How to Communicate with Our Athletes through Social Media

Special Olympics *Pennsylvania*

Introduction

- ## Session Facilitators:

  - Nicole Jones, Senior Director of Marketing & Communications

  - Wenona Sutton, Marketing Communications Manager

  - Tarre Apreala, SOPA Athlete and Global Messenger

- ## Topics of discussion will revolve around:

  - Limitations of communicating with our athlete population.

  - How to use social media as a way to create improved communications.

  - How some Local Programs use social media to communicate.

  - Step-by-step instructions on how to get started using Facebook.

  - Social media best practices and SOPAs social media policy.

  - Q & A

Communicating with Our Athlete Population

- Many athletes do not respond well to phone/e-mail messages, however they are very active on Social Media.

- The need to develop social media strategies was a topic voted for during the 2014 and 2016 Athlete Congress.

- Athlete Survey Results:

  - 38 athlete responses representing 17 local Programs

  - 87% use social media

  - Facebook was the highest used medium that a majority checked at least once a day

  - Many were satisfied with the social engagement that their local Programs did provide (if applicable), but those whose did not use social were in favor of its use

  - Athletes also felt that Social Media should be used as a tool to help recruit more athletes, get more people to volunteer at sectional and state events, and that more programs should become more involved on Twitter

How Social Media Can Help Programs/Athletes Better Communicate

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Facebook Pages Versus Facebook Groups

- <u>Facebook Pages</u>: Enable public figures, businesses, organizations and other entities to create an authentic and public presence. Unlike personal profiles, Facebook Pages are visible to everyone on the internet by default. You, and every person on Facebook, can connect with these Pages by becoming a fan and then receive their updates in your News Feed and interact with them.

- <u>Facebook Groups</u>: Are the place for small group communication and for people to share their common interests and express their opinions. Groups allow people to come together around a common cause, issue or activity to organize, express objectives, discuss issues, post photos and share related content.

Facebook Pages Versus Facebook Groups (Cont.)

- Facebook Pages:
  - Privacy: Page information and posts are public and generally available to everyone on Facebook.

- Facebook Groups:
  - Privacy: In addition to a public setting, more privacy settings are available for groups. In secret and closed groups, posts are only visible to group members.
    - Audience: You can adjust group privacy to require members to be approved or added by admins.
    - Communication: In groups, members receive notifications by default when any member posts in the group. Group members can participate in chats, upload photos to shared albums, collaborate on group docs and invite members who are friends to group events.

Facebook Groups Privacy Settings

What are the privacy settings for groups?

When you create a group, you can choose 3 privacy settings: **Public**, **Closed** and **Secret**. The table below shows who can join these groups and what people can see about them.

	Public	Closed	Secret
Who can join?	Anyone can join or be added or invited by a member	Anyone can ask to join or be added or invited by a member	Anyone, but they have to be added or invited by a member
Who can see the group's name?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see who's in the group?	Anyone	Anyone	Only current members
Who can see the group description?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see the group tags?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see what members post in the group?	Anyone	Only current members	Only current members
Who can find the group in search?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see stories about the group on Facebook (ex: News Feed and search)?	Anyone	Only current members	Only current members

If you're an admin of a group, learn how to change the privacy settings of your group.

State/Local Program Facebook Group Examples

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Athlete Leadership Secret Group

- A place for <u>all</u> interested SOPA athletes to interact with one another and connect with the Athlete Leadership (AL) Coordinator.
- Used to inform athletes about upcoming AL University sessions, Input Councils, online surveys, newsletter issues, Global Messenger speeches, #WellnessWednesday facts and more!
- More than 180 members
- <u>Athlete</u> friend requests to Jelsea Schrob to join.

Lehigh County Closed Group

- A group is for athletes, coaches, volunteers and parents/caregivers of athletes.
- Used to communicate practice times, cancellations, special events, etc.
- More than 180 members.
- Tarre Apreala will discuss the benefits associated with participating in a closed group as opposed to a general Facebook page.

Potter/Venango Forrest Public Groups

- More than 50 – 80 members
- Used to communicate practice schedules, share images, etc.

Philadelphia Public Page vs. Public Group Page

The Facebook page provides content for a broad audience; whereas, the Facebook group – in this case – stimulates more athlete communications.

How to Create a Facebook Group

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Steps on how to create a group

1. Create a Facebook Group in association with an existing Facebook profile or page. For directions on how to create a Facebook page, review our "SOPA Social Media How-To Guide" handout – also available via our online Resources.

2. Click in the top right of the Facebook page and select Create Group. ***

3. You will then see this lightbox. Name your group.

Some steps are taken from
https://www.postplanner.com/how-to-create-a-facebook-group/

Steps on how to create a group

4. I am naming my group "SOPAs Facebook Group." This name can be whatever you want & you can change it later. Make the group name memorable and searchable -- so people can find it.

5. You are required to add at least 1 friend to the group before you can create it. If you don't you will get an error message.

6. You'll now need to decide what privacy setting you want your group to have.

Create New Group

Please add at least one friend to your group.

Group Name — SOPAs Facebook Group

Members — Enter names or email addresses...

Privacy ○ 🌐 **Public**
Anyone can see the group, its members and their posts.

◉ 🔓 **Closed**
Anyone can find the group and see who's in it. Only members can see posts.

○ 🔒 **Secret**
Only members can find the group and see posts.

Learn more about groups privacy

Cancel   Create

Steps on how to create a group

7. If you have fewer than 250 members you'll be able to change the settings as you see fit. But as soon as your groups grows to over 250 members, you can only change an Open group to Closed or Secret -- and a Closed group to Secret. You won't be able to change the privacy again after this.

8. After you choose your privacy setting, click the "Create" button.

Create New Group

Group Name | SOPAs Facebook Group

Members | Enter names or email addresses...

Favorites | ☐ Add this group to your favorites.

Privacy | ○ 🌐 Public
Anyone can see the group, its members and their posts.

● 🔓 Closed
Anyone can find the group and see who's in it. Only members can see posts.

○ 🔒 Secret
Only members can find the group and see posts.

Learn more about groups privacy

Cancel | **Create**

Steps on how to create a group

9. Facebook will now give you the option to choose from a wide array of creative graphics for your icon/avatar. This is completely up to you and bears no significance as far as Facebook is concerned. But if you've created many groups or have multiple groups in your favorites, you'll want to choose an icon you can easily identify.
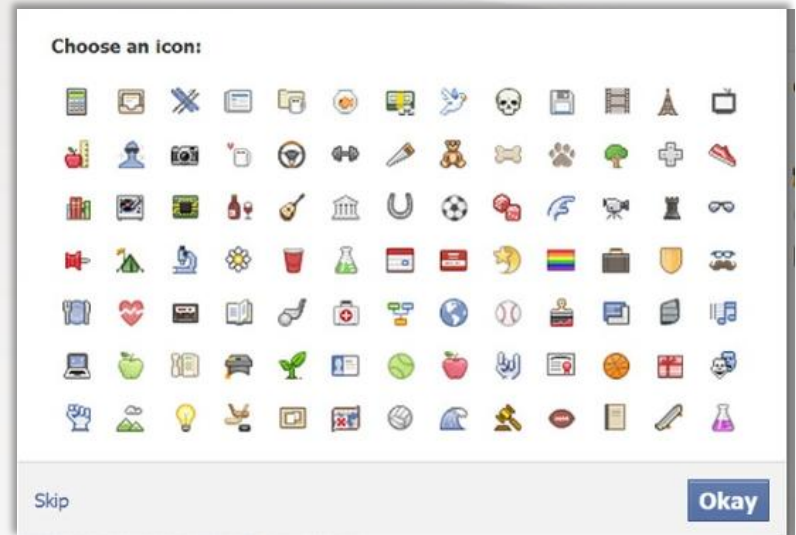
10. Complete the "About Section." Your about section is important. It gives prospective members an idea what your group is about and can display any "rules" you may have about the group.
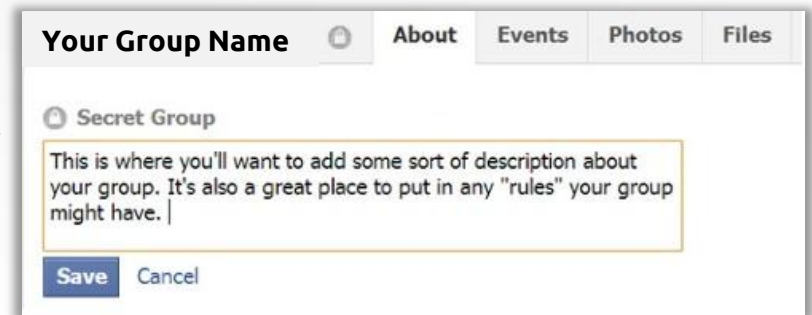
Steps on how to create a group

11. Choose image settings. You are given the 3 options here:
    - Use images from group members (will show a maximum of the last 8 active members)
    - Use a photo already in the group
    - Upload a photo
12. Next you'll want to edit the group settings. You do this by clicking on the gear icon & then clicking "Edit Group Settings." Once on the edit page, you'll have many options to change.
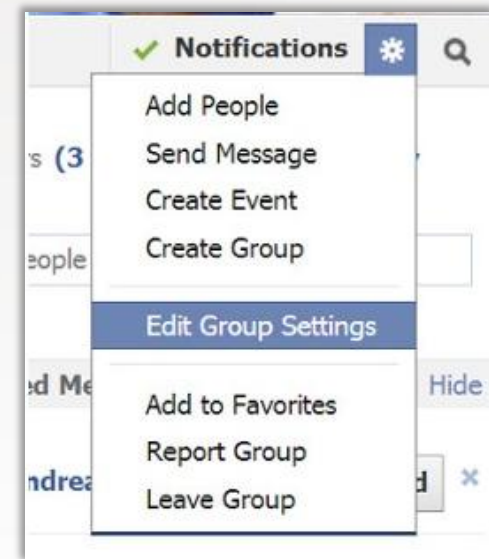
Steps on how to create a group

13. Items you can change:

- Group Icon

- Group Name

- Privacy Settings

- Membership Approval --
  Do you want to let anyone
  add members or should
  only you be able to?

Steps on how to create a group

14. Set a Group Address -- Here you'll have a chance to give the group a custom URL as well as an email address where people can email the group directly.

15. When you're done you'll see something like this:

   - Group Address:

      SOPAs.Facebook.Group@groups.facebook.com

   - https://www.facebook.com/groups/SOPAs.Facebook.Group/

Set Up Group Web and Email Address

Enter a name that will become the email and web address for your group:

| SOPAs Facebook Group | @groups.facebook.com |

Emails sent to this address will go to all group members. If you want people to find your group, give them the web address: facebook.com/groups/.

Set Address   Cancel

Steps on how to create a group

16. You can change:

- Your description, posting permissions (decide if only admins can post or if members can as well), and/or post approval (require that all posts be approved by an admin before going live).

17. Once you're done & happy with the settings, click "Save".

18. Invite others & Spread the Word!

19. Extra Features:

- **Notifications** - As an admin you should probably turn the notifications on to receive all updates when anyone posts.

- **Events** - A feature probably not used often enough in Groups is Events. Inside the group you can create events that only members can see & RSVP for.

- **Files** - Inside groups you can share files of any kind as well as create Documents which group members can add to & collaborate on.

Facebook Best Practices and Organizational Policies

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Best Practices

- **Develop Strategy**
  - This is like entering a marathon, not a sprint-you have to have a plan and commit to the long haul
  - Be sure you have a reason to do it, not just because it is one possible solution

- **Social Media and Its Maintenance**
  - Will require different amounts of time to keep current
  - Monitor the page often
  - Consider soliciting the help of an Athlete Leader and their Mentor – Baseline education will be offered via SOPAs Athlete Leadership University

- **Generate Content**
  - That is pertinent to the athletes and encourages engagement
    - Events, cancellations and rescheduling
    - Sports and special events
    - Training and competition results
    - Athlete Leadership and encouraging posts/images

- **Respond to Users**
  - Good, bad and ugly…try to respond to everyone!

Social Media Standards and Etiquette

- Be Responsible

- Be Accountable

- Consider Your Audience

- Bring Value

- Pick your Battles and Accept Your Mistakes

- Be Respectful

- Protect Confidential and Copyrighted Information

Social Media Policy

- The purpose of this policy is to define social media, as well as establish procedures for creating an overall social media presence

- The policy is designed to assist SOPA employees, interns, volunteers and athletes engaged in social media on behalf of the organization on a state and/or local program level

- The policy establishes the legal, policy, and institutional implications of opening and maintaining social media accounts in an official capacity

Social Media Policy (Cont.)

- The policy applies to any pre-existing or proposed social media networking websites established by a representative of Special Olympics Pennsylvania on a state and local program level

- This means a SOPA social media participant who, in an official capacity and on behalf of the Special Olympics:

  - Opens a social media account in the name of SOPA

  - Posts SOPA content on a social media account opened in the name of Special Olympics

  - Speaks or claims to speak on behalf of the SOPA on a social media account

  - Responsible for overseeing and maintaining an official Special Olympics presence on a social media site

Social Media Policy (Cont.)

- Responding to fans on Facebook and Twitter is essential in maintaining a strong online presence.

- It is important to reply to both positive and negative comments.

- Here are a few response guidelines for negative comments:
  - Notify Nicole Jones to let her know the situation and advise the best way to respond
  - NEVER delete a volunteer/athlete comment
  - Acknowledge complaints publicly letting other guests know you're handling the situation
  - Respond privately to sensitive questions

Social Media Response Tools

Reply to comments privately with a message: Page admins will be able to reply to public comments with a private message, helping them solve private customer requests more efficiently.
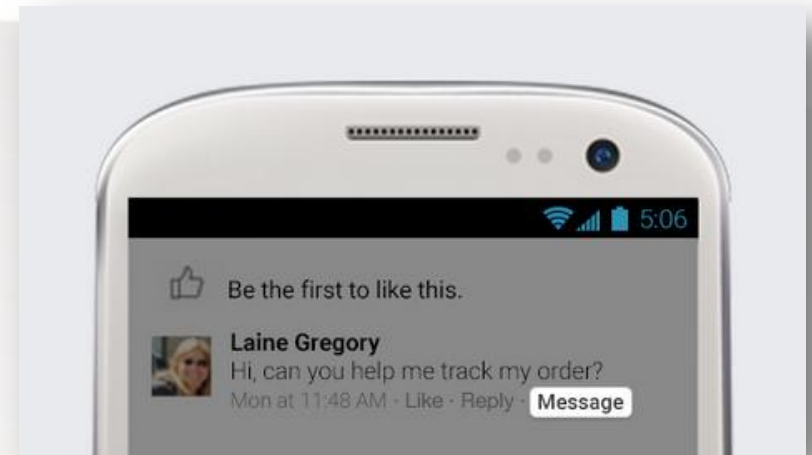
General inbox options

- Unanswered

- Unread

- Flagged
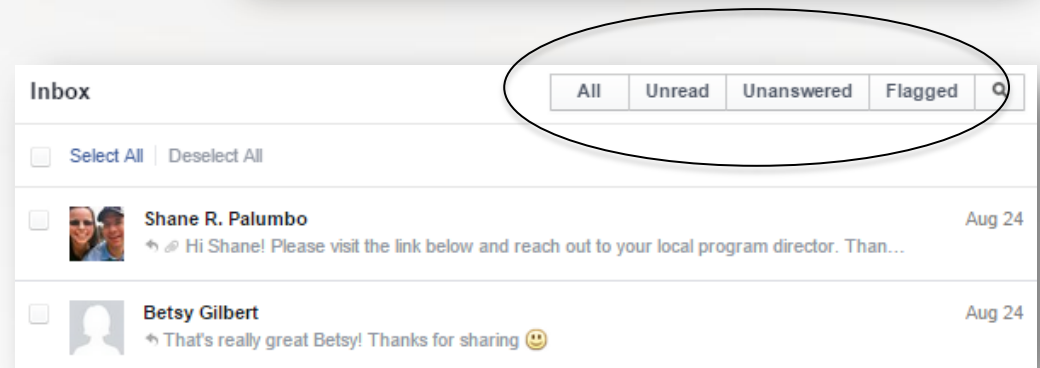
SOPA Tools & Resources

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Online Access to Docs & Tools
Via our Website

Documents & tools available at www.specialolympicspa.org.

Click on the **Volunteer Center** button on our homepage to access our Vsys Tips page, Resources and more!

Staying Well Informed

The Monthly Update is a tool to enhance communication between Special Olympics Pennsylvania's state office and its volunteer program management team members. **Around the beginning of each month, an email update will inform volunteers of the latest news available and accessed via our SOPA website.** Just visit our Volunteer Center and click on Monthly Update!

Use the Monthly Update to stay "in-the-know" about any additional resources or general organizational information. As tools are added to the SOPA Dropbox, they will be announced in the Monthly Update.

(http://www.specialolympicspa.org/monthly-update).

Questions & Answers

- Q & A

- Handouts

- Contact Information

  - Nicole Jones – njones@specialolympicspa.org

  - Wenona Sutton – wsutton@specialolympicspa.org

  - Online Resources page – http://www.specialolympicspa.org/resources

Thank you!

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