

## LIFE, WELL RUN

# SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

### Introduction

Social media will play a key role in ICMA's *Life, Well Run* campaign. It will be used to increase awareness about professional management and encourage ongoing engagement between target audiences and the campaign, its content, and materials.

This plan incorporates leading practices in social media strategy and was informed by the following resources:

- *Social Media Strategy*, a white paper written by Sally Falkow and The Path Central, and published by meritusMedia.
- *Mastering Public Relations in Social Media*, a white paper published by PR Newswire.

What follows is an integrated, strategic plan for engaging target audiences across multiple social media platforms, in particular Facebook and Twitter.

It is understood that a social media manager will dedicate time to implementing this plan on a daily basis.

### Goals

To achieve the desired outcomes of the campaign, this social media outreach plan seeks to:

- Develop a visible national presence, reaching target audiences outside the initial pilot markets.
- Provide a template for pilot markets to adopt their own social media strategies.
- Raise awareness of, and appreciation for, the connection between the local government services target audiences receive and the role that professional managers play in delivering those services ethically, efficiently, and effectively.

- Actively engage target audiences on multiple social media platforms.
- Participate in online conversations that shape perceptions of the *Life, Well Run* campaign, ICMA, and the profession of local government management.
- Build relationships with key influencers, particularly bloggers and journalists.
- Create a community of supporters for the *Life, Well Run* campaign.

### Target Audiences

ICMA and GMMB identified the following target audiences for the *Life, Well Run* campaign:

- Opinion leaders in the media, blogosphere, think tanks, and other leading organizations
- Individuals interested in community/civic engagement
- Business leaders
- Elected officials
- Next generation of professional managers
- National membership organizations, such as chambers of commerce and community associations, whose members in local chapters who have a stake in efficient and effective local government
- Potential funders (both large and small)
- ICMA members as grassroots participants and donors

### Observe and Analyze Online Conversations

This step represents the campaign's market research. It can begin immediately and should be ongoing throughout the campaign. The social media manager will tap into online conversations on a daily basis to find out the following:

- Who is talking about local government management, the *Life, Well Run* Campaign, ICMA, and these issues? This will help us find our “tribe.”
- What are they saying? Is it positive or negative?
- On which social media platforms are these conversations taking place?
- What content resonates with our target audiences?
- Are there subjects of interest about which we could be providing content?
- Who are the “fire-starters” we need to engage?
- Who are the key influencers and thought leaders (i.e., bloggers and journalists)?
- Where are the opportunities and threats?

We will use the online platforms Hootsuite and PR Newswire to help us find this information. Once we have this information, the social media manager can focus resources on the most relevant social media platforms and building relationships with the key influencers.

### Social Media Platforms

There is a wide array of social media tools that can help us achieve our goals in this campaign. Here’s a list of social media platforms where the *Life, Well Run* campaign will engage its target audiences:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Google +
- The Knowledge Network
- YouTube
- LinkedIn

The social media manager will set up these accounts (also known as properties).

### Social Media Strategies

The following strategies will act as this plan’s north star, and guide the tactics and activities we use in pursuit of reaching our target audiences:

1. Target social media outreach at influential journalists and bloggers. This serves four purposes:
  - By establishing relationships with these key influencers, they will get to know who we are and become familiar with the campaign, making them more receptive to publishing our content.

- Journalists will seek us out for story leads and comments.
  - The campaign will achieve earned media in influential regional and national blogs and periodicals.
  - This earned media will reach other target audiences listed above (business and local government leaders, citizens, potential funders, next generation, etc.)
2. Enlist ICMA members, staff, and members of state associations/leagues to develop a grassroots effort to spread the word about the *Life, Well Run* campaign to their constituencies in their realms of influence.
  3. Aggressively engage target audiences by sharing content and participating in online conversations.

### Social Media Tactics

The following tactics will be used to carry out the strategies above:

#### Develop Grassroots Outreach Campaign

We will enlist our own key influencers to spread the word about the campaign among their constituencies and realms of influence.

1. Set up and manage social media accounts for Robert O’Neill, ICMA Executive Director, Ron Carlee, ICMA COO, and a few other strategic influencers within ICMA, its membership, and the local government profession.
2. Develop a mini plan for how these individuals will use their social media accounts.
3. Provide *Life, Well Run* pilot communities with a template for their own social media strategies, based on the strategies and tactics in this plan.

#### Recruiting Followers

In order to build our community of support and national presence, we must first increase the number of “followers” and “fans” of our social media properties. To achieve this, the social media manager will:

1. Develop an article for publication in the *ICMA Newsletter* encouraging all ICMA members to follow the campaign through their own social media accounts.

2. Encourage all ICMA staff to follow the campaign through their social media accounts.
3. Promote the campaign's social media properties to all state leagues and associations, and encourage members to follow the campaign.
4. Distribute the campaign's press releases and/or articles through *Life, Well Run* social media properties to national organizations (e.g., ICMA's sister organizations, chambers of commerce, and community organizations). Encourage them to suggest their members/employees follow the campaign with their own social media properties.
5. Become "followers" and "fans" of key influencers, including members of the media. This practice often encourages those you follow to follow you in return.
6. Share, link to, and retweet content from others. This practice encourages those whose content you shared to follow you.
7. Comment, reply to, and tweet at key influencers, media, bloggers, and others who post content of interest to the campaign. This will establish the campaign's presence and encourage them to follow the campaign in return.

### Engaging Target Audiences—The 70/20/10 Approach

Recruiting followers, however, is not enough to wage an influential social media outreach campaign. We must *engage* target audiences by posting interesting content and joining and/or facilitating online conversations. A successful formula for social media engagement is the 70/20/10 rule. This formula states the following:

- Seventy percent of the content we push out will be information of real value and interest to our target audiences.
- Twenty percent will be interaction—back and forth conversations with target audiences. This is how people prefer to interact with companies and organization today, and it will put a human face on the campaign and ICMA.
- Finally, 10% can be hard-core promotional content for the campaign. If we do 70 and 20 right, we can be blatantly promotional 10% of the time and nobody will mind.

Following are the activities the social media manager will conduct in order to engage target audiences:

#### 70

1. Collect and post content generated by ICMA staff, members, and others that is of real interest and value to target audiences. ICMA's Knowledge Network will be a valuable resource for content.
2. Content will be posted on all campaign social media properties on a daily basis.
3. Encourage as many people as possible to raise awareness about leading practices or the value of professional management by posting blogs on the Knowledge Network. Links to these blogs will appear on all social media properties.
4. With the help of the *Life, Well Run* campaign manager and outside vendors, the social media manager will post videos about local government management on YouTube and provide links to those videos on all social media platforms.
5. Proper social media etiquette requires us to ensure the content we push out is not all self-generated. Interesting content relevant to our target audiences will be collected by the social media manager from various sources, then shared, linked to, and retweeted.
6. Provide journalists and bloggers with leads for stories and columns. This will help build relationships with key influencers.

#### 20

1. The social media manager will monitor online conversations and publications daily for mentions about the *Life, Well Run* campaign, the profession of local government management, and ICMA, and comment and engage as appropriate.
2. Respond to online questions, comments, or concerns in a way that addresses the needs of the commenter and is consistent with the key messages of the overall campaign.
3. Be sure that response time is within a few hours, not days. Real time communication and response is key in social media. Again, this will be the responsibility of the social media manager.

4. Facilitate conversations by providing interesting content that starts online conversations. Ask questions about campaign themes to generate conversations.
5. Comment on journalists' online articles and bloggers' posts to further develop their awareness of the *Life, Well Run* campaign.
6. Engage journalists and bloggers in formal and informal chats.
7. Retweet and tweet at those individuals who post interesting relevant content on their Twitter and Facebook pages.
8. Blogs and articles posted on the Knowledge Network and on the *Life, Well Run* website should end by asking questions that generate responses or encourage comment by readers. The social media manager will respond to keep the conversations going.

## 10

1. Post announcements about the *Life, Well Run* campaign, its calendar, and its milestones as appropriate on all properties.
2. Post announcements about *Life Well, Run* activities as they approach.
3. Encourage people to donate to the campaign.

4. Post announcements about any earned media the campaign has achieved. Show that others, especially members of the media, are talking about the campaign, too.
5. Create a video property for the campaign where target audiences can post videos showing their community pride. Winners will be announced via all social media properties.

## Evaluation and Measures

To evaluate the effectiveness of the social media plan and measure the national presence of the *Life, Well Run* campaign, we will track the following metrics:

- # of positive campaign mentions per week
- # of negative campaign mentions per week
- # of comments on blogs
- # of retweets
- # of click throughs on links posted on Twitter, Facebook, and online articles
- # of visitors to the *Life, Well Run* website
- # of followers on Twitter
- # of fans on Facebook
- # of video views on YouTube