



## **Placing Social Media Ads**

Prepared for:

National Association of State Boating Law Administrators

[www.springaboard.org](http://www.springaboard.org)

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# Welcome

Dear Boating Safety Partner,

Join us as we encourage boaters to Spring Aboard! by taking a safe boating course. Spring Aboard is a national public information and education campaign to reduce boating injuries and fatalities by encouraging the boating public to take a boating safety course. The campaign combines the efforts of boating education course providers, recreational boating safety organizations, and state and local entities involved in recreational boating regulation.

The Spring Aboard campaign is designed to serve as an umbrella message for the recreational boating safety community across the country.

The campaign is enlisting this a wide variety of organizations to provide information and resources that will extend the reach of the Spring Aboard campaign now and in the future.

This document is intended to provide you with Best Practices and Guidance for placing social media ads on multiple platforms. The focus will be on ad placement on a nominal budget and leveraging social media through partnerships and relationships build through social networking.

Please take a moment to review the document and the Spring Aboard website, [www.springaboard.org](http://www.springaboard.org). If you have questions or can't find what you need, contact us at 859-225-9487 or [info@nasbla.org](mailto:info@nasbla.org).

We wish you a happy – and safe – boating season!

Regards,

John Johnson, CAE  
CEO  
National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA)



# Best Practices

In 2018, approximately 79% of the adult U.S. population is on Facebook. Combine that with users on Twitter, Instagram and other social media sites, and there's no denying one thing: a state agency or organization that wants to reach their target audience must include social media messaging to do so.

It's important to keep in mind, however, that no one group could - or *should* - try to reach everyone on social media.

## Define your target audience: Don't talk to everyone.

Remember that social media marketing is all about relationships.

The question is, "who do you want to engage with?"

1. **Broadcasters:** These are people who'll leverage what you shared (your social and blog posts) and create something unique and closely-tied to what their fans want on social media. As a general rule of thumb, share case studies, exclusive data, important thoughts, trends and epic ideas.
2. **BFFs:** They're strong influencers of people that they know personally. This means that they spend time relating with their own audience.
3. **Scout's Honor:** These people have earned the trust of their massive audiences on social media networks. You can reach out to these people on social media, but offer something of social value (e.g., retweet, positive reviews, brand mentions) first, before making a request.
4. **Opinionated:** These people want to be a part of your cause. They're influencers — but to get their attention, you've got to be smart and one step ahead of other demands on their attention. If possible, get them involved in your cause.
5. **Informers:** These engagers share information with their social networks. Once they come across a valuable resource, they'll share it with their audience. Make sure that your headlines are catchy and benefit-driven. That's how to get the attention of "social informers."

Remember, not everyone on Facebook is in your target audience.

## Create a user-friendly value proposition

A value proposition is simply a promise of value. It makes you stand out from the competition. If you want your value proposition to work, it must:

- Be relevant
- Be visually appealing
- Be clear and concise
- Include a call-to-action



# Partnerships

## Spring Aboard: Leveraging Partnerships through Advertising

After you've defined your Target Audience and created your user-friendly value proposition, this next step will determine how much or how little you want to spend and coordinate with partners.

*What is your budget?*

Like many boating safety initiatives, the Spring Aboard campaign is run through grant funding, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard. Once the grant ends, however, the program itself should be sustainable and marketable. It's important to determine what your budget for the Spring Aboard campaign will be and how to maximize that budget once the funds have been spent.

This is where partnerships play an important role in the Spring Aboard campaign. Consider who the partners are in the campaign: nonprofits, state agencies, course providers and companies. Are there certain partners that stand out with their stellar social media campaigns? Are there partners that may want to invest some additional funding to promote not only the Spring Aboard campaign message, but their own company or organization's brand as well?

Take stock of who may be good to partner with and plan to advertise together. Pull together your resources: budget, staff and potential audience to create a stronger Spring Aboard social media advertising campaign.



# Ad Buys

## Facebook

### Advertising on Facebook

Facebook makes it relatively simple to develop, promote and boost social media posts. They outline the steps to ensure that you understand how your ad may reach your target audience and that it stays within your defined budget.

To begin, log into your Facebook account and, in the upper right-hand corner, select “Create Ads.” From there, you’ll go through a process to determine the following:

1. Campaign Objective
2. Ad Set
  - a. Audience
  - b. Placements
  - c. Budget and Schedule
3. Create the Ad

Facebook does a great job defining the different sections as you go through the process to ensure that you understand how Facebook Ads work and how your ad can reach your target audience.

### *How to Boost Your Facebook Post*

Let’s say you have a post that is getting more Likes and Shares than your other posts in recent weeks. Or, you have a really important message that you want more people to see. Consider boosting your post: boosting a Facebook post is a great way to get more people to view that specific post within the perimeters that you set. After you publish the post to your company or organization’s page, go to that post and, in the bottom right-hand corner, you’ll see a blue button, Boost Post. Click that and you’ll be taken to the next steps to *Choose Your Audience* and *Choose Your Budget*. Click *Boost* to complete the process and Facebook will do the rest to get that specific post to more of the Facebook users that you want to reach.

## Twitter

To advertise on Twitter, many of the same rules apply: you want to ensure that you target your niche audience, you want to have a clear message and you want to have a strong call-to-action. To begin the advertising placement process on Twitter, visit [business.twitter.com](https://business.twitter.com). You’ll be prompted to choose one of the two following options:

1. Promote Mode: I want to automatically promote my tweets
2. Twitter Ad Campaign: I want to launch a Twitter Ad Campaign

*Promote Mode* is going to get your tweets noticed on a small budget and without much additional oversight or management after the account is set up. Launching a *Twitter Ads Campaign*, on the other hand, allows you to create campaigns tailored with your specific Goals and Objectives in mind, but also requires more management from your end.

Regardless what option you choose, if you follow the Best Practices outlined in this document as well as Spring Aboard's Social Media Plan, you'll be on a positive track when placing Twitter ads.

When you're ready to buy an ad on Twitter we encourage you to spend more time on their [website](#), learning the differences between Promote Mode and running a Twitter Ad Campaign, as well as other tips to run a successful ad(s).

## Instagram

You'll create your Instagram ads using the same tools you use to create Facebook ads. All you need to do after creating your ad is make sure that you've selected Instagram in the **Ad Preview** section. However, there are a few things you'll need to know before you start creating Instagram ads.

1. If you have an Instagram account, add it to your Business Manager or [add it through your Page's settings](#). If you don't have an Instagram account, your Facebook Page may serve as the voice of your ads on Instagram.
2. Next, go to ads creation.
3. Choose an objective for your ad that supports Instagram. There are several to choose from, including *Brand awareness, Reach, Traffic, and Engagement*.
4. Click Continue after you've chosen an objective. Next, fill in the details of your ad including ad targeting, budget, schedule and creative.
5. Before you place your order, make sure that there's a check next to Instagram in the Ad Preview section of ad creation. This will ensure your ad will be eligible to run on Instagram.

Your Instagram ad will appear in people's Instagram feeds along with images and videos shared by their friends, family and other Instagram accounts they follow.

If you use a single image in your Instagram ad, your image may appear in the **square** or **landscape** format depending on which format you choose when creating your ad.

If you use the **carousel** format as the creative for your Instagram ad, your Instagram ad will appear in the **square** format. People may click the arrows located on the left and right of the image to see additional images within the [carousel format](#) ad.

Instagram ads have a **Sponsored** label that appears under the profile name and a menu icon on the right side of the header. When you click the menu icon, you'll reveal options to hide the ad or learn more about advertising on Instagram. Ads may also contain a call-to-action button across the bottom that will highlight after a person hovers over an ad for 3 seconds. Call to action buttons will vary based on business objectives. Your ad's caption will appear below the image, video or carousel format.



## Google Ads

Google AdWords is the online advertising platform owned and operated by Google. AdWords is also the largest and most widely used online advertising network in the world, and millions of businesses and organizations advertise online using AdWords to reach new users and customers to grow their engagement.

Advertisers who choose to use Google AdWords can target users across two main networks – the **search network**, and the **display network**. The search network refers to pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, in which you bid on keywords that are relevant to your goal and have a chance to show your advertisements to users who enter those keywords into Google as part of a search query. Pay-per-click advertising is also known as paid search.

The display network offers the option of placing visual banner-style advertisements on websites that are part of the display network. The Google Display Network reaches approximately 90% of global internet users, a vast potential audience.

Before you can start advertising on Google AdWords, you'll need to set up an AdWords account. Setting up a new AdWords account is easy, and takes just a few minutes.

You have the option of creating your account using an existing Google account, or you can create a new account specifically for use with Google AdWords. Then, you'll specify some basics for your account, such as your location and time zone. Finally, you'll set up billing details, so Google can accurately bill you every month.

Once you've identified **keywords** (e.g. - Spring Aboard, Safe Boating, Boating) that are relevant to your campaign, all that's left to do is write compelling, persuasive text ads that simply beg to be clicked.

Although Google AdWords offers a wide range of diverse ad formats, text-based PPC ads form the core of AdWords. Writing ad text is a particularly challenging task, not least because of the space restrictions that advertisers are subjected to. You only have very limited space to craft a compelling message that speaks to your prospective audience and persuades them to click on your ad.

There are many elements to consider when writing PPC ad text. Your choice of language is crucially important, and can have a dramatic impact upon the tone of your advertisements. Some ads leverage emotional responses such as fear or even comedy to tempt visitors to click on them, whereas others capitalize on special offers to make their ads more compelling.



Strong PPC ads all have three things in common:

- **Features** - What's unique about what you are offering? What sets you apart from the other organizations vying for your users' support.
- **Benefits** - "What's in it for them?" What will your users gain by supporting your campaign or taking part in your services?
- **A call to action** - Include persuasive language in your call to action. For example, using the word "get" instead of "download" may result in more clicks, as "get" connotes an emotional takeaway – users don't want to "download" something, they want to "get" something.

*Remember this advice:* The second-best word is "you." The best word is the customer's name.

Since we're still in the stone age of advertising and can't add the visitor's first name to our AdWords ads automatically, we'll have to settle for second best.

### **Google AdWords Grant: Free Advertising for 501(c)3 Nonprofits**

This section is intended for 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations. A 501(c)3 may be eligible for up to \$10,000 in-kind advertising on Google every month if they meet basic eligibility requirements ([www.google.com/grants/eligibility](http://www.google.com/grants/eligibility)).

- Apply to Google Nonprofits
- Hold valid charity status, i.e. - 501(c)3
- Acknowledge and agree to Google's required certifications regarding nondiscrimination and donation receipt and use
- Have a live website with substantial information
- Register with TechSoup

If your 501(c)3 nonprofit organization meets these five eligibility requirements, Google will review your application and approve your organization to receive a possible \$10,000 in Google advertising on a monthly basis.

After your organization gets set up on Google AdWords, it is helpful to designate one person to manage the AdWords account. Google does offer support for those just learning how to manage Google AdWords or those that don't have the staff or time to manage their account with AdWords Express. For organizations with someone that has the skill and time to dedicate to managing their account, they can select that option. In addition, Google offers other Tips to maximize your organization's AdWords account.



Reference in this Placing Social Media Ads Guide to any specific commercial products, processes, or services, or the use of any trade, firm or corporation name is for the information and convenience of the public, and does not constitute endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the U.S. Coast Guard.

For more information, visit [www.USCGBoating.org](http://www.USCGBoating.org).



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