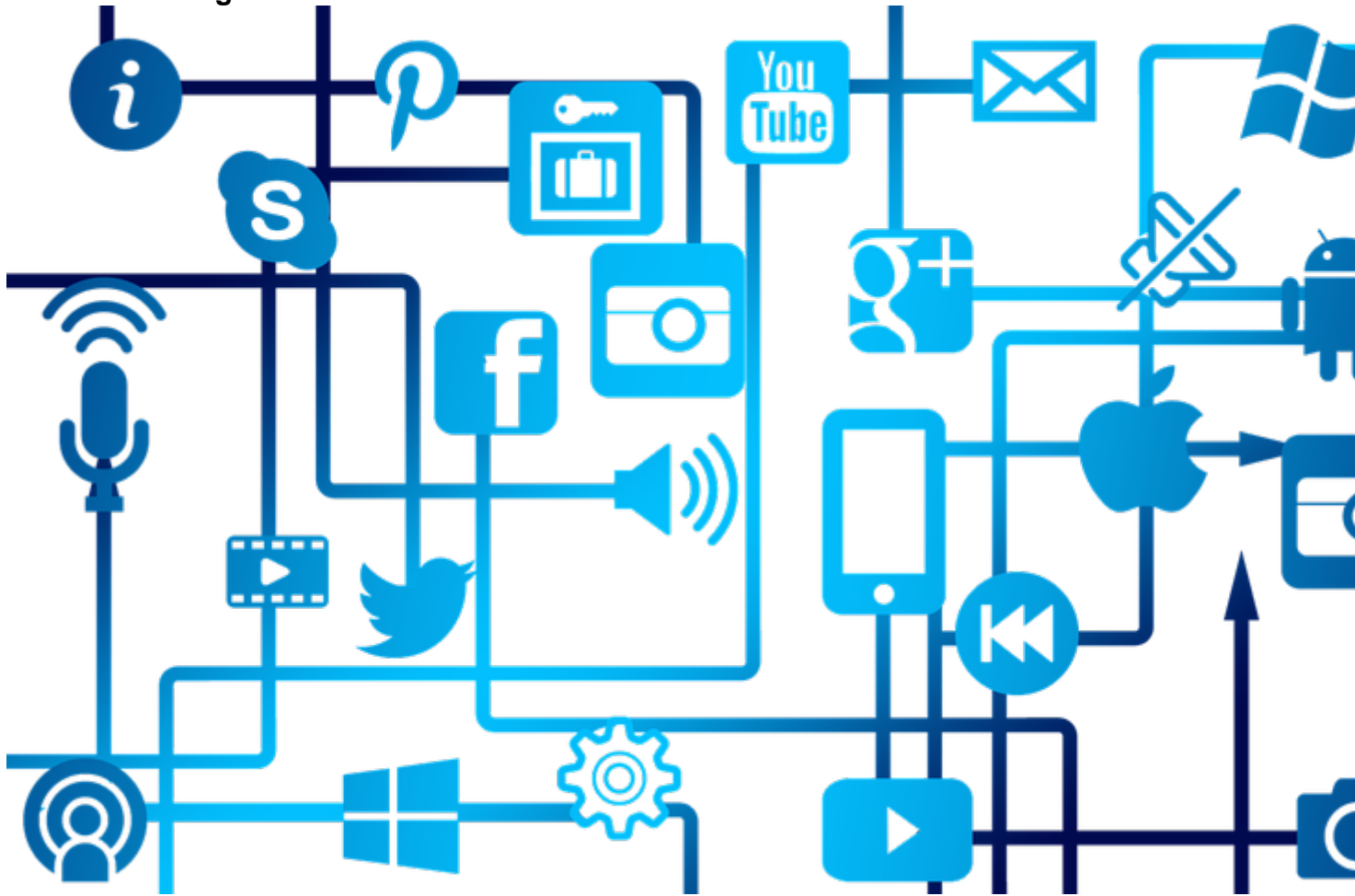


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Aug 18, 2017 by *Soft Power* 30

## Practical Advice from the USC Center on Public Diplomacy <sup>[1]</sup>

At the USC Center on Public Diplomacy (CPD) we research and analyze the ways organizations use social media and digital tools. In our efforts and collaborations, we've identified some top tactics that can benefit any organization.

Most organizations have social media accounts, if not a hefty presence, on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, which are diligently kept active. Perhaps an event you stage is wildly successful, or a luminary in your field contributes a piece to your website that goes viral. Suddenly, the organization's social media following dramatically increases or changes. So now what? How can you sustain your expanded network and leverage social media to maximum benefit in building a stronger and more engaged community?

- **ANALYZE.** Use free and paid tools (if budget permits) to analyze the new follower base to determine who they are and to understand their social media habits (e.g., who is most

influential, when they're most active online, which accounts they engage with, which hashtags they're using, etc.). Doing so will enable your organization to better prepare content that will reach these audiences at the right time in the right places. Twitter and Facebook provide free in-platform analytics tools, and examples of paid tools include Sprinklr, Brandwatch, and Nuvi.

- **LISTEN.** Once the audiences are better identified, you must work to listen to what they are saying and the topics they are talking about. This will enable your organization to better engage, crafting content around topics which can deliver the right messages and enable them to resonate with key audiences. Use tools such as Sprout Social, HootSuite, and Meltwater.
- **ENGAGE.** Ensure a steady flow of engaging social media content to maintain current followership levels. The key to creating engaging content is prioritizing posts with visuals such as photos and videos and humanizing topics as much as possible. The organization can create a content calendar (if one does not already exist) to identify and manage key moments in time to create live social media events such as through tweet chats and Facebook Live and to push out content around awareness dates.
- **INSPIRE.** Launch a “call to action” campaign that enables followers to get involved in the organization in a more personal way. For example, the organization can ask its followers to help spread the message about the brand or key issues to their networks. Sample campaigns include an Instagram or Twitter photo contest or a letter-writing effort targeting influential decision makers on a key issue. These mini campaigns are also an opportunity to drive followers onto other digital properties such as an organization’s website to help drive new traffic to the site.
- **PROMOTE.** Consider paid promotion of social media content to ensure the new follower base is seeing the content. Even with a new follower base, only a fraction of them will see the content organically because of social media platforms’ current algorithms. Amplifying the content through paid posts will garner a larger reach and potentially help grow the follower base.
- **ADJUST.** Measure engagement on key social media efforts on a regular basis using the tools outlined above to gauge whether content is resonating with the audience. Shape the strategy and adjust activities as needed to ensure content is having the intended effect of sustaining the audience and delivering the right message.

**Note from the CPD Blog Manager:** *This piece originally appeared in the 2017 Soft Power 30 report.*

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