



rijksuniversiteit groningen

How do you develop a social media strategy?

A social media strategy is a long-term plan. Usually, the strategy is followed for at least a year and describes the general course of your social media activities. You shouldn't only develop your social media strategy when you are starting to use social media. It is recommended to update an existing strategy after a certain amount of time, because apart from the fact that the organization's wishes may change, the social media landscape is subject to change as well.

Please note: A social media strategy determines the general social media policy. If you want to set up a campaign, to highlight a new service for example, you can create a social media plan. This plan can be seen as a concrete result of your general social media strategy. Be aware not to see the strategy and the plan as two separate things: your mission, vision, and core values should always return in both.

The below overview gives you an idea of what a social media strategy looks like. In addition, it could be useful to involve your colleagues, e.g. experts in the field of communication or policy, in the strategy's development.

Structure	Goal	Points for attention
Chapter 1	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Why are you writing the social media strategy?- What do you hope to achieve with the document? In addition to determining the social media policy, it could also give you insight into how social media should be embedded in the organization.
Chapter 2	Current situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What is the current situation? If you are new to social media, you might not be able to say a lot about that yet. If you have more experience with running social media platforms, you could <i>analyse the platforms</i> and indicate how <i>social media is structured</i> within your organization.
Chapter 3	Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Which objectives do you want to achieve with your strategy? Formulate a number of objectives, which should return in your strategy. Examples of broad objectives are: Increasing <i>brand awareness</i>, optimizing <i>online reputation</i>, attracting more visitors

		<p>for your <i>website</i>, or <i>retaining customers</i>. Of course, you could also set more concrete objectives that are linked to content, for example drawing attention to a specific goal, such as a research study or an event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you make these objectives measurable? If you are new to social media, you could analyse other accounts to establish a benchmark. For social media accounts that have existed for a longer time, you could do a baseline measurement of the current situation, where the results are used as a starting point for further analysis.
Chapter 4	Target groups / Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who do you want to reach with your social media activities? Determine your target groups and try to define them further using demographics and behavioural characteristics. - Which channels do you want to use to reach your target groups? Try to link your target groups to channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram), and match this with your objectives. For example, if you want to increase the interaction with a young target group, then Instagram is a good medium. If you want to increase your brand awareness among corporate stakeholders, then LinkedIn is the platform of choice.
Chapter 5	Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What kind of content do you want to produce? Now that you have determined your target groups and channels, you can think about the content: do you want to go for an <i>interview</i>, a <i>video</i>, or a <i>blog</i>, for example? - To further determine the different kinds of content types, you could develop a separate content strategy. In this strategy, you indicate for each content form what the tone of voice and the look and feel should be.
Chapter 6	Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would you like to monitor your accounts online and know how and when others are talking about you? And if so, how are you going to do this? You could, for example, make a selection of accounts to keep track of, or you could purchase a tool, such as Coosto, to do this for you.
Chapter 7	Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you want social media to be organized within your team and who will be responsible for what? Try to map out the structure as well as possible to determine how much capacity you will need to execute your social media activities. - You can, of course, outsource certain tasks, such as

		<p>producing videos or setting up larger campaigns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The extent of your budget plays a large role in realizing your social media activities. Try to take this aspect into account when describing your plans.
Chapter 8	Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the most important takeaways? Try to summarize your strategy as succinctly as possible and repeat the most important points from the strategy.
Appendices	Appendix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If you made elaborate analyses or consulted studies, you could add these in the appendices to provide more evidence for your strategy.

If you want to know more about social media, please take a look at our [Social media guidelines](#). Here, you will read the University of Groningen's social media strategy, best practices for when you want to set up a new social media account or want to professionalize an existing account, how to organize the names of the accounts, and rules regarding profile pictures.