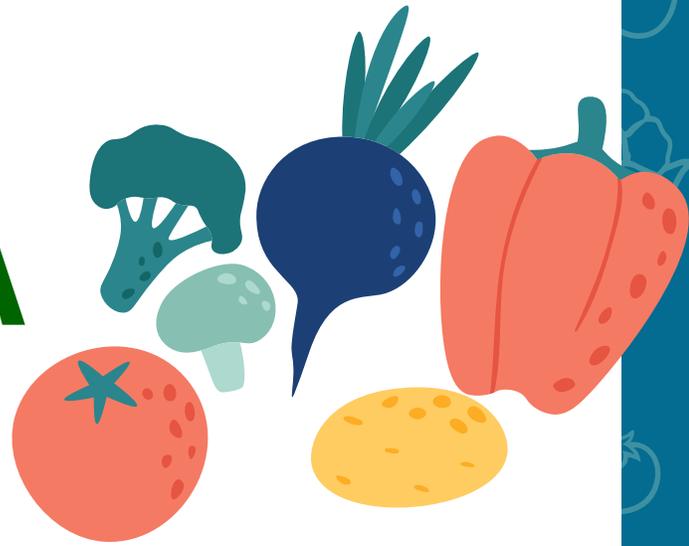




COMMUNITY HEALTH
IMPROVEMENT PARTNERS
making a difference together



SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION



INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION

Social media is a great way to stay connected with your students, families, and community members to further market your school meal and Farm to School programs. Social media provides key opportunities to keep your community informed of the amazing work being done within your district. Additionally, social media platforms can garner new interest from people who may not be aware of your work. Lastly, social media platforms help to humanize the work you are doing. By showing the hard work behind your programs, you can generate more support and interest in Farm to School and school meal programs.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHECKLIST:

- Choose your platform(s):** Select which social media platform(s) are the best fit for promoting your Farm to School program. Consider creating your own social media account for your school's Farm to School or school nutrition service program. In some instances, you may opt to use the school district's social media accounts. If your district has a Communications Department, consider connecting to create a plan for which platform(s) to use to reach a broader audience.
- Complete your profile:** Complete your bio or "About" section with your school district's name, contact information, website, and essential information about your program. Finish your profile by adding photographs and visual materials. You may also choose to incorporate your mission and vision for your program. Be sure to keep your brand in mind! See *Identifying a Brand* section of *Promotional Strategy Guide* for additional tips.
- Follow others:** Following other school districts, local businesses, and community organizations on these platforms creates a larger audience for your work, and can provide you with the inspiration or ideas needed to start posting. Suggestions include your school district's social media pages, the National Farm to School Network, the Farm 2 School Collective, the Farm to Institution Center, local farmer businesses, Farm to School support organizations, and local community businesses.
- Regularly check your pages:** Make sure you set up a plan to monitor your mentions, notifications, and private messages. It is important to be timely in responding to any comments or messages, especially if you receive a complaint or inquiry.

- **Develop your posts:** Once your page is set up, look into what content you can post. Check out the Farm 2 School Collective website (www.farmtoschoolcollective.org) for tips, tools, and social media resources for you to use on your platforms. Engage with your partners and audience by liking, commenting, and reposting their social media content. Using hashtags and tagging/mentioning other accounts can help your page gain more attention and followers. Example hashtags include: #f2smoonth, #farmtoschool, #schoolfood and #school lunchprogram.
- **Promote your social media page:** Continue to promote your social media channels through community events, presentations, newsletters, etc. Consider the audience you are looking to target when promoting your social media channels. For example, if you would like to engage more parents and families, you can promote at a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meeting or Back to School Night events.

ACTIVITY

SOCIAL MEDIA IN ACTION: HOW TO ADDRESS A COMPLAINT

- 1. Respond quickly,** ideally within the same day the complaint was made. Even if you do not have a solution, acknowledge the issue so they know you are looking into it. Letting people know you are looking into the concern helps to reduce negative feedback.
- 2. If possible, take the conversation offline.** Ask if you could set up a call or speak in person. A conversation in person can help clarify and keep the situation from escalating. As an example, one San Diego County school district responded to a parent complaint on their child's school meals by inviting the family to tour their central kitchen operation. As a result of this gesture, the parent later became an advocate for their school meal program.
- 3. De-escalate the situation by replying back in a conversational tone.** Include the person's name and let them know how you plan to fix the issue. If it is a mistake, take ownership and be sure to personalize your message. If the conversation is taken offline or to a private message, take this as an opportunity to go above and beyond and share new information and highlight the benefits of your program.
- 4. Lastly, do not take it personally (we know this can be challenging!).** Negative comments on social media are not directed at you as an individual, but are usually based on the situation a person is in. Reach out to another staff member if you are struggling with negative comments on social media and brainstorm as a team on how to best address this moving forward.¹



¹ **Source:** Shukle, R. (2015, December 29). How to Handle Customer Complaints Via Social Media. Retrieved from <https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/how-to-handle-customer-complaints-via-social-media/>



TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED

There are many different social media tools to promote your Farm to School programming. To get you started, we have highlighted a few of the top communications platforms with simple tips and resources.



Instagram:

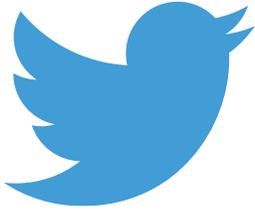
- Instagram is a picture-based and visual content platform, which involves posting videos or pictures on your page or story.
- Use your Instagram “story” to post videos, pictures, surveys, and other engagement activities for 24 hours. For more information on how to use your Instagram Story, visit: <https://bit.ly/3i3NBY4>.
- If you have a story you are proud of or multiple stories that can fit in a similar category, consider saving these as “highlights” to be viewed on your profile.
- Keep in mind that weblinks are not clickable in Instagram captions, but one weblink is allowed in the bio section of your profile.
- We recommend using [Bit.ly](https://bit.ly) to shorten weblinks or [Linktree](https://linktree.com) to share more than one weblink on your page’s profile. In your caption, inform your audience that they can click the link in your bio to access additional information.



Facebook:

- Having a Facebook Business Page makes it easier for people to discover and interact with you online. Facebook Business Pages can be used to share updates, upcoming events, pictures, and videos.²
- Before creating your Facebook Business Page, you must create your own personal Facebook profile if you do not have one already set up.
- Your Facebook Business Page can only be created under an individual account and will not have a separate login from the user who created it. Your Business Page can be created and accessed through your personal Facebook profile under “Your Pages”.
- If other staff members will be updating and posting on behalf of your Facebook Business Page, you will need to add their personal Facebook account as an “Admin” or “Editor” to this page. This can be done by selecting “Page Roles” under “Page Settings”.
- The “Publishing Tools” page is where you can draft, schedule, and view previously published posts. Be sure to tag others in your pictures when appropriate so they can see and share your posts.
- Weblinks are allowed in captions and posts, which can be helpful in directing viewers to specific webpages or resources.
- Your “Insights” page tracks the engagement received, which can help you gain a better understanding of your audience.

² **Source:** Newberry, C. (2020, February 10). How to Create a Facebook Business Page in 7 Simple Steps. Retrieved from <https://blog.hootsuite.com/steps-to-create-a-facebook-business-page/>



Twitter

- Twitter allows you to share meal service information and updates through pictures and links on your posts, also called a “tweet” or “tweets”.
- Hashtags are used to connect social media content to a specific topic, event, theme, or conversation. Using hashtags can allow your posts to be easily discovered by others.
- Try to stay on top of topics that are important to your audience. Tweets can serve as an educational opportunity or a space to have a conversation.
- Twitter messages are intended to be short and concise with a 280-character limit. This is great for holding short, direct conversations to engage your audience.
- Search relevant hashtags to see who else is tweeting in this industry.



YouTube

- A YouTube channel can be used as a central hub to store all of your videos.
- While this platform might not be used in the same way as other social media platforms, sharing your channel's links with your audience is a great way to get them engaged.



Peachjar

- This platform is commonly used by school districts to send flyers and newsletters to families as colorful digital flyers.
- Peachjar can also streamline the process internally for flyer and newsletter creation, which includes support for distribution to families, students, and communities.

Farm to School Collective: Example Resources

- Farm to School Champion: [Sample Instagram Post](#)
- Cajon Valley's School Nutrition Department: [Sample Facebook Post](#)

Additional Resources

- [Checklist: 10 Social Media Marketing Basics for Budding Businesses - Sprout Social](#): Complete list of social media platforms and how best to use these tools for marketing.
- [How to Handle Customer Complaints via Social Media - Social Media Examiner](#): Step by step guide on how to handle a customer complaint over social media.
- [How to Use Instagram Stories to Build Your Audience - Hootsuite](#): Learn the basics on how to use Instagram Stories.
- [How to Write a Good Twitter Bio: Tips, Ideas, and Examples - Hootsuite](#): Learn the basics on how to write a creative Twitter bio.
- [How to Create a Facebook Business Page in 7 Easy Steps - Hootsuite](#): Learn the basics on how to create a Facebook Business Page.
- [Peachjar Information Page - Peachjar](#): Learn about the Peachjar platform and how it works to keep parents informed.
- [Social Media 101: How to Successfully Promote Your School Nutrition Program - PrimeroEdge](#): Tips on how to create a social media account for your school nutrition program

