Social Media Playbook June 2022





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Introduction

A social media playbook outlines one consistent set of guidelines your team can follow to ensure you execute your social media strategy effectively and achieve your goals. This playbook is about delivering and achieving agreed marketing tactics for Wimmera Mallee Tourism (WMT) to grow followers, engagement and ultimately, visitation and visitor economy spend in the region.

Who is this playbook for?

This playbook is for WMT staff and council staff working in partnership with WMT. Once you are versed with this playbook, you can post consistency in the right tone of voice without unnecessary layers of approval. By signing up to this playbook, content is created regularly using the agreed brand pillars and ideas contained in this playbook.

Before you play: 3 truths about social media

There are no experts in social media.

- Social media is about human interaction. Be human.
- Be playful.
- Everyone changes. Everything changes. Play with change.

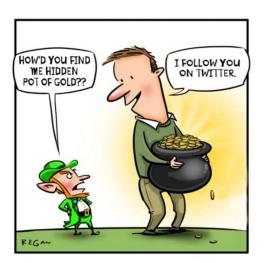
Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.

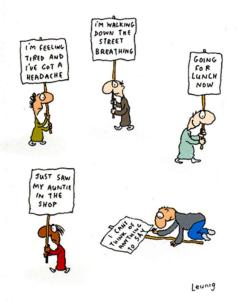
Benjamin Franklin

Honestly, it's just common sense and fair play



SOCIAL MEDIA WITHOUT ELECTRICITY





Social Media

Social media is a playground full of excited kids, play equipment and plenty of noise and colour. People like Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, Twitter, YouTube own the playground equipment. They provide the free play platforms, and, in exchange, they let us offer games and stories to make playtime more fun.

The things we say, show and share are our pieces of content. Play well and people will repurpose your content, trade it around the playground and if it's popular enough, it will spread like wildfire. Play with old games in old ways and your content may only get a nod from a few people. Having followers who like your content is great. Having followers who exchange meaningful content is awesome.

Social media is a commitment like any other marketing effort and is growing in value daily. Data and insights on the people who follow you on social media are useful. Through the ever-improving analytics, you can gain an insight to your followers and their demographics. For online advertising you may do, it is one of the most accurate ways of targeting people online.

There are now 20.5M active social media users in Australia, representing around 80% of the total population. Social media, at 1 hour 46 minutes per day, accounts for roughly one-third of the time spent online, making it the second most popular media activity for Australians after watching television. Over 1 in 3 users turned to social media to gather information about brands.

Australian Facebook users are some of the most active advert clickers in the world - an average of 22 adverts clicked per month vs the global average of 12. This is in the top 8% of countries globally. (Source, Analysis: Genroe)

89% of consumers say they will buy from a brand they follow on social media and 84% will choose that brand over a competitor.

We are checking social feeds every minute of every day more and more...

Visitors are using their mobile devices more than ever before. The pandemic has accelerated this online culture beyond millennials. All age groups are now spending more online and planning their next trip through technology. Social media can create the inspiration to travel and discover. As the picture to the right indicates, we are now connected in millions of ways not just receiving information, but by sharing it too.



To share is human

Just as your content is your capital, shares are your means of trading content and creating an economy. The value and shiny appeal of your capital will determine how much it will be shared, and your investment returned.

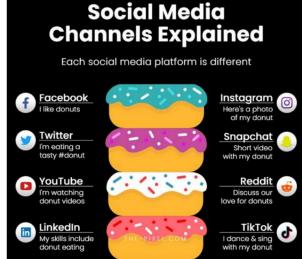
Hashtags

These are words or phrases preceded by the # hash symbol. Hashtags are a convenient and quick way to label content to be indexed in search. They are also great ways to aggregate content so people can follow events, trends and topics of interest. If enough people use the hashtag, you begin to trend, and people start to pay attention to what's going on.

Where to play for the right audience

Research has cited social media as a key influencer in our target's decision-making process. Social media is also a key driver of word of mouth, which is incredibly important in the travel decision making process. Most people (61%) have watched a video on social media, while a significant number have shared someone else's post (46%) or posted a selfie (45%) or picture of their food (40%). If the WMT brand can be included in this, you are essentially getting free advertising.

WMT should play predominately in the Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube channels



with potential to test Tik Tok with the new colours campaign.

How to play

What happens when things get lost in translation? What happens when something goes wrong, or we say something dumb? What if someone says something bad about us?

If you messed up, say sorry. Forget trying to bluster, divert, blame, or spin. Be honest and sincere. People smell old school spin a mile away and will mobilise quickly to crowd you out. You'll even make the news for all the wrong reasons.

Sometimes people do get on soapboxes, and, like all social systems, they want to make a gang in the playground and be the tough kid. Your biggest hurdle is learning to engage with dissenters and bullies.

Here are some tips:

- Acknowledge and respect people, they feel heard.
- Be human, not corporate. People more readily attack corporations but tend to behave differently with an individual.

- Don't delete things. That is a last resort. If content breaches your fair play rules, or contravenes the law, ensure you have provided ample time for the perpetrator to remove it before you do.
- Don't ever pull something down just because you don't agree with it. Even a whiff of censorship will mobilise angry crowds.

The unforeseen circumstance of people who blast others on social media is that their bad day at the keyboard is preserved for eternity and posterity. Just like those embarrassing pictures people post without thinking of the consequence.

Brand pillars and tone of voice

If you get overwhelmed by articulating brand essence, brand voice, brand character and brand attributes, just substitute the word person for brand. Be human.

Ask yourself 'would I be comfortable saying that in person in a social setting?' If you create content in teams or assign it to someone else, make sure they speak your language and tone in plain words with genuine sincerity and authenticity.

Smiley faces and abbreviations are entirely up to you. Used sparingly they can be effective or clarify tone. Used too liberally, they become like that kid that just throws sand all around the sand pit, gritty but a bit too chaffing.



Wimmera Mallee Tourism - Brand Pillars

Big Space and Nature	Arts and Creativity	Culture and Heritage	Agriculture and Food
EXPLORE	DISCOVER	LEARN	EXPERIENCE
	OUR REGIC	NAL STORY	
We have the best colours and landscapes We have the smallest mountain in the world We have the best night skies for star gazing We have the most wide and open spaces We have big widerness and outback deserts We have big events in big spaces	We have the largest outdoor gallery in the world We have a creative culture around our towns We have outdoor sculptures and installations We have performing arts and live music We celebrate art and creativity	We are connected to our land and people We have towns untouched by time We tell stories through our community and traditional owners We are proud of our history and uniqueness We showcase the past through art and museums	We have unique grain and salt stories We are the home of the mallee bull We have the best vanila slices in Australia We have the best pub feeds in rural Australia
	FUNCTIONA	AL BENEFITS	
Sig nature experience and adventure to explore Sest night sky viewing Explore national and state deserts Explore and discover flora and fauna	Big art and creative culture to explore. Vibrant colours provide an emotional escape from the dreary Buy unique art and treasure Take <i>instagrammable</i> photos	Traditional Owner stories. Explore charming rural towns Learn stories of first settlers and border disputes Learn the sad story of the <u>Maryvalle</u> murders and the uplifting story of the lost children.	Taste local produce of region Visit farm gates and retail stores Connect to stories of early farming and grain
	TARGET MARKE	T & ATTRIBUTES	
'I want to explore and have unique experiences"	"I want to connect to art and creativity"	"I want to understand the history and culture"	"I want connect to the land and good food"
amilies aby Boomers / International market	Pre-kids and empty nesters Baby Boomers / international market	Families Empty nesters	Baby Boomers Pre-kids and empty nesters
ien Xers ocially and environmentally aware	Gen X and Y Families with older kids	International market School groups	Financially secure Discerning
Campers and caravanners	Campers and caravanners	annan Branka	

all'a prime

Planning your playtime

Have a playful strategy

A strategy is something that lasts for at least a year. A good strategy brings gradual, solid, and enduring outcomes.

Strategies in social media include:

- Long term follower growth
- Shifting perceptions about destination product or experience
- Increased results in search across the web
- Content generation
- Entry into new markets and support for products or experiences.

A tactic, on the other hand, is something you do at intervals to spice up your strategy. Tactics are like icing your cupcakes differently to attract renewed or new interest.

Tactics in social media include:

- Competitions, giveaways, and polls
- Promotion of events and seasonal offers
- Playful ways to grow followers and fans
- Advertising or promoting content to increase awareness and gain new followers.

A careful mix of tactics with a good strategy is like embarking on running a marathon and having the means to make short sprints along the way. Slow and steady is the strategy based on your purpose and quick bursts or sprints are the tactics for keeping your pace moving along.

What is social content?

Content is loosely made of images, words, sounds, videos, or anything else you can display or publish through traditional or digital media. Content comes from all places and some are

from the most unlikely sources. With the rise of technology, the ease of processing video, images and the use of smart devices, the world has never been as inundated with content as it is nowadays. Everyone is a publisher. We are individual media channels. With so much choice and clutter of content online, relevance will be the deciding factor that keeps content appearing top of search.

Top Social Media Tips

- Be authentic, responsive, and natural
- Make sure offline equals online and online equals offline in everything you do
- Define the tone and personality of your social media. People want to know what your personality is. Brands are no longer factories or offices. Brands are made of real people with real lives. Who in the region has the stories that can inspire?
- Avoid using bureaucratic speak and corporate jargon this may be your native language, but it is not theirs. If your posts are boring and stuffy, people will expect boring and stuffy when they arrive
- Be real and humble
- Ask questions regularly. Wonder out aloud. Involve people in choices or decisions. Humility is much better than public humiliation
- Be responsive Don't post and ghost!
- Plan ahead. Map out busy and quiet times. In busy times, amplify what is popular and happening right now. At quiet times, either reminisce about the good times and ask for responses, or lead into the next big thing coming along
- Share insights and exclusives. Show behind the scenes, sneak peeks, alternate views. Share the favourites of guides, celebrities and sports stars, managers, curators, the best places to eat nearby, the best rides or how to dodge a queue
- Ask yourself what would you want to know about your favourite brand, attraction, shop, or activity?

The art of conversation

Social media has one communication advantage; you own a venue where people can converse with you (and with each other) about what you do and what interests them. Consider it hosting a function or drop-in centre and you'll play fine.

It's simple to see how people respond and what content engages them in conversation. They're strangers as individuals, but familiar types as a group. Often, they will respond very differently to what you would prefer personally. Leave your own preferences at home and begin to listen, observe, and learn.

You must practice the qualities of adapting, refining, changing and playfulness. As soon as you have what appears to be a formula, everything will change around you.

Do not become haphazard, ad hoc, or indifferent. Ever. People will stay away. In droves.

Sentiment

There are heaps of free articles telling us that funny things get shared more than sad posts, or that injustice and people's anger spreads faster than happiness. Your sentiment and goodwill are based on your conversational tone and what kind of response you want to invoke. Your audience sentiment is how well you host and maintain that conversation.

Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing.

Benjamin Franklin

In this case, involve people by having genuine space for a two-way conversation and refine as you go.

Response

If you ask a closed ended question (yes /no answer), you can generate easy reactions. Good examples are 'are you left or right-handed?' 'Morning or night person' 'savoury or sweet' These are no brainers and people react accordingly.

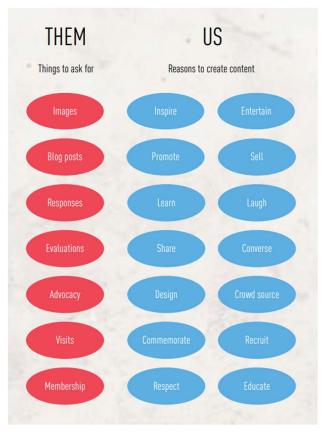
Response is something else. A good response rate is about considered thought and takes more effort and interest than quick answers and instant reaction.

If you want to learn more about your audience then learn with them, ask interesting questions but keep them short in scope. Explore the balance you need between reaction and response.

Experiment with closed and open-ended questions and learn from how people respond to your content. Like any playtime, variety is healthy and stimulating.

Make playtime regular

The best adage for social media is to be consistent. Whatever cycle you choose, consider your channels as media outlets and whatever your publishing cycle is, stick to it. You can always ramp up but being sporadic and off-cycle just says you are haphazard and is a great way to reach no one! Plus, a sustained presence will also lead to longer term results in online search.



Play to get shared

Approach your social media content with a long-term view, by thinking of yourself as a media channel. People will converse with you and about you when you have relevant, updated content that is engaging.

It's not about who has the catchiest jingles, million-dollar budgets and viral videos. Neither is it about just posting media releases and product listings and trusting people will read what you feel is important.

Good content is about story telling — just as you would make interesting conversation. Drop the sell and provide the means for people to listen and learn about you. Most of all, understand that in the modern age when we all have equal access to the internet, people love to be seen, heard, valued, and respected.

Find out who the most popular bloggers are. Study how they play and explore a few of their approaches in your content.

Vary the channel and timing. Share content through all your channels in the best format for that channel. Share it at different times through your calendar or event. Are you sharing a snack, a meal, a banquet? Play with menus and where or when to serve each course.

Push marketing often sucks

Anything that pushes a deal or sales are ads. People are immune to many ads, or they tend to get cranky if you slip them in. If you must, make them as little as 10% of your regular content. Make it a real deal and don't dilute it. There are plenty of places to advertise online other than through your premium channels.

A common strategy nowadays is to use advertising to amplify your content or to direct traffic to your website rather than use social media just for your advertising. Use advertising to drive people back to interesting content. Another way to think about it is whether you need to advertise an offer, or promote your conversation and invite people to join in.

Explore these idea prompts for exchange between your brand or business and real people. Keep exchange real, make the purpose clear and be upfront of what the exchange is; people are wary of lazy approaches that get labelled as 'cash for comment' or poorly incentivised ways to generate content. If you do incentivise, make sure you have simple and clear terms and conditions that respect everyone's copyright and creativity.

A word of reality

Many people 'like' or follow pages on a wide variety of social media platforms. Very few return to those pages. If they don't regularly interact with content from those pages, they lose content. With such a constant flurry of content, your posts may just move down a feed and be completely missed. A realistic expectation is that only around 10% of your followers will see your posts. Naturally, you can pay to have more fans or followers receive your posts.

Tagging and partnerships

Ve have the smallest mountain in the world W Ve have the best night skies for star gazing W Ve have the most wide and open spaces W	OUR REGIC We have the largest outdoor gallery in the world We have a creative culture around our towns We have outdoor sculptures and installations We have performing arts and live music We celebrate art and creativity	We are connected to our land and people We have towns untouched by time We tell stories through our community and traditional owners We are proud of our history and uniqueness We showcase the past through art and museums	We have unique grain and salt stories We are the home of the mallee bull We have the best vanilla slices in Australia We have the best pub feeds in rural Australi
Ve have the smallest mountain in the world We have the best night skies for star gazing We have the most wide and open spaces We have big wilderness and outback deserts We	We have a creative culture around our towns We have outdoor sculptures and installations We have performing arts and live music	We have towns untouched by time We tell stories through our community and traditional owners We are proud of our history and uniqueness	We are the home of the mallee bull We have the best vanilla slices in Australia
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It's playtime

How to get good content

The best outcome is to share and post user generated content. It is a simple matter of building a long-term strategy to collect, curate and share content people generate about you. Here are some steps.

Let them know you are willing to publish their content. Invite people to post on your wall. Best approach is to do it by invitation. If you have a volume you'd like to obtain as a steady stream, consider ways to incentivise that align with your organisational values.

Image sources

Tap into sources of images from photo libraries or creative commons. Share and pin interesting images on your Pinterest or Facebook pages (and always give credit and links to the source). Often a great image and mention can be a good conversation starter as people love to share their images on platforms broader than their own circles.

Video sources

Link and embed great examples of video relating to your business, attraction, or experience. There's room for someone to aggregate a great source of video in one place. Get a work experience student or intern to help do a landscape survey of what is out there relating to you or allied interests. Learn what people watch and study how they make popular videos before embarking on your own. A good story, well told, beats a million-dollar production any day.

Content calendar

The simplest way to keep the content flowing is to sit down with that piece of paper you started with that lists what you like about play, the results of the search and brainstorming ideas you generated and create a content calendar.

It's a simple diary/schedule with a pre-prepared post to publish on any given day. It helps you to get out of the daily grind of wondering what to do, helps with a strategy, like frozen dinners, you have no need to go hungry, just thaw and serve.

Everything you do has a cycle. Events are an easy one. You must market them, take bookings, prepare equipment, advise people on what to bring, have the event, then follow up on how it went. Time and time again. Each step in that process cycle is a content opportunity.

- Dreaming
- Booking
- Anticipating
- The journey
- In destination
- Post visit share

Visual Storytelling

Images and video are the most valued content. A good picture no longer says 100 words. Visual content entertains, invokes moods, kindles memory, and supports your written claims. 'Show me don't tell me' is a great start when it comes to visual content.

Making images is easier now than any time in history and it's only going to get easier. Here's some things to consider when creating images or commissioning others to make them for you.

Make sure the imagery works at various sizes and aspect ratios. Keep it simple. Keep it real. Treatments (the special effects we put on images) date fast, so keep an original version of your images in case you need to update treatments. Better still, work out your in-house styles and treatments and make them your identifiable brand look and feel.

If in doubt, find an image from the creative commons like Flickr or Pinterest and ALWAYS give a link back to the source.

You can also encourage followers to share their images through your channels by several means:

- Direct posts on your walls or feeds
- Curated processes where they submit images you sort and republish

• Competitions where you choose a winner from entry (subject to permits and terms and conditions you will need to arrange)

Moving pictures are the next big thing. Video is authentic; it has sound and can show and communicate a great deal. You can capture great video on your smart phone these days so there is no reason not to capture and share what you do, what happens, simple guides and interviews.

Watch YouTube to study what gets the most views. This will give you some clues as to what works, and you can apply those features in your video content.

Keep an eye out for the following when watching the most popular online videos:

- Length is it long like a TV episode or short like an ad?
- Do they have an introductory logo or website at the start or end?
- What's the take home message?
- Is it pure entertainment?
- What did you learn from watching it?

The idea generator for posts

- What is Visit Victoria doing that we can add to?
- How can we help Visit Victoria or Tourism Australia promote re our destination?
- Created memes, images and quotes based on your content or collection. Can you share iconic images or offer screensavers, mobile wallpapers? Can you invite followers to creatively interpret or mash up your content as part of a road trip?
- Involved your followers in decision making for exhibitions, events, or new initiatives (be explicit what you require and manage expectation) as the social crowd can be one of your best focus groups.
- Invite influential bloggers and advocates to events and make special categories for members and friends through social media.
- Provide areas for photos and video backgrounds, made any interactive games, and exhibits social friendly by enabling people to share their output of your experience (i.e., drawings, videos)
- Created content days where you invite everyone to contribute an image or video of Silo Art and surrounds.
- Create fun, playful user guides like how to do or top ten (listicles). 10 things you wanted to know but were too afraid to ask.
- Provide a top ten of nearby things to see and do near each Silo or ideas within walking distance, on bike or by car. Share your staff picks, hidden treasures, and insider tips.
- Listed exclusive products or deals you have in your gift shops, foyers, restaurants.
- Created a dish or a cocktail, a dessert or a menu based on crowd sourcing find ideal ways to use seasonal ingredients and then invite followers who submit suggestions to a special event to celebrate.

- Provided walking routes near you with great views or feature art walks, bird watching and kangaroo viewing areas (popular with international visitors).
- Featured top ten rides or trails to explore by bike or the best foods to take on a bike picnic.
- Suggested local cafes and hot spots for lunch, a quick snack, take away, or best meals with themes for families, cuisines, or dress code to help visitors.
- Feature of top pubs and any theme/music nights.
- List where your staff or management like to go on weekends.
- Incorporated visitor reviews and insights into your posts.
- Cross promoted offers with industry. For instance, redeem your entry ticket or receipt of purchase at a partner business for a special offer or to sample other local produce or experiences.
- Tweet your updates, new content, or even your events listed on other websites or in ATDW when they are published.
- Crowd source images or comments to make a compilation video and then share it widely and invite people to find their content in the result.
- Extend your education programs to feature a school's video on your big screen in-house or through your social media.
- Create local chapters of fans you can invite to interstate events and travelling exhibitions.
- Engage with Traditional owners for ideas on storytelling, product, or experiences.
- Follow more people in your industry and influential social media people and join in their conversations.
- Build a discussion forum or Live Chat function on your website to answer questions about you and what you do? You then have content that drives search back to your website and you can share from there on social media.
- Do some cross cultural or international research to find how your counterparts are doing it overseas?

When to post

The time of day you post has an effect, for sure. Some people work. Some use Facebook at work. At lunch time. Some check it before they head home. Some check it on their mobile. Some on the iPad in front of TV. Frequently. It's dependent on where they access, how they access and why they access social media within their daily schedules. You get the idea.

There is no magic time to post, just observe when you get the most interaction, then rinse and repeat until you refine what works for you. Have a look at the insights for you biggest group of followers. Take a few calculated guesses when they might be online. If women in the age range of 30-45 years are your biggest followers, keep them happy and figure out when they are active online (think kids, at the office, mobile use etc). Rocket scientists have only ever achieved one-way trips and burn up a lot of fuel getting there, so this stuff is definitely not rocket science! All this social media thing needs is careful observation and play.

Consider setting a regular theme.

A Wednesday wonder or a Travel Thursday to gain thought around the two days when people begin to dream about their weekends. Wednesday wonder could be about lighthearted ways to ask a question requiring some general knowledge about the Wimmera Mallee with a subtle attempt to shift perception and misconceptions about it being too far away. These could also be linked to competitions.

Owned data

In 2022 building a large email database is paramount. Recent changes to Apple's privacy policy enacted by iOS 14 have changed the way that data can be used by advertisers. Cookies are being phased out. Essentially targeting capabilities are being eroded.

Using social platforms is essentially renting space – you want to own and audience! We can also use databases to retarget audiences. Build the WMT audience through competitions, opt ins, incentives, sharing information, lead generation forms, lead magnets.

Social Media Roles and Responsibilities

It's important to understand activities of each LGA and how this can be better coordinated with activities of WMT. Under the new governance model of WMA, effort should be made to replicate activities and coordinate a calendar of marketing activities that ensures each week something somewhere is promoted. When an LGA promotes an event or attraction, this should be amplified through WMT social channels.

All demand activity should be coordinated through WMT to ensure duplication is minimised and opportunities maximised. The goal should be to ultimately promote something happening in the region every day.

Each respective council Communications Officer will work with this new WMT Social Media Playbook. Any local tourism activity should be coordinated and promoted through WMT social channels. Any post from WMT relevant to a particular Shire or the whole of region should also be amplified and reposted. Economic Development/tourism staff for each council will ensure that WMT is involved with any demand generating activity including marketing promotions, events, and development of new or emerging product.

LGA	Name	Role
Yarriambiack	Katherine Colbert	Communications Consultant
Buloke	Tim Heydon	Communications Officer
West Wimmera	Erin?	Communications Officer
Hindmarsh	Jeff Woodward?	Tourism Guru

Table to be finalised of key council contact staff responsible for social media