



## Six strategies for boosting social media creativity



When viaSport did a communications survey of the sports sector, we were surprised when sport organizations said that one of the biggest barriers keeping them from benefitting from social media was “a lack of creativity or good ideas.” This result was unexpected, since in our experience people who work for sports organizations are some of the most creative people we know! After all, it takes creativity to come up with innovative programming, or stretch a budget, or discover new ways to get participants involved or promote a fundraising event or tournament.

Creativity is about so much more than being artistic. Even if you can't paint a masterpiece or compose a sonnet, you can still tap into your creative side to accomplish your social media goals.

### **What you will find in Module 26:**

Six strategies to boosting your organizations social media identity

1. [Set goals](#)
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## 1. Set goals



If I asked you to tell me a story – any story – you would probably freeze and not know what to say. If, however, I asked you to tell me a story about how you met your best friend, you would answer right away. Ironically, it’s often easier to be creative when you restrict your focus. That’s why it’s so important to have a social media action plan. (Learn more in Module 15: [Nine easy steps to creating a social media action plan.](#))

Having clear goals not only makes brainstorming easier, but it also channels your creativity in a productive direction and helps you prioritize which of your ideas should be brought to life. If, for example, your social media goal for this quarter is to recruit athletes, you can prioritize content ideas based on how likely they are to accomplish this task.

## 2. Brainstorm



Psychologists say that “divergent thinking” is a key to becoming more creative. Divergent thinking is the process of exploring many ideas in a rapid, unstructured fashion to find unexpected connections. Convergent thinking is moving from step to step in a logical manner and allows you to refine your ideas. To put on your divergent thinking cap, experts recommend that you try brainstorming, bubble mapping, journaling and free- writing (writing for a set period of time without stopping without

concern for grammar, logic or structure).

These techniques may seem cheesy, but research shows that they're highly effective. Their power lies in helping us silence that inner critic who shoots down our ideas before they have a chance to be fully explored and gets caught up in petty concerns like grammar. When it comes to divergent thinking, there are no wrong answers and spelling doesn't count!

**Try a few of the simple brainstorming prompts listed below**, then see what trends emerge. You might be surprised at the results.

- What are the most exciting (big and little) things to happen to your organization this year?
- What's so great about your sport?
- What are the biggest myths or stereotypes about your sport?
- What moments have made you proud to have the job/position you hold in your sport organization?
- What are some anecdotes that show the good work that your organization is doing?
- What are some underdog stories from your organization?
- Who are you most grateful for within your organization?
- How have you seen your sport transform lives?
- If you had an unlimited budget, what social media initiatives would you love to try?
- What do you wish outsiders knew about your sport?

Once you've completed your brainstorming session, check out Module 16: [Creating a social media policy for your sports organization](#) to fine-tune your ideas.

### 3. Seek inspiration

When it comes to social media content, there's no need to reinvent the wheel. All across the world, organizations (and even laypeople) are creating funny, smart, inspiring, tear-jerking social media content. Use their great ideas to fuel your own.



#### **Get inspired by:**

- Using sites like Pinterest to create an inspiration board of social media content that you think is well done. Try to identify common trends and patterns in your board. Are you drawn to emotional content? Funny content? Content with striking graphic design?
- Creating a Twitter list of sports organizations and following key influencers in the sport social media world on Twitter. (Not sure how? read Module 14: [Twitter 101 for sports organizations](#).)
- Joining social media and sport groups on LinkedIn.
- Checking out award-winning social media content. Awards like the [Shortys](#) honour excellent social media content within different industries, including the sports sector. While the winners usually have sky-high budgets, you may be able to adapt a million dollar idea for your \$10 budget.

- Reading general social media marketing and communication blogs to keep track of the latest trends.

## 4. Use a template



Many organizations feel that they lack the graphic design creativity and know-how to execute their ideas. Historically, many sports organizations have solved this problem by hiring graphic designers to create a series of templates for video, social media and the website. If you don't have a communications budget, however, you can still improve your organization's graphic design capabilities. With free sites like [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com), you can put together social media content, Powerpoint slides, posters and many more using beautiful templates. Canva even has graphic design tutorials to help you hone your skills. No Photoshop experience needed!

## 5. Experiment with memes



A meme is an “an idea, behavior, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture.” In the online world, this phrase refers to content types (such as the ALS ice bucket challenge or the Harlem Shake) that spread rapidly across social media. Taking advantage of memes is an easy way to create shareable social media content. After all, if the meme wasn't quick and easy to execute, it would not have spread in the first place. Memes like Throwback Thursdays and Motivational Mondays are especially well-suited to sports organizations. Check out [knowyourmeme.com](https://www.knowyourmeme.com) for more meme ideas.

## 6. Tap into your membership

You've likely got a goldmine of untapped social media talent within your membership ranks. In fact, your athletes, coaches, officials and fans are undoubtedly creating content about your sport and your organization whether or not you sanction it.

### **Harness this power by:**

- Following athletes, coaches, officials, teams and other members on social media, then sharing their content. (**Remember:** Don't share content from a members' private account, only public pages and Twitter feeds are fair game).
- Asking your followers for content. When you put out a call for social media content, you'll be

surprised by the result. Ask your members to send in sport highlight videos or photos, design a poster or blog for your website and see who responds.

- Holding a contest. Photo contests and 'caption this' contests are simple, effective ways to encourage your members to interact with your organization.
- Connecting with coaches to find athletes with interesting stories or unique personalities who could appear in video profiles or other content.
- Setting up a [Google alert](#) for your teams, high-profile athletes and coaches, and your organization. When someone posts content with these keywords, you'll get an email.

Do you have a question about creativity? Do you want to share a tip?

Email [arley@bcwheelchairsports.com](mailto:arley@bcwheelchairsports.com) to get in the conversation.

## Sources

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To learn more, check out our Social Media Toolkit, found [here](#).



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