



How to make the best use of social media



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Getting started

Social media is a powerful tool that can give your organisation a voice; create awareness of your work and axSpA; connect with people living with axSpA; and disseminate information quickly.

It is easy to get started and does not cost anything to create a social media presence. However, to maintain a strong social media presence takes dedication and a plan of action.

Determine your goals

What are you trying to achieve through social media?

Do you want to:

- Create and maintain an online presence?
- Drive traffic to your website?
- Attract members to your organisation?
- Share information about axSpA?

Identifying your goals and making them as detailed and specific as possible will make it easier to track and measure progress.

There are lots of articles online offering advice about social media. It is best to search for articles aimed at non-profits, ideally health or patient related.

Evaluate your resources

A few things to keep in mind!

Who will:

- Create and post your content?
- Maintain your social media accounts?
- Respond to comments and messages?

Managing your social media accounts can be time consuming; consider the time and people you have available.

Deciding which social media platforms to use

Some of the most popular social media networks for sharing information are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, LinkedIn and WhatsApp.

You don't need to be everywhere at once. When you are starting out, it is important to focus your efforts in places that will generate the most return, especially when resources are limited.

Consider **who you want to reach** and the type of content you want to share. For example, if you are targeting a younger audience and can produce lots of videos, **TikTok** might be the best platform for you.

If you are looking to connect with people living with axSpA and encourage conversations between people, **Facebook** could be a good option as you can have a page – and potentially create a private group that can act as a virtual support group.

Connecting with rheumatologists and healthcare providers could be done through **LinkedIn**, as a platform to share, for example, information about clinical practice or research.

Twitter is great for short, frequent posts, whereas **Instagram** is perfect for an organisation with lots of high-quality imagery (there are lots of sites you can get free images from, for example Unsplash).

You can create your own **YouTube** channel, which people can subscribe to. This is a great way to share longer video content. **WhatsApp** is a messaging app, in which you can create groups. You can share information, including links, images and videos; and have group conversations.

Whilst it is not an exact science, you can make an assessment based on the demographic you want to reach. If your target group is broad, and you have the resources, you might consider being active on different platforms. It is worth doing some research to find the platform that is most relevant to your audience.



Best practices

Getting started with social media doesn't need to be overwhelming. The following section sets out best practices, if resources allow. You can start small and grow your presence as your organisation grows.

Remember, your objective is to be informative with the content you share, and to set your group up as a source of credible and important information.

Tools like Hootsuite can be helpful for scheduling posts and can save time when posting or tweeting to different platforms. These types of tools often have free basic plans, regularly share helpful articles and have free templates and guides. Facebook and Instagram posts can both be scheduled through the Meta Business Suite, a tool that is available with Facebook pages.

Create a social media calendar

Create a social media calendar to help you stay organised. It can be as simple as a spreadsheet to record the following for each post:

- Publication date and time
- The platform the post will be published on
- Text and creative assets (photos, videos, etc.)
- Links and hashtags

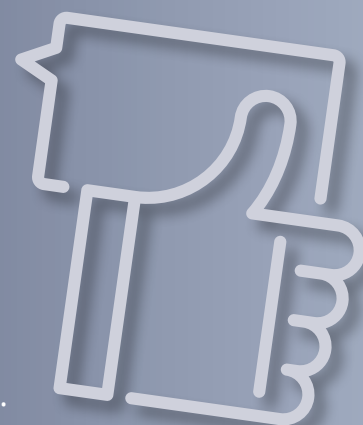


Post a variety of content

Social media provides a range of opportunities to make a meaningful, positive impact on your followers, from educating to creating a sense of community.

The key to driving engagement is to use a variety of content types – from simple posts with image attachments to linked articles to video content.

- Educational content to provide valuable health information and answer common questions
- Content to raise awareness of current topics in axSpA
- Inspirational and motivational content
- Content that people will want to share – infographics, videos, etc.



Post frequently

When it comes to frequency of posting to social media, there is no exact science. The idea is to be active, yet not inundate your followers. Keep in mind your own personal social media experiences – if you are flooded with posts, it's difficult to follow information. Some well-resourced organisations aim for one post a day on each platform. But, you can share the same or similar content to different platforms as you are likely to have different followers on each platform.

The exception is Twitter. Sharing more is better on Twitter so if you can tweet several times a day, it will increase your visibility; however, this can be time consuming and may not be practical for all organisations.

Be mindful that Twitter has a 280-character limit. If you have a lot to say about a specific or timely topic, you can post multiple times in a day, for example in the build-up to World AS Day.

However, it's important to remember that quality is more important than quantity.

If your posts are not relevant to your audience, they may unfollow you.



Let's talk about hashtags!

When you want to get people talking about a certain subject or post, you can include a hashtag (#). It will allow others who are interested in your topic to easily find it.

The great thing about hashtags is that they can be conversation starters and encourage interaction.

However, when it comes to including a hashtag with your post, there is a right way and a wrong way! Here are a few tips:

- Using **one or two hashtags in a single post** is better than using a hashtag after every few words
- Try to **keep it short** so that people can remember your hashtag
- Try to be specific with your hashtag – **simple is better!**

Example hashtags:

#axSpA and **#WorldASDay**



Promote your social media accounts

Promoting your social media accounts is important if you want people to follow you!

People will often go to your website to see where you have a social media presence.

The social media icons on your website should link directly to your accounts (they should always open in a new window so you don't lose them from your website).

You can feature feeds from your social media accounts on your home page. If you make it easy, people will be more likely to follow you.

You can also link to your organisation's social media platforms in your email signature, emails and newsletter.

Growing your presence and keeping your followers engaged

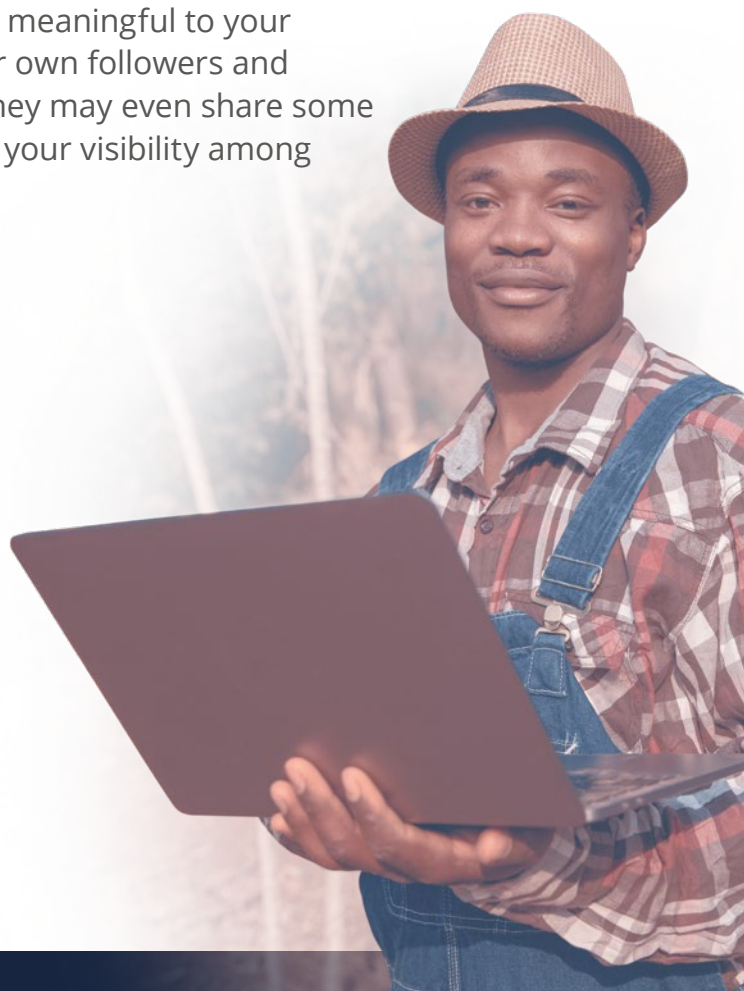
Follow others!

Follow other groups or individuals who are meaningful to your organisation or your cause. They have their own followers and potentially great content you can share – they may even share some of the content you post which will increase your visibility among their followers.

For example, you can follow medical associations, a prominent physician in your country or region, or other patient organisations with an interest in axSpA.

To find the right groups/individuals, you will have to do some social listening first. This means going to the platforms you plan to be on and searching axSpA-related terminology to see who or what comes up.

You can start by following ASIF on all social media platforms and sharing ASIF posts.



There are lots of other ways to grow your following. Being proactive in responding to comments is important – even if it is simply liking a comment, you are showing your followers that you value them. There are lots of great articles online that give guidance on growing your social media audiences.

Giving people a reason to follow you is key – think about your audience and what is relevant and important to them.

Boosting and Ads

Complex social media algorithms mean that **organic posts** (posts that have not been ‘boosted’) will only ever reach a small number of people – regardless of the quality of the content. Occasionally an organic post will be liked, commented on and shared so much that it will be seen by a significant amount of people, but sadly it is not the norm. This is why many organisations invest in ‘boosting’.

Boosting means paying the platform to amplify your post to reach more than the people who are already following you. It’s a great tool that doesn’t require investment of a significant amount of money. Sometimes a small amount will go a long way!

A good thing about boosting is that you can decide the amount you want to invest, the duration of your boost and who you want to reach. Be mindful that a boosted post will show up as ‘sponsored’ on your followers’ feed. This isn’t a bad thing – it just shows that you have put money behind the post to help it reach a wider audience.

Paid Ads are another way to get your content seen by more people. A Paid Ad is created differently to a boosted post. For example, in Facebook they are created in **Ads Manager** and they have more options and customisable features. Ads can be successful in getting more people to click through to your website. Each platform has guidance on creating Paid Ads.

Language

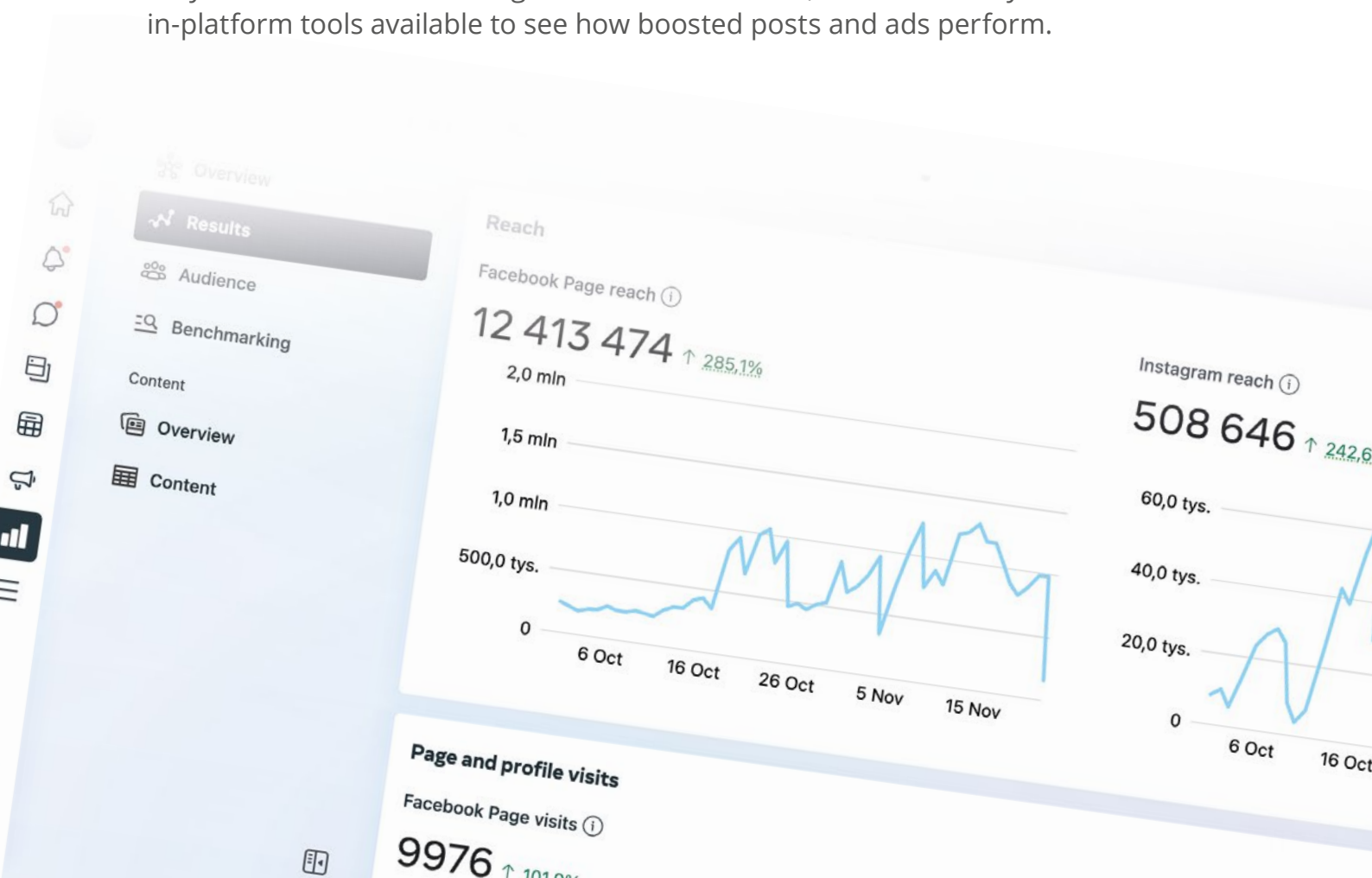
Think about your audience and what resonates with them. Posts on Instagram might use informal language, whereas you might use a more professional formal tone on LinkedIn. When talking to people living with axSpA or trying to reach the general public, use terms that are familiar and not too complicated or clinical. Use references to support medically related statements.

Measurement

Taking the time to measure your social media impact can help guide your future activity. If you are looking to measure awareness, it is useful to track:

- **reach** – number of people who see your content
- **impressions** – number of times your content appears on someone’s screen; impressions are likely to be higher than reach as content can appear on someone’s screen multiple times
- **engagement** – comments, retweets, likes, shares and clicks

Each social media platform has its own in-platform analytics. For example, on Facebook, they can be found in the Insights tab and on Twitter, in Twitter Analytics. There are also in-platform tools available to see how boosted posts and ads perform.



Social media post examples to get you inspired!

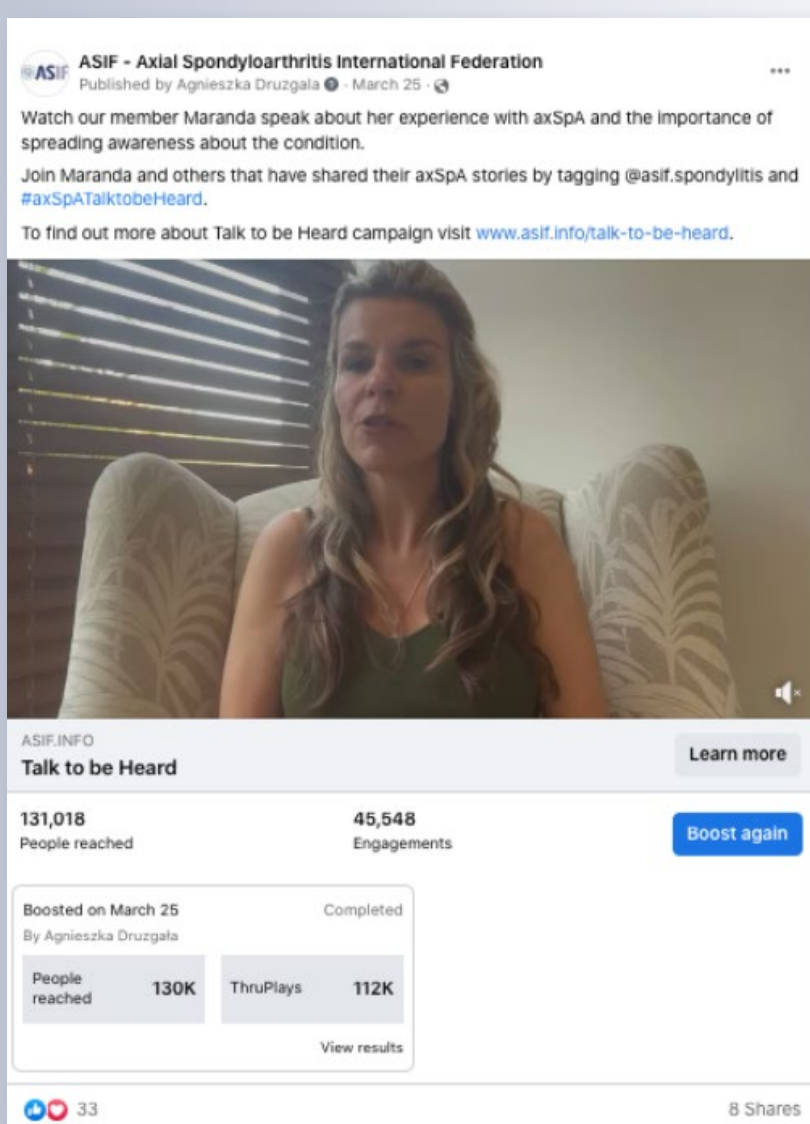
Using great graphics

Well-designed graphic cards get the message across clearly and simply.



Highlighting patient stories

This is an example of a Facebook Ad featuring Maranda van Dam from South Africa sharing her story as part of the Talk to be Heard campaign. She recorded it on her phone at home, which shows that it isn't necessary to spend money on professionally made videos. We spent £200 on boosting the Ad and it reached over 131,000 people.



ASIF - Axial Spondyloarthritis International Federation
Published by Agnieszka Druzgala · March 25 · 🌐

Watch our member Maranda speak about her experience with axSpA and the importance of spreading awareness about the condition.

Join Maranda and others that have shared their axSpA stories by tagging @asif.spondylitis and #axSpATalktoBeHeard.

To find out more about Talk to be Heard campaign visit www.asif.info/talk-to-be-heard.

ASIF.INFO
Talk to be Heard [Learn more](#)

131,018 People reached
45,548 Engagements [Boost again](#)

Boosted on March 25 Completed
By Agnieszka Druzgala

People reached	130K	ThruPlays	112K
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[View results](#)

👍❤️ 33 8 Shares

Posting content that resonates to share what’s happening

This post reached over 36,000 and received nearly 2,400 engagements. Creating a simple graphic with compelling and relatable content increases the chance of people engaging with it.



ASIF - Axial Spondyloarthritis International Federation
Published by Viktoriia Blavitska · April 29 · 🌐

More than 1 in 160 people are living with axSpA globally.

If you are wondering what axSpA is, find out more at asif.info/worldasday

Axial Spondyloarthritis (axSpA) is a chronic rheumatic inflammatory disease that primarily affects the spine and sacroiliac joints. It can lead to chronic pain, structural damage and disability. It can have a huge impact on every area of a sufferer's life. It can affect anyone and onset is often in a person's 20's.

On average it takes 7 years to get a diagnosis - which is why it is vital to raise awareness of this potentially debilitating condition.

Please share to raise awareness.

#WorldASDay2022

World AS Day
7 May 2022

**More than
1 in 160 people
are living with axSpA globally.**

ASIF - Axial Spondyloarthritis International Federation
Nonprofit Organization [Learn more](#)

36,062 People reached	2,849 Engagements	- Distribution score	Boost post
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👍 2.3K 9 Comments 15 Shares





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