



Halton Hills

**CULTURAL ROUNDTABLE**

Helping culture grow

## Social Media for Events

### *the basics*

by Kate McGowan

Social Media as a topic is almost limitless, but here are some pointers to make your first event a success. Have fun, and good luck!

### *Always*

Know your event inside out: dates, venue, times, guest speakers, headliners etc  
Have organizer contact info and how to reach them before and on the day of the event if you need them.

Ensure you are included in meetings, emails and planning documents.

Advise team members: "If I know about it, I can promote it for you!"

Agree how the event is to be promoted and what success looks like.

### *Early on*

Choose a hashtag, e.g. #RTH2016, for the event and use it EVERYWHERE.

Encourage others to use it too.

Identify the most important features and capture them first. If, for example your headline act takes place at night and lighting is poor, capture a short interview with them earlier in the day or before the event.

Contact people you plan to cover in your SM content - get a quote or photo of them as a teaser. Always ask them to spell their first, last and organization name so you have it correct, and ask them for any web addresses, hashtags etc.

Ensure that any landing site/video/channel has the content you are referring to - esp if an external site that you do not control.

Create an image bank on your device images from the previous year's event so you have them on hand. No good pic of the highland dancers? Upload one from the image bank!

Establish facts from Organiser:

Does the site have a base for you to use? With power and wifi? If not, ensure you have mobile charging opportunities or multiple devices and sufficient data allowance. Warn organizers that you may need help with the cost if you exceed your plan.

Visit the site in advance and meet the organizer. Ask if you can have an ID tag, backstage pass etc if needed.

Ask the organizer for names and contact info of key players so you can interview ahead of time.

Create a highlight video of last year's event to engage audience.

Remember your intended audience - think of tone and images that will appeal to them.

Add social media logos and event hashtag to EVERYTHING, eg: website, media releases, eblasts, advertisement, print and broadcast media, media kits and releases, tickets, programmes, printed material, signage, t-shirts etc

Ask organizer if there is budget for social media promotion, e.g. Facebook ads, which reach new likely event attendees.

Ensure that all social media accounts are content rich prior to the event date - e.g. have map, event date and hours, teaser content, where to buy tickets, if tickets are available at the gate, any info line to call, etc.

Ensure all digital assets are in the correct format (typically jpg rather than PDF/TIFF/GIFF) and suitable size. Most social media channels have file size limit and not all will convert larger files automatically. Be mindful of this for speed and data allowance if not using free wifi.

## ***1-2 weeks before***

Look at the event and plan what you can cover - plan where you need to be when, esp if a big site.

Plan your "After the event" content, so that after a long day you can simply upload previously branded, templated and written pages freshened with the best image of the day.

Check other media, e.g. website to ensure up to date, esp if driving traffic to it.

## ***The week before***

Pack a backpack with chargers, extension cables, memory stick or dropbox account, and a list of all passwords to social media accounts in case you unexpectedly have to use another device. Ask organizer if there is any lockable storage onsite for laptops etc.

Check other media, e.g. website to ensure up to date, esp if driving traffic to it.

## ***The day before***

Pack your bag the night before, for a quick, calm start to the day.

If an outdoor event, check the weather forecast and pack appropriately!

Ensure you have full charge on all devices. Close battery hungry apps for best battery life on the day (eg GPS, wifi and bluetooth if not needed)

Check other media, e.g. website to ensure up to date, esp if driving traffic to it.

## ***On the day of the event***

Keep a running order of the day at hand and your plan for post priorities.

If possible introduce yourself before photographing/filming, and that you are part of the organizing body.

If images/performances are subject to copyright, get permission before use. Just ask.

Try to stop at intervals and review your posts - it's easy to get carried away and go off topic.

Ask the organizer to produced branded waivers saying that images may be used for social media.

Ensure organizers can contact you on the day (via cell, sms, email if they need to use social media in a pinch - a lost child, pet, or worse, a more serious emergency. Ask the organizer for their plan for such eventualities and how you can help.

## ***After the event***

Upload your pre-prepared image and content.

Ask visitors to upload their images or set a competition for the best image.

Announce the date of next year's event

Post results e.g. which pipe band won the competition, etc

Include organizer contact info for any follow up.

Recruit participants for the next year and link to mailer web form (eg constant contact form on HHCR website)

## ***Links:***

<a href="http://www.facebook.com">www.facebook.com</a>	<a href="http://www.instagram.com">www.instagram.com</a>	<a href="http://www.twitter.com">www.twitter.com</a>	<a href="http://www.hootsuite.com">www.hootsuite.com</a>
<a href="http://www.snapchat.com">www.snapchat.com</a>	<a href="http://www.tumblr.com">www.tumblr.com</a>	<a href="http://www.youtube.com">www.youtube.com</a>	<a href="http://www.vimeo.com">www.vimeo.com</a>

## ***Further reading:***

**Social Media Examiner: 16 ways to use social media to promote your event**

<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/use-social-media-to-promote-your-event/>

16 tips to bear in mind

**Adweek: How to use Social Media to Optimize your event**

<http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/social-media-event-promotion/614731>

Includes a handy timeline planner.