



SOCIAL MEDIA



More Information: tti.tamu.edu/policy/how-to-engage-people

Description

Transportation agencies are increasingly adopting social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram to engage the public on transportation projects and programs. State agencies exchange project details (scheduling, benefits, operations, planning, etc.) and feedback with the public. Social media can also reach a part of the population that otherwise might not participate in traditional outreach methods at a fraction of the cost.

Target Market

Social media allows people to engage on their own time and in their own way. For example, busy professionals, parents, or individuals who work nontraditional schedules may not be able to attend public meetings during normal business hours. Additionally,

using social media attracts people from younger generations to actively engage or comment on transportation projects, policies, and ideas.

As of 2015, 76 percent of all Internet users used social media sites, and 52 percent of online adults used more than one social media site.

How Will This Help?

- **Informs travelers of accurate and relevant developments** in real time.
- **Delivers customized information** to a target (e.g., regional) audience.
- **Reaches audiences that might not otherwise participate.**
- **Improves interaction** with the public.

COST



TIME



INDEFINITE

IMPACT



WHO



LEAD AGENCY

HURDLES



MAY EXCLUDE SOME, STAFF RESOURCES

SUCCESS STORIES

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) began using social media in 2009 to support public engagement and improve responses to public feedback. TxDOT adopted a social media policy that evaluates its success in terms of the quality and quantity of exchanges with the public. TxDOT's social media activities help the agency meet its public engagement objectives.

Implementation Issues

Transit agencies reported that resources are a primary concern. Although most social media tools and platforms are free, they require staff time and resources to monitor and maintain. Staff availability and training are some of the greatest barriers to adopting social media. Agencies must provide training and adopt a social media policy at the agency level.

Online criticism and negative feedback can increase because of user anonymity. Some agencies have found that responding directly to negative feedback online helps lessen the issue.

SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

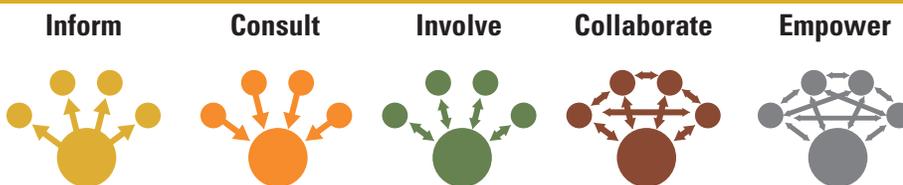


Figure 1. Spectrum of Public Engagement (Source: IAP2)

