

**2016-04-06-15.04-How-to-Increase-Membership-Engagement-with-Social-Media**

[Start of recorded material at 00:00:00]

Amy: - right when those questions come up. So just to make sure that everybody's chat box works, please go give it a little quick test with a hi or a hello or your favourite little welcome message just so I can make sure everybody knows where they're going and how to, how to engage. Don't all go at once.

Lori: It's looking good. A lot of people said hi.

Amy: Alright, okay, great. So let's get started. We, like I mentioned there's a lot to cover and I'm going to go probably way faster than I would prefer and maybe even faster than you would prefer. But all throughout I've got some links to templates and resources so that you can continue to work on some of the pieces that we cover today. And I am always happy to answer questions from folks or feel free to reach out on email or Twitter whatever that is. I'm totally here to be a resource for all of you.

So this first slide I put up because it is purposely like overwhelming and a great illustration of how I think a lot of folks often feel about trying to create a strategy around social media. It just feels like there are so many numbers and things popping up and different websites and all of these different requests coming in from different staff in our organization about what we could be posting. And I want to focus in on creating purposeful content and engagement with our members. If that can be our lens I think we set ourselves up for making some really good decisions instead of feeling that like hamster wheel feeling of like there's always more social media networks and there's always more websites and we just need to be everywhere. We can get off the hamster wheel and just say we are making decisions about really great engagement with our members and that's, that's where we're going to focus today.

So to think about that I want to start with a bit of a metaphor that I prefer. It helps me think about all of this and you can take it or leave it if it's not a good metaphor for you. But at least for this webinar I think we'll be able to reference this kind of setting. So when I'm thinking about our, you know, at NTEN or another organization that maybe I'm working with if I'm thinking about our whole strategy - social media is a part of that, right but we have website and email, we have all these different pieces, we're thinking about our whole strategy - the metaphor for me is that it's just like throwing a house party.

And, again, maybe you throw house parties differently than I do but at least for the sake of this webinar, you know, when I'm throwing a house party I feel like I spend all day in the kitchen preparing lots of different foods. Getting all things clean and tidy, making maybe some

beverages ahead of time, that kitchen where I have total control I can make as many different types of cookies as I want to, that's our website. We own that space. We can clutter it up, we can keep it tidy, we can do whatever we want in there. We can test out different types of content, all of that is our website.

And before the party starts that's probably where we're spending most of our time because we're preparing. Now once the party starts we got to leave, we got to leave the kitchen, we got to go greet folks at the front door as they're coming in and that's really where we see social media and other parts of the web coming into play. We're leaving our kitchen, we're leaving our space and we're going out to meet folks where they are when they enter the party.

And what's most important when we do that is that we're, of course we're welcoming folks, making them feel good to have come to the party, so that's kind of a key piece we'll re-visit later in the webinar when we're thinking about what content we share and how do we engage, what's the best tone – part of that you can always default to is welcoming folks.

And the other piece that you want to be doing in that time or in that space is noticing where people are congregating. So at my house parties, just to use myself as an example, I obviously work in technology and my husband, he works in theatre. And so when we have a party we've got kind of some very specific but separate groups of folks who often attend. And as we're welcoming folks and telling them to make themselves at home and maybe here's where the food is, etc., they kind of gravitate into different spaces naturally.

And noticing that is important because then we can provide the most appropriate content. If I can see a bunch of technology friends are maybe sitting down on the couch the first available seat as soon as they came in and have all taken out their phones and are typing away, I can provide them with maybe a beverage that encourages them to put their phone down and to actually talk to those around them. Whereas maybe my husband's theatre friends are in another room telling stories, gesturing really wildly. Well, I don't want to give them a beverage and have them spill it everywhere so maybe I deliver the cookies into that room. Something a little bit more manageable for that audience.

So noticing where groups naturally are gravitating we can deliver appropriate content instead of feeling like we're constantly trying to post the same content everywhere. Because it's not the same groups of people everywhere. So speaking of content, of course, we want to make sure that we're creating a space where our members are also able to contribute content, not just us. No one's super excited to come engage with an organization who just constantly says here's our stuff but never wants to share or engage around content that the members created as a community.

And that does not mean that when you create a space for people to contribute content it all has to be just like you would have made it. Perhaps I would not make blue and pink devilled eggs for my own house party but I can importantly create a space so that if there's a member who really wanted to make blue and pink devilled eggs they can do that. And I'm not necessarily saying no, I don't like the way those look I'm saying great, you know, they are edible and they are festive. So I guess it meets our requirements, right. It's not being offensive, it's not against our policies, here's a space where you can contribute that content. And if the rest of the community doesn't really engage with it, it's not, it's not your fault, right. Then you're kind of letting the community decide how to engage with that content but you created the space where that member felt like they could contribute.

And then the last piece that's really important as we're thinking about kind of all across the web are signposts. I grew up out in the country in Oregon and you always knew that somebody was having a birthday party because you would see on the main highway there'd be some balloons and then you'd turn off onto the country highway and there'd be some more balloons. And then you'd turn off onto this gravel road and there'd be some more balloons. And people were just putting those up to make sure folks knew the route to get to the party.

That's the same as all of those profiles we have across the web. We want to make sure that if folks maybe come across us on Facebook to use that as an example because maybe a friend of theirs shared one of our posts and they clicked through to the page that they can see right away how to get back to our website where we know we're in control, right, we have all the content just the way we want it. That they're clicking through and finding our website into appropriate places that help them get oriented.

Not everywhere do you need to have a signpost or a profile that has the most general mission statement and a link to your home page. Oftentimes our home pages are not the best place for somebody totally new to come find us. So thinking about if you know – to go back to that party – that I have a bunch of my technology friends in that living room and I want to give them a certain beverage then I'm telling them "Hey, there's more like this in the fridge." I'm not saying "Hey, come to my address and find more beverages if you want more" or "Hey, did you like these cookies, I put a few more out on the dining table. That's where you can get more like this." So that folks who are seeing and interested in this certain type of content can navigate to where they can find more of that instead of hitting your home page and thinking well now I have to find if there is more of that type of content. Maybe there isn't and it's not even worth looking and you're then leaving people up to try and navigate your home page and your website which oftentimes probably isn't very fulfilling.

So now I want to talk about our first kind of process as a team or as a staff to help you figure out, okay, who are these groups in my community and how do I know if they want cookies or beverages or whatever else. But before I dive into the process and the kind of next steps to create your plan, I just want to pause, Lori, are there any questions or clarifications I can offer?

Lori: Sorry, no, so far, so good. People are wondering what the devilled eggs were but you addressed that.

Amy: Oh, yes, they were devilled eggs. It's a, I would never eat a blue and pink devilled egg but, you know. That member contributed them and we thanked them for them anyway.

Okay, so diving in then to creating a community plan or a community map. I'll bring this chart back up in a few slides but I want to talk through each of these layers. So when you think about your organization, when we say community which often includes our members or is exclusively our members depending on what your organization's kind of set-up may be, that community is defined by the folks who can directly engage with you. We normally think of that in a very lopsided way. We normally think well these are the people we could email or we could send a mailer to or we could call. But what's really important is that they can also talk to us.

So when we're thinking about how we might engage them remembering that we should design with that in mind. We should not necessarily always send our emails with a, you know, generic info@. Maybe it really should come from a person because people want to be hitting reply and engaging on that topic. So these are our folks that we can talk to anytime, nothing's stopping us from talking to them and nothing is stopping them from talking back to us.

Which is very different than network. Community and network are not the same words, that is my, I would love to make sure that everyone knows that. So your network, now these are the folks who are the friends and the family and the co-workers of the people in your community. You don't talk to the network because they're not, they're not on your list, right, they're not in your database, they're not on your Facebook page. You talk to the network by providing a message to your community that they want to share. These are the messages I'm sure even if you haven't maybe used this type of messaging that you have certainly seen it in other organizations.

So these are the kind of messages that say "We're so excited that we have our upcoming gala, we would love for you to invite three friends to come with you." That is a message designed for the network. You're saying "Hey, community member, please as a trusted source on our behalf, send our content to your people." Normally they are a trusted source. I, it's not always the case for me because I get like every

message that my mom receives I think she just forwards to me, like she has some sort of automated forward every email to Amy, so she's no longer a trusted source for those organizations trying to share their messages. But for most people that's a trusted source. I could get a message and say I've never heard of this organization but my friend, Anna, has invited me to come with her, you know, maybe I'll go check it out because I trust Anna and if she's interested in this organization, you know, I want to go see what it's all about.

And then the last ring or layer is often the organization or the one that I feel so many organizations try to talk to first and that's the crowd. This is where you're in a board meeting and you have the board member that says "Well, let's just create a viral video and everyone will donate to us and it's going to be amazing." That's not how it works. We don't talk to the crowd because the crowd is everybody else, we're not connected to them. We can talk to the people we are connected to which is our community. And when someone, something, a message or a blog post or a video or whatever type of content it is, when it's actually out there in the crowd it started with the community and was so relevant to the community and so interesting to the community that they shared it with their network.

And the network said "Oh, yeah, this is really interesting, I just got this from my friend, I'm going to share it too." And as the network layer continues to share it out then we reach out to that crowd. Whatever kind of viral campaign you might think of it has started with creating something that was really great at the community layer, knowing who those community members are and creating content for them that could then be shared out all the way through the network.

So, I just want to pause, Lori, any clarifications before I move on?

Lori: Yeah, just a couple clarifications that, can you just re-cap quickly the difference between network and a community.

Amy: Sure.

Lori: And then how can a start-up get a community is the second question.

Amy: Yeah, great questions. So the community are the folks who are on your list, they are on your Facebook page, you have their email addresses, you have their phone numbers, they come to your events. These are the people that you are connected to. Whereas the network are their friends and family. So I don't have the names and numbers of, you know, all of those other people but I know that I could maybe at my event say I'd love everyone to take two of these invites home with them and share them and now my content has reached the network but I don't have their info until they kind of connect with us if that makes sense.

And as far as building up that community when you're, when you're just starting as an organization I think you really rely on those messages that can get to the network. So if you're starting up and all you have is your board, well making sure that you have some really great content that explains who you are, what your mission is, why you're getting started, maybe what your kind of initial actions will be whether those are maybe events or you're taking on a specific policy, whatever it is that's spurring you to get started with invitations for people to join you. So that those couple folks you already have in your community, maybe only your board members, can start sharing those out other partner organizations, with their friends and family and other events they go to and start bringing people into the community as they sign up directly with you.

Lori: Great. And so one last quick clarification by Willa, so the content you're creating should start with your current community.

Amy: Exactly.

Lori: Like you said you're not trying to reach crowd. Okay, great.

Amy: Yeah. Start with the community that you have. Because if you're designing content for the community that you want but it's not the community you have no one is going to share it. They're not, you're in, they're not in your community yet, right. So you have to design for the community that you have with invitations that maybe say "Hey, existing community we're" – obviously not this language – "Hey existing community, we're so glad that you're all a part of this. We are ramping up efforts on this new policy position and would love to make sure there's folks that have experience with this in the community, who do you know, let's invite them in." But you can't just say "Great now we're releasing all of this content about policy" and that's never been something we've done so we don't have any community members focused on that, it's just not going to go anywhere.

Lori: Okay. Should I ask one more, I think you kind of addressed this – so if you don't have a community yet, if you're brand, brand new organization.

Amy: Yeah.

Lori: Yeah, what would you do?

Amy: So I would say even if you're a brand new organization, you don't have a board, you don't have volunteers, you don't have anything, you still have you. You, member of this webinar are starting this organization, you have friends and family, right, you have, you can talk to that network and invite folks in. And if that's really all that you have you might as well start there. Start with folks where you're the trusted source, right, of that message or invitation to join and get it spreading.

Lori: Sorry, yeah, that's perfect. Let's, let's keep going.

Amy: Okay.

Lori: Great questions everyone.

Amy: Okay, so now, now that we're talking really only about our community for the rest of the webinar we have to figure out, okay within our community at our house party who are those different groups, you know, congregating in different spaces. So the first step is figuring out okay who are these different groups. And sometimes it's super obvious. There are some groups where you look at the community and you say okay I know exactly who's in this group. But there are other organizations or memberships where it feels like as the organization we think well everybody joined for the same reason or everybody's getting the same membership so I don't know how to tell the differences.

And that's where I think doing some surveying of members can be really helpful. Same with adding on if you have a place on your website where people can subscribe to your newsletter putting some non-required - cause you don't want to slow people down from joining the newsletter - but some optional fields that ask people why are you joining, what are you hoping to get out of this membership. Or, you know, depending on what your community is about, you know, putting something up that says maybe what type of job do you have or what type of organization do you work in. So you can start to get a sense of who those groups are because maybe you otherwise don't have a lot of that information.

Your second step then is kind of a two-parter. That first part is figuring out okay what are the goals that that group has and then the other part is what are your goals for that group So it may be, just to use an example, at NTEN we have a whole network of folks who are volunteer organizers for local meet-up groups all over, all over North America. And when we think about them as a group within our community, these organizers, we think okay well one of their goals for being an organizer is that they want that kind of volunteer experience, professional development, that leadership opportunity. But our goal for them is that they're actually directly providing one of our programs, right. So they're fulfilling a huge goal for us so we want to make sure that we're giving them recognition that matches what a critical role they're playing for us.

And then the last step is figuring out those channels. Okay, so if we've got all of these tech folks that came to the party they're in the living room whereas maybe my husband's theatre friends are in the back room talking about theatre, okay, so maybe one of those is actually Facebook and one of those is Twitter, right, as we think about that metaphor applying to social media. So thinking about which of those groups are kind of separate groups but also where do they hang out

online. Because they're probably not all in the same channels all together. Again this is an area where I often get folks saying "Well, I don't know who's in these different places, you know, we already have a Facebook page. How do I know who's there?"

If there's anything that human beings have inside of them it is opinions and they would love to share them with you. So feel free to go ask them on Facebook some of those same questions. Maybe you put up some of those optional fields on your newsletter subscription page, well, use those same questions on Facebook or on Twitter or whatever channels you're maybe already using to say, "Hey who's here? We'd love to see who's here and what kind of content we can best deliver to you. Give us your feedback or answer this question." So you can start to get that kind of data that you need.

So here's just a very simple view of an example but there's a template that you can get, there's a link on the screen so that you can fill out a full community map. It should take far longer than it did to explain it. Here at NTEN we consider our community map a living document that we kind of reference and update whenever needed. And I would say that in this group column on the left I think we have about 36 different groups that we identified. And it may be that a single individual is actually part of two different groups or three different groups because they personally have a number of needs or reasons they came to the community. And then there's other folks who just, are in one group and that's really the only group in the community they're a part of.

So don't be afraid to be really specific in this list of groups because the more specific you are there the more specific you can be with your goals and with their goals to help you understand if you're actually creating content or opportunities or asks that are relevant to that group. Or maybe you identify that they're not very active and it's because you hadn't recognized what their goal was and you weren't giving them appropriate content.

Any questions before we go to the next step, Lori?

Lori: Yeah, Norman here has asked, you know, there's so many groups you can reasonably prepare content for so how do you manage those resources?

Amy: Great. Well, the next section is talking about content so I bet we'll answer more of the question in depth there. But what I would say is what we've identified as we, you know, just to use NTEN directly as an example, a lot of those groups don't necessarily need content frequently. You know, some of those groups, it's more about did they get appropriate content that spoke to the fact that they had donated to us vs. are they getting a weekly newsletter.

So part of being specific with our groups and I think also being specific with the goals can help you say great we're not creating 18 different blog posts a week just to reach all these different groups, it's more what content is even necessary for these different groups. Or back to our devilled eggs, maybe that's a group like our community organizers for example who's actually creating lots of content. Why should we try and create content for them when what they want as a volunteer is to get recognized, right, and have some leadership in the community. Well, great, our content plan can now say let's share their content regularly. Instead of thinking we need to be creating content for them, our content needs to be by them and about them.

Lori: Those are all great tips and that's why [Allory] was asking, sorry, [Dallory], was, you know, how do you actually, if someone fits into multiple groups, how do you kind of clarify the goals or prioritize what your goals should be?

Amy: Yeah, I think for us we are able to in the NTEN example kind of rank those groups. So say somebody just to keep using the examples I've already brought up, say somebody is a community organizer, they're one of our local organizers in our [unintelligible 00:26:04] program and then maybe they're also part of a group that attends our annual conference. Well, their participation in the group as an organizer is more critical than them attending the conference cause the conference is only once a year and they're organizing events every single month.

So we can prioritize, let's make sure we're sharing their content over delivering them content about the conference because that only happens once a year and will be easier to direct. Does that make sense?

Lori: Yeah, I think so and if not, Dallory, feel free to clarify. And then maybe just one last question from Emily, how can you judge how much content to create? For example, if this is tricky, if your current community doesn't use social media but your prospects do, so the people you're trying to reach.

Amy: Cool. Well, let's move on to the content creation plan and then come back to that.

Lori: Sounds good, sorry.

Amy: Okay, cool. Great, okay content. And I think part of this is – and I'm just making assumptions about folks on the webinar – but at least in my experience personally and in other organizations I've worked in oftentimes we are creating content as like maybe one person is creating content and really trying to pull different ideas or, you know, a single photo from somebody that was on a program team but they're not going to write the post and I have to do it. And you just have this back to that hamster wheel feeling of like there's so much content I could

possibly be writing or creating or sharing or posting, how do I manage it all.

So when we're thinking about content and I keep using the word content because I want it to be generic, I don't want to only be talking about blog posts or only talking about videos or photos or something. So really thinking about whatever that content or message is, it is not the goal. The content is not the goal, right, that's why we had goals separate on that community map. What are they, what are those community groups interested in. We didn't say great what kind of blog posts can we give them because that doesn't make any sense.

The pieces that are most connected here are the goals that we have and the people or the groups that they are connected to. The decisions that we make about the content and then the tool, so whether we put it on Facebook or Twitter or whatever, those come based on the people in those groups not because our goal is a blog post. Our goal needs to stay at that really high goal level of providing recognition or showcasing leadership or whatever those goal statements are that we may have for those groups.

So a very quick example for context is an organization here in Oregon where we have kind of just a couple bigger cities and then the rest of the state is very rural, we had an organization based here in Portland that serves the whole state. And they relied on volunteers to deliver kind of first point of contact service in their communities as a, as they helped community members get referral into the services that they needed. So that meant they had to train these volunteers. And they required that the training was happening in Portland which meant, you know, folks that were an eight hour drive away were probably not going to drive eight hours just to volunteer for an organization. And they thought - not making a decision based on the people and the goal but making the decision based on the tools and the content - they said great well we already hold these volunteer trainings so we're just set up a camera and we'll live stream it or we'll record the video.

But, of course, as you can imagine nobody participated, nobody accessed the video to get the training that way because if they had gone back to the people and realized what was going on, a lot of those folks in rural Oregon well their main access point was their phone. So they weren't going to sit and like stream eight hours of video on their phone. I don't think you could pay me enough money - well, probably there's a number in the world of money you could give me to do that, but it would have to be a lot, right. It's certainly not a volunteer opportunity where you want to get trained for eight hours on video on your phone and use up all that data.

So going back to the actual goal which was making sure that these folks could be trained volunteers to provide this first point of contact service and that the people that had primarily phone or tablet devices -

not necessarily lots of like sit down computers I want to watch something for eight hours - that helped them to make a better decision about the content and the tools by saying well yes we have these training programs but they don't need to be watching the video they could just read the materials from the training. And we can put those online in an accessible way where they could read them online they could download them, they could print them, they could do whatever they want to be able to browse or read those materials in the way that makes sense for them. So as soon as they offered that as an option of course the volunteer uptake was huge.

So we have a couple step process that's similar to making the community map and there's an easy template that you can download so that you can work on a content plan with your team as well. The first step is thinking about all these content types. There are a lot of different types of content that you're probably already creating in your organization but when we think of them as what that content is about we start to see how different they are instead of just saying well we have blog posts and we have tweets. Well, that doesn't matter, that's a vehicle for that content but what we want to concentrate on here is what are the messages, what are the actual content types that we have to share.

So these are just some examples on the screen but again I think it's really important to be as explicit as you so can instead of saying - so one of the examples you can see on the screen there is events. So at NTEN we consider that two different types of content. We have an upcoming event, meaning the event hasn't happened yet and then we have event archives meaning the event has already happened because the content is different. You know, after today's webinar Lori could share the slides or the recording or maybe some of the highlights from the chat. But ahead of time she's sharing a registration link and information about what we're going to cover. So being specific can help you then plan for what to do with that content.

Your second piece now just like we did before is talking about goals. Why do we need to have these types of content. This is one of the best exercises to do with a team of people from across your organization so that if nobody can say there's an explicit organizationally important goal for that piece of content I extend the invitation for you to stop creating that content. If it is not justified at a strategic goal level please do not create it because it means it doesn't line up with your community map, right. You don't have a group of people waiting for that content so who is it serving. No one, cause it's taking away your time creating it. Use these goals to help start making some comparisons between the content that makes sense for different groups in your community map. Oftentimes you'll see those goal statements being very similar. So increasing participation maybe helps in your community map because you have a group of volunteers. Great, so you probably want those volunteers participating, etc.

And then your third step are all of the channels that you have access to. And what I think is a really important reminder here is to think beyond your organization. So at NTEN, you know, we have, for example, a funder who gave us a grant for a specific project, a program area. So we list them on our content plan because if we have content, any content related to that program that we're sharing well we want to make sure that that funder is also sharing that content, right. So we have a reminder for ourselves anytime we look at that content plan and see the checkbox, oh, hey, we just posted an update from some of our participants about, you know, maybe their success stories or whatever it might be, I'm going to send that to the funder and encourage them to share it on Facebook as well.

So here's that very simplified version of what the chart is and, again, there's a template online that you can download or make a copy of and work through with your team. But I like Xs and Os. You can use yeses, nos and maybes. You can use green, yellow, red, do whatever you want. But for me this, what we see on our screen here is that we've got an upcoming event, so there's an event, probably a registration link, information about what is going to be covered at that event and the reason that we share that is for visibility at NTEN. Because so much of what we do is online it's important to us that when we have offline events we can promote those and have some visibility that we are an organization, we are not like robots that live inside the internet, right. We are people and an organization and of course we want to increase participation. We want folks to come to that event.

And the Xs and Os mean for sure we're going to put it on the blog. For me that means, you know, the blog is kind of part of your website, it's part of your kitchen, you can do whatever you want. We can have information about last year's event, we can post photos and text, etc. But then we'll post it on Twitter because now we have a blog URL where people can click through and see it cause Twitter we're only going to be able to share so much information. But the newsletter gets a maybe because depending on the event date maybe the newsletter is not going to be a good place for upcoming event but maybe the next row down in this spreadsheet is event archive or post event wrap-up, maybe that goes in the newsletter instead.

Any questions?

Lori: Right. So there's a lot of questions over the goals. And basically how should you go about reviewing what your goals are? So [unintelligible 00:37:23] was asking, you know, should you send a survey or how do you ever determine, Rodney was asking how do you even determine what your community's goals are in the first place?

Amy: Okay, so talking about the community's goals, not content goals.

Lori: Right, I guess so, I mean, I guess if you're trying to create content for your community I guess he's asking, you know, how do you know what's important to them and how do you figure out what they want actually vs. I guess what you want.

Amy: Yeah, great question.

Lori: Yeah.

Amy: I think there are, there are some passive strategies and then there are some direct strategies. So passive strategies that I think are way more valuable than the amount of time or organizations that actually go look at this data but that's just looking at things that you already have access to. Looking at your Google analytics and seeing gosh, you know, a lot of folks that come from our Facebook page actually read our blog posts, but folks who are coming from, I don't know, Twitter, are kind of going to our program pages and looking for a program. What, how can that help us understand what's going on here, right.

So looking at that passive information whether it's Google analytics, it's data from other tools, it's maybe, you know, say you use Bitly like we were using a couple Bitly links here in the slides, looking at who's sharing your links. I think there are a lot of places to get some of that data. But I think asking people is super important. So you can ask them the way I suggested earlier where, maybe it was just on your sign-up page or, you know, posted occasionally on your different channels with a survey. But I think doing annual member surveys is hugely important and that's a great place to say, you know, people don't need to tell you what their Facebook URL is or their Instagram profile is but you could just say as you're asking all other types of membership questions, you know, also where on the web would you like to engage with us or share content. And just let people, you know, maybe check the box next to Facebook and Instagram or whatever different tools you maybe suggest there. But they don't, again they don't give you in their usernames or anything.

But I think getting that regularly and having an open box in the survey, so maybe they check the boxes next to Facebook and YouTube but you didn't list Instagram and they were really using it they could type that in and then you can start to see oh actually a lot of our community members reported that they're using this newer platform, maybe it's time for us to go try it out because our community members are there. You don't need to go use every tool until your community members are there and want your content. You don't get an award for having an empty page on a site that no one uses. So don't ever feel obligated to go spend time creating profiles just to do so. If there's no community members there it doesn't matter why you're there. So instead listen to your community and go to those places where they say now they're hanging out.

Lori: Okay, I think that's great. It's quarter to so I'm going to let you keep going but there's more questions coming in here.

Amy: Okay, great.

Lori: Okay.

Amy: Okay, well, I can be, I can try to go super quick. So I thought it would be helpful to talk really quickly about thinking of these larger goals as we're thinking about measuring our impact and return on investment and all of those different pieces. And I'm going to just go super fast. So we first start all the way up at our mission level. And then think okay so from there what is that engagement strategy or what, or why are we even engaging outside of our website. Thinking about what data is going to help you understand if you're successful.

So here's an NTEN example. So here's NTEN's extremely broad mission statement but I highlighted some of the words that are important for us when we are specifically creating our evaluation around membership and engagement. So we are tracking against all non-profits, we want to make sure we're not focusing only on say environmental organizations or something like that because our mission really covers all. And we want to similarly think about technology broadly, we don't want to just have 80 blog posts on databases because our admission addresses all types of technology.

So going through that we identified three specific goals that we had when it came to engagement. One of those goals is the NTEN reputation, so establishing/maintaining that NTEN is a trusted leader. Again you'll see some of those similar phrases directly or at least ideas from our mission statement reflected there. So what that means as far as the data we actually want to track, again this is a way of avoiding saying when we're reporting on our analytics just saying well we have this many followers. Instead we say well regarding our goal to establish the NTEN reputation as a leader, here are some of the specific data points that touch on all different platforms. Because again we're reporting against a goal instead of reporting against random metrics that these different social platforms just present to us.

And there's a template that I, you know, it's not super exciting but there's a template you can grab so that you at least have a spreadsheet to start working on your own. But again so these on the left in column A where it says be a valuable resource build community and then it says what's your goal that's where it would say establish NTEN reputation. Those are our three categories. And then within there you can start to add the specific data points that are going to help you decide if you really are meeting that goal and are not just convenient.

A couple just to highlight I think that are some that are really influential to us are places that are referring folks to our website. Again

if our website is like our kitchen, our core, we want to know where people are coming in from and who's sending them there. So we'll look through our Google analytics regularly to see if there are specific community members who, say, posted about us on their own website and are sending a lot of traffic so that we can reach out to them and make sure we've commented on that blog post that we are visible there as thanking them and recognizing them because they are already sending so many folks our way.

So I'm just going to keep on going and I'll pause for a second. So the biggest question that I get from folks is we're a small organization we only have three staff or however many staff and I don't have a ton of time to be managing all these different social platforms. So if you have only 30 minutes that could be 30 minutes in a whole week, it could be 30 minutes a day, whatever that is, think about spending your 30 minutes in this priority order.

First if you do nothing else make sure that you spend time listening. There are lots of ways to listen but if you are an organization that isn't listening first and you are just signing on and posting a tweet that says who knows what and you haven't noticed that all of your community members are actually really upset because of something in the news you are going to seem very, very out of touch. So you always want to listen first. One great way to listen first is to make sure you've signed up for Google alerts. It's not fancy, it's not new but it can help you stay on top of so many mentions of your organization that you otherwise wouldn't see.

I always recommend setting up alerts for your organization's name, your executive director's name, common misspellings of your organization's name. So, for example here I've written non-profit technology network instead of NTEN because in case somebody wrote out our name instead of writing NTEN I still want to make sure I get that content.

You also can listen to social platforms even without having a profile there. So maybe you don't have a Twitter account and that's fine but you can still listen on Twitter to see if your community members are there or to see if folks are talking about you as an organization, if they're talking about your content. Maybe they're talking about the mission area that you have. You can listen on different social networks even without having a profile to start establishing or evaluating whether or not you should have a presence there. So this is just a screen shot from Twitter searching for non-profit technology and seeing who's already talking about that.

And then the next piece, so now you've spent some time listening, now you can join. So your next priority is still not creating more content. Your next priority is replying and engaging with people now that you've listened and established kind of what's going on in the

community. So here's an example of going to a blog post where somebody's already talking about something great in our community and leaving a comment. So that as people read those, read this blog post that's getting shared a lot they see a thoughtful reply from the organization.

Also important that part of joining needs to be evaluating those signposts that you have. So, for example, this is a, this is the Twitter bio from NTEN's account so you can see we've listed there specifically the hashtags that we use and that we're following so that as folks see us on Twitter they could also start engaging in those hashtags where there's already existing community.

And then the last step is now creating. So you've, in your half hour spent most of your time listening and then joining and replying to folks, it's only that remaining time that you're going to create content. Again, not because I'm trying to make your job horrible and, you know, you have to create tons of content in a small amount of time but because the most important things for you to do are not create content. There's already lots of content, it's replying, highlighting, re-tweeting, whatever it is that you're listening for and you're seeing in the community and then showing that back to the full community.

There we go. And again, this is where, because the social web is so huge it's really important to have that community map and that content plan in place so that when you come to that maybe only 10 minutes of creating you could say great what's most important is that I post a couple photos on Instagram cause it's our most active community space than to try and, you know, maybe write a full blog post because maybe your community doesn't share blog posts as much.

And just thinking about creating it doesn't always have to be creating original content yourself. Part of it could be creating conversations. So here's just an example assnchat stands for association chat. It's a weekly Twitter chat that happens and hashtag that kind of is in use throughout the week in between those formal chats as well but a space where you can go create conversation without necessarily just saying every week we create a blog post. Maybe every week you want to participate in an active chat and then post a re-cap of your thoughts or the highlights, etc.

So just a few reminders. You're always listening first, that should take the most time. Joining is next and creating is always last. So as you're listening you're consistently listening to maybe you need to update that community plan, maybe you found that there's members in a different social platform, maybe you found that you have members who are really interested in certain topics that previously you haven't covered or addressed. And figuring out who's really participating in those groups. Maybe you can start identifying who those leaders are that really engage the most often in those different channels.

Then when you're joining in this is the place where you are celebrating all of those members, you are sharing their content, maybe you're even identifying folks where you can put their content on your blog and get more content from the community that they want to share. And then lastly creating only where you're adding new value. If there's already content that exists on that topic don't create it again, let your community lead.

So I'm just going to stop, I know that we're getting really close on time but I want to see, Lori, I imagine there's a couple questions we could cover.

Lori: Yeah, first of all I just want to say that was an amazing presentation and there's a lot of people saying the same thing. So thank you.

Amy: [unintelligible 00:51:23].

Lori: So, okay, I think Nicki has a good question here. So she's wondering how much time do you figure out how to invest in new social media outlets? For example, they haven't been on Instagram long but they realize that that's probably where some of their small or core group is. And it feels like they should be spending time there but they, so, but, I guess she's struggling if that's the best place to be for everyone or for all the goals or if that's where people find the right content. So how do you strike that balance?

Amy: Yeah, great question. So what I, a strategy that I like - again especially with organizations where you're small maybe you have a good active community but you as a staff are small. When you start to see like oh yeah there are some folks on Instagram or maybe another, you know, newer platform, I don't really have the capacity myself to go try and force it to happen is I find if there's a community member already using it who like obviously really loves it - especially with Instagram there were definitely those folks who were really into Instagram - and we just reached out to say cool well, you know, as you're sharing content you're a member of this community I'm sure you already do this but maybe use the same hashtag that we use on Twitter, #npotech for non-profit tech. And then even though we didn't have an Instagram account we could start to watch how active folks were that were in our community using that hashtag. Cause again if they're only using Instagram to post photos of their food and we're focused on technology well even if we created a profile they probably wouldn't engage with us anyway, right, cause it's not the right match of content and goal.

But as we started to watch these key community members using it and using the hashtag and seeing that there was real action there that's when we decided to join. Because we knew we could create a profile, we could reach out to those couple folks who were our kind of champions, they would follow us, they would kind of re-share our photos and it would be easier to join in than it would be to have said oh

Instagram's here it looks pretty cool I'm going to start using it and not have any sense of whether people are using hashtags or how are they doing it or what kind of works. Does that make sense?

Lori: Yeah, I believe so. And I hope so for Nicki too. Okay, so one last question, it's a double question by Allison.

Amy: Okay.

Lori: So what questions should she ask leadership when considering what actions her organization should take when joining social media? And following on that how do you start organizing what is appropriate for staff to say on behalf of the organization so they can start doing this reply and celebrating, promoting?

Amy: Yeah, great question, I'm going to start with the second part of the question first. So I think that, you know, all organizations probably or should have an employee handbook that says like here are our policies, these are our vacation days all of that. And we should similarly provide staff with a social media handbook. It doesn't need to be filled with you should never say these things or, you know, as soon as you make a list of don'ts that's all that we can think about posting, you know. So don't try and make a list of things that say all of this is off limits. Instead it should say we bet that you have a Facebook page and every once in a while you might share content, here's how to do that.

Or, if you're on Twitter and you want to engage in the association chat every week here are some ways that we encourage you to do that. So, for example, at NTEN social media handbook we gave a rundown of all of the platforms where NTEN has an actual presence. So Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, you know, places where we have a profile ourselves and we say what we've learned. You know, on Twitter we use these hashtags and on Twitter we see that the posts that get the most action are posts where we've shared actual fact vs. just a link where someone would have to click through and read that post. Like so we give kind of our own internal best practices based on what we've seen or observed or know about these different channels. So staff even if they're brand new to Twitter when they started at the organization and they want to engage they have a sense of how to use the tool and how to engage in that community.

We also have all staff have access to our community map so they know oh the folks that are on Twitter are actually kind of like me they're these groups of people vs. oh the folks that are Instagram are maybe these groups and I'm not really kind of part of those groups so maybe that's not where I'm going to focus my time.

And then the first part of the question, now I forget the first part.

Lori: Well, actually I think we should wrap it up I see people logging off but that last link to your last template was broken so we'll make sure that we get the right one.

Amy: Oh, gosh, perfect.

Lori: But I want to thank you, Amy, because that was incredible. I think that was one of the best presentations I've seen on content and social media, so thank you for coming in.

Amy: Thank you.

Lori: And I believe I'm showing my screen right now so I just, I want to let everyone know that there's still two more days left of this summit and tomorrow, I know a lot of associations are struggling with how to reach millennials. So we have Sarah Sladek joining us and she's the CEO of XYZ University, she's written a book about it. And then the last day we have Robbie Kellman Baxter who's the author of The Membership Economy and she has some fascinating things to say on how to build a really good membership model.

So please do join us, spread the word and thank you again, Amy. Bye, everyone.

[End of recorded material at 00:58:43]