

SOCIAL MEDIA IS WEIRD



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Meghan, Deanna, Angel

Cru's social media team manages the content and sets the direction for our global social media across many platforms. We've learned a lot in the last few years, and are excited to share it with you. Our hope is that this book will help you make your social media great!

INTRODUCTION

Social Media is Weird

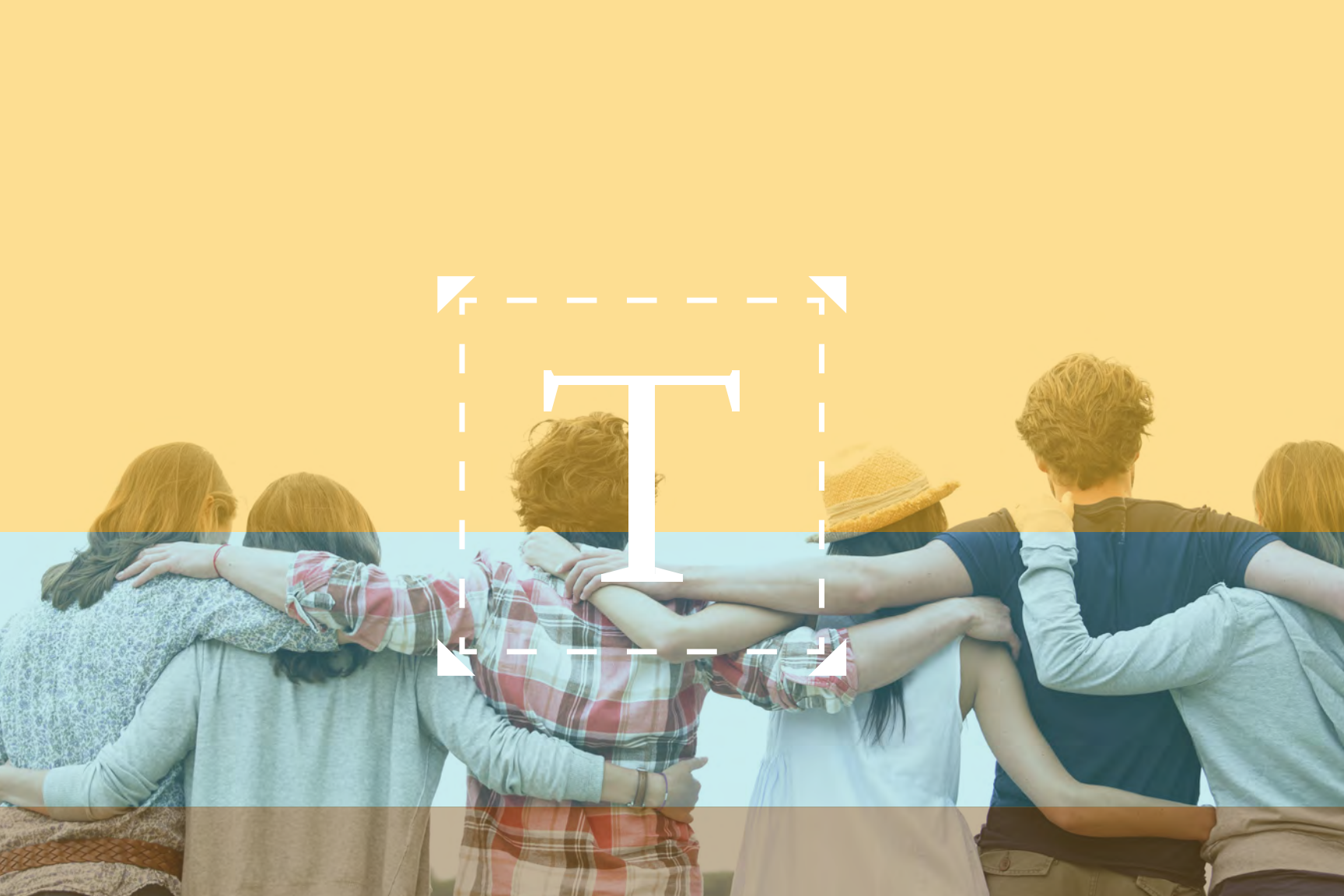
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and the like have the potential to connect and engage people of all backgrounds. After all, where else can you connect with your grandma and high school best friend at the same time? Social media has the ability to spread news across the world faster than your Aunt Sally's latest gossip at a family reunion. It can make us feel connected to others and part of a community. All that can happen through a few clicks of a mouse as you sit at home in your underwear.

Yes, social media is weird. Weird, wonderful and powerful. It's this element of power that makes using social media so intimidating. If you're like most, you are reading this tutorial because you are over-

whelmed with using social media at all, let alone using it effectively for your ministry.

You are not alone! Social media can be a monster. However, its "monsterness" is what gives it amazing potential for reaching people with the gospel. You can reach thousands of people at one time, and it's free! **Did you know that as of 2015, 73% of Americans have a presence on social media?**

We can't afford to ignore this online community. Our goal in this book is to take away the monster's teeth and claws. We want to make social media simple and manageable for you and your city ministry needs.



JARGON

Learning the Lingo

Analytics - The approach of collecting data from social media sites and evaluating that data to make best practice decisions. This process goes beyond the usual monitoring or a basic analysis of retweets or “likes” to develop an in-depth idea of your social audience.

Feed - The News Feed or feed of information given to a person in real time to display news and updates from other users that the person follows on a variety of social media platforms.

Handle - Contrary to a door handle, a handle will refer to a person’s username on Twitter.

Hashtag - Indicated by the # symbol, is a way to be involved in a conversation or help in searching a

topic or term. Primarily used on Twitter and Instagram, but can be used on Facebook.

Impressions - The number of times a post from your page is displayed, whether the post is clicked or not. People may see multiple impressions of the same post. For example, someone might see a page update in their News Feed once, and then a second time if their friend shares it.

Like - Facebook users can “like” a post through the social media site or on content outside of Facebook and share it with their friends. The more likes something gets in its first moments the better chance the post has of being seen on people’s News Feed.

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Reach - The number of people who received impressions of a Page post. Reach might be less than impressions since one person can see multiple impressions.

Share - Facebook users can share content from your page on their own. This step is one that you should strive for because the user is taking your post and making it their own. It also opens up the content to the sharer's friends, which broadens your audience.

#TBT - Throwback Thursday is an Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook phenomenon that often refers to sharing a photo that recalls something from the past.

Trending - A Hashtag that has become popular across a certain region or country that will be highlighted often on the left or right side of a person's feed.

Viral - A topic or post that has organically been shared across a wide network of users (that often is picked up for stories on news stations, as well).

NOTES:

VIRAL

TRENDING

SHARE

ANALYTICS

**“Don’t fear the social
media monster!”**





POSTING BY PLATFORM

We'll Make a Guru Out of You

In recent years, thousands of studies have been done on social media, how to use it, why people are so enamored with it and its best practices. Luckily for you, we went ahead and did the research so you don't have to. You get to benefit from hours of reading with a few short tips and tricks for each platform. We know, we're pretty nice.

Whether you're managing your ministry's Facebook page or trying to post new content for your ministry partners, it's imperative you keep up with trends in social media.

FACEBOOK

1. Don't forget weekends: The interaction rate for

posts on weekends is 14.5 percent higher compared to weekday posts. The best part? Only 14 percent of all posts are published on Saturdays and Sundays. Facebook fans like to use social media when they have down time, which is why the weekends have such high interaction rates.

2. Facebook interaction should occur during "nonbusy hours": People are more likely to spend time perusing Facebook when they're at home, 8 p.m. to 7 a.m.

3. Only post one to two times a day: Brands posting just a few times a day see 19 percent higher interaction rates than those who post three or more times a day. The key is to not bombard fans with too many posts, as the News Feed Optimization penalizes that.

4. Keep it short: Posts with 80 characters or less receive 23 percent higher interaction than longer posts. Take time to figure out how to make posts concise.

5. What do you think: Posts asking questions generate 92 percent higher comment rates than non-question posts.

6. Ask fans to do something: Call your fans to action. Ask fans to “caption a photo”, give their opinion, or vote “yes or no”. These options see interaction rates 48 percent higher than average. Don’t ask them to “like” or “share” your content though. Facebook algorithms penalize that.

7. Make your social network site social: When fans take the action you should comment, share or like it, don’t ignore it. Fans want to see you appreciate their interaction and see the conversation goes two ways. A simple “Thanks!” goes a long way.

TWITTER

Did you know Twitter has 232 million active users? What a powerful ministry tool that is simple to use and can reach the masses.

1. Be a weekend warrior: Twitter engagement on the weekend is 17 percent higher than weekday tweets. The best part? Only 19 percent of companies are using the social media site on the weekends.

2. The worst of times: The best time for tweeting is when people are at their business. Tweeting between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., known as busy hours, receives 30 percent higher engagement than tweets during non-busy hours.

3. Keep tweets short: I know what you’re thinking, it’s already 140 characters and it still needs to be shorter? Yes, tweets that contained less than 100 characters received 17 percent higher engagement compared to tweets longer than that.

4. Use the hashtags: Brands using the search tool received two times more engagement than those without them. But engagement drops if you use more than three.

5. A picture's worth: A picture helps with replies, retweets and views on Twitter. Tweets with photos or links receive twice as much engagement.

6. And action: Ask users to retweet. It works! Tweets that contain "RT" or "ReTweet" receive 12 times higher retweet shares compared to those without a call to action.

INSTAGRAM

Currently, 90 percent of the 150 million people on Instagram are under 35 years old and the fastest growing population on Facebook is 65+. That means if we want to reach the next generation we need go no further than their phone to plug events, share stories and promote ministries through the photo sharing application.

1. Post consistently: Users like to see a variety of photos from different accounts in their feed. Post often enough to keep them engaged, but keep them wanting more. Spread your posts out throughout the day or over a few days.

2. Short and sweet: As you probably have guessed, keeping posts short is the common theme throughout social media. If you have long wordy paragraphs under your Instagram post, few will read it and they will skip right over you. Keep characters to a minimum and only add information that is necessary.

3. Use filters: Photos with filters generate more engagement than those that don't. It's all about how the photos look. Test out different filters and find out what your audience enjoys seeing. Statistically, Mayfair is the filter that generates the most interest overall.

4. Hashtag it up: Well, don't go crazy, use two. But adding hashtags is super important for networking, visibility and engagement. (See the Hashtags and Campaigns section)

5. Engage with your audience: Interact with the community by asking questions in your caption and responding to comments.

6. Develop storytelling strategies: Instagram videos let you bring static moments to life. Think about the types of photos you already post and how you can use video to add depth to that.

NOTES:

Social Quick Tips



twitter

- POST ON WEEKENDS AND WEEKDAYS
- 3-5 TIMES A DAY
- 8 A.M. TO 7 P.M. HAS BEST ENGAGEMENT
- USE HASHTAGS
- 100 CHARACTERS OR LESS
- ASK FOR RETWEETS

Instagram

- POST TWO TIMES A DAY
- USE HASHTAGS
- SHORT AND SWEET
- USE FILTERS
- POST VIDEOS
- ENGAGE WITH AUDIENCE

facebook®

- POST ON WEEKENDS AND WEEKDAYS
- ONE TO TWO TIMES A DAY
- 8 P.M. TO 7 A.M. HAS BEST ENGAGEMENT
- 80 CHARACTERS OR LESS
- ADD A PHOTO
- ASK A QUESTION

cru



®

BRANDING

Hey Good Lookin'

Let's talk a little bit about branding.

You know that excitement you feel when you see a fun new product from a company you love? Meghan does.

When Meghan first got her new Apple MacBook, she was so excited she literally couldn't stop smelling it. Seriously, the smell of new plastic and metal was like a bed of roses to her. But let's be honest, not any new laptop would do. No, the reason she was excited about her new toy was because it was an Apple product. When you think of the brand you think clean, crisp, top of the line and easy to use.

The company has built its brand on one simple idea: "think differently." Branding works ... well, at least it worked on Meghan.

Like Apple has demonstrated, branding can evoke positive feelings within us. Our goal with the Cru brand is to accomplish the same thing. We want people to have a genuine experience anytime they come in contact with "Cru". They should associate Cru with changed lives (theirs and others through Jesus), meaningful relationships (with others and a growing relationship with God), and significant opportunities (to make a difference, and to go anywhere and do anything for the sake of the Great

Commission). You may wonder why this topic of “branding” has become such a big deal at Cru over the past few years, so here are a few reasons why building a strong brand (especially in your social media accounts) can positively impact you and your ministry.

1) Credibility Repeated exposures to a brand over time increases credibility, but only when those exposures reinforce a consistent look, feel and tone. Think about a potential journey for a student; friends in their youth group have a Cru shirt and love Cru, they read an article about freshmen in college from Cru online, then they hear about a Cru event in their city through their church. They begin to see that Cru is active, all over the place, and engaged in things they are interested in. Now, how much more likely will that person be to say “Yes” when invited by a friend to come with them to a Cru event?

2) Unity We want people to know and recognize Cru easily throughout all its ministries in order to show scope and breadth of the organization as well as increase transferability from one ministry of Cru to another. A specific example would be an alumnus of the campus ministry already feeling comfortable and familiar with Cru when they arrive in their new city.

3) Quality Cru has a history and track record unlike almost any other ministry around. Having brand standards that bring consistency to the details shows professionalism and quality that people expect from a long-established worldwide organization.

Here’s a few branding guidelines ... we promise, it’s not that bad.

Colors

Color is one of the first things you associate and recognize with brands. Think about it: Coca-Cola “owns” the color red; UPS owns brown; Starbucks owns their green. Cru has a unique opportunity to own Cru Gold.

Applied in a thoughtful and consistent manner, color is a powerful tool audiences associate with a brand, enabling us to build instant recognition. By owning our color we can differentiate ourselves, and stand out amongst many organizations competing for attention.

Our primary color palette comprises of Cru Gold, Cru Gray and generous amounts of whitespace. These are the dominant colors on all our communications.

Cru Gold

SCREEN

RGB: 249-182-37
HEX: f9b625

COATED PAPER

Solid Ink: PMS 123 C
CMYK: 0-24-94-0

UNCOATED PAPER

Solid Ink: PMS 115 U
CMYK: 0-10-100-0

GRAYSCALE EQUIVALENT

K=22

Cru Gray

SCREEN

RGB: 98-96-98
HEX: 666062

COATED PAPER

Solid Ink: PMS Cool Gray 11 C
CMYK: 0-2-0-68

UNCOATED PAPER

Solid Ink: PMS Cool Gray 11 U
CMYK: 0-0-0-65

GRAYSCALE EQUIVALENT

K=65

White

SCREEN

RGB: 255-255-255
HEX: ffffff

COATED PAPER

CMYK: 0-0-0-0

UNCOATED PAPER

CMYK: 0-0-0-0

GRAYSCALE EQUIVALENT

K=0

Typography

So let's say you want to create a graphic for an upcoming event; with thousands of fonts out there, which do you choose? We have a few official Cru fonts that should work great as a default for your promotions. And by the way, all of these can be downloaded for free on Staff Web.

Primary applications (body text, headlines, captions)

Freight Sans Pro Light
Freight Sans Pro Book
Freight Sans Pro Medium
Freight Sans Pro Bold

Secondary applications (body text, headlines, captions)

LEITURA ROMAN 3
(ALL CAPITAL LETTERS)

Imagery

When you post images on social media, there are a few things you want to capture:

1) Use real photos of real people. Most folks can spot a stock photo from a mile away, so try to snap photos of real students in action to make your content more relatable.

2) Show community. Many students will be drawn to your ministry because of the community and friendships they can find there, so be sure to reflect that by using images with groups of students as much as possible.

3) Show diversity. We want everyone to feel included and welcome at Cru, so make sure your images show diversity in gender, race and even age.

Here are a few examples of images that reflect the Cru brand well:



Here are a few examples of images that do not reflect the Cru brand well:



Do not rely on overused inspirational stereotypes



Do not use religious artifacts or symbols as props; never use photos of people impersonating Jesus (Exception: organizational product shots; i.e., *The Jesus Film Project*)



Do not use images that appear staged or posed; imagery should be believable and give the impression that we've captured a moment



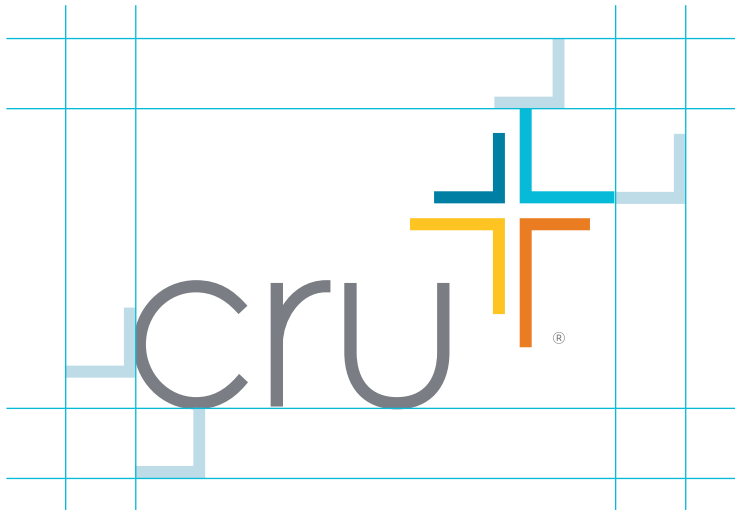
Do not use imagery that depicts an artificial sense of happiness or sentimentality; imagery should be realistic in its depiction



The Logo “Make me look beautiful!”

Spacing

In order to make our logo as recognizable and “standout” as possible, it’s important to not crowd it with other elements. Fortunately, there’s an easy way to determine the minimum amount of space you need for the Cru logo. Take a look at the Cru logo; in the four corners cross, take the upper left quadrant (the dark blue one) and use that as a spacer like so:



And voila, that’s the amount of space you need!

Clarity

We always want our logo to look great, so make sure you're using a high quality version that doesn't look grainy or discolored. Once again, all of those can be downloaded on Staff Web.

® Instead of TM

Take a look at the Cru logo you're using. If it has a TM after it, you have an old version that needs to be updated (seriously, Legal told us so, and we pretty much never question Legal). Head to Staff Web and update your logos with the fancy new ® version.

Changing the Cru Logo

There are many areas for creativity within the Cru brand, but altering the logo is not one of those areas (sorry). When you think of the big brands that evoke feelings, you see the logo used the same way in the same colors every time. Though it can be fun to add a school mascot, change the colors or distort the image, in the end it never looks good.

There are only two variations of the full colored Cru logo, and here they are:



A Logo for Your City

The only customization that can be made to the Cru logo is something we call a “lock-up”. A lockup is the Cru logo officially connected to the name of your city. If you’d like a lockup package made for your city, contact brandmanager@cru.org and they’ll get you everything you need. Here’s an example of a logo lockup:





Don't be that guy.

HOW NOT TO DO SOCIAL MEDIA

You're Annoying

We've all been there. You log onto Facebook and see that Gammy liked 40 of your photos, wrote an embarrassingly personal question on your wall and somehow managed to upload every bad photo of you ever taken with hashtags like #grandkids #florida #gammy #facebook and so on. She doesn't know any better, but now you do.

Each platform has its own etiquette (see "Posting by Platform" for more information). There's a limit on how often to post, how many hashtags to use and how much text to add. It seems like a lot of rules for something that was supposed to be easy. But don't lose heart, we'll tell you everything not

to do so you don't make the same mistakes as Gammy.

1) I know you want to, but don't. Social media isn't the place to change people's theology or to win an argument. When Jesus encountered people He met them where they were, not where He expected them to be. When posting, think of social media as a ministry tool. Be engaging, give resources and ask thought-provoking questions.

Celebrate life with your city and respond to what's happening there (like your group participating in Boxes of Love.)

Find common ground. Don't make Jesus the only thing you post about, because social media is about more than that. It's the place to build relationships, start conversations and let people know your community is there to serve the campus.

2.) Take it easy. Jesus wasn't a Republican or Democrat. Your ministry's social media isn't the place to promote political or socially controversial topics. Don't bash other organizations or slam individuals or their beliefs.

You may be passionate about topics like homosexuality and abortion, but we can't expect people who haven't encountered Jesus to be changed through posts. Your News Feed tells a story. What does yours say about who Jesus is, who we are as Cru and the community you're inviting people into? For ideas on what to post, see "Evangelism".

3.) City lingo. Show influentials, city leaders and mission team leaders in action.

People want to see others-centered posts so challenge your community to take photos. These posts are great to share on your ministry's social media and with prayer partners

4.) Please be my friend. Once in college, Angel asked a girl to be her friend during class – the girl never sat by her again. We share this embarrassing story to emphasize the importance of not begging people to follow you or be your friend on social media. Give them good content and they will want to stay.

On the other side of that, remember who you follow says a lot about you. Follow, like or share posts from other organizations or your campus athletic teams.

5.) If you like it, then I'll like it. Instagram has said it best: "Document life, show off your quirky moments, and tell a vibrant, filter-filled story." If you like something chances are your social media audience also will like it so share photos, videos, text and ideas you feel inspired by.

6.) Why so serious? Serious and dry posts are boring. Period. Put emotion into your content. Be funny when appropriate but also have tender moments. It's important to show a lighthearted and empathetic side. Keep in mind that what you post represents your movement, Cru and, ultimately, Jesus.

7.) No need to write a novel. Keep your posts short. People today have an attention span worse than a goldfish. Your goal for social media is to keep it interesting. Instead of posting a 20 -minute testimony, chop it up into small, 30-second or one- minute pieces. Post a different piece once a day, or week.

For more ideas and resources, check out the videos on our online resources page from RogerVann's talk, "Making the Most of Facebook" or the book, "Sticky Jesus: How to Live Out Your Faith Online" by Toni Birdsong and Tami Heim.

NOTES:



CONTENT CALENDAR

Let's Date!

Plan not and you will post not. We've said it before and we'll say it again—we know you're busy. That's why the biggest tip we can emphasize is planning out your content.

We encourage ministries to create content calendars because with a short amount of time you can schedule months in advance. This allows you to be organized and save time in the long run. We've worked with several ministries and every time they applied a planned out calendar they've seen followership and engagement increase.

So, take a deep breath, grab a cup of coffee and let's get to it. You can do this! If you're still

feeling a sense of impending doom, feel free to take a moment to crush an empty soda can on your head or play "Eye of the Tiger" to psych yourself up. We can wait.

Ready? OK.

First, let's consider your city's goal with a few questions. What is your goal with social media? Do you want to direct people to your ministry's website, do you want more followers, do you want more engagement, do you want people to know you exist on your city? Do you want to help people in your city use their social media for evangelism?

Once you know the answers to these questions, you can move forward to the next step. Look at what social media platforms you currently exist on and talk with your students about any platforms you should use based on demographics and the niche group you target.

Next, plan for a month, but work week by week. Start by thinking through one typical week and plan one type of post for each day.

Sunday Ask an engaging question

Monday Post a graphic with a verse

Tuesday Post a video

Wednesday Repost a Cru graphic

Thursday Throwback Thursday

Friday Recap or quote from large group meeting

Saturday Repost a pastor or artist

Once your week is planned out, multiply the content by four and BAM, you have a month of content. Now you know you need to come up with four videos for the month to post on Tuesdays.

You can choose the same guidelines every week for 3 months and change it up once in a while when things like campaigns, outreaches or conferences come up.

We know what you are thinking, “You told us to post multiple times a day.” Yes, and you should. Be aware that you’ll have random things come up like special events, outreaches, campaigns, reminders for large group meetings and so on. You can schedule posts ahead of time if you have all the information. If not, take a few minutes at the beginning of each week to schedule current content.

Once you know what to post and how many to post, it’s time to create the content. See “Content” for more information.

OK, you have it all planned out. Done and organized. All that's left to do is schedule your posts. We suggest taking an hour or so at the beginning of every month and scheduling all of your posts on Facebook and Twitter. With the exception of a few special posts and Instagram you are done and won't have to worry about posting every day. For more information on how this works, read "Scheduling and Analytics".

See, that wasn't so bad.

A few final thoughts:

- We love using Google Calendar with the ministries we work with. It helps visualize what the social media will look like and is easy to share with others. It's also easy to link all of the content directly in the calendar so you won't need to hunt it down later, especially if you're using Google Drive.

- Don't link your social media accounts to post at the same time. I know it seems easier, but Facebook and Twitter penalize you for doing this, which causes your posts to be less effective.

- Don't be married to anything. See what works and what doesn't. If something didn't do well try something else. It's OK.

- Change the times you post. See when you generate the best engagement and post at those times. This will take time and will fluctuate throughout the year. Be patient with it, you'll get the hang of it. For more information, read "Scheduling and Analytics".

On the next page, you'll see an example of a week scheduled out for the Epic ministry movement.

Check out online content for example calendars!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
<p data-bbox="164 353 479 601">Give millennials a place and time to meet if they want to join you for church.</p> <p data-bbox="182 678 458 764">#ridestochurch #portland</p>	<p data-bbox="560 353 878 548">Encourage young professionals at their place of employment.</p> <p data-bbox="578 624 861 711">#faithandwork #flourishingcity</p>	<p data-bbox="994 353 1295 494">Re-tweet something from another ministry.</p>	<p data-bbox="1378 353 1703 601">Post a short video or photo of a millennial making a difference in the city.</p> <p data-bbox="1378 678 1703 764">#makeadifference #coloradosprings</p>

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

Take a picture of a gathering of young professionals over dinner and post it.

#connect
#NYC

Post a Bible verse and graphic.

Also, use this day to schedule posts or gather content each week.

Post a tip in how to thrive in the city

#citysurvivaltip
#orlando

NOTES:

NOW
It's Your Turn!



SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

--	--	--

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

--	--	--	--



CONTENT

So Easy a Caveman Can Do It

Remember learning about primitive societies made up of hunters and gatherers? Well, in social media you are equal parts hunter and gatherer. OK, so you're not going to be literally slaying wild boars and picking blueberries, but the concept remains. You are on the hunt for quality social media material and you're putting everything you find to good use on your pages.

Gathering and creating content is perhaps the most daunting part of social media for most staff. You may find yourself asking, "How do I come up with that much content?", "Where do I get content?", "How do I create my own content?"

We get it. It seems like a lot, but it doesn't have to be overwhelming. Here are some tips and tricks to help make it a little... nope, a lot, quicker and easier.

1) Get organized. Set aside time to plan out a content calendar for the month (For more details, see the "Content Calendar" section). Planning your content in one session where you're in full "creator" mode enables you to get into a rhythm and helps you avoid the "Oh no! What do I post today?" blues. Once you have your calendar in front of you, it will be much easier to see what content you need to gather. For example, if you plan to post a Bible verse every Friday you know you need to find four verses to use for the month.

2) Post around a theme. Posting from scratch can be tough, so why not create a theme for the week or month? A theme could be based around time of the year (August is everything back to school), or could be completely made up (February we'll post all about forgiveness). If you have a campaign or theme, then all of your graphics, verses and videos can go along with it. When brainstorming content, it's a lot less overwhelming to say, "Let me find four great quotes about forgiveness" than it is to say, "Let me find four great quotes."

3) Think about your audience. Who is your audience and what can you give them that would encourage or add value? What are they already talking about? Join in on the conversation. What is happening to them throughout the year that you can speak to? For instance, you know your community is stressed at the start of the fall season, so why not create posts that encourage them during those months?

4) Find great images. Now that you have the information you need, it's time to gather and create con-

tent that will catch people's eyes. Trust us, you don't need to be a Photoshop expert to create fun graphics and videos. Here are a few resources that help make the process quick and easy:

- **Steal Cru's content.** Did you know Cru has a ton of great content to share? It is all yours for the taking. You are welcome to steal and repost any of our images, articles, verses and videos. No need to make everything from scratch. Check out all of our platforms for recent and throwback content.

- **Make your own graphic.** Canva.com is a free website for designing your own graphics. There are templates for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram posts, documents and much more. Just select the format you want and begin designing! If you sign up for Canva they will walk you through a simple tutorial online.

- **An even simpler way to make a graphic.** Overgram App is a handy tool that allows you to add graphics and text to your photos on your phone. The app has an array of trendy fonts and customization options

to choose from when creating. It's especially helpful when working with Instagram or when you need to create and post something quickly. It is simple and easy to use. Just download and follow the prompts.

- **Let's start Reposting.** Have you noticed that you cannot share or repost photos and videos directly on Instagram? This is where Repost App is a life-saver. The app allows you to repost any content posted by anyone you see or follow. It's especially helpful when working with campaigns and sharing photos students post. Just download the app and repost from there.

- **The iMovie app** is great for creating and editing videos directly on your phone. You can crop, shorten, add music and use text easily.

We've talked about how to create content, but not all content is created equal. What content should you be posting the most and what receives the most engagement?

Videos receive some of the highest engagement on social media. Videos on Vine (6 seconds maximum) and Instagram (15 seconds maximum) are 400 times more likely to be viewed than any other content. Videos are a fresh and engaging way to share content, and in the era of bite-sized videos, they don't have to be professional quality – just grab a smartphone and create something quick!

Graphics also generate engagement particularly on Facebook and Instagram. Find a quote, verse or post information on an upcoming event.

Articles are one of the best things to share. Have you recently read something you liked on Cru.org or another website? Share that with your followers and ask what they think or write a quick sentence on what you thought. Chances are if you like it, then they will too.

For access to downloadable graphics, videos and articles to use on your social media, check out our online content!



HASHTAGS AND CAMPAIGNS

What's Up With That Pound Sign?

We see hashtags all over social media. It seems like every post is followed by a slew of hashtags, especially if it's posted by a teenage girl. But what are they really for and do they serve a purpose?

Well, since the title of this post includes the word hashtag you can safely assume they are pretty important. When used correctly, hashtags are the key to networking, generating new followers and getting your ministry out in the social media sphere. Feeling overwhelmed? Fear not, using hashtags is simple.

- What's the magic number of hashtags? Two to three. This keeps your posts clean, easy to identify and a lot less annoying to those following you.

- Choose a hashtag that's all yours. “#nobodyelse”
- Pick a hashtag that clearly represents your ministry and identifies you easily.
- Do research on the hashtags you are considering to make sure it's not too popular or coupled with inappropriate content.
- Keep it simple. People will be more likely to use the hashtag if it's short.
- Spell check. You want to save yourself from the embarrassment of accidentally using inappropriate letter combinations.

- Use a campus hashtag. The point of the hashtag is for visibility. If you use an already existing university hashtag along with your ministry hashtag you will increase your reach by thousands.

Example: #CruOrlando

- Follow your campus' newspaper, radio station, social media and athletics department. This is an easy way to know what's happening and what hashtags are trending.

Let's have a campaign.

Campaigns promote your ministry and call for increased interaction and engagement during a certain time for a certain purpose. They can range from one day to several months or longer. It's up to you! Campaigns should promote your ministry and bring content to your social media pages or website. They should have a specific purpose, be easy to engage with and interesting.

Getting Started:

- Choose a hashtag specific to your campaign and use it along with your ministry hashtag and school hashtag.
- Contests and giveaways are great ways to engage with people. Who doesn't want to score a fun freebie?
- Videos are fun, so consider making your own to go with the campaign.

For Example...

One Easter, Cru's social media pushed the #AtThis-Time campaign, which revolved around the last week of Christ's life before the resurrection. The premise of the campaign was to allow people to see in real time what Christ's last days would have been like, including a detailed description of Good Friday.

The week before the campaign, Cru used each of its social media platforms to share informational graphics on the upcoming campaign. There was also a post on Cru.org about it, which can be done on an individual ministry’s website.

Then came the campaign. A mix of videos, graphics and text were posted on Twitter, and reminders of how to get involved on the Twitter-focused campaign were posted throughout the week on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Vine and Tumblr. If you saw our social media, you saw we had a campaign running.

After the campaign ran its course, Cru shared the success of the campaign with those who supported it. Remember, the campaign’s success is your success. Take pride in that and share it so you can continue to get support for more social media campaigns!

NOTES:

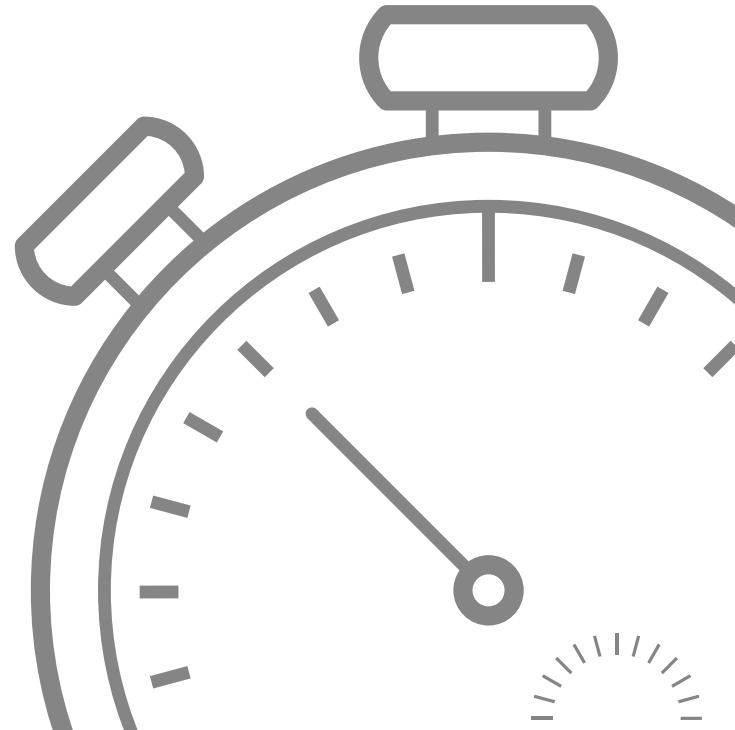


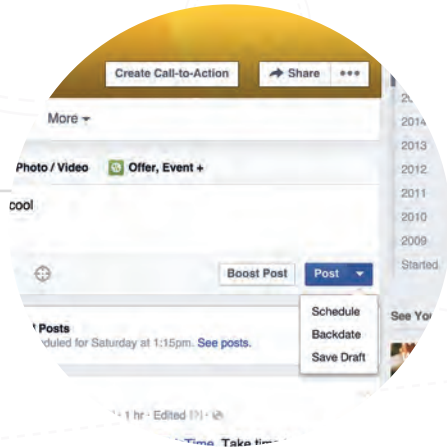
SCHEDULING & ANALYTICS

Channeling Your Spidey Senses

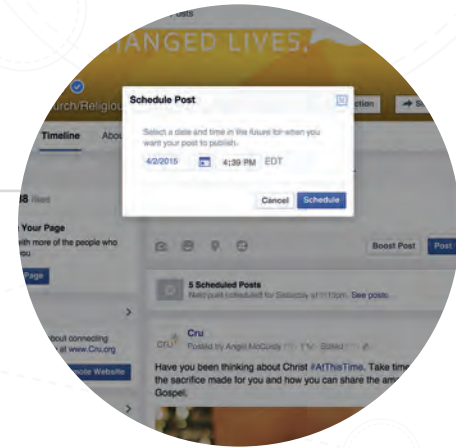
Wait a minute, you don't have super human abilities to slow time and check off your entire to-do list in a day? You must be joking?! We know you don't have all the time in the world, but by now you know social media is vital for your ministry. But what if you could take a few minutes at the beginning of the week and knock out all your social media posts at once? Well, you're in luck!

Here are a few tools you can use to schedule posts in advance and keep your sanity intact.





Facebook makes it easy to schedule a post. Go to your page and click the arrow on “Post”.



Select the date and time you want your post to go out. This option is only available for fan pages so if you're still working as a group page we suggest making the transition.



We know you're on a budget, so we suggest using Hootsuite to schedule posts to Twitter. Simply click the "Compose Message" area at the top left of your screen.



Once it comes up you can create your message.



Then, hit the calendar icon and select the date and time you want your tweet to appear. Be warned, Hootsuite uses links for graphics so we suggest posting those organically if you have the time.



You can also use Hootsuite for listening to what people are saying about certain hashtags, when you've been mentioned and what your followers are talking about. Just create a "stream" with what you want to see. **Learn how on Hootsuite.com!**

ANALYTICS

I know the word “analytics” can make some people run for the hills screaming. But social media companies are working to make learning analytics easy. These analytics will help you understand if a campaign was successful, what posts are doing well and what needs to be adjusted in your posting.

A screenshot of the Facebook Insights page for a user named 'Cru'. The page is partially obscured by a grey semi-circle. The navigation bar includes 'Page', 'Messages', 'Notifications' (with a red notification icon), 'Insights', and 'Posts'.

Cru

Page Messages Notifications 1 Insights Posts

Welcome To The New Page Insights

- Now it's easier to:
- Monitor what's working and not working on your Page.
 - Understand the people who like your Page and engage with your posts.
 - Make decisions about the best ways to connect with your audience.

To track analytics in Facebook, go to the “Insights” section of your page.



Insights shows you how your page is doing from the number of likes per week to how your posts are doing with engagement and reach (check out the “Jargon” section to see why it’s important).



You can even take a closer look at each post to see details of how it did by clicking on a particular post.



Hootsuite also shows some analytics. Simply click “Twitter Profile Overview” and select the date range you would like to learn about.



Hootsuite will tell you how many followers you gained each day, as well as how many link clicks a post received.



EQUIPPING

Anything I Can Do, You Can Do Better

Whether you are a staff, volunteer or somewhere in between, social media should be on the forefront of every leader's mind. So here comes the big question: Who is going to take on this role?

Our goal is for every City Ministry to be trained on doing social media well. We know if leadership is trained, they can train volunteers and transfer the skills on to others.

We're aware that not every Cru ministry has full-time staff. That's ok because this training is for volunteers and other partners too! Our heart is to see leaders from every ministry take ownership and run social media in their ministry context. Ultimately, we want to

see leader-led social media as part of ministry teams with staff as coaches. It's important for staff to be in the loop so they can train volunteers well and transfer the roles fluidly.

Make it transferable.

There is a lot of turnover on ministry teams as staff, interns and volunteers come and go at different times. Making your social media plan transferable is key. The plan will save time and work by keeping content organized and centralized.

Create a space online that's easily accessible for those in charge of social media. This should be

a place that is safe, but can be easily shared and passed along if needed. Google Drive or Dropbox are great options. You can store information like usernames and passwords for each social media site, campaigns and analytics from past content, and ideas for the future of your school's social media.

How can you train your ministry leaders to be successful at social media?

1) Make social media a priority. If you don't think it's valuable, they won't either.

2) Keep with it. It will take time to build momentum and see the results you desire. But if you stick with it, it will only get better!

3) Be visible in your city. Make your ministry known in the city by posting relevant content, using trending hashtags and asking your community to like and follow your pages at face-to-face ministry gatherings.

4) Reach out to your target audience in your city through Facebook and Twitter pages. Go to where they are right when they arrive in your city.

5) Teach that this is free publicity for your ministry. Free is probably the best four letter word out there and when it's attached to publicity and advertising, you can't go wrong. The more people who see your ministry, the more of an impact it will have.

6) Social media is also a hub for all your ministry information. Encourage your involved community to post about events and happenings around the city



EVANGELISM

Go Tell It On the Web

We're going to hit you with some statistics that will likely blow your mind — so prepare yourself. Facebook is the third largest world population behind China and India. More than 50 percent of the world's population is under 30 and more people own a mobile device than a toothbrush. What's more, college students are said to spend an average of 3.5 hours on social media daily.

Is your mind blown yet? We looked at that last statistic and Deanna asked a great question, "If we knew a place in the city where people were spending three or four hours everyday, wouldn't we be encouraging others to go there and build relationships?"

Why, yes, we would and social media is that place! We believe the Lord has connected the whole world through social media for such a time as this. We have the opportunity to make an impact for Christ and if you're not using it, you're missing out. We're all busy and have a million other things vying for our time, but if we want to reach the campus and the world, social media must be a part of that.

What does it look like to evangelize well on social media?

- **Think through how** your ministry and the individuals in your community can use social media strategically to reach outsiders and serve your city.

- **Empower and train** your ministry leaders on using their social media to influence non-Christians. Encourage them to repost and be involved with any of the content you create. This is a great way to get new people or non-Christians in your community involved.
- **Think about the audience** you're trying to reach. Consider running a campaign specifically aimed at students with doubts and questions.
- **Evangelism is one piece** of your social media presence. Choose campaigns and content wisely. Be intentional with how often you post evangelistically. Be seeker friendly, informative and interactive. If all you do on social media is evangelism you will lose engagement.
- **For more ideas**, read "How Not To Use Social Media".

One way to engage non-believers in a meaningful way is an online outreach. Choose a hashtag

for the campaign and be sure to include relevant hashtags from your city and ministry. Ask volunteers in your movement to participate at the same time by posting and tweeting. You can use Cru's "Spiritual Conversation Starters" found on www.Facebook.com/CruGlobal in the photo albums or have ministry leaders pull short videos of their personal stories.

In the Northeast, Deanna participated in Digital Days of Outreach during their winter conferences. Leaders trained students during a main conference session where they cast vision for what the outreach could look like.

Students were asked to pick a theme or a question that was a part of their testimony of coming to Christ. Then, each student recorded a short video of their testimony where they elaborated on what Christ had done in their life by expanding on the theme or question that was presented.

At the end of the video they turned their question around and asked the audience to answer the question for themselves. The videos were uploaded and posted on their individual and campus social media pages. What a way to share what Christ has done in the lives of many students in just a matter of minutes!

After the session, students prayed about what outreach to do on their own social media. Students talked through fears and asked each other for help. They were challenged to take the next steps in sharing their faith together.

More ideas for online outreach:

- **Cardboard testimony.** Have volunteers write a word or phrase describing who they were before Christ (one side) and after Christ (other side), then film a short video.


- **Upload student testimonies.** Have your community reach their peers by being open and honest about their faith journey.

- **Ask engaging questions.** This is your platform and your opportunity to share the gospel in an enlightening way. Take advantage of this.

- **Who is on your heart?** Ask people involved in your ministry, “Is there someone who God has laid on your heart to ask where they are at spiritually?” Then, challenge them to pray and contact that person to meet up later to talk. This would be great to do as a group outreach, small group or in lieu of a weekly meeting.

For more personal evangelism ideas, check out the video from Roger Vann’s talk, “Making the Most of Facebook” in our resource section online.



A photograph of a man and a woman celebrating. They are both looking upwards with their arms raised in the air. The man is on the left, wearing a white turtleneck and a watch. The woman is on the right, wearing a watch and a bracelet. The air is filled with colorful confetti (red, yellow, green, blue, pink) that is falling from above. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Congratulations, you made it through this book and are now a social media guru. Feel free to brag to all your friends. We are so excited that you have taken the time to equip yourself with tools and resources to reach the world for Christ through mass media. What a great impact you will have on the Kingdom. Go forth boldly, teaching and training others what you have learned, for the time is now to reach people in this digital age.

“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”

Colossians 4: 56



CruInstagram



CruTweets



Cru Global



For online content and more info:
cru.org/city-social-media



Created by Meghan Allred, Deanna Kustas & Angel McCurdy | Designed by Brent Blossom