
Social Media Challenge for September - Sources of Images

We know that images are the life of social media. We can have a great narrative or insight, but without an image to draw people in, we are unlikely to get noticed on social media. It isn't just true of Instagram and Snapchat (specifically visual social media), but is also true for posts on Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ as well as websites, emails, and newsletters. The modern reader expects eye-catching images. Finding, managing, and editing images also takes a lot of our time.

In the ideal social media world, church members and guests would share their own photos of being engaged in church activities. That eliminates most issues of finding flattering photos, getting permission, and not violating any privacy or child safety protections. Where we have to take the photos, we need to have either individual or blanket permission and to follow safety policies.

But what if we don't have original images? Perhaps the event we are promoting hasn't happened yet or we are trying to visualize an abstract concept. For these, we have many legitimate online sources. Resist the temptation to simply taking an image from a Google search. These are hard to tell if they are copy-protected and we don't want to violate the rights of an artist by using images without attribution, permission, and/or compensation. Browser searches may give ideas of types of images that might illustrate a theme, but we need to use images with clear permissions. [More on understanding the legal aspects here.](#)

Here is a recent listing of 21 different sources of images: <https://blog.snappa.com/free-stock-photos/>

I'm a fan of [Pixabay](#). This site is for photographers and other graphic artists to share their work. And perhaps pick up the equivalent of tips for images appreciated by others. If I find an awesome ideal image or use several from one person, I "buy them a cup of coffee", but you do not have to pay. Quite often the image at the top of the monthly Update comes from this source - here is a sneak peak for this month.



Sites like Pixabay let you download in different image sizes. Bigger is not always better. Images on web pages need to be resized prior to posting so they don't slow down web pages. Social media post images need to be certain proportions so they don't get cut off in strange places. One simple graphic applications with tools to resize images is Paint. Here is a recent overview of what dimensions of images are optimal for different social media sites: <https://blog.bufferapp.com/ideal-image-sizes-social-media-posts>

I'm also a fan of using the print screen button to copy an image from my screen into memory and then pasting into something simple like Paint for cropping. While this is fast, it does not produce images that can be scaled up greatly (posters) or create good quality prints. It does generate usable quality images where the graphic is being read primarily on screen or on average print media where the formatting of words on an image has been worked out in Word, Publisher or Adobe.

I hope this has given you at least one more source of images for communicating your organization's work.

What is your favorite source of images?

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