

Social Media “How-to” Guide

Why is social media utilization important?

In order to improve patient care, the knowledge we learn must be **shared** with the patient population. Social media plays an integral role in spreading this information. As student pharmacists we value our patients. To provide the best services we must value the usefulness of social media.

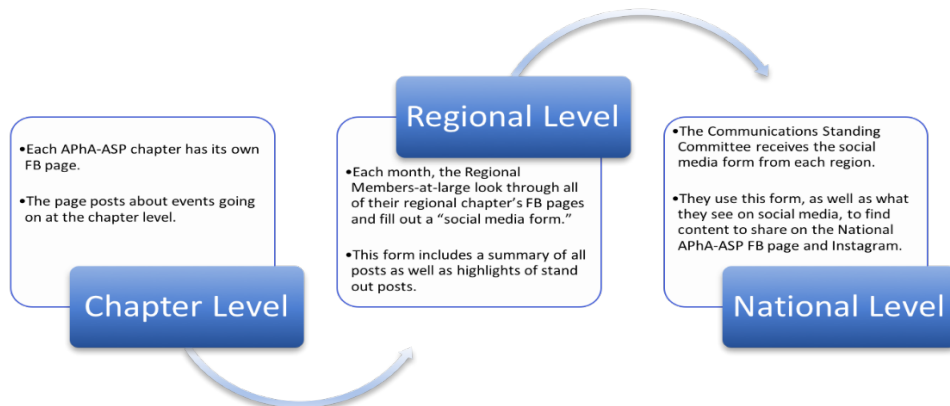
Your APhA–ASP Regional Members-at-large serve to provide chapters with the information necessary to succeed. This is because we take pleasure in seeing all of the great work the student pharmacists of this Academy do. We want these efforts to have the greatest outreach attainable. This guide was created because we believe you are serving in this Academy for the same reasons: to improve patient care, and to envision and advance the future of pharmacy.

In this guide, you will find:

1. A breakdown of the chapter, regional, and national communications structure.
2. How to take social media posts from okay to **great**.
3. Ways to find what does and doesn’t work for your chapter’s Facebook page.
4. Content to share during breaks and/or slow periods with minimal events.

Chapter, regional, and national communication breakdown

How does the APhA–ASP National Standing Committee on Communications find content to share from chapters all over the country on the Academy’s Facebook page? It starts with YOU! Regional and national officers rely on the content posted on chapter pages to highlight events. The graphic below explains how your post goes from the local to the regional to the national level!



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When the APhA–ASP Regional Members-at-large and Standing Committee on Communications members look at posts, there are certain ones that ***stand out***. These usually include high-quality photos or videos, a clear explanation of how the event impacted patients or members, and graphics instead of just words when possible. Making sure that your chapter’s account is a page and not a group is also vital in assuring that your posts reach the most people.

How can my chapter take our social media posts from okay to GREAT?

Sometimes posting on social media may seem challenging, but there are steps to take that can increase your chapter’s following and make your posts engaging and recognized by regional and national officers.

1. Create a short and catchy headline. This should be one sentence, something to draw the reader in and engage them with the post.

Include a video, picture, or link with your post. It is easy to skip by a post that is entirely words. “A picture is worth 1000 words” and that definitely holds true when it comes to posting on social media. www.canva.com is a great and *free* site to make graphics and pictures.

2. Tired of seeing pictures as you scroll through your timeline? Videos are a great way to engage your audience and break up the monotony of social media. BONUS: If the video does not need sound to portray a clear story, it is easier for a user to watch if they are in a setting where having a video play out loud would be inappropriate.

3. Use a national hashtag or start your own hashtag! This is a great way to engage members and create unity within APhA–ASP.

4. Make it fun. Have your posts be intriguing and entertaining. Include real people and real stories to personalize each post.

Utilizing breaks as a time to practice/finding what works and what doesn’t for the chapter

Summer and winter breaks are great times to experiment and practice with social media! You can utilize this time during breaks to see what works and doesn’t work for your chapter and your social media followers.

1. Is there a certain type of post that engages your followers the most? Try out videos, photos, infographics, and text to see what yields the best response.
2. Is there a certain time or day of the week that results in significantly more engagement? Try posting at various times to determine what works best for your social media followers.

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3. Use Facebook’s “Insights” data analytics feature to best answer the above questions so that you can maximize your impact.

There are a number of things you can look at within this feature, but one of the most valuable features is within the “Posts” tab. Here, you can see when the majority of your followers are online. You can examine post by post to see what reached the most people so that you can formulate a better idea of what truly works best for your followers.

How to engage members during school breaks or periods with minimal events

Even when class is not in session or your chapter is not holding many events, there are tons of ways to engage members! Here are a few suggestions on content to post to help your chapter get started.

1. Share content from other Facebook pages.
 - Follow other APhA–ASP Chapters and share their posts.
 - Share posts from the national APhA and APhA–ASP Facebook pages.
 - Share posts from the IPSF Facebook page
 - Follow pharmacy-related pages and share their articles that are topical and pharmacy-specific. Examples include *Pharmacy Today* and IDstewardship, Antibiotic Stewardship & Pharmacy Education

2. Keep up-to-date on the latest *Student Pharmacist* magazine issue and share articles that you think your members would benefit from reading. Links to articles are found on <http://www.pharmacist.com/publications>.

3. Find creative ways to recognize current and former chapter members.
 - Member spotlights: If one of your chapter members is going above and beyond while school is not in session, it is important to recognize their hard work.
 - Officer spotlights: This is a great way to introduce your new team to your members/followers.
 - Post about outstanding members from previous years: include what recent graduates are doing now (residency, job, fellowship, etc.). Reach out to final-year student pharmacists on rotations and highlight what they are doing.

4. Do Throwback Thursdays (#tbt) and Flashback Fridays (#fbf) of events that your chapter is particularly proud of, as this is a great way to highlight an event that wasn’t posted about during the school year.

5. Post reminders about upcoming regional and national meetings. It is never too early to start promoting MRM in the summer months!

6. Social media campaigns to bring awareness to certain diseases and causes

(<https://healthfinder.gov/NHO/nhoyear.aspx?year=2017>).

- Share infographics and statistics.
- Encourage members to participate by sharing posts, creating educational posts themselves, creating a social media challenge, and more. Be creative!
- Include the Patient Care Vice-President and chairs when possible.

7. Start an “Embrace Your Calling Social Media Challenge.” Encourage your members to use the hashtag #mycallingis or #embraceyourcalling in order to start living the presidential theme. Think of a unique and creative way to award student pharmacists who participate!