

Maria Mitchell Association

Social Media Guidelines

12/13/2017

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1. General Social Media Usage:

These guidelines should be applied to all of the social media platforms the Maria Mitchell Association posts to. A consistency in types of posts, times of posts, and the quality of posts should be present in the MMA's social media pages. These pages include those on the platforms Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TripAdvisor, and many others.

Each platform should have a consistent type of content on it. For example, interesting photos should be shared on Instagram, whereas articles and web addresses should be shared on Twitter and Facebook. See the sections for each specific social media platform for more information on the content that should be posted to each.

Every post should be contextualized so it can be easily understood without any supplemental information or prior knowledge. This means writing posts in such a way that most who view them, even those unfamiliar with the MMA and what it does, can understand what the posts are trying to convey. To accomplish this, avoid using acronyms, complex language, or "inside jokes" without an explanation.

The MMA should also create and maintain a list of social media goals. Some of these goals should include, but are not limited to:

- Increasing public visibility of the MMA's mission
- Boosting overall physical visitation to the MMA's locations
- Improving personal interactions with visitors, members, scientists, and other organizations on or outside of Nantucket.

To keep these social media goals within sight, the MMA should also develop a list of principles to achieve these goals. Some of these principles should include, but are not limited to:

- Making every post meaningful (not just a post for the sake of posting)
- Avoiding "burst posting," or posting multiple times within rapid succession
- Posting at lunchtime (about 12PM) and dinnertime (6PM) local time, the times at which many people have breaks from work
- Promoting events ahead of time, perhaps a week before and the day before they happen

With these goals and principles for achieving these goals in mind, the MMA can use all of its social media pages effectively.

2. Instagram:

Instagram is a great platform for sharing eye-catching and interesting pictures. Successful Instagram accounts often focus on being visually appealing and sending a positive message. Posting once a day is good, but only if the content meets the same standards. It should be no more than once a day except for rare exceptions. With a focus on interesting pictures, Instagram is not the best platform for posting event flyers. A better option would be to post an interesting picture related to the event, or for events that occur more than once a picture of a previous event, and then in the caption direct the reader to the website for more information and the ability to register.



For the MMA's Instagram, the pictures should be fun, scientific, and highlight the connection to Nantucket whenever possible. Relevant hashtags should be used, but not so many as to make it appear cluttered and hard to read. Longer captions are useful for educating and engaging, as well as helping the post gain more exposure because of the way Instagram's search engine and advertising algorithms work. At the same time, captions should not be too long or people may not bother to read them.

Instagram stories should be made available to a wider group of staff, interns, and volunteers. The stories would have more freedom and could be more fun and casual than the actual posts. Instagram stories are also good for live interaction and engaging with existing customers, which helps build a community.

3. Facebook:

Facebook is an excellent platform to use for updating people on the events the Maria Mitchell Association is involved in or hosting. This includes articles related to science, the MMA, or Nantucket. Facebook is also a great platform to share large numbers of photos at once (from say a recently held event) by using an album to avoid burst-posting.



4. Twitter:

Twitter is a social media platform the MMA can use to share articles. The articles the MMA posts should relate to Maria Mitchell, women in science, astronomy, natural sciences, and/or Nantucket. Appropriate hashtags should be used so the MMA and its posts can appear in more searches. Twitter is also a platform the MMA can use to post pictures of event flyers to keep followers updated on current events being hosted by the MMA. If an event were to be cancelled, a cancellation message should be posted on Twitter, so users who originally saw the event posting will likely see the event cancellation.



5. TripAdvisor:

TripAdvisor may not seem like a traditional social media platform organizations concern themselves with, but the MMA's presence on TripAdvisor should not be ignored. The MMA is all about creating an experience for visitors, and TripAdvisor is a platform where visitors are able to rate their experiences for those who may be considering visiting any one of the MMA's locations. Good ratings are likely to erase any doubt about visiting for someone who may be on the fence.

To improve the MMA's presence on social media, staff, interns, and volunteers should develop a way to encourage visitors to leave reviews. It is important to do so naturally, rather than pressuring guests into feeling as though they should leave a review. This pressure could actually be a detriment to their experience. Having a link to the MMA's TripAdvisor page on marketing materials and having the TripAdvisor logo present at the MMA's locations are passive methods of encouraging TripAdvisor reviews. Note: permission is required to use TripAdvisor logos/reviews on printed material or websites. There is a method to request this usage on the TripAdvisor website via the contact us option in the help center.

There are active methods for encouraging TripAdvisor reviews that are not pushy. After an event or program a guest or member attends, the MMA can send an email thanking them for their time and business. If there was ever a personal connection established during the event or program, this can be included in the follow-up email as a way of showing how much their business was appreciated, and the email is more personal. Then, towards the end of the email, the MMA can gently ask for a TripAdvisor review and explain why feedback on that platform is important. The MMA can establish these connections with more personal programs, such as group bird walks, weeklong classes, and many others.

Finally, the MMA should constructively respond to all TripAdvisor reviews, whether these reviews are positive or negative. It is important to keep a positive image and arguing with someone who wrote a bad review will often reflect negatively on the MMA. Based on the specific review, it may be better to address their concerns, admit mistakes, or make corrections. By responding to all reviews, the MMA will show potential visitors they truly value providing a positive experience. Personal interactions of any kind, especially on a platform where the visitor experience is being rated such as TripAdvisor, are essential to ensuring visitor satisfaction and encouraging these visitors to come back again or refer their friends and family.

