Social Media Support Toolkit

HELPING BRIGHT CITIES CELEBRATE THEIR WINS
Our Bright Cities do amazing work — but sometimes, it's challenging to share your accomplishments with the public.

Here is everything you need to know about successfully promoting your work on social media channels.
STEP 1: Know your audience

City projects impact all members of your community, but usually, only the people most affected are truly invested in the work. In order for your content to have the greatest impact, you want to fully understand who this group is.

Bright Cities work will mostly appeal to parents, but more specifically women ages 25-45 who have children. Because Bright Cities projects directly impact the health and well-being of little ones in your community, sharing the project with moms is a great way to get them invested.

Just because moms are your primary audience does not mean there aren’t other audiences to consider! Think: community groups, local nonprofits, dads, grandparents, and childcare providers.
Key Question:
Who do you want your content to resonate with?
STEP 2: Create strong content

As you come up with Facebook posts, blogs, Instagram content, and more, you’ll want to share...

What the project is.
Are you planting trees to increase air quality?
Are you changing cleaning products to ensure chemical-free turf?
Are you donating food to local food banks?

Why the project is important.
People know that some chemicals are bad for them, but do they know that there is six times more arsenic in infant rice cereal than in other types? Do they know that air pollution and disproportionately affects the health of black families?
STEP 2: Create strong content

As you come up with Facebook posts, blogs, Instagram content, and more, you’ll want to share...

The success of the project.
Share statistics! We helped 300 families. We planted 50 trees. We switched to cleaning products with 10x less chemicals.

What it means for your residents.
Now that you’ve shared the statistics, share what difference it makes. It means that residents have access to healthier foods for their babies. It means that kids are playing on safer soccer fields. It means that less children will suffer from IQ loss.
Key Question:
How does this affect residents — and how can we connect it to their daily lives?
STEP 3: Plan your content

Getting all of those elements into one tweet would prove very challenging — but it doesn’t all need to be done at once! Plan out multiple posts over time.

You can share all of those 4 content areas in a variety of different posts over the course of time.

After the project is completed, you can also write a blog that shares the full scope of work and link to that on social media so that residents can learn more.

A great way to do this is by sharing graphics, images, quotes, and stories from the projects.
Many parents don’t know about hidden toxins in household items that can harm babies’ brain development.

That’s why the city of Dearborn partnered with Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision to educate expectant parents and hand out gift packages with safe, healthy items.

Photo of beneficiaries / residents

Success of the project + partners

Quote from city leader

Here’s a great photo from our event last week, where Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision educated expectant families on toxic chemicals by handing out gift packages with safe, healthy items.

“The workshop was a great opportunity for Dearborn residents to learn about reducing exposure to arsenic in food.”

Learn more about how toxic chemicals can hide in plain sight here: hbbf.org

Link to more information
Key Question:
How can we tell the story of this project in an effective way?
STEP 4: Find strategic partners

Step 4 goes back to Step 1 — knowing your audience. What community-based organizations reach the people you want to share this with? Do some research and then ask them to share your blog or social media posts.

Having partners who are dedicated to the health of women and children, environmental justice, and other relevant topics is a key to spreading the word of your success.

Other partnerships could be created with larger organizations that reach other local governments — like Mayors Innovation Project, Cities of Service, National League of Cities, and more.
Key Question:
What strategic partners can we utilize to share our accomplishments with their audience?
STEP 5: Engage

A sneaky — but effective — social media trick is to find people that you wish followed you and follow them first. Search by hashtags on Instagram and Twitter, and by keywords on Facebook and LinkedIn.

When you engage with (liking posts, responding, commenting, sharing) people or pages, they are more likely to follow you. Spend some time thinking about key populations that you want to engage with your content and start linking their posts often.

Name recognition is key to building social media presence, but it’s also key to building trust in your community. Social media engagement does double duty!
Key Question:
What types of content can we comment on and engage with that moves us closer to our goals?
Facebook is one of the largest audiences, as it appeals to both individuals and organizations. It allows you to post comments, share photos and videos, share links to news or other content, and chat live.

This is a great way to share information in a more detailed manner because it provides for more space than Twitter, which only allows a specific number of characters.
Tips: Posting to Facebook

DO:

• Proofread! Make sure your content is free of any spelling or grammatical errors.
• Include relevant photos. Don’t include a blurry or irrelevant photo for the sake of adding an image. Make sure that your content is pleasing to the eye.
  ◦ High quality images are key! Use a smartphone in a well-lit room to get the best, clearest photos. For more tips, check out our Content Collection Toolkit.
• Tag partner organizations who worked on the project.

DON’T:

• Post really long captions. You have more space on Facebook to elaborate, but don’t make posts too long, or people will glaze over them.
• Complicate things. You want your audience to be informed, not confused. Avoid jargon or any complex language (like details about phthalates or flame retardants — no one else knows what they are!). Make sure the post is accessible and easy to understand for the average resident instead of in the weeds of technicalities.
Tips: Posting to LinkedIn

As you probably know, LinkedIn is more focused on professional connections. Facebook and LinkedIn content can look pretty similar, but with different main audiences. While you’ll reach residents (like moms) on Facebook, you will reach more leaders and influencers on LinkedIn.

LinkedIn can be a great tool for finding businesses that want to support your project. Whether locally or nationally, many business owners are committed to ensuring Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) elements to their business, donating time, resources, and even funding to projects that they are passionate about.

Utilizing LinkedIn to share your city’s success could lead to:
- More funding for current projects or funding for future projects
- Unlikely partners who want to share your stories
- Other city leaders who can help problem-solve and brainstorm
The best way to successfully tweet:
*edit!! Tweets have to be short and to the point, but that doesn’t mean they’re less effective.*

Because you only have 280 characters to get your message across, really think about what you’re trying to convey.

**Tips: Posting to Twitter**

Twitter allows for accounts to easily engage with one another, which is a great tool when wanting to make sure your audience is informed.

You can tag local organizations, businesses, and leaders who participated in the project (or who you would like to engage in the future) and increase the likelihood of them sharing the content.

Another benefit of Twitter’s engagement level is the ability for two-way feedback. When you share your project, residents and stakeholders may have feedback or ideas to improve the program. That’s a great thing!

Getting feedback through social media is an easy way to listen to the community and meet their needs.
What's the best type of content to post on Instagram? Anything beautiful.

From high-quality photos to eye catching graphics, Instagram is home to content that fits a visually pleasing aesthetic.

If you do not have compelling photos/visuals, Instagram is going to be a challenge.
Tips: Posting to Instagram

Hopefully, you have utilized the Content Creation Toolkit and learned how to take stellar photos of your project. If you don’t have great photos to utilize, here are some tips to make your Instagram content stronger:

- Create quote graphics like this one in Canva from participants (remember Step 2 — make sure you share how this project benefited the residents!) or city leaders

- Use stock photos. Unsplash or Pexels are useful resources when it comes to general photos (photos of playgrounds, trees, open areas, etc.)
Communications Basics Checklist

- Who is my audience?
- What is my strategy?
- Do I have strong images?
- What's the hook (most interesting part)?
- Who can help me amplify this?
- How will I assess impact?
- What constitutes success?
Questions?

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