

Partnering for **Vaccine Equity**



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Social Media and COVID-19: Insights and Tips for Delivering Your Message

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Presenters



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What we'll cover today

Getting the conversation started

Baseline protocols for being active on social media.

Getting your message out there

How to get the message right.

Getting equipped to answer questions

Negative comments and how to deal with them.



Poll

Getting the Conversation Started



Reaching Your Community

There are many different reasons to be on social media. People share personal stories and photos, brands share their products, organizations make announcements. It has become a part of our everyday lives.

As an organization, your followers are likely looking for news and announcements. They expect you to coordinate events but also community behaviors, such as getting vaccinated to protect each other. But when it comes to known sensitive topics like COVID-19, **you shouldn't treat your pages like a megaphone, blasting commands.** You hold a respected position and it's important to get the message right.

Listen and try to consider your posts as conversations rather than announcements.

Additionally, it may be worth exploring other platforms. Adding your presence on newer platforms like TikTok or Clubhouse may allow you to reach new or younger members in your community.



Listening to Respond

Social Media Monitoring, which includes tracking keywords, hashtags, and posts from key conversation leaders, keeps you informed about what your audience cares about.

- Understanding your audience's concerns and staying up to date with how they are sourcing information online keeps you poised to respond effectively with **the right content at the right time**.
- Platforms like **Hootsuite**, **Tweepstap**, and **Mention** provide free and/or low-cost tools for honing in on the conversations that matter most.
- Tracking **emerging trends** in conversations, keeping tabs on **popular articles and contributors**, and **identifying shifts** in community discourse means your comms team can nimbly respond with creative and content that gets to the heart of community members' fears and hesitation around vaccination.

Build a list of terms and definitions associated with COVID-19 that integrates official terminology (i.e. *VAERS*), slang (i.e. *the jab*), and code words (i.e. *dance parties*). Add to this glossary regularly to keep your monitoring efforts relevant.



Facilitating Conversations

As an organization, think about how your posts can facilitate positive online conversations amongst your followers, instead of only responding to you.

- It's **social** media - it's meant to be interactive
- In your captions, ask questions and encourage people to comment or tag their friends
- Use Facebook and Instagram Stories options like polls, questions, quizzes, and countdowns to increase engagement
- “Like” people’s comments and respond back to them to encourage them to continue engaging with your page

Do:

#DYK? You can schedule your flu vaccine and your COVID-19 vaccine for the same day for convenience! This could be at a pharmacy, a drive-up vaccination site, your doctor’s office, or another health care provider site. Where did you get your COVID-19 vaccine? Drop your answer in the comments! 📌

Don’t:

Schedule your flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine on the same day for convenience!

Getting Your Message Out There

Talk the Talk

Listening in on how your community is discussing COVID vaccinations is not only key to understanding their concerns but also the first step in adopting **language and tone** that will help you connect authentically with your audience.

- As your list of terms expands, make sure to **clearly define the context and meaning** so you can use them correctly (or avoid using) where appropriate.

Engage empathetically, identifying how your community members are feeling and determining what they need in the moment to move closer to vaccine acceptance.

- If they are **afraid**, avoid fear tactics or heavy-handed attempts to change their behavior that might drive them further away.
- If they are **confused**, present only the most relevant information in succinct, easy-to-understand language.

In all your messaging, communicate a **willingness to interact**, inviting dialogue so audience members feel **welcome to ask questions**.

Tips for Writing the Perfect Caption

- Write captions that directly debunk the most common misinformation topics or answer the most common questions about the vaccines
- When writing a caption, aim for 2 to 4 sentences - not too long that people lose interest, but long enough to get the message across
- Always include a CTA
 - “Visit our website to learn more”
 - “Check out our blog for more facts about the vaccines”
 - “Find a vaccination site near you at...”
 - “Schedule your vaccine appointment today”
- Include a URL where people can find more information
 - Use <https://bitly.com/> to shorten URLs, if needed
- Encourage followers to comment their thoughts or questions



Tapping into the Learning Community

Luckily as part of our Partnership for Vaccine Equity, there are plenty of resources at your disposal. Social images with pre-written caption text are available for download and posting on the website already.

Leveraging the Culture **ONE** World team's findings through social listening, these messages are crafted both visually and verbally to combat some of the most prevalent topics of misinformation and disinformation used by the Black community on social media.



Getting Ready to Answer Questions

What to Say to Naysayers

“The COVID-19 vaccine isn’t safe.”

Many community members are worried that the vaccine was developed too quickly and will cause adverse effects.

How to Respond: Assure these audience members that the technology the vaccines are based on is supported by decades of research.

“The COVID-19 vaccine isn’t effective.”

Some responses may indicate that breakthrough cases and asymptomatic transmission render vaccines ineffective.

How to Respond: Share data and resources that reflect the positive impact vaccines have had on controlling the spread of COVID and reducing the severity of symptoms.

“The COVID-19 vaccine isn’t necessary.”

Community members who have contracted and survived COVID may assert that their *natural immunity* renders the vaccine unnecessary.

How to Respond: Acknowledge that the body’s natural defenses against the COVID virus can wear off after 4-6 months, leaving survivors who don’t get vaccinated vulnerable to reinfection.

The Redirect

Resist the temptation to engage in back-and-forth arguments with commenters who reject data that supports vaccination or delete their misinformation altogether.

The content you share in response is more for the benefit of other readers than the commenter themselves. And negative comments, as unnerving as they may be, can actually boost your reach on certain social media platforms.


Strategies for Replying to Questions and Comments


- Tone of voice should be down-to-earth and understanding, not condescending
- Present logic and avoid emotion
- Debunk misinformation with facts
- The “moveable middle” genuinely wants to know answers to their questions - show them you are a trustworthy, empathetic source of information
- Validate their concerns
 - “That’s a really good question, @_____. We’ve done a lot of research on the topic and we’ve actually found out that...”
- Answer questions clearly and succinctly
- Include a URL for follow up questions
 - “If you’d like to learn more about the different types of vaccines available, check out [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines.html)”




Examples of Responses


Debunk false information in a clear, logical manner:

 **Jim Collins**
They offer no protection from infection. I have firsthand experience
Like · Reply · 1d

 **Stronger.org**
Jim Collins This is false. All of the authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccines decrease your chance of serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. The current data and evidence back this up. COVID-19 vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. When we get a vaccine, we don't actually get sick from the disease itself—our bodies learn to fight off the virus without the danger of an actual infection. Then, in the future, if we are exposed to the virus, our immune system "remembers" what to do.
Like · Reply · 22h

Other followers can help respond to questions, too:

 **Kathy Sherer**
When and where can we get them?
Like · Reply · 4d

 **Diane Baker**
Kathy Sherer I got mine at the Sears at the Pueblo Mall. It is a drive through that provides all COVID-19 vaccines. I don't know the days or times, but I was there Saturday about noon.
Like · Reply · 4d

Thank You!

Q&A

Satisfaction Poll and Upcoming Events

- November 10th: Equipping Trusted Messengers
 - 12-12:45 PM ET
 - Please click [here](#) to register
- November 18th: Truth Check Your Timeline: Tools for spotting misinformation and fact checking social media content
 - 1-2 PM ET
 - Please click [here](#) to register
- November 30th: How to Combat and Respond to Anti-Vaccine Attacks on Social Media
 - 2-3 PM ET
 - Please click [here](#) to register

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