SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUR CHAPTER: GETTING STARTED

Why does my Chapter need Social Media?

If your Chapter has an awesome website that you keep very active, you may not need a social media account. However, to keep your members engaged and active we definitely recommend it. Your members will log on to social media every day; they may only visit your Chapter website once a month or less. Social Media also allows your members a platform to engage with each other through comments, likes, and sharing.

Which platform is right for my Chapter?

Don’t spend your time posting where your message will never be seen. Ask your members what platforms they use and better yet, where they want to engage with AFWA. Here is a quick review of some of the most popular social media platforms.

* **Facebook:** Most likely, more of your members will be active on Facebook than any other social media platform. Several AFWA Chapters have even replaced their Chapter Website with Chapter Facebook pages. Here your Chapter can collect followers, post events and updates, share photos, and engage in discussion. A Facebook page allows your Chapter to follow AFWA National and other Chapters, accounting/financial companies, recruiters, community service organizations, local colleges and student organizations to connect with them, promote each other’s events and share useful content with your members and followers.
* **LinkedIn:** LinkedIn is a destination for professional networking. Through LinkedIn, your members can network with each other in a professional setting. Chapters can create their own group to share event information, post jobs and updates, and generate discussion among group members. Your Chapter’s LinkedIn Group may be private or open to the public.
* **Twitter:** Twitter is the least complex of these three major platforms. Your message is delivered to followers in 140 characters or less. Twitter is great for engaging in popular discussions using hashtags or tagging other users. For example, ideas learned at AFWA conferences can be quickly shared with Tweets and promoted hashtags. However, this platform will be best used to support either your Chapter website or other social media platform.

Yes, there are other social media platforms such as Google+, Flickr, YouTube and many more. Don’t overwhelm yourself by trying to start a profile on all of them. Start with one, build a following and engagement, then see where your Social Media plan takes you.

General Guidelines from AFWA

* Be sure your new social media account is appropriately titled with your Chapter name, such as Accounting & Financial Women’s Alliance – Atlanta, or AFWA Atlanta. This is to ensure your Chapter’s account is not confused with a National AFWA account.
* All social media accounts should have at least two admins, or shared knowledge of the user name and password. This will help ensure consistency of access should an admin leave for any reason. Utilize the AFWA Communications Inventory (found in the Marketing Toolkit on the AFWA Member Site) to help catalog your user access information.
* AFWA Headquarters provides images for your Chapter’s use on social media, such as profile and cover images. These images are not required, but recommended. Contact marketing@afwa.org for more information or visit the Chapter Marketing Toolkit on the AFWA Member site. Consistent use of AFWA chapter profile pictures will help leverage branding efforts and make your account easily recognizable as an AFWA chapter.
* Your social media profile will allow a brief description of your Chapter. Be sure to fill out this field. You may use copy from the AFWA.org/about page, but we encourage you to include a local spin as well. Also consider including contact information for your chapter, such as a phone number or email address where users can reach your directly as well as your chapter website address if you have one.
* Monitor your accounts. A social media account left alone is a scary thing. Outdated information can make your otherwise active chapter appear inactive. Or worse, negative comments, user rants, or spam posts can reflect poorly on your chapter. Be sure you check your accounts at least once a week to make sure your profile is clean.

Setting Up Your Account

**FACEBOOK**

* On Facebook, you have the option to start a group or a page. For the most engagement and visibility, you’ll want to start a page.
* Your Facebook page will be started by a current Facebook user. Do not create a user profile for your Chapter, this can confuse members. Instead ask one of your members to create the page and add one or two other Board Members who also use Facebook as Admins.
* Your Facebook page will be public, meaning anyone can follow your page and post to your wall. Facebook does give you the option to block users or remove posts if necessary.
* Once you are a page admin, Facebook will allow you to toggle on and off who you are acting as, yourself or the Chapter. Toggle yourself as the Chapter and be sure to “Like” the AFWA National Facebook. This will allow for easy sharing of AFWA National updates and posts.
* As an admin, you can create events through your chapter page for chapter meetings, community projects and fun events. You can then share these events with your friends and others can find the events and get to know your chapter.

**LINKEDIN**

* For the most engagement, be sure you start a Group (not a profile or a company page).
* Your LinkedIn group should be started by a current LinkedIn user. Do not create a user profile for your Chapter, this can confuse members. Instead ask one of your members to create the Group and add one or two other Board Members, who also use LinkedIn, as Admins.
* The privacy settings you choose are entirely up to you and your chapter. Some Chapters have set up private groups, which means group members must be approved. Other Chapters have decided to have open groups, which means anyone can join. Private group pro – you can prevent spammers from joining your group. Private group con – someone has to keep up with the requests to join.
* Search LinkedIn for Accounting & Financial Women’s Alliance, be sure to select “groups” in the search results. You can get ideas from all the other Chapters that have pages.

**TWITTER**

* Your Twitter account can be started without the need for another user as an admin – in other words, you do not have to use a personal twitter account to start one for AFWA. Be sure the user name and password is shared with at least one other Board Member to ensure access.
* You will need an email address to start the account. If your chapter has a shared email, such as info@afwaatlanta.org or afwaatlanta@gmail.com you may want to use this account. This email account will likely be passed down through your Chapter leadership, keeping the account with your Chapter, not a single member.
* Recommended Twitter Handle: @AFWA[chapter name], ex. @AFWAAtlanta
* You can set your Twitter account to private or public, whichever your Chapter prefers. However, we recommend you keep your account public. With a public account, users can begin following your Chapter at any time without your approval.
* The easiest way to get started is to start following @AFWANational, accounting, tax, and financial accounts and retweeting important information that would benefit your members and followers.

How do we keep up with it all?

Does the idea of keeping up both a website and a social media account sound like too much work? We understand, here are a few tips to manage all your content.

* **Start with One:** Remember, for most Chapters, there is no need to have an account with all the major social platforms. Start with one and see how it goes!
* **Start a calendar:** There is no need to post to your social media account every day. Think ahead about the content you may want to post, such as event announcements, Chapter photos, holiday greetings, or Chapter and member achievements. Plot these topics on a calendar to help you remember when to post to your account.
* **Volunteers:** Don’t leave your tweeting, posting, and sharing up to one person. Form a committee and assign one individual to each platform. Or allow two or three people to make edits and updates to all your accounts. Utilize the calendar mentioned above to assign who will post what. Hint: Social Media and websites are a great way to involve the young professionals in your organizations.
* **Make your webpage static:** Think of your Chapter website as a brochure that you print and handout to individuals who want to know more about your chapter. You don’t necessarily reprint your brochure every time a new event is added to your calendar, right? Instead of listing upcoming events on your website, post contact information for your Programs or Events Chair. Or better yet, add copy that reads “Please visit our Facebook (ex.) page for all the latest happenings with our Chapter.” Keep your social media account up to date and review your website at least once a year to make sure all information, such as leadership, is accurate, and your set.

What do we post?

There’s no perfect formula that generates engagement on all accounts. But a guide to follow is one part chapter news and updates, to one part industry and community news, to one part just for fun. See what topics drive the most engagement from your members and post more on that topic.

* **Chapter news and updates:** upcoming events, event photos, chapter leadership announcements
* **Industry and community news:** sponsor and partner updates, AFWA National updates, or industry headlines you may pull from the weekly AFWA Newsbrief
* **Just for fun:** Photos and quotes, holiday greetings, birthday and achievement announcements, new member welcomes

Remember, there’s no shame in circulating someone else’s content *(as long as you don’t try to play it off as you own)*. Your can retweet and share posts from AFWA National, and share articles and blogs published by accounting and financial news sources.

Finally, respond to your followers. It is easy to set and forget your social media posts. But your responses to comments by your followers will keep them coming back for more. For example, you post a link to an event, one of your followers says “I’ll be there, can’t wait,” respond by saying “great, we look forward to seeing you there.” The response doesn’t have to come from the account administrator; a response from any leader in the Chapter can be equally valuable. Users like to know they’ve been heard!

I have a few more questions

Feel free to contact AFWA Headquarters at any time for help with your Chapter’s social media accounts. You may call 859.219.3532 or email marketing@afwa.org.