

Getting **Started** with **Social** Media

Walk MS Tips for Using Social Media



walk to
create a world
free of MS

Why Social Media?

Social Media is about **connecting**, **creating**, and **communicating**. We connect individuals by creating a community within the space. These communities allow users to make a connection to one another, to a cause, and to their passions.

Once users have connected via social networks they can begin to communicate with one another and share important, relevant information. For Walk MS participants, users can connect with their friends, family and potential supporters to effectively increase awareness, inspire new members, and encourage others to donate to their walk.

“Getting Started with Social Media” is multi-faceted. First and foremost, we have selected a variety of networks that best fit your needs and can help meet your goals. Next, we’ve included helpful tips to get started right now. These tips have been designed to help you begin using social media from day one. Finally, we have provided a number of best practices for each of these spaces to use as you continue to grow your presence on each network. Utilize these recommendations to help you throughout the process.

Along with “Getting Started with Social Media,” you will also be provided with a series of webinars that take you through each social network step by step. Use these in conjunction with this manual to help further explain how to get started, the best practices in each space, and other useful information about the sites.

Social Networking Basics

facebook

www.facebook.com

With well over 350 million active users, Facebook is currently the most popular social networking site in the world. Founded in 2004, Facebook is “a social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently with their friends, family and coworkers.” The Facebook platform is inherently viral, making it easy to share important news, events, pictures, and more with all of your friends with just one click. This will enable you to spread the word about your upcoming walk faster and easier than ever before!

LinkedIn

www.Linkedin.com

LinkedIn promotes itself as a place for professionals to gather and believes that “relationships matter.” Users hail from over 150 different industries with an average annual household income of \$100,000. When it comes to an organization such as the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, every dollar counts to help find a cure. LinkedIn has the potential to expose your team and your cause to professionals capable of making a profound contribution. The existence of groups on LinkedIn can help you to connect with others of similar passions and interests who could potentially create or join a team.

twitter

www.twitter.com

Twitter is the fastest growing social network, having grown at an astounding rate of 1,382% since last February. This micro-blogging platform enables you to send 140-character (or less) updates about anything you want to anyone “following” you (for example, your Walk MS supporters). The character limit also makes Twitter one of the most mobile and portable social networks, as users can easily send and receive updates via SMS text without having to install a third party application. Finally, tweets (short, 140-character messages sent through Twitter) are searchable through Twitter search, allowing you to find people talking about your interests in real time.

YouTube

www.YouTube.com

YouTube brings your cause to life by giving friends, family and fans a central place to view footage of events they’ve missed, videos that have inspired you, photo slideshows, and more. Videos and slideshows are a powerful way to share your past Walk MS experiences and invite others to either join you as teammates or to support you with a donation.



www.nationalMSSociety.org

Your Convio access can instantly connect you to all the details you need to know about your upcoming event. With the ability to fundraise, invite your friends to join your cause, check your progress and thank friends individually for their contribution, the MS Society makes it quick and easy to get started with a simple login.

Getting Started

Facebook

If you don't already have a Facebook account, go to www.facebook.com and sign up. Use your real name so that you can find people and be found by your friends easily. Upload your custom optimized profile picture to promote your event and spread the word about the walk. You probably have a ton of friends on Facebook already that you didn't even know about, so once you've set up your profile use Facebook's e-mail contacts importer to find them:

<http://www.facebook.com/find-friends/?ref=sb>

Depending on your recruitment and fundraising goals, it could also be beneficial for you to create your own team fan page on Facebook. Pages allow other Facebook users to "become a fan" of your team without having to be your friend on Facebook. To create your page, go to www.facebook.com/advertising/?pages and click the green button to "Create a Page." Select the "Non-Profit" category under "Brand, Product, or Organization," and fill in your page name. We suggest a title that includes both your team name and the location of your walk event as well as one without a date so your fans will stay with you year after year (ex: Amy's Angels - Jones Beach Walk MS). Fill out the information tab and upload your custom optimized profile picture, and you're ready to go!

Twitter

If you haven't already done so, sign up for a Twitter account at www.twitter.com. Provide the link to join or donate to your team on the "website" section and mention your participation in your local Walk MS event in your 160-character bio. After you've filled in your profile information, select a photo of you or your team to upload for your profile picture (also called an avatar). Once uploaded, go to www.twibbon.com, login with your Twitter account information, search for Walk MS and select our Walk MS Twibbon (a virtual ribbon for your Twitter account photo) to attach to your picture.

Go to http://twitter.com/invitations/find_on_twitter to find out if any of your friends or your local MS Society chapter are already on Twitter and start following them. You can also follow us at <http://twitter.com/MSsociety>. You're now ready to start tweeting!

LinkedIn

If you haven't already, go to www.Linkedin.com to set up a LinkedIn account. Follow LinkedIn's tips for profile completeness and aim to get your profile as close to 100% complete as possible. It's especially important that you have a profile picture that clearly shows your face so that everyone can see who you are.

Click to "Add Connections" on the top right of your page to use LinkedIn's e-mail contacts importer and start building your network. You should also search for and request to join groups related to MS, the MS Society, charity fundraisers/walks, your local chapter, and your local community.

Getting Started

YouTube

Register for a free account at www.YouTube.com. Fill in your profile information and select a name for your channel that you feel best represents your dedication to the cause. Upload any videos or photo slideshows you have from previous walks and include important keywords like “National MS Society” “MS” “multiple sclerosis” “walk MS” and “charity fundraiser” in the “tags” sections of each video. Also include links to your team page so that viewers can easily donate to your team right away.

Convio www.nationalMSSociety.org

If you’ve officially registered your team for this year’s Walk MS event, you already have an account on our Convio platform. Log on to your account on your event’s website and get started using the tools provided. Make sure that the rest of your team is registered as well.

Once setup, connect your Facebook account by following the simple connect steps feature on your personal page. By doing this, you will be able to connect with *boundless* Fundraising – an application run through Facebook that allows you to collect donations right from your Facebook profile!

Best Practices

Now that you're set up, here are some tips of how to best utilize these networks to recruit more team members and surpass your fundraising goals:

Facebook:

If you've created both a personal account and a team fan page, your fan page should be fully accessible to you as long as you are logged in. All posts made from your personal account to your fan page will appear as posts from the team/page itself, while posts to your personal profile will appear as posts from you. Our tips for best practices vary slightly between posts to your personal Facebook profile versus posts to your Facebook fan page (if applicable).

From your personal profile:

- In addition to your own personal updates, begin posting daily status updates with information about the MS Society, MS, your reason for walking, fundraising progress, and invitations and links to join or donate to your team.
- Perform a Facebook group search. Start broad (ie "Multiple Sclerosis" "MS" etc.) and move to more focused searches such as "Walk MS" and groups focused around your community. Join existing groups and fan pages and post an invitation to join or donate to your team on group/page walls.
- Add a *boundless* Fundraising link through your Convio Participant Center

From your fan page:

- Status updates should be similar to the walk and MS related updates you post on your personal profile but, additionally, they should feature stories from other members of your team. Be sure to update with photos and videos from previous walks, your team's fundraising progress, and links to your team page with info on how to join and/or donate.
- Perform a search to find groups and fan pages for people who are passionate about the cause or the MS Society, especially your local chapter. Join existing groups and fan pages and post an invitation to join your team on group/page walls.

Please note: there is no way to post on another group/page or message an individual Facebook user as a *fan page* – unless you are posting directly to your fan page, you will always send and post messages from your personal account as yourself.

• **Advanced Tip:** Message group administrators individually about your fan page and personal commitment to the walk, including ways to join your team or donate. While a post to a group wall could be lost among other posts and may never even be viewed by some members, an administrator has the ability to send your invitation directly to all members to ensure that it is received.

Twitter

• Tweet links to important (relevant and factual) articles, short stories of your experiences in previous years, your fundraising progress and links to donate, and information on how to join your team.

• Go to www.search.twitter.com and search for keywords like "MS", "MS Society", "Walk MS", and "raise money" to see what people are saying. Use the "advanced search" feature to limit your returns by geographic location to ensure you are only viewing conversations happening in your community.

• Follow users in your area that share your interests, that tweet regularly about MS, or that are also participating in Walk MS.

Best Practices Continued

- Join in the conversation by replying directly to users using the “@” symbol immediately before their twitter name.

- Ex: “@carriekerpen I participated in last year’s Jones Beach Walk MS! I have some photos if you’re interested”

- Ex: “@carriekerpen That’s an amazing story! My sister has MS and I’m walking this weekend to support her: <http://bit.ly/MyTeam>”

- Advanced Tip:** A “hashtag” is an oft-used topic marker on twitter created by placing a “#” symbol immediately in front of your marker (ex: #MS, #WalkMS). Search for and use relevant hashtags in your own posts to contribute to existing conversations. Perhaps your chapter is already using an event-specific hashtag – join them by using it as well! Create your own tags to start a conversation of your own and use them in all appropriate posts.

LinkedIn

- Contact those already in your network – particularly those who care about MS (or the person you care about), those whose companies are known to offer donation matching, and people who work at charitable organizations – with an invitation to support your team.

- Post discussions on local groups related to MS, the MS Society, or charity walks/fundraisers with information about the upcoming walk with information on how members can contribute.

- Advanced Tip:** Perform an advanced search to focus in on more specific keywords that may exist anywhere in a user’s personal profile (include keywords such as fundraising, donations, non-profit, etc.) then send invitations to connect with these individuals. When you send an invitation to connect, be sure to write a personalized message to the recipient. You’ll be limited on characters, so let them know who you are and that you are participating in this year’s Walk MS.

YouTube

- Search for videos posted by others who have been touched by MS or videos of other who’ve walked. “Favorite” the videos you like and post encouraging comments on them with links back and invitations to view your own channel/videos.

- Subscribe to channels of other users who tend to post videos about MS, their experiences with MS, or who participate in other walks for charity.

- Advanced Tip:** Post your next video as a “reply” to another popular video (this video should be directly related to MS or Walk MS). When others view the original video, yours will come up as additional suggested viewing, and the user who uploaded the original video will definitely see yours.

Convio

- Whether you are new to the walk or have been participating for several years, make sure all of your personal and contact information are up-to-date and accurate – a complete profile is important!

- Interact with others on your team, explore the site and utilize its features including messaging team members, emailing contacts, and more.

- **Advanced Tip:** Check your personal page regularly to keep track of your progress and find some great information you can incorporate into your updates on Facebook and Twitter.