engage with your audience. Ask questions and vary your posts to keep your followers interested. Don’t be afraid to be creative, entertaining and helpful.
- If a fan or follower has a question in a comment or sends a private message, try to answer it promptly. If you don’t know the answer, let that person know
that you are looking into it for them. Followers want to know they are being heard.

- Respect copyright laws, if it’s not your image or you are unsure of the source, don’t post it.
- Send followers to your website for more information (calendar of events, contest rules, contest entry forms).
- Create a content calendar. Consistency is key. Make sure you have your message being communicated to the public regularly.
- Consider adding hyperlinks to your social media platforms in your email signatures.

We are here to help
Once you establish a social media presence, notify Lindsey Davidson with OSU Agricultural Communications Services. We can help you promote your efforts. If you have any questions along the way, feel free to contact Lindsey at 405-744-1884 or lindsey.davidson10@okstate.edu.