



International  
**Paralympic**  
Committee

## **Social media best practice guide**

**An advanced guide for IFs and NPCs**

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**International Paralympic Committee**

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## 1 General

Social media provides a real opportunity for the Paralympic Movement to reach new audiences, engage people with our mission and change attitudes.

Facebook is an international social media network with over 1 billion active users – huge potential to spread your message. Twitter is often the social network of choice during sport events. It has been described as the world’s biggest sofa, bringing pundits, athletes and fans together. Twitter has more than 200 million active users.

Athletes are the greatest ambassadors for the Paralympic Movement. Through their stories, they have the power inspire and excite the world and spread a message of inclusion.

## 2 How to succeed on social media

- **Deliver value when, where and how our audience wants it** – whether this is providing live sports updates, behind-the-scenes insights, inspiring or giving exclusive access.
- Make sure that you are **listening, engaging with and responding with fans**. We need to connect with our fans, not keep a distance.
- Show **charisma, courage, attractiveness and candour** in all social media posts
- The best content falls into one of the following categories: **education, information, inspiration, exclusives and entertainment**.
- Ensure you’re using **multi-media**: photos and videos tend to get the most engagement on social media

## 3 First steps

### 3.1 Setting up an account on Facebook

Go to <https://www.facebook.com/pages/create/> and select the type of page you want. You will need to have set up a personal profile in order to create a fan page.

**Follow the steps** to add a name, photo and description for your page. Use the full name of your organisation (both in English and in your country’s own alphabet if it is different). This will enable you to be found in searches more easily. Make sure you include your other social media profiles and website, and complete your profile with as much detail as possible.

Ensure you **create a custom Facebook web address**. If you have not done this, go to <https://www.facebook.com/username>. This will give you a shorter URL without numbers in it.

**Lay out your biography** with milestones, like competitions and include links to videos, photos and articles about yourself.

Once you’re happy with it, **invite all of your friends to like your page**. Add a Facebook widget to your website and link to it from your Twitter/ Instagram profile, so that fans can easily find you.



### 3.2 Setting up an account on Twitter

Go to [www.Twitter.com](http://www.Twitter.com) or download the Twitter app on your phone and choose a good Twitter handle. This is like an email address for Twitter. People will most likely search for you by your organisation name, so make the handle easily searchable.

User your organisation emblem as your profile picture and add a compelling image as the cover photo.

Write a description about your organisation using important keywords that your potential followers might search for. Link to your website and Facebook page. Include #Rio2016 and #Paralympics where relevant.

Follow people who are relevant to you, like other athletes from your sport or country, people you admire, national governing bodies, National Paralympic Committees or International Federations. Tweet at them so that they are aware that you have just joined Twitter and ask them to help you to get more followers.

Advertise your Twitter account on your website, Facebook page, email signature and printed material.

#### Basic information on how to use Twitter

When you post on Twitter, it is a tweet. When you repost someone else's tweet, it is a retweet or RT.

Public tweets go out to all your followers and can be seen by everyone if you have not set your account to private.

Direct messages (DMs) can only be seen by the person to whom you are sending the message.

@Replies are tweets that begin with a Twitter handle. These can be used to engage with people on a more personal level, but be aware that if your tweet begins with a Twitter handle, only your followers who also follow that Twitter handle will be able to see the tweet in their feed, unless they have altered the settings. If you want all your followers to see the tweet, you can use a "." before the Twitter handle.

Hashtags are words preceded by "#". They organise conversations according to different topics. You can click on a hashtag to see other tweets about that topic. Trending topics are based on which hashtags or keywords are being used the most. Where possible try to include 1-2 hashtags in a Tweet as these generate more engagement.

## 4 General posting ideas

### 4.1 Resources available

You can share videos from the [IPC YouTube channel](#).



You can share or retweet content from the IPC social media accounts, but please do not download and re-upload photos to your social media channels, as you do not have the copyright to do this.

You may download and share on social media any images from the [IPC Flickr page](#), however.

## 4.2 Content plan pre Rio

Share team announcements

Use a [countdown](#) – post images with a number to count down the days to the Paralympics

Share training photos or photos from your archive of key athletes and include information about their achievements and what they hope to achieve in Rio

Share news articles about your athletes

Share video content from past competitions and link it to Rio by including something of that athlete's goals for Rio.

## 4.3 Content during Rio

Please see the IPC Digital Media Strategy for information about what you can share during Rio. This includes:

- Live streams on Paralympic.org
- Videos on YouTube ([IPC channel](#))
- Samsung Paralympic Blogger content
- Photos shared from IPC social media pages
- Photos from OIS project
- Hold Q&As for athletes to interact with fans on Twitter and Facebook (using live video).
- Behind-the-scenes

## 4.4 Content after Rio

- Share videos of major achievements from the [IPC YouTube channel](#).
- Share photos of major achievements
- Share photos/ videos of homecoming parades

## 4.5 General tips

- Make sure you **post on a regular basis**. There is nothing worse for fans than a ghost account, where you only post once a year. Give people a reason to come back to your page.
- **Break news** – make your Facebook or Twitter account the first place your fans can find out what you will be doing next.
- **Exclusive access** – Post behind-the-scenes content, give unique insights and exclusive information.



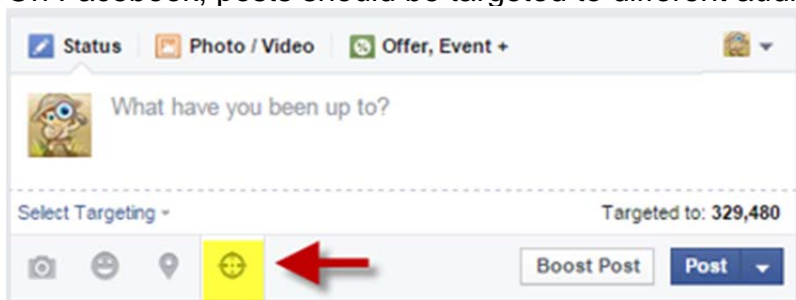
- **Be engaging** – ask questions, involve your fans with “fill in the blank” status updates and include a call to action (e.g. asking fans to like or share a post). Try to reply to fan questions and comments. Acknowledge fan posts by liking them where appropriate.
- **Monitor your page insights.** These can be found in the tab on the admin panel. They tell you who your audience is, when they are online and which posts have been the most successful. Use these stats to share posts when and how your fans want them.
- **Rich media** - Share images and videos. They are more likely to be retweeted/shared/liked.
- **Are there any rules?** Common sense should prevail. The IPC actively encourages athletes to post to social media, but there are some ground rules. Check out the [IPC Social and Digital Media Guidelines](#) for more information.

#### 4.6 Tips for posting news articles:

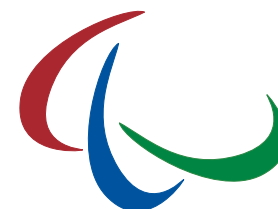
- With [facts/figures](#)
- With [anecdotes](#) (These find some sort of surprise/punchy piece of information in the story that makes you click)
- [Using CAPS to label certain types of articles](#), e.g. RECAP, PREVIEW, VIDEO, WATCH LIVE, NEWS, BREAKING NEWS, FEATURE
- Using a quote
- Mentioning a number in a list article
- Including a clear call to action, e.g. ask people to like or share a post or illicit a comment by asking a question.
- Including a question or write a text post with a “fill-in-the-blank.” (especially Facebook).
- Conversational, emotional and excited tone of voice

## 5 Facebook and Google+

- Posts should try to be spread 4-6 hours apart.
- On Facebook, posts should be targeted to different audiences using the targeting tool



- Be succinct. Facebook posts between 100 and 250 characters (less than 3 lines of text) see about 60% more likes, comments and shares than posts greater than 250 characters. Google+ posts should be longer to include keywords and maximise SEO. The optimal posts are only 40 characters in length for Facebook and 60 for Google+.
- Post photos and videos. Posts including a photo album, a picture or a video generate about 180 per cent, 120 per cent, and 100 per cent more engagement than the average post, respectively.



- Use bold visuals. Grab your audience’s attention by using simple images with a clear focal point. Images with highly saturated colours and close-up images also stand out more.
- Remember that visually impaired fans cannot see text or photos, so ensure that you add a text caption with any relevant information.
- Tag other pages in your posts by writing @[Name of Page] and select the page from the automatic drop-down menu to create a hyperlink

## 6 Twitter

- **Hashtags:** Where possible try to include 1-2 hashtags in a Tweet as these get more engagement  
Do not overuse hashtags, think about which ones are the most important in the tweet.
- Ensure you use keywords in the Tweet so people can find your messages.
- Try to limit tweets to 100 characters – this is the optimal length for a tweet.
- Include calls to action wherever possible. Remember the most re-tweeted words on Twitter:

you	post	media	social media
twitter	blog	help	10
please	social	please retweet	follow
retweet	free	great	how to
top	blog post	check out	new blog post

- Retweet tweets from athletes and other users
- Tweet as much as possible on the weekends

### 6.1 Live Tweeting during events

- Ensure that you tweet in the build-up to the live event, e.g. with videos of previous races/competitions, info-graphics, photos of Ones to Watch.
- Where possible, try to get celebrities guest tweeting at events
- Don’t tweet about every result, but direct people to live results. Only tweet when you’re inspired by an amazing performance and react to it in an emotional way.
- When reporting on results, try to do so in a snappy/cheeky/funny way
- Give context/more info to the results – **always use the event hashtag in every tweet** (#Paralympics) and if it is a game, say how much time is remaining.
- Focus on the kind of Tweets that only you can create by sharing your insider perspective. Tweet behind-the-scenes content – line-up cards, athletes preparing to take to the track, medals, mixed zone, etc.
- Tweet good quality photos with zoomed in detail.
- Engage and respond to fans



## 7 Instagram

- Instagram sorts photos by people, location and #tags.
- Use hashtags and tag people using @ wherever possible.
- Use Geo-tagging where possible
- Close up photos with an interesting filter tend to perform the best

## 8 Moderation

User generated comments should be removed if they include racist, sexist, homophobic or insulting language.

## 9 Photos

Only post photos where your organisation owns the copyright and always ensure that photographers are credited.

## 10 Curation

Suggested daily curation regime:

- Visit the [Twitter lists](#) on IPC accounts – share relevant content and engage with influencers and journalists
- Go to your Facebook lists / news feed and see what your influencers/ athletes/ members are talking about on Facebook.

## 11 Reaching out to influencers

Use influencers to amplify your posts – find influencers using [follwerwonk.com](#), add them to a twitter list and romance them for example by commenting on their blog, engaging with their social messages and sharing their content in order to get your name on their radar.

When you're ready to make the pitch, send the influencer a private message and be understanding of the fact that they might not get back to you right away. Make your message creative and succinct and give them an example of what you want from them.

It's also imperative that you clearly demonstrate how the influencer's participation will help them get what they want, whether that's promoting their personal brand or having the chance to share their opinion on a topic that's important to them.