



How To Reach Program Participants on Social Media

You know who you want to see your social media posts. But how do you make sure they see them? Social media is essential for businesses, schools and nonprofit organizations to connect and communicate with their audiences. **Responding to a Facebook message is just as important as answering the phone in your office.** Today, social media is where people go to find information that is important and relevant to them. Therefore, it is important for EFNEP representatives to provide potential participants with the information they need to improve their lifestyles. To ensure that program participants see your messages and know that they can go to you to learn more, try some of these social media best practices:

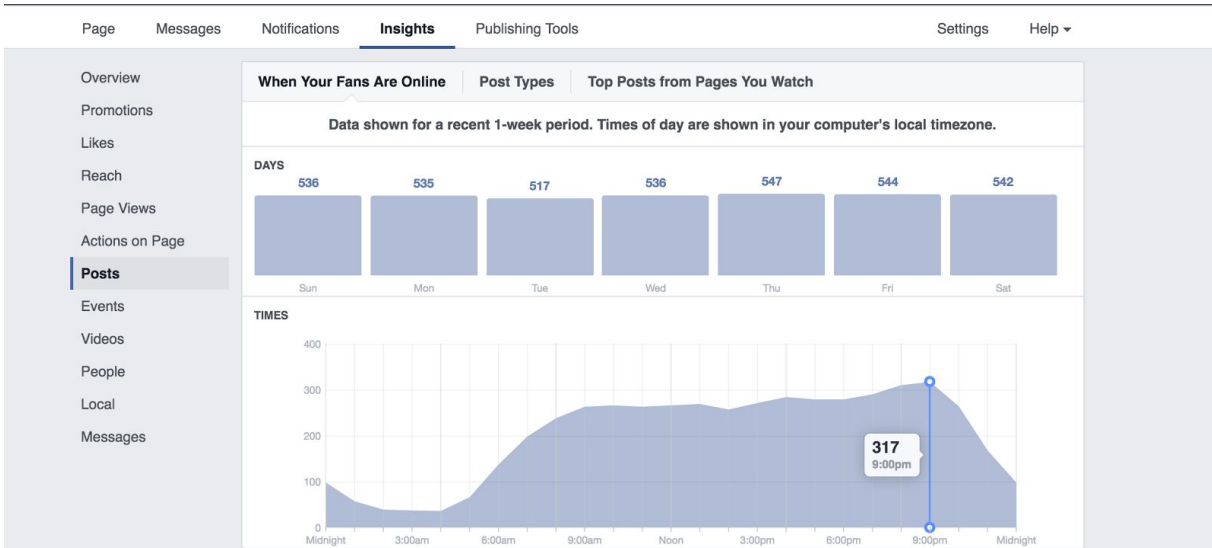
- **Give them a reason to follow you.** Inbound marketing means drawing your potential followers to you rather than going out to find them. Create or curate content that meets program participants' needs, but also content that they will want to read, watch or see in their social media feeds. Make yourself a valued resource. It's also important to remain consistent. Create a content calendar that is customized for all channels and that includes a strategy to incorporate a variety of different types of content, including photos, videos, articles, blog posts, and gifs. Post the same number of times each week; ideally, one should post on days and at times that their social media audiences are most likely to be online.
- **Talk about your social media channels as often as possible.** Any time you meet with a new participant, encourage them to follow your social media channels. Include links to your social media channels on your website, blog, email newsletters and any other digital resource that is part of your organization. Put the URLs for your channels on as many program materials as possible. Make it easy to remember by simplifying the URLs. For example, Facebook.com/VaFNP.
- **Use calls-to-action.** A call-to-action instructs your audience to do something with the knowledge you provided for them. Examples are:
 - "For more recipes, visit our Facebook page."
 - "To stay up-to-date on upcoming classes, follow us on Facebook and Twitter."
 - "Visit our Facebook page to learn more about our programs."

This is also where hyperlinks become important. Make the action easy for them to perform by including hyperlinks to the social media pages you want them to visit.

- **Use your email list to create an email marketing campaign.** Email marketing is one of the most effective forms of online marketing because you can send your marketing messages directly to your target audience's Inboxes. You also already know that your audience is interested in your content. After all, they voluntarily provided you with their contact information. When program participants give you their email addresses, they expect to hear from you. Any time you send an email to current or potential participants, include a link to your social media channels with a call-to-action.



- **Identify times of the day that program participants are most likely to be on social media sites and schedule posts around this time.** Facebook Insights is available for all Facebook pages and offers a wide range of information about your followers, including when your followers are online the most. Be strategic; know your audience and pay attention to the statistics associated with your social media sites.



- **Actively explore the online community and go to similar audiences.** “Outbound marketing” is a term that is often associated with cold-calling and SPAM mail. However, it’s possible to be strategic with your outbound marketing, especially on social media. Post content to other Facebook pages whose audiences may be interested in your information. For example, if you want to target Women, Infants and Children (WIC) participants, post to your local WIC page about upcoming prenatal or children’s nutrition classes. Also remember to like, comment, or share relevant content from other pages. Similarly, look for Twitter hashtags that are relevant to EFNEP and join conversations with other Twitter users.
- **Create a [promotional campaign](#) that engages and entices potential followers.** Entice people to follow you by running a [social media contest, sweepstakes or challenge](#) related to your mission. For example, a photo contest that encourages program participants to share photos of their healthy dinners on your Facebook page is a great way to get your audience engaged and even provides you with great images to share on your page. Offer a prize for photos that generate the most engagement.

The greatest benefit of using social media is that it’s an avenue of communication. More and more people are using online channels to learn more and contact organizations about their services. Offer this avenue to EFNEP participants in order to better serve them and give them the information they need.