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SOCIAL MEDIA PLAYBOOK

A TOOLKIT OF TIPS AND GUIDELINES FOR SQUADRONS

PURPOSE OF THIS PLAYBOOK

This playbook details recommended guidelines for squadrons for three social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Specifically, this playbook walks you through how to set up an account, how to use each platform, and how to measure your progress. What follows is a toolkit of sorts, outlining objectives, metrics, and usage instructions for the social media platforms listed above.

While Facebook is America's Boating Club's social media platform of choice in terms of communicating with members and marketing itself to the general boating public, you are encouraged to adopt the platforms you feel will benefit your squadron the most, as resources allow. As social media trends change, this playbook will be updated accordingly.

This playbook was devised by a team comprised of America's Boating Club representatives and members, all with a range of social media experience and knowledge: HQ Managing Editor Amy Townsend, HQ Publications Director Yvonne Hill, R/C Ron Jones, Lt Rose Stano, and P/C Jim Greenhalgh.

If you have any questions about social media or want to participate at the national level, contact Managing Editor Amy Townsend at townsenda@hq.usps.org.

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OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK

This section covers the basics of using Facebook, including how to set up a page, how to use the platform's features, engage with users, and measure your growth. Additionally, this playbook provides more advanced tips for squadrons that are already established on Facebook and are interested in increasing their reach and engagement. Facebook can be accessed via desktop or mobile, so page admins are encouraged to download the Facebook app to their smart phones for ease of use.

The suggested guidelines below will help America's Boating Club create a consistent, reliable brand across social media, and squadrons are strongly encouraged to adopt them where applicable.

1. Getting Started

Create your squadron page as a Business Page using the squadron or club's name. *Do not set up the page as a personal account or as a Facebook group.* While groups offer a way for members of a community to interact with each other, Pages are a way to connect with your audience and public at large. In order to set up a Facebook Business Page, you must link it to your personal profile, as every page needs an administrator to manage it.

1.1. To create a page, go to [Facebook](#) (or click on the  icon at the top of your home page and then click "Create New Page"). When prompted, fill out the page information, including the page name (i.e., America's Boating Club of Raleigh or Waukegan Sail & Power Squadron), category (i.e., nonprofit organization), and page description (see section 1.2).

1.2. Write your page description or About section to include a reference United States Power Squadrons, America's Boating Club. Describe what your business does, the services you provide, or the purpose of the page. For example:

America's Boating Club of Anytown, a unit of United States Power Squadrons, America's Boating Club, is located in Anytown, Any State. We promote boating safety by teaching boaters the skills they need to feel confident and have fun on the water.

1.3. Set your profile photo and cover photo.

1.3.1. As stated in the [Marketing Guidebook](#), the profile photo should include the national America's Boating Club logo and the squadron burgee. For best resolution, the profile photo should be a .png file and sized to at least 170 x 170 pixels.

1.3.2. The cover photo should be something that conveys your squadron and the America's Boating Club brand. For example, you could use an image depicting a squadron activity (preferably water or boating related) or a local waterway. The cover photo must be 400 pixels wide and 150 pixels tall.

1.4. Set up a call-to-action button on your page. This can direct users to visit your squadron website or to contact you. To set up the action button, click on "+ Add a Button" under your cover photo, and follow the instructions. Test the button to make sure it works.

Where prompted, fill out any other page information, such as location, website, contact, etc. Once you've created your page, you should check it across all devices to make sure it looks and works as expected. View your page on desktop, mobile and tablet devices if possible.

2. Using Facebook's features

To use your squadron page, you will have to log in to your personal account. Once logged in, you can access any pages you manage by clicking on "Pages" in the lefthand column of your home page, or click on the Flag icon () at the top of the home page. Whenever you wish to post or otherwise interact as your page, check the profile photo to ensure it's the squadron page's profile photo and not your personal profile photo.

2.1. Finding followers

2.1.1. With your squadron page up, the next step is to gain followers. Typically, Facebook will prompt you to invite your Facebook friends (people who follow your personal profile) to follow your business page. As a squadron member, likely your Friends list includes fellow members and boaters who would benefit from following your squadron page. Select the users you wish to invite, and click send. Facebook will notify them about your page.

2.1.2. Additionally, you can create a post on your personal feed to promote your squadron's business page. Explain what the page is about, why people should follow it, and encourage your friends to share your post to expand your reach. Don't forget to include a link to your squadron page.

- 2.1.3.** Inform other squadron members about the page and encourage them to follow it. Email them the link, put it in your squadron newsletter, or mention it at squadron events or during classes.

2.2. Posting

- 2.2.1.** Posts are the quickest and simplest way to engage and communicate with followers. Posting frequently shows users you are active and reliable, and ultimately helps expand your reach and audience.
- 2.2.2.** Posts can be text, photos, links or videos. Photos and videos get more attention and engagement than simple text posts. Examples of posts you can make on your squadron page include information about upcoming classes or events; photos or videos from squadron activities such as raftups, changes of watch or beach cleanups; or safe boating articles (such as from [The Ensign](#) or [America's Boating Compass](#)). Consider asking questions to elicit feedback.
- 2.2.3.** In addition to original posts, you can also share posts made by other Facebook users. If you need quick content for your page, share posts from [America's Boating Club's Facebook page](#), [The Ensign's Facebook page](#), or [Boat Live 365's Facebook page](#) by clicking the Share button on posts you wish to share with your followers.
- 2.2.4.** You can post in real time, or you can schedule posts to publish at a later date or time. Under Publishing Tools in the lefthand menu, you can see published posts, scheduled posts, or post drafts. Click on "Scheduled" and "Schedule a post" to make a post for later. Then set the date and time to be published.
- 2.2.5.** Another way to engage followers on Facebook is to like posts or comment on posts. When commenting as your squadron page, however, keep in mind you are representing your squadron and America's Boating Club, and act accordingly. Refer to "Social Media Policy" for more guidelines on social media behavior.
- 2.2.6.** As Facebook administrator, you can perform other actions such as editing or pinning posts. Simply click on the "..." icon on any post to see more options.
- 2.2.7.** When making posts, you can tag other pages (only business profiles, not personal profiles) to amplify your content. For example, if your squadron participates in an event with another squadron, share photos and tag that squadron by typing @Squadron Name. You can also tag @America's Boating Club

(or @uspowersquadrons) for anything related to your squadron or the organization, and the national page will share your post to its feed. (Do not tag unrelated pages as this could be considered spamming and should be avoided.)

2.3. Following other pages

- 2.3.1.** In addition to gaining followers, you want to grow your audience by following other pages. (You cannot follow personal profiles.) Be sure to follow [America's Boating Club](#) and any other official pages related to America's Boating Club such as [The Ensign](#), [Boat Live 365](#), [America's Boating Channel](#), etc. This ensures you populate your News Feed with content that is relevant to your squadron and its interests, as well as those of your members and followers, that you can share to your followers as desired.
- 2.3.2.** Follow other squadrons and boating industry pages. For a list of recommended or relevant organizations to follow, see [Section 4 on Resources](#).

3. Advanced tips

Use these advanced Facebook tips to promote your squadron and reach prospective members.

3.1. Facebook groups

- 3.1.1.** Another way to grow your audience is by joining Facebook groups. You can join boating groups as your squadron page or as yourself to interact with likeminded Facebook users.
- 3.1.2.** When appropriate (being mindful of the group's rules), you can share information from America's Boating Club, your squadron, or safe boating articles from any of our online publications such as [The Ensign magazine](#), [America's Boating Compass](#) or [America's Boating Channel](#).

3.2. Sharing content

- 3.2.1.** If you wish to share a page or an article from an external website (meaning, it's not already a Facebook post), most web pages/articles have a built-in sharing feature. From there, you can choose to share to your social media platform of choice.
- 3.2.2.** To share directly to your squadron Facebook page, click the drop-down menu to select to share to your page. To share to a group, switch to your squadron page's Facebook profile, click the drop-down menu to select to share to a group, type in

the group name, and select it. Write a brief sentence or two about why the page or article might be of interest, and click post.

Or, you can copy and paste a link directly to share as a post in a group or to your squadron page. Facebook should automatically generate the link preview.

- 3.2.3.** When you share an article, explain who we are and what we do as well as why this article is of interest. This is helpful in establishing our brand. You can use this boilerplate text (edit depending on the source):

The Ensign magazine/America's Boating Compass/Boat Live 365/America's Boating Channel is an official channel of United States Power Squadrons, America's Boating Club, a volunteer organization whose members teach boating skills and best practices to help improve the safety of our nation's waterways.

3.3. Promoted posts & advertising

Squadrons with a social media budget can pay to promote their posts or create ads.

Boosting posts, as detailed below, is relatively simple and inexpensive:

- 3.3.1.** If a post is available to boost, such as a squadron course you wish to promote, you will see a blue "Boost Post" button on the post; alternatively, when you go to make a post, you can also click the slider to "Boost post."
- 3.3.2.** Choose a goal from the provided list (for example, increasing engagement or website visits), then fill out the details for the ad:
- **Button:** Depending on what you choose here, you will need to also provide a link (such as the website to sign up for a course).
 - **Audience:** You can tailor the audience for your post based on a number of factors, such as page followers/people who like your page and similar, people in your area, interests or behaviors, etc.; or you can select "Advantage Audience" and let Facebook tailor it for you.
 - **Budget:** Select a total money amount you wish to spend.
 - **Duration:** Choose how many days you want the ad to run or choose a specific end date.
 - **Placements:** Choose to run the ad on just Facebook or a connected Instagram account as well.

Once you've entered your payment information, you can click "Boost Post." In the righthand column, you will see "Estimated daily results" that show you an estimate of the number of people reached as well as post engagement or website visits (depending on your specified goal).

- 3.3.3.** Facebook reviews every ad; assuming yours is approved, you will receive a notification that your boosted post is up and running.
- 3.3.4.** When your promotion ends, you can view the results in the Ad Center (accessed from the lefthand column on your page).

3.4. Page roles

If you are able to have more than one page administrator, you can delegate roles to each person, which allows them to have different privileges and access. Page role positions are Administrator, Editor, Moderator, Advertiser or Analyst; each role is defined on the site.

- 3.4.1.** To assign someone a new role, click on your page's Settings, then go to "Assign a new Page role" and type the person's name. (If you are unable to find their profile, enter their email connected to their profile). If you are not friends with the person, the request will go to their email, and they will have to approve it.
- 3.4.2.** You can also remove someone from their role if they leave or for any other reason.

3.5. Changing page name

With our name and brand change, many squadrons have changed their names and may wish to update their Facebook page to reflect this. Doing so is relatively easy but will need to be approved by Facebook.

- 3.5.1.** Go to your page's Settings. On the General Page Settings page, click on "Edit" next to the page name. Change the name to the desired one, review the change, enter your password to confirm, and click "Request Change." It might take a few days for the change to take place if approved.
- 3.5.2.** Some page name changes are denied if the names appear to be too dissimilar or unrelated. In the event that Facebook denies your request, first try changing the name to one that includes BOTH the old name and the new name. For example, if the old page name is Raleigh Sail & Power Squadron, change it to Raleigh Sail & Power Squadron (America's Boating Club of Raleigh). Once that is approved, you

can't change the name again for 7 days. When possible, change it again to just the new name (in this example, America's Boating Club of Raleigh).

3.6. Creating Events

You can create an Event on Facebook to promote your squadron courses or other activities.

- 3.6.1.** Click on the "Events" tab under the cover photo on your page, or from the lefthand menu. Under "Upcoming Events," you will see any events you create. Otherwise, it will say "No upcoming events."
- 3.6.2.** Click on "Create new event." Fill out the information, including the event name, date, time, and description. You can also add a cover photo for the event.
- 3.6.3.** Select whether the event is virtual or in-person. If in-person, provide the physical address. If virtual, you can include a link or schedule a [Facebook Live](#).
- 3.6.4.** You can also choose a category to help people find your event, add a co-host if applicable, make it a recurring event, change the communication settings, or add a link to purchase tickets or sign up.
- 3.6.5.** Once you're done, click "Create event." Now you can invite guests; search for people by name, email address or phone number, and click on users' names to invite them. Make sure to promote your event on your page and encourage attendees to RSVP.

4. Resources

In this section you will find resources that will help your experience on Facebook, from suggested Facebook groups and pages to follow to sites where you can find relevant content to share.

4.1. Helpful groups and pages

- 4.1.1.** In addition to America's Boating Club and other squadron pages, we suggest following our partners, including but not limited to: [USCG Auxiliary](#), [BoatUS](#), [NASBLA](#), [National Safe Boating Council](#), [Sea Tow Foundation](#), [NOAA](#), [National Weather Service](#), [DAN Boater](#), and [Sea Scouts BSA](#).
- 4.1.2.** Other authoritative industry pages you can follow include [National Marine Manufacturers Association](#), [Operation Dry Water](#), [Tall Ships of America](#), to name a few.
- 4.1.3.** Additionally, America's Boating Club has a Facebook group, [Social Media for Squadrons](#), that provides social media resources and assistance for squadrons.

By joining the group, you can engage in conversations with other members and squadrons and help each other with promoting our mission as a safe boating organization.

4.2. Boating content

- 4.2.1. [The Ensign magazine](#) and [America's Boating Compass](#) are a treasure trove of safe boating articles.
- 4.2.2. [America's Boating Channel](#) has a plethora of safe boating videos you can share. Remember, videos and other visual content are the most engaging content when it comes to Facebook.
- 4.2.3. [Boat Live 365](#) has a resources page, including [social media graphics](#) that are free to download and post to your page. These graphics include safe boating facts on a range of topics.

4.3. Troubleshooting

[Facebook Help Center](#) has a number of tutorials and explainers on how to use their site. You can browse their categories and drop-down menus, or type in a question you have to find related articles and answers to your problems. If you have trouble setting up your page, follow their instructions [here](#).

4.4. Helpful tools

- 4.4.1. Facebook has a built-in analytical tool called [Insights](#) to help you assess your page's performance and measure your progress and growth. You can use Insights to understand how people are engaging with your page, view metrics about your page's performance, and learn which posts have the most engagement. To access Insights, click on it in the lefthand menu from your page.
The main metrics for gauging your page's growth are:
Audience: You can see the number of followers you have, as well as their age, gender, and general location.
Engagement: This includes how people interact with your posts, such as likes, comments and shares.
Reach: This is the total number of users who have seen your ad or content (versus **impressions**, which is the total number of times your content was viewed).

- 4.4.2.** There are a number of design programs that allow you to create simple graphics for social media. [Canva](#) is a free design tool and relatively simple to use. It provides templates that can be customized to fit Facebook and Instagram, for example.
- 4.4.3.** A useful tool for sharing links on Facebook is the [Facebook Sharing Debugger](#). Pasting a link into the debugger will show you a Facebook link preview (i.e., how the link will show up on Facebook when you post it). The debugger can also help you [fix any issues](#) with the link preview prior to posting it.

INSTAGRAM

This section covers the basics of using Instagram, including how to set up a profile, how to use the platform's features and engage with users, and how to measure your success. If your squadron or district decides to create an Instagram account, the following instructions will help you get the most out of this increasingly popular social media service.

1. Getting Started

You can create an Instagram business account without having your own personal account. (It's advisable to set your squadron account up as a business profile so you can access specific features, such as Page Insights.)

1.1. To create a squadron profile, download the Instagram app from your phone's app store, and tap on the icon to open the app. You can choose to [Create a New Account](#), or if you already have an account, select "Add a New Account."

1.1.1. If setting up a new account from scratch, enter your email or mobile number. Retrieve the confirmation code sent to you and enter it, and click "Next." Fill out information as prompted.

1.1.2. If adding a new account, open the app and log in to your personal account. Navigate to your profile and click on your username up top. A prompt will pop up; click on "Add account." Or click on the hamburger menu in the upper righthand corner, go to "Settings," then "Account." Scroll down to "Add new professional account." Fill out the information when prompted.

1.2. For your username, we encourage you to use your squadron's name. Usernames must be 30 characters or less, and can only use letters, numbers, periods or underscores. Good username examples could be americasboatingclub_raleigh or capecoralsquadron. If it exceeds the character limit, you will have to shorten it, but try to keep ABC, USPS, or squadron in the username.

1.3. To finish setting up your business account, select a category (i.e., nonprofit organization), click "Business," add contact details, and finish the setup process.

1.4. Set your profile photo. Click the circle on your profile page, or the + button, and choose a photo from your phone. We suggest using your squadron burgee here.

- 1.5.** Fill out your bio, website, and contact information. In your bio, you should mention America's Boating Club. Use the following boilerplate copy, edited as needed:

[Squadron name] is a unit of United States Power Squadrons, America's Boating Club, a volunteer organization whose members teach boating skills and best practices to help improve the safety of our nation's waterways.

2. Using Instagram

2.1. Posts

Instagram is a visual app and is best suited to posting photos or videos. When creating a post you can share up to 10 photos or videos at a time.

- 2.1.1.** To share a post, click on the + icon in the upper righthand corner of your home page. (The default option is to make a new post, but at the bottom of your screen you will see options for Post, Story, Reel, or Live.)
- 2.1.2.** When making your post, you can either take photos through the app or select photos/videos from your camera roll (you will have to allow app access to your photos). To post more than one photo, click "Select multiple."
- 2.1.3.** Once you've selected your photos or videos, click "Next" at the top of your screen. You can add filters to the photo(s) or click "Next" again.
- 2.1.4.** Write a caption for your photos or videos to explain what is happening in the photos.
- 2.1.5.** Other options include tagging people or other accounts, adding the location of where the photos were taken, etc.
- 2.1.6.** When you're ready to post, simply click "Share." The photos or videos will then appear as a post on your profile and appear in your feed. Your followers will see it in their feeds, as well.

2.2. Stories

If you want to share something temporarily, you can make a story instead of a post.

- 2.2.1.** To create a story, click on the + icon in the upper righthand corner of your home page or screen. At the bottom, click on "Story."
- 2.2.2.** Take a photo with the camera in the app or choose photos from your phone by clicking on the photo thumbnail in the bottom lefthand corner to access your camera roll.

- 2.2.3.** With your photo selected, you can choose to customize it by clicking on any of the icons at the top and adding text, graphics, filters, or tags. Or you can simply share as is.
- 2.2.4.** To tag another account or add the location of the photo, click on the text icon. Above your keyboard, you will see “Mention” and “Location.” To tag someone, select “Mention” and type @ plus their username. You do not have to be following them to tag them. To add the location, select “Location” and type in the address.
- 2.2.5.** When you’re ready to share, click the arrow (➔) button at the bottom of your screen. You will see the options to share it to your story, as a message, or to a close group of friends. When you click “Share,” you can also choose to add to Highlights (see Section 2.2.6. below for more information).
- 2.2.6.** On your profile page, you can create Highlights, which will permanently save and categorize any stories you choose to add to them. This is a good way to get your followers’ or prospective members’ attention to any stories of note. Click the “New” button on your profile, and it will bring up all the Stories you’ve shared. Select any or all related photos (for example, a squadron change of watch or raftup), and click “Next.” Give the Highlights folder a name, change the cover photo if you wish, and click “Add.” You can create as many Highlights as you want.

2.3. Reels

In addition to posts and stories, you can also create reels, which are short entertaining videos. You can edit and splice together photos or videos, and add audio, graphics, text, etc. To learn how to create a reel, read Instagram’s [instructions](#), or you can simply use posts or stories to share basic videos.

2.4. Finding followers

- 2.4.1.** Invite people you know to follow your squadron Instagram page. Ask your family, friends and squadron members to follow.
- 2.4.2.** To help people find your account easily, add a link to your Instagram account on your squadron website, in the squadron newsletter, and even in your email signature. Encourage your Facebook followers to follow you on Instagram too.

- 2.4.3.** Follow people and organizations you want to connect with. Follow industry pages and boating safety accounts as well as other squadron pages.
- 2.4.4.** Including hashtags on your posts can help people find your organization (see Section 2.4. Hashtags below for tips).

2.5. Hashtags

Hashtags are a great way to get discovered by users on Instagram, especially when you want to reach people beyond your followers. When using a hashtag, your posts and stories appear alongside other content from accounts using the same hashtag.

- 2.5.1.** Search for relevant topics and keywords to find hashtags relevant to your squadron. For example, #safeboating, #boatingsafety, #powerboating, #sailing, etc.
- 2.5.2.** See what other boating industry or safe boating accounts use for hashtags. For example, #safeboatingweek, #wearit.
- 2.5.3.** When you make a post, you should include a hashtag; ideally, Instagram recommends three or more hashtags that describe our business, products or serviced to reach people who may be interested in our organization but haven't found it yet.
- 2.5.4.** You can also create your own hashtags specific to your squadron and encourage followers and members to use it when they share photos or videos related to the squadron. For example, if your squadron has an event and you want to encourage users to post about it, create a specific hashtag for it.

3. Resources

In this section you will find resources that will improve your experience on Instagram, from suggested Instagram pages to follow to sites you can find relevant content to share.

3.1. Helpful accounts

- 3.1.1** In addition to following @americasboatingclub and other squadrons, we suggest following our partners, including but not limited to: [@uscgaux](#), [@boatus](#), [@boatingcampaign](#), [@sea tow](#), [@noaa](#), [@nws](#), and [@seascoutsbsa](#).
- 3.1.1.** Don't forget to follow America's Boating Club-related entities like [@americasboatingchannel](#) and [@boatlive365](#).

- 3.1.2.** You can follow [@instagramforbusiness](#) for tips on how to grow your squadron page and expand your reach and audience.
- 3.2. Tools**

 - 3.2.1.** Like Facebook, Instagram has a built-in analytics tool called [Insights](#). With a business account and access to the professional dashboard, you can access Insights to see things like how well your posts are doing, how many accounts you've reached, how much engagement and interaction you've received, etc.
 - 3.2.2.** For more in depth how-tos and tutorials, you can refer to Instagram's [Getting Started](#).
 - 3.2.3.** Like with Facebook, [Canva](#) provides customizable templates and graphics for Instagram as well. Just create an account, and start designing!
- 3.3. Troubleshooting**

Instagram has a [Help Center](#) to answer questions and help resolve any problems you encounter.

TWITTER

This section details the basics of using Twitter, including how to set up an account, how to use the platform's features, engage with users, and measure your success. If your squadron uses Twitter, the following information will help you get the most from this social media platform.

1. Getting Started

When setting up Twitter, create a free professional account as opposed to a personal account. If you already have an account for your squadron, you can switch it from a personal account to a professional account.

1.1. To create a professional account, go to twitter.com and click “Sign up,” and [Create Account](#).

Enter your information as prompted and complete the sign-up process.

1.2. If you have a personal account for your squadron and wish to change it to a professional account, sign in to your account, and [follow these instructions](#).

1.3. Once you have your account created, choose a username that is 15 characters or less, and a display name, i.e., your squadron name.

1.4. Finish filling out your profile by setting your profile photo (your burgee) and cover photo, as well as your About section, or “elevator pitch” that explains who you are. Reference United States Power Squadrons, America's Boating Club in your bio. For example:

America's Boating Club of Anytown, a unit of United States Power Squadrons, America's Boating Club, is located in Anytown, Any State. We promote boating safety by teaching boaters the skills they need to feel confident and have fun on the water.

2. Using Twitter

2.1. Timeline

When logged in to your account, you will see what is called your timeline, or feed. Your timeline is divided into two categories, “For You” and “Following.” The latter contains tweets from users you follow, while the former contains tweets from users that you might not follow but that are recommended to you by Twitter's algorithm, as well as any tweets about topics you might be interested in.

2.2. Tweets

Posts on Twitter are called tweets, which are blurbs of text totaling no more than 250 characters, or also photos or videos.

- 2.2.1.** To tweet, click on the blue + icon (on mobile) or in the text box at the top of your screen (on desktop). Type out your text, attach a photo or video, or include a link, and hit “Tweet.”
- 2.2.2.** You can share, or retweet, other users’ tweets. Simply click the retweet button () beneath the tweet to share it directly to your timeline, and you will see the tweet on your timeline; your followers will be able to see the retweet as well.
- 2.2.3.** You can also quote retweet, which means you share another user’s tweet with commentary of your own attached. When you click to retweet, choose “Quote retweet,” add your comment or media, and post.
- 2.2.4.** In addition to tweeting, you can reply to others’ tweets or your own tweets (click ) , or like tweets (click ).
- 2.2.5.** If you wish to tweet something that is more than 250 characters, or you want to tweet more than once on a related topic, you can thread a tweet into a series of connected tweets. Click the button to compose a new tweet and type out your message. Click on the + icon and type out the rest of your message or a new related message. Repeat as many times as necessary. When you’re ready to post your thread, click “Tweet All” to post.

2.3. Finding followers

- 2.3.1.** Follow @uspsabc and other affiliated accounts such as [@AmericasBoating](#) (America’s Boating Channel) and [@BoatLive365](#) as well as any other squadrons’ accounts.
- 2.3.2.** Follow our partners, including but not limited to [@uscgaux](#), [@boatus](#), [@safeboatcouncil](#), [@seatow](#), [@NOAA](#), [@NWS](#), and [@seascoutsbsa](#), as well as other industry leaders.
- 2.3.3.** Encourage your squadron members to follow your page on their personal accounts and then follow them back.

- 2.3.4.** Track topics (see Section 2.4. Following Topics below) and consider following users who tweet regularly about those topics or topics relevant to your squadron. Engaging with other tweets and users is an effective way to get followers.

2.4. Following Topics

Topics are trending, or popular, subjects or conversations. You can choose to follow a Topic, and Twitter will personalize your Twitter experience with relevant tweets, events, and ads. Twitter will also show you other Topics that you might be interested in based on your profile and activity, such as the tweets you view or like.

- 2.4.1.** From your timeline, Twitter will occasionally suggest a Topic for you to follow. Click on the follow button next to the topic.
- 2.4.2.** Or you can click on your profile and select Topics from the lefthand menu. From the suggested options, click to follow any of the Topics or search through relevant categories to find Topics of interest. Any Topics you've followed will show up in the Followed column.

2.5. Hashtags

Like with Instagram, hashtags are a great way to get discovered by users, especially when you want to reach beyond your followers. When using a hashtag, your posts and stories appear alongside other content from accounts using the same hashtag.

- 2.5.1.** Search for relevant topics and keywords to find hashtags relevant to your squadron. For example, #safeboating, #boatingsafety, #powerboating, #sailing.
- 2.5.2.** See what other boating industry or safe boating accounts use for hashtags. For example, #safeboatingweek, #wearit.
- 2.5.3.** Whenever you tweet, include a general boating-related hashtag, or a more specific hashtag, depending on the context.
- 2.5.4.** You can also create your own hashtags specific to your squadron or squadron events and encourage followers and members to use it when they share photos or videos related to the squadron/event.

3. Resources

In this section you will find resources that will help your experience on Twitter, such as tools to measure your success and sites for further information.

3.1. Professional Tools

Go to your profile and click on the more (...) icon to access Professional Tools from the lefthand menu. Click on Professional Home to see your dashboard of metrics for the past 7 days. Here you can see your impressions, engagement rate, profile visits, and link clicks, or find more people to follow. Additionally, you can promote, or pay to boost, a tweet.

3.2. Helpful sites

For more in-depth insight on how to best use Twitter to market your squadron, visit business.twitter.com.

OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

There are a number of other social media platforms, more than we could ever hope to cover in this Playbook, and many of them not especially suited to the needs of our members.

However, squadrons might find other platforms particularly useful.

- [YouTube](#)—the most popular social media platform, but with a somewhat steeper learning curve—can be a good resource for supplementing classroom instruction or materials.
- Some squadrons have found success on platforms such as [Meetup](#) and [NextDoor](#); the former is a social media site for organizing in-person and virtual activities and events, while NextDoor is a hyperlocal social networking site aimed at neighborhoods. Both provide avenues for squadrons to promote local events such as classes or other community activities.
- [Scuttlebutt](#) is a new social media platform for boaters. This app works much like Facebook; simply create an account and share your boating updates, photos and videos. You might find it helpful for recruiting new members to your squadron or promoting your squadron classes.