Over 65% of U.S. adults use some sort of social networking website (and 90% of young adults), and of that group, 66% have taken some sort of political action using the Internet. And Canadians use Facebook daily more than anywhere else in the world, with 74% checking Facebook at least once a day. That is a huge reach, and it’s exactly why we should be serious about using the Internet as a means of supplementing our organizing. We have the potential to reach many people, including folks who are not union.

Using social media is an excellent way to foster relationships with your members, share information, give updates, and follow events (like pickets or strikes) in real time. And it’s just plain fun – social media shouldn’t be stressful.

Everyone is on Facebook. It’s been around for over 10 years, and it isn’t just for “young people” anymore: as of early 2017, 70+ % of people ages 30-49, 60+ % of people 50-64, and 55+ % of people over 65 use Facebook. You are missing out on a massive audience if you do not take advantage of it. Facebook is useful for sharing photos, videos, links, and events. You can communicate easily, not only with your members, but with other locals, the International, and other unions. If you are supporting a strike or picket, you can quickly disseminate information about where and when to go. You can share pictures from it.

Twitter is best used to communicate with your followers and share links/updates. While the audience skews younger, it’s integral to quickly spreading information, engaging followers, and sharing links and photos. Using hashtags (#) lets you get in on a “conversation” and makes it easy to engage people – many campaigns will come up with a hashtag to use (#SaveTheMet, for example) so it’s easy for people to follow updates. Additionally, thousands of journalists and reporters use Twitter, and it makes communicating with them and forming positive relations much easier than before. Finally, every single major union uses Twitter. It brings us together.

Try gauging your members’ internet preferences: How many are on Twitter vs. Facebook? What do they like better, and what would they respond to more? You may not need to use both!

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As of early 2017, Facebook has 1.28 billion daily active users (users who log in to Facebook at least once a day) and 1.15 billion mobile daily active users (users who log in to Facebook daily using their mobile device). Facebook reaches a massive number of people, and it is free.

Once you’ve made a Page, think about it this way: the people who “liked” your local’s Page on Facebook did so because they want to hear what you have to say, so you need to figure out how to put engaging content in front of them. With that in mind, here are Facebook’s basic components.

MAKING A PAGE
In order to make a Page, you need to have a personal Facebook account. If you don’t have one, it’s easy to set up if you have an email address – just go to www.facebook.com and follow the instructions. Then, go to this link and create your Page: facebook.com/pages/create.

CUSTOMIZE YOUR PAGE: COVER PHOTO
The cover photo is an excellent chance to really make your “brand” stand out and show people what you’re about. It sits directly at the top of your Facebook Page. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- **Your cover photo should be crisp and clear.** Cover photos should be at least 720 pixels wide and 315 pixels tall, so if you upload an image that’s smaller than these dimensions, it will be stretched to this larger size. That will make the image look fuzzy, unpolished, and unprofessional.

- **You can change the cover photo whenever you’d like.** Change it for holidays, seasons, etc., or maybe you have a group shot from a fun event. If you’re starting a new campaign – say, a food drive for the holidays – you can make a cover photo reflecting that. Here’s an example of a cover photo with useful information:
CUSTOMIZE YOUR PAGE: PROFILE PICTURE

As with cover photos, you want to have a profile picture that’s crisp, clean, and recognizable. IATSE’s profile picture is our logo:

- **Add a caption to your photo.** When adding a profile picture, you can “edit” the image and write a description. This is a great place to insert a link to your website or a brief description of the picture.

- **Remember: this picture is what shows up in newsfeeds, in searches, etc.** Picking a simple, recognizable image is usually your best bet:

CUSTOMIZE YOUR PAGE: “ABOUT” INFORMATION

You can fill out a short or long description of your Page, a phone number, website, email address, physical address, and more under the “About” tab.

Keep in mind that Facebook changes its layout every so often, so make sure you keep all of this information up-to-date. Sometimes Facebook’s Page layout prominently shows a visitor the number of likes the Page has, its Page description, and a website link. Other times, only the number of likes will be immediately apparent. All of the information is always there, it’s simply the visibility that changes.

It may sound confusing, but making sure that you have all of this information up-to-date will make it easier for you in the long run.
CONTENT

Your timeline is where you interact with the folks who liked your Page, and it’s where you can move people to action! Here are some dos and don’ts for your timeline:

**DO**
- **Develop a unique voice.** Remember, there are people on the other side of the computer – no one wants to read boring posts with no personality.
- **Be positive in what you write and share.**
- **Share pictures and video.** They drive Facebook traffic. Share pictures or video from a recent show, a meeting, a rally – anything that you think people would be interested in.
- **@mention other Pages.** Did you go to a rally with members from another IATSE local? Tag them in the post if they have a Facebook Page, too!
- **Proofread before you hit “post.”** Make sure everything you post is factually correct, spelled correctly, and isn’t written entirely in CAPITAL LETTERS. Check twice, post once!

**DON’T**
- **Write long, wordy posts.** Keep your text-based posts short and simple. Avoid giant blocks of text.
- **Go weeks without posting anything.** Remember: you can schedule posts for the future. Click the small downward-pointed arrow next to “Publish” and select a date and time. This is especially helpful for holidays or other events that you’re planning for.
- **Argue with your followers.** Sometimes people intentionally antagonize (they’re called “trolls”) – don’t engage with them!
- **Share poor-quality photos.** While not every photo is a work of art, make sure there aren’t thumbs blocking the shot, the photo is in focus, and so on.

**Write a status update.**

This is one of the simplest ways you communicate with your followers. Within a status update, you can write text or share an image, video, or link (explained on the following pages). Depending on your Page category, you can also advertise, create events, and more. A great thing to do within a status update is mention other organizations, people, or places. Much like Twitter, you can find and tag other Pages by typing @ and then the name of the Page.

You could ask members to contribute pictures to post (making sure they do not violate a non-disclosure agreement). Perhaps some of your members volunteered for a cause on behalf of the local, or attended a rally for another union to show solidarity. These are great opportunities to snap a photo to post and help build a sense of community, and show the public what you’re all about.
Make shareable images.

This is a fun way to interact with fans. You can share photos, or pictures with text on them (like a really good quote or compelling data). Below you can see a funny picture we posted the day before the end of Daylight Saving Time, and three days before Election Day. We also included a link to the IATSE website where we had a page of voting resources. The photo got 119 “shares”, which means that 119 people clicked “Share” to post it on their Facebook.

Here’s a meme about CEO hourly pay versus the minimum wage:
Funny pictures (like the Daylight-Saving Time one) and politically-charged pictures (like the minimum wage one) can do well. It depends on your audience though, so don’t be afraid to experiment or mix it up.

You can make your own by using free websites like Canva.com, or share from other pages like the AFL-CIO/Canadian Labour Congress or other labor Pages. “Like” other Pages to see what they’re sharing (“See Pages Feed”, along the right-hand column on your page):

Share links.

Share industry-relevant, labor-related, or general interest articles. One important thing to remember is that you can edit the link that you share, and customize the “headline” and “description.” Here’s how:

This is the article I want to share. Copy the link from the address bar on the page where the article is and paste it into the “status” box.
Once you’ve pasted the link and the story pops up, delete the address from the box so it looks a little cleaner. The story will stay, even though you deleted the link.

If you want to change the headline (outlined in red) or the description (outlined in blue) before posting, just click the text and you can edit what it says.

Sometimes, if you copy and paste from a certain website that has not been optimized for sharing content on social media, the headline will get lost in the process – this is when you might want to edit the headline.

Similarly, a link may not include a photo, and you’ll want to add one so it grabs attention. Use the gray + to upload a photo.

Then, click “Publish” and you’re done.
Twitter is the other big social media outlet that's incredibly useful for disseminating information, keeping in contact, building relationships, and updating events in real time. It's instrumental in quickly organizing mass amounts of people. Twitter has over 328 million active users, posting over 500 million tweets a day.

**MAKING AN ACCOUNT**

Go to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and locate the “Sign Up” button. Make sure your Twitter name (also referred to as a “handle”) is short and easy to remember – you might do IATSELocalX, or your own name or nickname for a personal account.

**FOLLOWING**

Now you can start “following” people. Once you follow someone, their tweets will show up on your “feed.” Here are some ways to get started – after all, Twitter isn’t helpful if you aren’t seeing any updates:

- **IATSE and IATSE Canada**: twitter.com/iatse & twitter.com/IATSECANADA
- Follow your **local newspapers, reporters, and TV stations as well as magazines/papers about your craft**. A story about a stagehand in Indiana will get more play in their local paper than in the New York Times. Small newspapers also tend to do soft feature stories on IATSE members working in community venues, and it's important for locals to have and maintain good relationships with their community.
- Follow **local businesses** or **endorsed politicians**.
- Follow **labor journalists and reporters**. Because the modern news cycle is always "on" and organizing drives in labor are doing more online organizing, it is extremely important to follow the latest news and trusted reporters.

**MENU BAR**

Here's a tour of the white bar that runs along the top of Twitter:

- **Home**: Brings you to your newsfeed. It's where you'll see all tweets from everyone you follow, and what they've retweeted.
- **Moments**: The best of what's happening on Twitter, or in the world. This is curated by Twitter. It's helpful for cutting through the clutter. Read more here: [https://about.twitter.com/company/moments-guidelines](https://about.twitter.com/company/moments-guidelines).
- **Notifications**: This is where you see if folks mentioned you in their tweets, followed you, retweeted you, or “liked” your tweet (similar to “liking” a post on Facebook).
- **Messages**: This is where followers can send you a Direct Message (sometimes referred to as a “DM”). These private messages are useful for exchanging phone numbers or email addresses. You can opt in or opt out to receive direct messages from anyone, regardless of whether or not you follow one another. Go to Settings → Security and Privacy → Direct Messages to choose.
- **Search Twitter**: Search for users, hashtags, links, and phrases here. It's an important part of Twitter.
- **Icon**: A menu drops down with back-end options like changing your email address or privacy settings.
- **Feather pen "Tweet"**: Click it to compose a tweet.
WRITING A TWEET

A tweet is a 140-character message that you post. Click the small birdhouse icon on the top left. You’ll notice a box that says “What’s happening?” which is where you write your tweet. Here are components of a tweet:

- **@ symbol**: if you want to mention another Twitter user, type @TheirUsername. If you’re writing a tweet and you want to mention a person, organization, place, etc. – check to see if they have a Twitter account first, follow them, and then type @TheirUsername into the compose tweet box and they’ll see that you mentioned them.

- **#**: Put simply, the hashtag is Twitter’s way of categorizing things. A great way to use hashtags is during an event or big news story. For example, the IATSE Communications Department used #savethemet during the Metropolitan Opera campaign in 2014. See what comes up when that hashtag is searched:

You can see articles, press releases, videos, and more from completely different Twitter accounts, all because they used the single, unifying hashtag #savethemet.

When typing a hashtag or tagging someone with the @, make sure that there aren’t any spaces. The #, like the @, makes the group of words searchable.

- #SaveTheMet not # SaveTheMet or #Save The Met
- @IATSE not @ IATSE
Hashtags are not case-sensitive, so #SAVEMET will return the same results as #SaveTheMet or #savethemet

**There are fun ways to use hashtags.** As with Facebook, you can use hashtag #TBT, which stands for “Throwback Thursday,” and post a “throwback” picture: a picture from a meeting a few years ago, a great show you worked on a few months back, and so on. On Sundays, many stagehands use #StageShotSunday and tweet a picture of the stage they’re on.

**You can also add links to your tweets or retweet people:**
- **Link:** If you want to include a link in your tweet, just copy the link from the address bar, and paste it into the “Compose” box. Sometimes a link is too long and takes up too many characters (you only have 140 characters, after all!). If this is the case, use a website like [http://tinyurl.com/](http://tinyurl.com/) or [www.bitly.com](http://www.bitly.com) to shorten the link.
- **Retweet:** You can retweet someone else. If you do that, it will show up on your followers’ feeds. To do this, click the two arrows below the tweet — when it’s retweeted, the arrows will change color:

![Retweet Example](image)

Overall, make sure your tweets are interesting and engaging. Ask questions and provide context. If you’re sharing a link, don’t just tweet the link with no other text – add details. For example:

**Don’t just tweet a link:**

![Link Example](image)

**Add details:**

![Details Example](image)
DESIGN

You should change the cover photo, profile picture, and add a description. There are many spam accounts on Twitter, and by editing the way your profile looks, you'll show that you're not a spam account and that you take your online presence seriously.

To edit these features, click the “Edit profile” button. Upload a clear, high-resolution photo for the “Cover photo” and make sure your “Profile photo” is easy to recognize. It's how people will know who you are. Be sure to fill in the “Description” and identify who you are.

Just like Facebook, the photos you upload to use as a cover photo and profile photo should be big enough that they do not appear fuzzy or distorted. A cover photo’s recommended dimensions are 1500x500 pixels, and a profile picture’s recommended dimensions are 400x400 pixels.

If you have a Facebook Page, consider using the same cover and profile pictures to make your “brand” consistent across social media platforms.
Here are some frequently asked questions and answers about social media as they relate to your local.

Q: HOW DO I CONTROL A CONVERSATION ON FACEBOOK? HOW DO I DEAL WITH A MEMBER POSTING NEGATIVE THINGS?

A: First and foremost, you are controlling the Page. You have the ability to delete comments and block users. If someone is stirring up trouble, you can send them a message asking them to stop. If they don’t stop, you have every right to block this user from commenting on the Page. On the IATSE’s Facebook Page, we have posted this in our rules:

“Disclaimer: The IATSE Facebook Page is not an official means of communication with the IATSE International.

IATSE retains discretion to determine and remove inappropriate content, which includes but is not limited to material that is:
• Illegal, obscene, defamatory, threatening, or that abuses intellectual property rights,
• Soliciting or self-promotion that is, or is seen as spam and adds little value,
• Confidential internal matters that should not be discussed via social media,
• Speaking on behalf of IATSE when unauthorized to do so.”

This way, users know the ground rules before they start interacting with your Facebook Page, and the circumstances under which you would delete a comment are clear.

Also, there is a setting you can activate that blocks comments with certain words:

• Click Settings at the top of your Page → Page Moderation → Type the words you want to block, separated by commas. You’ll need to add both the singular and plural forms of the word you want to block → Save Changes

You can also block different degrees of profanity from appearing on your Page. Facebook determines what to block by using the most commonly reported words and phrases marked offensive by the community. To turn on the profanity filter:

• Click Settings at the top of your Page → Profanity Filter → Off/Medium/Strong → Save Changes

Q: ISN’T SOCIAL MEDIA ONLY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

A: No. 70+ % of people ages 30-49, 60+ % of people 50-64, and 55+ % of people over 65 use Facebook. If a company or organization doesn’t have a Facebook Page, they are missing out on a massive opportunity to connect with their fans. Next time you buy a product, check the packaging – more than likely, it’ll include the link to their Facebook Page or their Twitter handle. Every major union uses both outlets. Check their websites and you’ll see links to their Facebook and Twitter. Both Facebook and Twitter are important for locals to use because they create an online community.

Q: DOESN’T USING FACEBOOK AND TWITTER TAKE UP A LOT OF TIME?

A: There’s no perfect answer to this. If you’re really unsure about how to use them, try making a “dummy” account
first and get used to how each website works, and then create your real account. It’ll make the transition process much easier. You can also talk with members and find out if anyone else is interested in learning the ropes and being in charge of the accounts.

**Q: WHAT IF MEMBERS SIGNED A NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT AND THEY ARE POSTING PICTURES FROM SET?**

**A:** On Facebook, this is where the blocking/banning comes in. Remember, you are in total control of what gets posted, and you have the power to delete things. On Twitter, it’s a bit trickier since you can’t delete something you didn’t post. Make sure your members know: if the content is questionable or might reveal a secret, do NOT post it. Wait until it's out. Twitter is fun, but it's not worth risking a job over.

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**RESOURCES**

**TRAININGS/WORKSHOPS & COURSES**

**IATSE SOCIAL MEDIA TRAININGS**

[iatse.co/unioncomms](http://iatse.co/unioncomms)

The IATSE Communications Department has run labor union-centric Twitter and Facebook trainings for New York City-area labor unions in conjunction with the New York City Central Labor Council. We’ve recorded these trainings to make them available to IATSE members everywhere. Scroll down to “IATSE’s Social Media Trainings for Unions” to view the YouTube videos.

**AFL-CIO DIGITAL TRAINING SERIES**

[iatse.co/aflciodigital](http://iatse.co/aflciodigital)

The AFL-CIO has a very robust online presence. The link above will take you to a page with everything you could possibly need to know about using social media — and it’s tailored toward unions.

**WELSTONE: COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS**

[wellstone.org/resources/category/117](http://wellstone.org/resources/category/117)

Wellstone now houses the New Organizing Institute, a group that helps folks use “digital tools” (email, social media, text messages, etc) for organizing purposes. For example, the 2008 Obama campaign is widely credited for using digital tools in new, innovative ways, and it was able to reach a massive audience. The link above will take you to a page about online organizing, and from there you can click around and find how to effectively use social media making videos, writing emails, blogging, building a website, and so on.

**CORNELL UNIVERSITY INDUSTRIAL & LABOR RELATIONS SCHOOL**

[ilr.cornell.edu](http://ilr.cornell.edu)

Offers courses on labor and communications, and qualifying IATSE members can use LEAP funding to reimburse classes.

**LYNDA.COM**

[lynda.com](http://lynda.com)

Lynda.com offers over 3,500 online courses taught by recognized industry experts and working professionals in Communications, Marketing, Design, Web, and more. IATSE offers premium annual discounted Lynda.com subscriptions to members in good standing and local union staff. Learn more about this partnership here: [iatse.net/member-education/lynda](http://iatse.net/member-education/lynda)
JASON MANN, “SIX STRATEGIES TO PROMOTING YOUR UNION”

Available to purchase here: amazon.com/Promoting-Your-Union-strategies-organizing/dp/1468137972

SHAREABLE IMAGES

- Photoshop
- canva.com (free) – Canva has pre-sized templates for creating custom Facebook and Twitter cover photos and posts.

ONLINE ARTICLES

HASHTAG CULTURE:
newyorker.com/online/blogs/susanorlean/2010/06/hash.html

FEEDBACK

Send us feedback for this guide! Take a look at the questions below and send your answers to comms@iatsenet.

- Which part of this guide did you find most useful and why?
  - Introduction
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - FAQs
  - Resources

- Was there any part of the guide you would have changed/omitted/added?

- Please add any other comments or suggestions that you may have.
CONTENT

Social media is a public relations tool for you and your local. Your personal Facebook and Twitter accounts are a reflection on your Local’s image. Remember – the content that you post on your own Facebook or Twitter profile should be professional. You may want to consider maintaining a “business” Facebook page restricted to professional content and contacts, and keep another account for family and friends only.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Details about your personal life.
- If you’re a party animal off the clock, it does not benefit you to document your party habits to members and employers on social media.
- Rude commentary about people you dislike.

Personal photos.
- If you wanted to run for an executive board position, would seeing your Facebook photos help you or hurt you?

Union-specific or sensitive news to members.
- Facebook or Twitter is not the appropriate venue for certain things like asking union members to pay dues. Because social media is a public-facing tool, email, mail, or a face-to-face conversation is more appropriate for discussing union business with members.

Privacy levels can be set to block certain content on your Facebook page from being seen, though this is riskier if you forget to maintain consistent privacy levels on content. You can also have a private Twitter account, where you must approve all followers before they can see your tweets.

Remember that Facebook and Twitter is part of the public image of you and your Local. Before you post something online, for your Local’s Page or your personal account, make sure that it’s appropriate.
GUIDELINES FOR NETIQUETTE

Notice that they’re similar to “real life” etiquette:

1. **Just because you’re not face-to-face doesn’t give you a free pass** to write rude, inflammatory comments, make fun of people, the IATSE, IATSE leadership, spread false information, share obscene pictures, and so on. If you think it’s a bad idea to do off-line, it’s just as bad to do it online.

2. **Don’t argue or engage in arguments.** Body language and tone of voice are lost when communicating on the Internet.

3. **Don’t be insensitive.** No tasteless jokes (see the second example below). This also means: don’t make fun of shows/movies etc. you may be working on OR not working on – imagine how you’d feel if you found out that members from another local were mocking the play you’re doing lighting for or the TV show you poured hours into making.

4. **Don’t post confidential information.** If you’re unsure about information, you can check with your union officer, the studio, even your legal department if available – or just don’t post it.

5. **Don’t use social media when you’re under the influence.** You might say some things you regret!

6. **Assume best intentions.** We can’t say this enough: treat others online as you’d like to be treated. There is no reason to jump to conclusions and be argumentative.

7. **Don’t add management people as Facebook friends on your personal profile.** They view you as a professional, and you don’t want to give them reason not to if they see you’re posting things they view as unprofessional.

8. **Deleting comments or tweets doesn’t mean no one saw them.** There’s always a chance that someone took a “screenshot” (a picture of the display on a computer or phone screen) of your tweet or Facebook comment – so if it was bad, there may still be proof you said it. See the examples below!

9. **Use correct grammar, and DO NOT TYPE IN ALL CAPS.** Using all caps is considered yelling online.
Amy's Baking Co. got wind of some bad restaurant reviews posted about them online. Rather than using the reviews as constructive criticism (no matter how rudely the reviews may have been written), Amy’s chose to attack their followers – most of whom didn’t even post reviews in the first place!

They fell victim to points 1 and 2 above. By doing so, they not only alienated potential customers, but they made themselves look unprofessional.

A better reaction would probably have been to just not react at all.

Designer Kenneth Cole tweeted some insensitive remarks while massive (often violent) protests erupted in Egypt.

He violated points 1 and 3 above. Cole probably wouldn’t have made these remarks to an Egyptian and he insensitively made light of a very serious situation.

Moreover, Cole didn’t apologize. He said that he “didn’t intend to make light of a serious situation” rather than outright apologize.

Like the Amy’s Baking Co. example, Cole shouldn’t have said anything, and instead thought of a more creative way to advertise their “spring collection.”
Despite these mistakes, many companies/organizations handle social media very well – and it’s easy. Social media is a combination of marketing and customer service – treat others how you’d like to be treated!

JetBlue Airways does a great job responding to customers on Twitter. The example to the left is a perfect illustration of stellar customer service.

For example, if a local member tweets or Facebook posts something negative about the union, it’s a great opportunity to engage them in a positive way. Find out why they’re unhappy, and how you can fix it.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

*ClickZ: The 10 most cringeworthy social media fails of 2015*

*Digital Trends: The Most Embarrassing Corporate Social Media Fails in 2015*