

Time to Face(book) the Music: Your Program Needs Social Media

So, your program doesn't have a Facebook page, or perhaps someone created a Facebook page many moons ago and no one has touched it since. It's time to get one started, or dust off the one you have. Below you'll find some compelling reasons why your program should have a Facebook page and some tips for keeping your page engaging and easy to manage.

- ***Your students are using it.*** Research supports the anecdotal evidence. A [new study](#) from the Pew Research Center on social media usage has some interesting findings relative to the adult education population:
 - Looking at social media use by household income, the demographic segment with the highest use (72 percent), makes less than \$30,000 per year.
 - Social media use by educational attainment is practically level for all segments – high school or less, 66 percent; some college, 69 percent; college degree, 65 percent.
 - Facebook is by far the most popular social media site for adults online.
- ***It can help you build community, thus aiding recruitment and retention efforts.*** Once students “like” your page, everything you post will pop up on their feed. This makes Facebook a great tool to let students know about important things, such as free testing, special events and program closings. It allows you to provide well-deserved recognition for students by posting photos and kudos, as well as offering opportunities to engage/educate them with math jokes, inspirational thoughts and other fun stuff that they may be compelled to share on their pages. Facebook also provides a vehicle to connect with students who have “stopped out.” Every time you post something on Facebook, you are building community and increasing the opportunity for others to engage with your program, including Facebook friends of those who “like” you.
- ***It's a free marketing tool you can use without leaving your desk.*** Not only is Facebook completely free, it can be accessed from any computer with internet capability. (Have a firewall that's keeping you from accessing Facebook? Keep reading!) Facebook is different from other marketing tools, too, in that it allows you to connect immediately

and interact with your target audience. It is relatively easy to track how effective your Facebook marketing is.

If you don't know what to post or don't even have time to think about it on a daily basis, do some planning. KYAE creates a monthly editorial calendar so we know what we're posting twice each weekday. The KYAE editorial calendar aligns with internal initiatives (i.e., free GED testing, closeout campaign, etc.) and external events (i.e., holidays, seasons, etc.), and features everything from student success stories to math jokes to cats wishing everyone a happy Friday. The key is to keep your community engaged and informed, so even if it's a "funny" that is being shared, it should connect somehow to your message and goals. If you would like a copy of the KYAE Facebook editorial calendar for the next month, just ask (contact below). You are welcome to use it verbatim or to alter it to meet your needs.

If it's difficult to make time to post on a daily basis, try HootSuite (www.hootsuite.com). This free resource provides the opportunity for you to schedule your posts, which allows you to do the bulk of your Facebook postings in one sitting. HootSuite may also help you **circumvent firewall issues** that keep you from accessing Facebook. A discussion with a small sampling of programs with firewalls indicated that, even though they cannot access Facebook, they are able to access HootSuite. Through HootSuite, you may respond to Facebook posts and messages.

Programs with firewall issues that have a Facebook page often have a designated individual who makes posts from his/her personal computer or smart phone. If the program page is linked to this person's personal Facebook account, it's simple to keep up with others' posts and messages because it will pop up in the personal account, too. This makes it especially easy for someone with a smart phone to provide a timely response. (To set up a program page, click the link below the green "Sign up" button on the Facebook home page that says, "Click here for a celebrity, band or business.")

Need help getting started or want to brainstorm ideas for content? We can help! Contact Missy Brownson at missy.brownson@ky.gov or (502) 573-5114, ext. 123.