

Digital Communication
Modernization 2021-2024



CDC Social Media Strategy

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(NPHIC)
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A Robust Social Media Presence

Social Media at CDC



CDC Social Media Strategy

CDC will deliver authentic, relevant social media messages that encourage healthier, safer habits that reduce injury, illness, and death by:

- Tailoring authentic content for audiences
- Engaging in conversation among those audiences
- Using data to drive content goals



Introduction & Background

CDC's Office of Communication worked throughout 2022 to develop the Social Media Strategy as part of an ongoing modernization project.

Strategy is informed partly by:

- Interviews with CDC staff
- Assessments of 200 randomly selected social media posts from OADC channels
- Web analytics to evaluate the relationship between web and social media.
- Evaluations of existing guidance documents
- Comparisons of CDC social media posts with content from leading health organizations and sources



Current Practices Future Outlook

Current

- Social media channels driven by CDC organizational structure rather than audience needs
- Social media channels treated as broadcast channels; channels receiving high amounts of negative feedback
- Social media undervalued for the feedback it can provide on audience information needs



Future

- High-quality, engaging social media channels that are driven by audience needs
- Social media channels that engage audiences and encourage positive interactions
- Social listening actively used to learn about audience needs and adapt communications
- Consistent growth in key performance indicators (KPIs) and discussions about data
- Universal commitment to innovation; desire to test new tactics and share results broadly among CDC social media community



Five Social Media Trends + Opportunities for CDC

1. **People want skimmable content** as attention spans on social media are smaller than ever.
2. Most **Americans distrust institutions** with only 39% of adults saying they trust the government and media.
3. Engagement with a “human touch.” Brands must be **authentic, engaging, and should elicit emotion.**
4. Declining organic **reach incentivizes paid ads.**



Guiding Principles

Eight Principles to Align with the Social Media Strategy

Principle 1: CDC Tailors Its Content

Know your audience. Write for them.

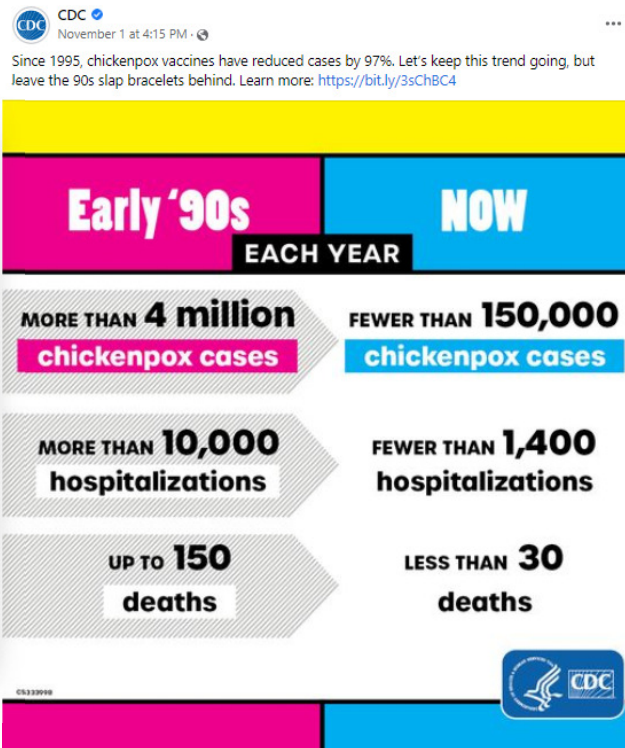
- CDC content creators should
 - Analyze audience insights
 - Define their primary target audience for each social media channel.
 - Understand your target audience's motivators, barriers, and information needs and use that understanding to tailor their social media content.
- Questions to ask:
 - What are your audiences' behaviors when it comes to your topic area?
 - What content does your audience respond well to? What content does it not respond to?



CDC Tailors Its Content



Clinician focused message

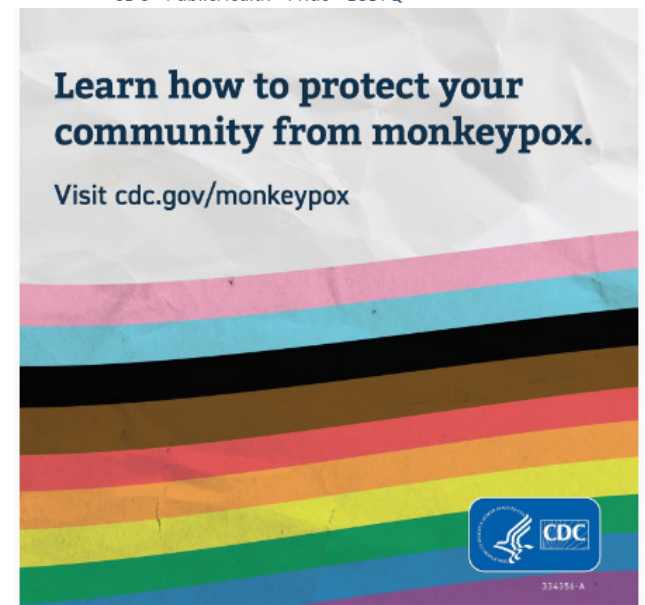


Young parent focused message

cdcgov LGBTQ+ folks have been disproportionately affected in the current #monkeypox outbreak. Learn how best to protect yourself and your LGBTQ+ community.

Tap the link in our bio for more info.

#CDC #PublicHealth #Pride #LGBTQ



LGBTQ+ message



Principle 2: CDC Publishes Authentic Content

Be real.

Content creators should:

- Write copy for captions and graphics in plain language.
- Ensure your audience can fully comprehend your message by writing your message like something a friend or neighbor might say.
- Questions to ask:
 - Is my tone conversational?
 - Have I used plain language?
 - Can we recruit CDC experts to talk to our audience?



Principle 3: CDC Optimizes Its Social Media Content

One size does not fit all.

- Content creators should
 - Use channel-specific media formats and best practices.
 - Go beyond resizing images per platform to re-envisioning content for each platform's unique best practices.

Questions to ask:

- *Is this graphic/ video/ etc. taking advantage of the platform's best features? "Would I stop scrolling to interact with this content?"*
- How did the content perform across channels?
- Are there any trends across channels (e.g., short-form videos received high engagement on Twitter, but low engagement on LinkedIn)?



Authentic + Optimized Social Media Content

- **Captivating and/or emotional**
- Clear call-to-action
- Easy-to-read charts
- Brief, useful information
- Don't repeat info in the caption
- ALT Text
- Mobile legibility



COVID-19 Vaccines By Age

CDC recommends everyone ages 6 months and older get vaccinated against COVID-19.

| Authorized or approved for | Pfizer-BioNTech | Moderna | J&J / Janssen |
|----------------------------|-----------------|---------|---------------|
| Under 6 months | No | No | No |
| 6 months – 17 years | Yes | Yes | No |
| 18 years and older | Yes | Yes | Yes* |

*In most situations, Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are preferred over the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine.

cdc.gov/coronavirus



Principle 4: CDC Engages With Its Audience

Start a conversation.

Channel managers should foster connections with audiences *where possible*. Engaging with users as they connect with CDC—responding to comments, asking for feedback, and providing opportunities to interact—can help build trust for CDC.

Things to consider:

- Build in the time and resources to ensure community management and comment moderation are consistently performed
- Plan for how you will consistently engage in two-way conversation with your audience
- Proactively engage your audience using open-ended questions or other built-in channel engagement features



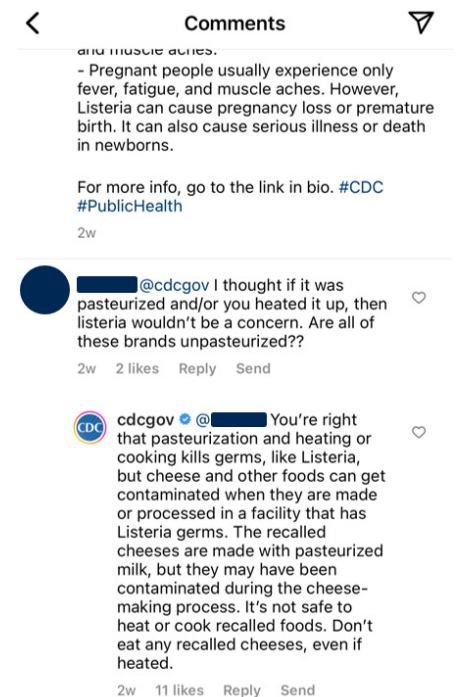
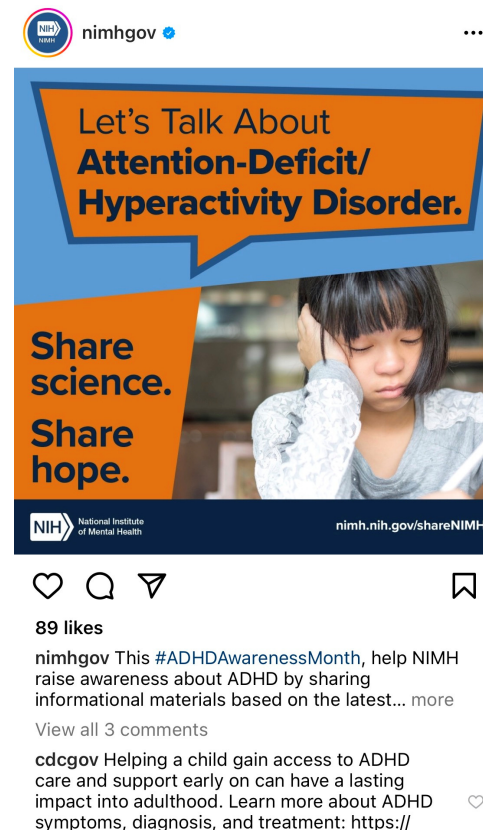
CDC Engages With Its Audience

User Comments

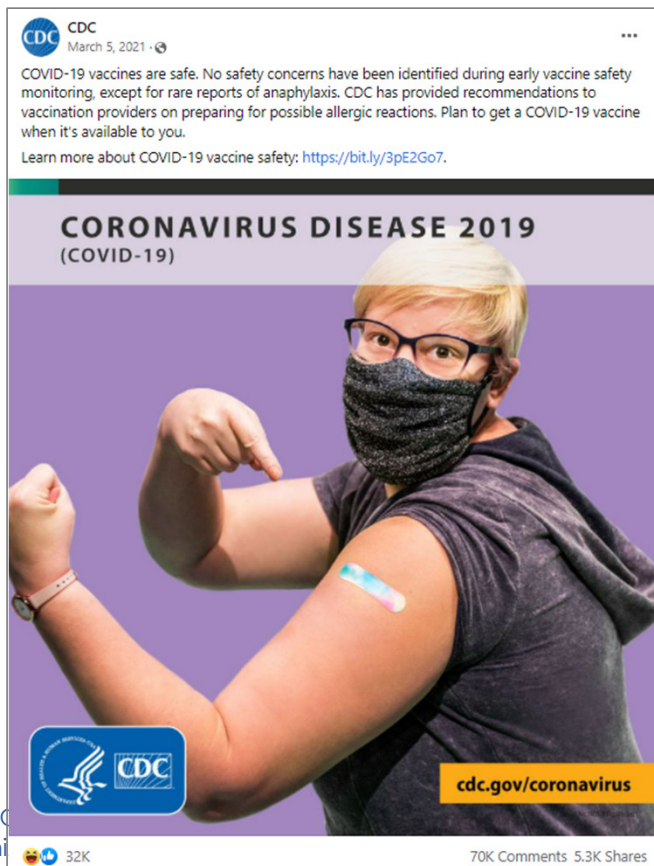
- Two-way conversation
- Responding to a genuine inquiry adds humanity
- Guidelines for Public Comment

Engagement

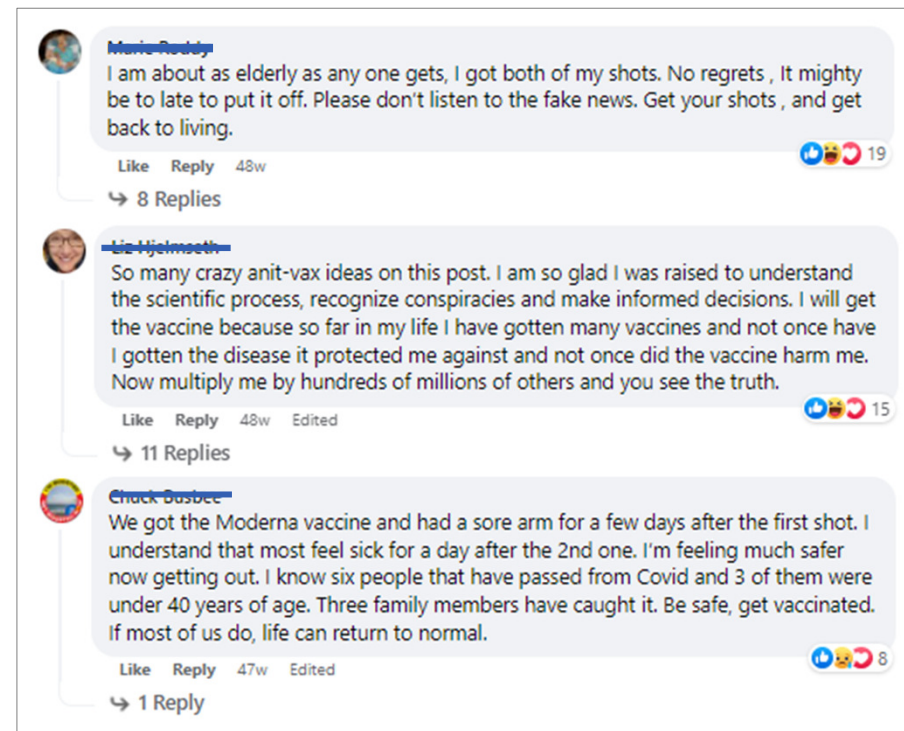
- Utilize quizzes, countdowns, etc.



CDC Engages With Its Audience



This CDC post about vaccine safety was able to drive some positive comments and reactions.



Principle 5: CDC Experiments With New Tactics

See what works.

Content creators should:

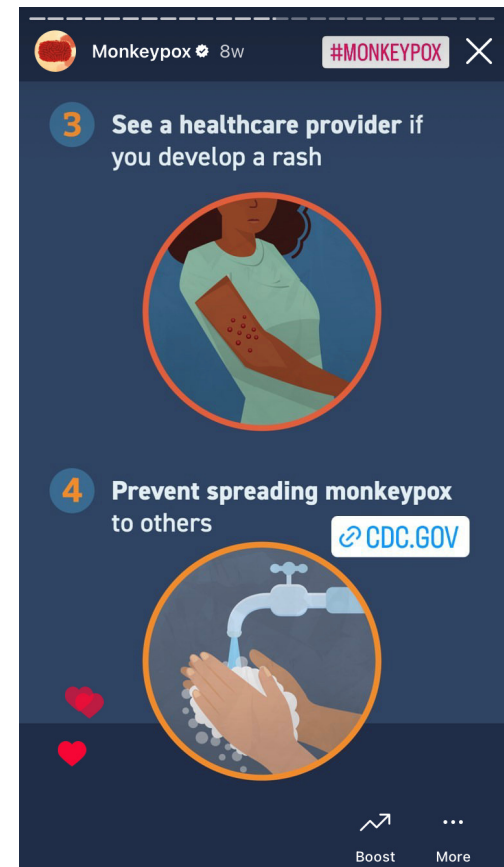
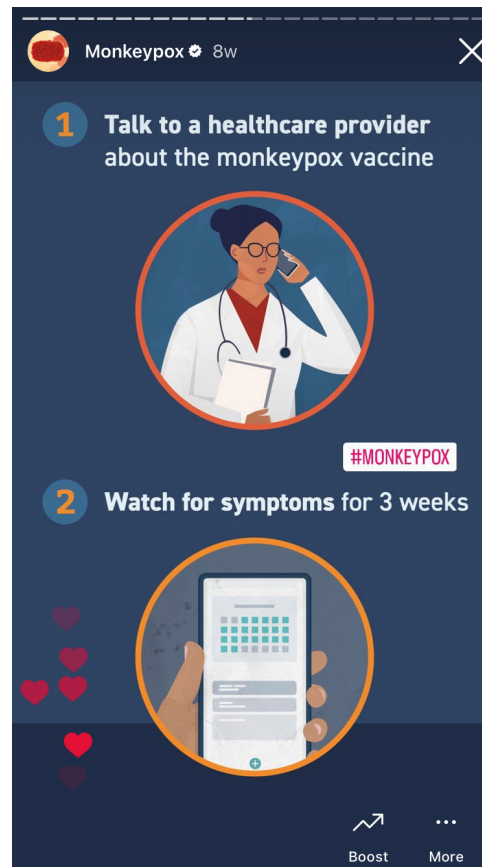
- Experiment with new tactics regularly.
- Apply lessons learned/ inform future content

Considerations for implementing new tactics:

- Explore all channel features, and stay updated as new features debut
- Redefine “failure” as not trying new tactics
- Look to similar organizations



Principle 5: CDC Experiments With New Tactics



Principle 5: CDC Experiments With New Tactics

Experimenting with meme content

 CDC Flu @CDCFlu

There's still time to get a flu vaccine! Find one near you: bit.ly/PSDKVI

Take her somewhere special.



ALT

 CDC Flu @CDCFlu

Flu can be serious. During a regular flu season, flu can cause between 140,000 – 710,000 hospitalizations and 12,000 – 52,000 deaths. An annual flu vaccine is the best way to protect against #flu. More: bit.ly/2RnJ2ee



Principle 6: CDC Uses Data To Drive Decisions

Analyze often.

Social media teams should:

- Create SMART goals. Track progress against these goals quarterly and use results to adjust overall social media strategy.
- Regularly analyze social media content performance
- Use these data to inform social media content development, including identifying which channels are best bets for investing time and resources.



Principle 7: Social Media is a Critical Part of Communication Strategy

Social meets people where they are.

- Content creators should ensure social media is developed as part of all proactive media releases, communication roll out plans, guidance updates, new web tools/products, scientific releases/reports and other major communication efforts.
- Including social media content in tandem with other communication efforts ensures that we reach our audiences via as many channels as possible using clear, timely communication.



Principle 8: CDC Ensures a Unified, Strategic Social Presence

Many channels. One voice.

- CDC teams that manage program channels can play a unique role from enterprise channels in reaching specific audiences, sharing tailored content, and building community.
- Content creators should apply these guiding principles when developing social media content, whether for enterprise or CIO-managed channels.



Who Are We Reaching?

Audience Profiles for CDC Enterprise Social Media Channels

Primary Audience: The Health-Motivated Consumer

Age: 25–44 years old [\(source\)](#)

Gender: Female [\(source\)](#)

Why they use social media for health: [\(source\)](#)

- Seek and share health-related information

- Exchange social support in online communities

- Track and share health statuses or activities

Why they use social media generally: [\(source\)](#)

- Connect with family and friends

- Share updates on personal topics (e.g., birthdays)

- Create a good impression of themselves

Primary social media channels: Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest



Secondary Audience: Public Health Community

Healthcare Providers

Why they use social media: [\(source\)](#)

- Further professional development, including learning, collaboration, and career advancement
- Facilitate doctor-patient communication (e.g., responding to questions and proactively providing advice to followers)
- Managing negative comments [\(source\)](#)

Primary social media channel: [LinkedIn](#)

Public Health Practitioners & Organizations

Why they use social media:

- Practitioners:
 - Further professional development, including learning and sharing meetings updates and professional opportunities [\(source\)](#)
- Organizations:
 - Disseminate information to the public [\(source\)](#), particularly hard-to-reach communities [\(source\)](#)
 - Enhance communication during public health emergencies [\(source\)](#)

Primary social media channel: [LinkedIn](#)

Secondary Audience: Media

Why they use social media:

- Get information from sources (source) and find trending topics (source)
- Develop sources (source)
- Grow social media following, which can translate into better employment opportunities (source)
- Promote their work to drive views (source)
- Pressure from employers to maintain/develop online personas (source)

Primary social media channel: Twitter



Recap

Guiding Principles: Recap

1. CDC tailors its content.
2. CDC publishes authentic content.
3. CDC optimizes its social media content.
4. CDC engages with its audience.
5. CDC experiments with new tactics.
6. CDC uses data to drive decisions.
7. CDC recognizes social media as a critical part of communication strategy.
8. CDC ensure a unified, strategic social media presence.



Q&A/ Discussion

Thank you!

Please contact us at socialmedia@cdc.gov

For more information, contact CDC
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 www.cdc.gov

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

