

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 background header.
 - 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 and the topics you will be tweeting about.
 - Note that all your opinions are your own.
- 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 others’ posts.
 - Reply to comments on your posts.
 - Include photos/graphics/GIFs which are great for 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!

What helps a post get more engagement?

- Across social channels, photo and imagery posts are the most-used content type to increase audience engagement. ²
- Tweets that include images or videos are nearly 400% more likely to be retweeted. ¹
- People are twice as likely to share video content with their friends than any other type of content. ²
- Videos on Facebook get the highest rate of engagement, despite only making up 3% of content. ¹

Sources:

<https://statusbrew.com/insights/social-media-statistics/> ¹ <https://www.hubspot.com/marketing-statistics> ²

Contact ACC's Social Media Manager, Stephanie Rhodes (srhodes1@acc.org) with questions.

Related resources:

- 1) 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.

Understanding Social Media, Volume: 73, Issue: 9, Pages: 1089-1093, DOI: (10.1016/j.jacc.2018.12.044)

- 2) [The Next Beat: Expanding the Reach of CV Medicine With Instagram](#)
- 3) Check out December's *Cardiology Magazine* number check on how social media plays a key role in communicating with members across the world. Learn more: [ACCinTouch: Expanding Our Reach](#)