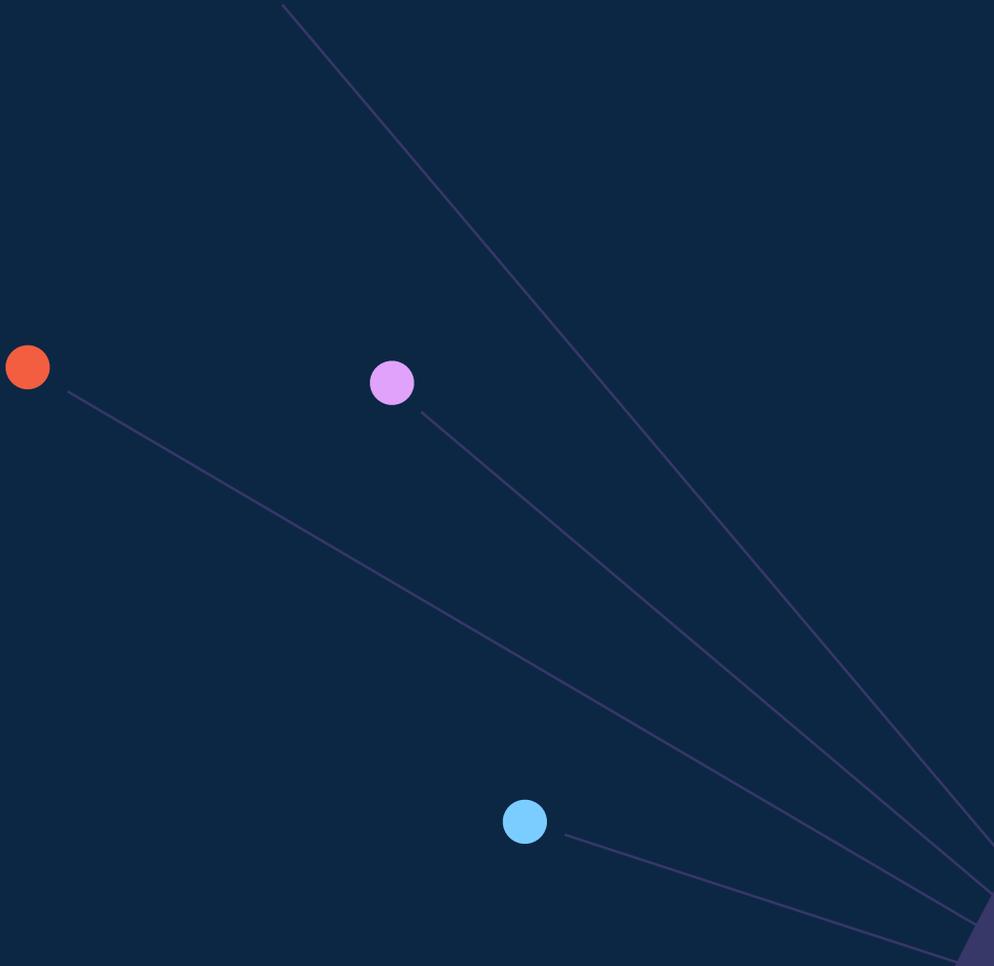


# THE STATE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN GOVERNMENT 2019



HOOTSUITE'S ANNUAL REPORT  
ON SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS  
IN GOVERNMENT



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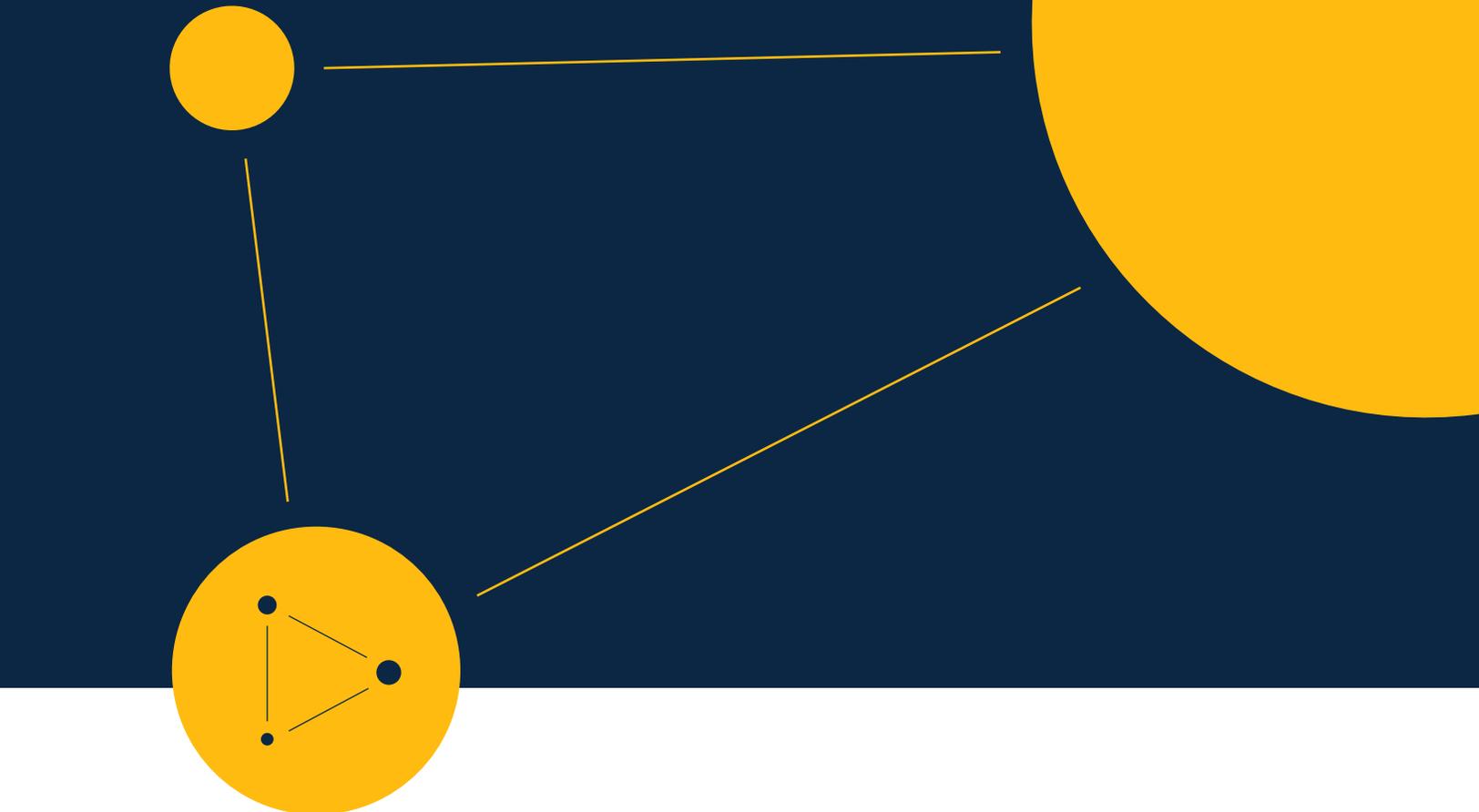
## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Social media has become a vital way that governments connect and engage with their constituents. More than 300 government agencies around the world trust Hootsuite for social media management. Our partnerships with federal, state and local agencies make us uniquely positioned to provide guidance and advice for all levels of governments on social media in 2019.

Since we published our last *State of Social Media in Government* report in February 2018, we've seen agencies of all sizes continue to adopt social media across a range of increasingly innovative campaigns and programs. In this report, you'll read about agencies using Instagram Stories to run live Q&As, city governments riffing on the latest memes to create budget videos, and the positive effects of shifting traditional advertising budgets to social media—among many other inspiring examples.

There are changes in how social media is perceived at the strategic upper levels of government, too. The Government of Canada's *Digital Operations Strategic Plan 2018-2022* explicitly states that “the government should also leverage open platforms, such as GitHub or social media, to collaborate with Canadians and experts”.<sup>1</sup> This single example reflects the growing consensus we're hearing from other national governments that social media is a communications channel of strategic priority.

Whatever level of government you work in, and in whatever area of communications you focus, you'll find this report packed full of inspiring case studies and actionable insights you can begin incorporating into your own strategy today.



## RECOMMENDATION 1

# Invest in video and visual content

Social media is pivoting from text-based platforms originally designed for desktop use towards bite-sized, visual content that is captured on mobile and meant to be consumed on the fly—and Stories embody that pivot.

According to consulting firm Block Party, Stories—the vertical, ephemeral slideshows pioneered by Snapchat and now popular on Instagram and Facebook—are growing 15 times faster than feed-based sharing.<sup>2</sup>

For many government agencies still testing the waters of social media, this might be seen as a leap too far. The degree of intimacy and spontaneity social media users associate with Stories obviously won't be a perfect fit for all agencies—but as more people turn their attention to content shared using these formats, government officials need to take note of this shift in citizen behavior and make incremental changes to their content strategy to account for it.

## EXPERIMENT WITH STORIES TO CONNECT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

For agencies interested in experimenting with Stories, there are plenty of great examples out there to learn from. In the UK, the Royal Navy has seen huge success integrating its social media strategy—and particularly Instagram Stories—with more traditional television broadcasts to build awareness of the work of the British Armed Forces.

In the 2018 series *Warship: Life at Sea*, a film crew followed the lives of those stationed on a Royal Navy vessel in the Black Sea.<sup>3</sup> While the show aired, viewers were encouraged to submit questions to the officers via social media. The objective was to give social media users more exclusive access to life on board.

The Royal Navy social media team received more than 700 questions during the broadcast. They sorted questions into broader themes and then displayed them on screen while Lieutenant Matt Raeside answered in an unedited, authentic Story on the [Royal Navy](#) Instagram account. Approximately 70 percent of the questions were about recruitment—a key driver for the campaign as a whole.

Through their innovative use of social media, the Royal Navy managed to add an interactive element to their television programming that drew in the younger demographics they hoped to reach. The use of social media strengthened the connection between members of the Royal Navy and the viewers who saw their own questions answered in real time. Campaign results included the highest visitor traffic of the year to the Royal Navy website, with a significant number of visitors navigating to the Careers pages.

## BUILD WINNING CAMPAIGNS WITH “SNACKABLE” VIDEO CONTENT

The rise of Stories indicates a growing appetite among audiences for video content that is “snackable,” posted regularly, and increasingly personal and authentic in style and tone.

In 2018, the American city of Frisco, Texas ran a social media campaign it called 100 Days of Progress in Motion, which saw “City of Frisco staff [produce] one video daily over a 100-day period, highlighting different city departments, services and news updates on the City’s Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts.”<sup>4</sup>

By taking the time to tell the story of each city government department, the team delivered useful and engaging content in a way that resonated with residents. 100 Days of Progress in Motion won Best Social Media Campaign at the industry-specific Savvy Awards, emphasizing how video formats are becoming an increasingly critical element in government social media strategies.

## YOU DON’T NEED A BIG BUDGET TO GET RESULTS

For smaller social media teams with limited budgets, the trend towards visual content and video can feel intimidating. However, pioneering agencies are showing that a modest budget doesn’t need to get in the way of a creative—and effective—campaign.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) hit the headlines with its unique and somewhat absurd take on public safety notices for social media. The commission used a top-hatted bird to communicate the importance of keeping electrical cords away from children. Fast Company published an article commending the campaign, noting that “It makes no sense, but visually, it’s hilarious”<sup>5</sup>

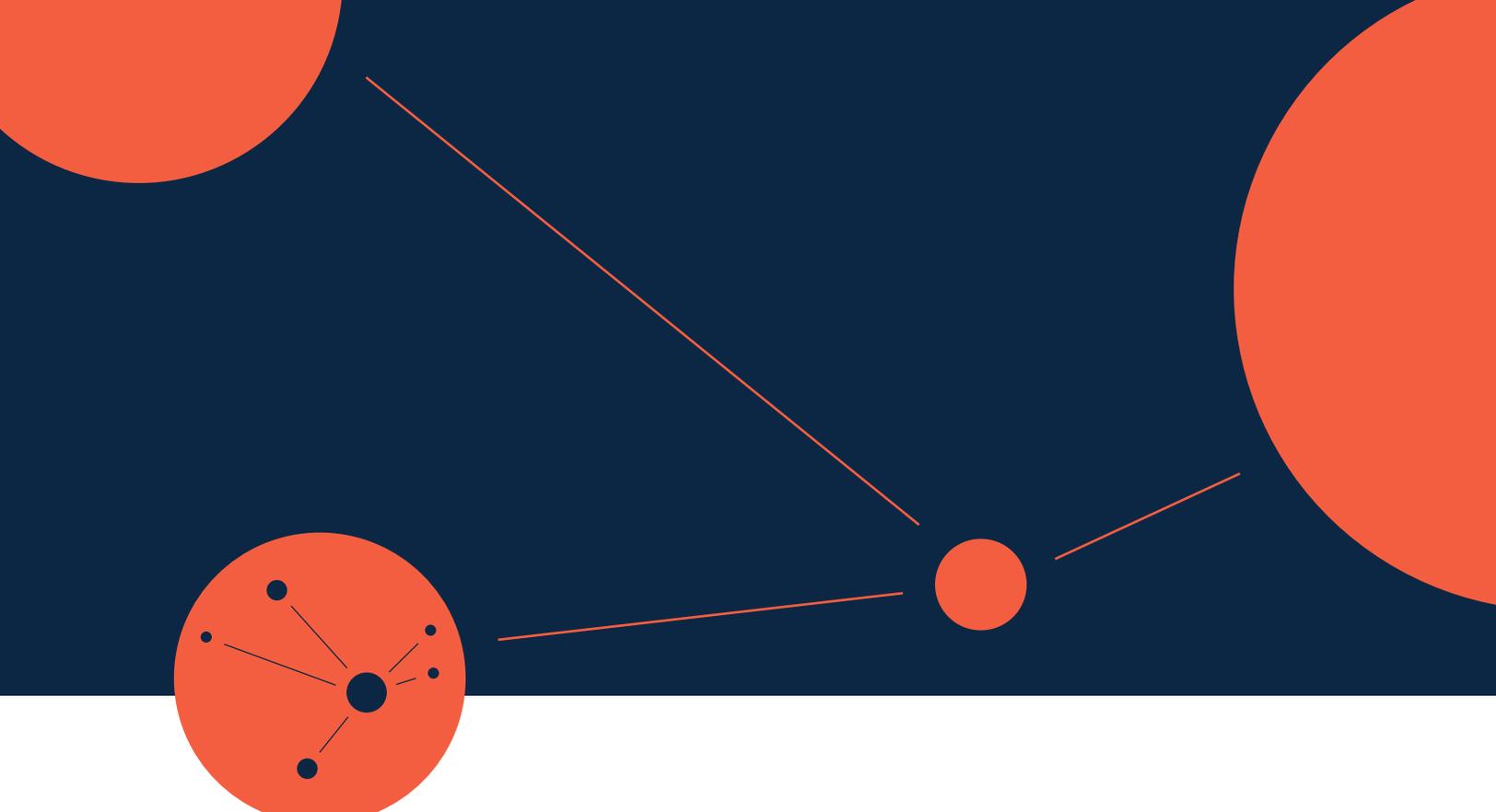
Focusing on sharing information about the products most likely to cause injury, the CPSC communications team took a humor-based approach to its content strategy for [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#). The campaign rocketed past its goal of 300,000 engagements on social media, hitting an impressive 800,000 engagements in 2018.<sup>6</sup>

Developing a unique voice and visual style for your agency can yield impressive results, especially when combined with a data-backed strategy. Invest in understanding your audience and then find creative ways of reaching them.



The CPSC safety campaign beat its target for engagement on social by

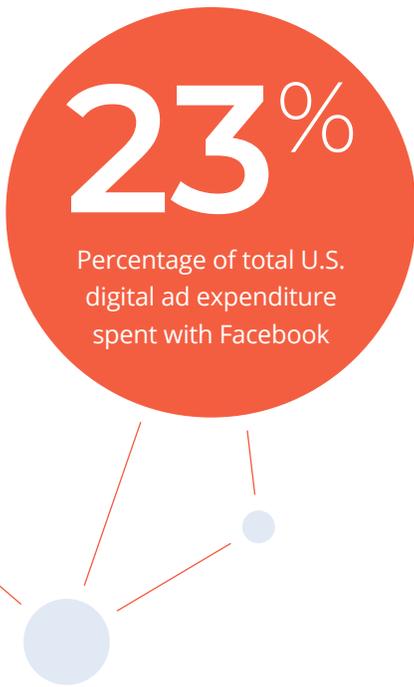
166%



## RECOMMENDATION 2

# Get more out of your ad budget with smart targeting and reporting

For organizations using social media to promote content, the landscape has changed dramatically in recent years. With organic reach continuing to decline, we've officially entered the "pay to play" era.



Indeed, brands across all industries have started to shift their ad dollars, with Facebook now accounting for 23 percent of total U.S. digital ad spending.<sup>7</sup>

For governments tasked with communicating and engaging with citizens, social media is a vital but increasingly noisy place to fulfill this mandate. The right social advertising strategy can begin to fill this gap, complementing organic reach and increasing audience size over time.

The need for government agencies to invest in this space has become more pressing as traditional community news sources fall by the wayside. In the USA, Route Fifty reported on the effects of mass local newspaper closures. With more than one in five newspapers shut down over the past 15 years, there now exists a “news vacuum for about 3.2 million residents and public officials” that is trending towards a further increase.<sup>8</sup>

Sharing news and information via social media is one way for governments and agencies to mitigate the effects of this shift—and governments will need to invest in social advertising to ensure their content reaches their target audiences.

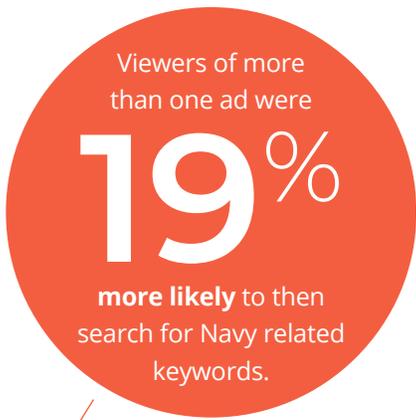
## BOOST TOP-PERFORMING ORGANIC CONTENT

For government agencies testing the waters with social advertising, boosting your organic social content is an easy way to get started. Boosting is a feature available in some social media management platforms (including Hootsuite) that allows you to use your advertising budget to amplify your best performing organic posts.

By investing in creating quality organic content that can be boosted, agencies can engage their existing followers while also attracting new ones. This means reaching a wider—but still very targeted—audience. For example, you can narrow your boosted post to target specific demographics and locations.<sup>9</sup>

Boosting is also a good way to get extra value out of content you have already created, and your strategy for how you boost can be informed by your understanding of how different content resonates with your current audience.

Rather than paying per click for ad placement, boosting allows you to set a daily budget, along with other criteria that specify which organic content gets boosted. For agencies with limited ad budgets, this opens opportunities to experiment with new strategies without a large financial commitment—and can pave the way for securing more agency budget allocation for social media advertising later.



## MAKE USE OF TARGETING FEATURES FOR EFFICIENT SPENDING

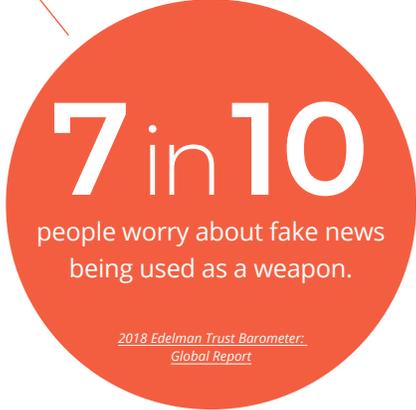
The U.S. Navy is one government agency that has started to change its approach and shift more of its advertising budget into social media campaigns.

A key agency metric is recruitment—yet until recently, the Navy spent more than 70 percent of its advertising budget on traditional media such as television.<sup>10</sup> Given the overwhelming preference for social media channels among its target audience of millennials and Generation Z, the strategy was out of date and ineffective.

In 2018, the Navy went digital-first, and the results have been impressive. The team created a series of sixty 6-15 second videos to be used as targeted YouTube ads. The new strategy was based on connecting the content viewers were interested in with the story told by the ads. For example “if someone was watching a gaming video, the creative they saw was about gaming”.<sup>11</sup>

The result? Within three days, viewers who had seen more than one ad were 19 percent more likely to then search for Navy-related keywords.<sup>12</sup> This is an example of successful results through the type of pinpoint targeting that’s possible with social media advertising.

Beyond marketing, using intelligent content features for targeting can help you more effectively fulfill your agency’s communications obligation to the communities you serve. Whether it’s messaging about rebates that only affect certain neighborhoods, or targeting underserved communities with voter registration reminders, government agencies at all levels should recognize the role that social advertising can play in effective citizen outreach.



## STAY AHEAD OF REGULATORY CHANGES AND TRENDS

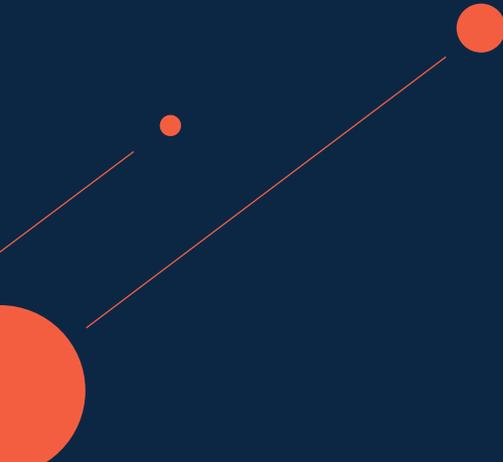
We’re living in an environment of digital dissensus—a world where people are quick to jump to outrage and are fragmented into echo chambers on social media due to more sophisticated algorithms serving up content designed to maximize engagement.<sup>13</sup>

There are many positive stories associated with governments using social media, but appreciation of the day-to-day enrichment it can offer communities has been sometimes lost in the larger debate about the role and implications of politics and advertising on social platforms.

Scandals about government advertising don't do anything to quell such fears. As a result, governments must provide more transparency about the ads they're publishing, who they're targeting, and why.<sup>14</sup>

States including California are introducing new legislation that will require advertisers with a political affiliation to make certain disclosures when posting ads.<sup>15</sup> Similarly in the U.K., Facebook is seeking to increase transparency by requiring that advertisers explicitly state the origin of all posts "relating to candidates, elections, referenda and political causes."<sup>16</sup>

Agencies seeking to benefit from advertising on social media will need to keep up with evolving legislation, with consideration and planning for how changes might affect them.



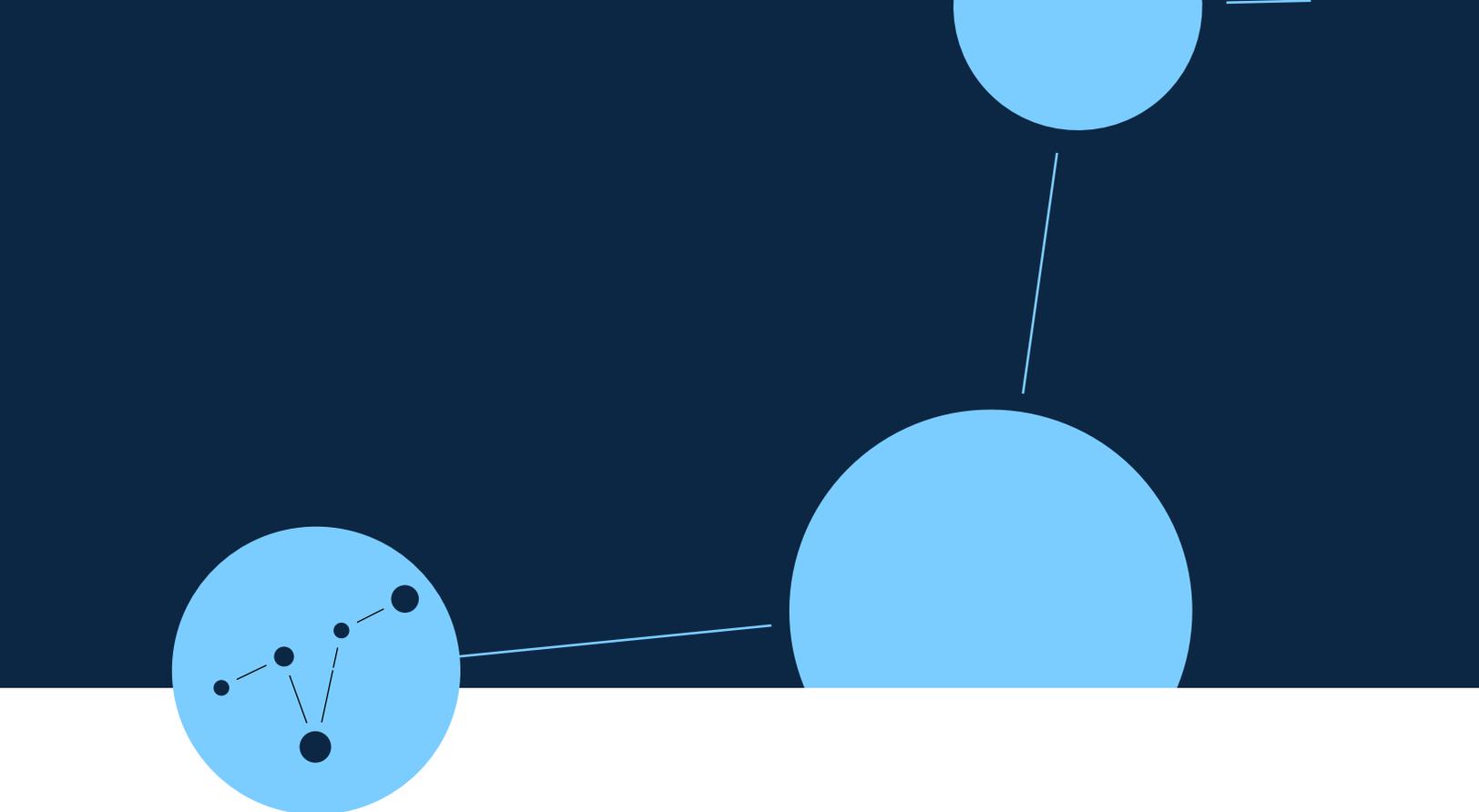
## The Honest Ads Act

Facebook and Twitter support the rules of the new Honest Ads Act, which makes online political advertising more transparent and less accessible to foreign entities.

The legislation was introduced in response to recent disclosures by social media giants that Russia used their platforms to purchase political ads during the 2016 U.S. presidential election and the Brexit vote.

- **Disclaimers on online political ads**
- **Creation of a "public file" of online ads**
- **More ads regulation**

Expect to see these rules tighten and expand globally in the coming months.

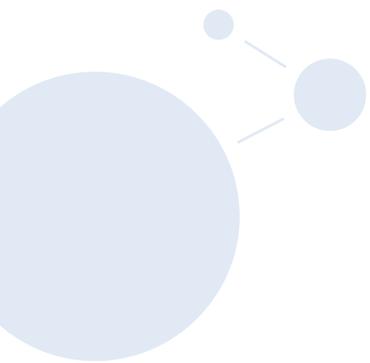


## RECOMMENDATION 3

# Create a social-ready plan for the unexpected

Every year, crisis response communication grows in importance as a use case for governments on social media.

Following multiple devastating hurricanes in early 2018, social media became a lifeline for those in need communicating with loved ones, as well as with emergency officials.<sup>17</sup> And as 2018 progressed, there was no shortage of examples of crises that required immediate action from government agencies on social media.



“For government agencies... an influencer component is still the exception rather than the rule. But expect the trend to accelerate. More and more socially savvy agencies will embrace social programs that proactively tap influencers in the name of better serving constituents—whether as a key component in crisis communications, to inform and engage citizens in everyday life, or as a recruitment tool.”

**Ben Cathers**

Principal Government Solutions  
Consultant, Hootsuite<sup>19</sup>

Encouragingly, we’re seeing a shift in thinking around crisis response planning. Government agencies of all sizes are becoming more proactive and increasingly using social media both to prepare residents in advance, and then reach them in the aftermath of an emergency situation.

## BUILD YOUR FOLLOWING IN ADVANCE

For social media to have a positive impact in a crisis, it’s vital that the right audience sees the content. This is why it’s important for government agencies to proactively build a strategy on how to reach followers, focusing on audience growth and influencer strategy.

Step one is to increase the visibility of your agency’s social media handles. In 2019, across every demographic around the world, internet users *are* social media users.<sup>18</sup> Your citizen audience is on social media—but they may not know that you are, too.

Prominently displaying your social handles on literature, signage, and email signatures is one way of raising awareness about your activities on social media and encouraging constituents to click “Follow.”

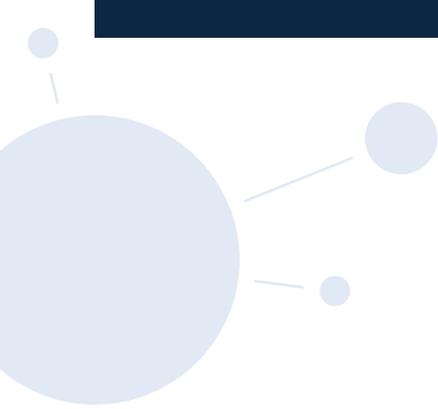
Some agencies are also finding success partnering with local influencers on social media. When it comes to combating false rumors or spreading the reach of time-sensitive information, it’s often more effective to take advantage of an influencer’s large audience than to try to replicate that audience size.

Investing in a social listening platform can help you discover the right influencers in your community. By monitoring what’s being said about your agency, or about topics and keywords that are relevant to your agency, you can easily identify highly engaged influencers who may be able to help you get accurate information to your audience on social media.

## BUILD YOUR AGENCY’S AUTHORITY AND CREDIBILITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social networks have a number of built-in features that can help agencies react effectively in a crisis. We know that government agencies are experimenting with Facebook Live for reinventing the press release, but it’s a format that comes into its own during a crisis.

As Chatham County, Georgia showed when they faced Hurricane Irma, Facebook Live gives residents a window into what action government takes in a crisis, shows the human faces behind the efforts, and provides a live environment for asking questions.<sup>20</sup>



“A lot of emergency managers are afraid that the voice of the many drowns out the official sources on Twitter, and that even if they are part of the conversation, no one is going to hear them. We disproved that and showed that official sources, at least in the cases we looked at, do have a critical impact.”

**Elodie Fichet**

Doctoral Candidate  
in the Department of Communication,  
University of Washington<sup>23</sup>

Facebook is also currently rolling out its “Today In” feature, which will better surface relevant local alerts from government agencies. Currently working with “100 local government and first responder Pages,” Facebook is committed to helping them “distribute time-sensitive and need-to-know information... [including] major road closures, natural disasters, and blackouts.”<sup>21</sup> With a monthly cap on such posts to prevent overuse, this feature has been designed with critical response in mind.

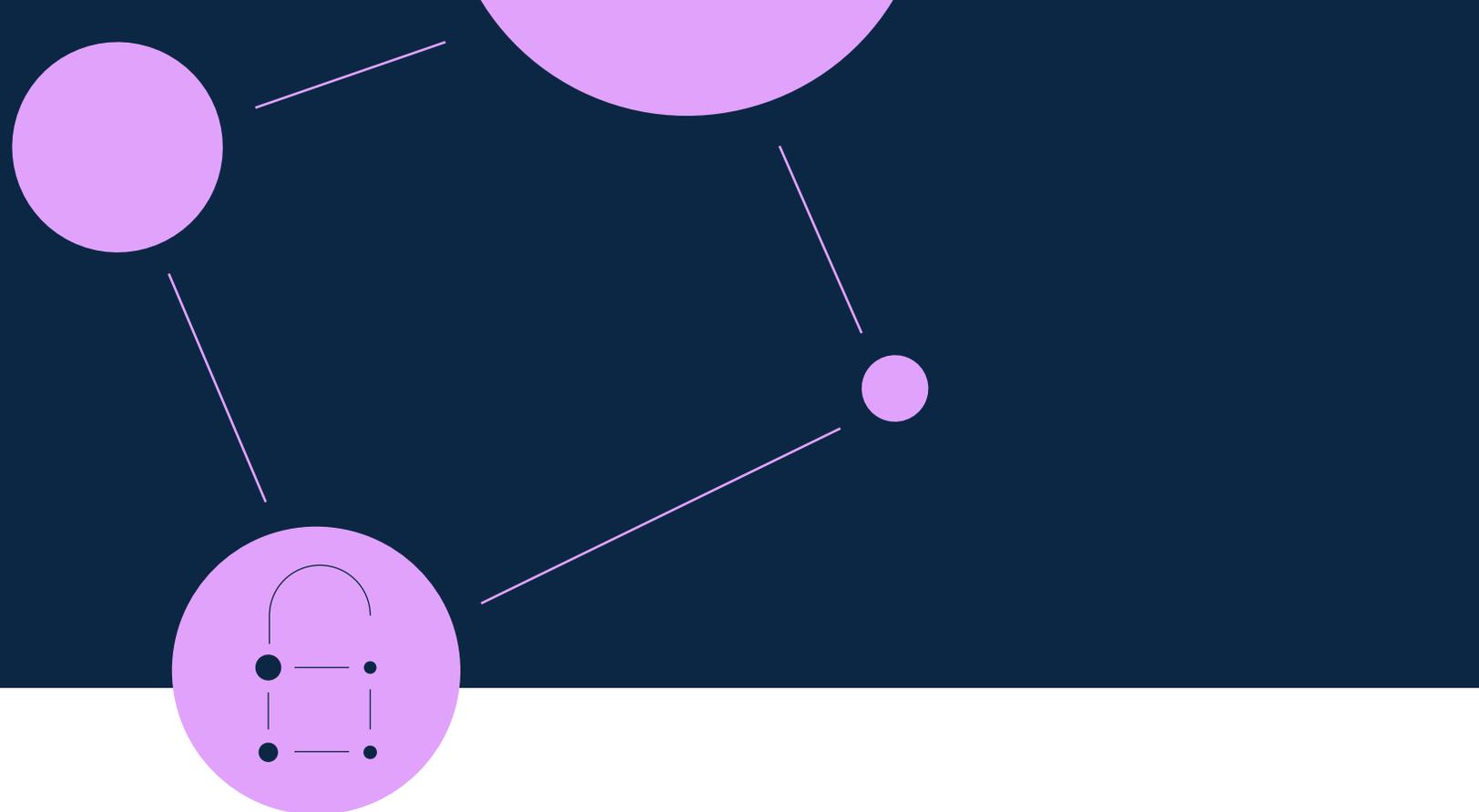
When confusion and rumor spread in a crisis, official statements on social media can have a net positive effect on debunking false information.<sup>22</sup> Agencies need to ensure they have the tools and strategy in place to listen for misinformation in trending topics, and that they have verified their social media accounts in advance. If you haven’t already done this, see Hootsuite’s guides to getting verified on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

## MAKE A PLAN TO OWN THE NARRATIVE—BEFORE A CRISIS STARTS

Many government agencies regularly deal with change management in their communities. This could be changes in services or investments that are controversial due to the fact they represent change. In these instances, social media is an important channel for educating the public and responding to queries and concerns.

The [Region of Waterloo’s rapid transit service](#) is a good example of how social media can be used to inform and engage residents, while also managing change. Investing in a new infrastructure project will never have complete backing from a community, but [Ride ION](#) shows that consistent fact-based messaging can move the dial and counter misinformation.

Social media is where citizens spend their time online—so it’s critical that agencies incorporate social as a channel in any wider communications strategy. As with crisis communications, it’s vital that government agencies have a plan in place to own the narrative on social media as it relates to projects in their jurisdiction.



## RECOMMENDATION 4

# Understand privacy laws to rebuild trust

For nearly every organization—and particularly for government agencies—regaining public trust will be a big obstacle to overcome in 2019.

Today, 20 of the 28 markets in the [Edelman Trust Barometer](#) lie in “distruster” territory. Governments around the world have a lot of work to do.<sup>24</sup>

A lack of trust in government impacts society negatively. It compromises the willingness of citizens and business to respond to public policies and can stifle economic growth.

## WHY TRUST IN GOVERNMENT IS CRITICAL<sup>25</sup>

1. Trust is important for the success of a wide range of public policies that depend on behavioral responses from the public.
2. Trust is necessary to increase the confidence of investors and consumers.
3. Trust is essential for key economic activities, most notably finance.
4. Trust in institutions is important for the success of many government policies, programs, and regulations that depend on the cooperation and compliance of citizens.

Source: [OECD](#)

For government agencies, social media is the new frontline for rebuilding trust. But in the wake of [Cambridge Analytica](#) and other data privacy scandals, people are less trusting of social media communications and suspicious of fake news stories.<sup>26</sup>

Governments have a responsibility to build more transparent policies and rules of engagement on social media to help rebuild this trust. They must also be mindful of regulatory requirements in their respective jurisdictions and use these regulations as a baseline for building a trust strategy and roadmap.

Follow these guidelines to promote the development of trust between your agency and the citizens it serves.

## DON'T BLOCK USERS OR DELETE CRITICAL POSTS

Today, organizations and individuals are subject to public criticism on social media—and few are exposed to more risk than government agencies and public officials. In such scenarios, the temptation to shut up the critics and the naysayers is strong, particularly when the criticism becomes personal.

However, due to a number of court rulings over the past few years, it's been confirmed that access to public figures and organizations on social media is a constitutional right in most countries and jurisdictions.<sup>27</sup> In the U.S., for example, all 50 states have public records laws based on the federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) that ensure public access to government records—including social media communications.

Agencies or public officials that post about government business on social media (regardless of having a disclaimer) are violating open-records laws if they don't keep a record of the postings.

## HOW TO RESPOND TO CRITICISM ONLINE

- **Don't rise to the bait.** People can be cruel when they're hidden behind their keyboards. As the manager of an agency's profile, it can be hard not to take the insults personally. Remember that your response will become part of the public record. Rise above it and stay professional.
- **Apologize and empathize.** When appropriate, say you're sorry—and mean it. A few simple words can prevent a situation from escalating. Don't use exactly the same words in every response; you'll sound robotic and insincere. Instead, build out a library of empathetic posts to use in response to critics or complaints.
- **Take the conversation offline.** It may be appropriate to remove the debate from the public forum by providing an email address or suggesting a direct message.
- **Offer more information.** It can be difficult to write a thorough and adequate response when social networks limit the number of characters you can use in a post. If a complaint is about a topic that will affect a large number of people, consider posting a link to a more detailed statement on your website.
- **Don't hit delete.** Deleting posts without archiving copies is in violation of most countries' freedom of information laws.<sup>28</sup> Deleting posts can look like an admission of guilt, or like you're covering up unflattering perspectives. It can also anger constituents and foster more negative comments. In many cases, responding openly and publicly to a complaint can effectively prevent further criticism.

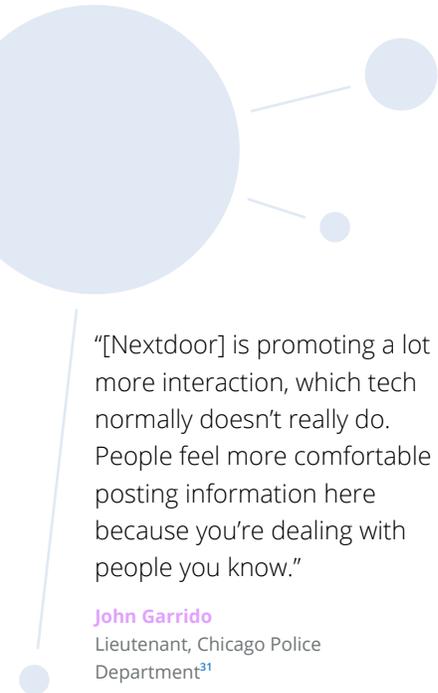
## REBUILD TRUST BY FOCUSING ON SMALLER NETWORKS

In an age of social skepticism, the rules of the social media game continue to change. Trust has reverted back to immediate friends, family, and acquaintances on social media. And as preferences for communication move away from public forums to smaller networks and one-to-one communications, governments must look for new ways to engage citizens.

Government organizations wanting to rebuild trust with citizens must shift their strategy to work within these smaller communities, often by decentralizing social media efforts across departments. State and local governments have already begun doing this. In New York, the NYPD has empowered officers in individual precincts to use Twitter to share local stories, engage with the community, and communicate how local incidents are followed up and resolved.<sup>29</sup>

Other local agencies are adopting new social networks such as Nextdoor (a private social network for neighborhoods), and are seeing promising results in rebuilding trust among local communities as a result.

Consumers continue to demand better one-to-one social experiences. As a result, the five top messaging apps—WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, WeChat, Instagram, and Twitter—now collectively count around 5 billion monthly active users, according to [Mary Meeker's Internet Trends Report 2018](#).<sup>30</sup> For perspective, this means messaging app users now easily eclipse traditional social network users worldwide.



"[Nextdoor] is promoting a lot more interaction, which tech normally doesn't really do. People feel more comfortable posting information here because you're dealing with people you know."

**John Garrido**

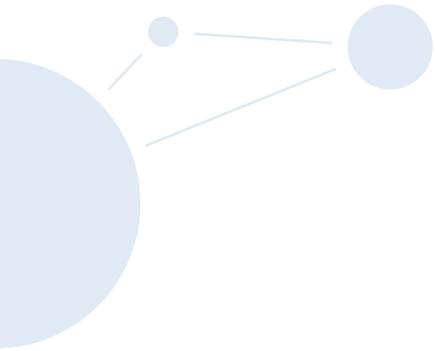
Lieutenant, Chicago Police Department<sup>31</sup>

## HOW NEXTDOOR IS REBUILDING TRUST WITHIN COMMUNITIES

[Nextdoor](#) is used by 85 percent of all U.S. neighborhoods. Its popularity is increasing around the globe, particularly with government agencies.

- Assigned staff can communicate with residents in a specific service area or the entire municipality.
- Staff can post to inform, educate, and activate residents to take high-value actions.
- Staff are not exposed to conversations members have with each other in their neighborhood networks. Members can reply to posts by staff or send them private messages.

Nextdoor instantly connects agencies with the residents they serve and helps increase satisfaction, safety, and trust.



“Twitter has long been the home of customer service on social media and the ‘go-to’ social channel for the majority of consumers. Whilst Twitter will continue to lead the field, updates to more personal channels, specifically WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, will shift how consumers interact with governments in 2019 and is a change governments and the public sector need to pay attention to if they want to stay relevant and connected to their audiences.”<sup>33</sup>

**Justin Clark**  
Head of Social Media,  
Transport for Greater Manchester

As this trend continues to develop, governments will adopt more personal channels of communication for citizen support services. According to Justin Clark, head of social media at Transport for Greater Manchester, 2019 will see the rise of WhatsApp as a primary social customer service channel.<sup>32</sup> WhatsApp is a trusted channel that citizens are already using for communication with friends and family.

## DEFINE YOUR TRUST STRATEGY AND ROADMAP

Data security and privacy can make or break an organization. In the past year, we’ve seen hundreds of billions of dollars of value lost from companies<sup>34</sup> and loss of confidence in institutions<sup>35</sup> because of data breaches and privacy scandals.

To make inroads in rebuilding the trust lost as a result of these incidents, governments must define a trust strategy and roadmap for their entire organization. Consider the following points when defining your strategy for social media:

- **Know your regulations.** Every jurisdiction and industry will have its own laws and regulations about data privacy, social media, and freedom of information. Government agencies should understand and adhere to these rules better than any private sector organization. Remember: Your agency isn’t just implementing a social media policy to cover itself legally; you’re creating a policy that employees and citizens can use as a resource. To do that, they must be able to understand it.
- **Be transparent with your privacy policies.** Demonstrate that you always have the best interest of your citizens in mind and that you can be relied upon to do the right thing when it comes to security and privacy.
- **Ensure all government social media content is archived automatically.** Agencies must be prepared to respond to public records requests—but manual archiving is time-consuming and prone to human error. Free your agency from manual archiving with solutions like Smarsh and Proofpoint. These solutions integrate with Hootsuite, giving you the efficiency benefits of a unified social media management platform while ensuring all your social media content is archived and compliant agency-wide.
- **Publish rules of engagement for all staff (and citizens).** Government agencies already have policies in place for social media usage. Instead of banning employee activity outright, agencies should outline rules of engagement for social media at all levels of government. These rules should cover when and how to engage with the public, how to respond to negative posts or complaints, and processes for archiving social content. Publicly, the terms of service should include instructions for how citizens should engage on social media, and advise when other channels are more effective.



## RECOMMENDATION 5

# Set benchmarks to measure social media impact

Limited budget is a reality for many government social media teams, and this lack of investment compounds the widespread issue of a lack of skill and resource. In a 2018 survey of public-sector employees involved in social media strategy for Hootsuite's [Social Government Benchmark Report 2018](#), respondents cited “skills gap and lack of social media training” as the largest barrier to success, with more than 30 percent acknowledging these factors as concerning.<sup>36</sup>

One contributing factor to under-resourcing for social media teams is the difficulty many government agencies face in proving the value and success of their work to others within their organization. Private sector metrics and ROI measurements don't easily translate to what governments are looking to achieve on social media; metrics like share of voice against competitors and sales numbers simply miss the mark.

Government agencies that are successfully measuring performance do so by setting direction from the top down and connecting social media activity to broader agency missions. Whether it's engaging with citizens, promoting events and services, or using social listening to better understand communities, agencies are starting to contextualize their efforts so they can measure success as a component of broader campaigns and objectives.

## CONNECT YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA GOALS TO ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES

No government social media team operates in isolation, and it's important to be able to answer the question "what purposes do we serve?" when creating measurable benchmarks.

In a Hootsuite webinar, the Los Angeles Police Department shared how they use social media to support the department's overall objectives.<sup>37</sup> For the LAPD, part of their mandate on social media is to protect and improve the overall reputation of the police force. This was put in jeopardy when a hostage situation in a grocery store saw an innocent bystander shot and killed by an officer.<sup>38</sup> Social media users were quick to begin speculating, with confusion and a lack of information leading many to jump to inaccurate conclusions.

The LAPD social media team was able to track the rise of negative sentiment in real time, and alerted leaders about the urgent need to approve and publish body camera footage. The video was released to the press and on social media within 48 hours—overturning a long-established policy where it could take over a month—and allowed the public to see and understand what had happened.

A key component of crisis communications is how critical it is to get out front of a crisis quickly with facts and to own the story from the outset. Using social media to release facts was the fastest way that LAPD could do this, and social media also played a crucial role in delivering on the mission of keeping constituents informed and their agency's reputation safe.

## SHOWCASE REAL-WORLD RESULTS TO INCREASE AGENCY INVESTMENT

The ability to tangibly measure social media results is the key to unlocking bigger budgets and running more advanced campaigns. To do this, agencies need to contextualize social media “vanity metrics” (such as reach and engagement) with measures of real-world impact on the communities served.

Round Rock, Texas runs a yearly campaign to increase residents’ understanding of how the city budget is spent. The team updates their approach every year, analyzing past performance and reviewing how overall user behavior and preferences have changed. The result is video content that hits the mark repeatedly. Recent examples include [Purrrrr-fect Budget](#), which appeals to the internet’s feline obsession, and [Base Ingredients](#), which drew inspiration from popular online cooking videos.

What started as a single video has evolved over the years to become a campaign that now uses a range of video formats, posted as both organic and promoted content. The result: a demonstrable rise in residents’ knowledge and understanding of their city’s budget.

That knowledge translates into an improved relationship with the city’s constituents. Frontline staff have reported an increase in positive sentiment from residents thanks to the transparency created by the campaign. Residents feel connected to their government’s decision making, creating an environment where they are less likely to express frustration in traditional town hall settings.

The City of Round Rock shows how social media can have a real and positive impact. By quantifying success, the social media team is afforded an increase to their budget, and able to grow that impact year over year.

## ADD SOCIAL MEDIA TACTICS TO EXISTING CAMPAIGNS

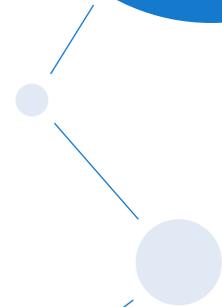
Using social media as a platform for engaging with citizens and answering questions is something that every agency should be doing—and many are.

The next step is to look at ways of adding specific social media tactics to wider promotional campaigns run by your government agency. This type of integration encourages more holistic measurement of overall campaign results and can lead to positive internal buzz about the social media team, as well as an increase in remit.

Highways England is responsible for keeping road users informed about issues that could affect their journey, and uses social media to post regular updates. However, the social media team is also involved with wider corporate campaigns, such as 2018's [Don't Be a Space Invader](#). After determining that tailgating is the biggest frustration for drivers, Highways England created a campaign to educate the driving public about the correct distance between cars and the consequences of getting too close on the motorway.<sup>39</sup>

Alongside traditional marketing and advertising, the team created social-media-friendly content that drove awareness of the facts through video and led back to the campaign's landing page. The campaign received more than 900,000 video views on Facebook alone, and the campaign landing page saw an impressive 13 percent conversion rate for bumper stickers ordered—more than 80,000 in total.

With the conclusively positive objective of making England's motorways and major roads safer, this campaign shows how social media can work together with traditional television and display advertising to drive a measurable impact on delivering agency goals. Rather than working in silos, teams achieve truly successful use of social media when it's integrated with the rest of an agency's marketing activities and objectives.



## ENDNOTES

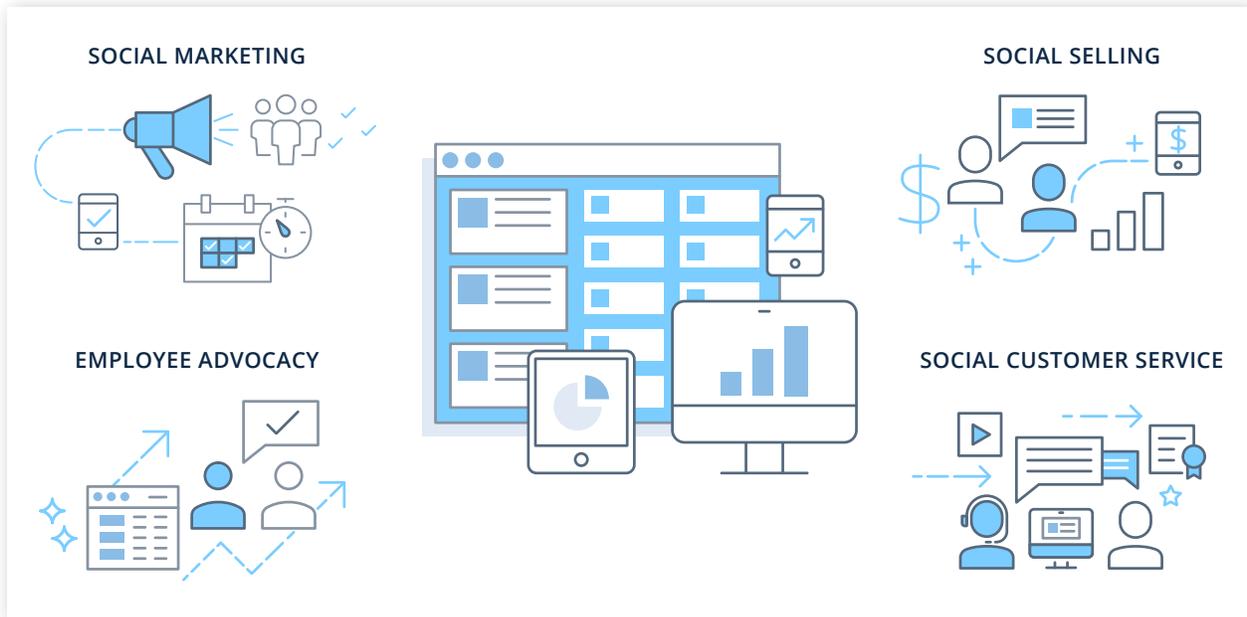
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research and analysis | Clare Morrison-Porter | Design | Eric Uhlich and Prudence Ip | Editor | Curtis Foreman

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