

CALBO Outreach & Communication Committee

2019 Goal - # 2

Investigate and report on methods to effectively utilize Social Media to promote Building Safety and the profession.

In the last report we identified popular methods of communication through Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Vimeo, YouTube, etc. We also identified that CALBO has a lot of content available through articles, bulletins, calendar events that could be used to help promote Building Safety and the profession. Sites like LinkedIn provide a way for business professionals to post their portfolio and connect with other professionals as an example.

The next step is to create a powerful social media platform as follows;

1. Identify our community

A social network platform is created to meet certain needs of the population. Identifying preferences and dislikes of our community will help in better understanding the psychological factors that affect them as consumers and what we can do to get their attention.

Our Community is identified as CALBO is a nonprofit professional association of city and county building departments and industry representatives. Our mission is to promote public health and safety in building construction through responsible legislation, education and building code development. On behalf of the 95% of California cities and counties, we welcome you to our community.

2. Define the features and functions

The definition of the features and functions is tightly related to the quality of the identification of our community. Our community wants and needs will shape and outline the features of developing a social network website. What do we want your users to do? How will we define the privacy of the data?

Defining the type of data that will circulate, what can be posted, who can post and how such as through the Outreach and Communication committee as an example. CALBO has extensive data

available relating to membership, Leadership Academy (BOLA), Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response, Education and Training and the California State Legislature all through the virtual face that was launched in 2019 which could be used as part of a Social Media Platform or campaign. CALBO should identify key subjects, or events such as training that a Social Media campaign can be built upon which would include timed postings as the events are getting near.

3. Choose the right technology

Identifying the features and functions of our social media network will determine the platform and the company where you can create our own network. We must choose the methods that will be effective and efficient for our social media network. Evaluating technology is something that should be done by professionals, possibly by hiring a consultant to help compare technologies or at least running this through a committee. This learning process will help us figure out various issues and opportunities for our social media network.

4. A must have structure

There are general rules that apply for building all web pages that have a huge importance for our social media networking platform since we are trying to engage users in social activity and keep them engaged on our site. There are three must have pillars that we need to incorporate to help our social media network to be successful.

- Customer service - Partnering with a hosting company to deal with technical issues and any other issue related to your platform.
- Security - Use reliable security systems that will make our users feel like they can do everything on our social media platform without worrying about privacy intrusion and data leaks.
- Scalability - Our social media platform has to be able to expand easily and quickly so it can follow the pace of growth.

5. Design Activity Stream

Nowadays, activity streams are the core of every social media website. Facebook introduced this feature first which set the standard for the market, the concept went on to be mainstream and thus it affected everyone. The fascination people have with their friend's activity is real. We want to know what they are doing, how they are feeling every moment of the day. Failing to develop quality activity stream can affect the attractiveness of our social media network especially when we have a target campaign around upcoming events. This is the focal point and the driving force behind the success of launching a social network. Joomla's plug-ins or Drupal's activity stream module can help accomplish this as an example.

For example, activity feed of Ning would allow us to connect our network to Facebook, Twitter or to add RSS feed. We would stay tuned with the comments, likes and shares, which would be shown in our news feed. We could make publications in the form of a tweet or post, and then decide what to show in our activity feed, and who can see your updates. These features would let us highly customize our network.

6. Create Status Update Features

Status updates are crucial. Every social media user wants to express their feelings and thoughts freely anytime of the day. We need to design the perfect tools that will make the status updates pleasurable and easy experience. Even though Facebook popularized the activity stream, Twitter made the status update another mainstream aspect of social media sites. Status updates are incredibly engaging. If this feature is not user-friendly and easy to use they will abandon our social media platform immediately. What can we do to design the perfect status updated tool?

It really depends on the values our social media is built. Twitter made an amazing move by limiting status updates to 140 characters. The developers were grateful for that decision. It made their work so much easier. Of course, we have to make sure to add comment adding options on the status updates. In other words, interaction with other users is everything.

There are a lot of open-source microblogging platforms that can be used for developing quality status update features. Laconi.ca or Identi.ca for example are good for this. If we are using content management system like Joomla, it is easy to make a content type that has a limited number of characters.

7. Quality Viewing Data options

How would we increase the engagement level and clicks on the site? We would need to create multiple data viewing features that will increase the visibility of the content on our social media platform. Users will see only what we allow them to see. Do we have enough data viewing options available? If the answer is no, then check the list of features you need to make available for our users:

- Popular Upcoming Stories
- Popular Stories in the last 24 hours
- Popular Stories in the last 7 days
- Popular Stories in the last 30 days
- Popular Stories in the last year

When Facebook launched their timeline features how fascinated everyone was by the fact that they can access history data so easily, with just one click. Users get excited a lot of social data.

The data viewing features must have user - centric design. It must be easy to use and accessible. Everyone has different preferences. Allowing people to access and tailor their experience is a big plus and it will keep them coming back again and again to our social network platform.

8. You need to attract the right users

After everything is said and done, in terms of defining the target audience and developing the right features the next step is attracting the right users. There are a lot of tools that can help create awareness on the market. Facebook was created in a college environment and it was a pioneer in the social media industry. What helped Mark Zuckerberg the most is the good old word of mouth. Even though this is a traditional marketing tool is still effective. Before people

start talking about our social media they need to be aware of it. Digital marketing has tools to increase awareness.

1. Email Marketing – CALBO has an email database. We could prepare engaging templates and use them for newsletters etc.

2. Blogging – We could create our own blog as people like to read useful information. Give them topics that focus on what they like and give them the titles they are interested in.

3. Engage with people - When other portals mention our social media network or write news about us, we need to act immediately. Engage with them. Make a connection. Build a community. Ask them about another piece of content and reply to that story with our own blog. People appreciate engagement and care.

With the numerous available resources today, creating a social media platform is easier now than it has ever been and with the launch of the new CALBO website last year, this is the next logical step to get the message out in today's world.