

SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

Introduction

Social media is a fantastic way of connecting with members in your region, sharing updates and information, and creating a sense of community.

This document includes guidance on best practice, as well as some tips and advice to help you grow and maintain your social media presence.

The most important thing to remember is that the content you post, like, share and retweet on social media reflects back on you, your regional Centre and CIWM as a whole, so it is important to ensure that you use these channels responsibly and in a professional manner.

Sharing via Twitter

You can connect with CIWM on Twitter about relevant content using the handle @CIWM. Incorporating “@CIWM” in your tweets will alert us to something you’ve posted which you think is relevant to us and will give us the opportunity to either like or share it to our audience.

Here are a few helpful tips for sharing your content on Twitter:

- **Keep it short**

A concise Tweet makes an impact. Keep each Tweet focused on one specific message rather than trying to communicate multiple things. You can include a link to a blog post or website if you have a longer message to convey. Please see the ‘Links’ section below for more information about including links in your Tweets.

- **Use visuals in your Tweets**

Adding a bold image, video, or GIF to your Tweets adds a touch of personality and leads to higher engagement rates. In fact, people are three times more likely to engage with Tweets that contain videos and photos. See the ‘Images’ section below for information about how to source images for your Tweets.

- **Incorporate relevant hashtags**

Hashtags are a powerful tool that allow you to expand your reach and tap into relevant conversations. Focus on keywords that are relevant to your business. Best practice guidance recommends using no more than two hashtags per Tweet and, where possible, including the hashtags in the main body of your posts to avoid exceeding the character limit.

- **Ask questions and run polls**

Asking questions is an effective way to interact with your audience, bring readers into the conversation, and understand people’s opinions. Tweet open-ended questions or use Twitter polls to survey on specific topics.

- **Curate and connect with Retweets and replies**

Retweeting relevant content and replying to Tweets are great ways to maintain a robust Twitter presence. Positive member feedback, helpful articles, and messages that align with your authentic voice are all impactful content to Retweet. When in doubt, remember this

rule of thumb: your Retweets reflect back on your regional Centre - and CIWM as a whole - and should align with our overarching purpose and values.

- **Tell your audience what to do next**

If you would like your Tweets to inspire your followers to take action, you must make it clear what it is that you want them to do. The best way of doing this is to include a clear call to action, such as 'For more information, visit *[link]*', which points them in the right direction.

People love to talk to organisations directly on Twitter. Be responsive to any questions, comments, and criticisms that come your way. To avoid long exchanges, switch to Direct Messages to resolve any complex issues. You can now include a deep link in a Tweet that displays a "Send a private message" call-to-action button to enable customers to send you a Direct Message.

Don't forget to tag relevant individuals and organisations in your posts where appropriate. If you are posting about a collaboration with a business or organisation, for example, you should tag them in your Tweet as this may prompt them to like and/or Retweet it.

Sharing via LinkedIn

You can connect with CIWM on LinkedIn by becoming a member of the CIWM LinkedIn page or by following the Circular LinkedIn group.

LinkedIn provides a great platform for its members to share their professional expertise, experiences, and anecdotes with their connections, the larger LinkedIn community, and people who are not within the LinkedIn network.

Here are some suggestions on how you can engage your audience on LinkedIn:

- **Directly mention people**

Invite people to participate in your conversations by @mentioning them in your post. This helps your post get shared and seen by people you want to hear from.

- **Include rich media such as photos and/or videos in addition to text**

Posts with images or rich media draw people in and bring your post to life. See the 'Images' section below for information about how to source images for your Tweets.

- **Ask for responses and feedback**

Engage your network by asking a question or by sharing a point of view. Respond to commenters and engage with others' posts with a comment or share to drive conversation.

- **Add hashtags to topic tag your posts**

Use a # to indicate what your post is about. Hashtags are searchable and help your content get discovered.

Uniformity

When setting up a Twitter account or LinkedIn group for your Centre, it's important to adhere to the guidelines set out by CIWM to ensure there is uniformity and consistency between accounts.

This means using the correct centre logo for a profile and banner picture and that these are the correct sizes and quality.

CIWM HQ can help provide you with these logos and images. We can also add you to our list of 'Affiliated pages' on LinkedIn so that our followers can easily find you.

Images

Including images in your social media posts is an excellent way of ensuring that your content stands out in a crowded newsfeed. Tweets that include images, for example, are three times more likely to be seen than those that don't.

Some key elements to consider when choosing an image are:

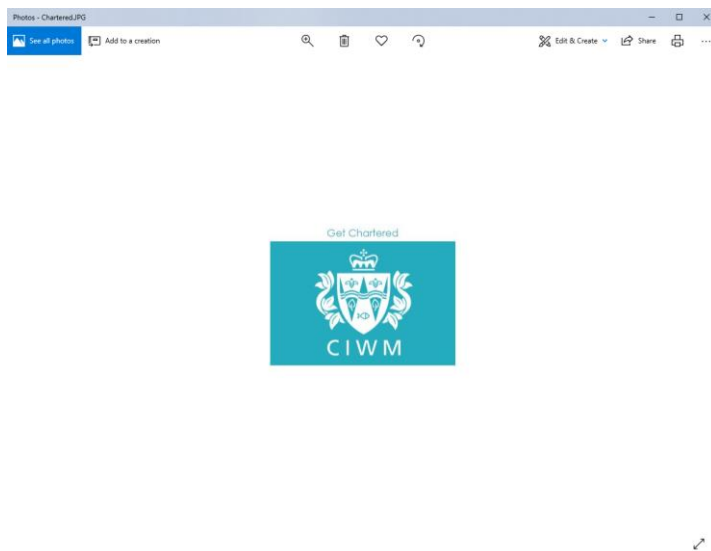
- **Relevance:** does the image relate to/reflect the topic of the post?
- **Quality:** is the image clear and does it look professional?
- **Frequency:** have you used the image before and, if so, have you used it recently?
- **Size:** is the image a suitable size?
- **Copyright:** do you have permission to use the image?

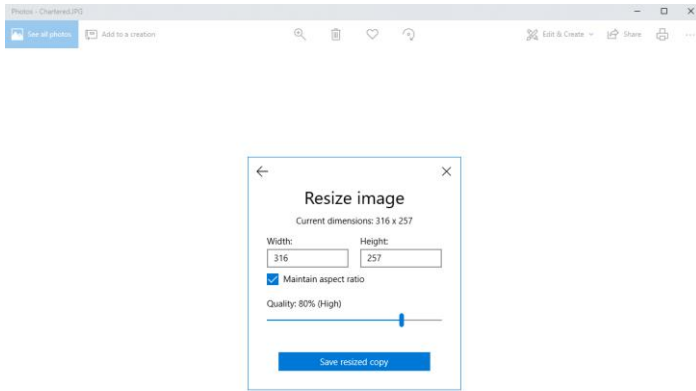
Image size

The general rule is that the width of the image should be twice the height of the image. The ideal image size for social media is 1024px (w) x 512px (h).

Resizing an image is quick and easy. Simply open the image using the Windows 'Photo' tool, click the three dots in the top right corner of the window, and select 'Resize'. In the 'Resize' box, select 'Define custom dimensions', enter the dimensions that you would like the image to be, and click 'save resized copy'.

It is a good idea to check that resizing the image has not compromised the quality as some images can become pixelated when increased in size.



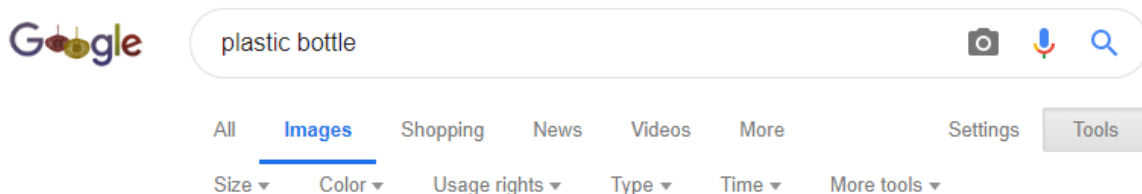


Sourcing images

There are several ways that you can find images to include in social media posts.

If you would like to post about CIWM products or services, such as membership, events, training courses, Circular or Circular Online, please contact our marketing team (marketing@ciwm.co.uk) who will be able to supply relevant images.

You can also source images by running an image search in Google. To do this, simply search for an image in the usual way and click the 'Tools' button below the search bar. From the 'Tools' toolbar, click 'Usage rights' and select 'Labelled for reuse'. The image search will then update to show only images that can legally be reused.



Links

Creating short, trackable links is a great way of directing your followers to a relevant source for further information and will also give you some insight into their level of engagement with your content.

www.bitly.com is a useful tool which allows you to create short links that won't use up too much of your character allowance. Bitly links can be edited using the 'customise back-half' function, making them more relevant to the content of your post, and this has been shown to improve click rates.

Scheduling

One of the most vital aspects of social media is consistency and it is important to ensure that you are posting, sharing, liking and retweeting regularly to keep your followers engaged. While it can take a lot of work to maintain your social media presence, there are tools available to help you.

Scheduling your posts in advance is one way to ensure that your accounts remain active without having to spend time on it each day. Tools such as www.tweetdeck.twitter.com and www.hootsuite.com allow you to schedule posts which will automatically go live on your chosen date and time.

Here are some useful statistics to consider when planning and scheduling your social media content:

LinkedIn

- The recommended frequency for posting is once per day.
- The most effective times to post are before the work day (8-9am), at lunchtime (midday) and after the work day (5-6pm).
- The best days of the week to post are Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Twitter

- The recommended frequency for posting is up to 15 times per day.
- The most effective times to post are at midday, 3pm and between 5-6pm.
- The best day of the week to post is a Wednesday.

Further Information

If you have any questions or would like any further guidance with regards to social media, please don't hesitate to contact Gemma Burnie (gemma.burnie@ciwm.co.uk) or Darrel Moore (darrel.moore@ciwm.co.uk).

Useful Links

- LinkedIn content best practice: <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/92835>
- Getting started with content on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/100132>
- Posting and sharing content on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/434>
- Bitly: <https://bitly.com>
- Tweet Deck: <https://tweetdeck.twitter.com/>
- Hootsuite: <https://signuptoday.hootsuite.com/pro-uk-branded/>