

Maldon & Blackwater Estuary CCT – Management Team Briefing Note

Briefing Paper

Sharing Information using Social Media

Conclusion.....

Our priorities should be minimum maintenance, ease of use, the ability to upload documents, hyperlink and to control content.

Facebook and LinkedIn offer good solutions and owing to the prevalence of their use, many CCT members will likely have pre-existing accounts and experience. It would be best if one or two CCT members felt able to set up the group rather than MDC Officers taking on the task as they would be bound by the Council's data security procedures.

For Facebook the team could set up a closed or secret group – the difference is explained here - <https://www.facebook.com/help/220336891328465>

For LinkedIn you could have an unlisted group or a groups whose membership has to be approved, more information is here - <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/1164>

Either would provide similar functionality and control, including group admins and editing rights. The best way to proceed is for the team to request a volunteer/s to explore and set up a group in either of these forums, depending on what they are most familiar.

Both Facebook and LinkedIn have very good help and 'how to' sections and are fairly intuitive.

Additionally, other options such as a website or blog site requires significantly more set up and looking after. Other sites such as twitter are not set up for private discussion and still others such as Yammer are not widely used and so would require all members setting up an account and would limit future options. Google + may be a good option but it is not one we're familiar with.

General Information.....

1. Facebook Groups Versus Facebook Pages

Facebook groups supplement your business and your fan page. So even if you create a Facebook group, you'll still want a Facebook page for your business.

Anything you share on your business page shows up in the news feed for fans to see. When fans engage with your content, it increases your visibility to others in their network.

However, updates from Facebook groups only show up in the news feeds of members. When a member engages with the content in a group, it doesn't show up in their friends' news feeds.

Once you have a Facebook group and a page, make sure they work in tandem. Actively promote your group to your fans, if it's something they're able to join. This way, you can leverage your group and your page at the same time.

2. Benefits of Google Groups

Google Groups is hardly the only application of its kind. Yahoo! and Microsoft, for instance, both offer similar services, and both have additional features not available in Google Groups. So what sets Google Groups apart? Perhaps the most significant difference is its Usenet archive, which includes more than 700 million messages [source: BBC]. Not all of these discussions are in English, which brings up another nice feature: Using "advanced search," you can look for discussions in more than 40 different languages. Better yet, you can translate the discussions to English with one click, and while the translations are far from perfect, they give you a good idea of what's being said.

Another nice thing about Google Groups is how unobtrusive its ads are. In typical Google fashion, all ads are text-based and tucked away so that they don't impede functionality. The ads that are included, however, are what Google refers to as "relevant text ads," meaning that they relate to the content of the group. Google assures its users that no humans are involved with matching ads to group content, though you might feel a little like someone is peeking over your shoulder when highly personalized ads appear on the screen in front of you. But remember, ad revenue allows Google to offer its group service free of charge.

3. How LinkedIn groups get ruined

A major problem for many LinkedIn groups is the amount of spam or self-promotional materials posted by marketers and other content creators hoping to drive traffic to their websites.

Because some groups have thousands of members or more — and are therefore filled with potential readers and customers — they are ripe targets for spammers, as well as for well-meaning content creators who just want to spread their messages as far and wide as they can, without due concern for where it gets placed. This results in dozens of posts with self-promoting links showing up that do not speak to the group's purpose or to its primary interests.

A side effect of this is that the relevant, high-quality discussions that are posted to the group's pages end up getting pushed down and diluted among the spam posts, making it less appealing or enticing for group members to find posts worth interacting with.

Cons of posting in LinkedIn groups for inbound marketing:

- Members are often accepted into groups simply to grow the number of users.
- Some groups do not have administrators, so anyone can post as much as they want.
- Too many emails from groups can dissuade people from reading your posts at all.

4. What is a Yahoo Group and How Does it Work?

Yahoo Groups are simply a way to communicate with folks, usually with the same interests. Whatever your interests or hobbies may be, there is probably a Yahoo Group for you. If you can't find a Group that suits your needs, you can make a Group that will!

A Yahoo Group is not the same thing as chat. After you join a group, you then 'post' messages. If the Group is moderated, once the message is approved it will show on the board and will download to those members that receive the posts in their email.



Most Groups have some rules. Some of the rules may appear to be quite restrictive, but generally the rules are not going to be changed if you don't like them. The owner of the Group can set the rules to be anything he or she wants and if the members don't like the rules they are free to leave the Group.

You can join a Yahoo Group two ways. The preferred method is to first create a Yahoo ID and join the Group from the Group's website. Using this method you have access to all of the features provided by the Group, including the ability to browse previous posts.

If during the joining process you are asked to enter the reason why you want to join the Group, it is a very good idea to enter the reason and not a lot of random characters. Not all Groups ask for comments during the join process, but most do. At this stage you can choose which method you want to use for receiving posts.

People usually have some expectations of what the Group will provide. You should be aware that each Group is different, although at first look they may seem to be similar. The Group generally has a character defined by the owner, moderators and members.

If the Group is well maintained it generally will serve members well.