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Secondary Mathematics Teacher Recruitment Campaign Module 5: Social Media

Produced for and by the
Marketing to Attract Teacher Hopefuls (MATH)
Research Action Cluster

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2015

Module 5: Social Media

Social media writer and speaker Erik Qualman says, "We don't have a choice on whether we do social media, the question is how well we do it."

If there is any one part of communication that has fundamentally transformed the way people interact, it has to be the combination of smart phones and social media. This module discusses the power of social media and provides some insights of how to manage this new communications phenomenon as applied to secondary mathematics teacher recruitment. Following are the different sections in this module.

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Section 5.0: What Is Social Media? Why Is It Important?

Social Media has changed the way we communicate. Taking the place of e-mail, the phone call, the personal note and even the traditional televised newscast, social media has become the new it for communicating opportunities, entertainment, personal achievements, frustrations and even major life events. The original World Wide Web or Internet consisted of web pages and static content. Today, what has been called Web 2.0 consists of dynamic, user-generated content within virtual communities. Social Media is an important, if not essential, tool for communicating with Millennials. Social media is also having an increasing impact on how all Americans interact and process messages.

The words Social Media describe a category of communications that takes place over the Internet, is interactive, and features a rich combination of visual, audio and written communications.

Social media is also varied in its reach. While some social media is designed for mass communication (think YouTube) other social media is specifically designed for closed or peer-to-peer communication.

One of the most important and defining characteristics of social media is the degree of interactivity. For example, the most popular social media platform is currently Facebook. This application not only delivers news and commentary but also provides the participant an opportunity to respond and even repeat the information. These features captivate interest, increase retention and enhance a sense of community. Consequently, social media boasts more than a billion active users providing and reacting to content that is shared globally.

Focusing on platforms, social media takes the form of blogs, wikis, social networking, music, picture and video sharing, postings, rankings, Internet forums and crowdsourcing.

Also important to social media planning is the continuity of message across platforms. For example, if one of the communication points of a mathematics teacher recruitment campaign addressed scholarship availability, some of the following social media strategies might apply and cross different platforms:

1. A Facebook posting may be targeting parents, reminding them to encourage their children to apply for the opportunity;
2. A blog entry might include a copy of the entry form;
3. A Snapchat or Instagram may include a photo of the last year's winner accepting her reward;
4. A YouTube video or Vining may feature last year's winner talking about the process;
5. A variety of Tweets may be released reminding candidates of the opportunity.

Demographically, while Millennials are the largest audience, social media has also seen a rapid growth in audience diversity, now branching off to nearly every segment of the population. Social media also carries with it a strong ability to affect change. It has been credited with fostering governmental revolution, the rise of specific consumer products, the growth of selected celebrity and the widespread encouragement of the creative thought.

The Holy Grail of social media is getting a message or interactive creation to go viral, which is short hand for something that engages and is shared with others simply because of the appeal of the content.

While there are advertising opportunities with social media, the core appeal of the communications is the ability to share individual content and opinion in hopes of fostering/contributing to discussion and/or providing some entertainment or information value.

Another aspect of social media that is on the rise is the ability to mesh e-commerce with social interaction. By enabling impulse buying, as well as routine purchases of products or services, the sales cycle is shortened and the overall effort to capture a sale may well be truncated, depending upon the product and the strength of the media appeal. Mobile ability has enhanced this process.

The rapid response ability of social media to provide information is in strong contrast to other forms of media where the ability to process images, respond to sales pressures, and share information is much slower and not nearly as effective.

Social Media Empowers

Finally, there is an empowerment aspect of social media that should not be overlooked. By giving the poster or regrammer or reviner the opportunity to be a source of information rather than just a passive recipient, it is easy to see how this interactivity is attractive, engaging, and actually empowering to the participant. Indeed many social media users have branded their ideas, opinions and output with the goal of collecting followers or fans impressed by their outlook.

This is of particular note in some of the major social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, etc. In addition to the non-mass media aspect of social media is the ability to filter both recipients and receivers of information. In the social media realm, information comes from trusted friends and respected individuals. Those who do not fit into the category of a trusted source can very easily be

ignored or even deleted. This includes input from mass media, which was once considered authoritative and has now been replaced, in Millennials, by input from peers.

The downside to this practice, however, is the idea of dissonance avoidance. Quite simply, in the social media realm, if someone doesn't like what he or she is hearing, seeing or reading, even if it is information they may need, they are encouraged to avoid it. This self-selection of information can serve to insulate viewers from conflicting viewpoints. While everyone at some level practices dissonance avoidance, and it is a byproduct of self-determination, in the social media realm it is made easy and is therefore amplified.

Social Media impacts for recruiting teachers of mathematics

Clearly social media is currently one of the strongest tools available to reach Millennials; therefore it is important to have a presence if not a mastery social media as part of the teacher recruitment process. Following is a sample of several types of social media that might be used for a mathematics teacher recruitment campaign.

Section 5.1: Social Media for Teacher Recruitment

There are myriad types of social media with some dying out and new ones being born each day. Each has its own niche and its own identity. As plans are being made to accommodate social media into a mathematics teacher recruitment campaign, the practitioner should be aware of the wide variety of tools available and consider which among them best fits the audience you are seeking to influence, as well as the message you wish to send. Following are brief descriptions of important social media and some suggestions of how each might be used for teacher recruitment.



Facebook: An online social media site combining experiences with lists, graphics, photography, video and personal data, Facebook is the largest of all social media vehicles at this time. It is one of the fastest growing social media platforms for other demographics besides Millennials. Common Facebook terminology includes the terms: Facebook page—where a Facebook event or person is located. A Facebook wall is where photos and posts by that person reside. A Facebook post is a communication placed on a Facebook wall. A Facebook event is something that is announced, and often organized using Facebook as the primary communication platform. The number of people who can read or see your Facebook communications or posts are called Facebook friends. Friends who agree or appreciate your posts respond by liking them.

Facebook also includes a powerful online chat service. Analytically, users like and share posts as well as create their own. One of the most interesting features is the ability to create events and subject-specific groups (both open and closed)—very similar to web sites. Closed groups represent an excellent way to keep track of students for example. Some academics also use it to send class information in the same way a mass email might be used.

Facebook also features some of the strongest analytics available in social media. These analytics track number of views, number of likes, number of shares, etc. They are very useful for tracking results.

For mathematics teacher recruitment, Facebook offers an excellent opportunity to create pages and sites where information is published pertaining to the teacher preparation program, mathematics teaching outlook, and insights into the use and applications of mathematics. Facebook also offers users the opportunity to become organized socially for support, insights, community and relationship building. For recruitment purposes, a mathematics-teaching program should have a web page for a brand identity and could very easily also offer a Facebook page for interconnectivity and commentary. Finally, using Facebook as a way of organizing events could be similarly helpful.



LinkedIn is a business and career social networking site. The site is used for professional networking and informing users of career opportunities and other helpful hints for career advancement. As of June 2013, more than 259 million people are users and located in more than 190 countries and territories.

The site is available in 20 languages. LinkedIn encourages users to create profiles and connections to each other. Users can invite anyone (whether a site user or not) to become a connection. This list of connections can then be used in a number of ways:

1. Users can find jobs, people and opportunities recommended by others in the network.
2. Recruiters and employers can list opportunities and jobs.
3. Users can save (i.e. bookmark) jobs/opportunities they want.
4. Users can like and congratulate each other's updates and new employments.
5. Users can see who has visited their profile page.

A mobile version of LinkedIn launched in February 2008. LinkedIn also supports the formation of interest groups. Wide ranges of topics are covered around professional and career issues. There are more than 128,000 groups for both academic and corporate alumni. Groups may be private, members only, or open.

LinkedIn allows users to endorse skill sets and to solicit these endorsements via a series of algorithms. LinkedIn launched LinkedIn Direct Ads as a form of sponsored advertising where individuals and companies can pay a fee to have LinkedIn sponsor their content and spread it to their user base.

LinkedIn is an excellent resource for recruiting career changers into the mathematics teaching profession. LinkedIn contains job boards and postings for those seeking a career. There are also many opportunities to publish lists or advice. A LinkedIn post of the top 10 reasons you should consider a career in teaching mathematics might be an interesting series.

Like Facebook, LinkedIn contains private groups and has solid analytics behind it. Using LinkedIn as part of a recruiting campaign can help pinpoint areas where more work or explanation is necessary. LinkedIn could also be used as a resource for career changers to interact with existing mathematics teachers for career advice.



Twitter is a text and small photo application that is designed for mobile use. It features the metrics of followers and retweets. A communication on Twitter is called a tweet. A shared communication is called a retweet. The goal of Twitter is to follow persons or topics of interest. Tweeps, those tweeting, are identified with an @ before their Twitter identity and topics of interest are marked by a hashtag with the # symbol. Status-minded Twitter users collect followers. To follow someone is to pay attention to his or her tweets. A social media achievement with Twitter is to have someone of note follow you.

Hashtags are metadata tags that collect and monitor trending topics. Hashtags appear at the beginning of a listing, which makes the attached media searchable and accessible. For example *#becomeamathteacher*, if entered into social media, would produce a list of individuals who want to discuss how to become a math teacher. Hashtags can also be fun and easy to remember like *#fromgeektosleek* might describe a person's new haircut. Hashtags can be used for promotions, campaigns or even events. Hashtags can also be used across multiple social networks as well. Hashtags work in concert with the @ symbol that identifies individual handles and allow one person to reach another via Twitter.

There are also software applications that encourage the programming of auto tweets, which allow the scheduling and/or manipulation of tweets.

Significant to Twitter is the limitation of 144 characters per tweet, which demands short sentences, and prolific usage of abbreviations. The advantage to using such a small number of characters is to encourage use on mobile devices and assist with fast turn-around time. Twitter lends itself well to campaigns to Millennials for recruiting purposes. The Tweets are short and responses are usually equally as quick. A Twitter campaign reminding followers about a scholarship deadline, for example, would be an excellent use of the platform. While the messages are short, the ability to provide links and the quick interaction can be both informative and provide strong community building. Effective use of hashtags can allow a program to monitor communications about a recruitment topic. For example, if XYZ University has an approaching application deadline and has been successful in building a Twitter following through @XYZUnivMathEd, a tweet with *#ApplyNowXYZUMathEd* can gain attention and include a short URL to the application (e.g. bit.ly/Apply).



Pinterest provides users the opportunity for self-expression using photos and other items of interest. Reposting of the Pinterest information is called re-pinning. Pinterest skews heavily female (~81% female, ~19% male). Similar to the Facebook Wall, Pinterest users have their own Boards (think bulletin boards) where things that interest them can be pinned.

Pintrest is highly visual in its approach and an appropriate forum to supplement Facebook and Twitter event recruitment efforts both pre and post events. It is also an excellent solution for attracting Millennials looking for more information about a specific institution.

Demographics:

1. Millennials use Pinterest as much as Instagram (more than 300 million users).
2. Pinterest is one of the fastest growing social media platforms among Millennials.
3. Median household income of Pinterest users is \$50K or greater per year.

Research firm Ahalogy determined other media consumption is different for active Pinterest users. The study found that:

1. Pinterest users watch two-three fewer hours of television a week than non-users.
2. Forty three percent of Pinterest users claim to use Pinterest in lieu of reading magazines.
3. Forty nine percent of active Pinterest users claim to use Pinterest in lieu catalogs.
4. Twenty nine percent of active Pinterest users choose Pinterest searches in lieu of traditional search engine.

Pinterest analytics

Like Facebook, Pinterest has analytics that can help determine the exposure and popularity of various pins.

Pinterest would be an interesting social media technique, particularly when targeting women. Photos and articles about mathematics teaching could be shared. Photos of classes, successful projects, etc. could also be pinned. Also, following interests already posted for areas like new teachers, mathematics, or teacher recruitment might provide a means to build a community based on the graphics and ideas posted with Pinterest. The key is to combine visual appeal with some facts. For example, some Pinterest content might include: a photo contest of the five coolest things you can do with math or six quick calculations to share with your class or four breakthroughs in the history of math, with accompanying copy and visual.



YouTube is a video sharing website. Purchased by Google, YouTube operates as a subsidiary. YouTube is an excellent solution for uploading shareable video. Unlike several other video sharing applications YouTube videos can be of considerable length. Current available content on YouTube includes video clips, television clips, educational video, and video blogs.

YouTube is the dominant online video provider in the United States with 300 hours of new videos uploaded every minute. YouTube is the third most visited website on the Internet and boasts 800 million unique visits every month.

YouTube is an excellent repository for recruiting videos and for testimonials on the success of becoming a mathematics teacher. It can be used for a wide variety of other video-centric recruiting applications as well. It is considered the go to for video hosting.

Regarding possible applications of YouTube, recruiting videos, interviews with graduates, interviews with students and other informative material suitable for a worldwide audience can be uploaded to YouTube. Depending upon availability and need for bandwidth, some YouTube uploads can cost time and money. YouTube uploads can be hidden or made exclusive if desired. Once uploaded, YouTube videos are assigned a unique URL and can be used as a link from other

social media pages. For example, a Facebook post may read: Just finished a new Mathematics Recruiting video, have a look here at (YouTube Link). Also, the YouTube video can be linked to the institution's teacher recruitment website.



Vine is another video hosting platform, similar to YouTube. Vine users create and edit short, shareable projects. Separate instances can be linked together for a total of six seconds. Each short video plays in a continuous loop. Vines are designed to support Twitter and other mobile feed platforms.

Founded in June 2012, Vine was acquired by Twitter in October of that same year. Clips are shared via a revine. Popular Vines can be revined automatically based on popularity. The Vine app can also be used to browse by user, theme, trending status, or popularity.

Vine enables users to edit on the fly or create stop motion effects. In July 2014, Vine added a new loop count, which shows how many times a video is viewed and also includes a count for views of video embedded in other web sites. Vine has been used for a wide variety of content creation including news, singing and comedy performances and promotion of music videos, etc.

Vine skews heavily among 14-20 year olds, making it a good social media platform choice for mathematics teacher recruitment particularly at the high school level. A project that might be interesting for a Vine application is a string of one second videos looped together and entitled a week in the life of a mathematics teacher. Other Vines may include short videos of people getting diplomas, going to their first job, and hearing thank yous from their students. There is also some existing Vine content that can be used to assist in recruiting. Here is an example of some Vine-ready science content: <http://www.popsoci.com/science/article/2013-08/watch-best-science-vines-compilation>



Instagram is a photo-sharing and social media application designed to help users take pictures and videos, and share them on a social networking platform. Sharing Instagram photos is called a regram. Unique to the Instagram experience is the final format of the photos, resembling an old school instant camera design and offering many features that enhance or modify a picture.

Facebook purchased Instagram in April 2012 for approximately \$1 billion. In December 2014, Instagram claimed 300 million monthly users. Instagram skews heavily female (~68% women, ~32% male). Instagram skews younger with 90% of users under the age of 35. College graduates consist of 18% of users. High schoolers make up 15% of users. More than one billion photos have been uploaded to Instagram.

In addition to photos, Instagram also offers users the opportunity to share short videos. The maximum length for Instagram videos is 15 seconds. Instagram would be an excellent platform for sharing photos of teaching experiences, brief video acknowledgements of performance, etc. A teacher recruitment program might enlist current students to post pictures with comments about what is happening in school (student teaching) sites. Using the pictures, Instagram followers can

learn through pictures of activities and postings where future mathematics teachers participate. Ideally, the goal would be to portray those activities in a positive light. Also, comical memes (e.g., an image that spreads from person to person over the Internet) might be used to generate community and a feeling of excitement. Pictures combined with humorous commentary are called memes and there are many available for use.



Tumblr is a blog hosting application known as microblogging, blogging that is shorter in content and posting size. The service hosts more than 138 million blogs and more than 63 billion posts.

1. The average visit to Tumblr is 14 minutes.
2. The average Tumblr user views around 67 pages per month.
3. Nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ of Tumblr's audience has a college education.
4. Thirty nine percent of Tumblr users are under 25.
5. More than thirty percent of all visitors to Tumblr are located in the U.S. (~41,250,000).

Tumblr is a widely recognized source for creating and sharing blogs. A Tumblr blog delivers many eyeballs and can be used to create original content. Some of the most interesting and widely followed content on Tumblr involves digital video and commentary. Tumblr is a great site for posting short videos and visual subjects. Both Instagram and Vine videos are frequently posted on the site. The application is an excellent destination site for targeting Millennials. If a mathematics teacher recruitment campaign were to produce Vine or Instagram videos, Tumblr would be a logical place to post/repurpose those video productions. The site is also a useful for finding original content, which can then be shared or re-posted.



reddit **Reddit** offers news and entertainment. Members submit content and users vote up or down to register (rank) the position of a post on the site's pages. Content is organized as subreddits and cover many interest areas. Reddit is particularly popular among Millennials with science, technology, engineering and mathematics interests. Reddit topics are very diverse and offer a wide variety of appeal. One way using Reddit for recruiting would be to have a contest, which engages viewers to see how high the posts could be ranked. Site content on Reddit includes stills, videos, written copy and other forms of digital media. Reddit mingles hard news with other postings, which makes it a very popular site across a wide selection of demographics. For that reason, Reddit is a good target for a social media plan seeking a wide audience.



Snapchat is a photo-messaging app that has an interesting history. Users can take and send snaps (photos, videos, text and drawings) to one another. Snaps are sent to recipients for a set time limit, (1 to 10 seconds), after which they are hidden and deleted from Snapchat's servers.

The app's users send 700 million photos and videos daily. Snapchat also offers Stories, narratives shared in the same way as photos. In June 2014, the company claimed that its Stories feature had

surpassed Snaps, with over one billion viewed per day, which represented a doubling of the daily views tallied in April 2014.

Snapchat has also introduced Snapkidz for users less than 13 years of age. Snapkidz is part of the original Snapchat application and is activated when the user provides a date of birth to verify his/her age. Snapkidz allows children to take snaps and draw on them, but they cannot send snaps to other users and can only save snaps locally on the device being used.

1. Snapchat demographics consist largely of users between 13 and 23 years of age.
2. Snapchat is also growing among a base of 40-years-and-over.
3. Eighty percent of Snapchat's users are located in the U.S.

One possible application of Snapchat for a recruiting campaign would be to use it to drive traffic to web sites or to alert invited group members of teaching promotions, performances, etc. From a practical point of view, since photos disappear after 1-10 seconds once accessed, there is no longevity possible, so information shared using Snapchat as part of a mathematics teacher recruiting effort must be understood as perishable.

Snapchat may or may not be appropriate for a teacher recruitment campaign, depending upon how it is used. Because of its disappearing nature, Snapchat photos have been used in the past as a way to communicate criminal information. Snapchat has also been used by people sending intimate photos, sexting, or other questionable practices so beware of the reputation attached to Snapchat when deciding whether to engage this platform.



StumbleUpon is a hybrid search engine and referral site, which helps seekers discover relevant web content. It provides web pages, photos, and videos based on the users past behavior and preferences. More specifically, StumbleUpon uses peer-sourcing and social-networking principles to deliver its content. The service exists in toolbar options for a variety of search engines including Google, Firefox, Safari and even Internet Explorer.

StumbleUpon uses collaborative filtering technologies. (Collaborative filtering is described as “an automated process combining human opinions with machine learning.”) The end result is a creation of like-minded users viewing content that has been recommended by one another. More directly than most, the collaborative site automates a word-of-mouth referral of true peer-approved content.

The application can also help filter the types of webpages viewed by rating or end application deliverables (audio, video, flash, images). StumbleUpon also offers paid advertising and content distribution, serving more than 125 million brand and publisher sponsored placements. StumbleUpon can be used as a way to push websites forward. StumbleUpon can also be used as a way to find related sites that could have the potential for supporting links—for example a recruitment teacher may find complementary sites that could be linked to their specific recruiting site. In addition, there are advertising opportunities within the StumbleUpon site that could help promote specific university recruiting efforts.



RSS Feeds and Podcasts: RSS stands for Real Simple Syndication and is a catch all for other-generated content that can be placed on a site and/or a mobile device. RSS Feeds are a great way to boost site content and relevance with minimal effort. Syndicated content is that which can be seen in multiple locations within the social media universe. For example, a story that discusses the popularity of mathematics teaching published in the Washington Post can be syndicated and provided to other web sites and social media outlets via RSS. These feeds are often used by web sites to provide additional content for their site. Other sources for RSS feeds include wire services and public domain information (press releases, announcements, etc.).

The word podcast originates from the combination of the word broadcast and the popular file extension used by Apple's iPod technology, (pod-cast). A podcast is designed for download and listening at a later time, perhaps from a mobile device like a tablet or smartphone. Very often podcasts are done in a series much like television entertainment. Podcasts can be used to help inform listeners on various topics. Many podcasts are delivered and referenced via RSS feeds. An appropriate use of podcasts for mathematics teacher recruiters may be as a vehicle for providing important information about specific programs, financial aide, etc. The shortened format and series division can enable target audiences to take their time and learn at their own pace. Once posted and disseminated via RSS feed, potential students could then download the podcast(s) and listen to them at their leisure on a mobile device of their choice, rather than having to sit down in front of a computer or laptop. Podcasts are also used to archive, preserve and share messages and short videos.



Blogs represent a description of a wide variety of commentaries and original work posted in an organized fashion. The word blog is a shortened version of the original term weblog, which referred to diaries or logs kept by writers and posted on the Internet.

Blogs can be open or limited to invitation only. Typically blogs contain posts or entries in reverse chronological order. Originally blogs resembled online journals, were solo authored and updated on a regular basis. Recently blogs have grown from a series of original posts to works of group authorship, called multi-author blogs. Wikis, a subset of blogs, have historically filled the multi-author role, but the distinction between multi-author blogs and wikis are becoming blurred. The most well known example of multi-author blogging is Wikipedia. Many articles in Wikipedia are supposed to be multi-authored and peer reviewed prior to publication.

In general, a majority of blogs are now formatted to be interactive, allowing comments and messaging. Facebook and other social media sites can be described, in a loose way, as a form of blogging. In addition, applications like Google Docs and Google Drive offer teams the opportunity to contribute to central documents by adding corrections, content, etc. The growth of WordPress and Google+ has fostered rapid expansion of blogging as these tools/applications make it easy for someone to self-publish.

Addressing format, many blogs provide subject-specific commentary; others function as diaries or brand communications. There are many blogs dedicated to education. Typically, blogs contain text, photos, videos and links to additional content.

Blogging is a very valuable tool for the modern social media toolbox and can serve as a strong connection to teacher recruitment. Blogs represent authoritative, informed voices on issues of specific importance. Blogs are also an excellent opportunity for reaching out to potential students and parents of students with critical information.

Section 5.2: Managing the Message

The challenges of effective social media include:

1. *Timing*
2. *Continuity of Message*
3. *Interactivity*
4. *Monitoring results*

Timing refers to when the social media posting or release is published. When considering creating a social media campaign, it is important to consider when the information should go live and which messages should be sent out to enhance the effectiveness of the effort.

Remember one of the major charms of social media is that it can be sent to a very diverse group of followers and can cover a lot of interactive ground. This range of audience might be cost prohibitive to reach any other way based on budget and media consumption, so time the messages for maximum impact.

This means that messages should be spaced sufficiently so to create interest but not to overwhelm the intended receiver or to lose the audience from lack of activity. Also, it is important to consider what the intended audience(s) are thinking or wondering about. For example, posting a large amount of social media content for recruiting Millennials the week before Christmas may be a bad idea because the desired audience may not be in front of the computer during that busy time of the year and if they are they are likely shopping or making Christmas vacation plans—not particularly concerned about future career opportunities. In contrast, posting recruiting information about becoming a mathematics teacher and the opportunities that career path holds would be excellent to emphasize during the weeks directly following SAT test score reporting when students have an idea of what they are capable of, where they want to go for college, but are ultimately undecided where they want to go. Similarly, targeting career changers with recruitment information is likely best at the end of the year, between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day because they are reviewing the year and thinking about options for the next year.

Continuity of Message: Obviously when using social media as part of an interactive campaign, it is imperative that information published be representative of your organization, i.e. Branded as explained in Module 4. It is also useful to ensure messages published on different media, social media platforms included, be unified in their communications. The messages do NOT need to be identical but should be, at a minimum, complementary, as discussed earlier in section 5.1 of this module. In addition, by stacking this social media in the same general timeframe, you increase chances of the message(s) being seen, retained and acted upon. Stacking refers to using multiple

social media with similar messaging, in a scheduled blitz. This process of widespread, multiple social media initiatives can reap specific benefits for the writers/posters. A large number of postings that all come out at once has the benefit of trending which makes the work and the topic more popular and serves to increase the messages value in search engine rankings. More people will see the messages more often than if they were limited to one platform or a single communication.

In a large picture, the same information provided via social media can also be forwarded to the public relations function and/or paid advertising function as well as the relevant web sites to ensure the message(s) achieve the desired impacts. This integrated approach to recruiting is explained in more detail in Module 2: Campaign Planning, Module 6: Public Relations, Module 7: Paid Advertising Media, and Module 8: Web Site Identity.

Interactivity: Many learning theories teach us that interactivity enhances learning. Being able to process and contribute to knowledge building is an important part not only of cognition but also retention. By presenting information that engages multiple senses and multiple learning pathways through interactive learning, chances are better that messages are retained and therefore capable of being acted upon. More importantly, as mentioned earlier, the interactivity element of social media is engaging, empowering and retention enhancing.

So, when considering aspects of a social media campaign, ensure there are plenty of opportunities to permit interaction with the information released. These activities could be as complex as puzzles or games or as simple as short surveys or polls. Promotions, giveaways and other opportunities can also be designed to enhance the interactive social media experience.

An example of this approach has been employed by Texas Instruments and promotes the sale of its graphing calculators using e-mail newsletters (in this case with the subject line. “Mayim’s hue is blue”) the posting seeks interaction and linkage to its web pages by asking the recipient to click and take a quiz to determine which color fits your personality.

ENTER THE
Calculate Your Color
SWEEPSTAKES

Lightning blue, that is
Color her confident, spirited
and unquestionably accurate!

What does your hue say about you? Take the Calculate Your Color quiz now to find out, then enter the sweepstakes for a chance to win a TI-84 Plus CE graphing calculator in the color that matches your personality.

TAKE THE QUIZ

Next drawing: TODAY, so enter now.

The advertisement features a woman with long brown hair and glasses, wearing a red top, holding a blue TI-84 Plus CE graphing calculator. The background is white with colorful plus signs and a row of five TI-84 Plus CE calculators in different colors (purple, pink, black, red, blue) at the bottom.

A good working rule is to have some sort of call to action, such as the quiz taking, coupled to a desired function associated with each social media post to encourage engagement and solicit feedback from the viewing audience(s). Ideally the action is transparent about the sales motivation encouraging the user to interact of the fun of it and not to buy the product.

Monitoring Results: Related to the need for interactivity in social media is the need to monitor, analyze, and evaluate results. The astounding positive results gained from a viral message that garners attention can be offset by negative messages, either accidental or malicious, that might be transmitted.

In some cases, social media posts can be damaging to reputation, to consumer confidence or to those involved. There was a recent example of a media personality tweeting something negative and insensitive about her trip to Africa. She sent the tweet shortly before boarding the plane and by the time the plane landed at its destination, the social media firestorm had taken its toll and she was out of a job.

Module 9, Lessons Learned/Evaluation addresses the need for constant vigilance in social media in more depth. Social media messages originating from or involving an academic institution should be constantly seen as professional and likely vetted prior to release. Responses to negative social media postings should be measured, quick and unemotional. Arguments, should they erupt, must focus only on facts and actions not hypotheticals, name calling or emotionally charged invectives.

Evaluation: Thanks to many inventors and content managers, there are many varieties of analytics available for social media. Module 9 continues to point out the wealth of information available from social media analytics. The most universal advice when considering evaluation of social media is to have clear goals defined prior to launching a social media campaign, know what metrics can be obtained via the platform and know which metrics will be the most significant to your efforts. For example, while Facebook can tell provide data on how many people visited your page, it can also inform on how many friends each of those visitors has (the more friends the more influence). These are both important statistics, but the influence factor may be more important in terms of finding likeminded individuals to recruit.

Similarly, the number of total page visits may be important but if the key pages you need the potential students or teacher candidates to click on or they are only staying on that page briefly (click through rate) then there is likely something wrong with the page and not the push to get people to the page.

Finally, one of the most satisfying statistics for most social media platforms is the number of shares. Wherein, your efforts have converted a viewer to help advocate for your cause, in this case, recruiting more future teachers interested in mathematics. The term for the rapid sharing and reposting, retweeting of data is called going viral and it is the most sought after analytic in all of social media. Section 5.4 of this module provides some tips on making a video go viral.

Boosting and Promoting: Increasing followers in social media is called boosting. Boosting is a catch all term for electronically promoting or pushing out social media postings. Some social media analytics experts publish suggestions on how to boost posts per platform. Most have to do with the frequency of posts and the content used to increase interest. However, Facebook has a paid

service that claims to boost likes and by the posting of Facebook items on to the News Feed of users likely to be interested in the post. In general the boost allows for more people to see your post in their news feed.

Promoting a post is similar, but it targets a more precise demographic and allows for the use of reverse SEO where you are actually sending your posts to people who have already indicated interests in the topic you are addressing in your post. There are also a lot of opportunities to hyper target with promotion of pages. It requires some additional effort but may ultimately be more rewarding than boosting depending upon your objectives.

As an anecdote, the UofSC STEM video effort was boosted at a cost of about \$150 to promote the viewing of a music video spoof. The results were mixed. While the boosting increased the number of people who saw the post in their news feed, it did not result in many click-throughs, which involved people opening the post and actually viewing the video. While the boost produced over 20,000 views, the click-through rate was around 3%; not very impressive for the effort.

Section 5.3: Maximizing Social Media Impact

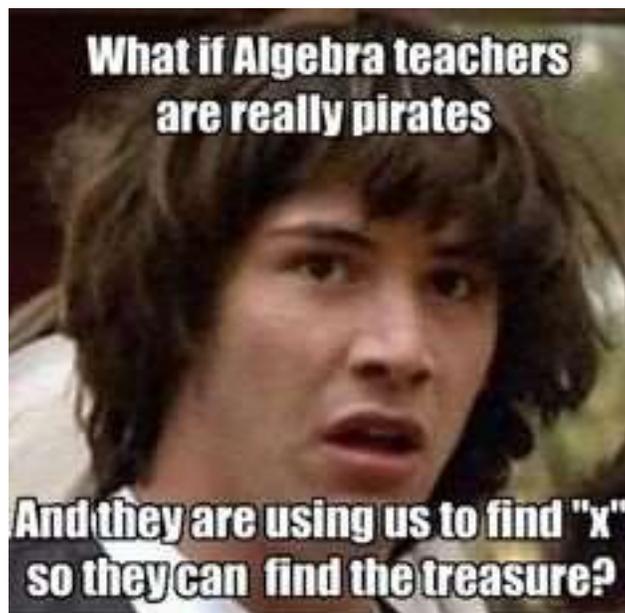
In addition to the suggestions above regarding unity of message and integrated communications activity, there are some other tips to maximizing social media's impact:

1. *Capitalize on popular culture*
2. *Increasing exposure to posts*
3. *Link to current events*
4. *Social Media communications becoming increasingly visual*
5. *Humor: To funny or not to funny*
6. *Snackable content*

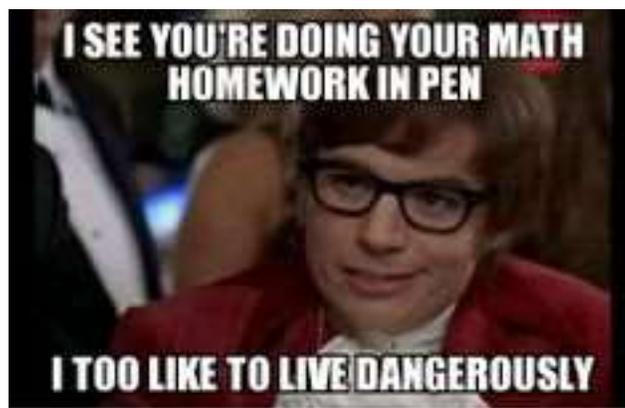
Capitalizing on popular culture: One of the keys to social media, besides its portability, is its immediacy. As discussed earlier in this module, posts and social media efforts are on a rapid rise in usage and consumption. Specific topics are myriad and examples are far ranging.

A brief search of social media can result in examples of various models displaying attractive human forms, countless memes of grumpy cats with satirical commentary, photos of celebrities, fake news stories, classic movie clips, '60s style illustrations, outrageous videos, pithy commentary, stunts, challenges, etc.

Therefore, when considering a teacher recruitment campaign, determine how to wrap your message into appropriate yet attention-getting examples of popular culture. One of the most common ways of doing this is Memes. Memes are graphics plus pithy comments (puns, contrasts, statements of sarcastic humor) that generate recognition and entertain the viewer. The U of SC STEM recruitment campaign used a series of Meme Mondays to send out these tactics. Some Meme examples are listed below.



more awesome pictures at THEMEMPICTURE.COM



As demonstrated by these examples, memes challenge the recipient, provide a bit of humor and combine culture with information. This meme might be suitable for Facebook or Twitter, as well as posting on a web site.

Increasing exposure to posts: The *Time* magazine article, "8 Ways to Get Your Posts Seen More on Facebook" provide great advice. Facebook offers several ways to boost web traffic to your content. The first way is via paid advertising or Boosting a site. The other way, which is free, is using their targeting feature, which allows you to target specific users based on demographic criteria: age, gender, location, relationship status, etc. (<http://time.com/48358/facebook-marketing-eight-ways-to-get-posts-seen-more/>).

Other options outlined in this article to increase traffic to a Facebook post, or any social media for that matter, include:

- Using original photography. Using original images increases interest and also scores highly on search engine optimization algorithms (see Module 8 for an explanation of SEOs).
- Posting at odd hours. When traffic is light, the chances of more people seeing your posts increase.

- Starting a conversation. Facebook in particular has ways to encourage conversation. By starting a conversation thread, others get an opportunity to join in as well.
- Be engaging. Offering opportunities to consider other points of view or learn of others' experiences makes for interesting posts.
- Cross-promote with other pages. This idea is addressed in Modules 4 and 6, specifically as it pertains to cross-platform promotions, but the same principle applies within particular social media platforms. The more common links between pages, the greater the chance of a solid impact. For example, promoting a page that discusses scholarships available for career changers could be cross-promoted with universities interested in recruiting career transitioning individuals.
- Hop on a trending topic. Recently on social media, a photograph of a well-known celebrity's naked posterior became a "trending topic." A savvy mathematics teaching recruiter could easily have discussed a formula necessary to calculate the shape, curve and perhaps even the lipid density of that individual's particular feature. It would have been a humorous and interesting post and a great example of hopping onto a trending topic.

Linking to current events: In addition to social commentary, satire, and trending topics, much social media content is generated by individuals reacting to current events/issues present in their lives. While receiving support from states or federal government agencies, as most higher education institutions do, it may not be entirely appropriate to comment politically on many policies and processes related to education.

However, there will be opportunities to comment on some aspects of current events. These should be done with taste, class and speed to ensure engagement with the target audiences. A good example is the relationship between Upworthy and Facebook. Upworthy is a web site designed to produce viral content to "draw massive amounts of attention to things that matter." Visitors to Upworthy find multi-media articles of interest to them and are invited to post them on Facebook. In this way Upworthy benefits from the additional exposure, and Facebook receives content that can then be reposted by other Facebook users in return.

A savvy recruitment campaign could easily post multi-media information on the benefits of being a mathematics teacher, post it to YouTube, and then contact Upworthy to see if it could be posted there. In addition, that same presentation could be posted on a recruitment website, other blogs, and/or the recruitment program's web site.

Incorporating Visuals: Related to topics of pop culture and current events, incorporating visuals into postings enhances social media content. Charts, photographs, videos, music, and other visual aids capture the attention of social media users. For academics, in particular, thinking visually may represent a departure from the typical methods of communications practiced on a daily basis. But when it comes to maximizing social media message impact, asking the question: "How can I portray this visually?" can be a useful technique for designing social media messages. Infographics are an excellent example. Following is an example of an infographic produced by the U. S. Census.

The practical restrictions are that video takes up a lot of bandwidth and requires longer upload and download times than text or still photography. These content length/size restrictions serve to ensure faster video speeds, prevent overloading the portal, and most importantly may require a different discipline as it pertains to scripting and editing of brief videos for social media postings.

Some of the most common compromises in the length versus content arena are the rise of bulleted lists and other short subjects. Therefore, social media postings designed in support of recruiting should be short and manageable.

Section 5.4: Going Viral and Other Rules of Social Media Usage

Digital information travels very quickly. The phrase *going viral* has positive connotations in social media and refers to content being shared and viewership growing exponentially as it is shared and viewed by others within social networks.

There are strategies to increase the chance that a video goes viral. Following are some suggestions:

Branding

As with many other products and messages, branding helps reinforce a perception. Branding requires consistency, distinctiveness, and a dedication to core values. Social media videos are no different. By creating a recognizable look, media consumers are trained to recognize your information and gravitate toward it. Shortcuts here include common colors, use of a logo, identical formatting and cohesive art across all marketing materials and social media platforms. For example, if you were to think of a certain auto insurance company with a signature gecko, or a department store chain with a very recognizable red logo, or a well-known beer company with signature horses and a Dalmatian, you would immediately know the business and recognize it for certain characteristics. Memes and other approaches for branding should have that level of detail.

Cross-Promote

Discussed at length elsewhere in this module, promoting across media channels increases message retention, recognition, and encourages action. There are countless suggestions of how to do this, but the most important thing is it is done. Cross promoting a brand can be difficult, but the alternative usually results in lost messaging, confusion, and ultimately lost sales/conversions/recruits.

Inform and Add Value

Videos that inform and add value can increase the chances of the project going viral. Videos can inform, educate, and inspire. And if done correctly, videos can not only engender loyalty among existing or potential customers but also inform an entire group. In terms of the mathematics teacher recruitment challenge, an engaging or attractive video can add value to any teacher preparation program by encouraging more individuals to consider that career path.

Don't Forget the Tags and #Hashtags

When videos are uploaded to YouTube there is an opportunity to add tags or descriptive words that provide detail about video content. To increase chances of a video going viral, ensure these tags are provided. The tags will help with YouTube's search engine.

Similarly, in Twitter, the #Hashtag helps identify certain threads across postings and helps group them together. The Hashtag has become a universal symbol for social media. They are ubiquitous and a great tool for organizing streams of comments or threads of conversation. The # sign instructs search engines to look for other social media postings tagged with the same word or phrase. Hashtags work for Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and others.

Issue a Call to Action

Providing an activity or a call to action at the end of a video helps to mobilize and encourage response. Calls to action like visit this web site or call us today or click here to find out more help engage the viewer and encourage retention and action.

Provide Contact Information

It seems like a no-brainer and if a call to action is properly added, it is, but...be sure to provide contact information in all videos provided to YouTube; and if that information changes, be sure to update it.

TWIT ABBRV OR HW TO TLK TWIT

Besides # and @ there are some other symbols associated with Twitter. These abbreviations are a function of the need for alternatives to communicate within Twitter’s 140-character limit. Rooted in text massaging capability, many of these older abbreviations have been combined with new ones.

• CX = Correction	• DM = Direct message.	• FB = Facebook
• LI = LinkedIn	• SEO = Search Engine Optimization	• Code 9 = parents around
• B4 = Before	• BFN = Bye for now	• F2F /FTF = Face to face
• CUL8R = See you later	• DYK = Did you know, Do you know	• IC = I see
• FOTD = Find of the day	• FWIW = For what it's worth.	• MIRL = Meet in real life
• IDK = I don't know	• LMK = Let me know	• SMH = Shaking my head
• NTS = Note to self	• ORLY = Oh, really?	• WTV = Whatever
• TT = Trending topic	• W/E or WE = Whatever	• YKYAT = You know you're addicted to
• YGTR = You got that right	• YKWIM = You know what I mean	• YOYO = You're on your own
• YMMV = Your mileage may vary.	• YOLO = You only live once	• YW = You're welcome

Section 5.5: Social Media: A Tool but Not the Entire Toolbox

In summary, there are a wide variety of social media available to those recruiting mathematics teachers. Some of the media is well established and appropriate for a recruitment campaign. When it comes to reaching Millennials in particular, social media adds a proven channel for communications in the teacher recruitment toolbox.

However, in 2015, it is important to remember that Millennials are not the only audience to be reached by a mathematics teacher recruitment campaign. Additional target audience members may include parents, guidance counselors, and community leaders. Those groups may not use social media exclusively but may access additional media to process information. In this case, targeting media used by additional audiences is equally important.

For example, if targeting parents of Millennials, a direct mail campaign or an aggressive public relations campaign can effectively supplement social media efforts.

Finally, social media, unlike a lot of other tactics useful for recruiting, includes the potential for rapid, uncontrolled results. Just because someone is talking about you does not mean they are saying good things. Consistent and effective campaign evaluation mechanisms that measure circulation and content help ensure the message has the intended impact.

In closing, social media is a new frontier in communications for key demographic groups associated with recruiting future mathematics teachers. Consequently the social media used should be assessed well and often to ensure target audiences learn about the robust opportunities available in becoming a secondary mathematics teachers.