

# Veterans For Peace: Mastering Social Media

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The reality is that social media is no longer new. Many nonprofits are entering their sixth or seventh year of using social media. If you're still on the fence about social media, then you're dangerously close to becoming dysfunctional in terms of online communication and fundraising. **Social media is not a fad.** It is a fundamental shift in how people use the Internet for social good.

## Get Oriented and Get Organized

The successful implementation of social media for your nonprofit requires forethought and planning. Some of the decisions you make early on will affect your social media campaigns for years. Make sure they are the right ones.

### ✓ **Define Your Goals and Objectives**

- Ask yourself: Are you using social media primarily to raise money? To secure new volunteers? To increase your website traffic? To build your chapter? To foster social good and create social change?
- Take an hour or two and write down five to ten goals and objectives.

### ✓ **Be Consistent When Reserving Vanity URLs**

- Consistency in vanity URLs is important for print materials, e-newsletters, and e-signatures (facebook.com/VFPchapter###, twitter.com/VFPchapter###, youtube.com/VFPchapter### and so on.)
- Ideally, your social media vanity URLs should match your website URL, but if your website URL is not available on the big three (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube), then you may need to get creative.

### ✓ **Save Usernames and Passwords in a Secure Place**

- Create a master login sheet. Using a Word or Excel document, create a list of all the usernames, passwords, and vanity URLs for your social media and mobile technology accounts. Make sure that key members at your chapter have access to the document and that it is saved securely.

### ✓ **Get Buy-in from Chapter Members**

- For many chapters, getting the green light to use social media, and, more importantly, to invest the time and resources necessary to launch and maintain successful social media, is still much easier said than done.
- This is where the age divide often becomes blatantly obvious. Many older members just don't get social media. They are deeply entrenched and often stuck in the era of Web 1.0—

much to the frustration of some of their younger colleagues. (Research is available from the national office proving the impact and return on investment of successful social media.)

✓ **Create a Simple Media Policy**

- An organization's social media policy should provide basic guidelines about what is appropriate to post on social media sites, an overview of privacy and legal issues, and some general rules about using social media during office hours. The overall message should be one of empowerment, not control and restriction. Keep it simple and on the short side. Focus on the big picture and create guidelines that can be applied across many social media tools.
- **VFP's national policy for social media is:**
  - Commit to high standards of professionalism when representing the organization online. Our goal is to build online communities in order to share our expertise and better serve our mission and programs.
  - Be respectful and polite at all times—even during online disagreements.
  - Delete content that is off-topic or inappropriate in character. When in doubt, get a second opinion.
  - Link to online references and source material often.
  - Acknowledge mistakes quickly.
  - Be honest and authentic.
  - Engage in conversation.
  - Think before you post, and make sure that your content is accurate and factual.
  - Share only content that is meant for public consumption. Don't discuss programs or campaigns that have not yet been officially launched to the public.
  - Personal use of social media during breaks is allowed, but use of social media for work purposes must be approved first.
  - Enjoy yourself! If you are not having fun engaging in online communities on behalf of the organization, then don't do it. Social media is not for every personality type.

## Get Started

- ✓ **Create a Facebook “personal page”**
  - This is necessary to create your chapter’s “fan page”
  - **If you have a personal page already, disregard this step.**
- ✓ **Create a Facebook “fan page”**
  - The fan page allows you to control the content posted on your wall. Additionally, you will have access to the page’s “insights” which will help you to track the success of the page. This will allow you to show the impact each posts has on viewers, along with the number of fans you gain over the course of time.
  - You can have multiple administrators for your fan page, which allows different members to post and maintain content, links, and videos. To add an administrator, simply view the “total likes” and click “add admin” when the individual’s personal page pops up.
  - Follow the National VFP fan page at: <http://www.facebook.com/veteransforpeace>
- ✓ **Create a Chapter YouTube Channel**
  - Create a YouTube Channel/Google Account. If you do not already have a Google account, you will have to set one up at <www.gmail.com>
  - Create and upload videos to keep followers updated on your chapter’s events and projects. These videos can also be posted on other social media networks, such as Facebook to gain more exposure. Send video links to the national office at [casey@veteransforpeace.org](mailto:casey@veteransforpeace.org) to have your videos posted on the national VFP social media networks. **The key is success to reach as many people as possible.**
  - Subscribe to funders, members, ally organization, and partners. Friend local media and supporters to gain additional press coverage.
  - Follow the National VFP YouTube Channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/VeteransForPeace>
- ✓ **Blogging**
  - Select a blogging platform. There are many to choose from, including: blogspot.com,
  - Design your blog and upload a banner. Make the page personal to your VFP chapter, and make it stand out.
  - Write content and secure photos for blog pages. Post blogs and photos on other social media sites to gain traffic on your blog and chapter website. In many cases, the blog can be the primary chapter website if the chapter does not have a website in place already.
  - Optional Add-Ons: Add “Donate Now” button. Add social networking icons to link to you Facebook, Twitter, and/or YouTube accounts. Add e-newsletter and text alert subscribe functionality.

## Keep It Going

- ✓ **Make it Attractive and Visually Appealing**
  - Taking the time to “pretty up” your social media tools will be a major factor in the overall traffic and usage of your page.
  - Your page should be visually appealing with clear photos and videos, easy-to-read wording with few acronyms and military jargon.
- ✓ **Join the conversation around the cause:** Listen first - always a good rule for social media - and chime in on conversations others are having about her cause.
- ✓ Share content and collateral that’s unique to your chapter.
- ✓ Celebrate big news. Don’t be meek about posting good news - like fundraising milestones, events, success stories. **Give your community cause to celebrate.**
- ✓ Remember the medium. Think big picture – people on Facebook respond to different things than Twitter. For example, trivia questions have been tried on both, and they were popular on Facebook but flopped on Twitter. **Think about Your Audience!**
- ✓ Balance quality and frequency. **Don’t just post for the sake of posting.** If the content isn’t meaningful, it lowered engagement levels. But make sure to post frequently enough to remain relevant and useful to the social media community and your fans.
- ✓ **Get Your Message Heard!**