

## Getting Started on Social Media: A Guide for Cardiovascular Professionals

*“Cardiology professionals have used social media platforms, such as Twitter, to gain exposure to new research, network with experts, share opinions and engage in scientific debates. The power of social media to communicate openly, with wide-reaching access worldwide, and at a rate faster than ever before makes it a formidable force and voice.”*

(From a March 2019 [JACC Journals article](#) by Dr. Purvi Parwani et al)

Considering launching a social media presence as a cardiovascular professional? Follow some of these steps to get started and tips to build your audience.

**1) Purpose:** Determine the purpose of your account. What kind of content do you want to create? What type of audience do you want to attract? What type of conversations do you want to spark? Observe the landscape of peers that are active on social media and take note of what others are doing in the space.

### 2) Set up a profile:

- Combine your name and specialty for a creative name (“handle”), or just use your name.
- Use a professional headshot for your profile photo and set up a header image (if applicable).
- Create a short bio that includes your medical credentials, area of expertise and current organization. Refer to [ACC’s hashtag guide](#) and add hashtags referencing your specialty area or topics you will be tweeting about.
- Note all your opinions are your own and not representative of your employer or institution unless your account is an officially sanctioned spokesperson account of that organization.

### 3) Engage with your audience:

- Be consistent with the content you share and be sure to post regularly. Social media accounts require regular care and feeding.
- Like, comment and share posts from other accounts.
- Reply to comments on your posts.
- Include photos/graphics/GIFs/ videos for increased engagement.
- Follow other CV leaders who are active. They may follow you back or bring you into conversations with others – this builds your exposure and audience!
- Remember HIPAA and best practices in this public arena and follow ACC’s Core Values, which include professionalism and excellence!

### 4) What helps a social media post receive more engagement?

- **Twitter:**
  - Using 1-2 hashtags can get you 21% more engagement.
  - Tweets with a GIF gain 55% more engagement than those without.
- **Facebook:**
  - A video post increases interaction by 600% on Facebook.

- Facebook engagement increases by 18% on Thursday and Friday.
- **Instagram:**
  - Videos get 21.2% more engagement compared to images.
  - Posts with at least one hashtag average 12.6% more engagement.
- **LinkedIn:**
  - Images on average result in a 98% higher comment rate than without on LinkedIn.
  - Links to Youtube videos play directly in the LinkedIn feed and typically give a 75% higher share rate.

Source: <https://www.socialpilot.co/blog/social-media-statistics#linkedin-engagement-stats>

**5) Related Resources:**

- From JACC Journals: [Understanding Social Media: Opportunities for Cardiovascular Medicine](#)

**CENTRAL ILLUSTRATION: Influences, Tips, Suggestions, and Cautions in Cardiology Social Media**

**Tips on Increasing Engagement (Individual)**

- Follow and engage the influences in the field
- Use popular cardiovascular (CV) and CV meeting hashtags
- Create a concise summary
- Use images, videos, figures to drive engagement

**Tips on Increasing Engagement (Organizational)**

- Use appropriate hashtags
- Incorporate images and video
- Record podcasts
- Add visual abstracts
- Create polls to gauge opinions
- Follow key stakeholders

**Suggestions**

- Set time limits on social media use
- Follow institutional policy
- Identify a focus
- Strive for accuracy, quality and give credit
- Share perspective and best practice
- Be civil

**Cautions**

- Do not discuss specific questions with patients
- Refrain from discussing controversial topics like religion or politics
- Never post HIPAA identifiable information
- Avoid posting content that could be negatively viewed or in the press

**Parwani, P. et al. J Am Coll Cardiol. 2019;73(9):1089-93.**

- [The Next Beat: Expanding the Reach of CV Medicine with Instagram](#)
- [The top 100 Twitter influencers in Cardiology](#)

Contact ACC’s Social Media Manager, Taylor Titus ([ttitus@acc.org](mailto:ttitus@acc.org)) with questions.