



YouthBuild Recruitment and Social Media Tips

Social Media as a Recruitment Tool

Applying and being accepted to the YouthBuild program are two of the first milestones that participants will achieve as they move through the YouthBuild program. A strategic and productive recruitment process, resulting in a large pool of viable applicants, is the first measure of success for a YouthBuild grantee. It can be challenging to identify and reach the target population of 16-24 year olds that are unemployed and not in school as potential YouthBuild participants may be disconnected from some of the traditional resources that might help them find the program. Relying on only traditional recruitment methods is limiting.

We know that YouthBuild participants are deeply connected to their communities and each other via social media platforms. According to a [2018 report by the Pew Research Center](#), 71% of 18-24 year olds on social media use Instagram, 45% use Twitter, and 94% use YouTube. We also know that YouthBuild participants are our best ambassadors and recruitment agents as they are uniquely positioned to share their YouthBuild experience with friends and peers in the community. Grantees can therefore empower their participants to inspire their peers to contact the local YouthBuild program, learn more, and apply to join the program.

As young people become increasingly connected via social media and technology, YouthBuild grantees must develop their own digital competence and identify new ways to reach out to the young people that they hope to serve. Social media can amplify your message and highlight the work and impact of your program.

Among the most popular platforms are Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. We will focus on these platforms in this fact sheet, but we encourage you to identify which forms of social media are most utilized by your partners and the young people you serve.

Strategies for Effective Social Media Recruitment

- **Have a plan and schedule your content in advance.** Managing social media platforms can be time-consuming. Planning your content before you start posting ensures success. Consider application deadlines, your admissions cycle, and important program dates as you build your timeline.
 - One social media post per day for most platforms is ideal, with some exceptions:
 - **Instagram** is designed for more frequent content. You can share a couple of photos and create longer Instagram stories, composed of multiple posts.
 - **YouTube** content can be shared as often as it makes sense for your recruitment strategy. A video a day is common for most social media campaigns, but if you don't have enough content to sustain this, space your content out and share it on other platforms.

- **Twitter** content can also be more frequent, but you want to make sure that if you are sharing multiple posts, they don't detract from each other. Prioritize your messaging for the day, week, etc. and focus your posts accordingly.
 - Use an online calendar like this one from [CoSchedule](#) to plan your posts in advance.
- **Get Connected, Stay Connected**
 - Keep a [social media directory](#) of your program and partners that includes Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram handles as well as any blogs and websites. This will help you connect with the right audiences.
 - Always use eye-catching photos and captivating videos that are fun and engaging. Tell stories, share data and statistics, and highlight successes.
 - Cross-share content when possible. Tweet your Facebook posts, link to your social feeds on Instagram. This will elevate your content and keep it front and center.
- **Always include links to your website and recruitment page.** Include these in your profile bios and in the posts that you share. Give people snippets of information and encourage them to visit your websites to learn more.
 - Hashtag (#) key phrases so you can track your posts and user traffic across platforms.
 - Tag your partners and share/repost the content they put out about your recruitment. This will help expand your social networks and increase the visibility of your messaging.
- **Create content that can be used beyond recruitment.**
 - It is likely that your program already has a library of photos and videos used for other campaigns and initiatives. Pull content that already exists and tweak it to fit with your recruitment goals.
 - If you create new content, think about how it can be applied to other areas of your program. Having content that can be used across the organization will give you a leg up when designing recruitment campaigns via social media.
- **Make a policy.** Even if only one person will be managing your social media recruitment, it is important to have a policy for all employees. This will help you to determine how and what to share and help you keep content and messaging on brand. It also sets out clear and consistent guidelines for posting and sharing content externally.
- **Invest when necessary.** Some of social media platforms offer additional features for a small fee. These range from targeted ads to more robust analytics. Determine the needs of your program and, if it makes sense, explore these options to supplement recruitment efforts.

This table provides specific tips for some key social media platforms. Keep these in mind as you start to build your online recruitment strategy:

Tips Based on Social Media Platform	
<p style="text-align: center;">Twitter</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use TweetDeck to stay ahead of the game This tool allows you to schedule content to go out automatically on the day and time you choose and offers other features including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The ability to edit posts and upload videos and photos, ○ Organize posts and content from your partners and followers, ○ Check out this article from RazorSocial for more tips on how to use TweetDeck. ● Keep it short, but always catchy Because you have a limited number of characters you want to be succinct in your messaging. Try: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sharing a photo and video and including a quote, ○ Asking a question that grabs attention, ○ Highlighting a data point. ● Retweet, Like, Mention! Ask a partner organization to share posts about your recruitment! It will increase visibility and connect you to more people.
<p style="text-align: center;">Facebook</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sometimes more is better Facebook doesn't limit your character use, so in addition to photos and videos, you can share lengthier, more detailed posts about your program. ● Designate a page Create pages that are specific to your program, your cohorts, and even your recruitment process. Dividing your content will let you reach specific groups and share the most important information with them. ● Ads are worth it Facebook ads offer another way to promote your program and compliment your regular posts. Specific features include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The ability to select your audience ○ Analytics and tracking tools <p>For more tips on how to use Facebook Ads, check out this Tip Sheet about YouthBuild Philadelphia.</p>

<p>YouTube</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make a playlist YouTube playlists let you schedule your videos in advance. You can pre-load them and set them to “go live” on a later day and time. ● Share videos that highlight different things Break down your recruitment process so people know what to expect. Share “a day in the life” at your YouthBuild program and talk about the program culture. Share participant and graduate stories and offer advice to those interested in applying. ● Be concise and engaging Keep your videos to 5 minutes or less and don’t post a video just for the sake of posting. You want your content to be meaningful and unified with the rest of your social media strategy.
<p>Instagram</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Go ahead and post more often Instagram is meant for heavier use and more frequent posts. Content shared here is bite size – quick videos, photos, and short 1-2 sentence descriptions. ● Keep them coming back with Instagram stories Instagram stories can be viewed by people even if they don’t follow you, which make them a great tool for recruitment because they are accessible to all 200M users. When creating a story you should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use a mix of videos and photos. Active service photos and Q&As with current participants and graduates are great here. ○ Tag any partners that appear in your posts, include hashtags and important information about recruitment such as deadlines. ○ Have fun. Use emojis and different fonts, include your location, and share content that shows the spirit of YouthBuild.

For Your Consideration

Setting Goals and Measuring Success

- **Determine what success looks like before you start.** For some, success is simply starting to use social media. For others, it can mean posting a specific amount of content on a specific number of platforms or reaching a certain number of people. Create benchmarks and re-visit them regularly to make sure you're achieving your goals.
- **Use analytics.** Incorporating social media into your recruitment strategy requires an additional lift and you want to make sure that you are getting a return on your investment. Use the built-in

analytics on your social platforms to track how many people have viewed, liked, or re-shared your content.

Content Mapping

As you consider how to use social media for recruitment, create content that will inspire eligible young people to explore the opportunities that YouthBuild offers or will motivate a partner to refer potential participants.

- **Know your audience.** Is your goal to reach partners or potential participants directly? Which social media platforms is your audience most likely to frequent?
 - Pew Research Center's 2018 report on Social Media Use indicates that Facebook is used by most Americans across all demographics, but those ages 18-24 are more likely to use Instagram and Twitter than older adults. Almost three-quarters of the public use three or more social media platforms, with younger adults tending to use more platforms.
- **Map content to your audience.** If you're trying to reach partners who know a lot about YouthBuild already, share programmatic information like cohort cycles, daily schedules, and application dates so that they can share specific details with referrals. If you're hoping to inspire a potential participant who's never heard of YouthBuild or doesn't fully understand what it is, graduate stories of success or attention grabbing headlines might be best. If you're hoping to reach both audiences, consider a mixture of the two types of content.
- **Involve participants and graduates.** One of the most successful recruitment strategies is connecting potential participants to current participants and graduates. Learning about YouthBuild and hearing personal experiences from peers creates a direct connection to the program.
 - Ask current participants and graduates what content would get their attention.
 - Invite them to help create content; participants and graduates are often very motivated to share their experiences through posts, videos, and photos.
 - Encourage them to amplify your message by sharing, retweeting, and liking posts.
- **Consider telling a story.** Try using multiple posts to tell a story over several days. The story might be a graduate success profile, a program highlight, or a day-in-the-life video.

Conclusion

A successful recruitment strategy must be diverse and should incorporate a few different methods. Social media is an excellent tool to employ here because if done right it can help you reach more people more quickly while still being a relatively low lift. Utilize your existing social media platforms and consider implementing new ones to maximize your impact and connect with a wider audience of potential participants. Don't forget to engage with your YouthBuild participants. Incorporate their feedback, knowledge and expertise to design strategies that make sense for the population that YouthBuild serves.