

Recruitment, Marketing and Outreach Strategies

Tip Sheet

How to Reach Youth

- **Shift your focus online.** Youth do just about everything online—when they want something, they immediately go online. This is their instinctual response.
- **Assume every website visitor is using their mobile device.** If your website isn't optimized for mobile devices, you are at a disadvantage. Youth are glued to their mobile devices—either in hand or within reach at all times.
- **Run paid ads on Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube).** The average time that users spend on Facebook daily is about 50 minutes. That's more than any other leisure activity surveyed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Youth are on social media every day, and when you combine that with demographic targeting capabilities, it makes it possible to place your program directly in front of your ideal customer.
- **Tell your brand story through content marketing.** Youth can see right through traditional marketing. They love stories – how you help solve problems or participant successes. Tell your program's story and avoid posts that are glorified ads.
- **Establish an edgy element.** Being online isn't enough. If you appear like every other program, you will be skipped right over. Establish an edge that will command the attention of your audience and communicate that edge through your content marketing and storytelling.

How to Speak Their Language

- **Keep it brief, but meaningful.** Youth have mastered the art of saying something meaningful in 140 characters or less. The more concise your own message, the more likely they are to relate to or appreciate what you say.
- **But, do not sacrifice detail.** Being concise is futile if you skimp on the important information. Present everything they need to know about your program, but skip the flowery prose.
- **Choose the best medium for communication.** Face-to-face meetings are not as effective with youth. Try an online approach or text message.
- **Don't condescend or make jokes about age.** Youth want to be taken seriously. Respect them, and they'll respect you.

- **Don't be so serious.** Youth understand that life is serious, but that doesn't mean they want to be so serious that they can't have fun. Being too serious stifles their freedom and creativity, two things they absolutely need to function well.
- **Learn social media slang words.** Social media acronyms are becoming more normal. Knowing the meaning behind the social media abbreviations will help when chatting with your youth audience.
- **Get feedback from young adults.** When creating marketing, ask youth you have on your caseload to see if your campaign is something that they can relate to.

Social Media Outlets Youth are Using (and we should be too)

- **Facebook** is a social networking site and is the most widely used social media platform in the U.S. Features include profiles, pages, and Messenger.
 - Profile: a personal account where you can add friends and communicate with others on a personal level
 - Page: a business account that users can “like” to get updates about what you post and has features to tell you how many users were reached and/or engaged in your posts
 - Messenger: an instant messaging service owned by Facebook that provides individual and group messaging, can send pictures and videos, and can be used to make free internet voice or video calls
- **Instagram** is a photo and video-sharing social networking service. Photos and videos up to one minute can be posted along with a description on your profile and are available for viewing for any length of time. Instagram Stories feature ten second clips of photos and videos available for only 24 hours.
- **Snapchat** is a multimedia messaging app where users can send pictures, videos, or chats to other users to whom they are connected. Content is available for only a limited amount of time—24 hours or less. Snapchat also has the capability to call or video chat though the internet.
- **Twitter** is an online news and social networking site where users communicate in short messages (of 280 characters or less) called tweets. Users can tweet, retweet (i.e. repost), direct message, and follow people and businesses. Hashtags are often used in tweets to categorize them and make them easier for other users to find.
- **YouTube** is a video sharing site where users can watch online videos or upload their own. Ads can be run prior to the start of videos.

Not Social Media Savvy?

That's okay!

You can find out how to set up each platform and have a tutorial directly on the app. All you need is to have a working email address and create your own screen name. All of the Social Media accounts have a walk through to help you set them up. When using Facebook make sure to choose your privacy settings (how much do you want everyone to see) wisely. Especially if this is a work account.

It's important to differentiate between work and personal. While you get savvy with social media we recommend you also make a work specific page. This is a private account designated only to youth that are in your program, and some of your partners. You can set the name as Case Manager (Insert Name). Youth will know it is you and this also gives them access to you whenever they need. We further recommend that when students first start your program you have each of them friend request your professional page and let them know they can contact you through this app in case their phones die. Be careful not use this account for any personal reasons, and only have youth that have been in your program currently or in the past.

Some Relevant Facts

- No one that this cohort surveyed had a dedicated social media manager for youth programs.
- The number one and most recurring reason why programs were not utilizing social media more often was a lack of time.
- Youth don't always have money to keep their phone turned on but they always manage to find a Wi-Fi hotspot. We need to capitalize on that.
- Outreach on the streets and pounding the pavement is a thing of the past. "Sharing" is only one click away on social media.
- This group has seen that while time is always an issue, communicating and advertising online needs to be a priority because that is where youth are.