

Getting Started with Social Media

1. Understand our goals

Before jumping in to social media for your branch, spend time determining what you want to accomplish. Understanding this will help you choose the appropriate tool or tools, create relevant content and understand what the best way to reach your target audience is.

Can Assist's goals for social media are:

- To build awareness and communicate our key messages
- To build a trusted community
 - o Provide a forum for our volunteers and clients to network, to organise, to communicate and share their experiences
 - o Provide a platform for announcements about sponsors/partnerships, events, case studies, media coverage, relevant articles, videos and photos
 - o Provide a forum for rural cancer patients to engage with Can Assist

Our target audiences are:

- o Can Assist members & potential members
- o Rural cancer patients
- o Local community groups, including local media, businesses and community services
- o Youth within the community

2. Create a strategy

The more work you do on the front end, the more likely you are to create a successful social media presence. Define what you hope to accomplish, with whom you wish to engage, and what content you wish to share first, and then begin exploring social media tools.

3. Identify a coordinator

Determine who will be the primary person responsible for updating and monitoring your page. Ensure they have the time to check in on the site at least once a day. This does not need to take up a significant amount of time, but successful social media sites are updated frequently, enable easy engagement with viewers and adjust in response to timely events and problems. Assign and train a backup/s for this person.

4. Listen

All social media platforms have their own standards, styles and expectations. By becoming a consumer of social media well before you become a producer, you will learn how these communities work, what content is of most interest, what other organisations are talking about your topic, etc. Spending a good amount of time on this step will help you better plan what unique contribution your voice can have.

5. Create your Facebook page within Can Assist guidelines

It is vital that Branches follow these specific instructions when setting up their page to ensure consistent branding. If you do not have a copy of the Can Assist Brand Standards, please contact the Marketing & Communications Coordinator.

Branches are to set up a public 'page' only. Facebook 'Groups' will not be accepted.

Note: You must have a personal account on Facebook before you are able to set up a branch page.

Can Assist Sydney Office is to be notified of the branch member/s assigned to looking after branch social media sites, along with their contact details.

6. Experiment

"Like" the official Can Assist Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CanAssistNSW1> and any other Can Assist branch pages, and ask them to like your page in return. Build out your Facebook page and spend time populating it for several weeks, sharing it with a small group who can provide comments. Have the site up and running well before you plan to launch it so you can become comfortable with maintaining it.

7. Launch

You're ready to communicate! Use traditional means, such as email lists, and notices to your members, volunteers and networks, to notify your potential audiences that you have a social media presence. Also, notify others with social media presences and similar interests that your site is live. Include easy-to-find links to your social media presence on your website.

8. Adjust

Once your site is up and running, you will find some content is popular, some is ignored, and some is just plain cumbersome. All social media tools come with easy to use tracking tools, so you can see which posts are viewed and shared most, which generate comments, etc.

9. Tell Us About It

Can Assist has a broad audience of contacts keeping in touch with us via social media. Let us know what you are doing so we can help expand your reach by sharing it with these individuals, and also to make sure we are aware of the news and developments your are sharing with your audiences. We can all learn from each other, but it's easy to slip into a vacuum when working on your own.

Best Practices for a Successful Social Media Presence

Branding

Contact the Can Assist Marketing & Communications Coordinator to obtain your Can Assist Facebook logo. This logo has been created to ensure correct identity and branding. It is for use only on your Facebook page as your profile image. If you already have a Branch Facebook page, please replace your current profile images with this branding.

Your profile on social media sites must be consistent with the Can Assist website and other Can Assist publications. Profile information may be obtained from the Marketing & Communications Coordinator.

Creating Local Content

Encourage your members and their family members and friends to share or request local branch content. These might include inspiring local stories, "thank you's" to local businesses,

promoting upcoming branch events and activities and promoting the activities of other local community groups. The most successful social media is generous and inclusive. Tell people at your events that photos will be posted on the branch Facebook page. Try to make your updates on a regular basis – keep an even pace. There is no point starting with loads of new content and then dropping off. You want people to keep coming back.

Keep it engaging

If you just post news you don't know how many people are reading your page. Encourage some feedback – eg. "Please like this post" or ask a question: "*What do you think?*" Get people talking! Encourage your community to post their stories on your site. Remember social media is a two way conversation – you will need to be responsive to comments.

Monitoring

Once you go live you must be prepared to monitor your social media content on a regular basis. This job can be shared across a few volunteers who are familiar with Facebook. If a negative comment is made on your page, it will be most appropriately handled by a clear and swift response on the same day from a designated branch representative. If you are in any doubt as to how to handle a negative comment please ring the Marketing & Communications Coordinator or email socialmedia@canassist.com.au. If the comment is simply a service complaint, a typical response could be: *Thank you for your comments. Please contact our Contact Assist on (insert phone number) who will be happy to attend to this issue for you.*

Be active

Social media presences require diligent care and feeding. If you do not have the time or resources to check in on these sites at least a few minutes each day, and to post fresh content several times a week, reconsider jumping in to social media at this time. Your site is only as interesting as your last post – if that post is several months old, visitors will consider it mothballed.

Be a valued community member

Don't just talk about your branch – share the best information you find from trusted sources outside of Can Assist. This will increase the value of your site and also will ensure you are a valued member of the community and are not just tooting your own horn.

If you have any questions about setting up a Can Assist Branch Facebook page, please contact the Marketing & Communications Coordinator.

Ph: (02) 8217 3400 or 1300 226 277

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