

Communication Best Practices

Overview

You have probably invested a lot of time, and energy, into carefully developing and curating your CLP resources. Now comes the important part of getting people discovering your content. But how do you do that? If you aren't familiar with marketing this can seem like an incredibly daunting task. Fear not, it is not as difficult as you may think. To help you along with this process we have put together this helpful guide that is filled with best practices and some ideas that you can leverage to get users finding your content. We have also included a downloadable version as well.

Publishing and Updating Content

Publishing Content

Publish now, or publish later. This can be a delicate topic. Obviously you do not want to publish any content that is incomplete, doesn't offer users any benefit, and is difficult to read or understand. But there are exceptions when partially publishing is acceptable. Let's say you are developing, or already have, a resource that is lengthy, has a lot of sections, or is just bulky due to the content. This type of resource offers the perfect opportunity to launch it in a "phased" rollout. A phased rollout not only reduces frontloaded development times, it keeps users coming back to your resource to view the new content.

Updating Your Content

You may have heard the statement "Content is King" at some point. This statement is very true when it comes to your CLP resources. Keeping your content updated and full of rich information that is beneficial to users can make a huge difference when trying to attract them to your content. It is best practice to frequently check your CLP content and make sure they are updated and in good working order.

What is "Good Working Order"?

- Content is current and relevant.
- Any links used in your content are working.
- Any images used have alt text, titles, descriptions, and captions when necessary.
- Any grammar, styling, alignment, or accuracy issues are addressed.
- Your resource has the corresponding content team, program tags, topic, competencies, resource type selected.

What is "Rich Information"?

- Content in your resource is relevant to the topic.
- It provides users with useful information or positively benefits them or their career.
- Consolidating links to resources and scattered content into one easily navigable resource that is designed to benefit users.



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Social Media

It is no secret that social media is an incredibly powerful tool that can be easily leveraged when you are trying to attract users to your CLP resources. Below are some best practices that you can use to in your posts to increase your followers and users interacting with your content.

Live Streaming and Video

This is a growing trend throughout all of the social media channels. Users not only stay tuned into videos longer, they come back for content at a much greater rate than static or one dimensional content. You can leverage this powerful tool by taking content that you would normally write about and create a video instead. This does require a little more planning, and you will need an assistant to video you speaking about your program or content but the it is worth the additional time as it will attract more viewers to your resource.

Here are some pointers on making engaging videos;

- Most important, you are representing the National Park Service so make sure your uniform is clean and neat.
- You want your video to reach a wide audience so keep it family friendly.
- We have all seen the inside of an office so pick an interesting backdrop, like the Grand Canyon or a scenic overlook in your park.
- It can be helpful to draft a brief script outlining what you want you are going to cover, this ensures you are clear and concise.
- Don't be afraid to video multiple takes of one scene, more is always better.
- Try to mix it up by switching locations for different parts of your video, there are numerous video editors on app stores that are easy to use, and best of all free.
- Create a call to action by encouraging viewers to follow you, find out more, or check out more of your content.
- Lastly, Make it fun!

Hashtags

There are several factors involved with increasing your contents views and engagements through any social channel. One simple, yet effective, way to attracting followers to your content is done through the utilization of hashtags. These are useful tools when applied correctly (do and don't examples below) and provide a gateway into users social media feeds.



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Do

- Use hashtags that are relevant to your content
 - If your content has to deal with parks use #parks
- Create hashtags that are unique to your content
 - Along with widely used hashtags it is always good practice to create your own unique hashtags.
 - Lets say you're part of the "Historic Preservation Society" and your content is focused on gardens; #HPSgardens would be a great hashtag to start using throughout all of your posts.
- Apply hashtags that are widely used on social media
 - Researching what hashtags are trending and widely used is always a good idea before using them in your posts.
 - There are several tools out there to make your hashtag research much easier, like [hashtagify](#).
- Keep your hashtags short and to the point.
 - People are prone to avoid anything that takes a lot of effort like typing in long hashtags, so make it easy and truncate your hashtags as much as possible.
 - Be sure you research first to make sure it isn't already in use.

Don't

- Use hashtags that are not relevant to your content
 - If you content is related to "maintaining historic structures" and you use the hashtags #modern or #food this could have a negative effect.
- Pack your posts with hashtags where it is hard to read because every other word is hashtagged.
 - Example of what your post text should not look like:
My #CLP #resource has the #best #content #you #can #find on the #CLP!
- Use very long hashtags
 - #thisisanexampleofahashtagthatistoolong

Influencers

Another great way to get your content noticed is by onboarding an influencer. Influencers typically have a large number of followers that actively engage with content posted on the influencers' social channels. Once the influencer follows and likes your posts, your content will quickly propagate throughout their follower network and increase the interest and engagement of your content.



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The next question you would probably ask is “how do I find and onboard an influencer?” This takes a little due diligence on your part. First, start by searching for people who are passionate about the subject your content applies to on social media platforms. Once you find someone that shares the same interest, and who has a large set of followers, simply open a line of dialog with them. You are trying to get them to champion your cause so this can take several attempts but is worth it once they are your ambassador.

Email/Newsletters

Newsletters are still an effective form of reaching your audience. These are fantastic tools as they have a high frequency of being read by recipients and provide a lot of space for you to highlight multiple pieces of your content in one condensed area. There are several newsletter platforms that are available online, we have included a few top tools that are easy to use and highly accessible. We do recommend you check with leadership before employing one of these tools as they do collect widely varying degrees of user analytics.

- [Mailchimp](#)
- [Constant Contact](#)
- [Campaign Monitor](#)
- [Send In Blue](#)
- [Convert Kit](#)

Traditional Media Best Practices

Word of Mouth

One of the oldest forms of communications and still a highly effective one is word of mouth. Interacting with people and informing them about the benefit of using the CLP is a great way to attract new users. Get them excited about the CLP by showing them your resources and demonstrating how effective they have been for your team.

Flyers & Posters

A simple one page flyer or poster placed in a high traffic common area can be an effective tool that generates interest and drive users to your content. Be sure to include URL links or a QR Code to your resources so users can find them. There are numerous QR Code generators online that you can use to create a code for your marketing materials, we have included a link to one of the easiest and most popular generators below.

- [QR Code Generator](#)



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Training Programs

Offering CLP training will not only help users find your content easily, it can help boost their career paths. This can be as simple as a brief walkthrough, setting up a profile, or an in-depth training program.

Make it FUN!

Users notoriously return to content that is fun, enlightening, and provides them with some type of benefit. Keep that in mind when creating your communications.

