Don’t Miss Out on the *Social*

Course Description. Step-by-step instructions for voluntary bar associations and their members to establish social media profiles and use social media effectively to promote themselves and their news by connecting with the “Big Bar” online network. Discover how to follow and get followed or “liked.” Practice how to find content that is relevant to your followers and how to translate your content into information that is relevant to The Florida Bar and its followers. See how to promote trending events and topics (#myfloridabar, #legalIT and others) that can help your social media posts gain greater momentum – and earn more publicity for your bar association. Learn how Florida Bar advertising rules regulate lawyers’ use of social media.

Why should associations be part of social media networks? (Joann Gore)

- Social media allows bar associations to communicate more broadly – and more immediately – than email or quarterly newsletters.
You can use social media to gain greater momentum for emails and newsletters, award announcements, CLEs and events because repeating – or posting information in advance – expands the reach to larger audiences beyond just association members or clients. *Association Marketer: 6 Reasons to Focus on Social Media as an Important Marketing Tool*

- Studies show that younger members – and younger potential clients – value engagement on social media more highly than older members do.

- Your social media posts provide publicity for sponsors, a greater return on their investments than just banners at your events or ads on your website.

- You can help support The Florida Bar and other voluntary bar associations by sharing their information with your followers – and they will do the same. Example: #OrlandoUnited

**How to Establish Social Media Profiles (Danny Aller).** How do you choose what social media platforms are best for your association or law firm? *Note: For simplicity, this presentation focuses mainly on tips for using Facebook and Twitter.*

- **eBizMBA** in July listed the top 15 social networking sites – top five are shown here – ranked by a combination of continually updated traffic statistics.

- Your choices should be based on your resources. For example, if you don’t have someone who can video your key events then [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com) is not for you.
Basics on setting up Facebook and Twitter profiles.

- **Branding.** They don’t have to match exactly, but your social media pages should look similar to your website, newsletter, business cards, etc., because you can use your social media profiles to extend (or establish) your association or law firm “brand” ID.

- **Specs.** [Entrepreneur](https://www.entrepreneur.com) published a cheat sheet that lists dimensions for cover photos and profile pictures, character limits for posts and “About Us” sections – everything you need to know to avoid frustration when setting up your profiles. Work toward including the same elements in all of your social media profiles, if possible.

- **Names.** Choose a name that clearly identifies who you are, and try to keep it the same or close to the same in all of your profiles. For example, @theflabar (Twitter) and @TheFloridaBar (Facebook).

Select one that’s not too long AND doesn’t unintentionally have a double meaning (be careful when using “assn”) – the capitalization can make all the difference!

- **How to Get Your Hashtag On.** Some people just don’t get it. Hashtags on all social networks have the same fundamental purpose: content tagging and discovery. Hashtags that are too generic – like #lawyer – serve little purpose.

Hashtags allow Twitter users to tap into a Twitter-wide conversation by making words searchable. To create a hashtag, place the "#" symbol before a word. This is a great tool to discover what is trending. This also help you connect with users who have similar interests.

Hashtag etiquette: Use a maximum of three hashtags per tweet. Hashtags are a useful way to get your tweet out to people who are interested in its main subject, but too many hashtags in a post can be #annoying.
You can also use hashtags to get conversations started online, and gain publicity for your organization.

#LawyersAreTheCoolest started with a tweet about a lawyer who facilitated the Rolling Stones concert in Cuba. When the "Legal Twitterati" got a hold of it – and added their own meaning to why they thought lawyers were the coolest – there was no stopping it.

Technical Tips. Now that you’re up and running on social media, it’s time to start using it correctly.

- Get rid of long URLs on Facebook. It’s a common mistake to leave long URLs in Facebook posts, but it’s not necessary. Let’s say you find a great article to share with your followers. You copy the whole, long URL and paste the link into the "What’s on your mind?" box. Facebook grabs the title and intro paragraph for your post, along with an image if available, from the original page where the article appeared. After this information pops in below the link, you can simply delete the link before sharing your post. Deleting the link after the story information populates will not delete the story; instead, it lets you share the story without the clutter of a long link.

Don’t like the image that Facebook grabbed from the other site? You can delete the images that appear there automatically. You also can add additional photos to the post by clicking on the + below the post – don’t use the Photo / Video link or you’ll wipe out the post.

- Shorten Long URLs. Twitter, LinkedIn and Dropbox all have their own automatic URL shorteners. But when you’re including URLs on other sites, you might want to use a shortener that allows you to track engagement and see how many people clicked on your URL. This is a list of some of the most commonly used URL shorteners.
- **How to share posts.** If you’re a Facebook user, you’re probably pretty familiar with how to share a post on your timeline. Just click the share button, right?

(If you manage multiple entities on Facebook, check to be sure you’re using the right one before you share to a timeline.)

- **Share a Facebook post on another social media site.** Check out the date stamp under the owner name of the Facebook page. If you click on that link, it opens a new window with a long URL at the top.

Drop that URL into Twitter — or shorten it using your favorite service — and you’ll have a link to that Facebook post that can be shared anywhere.

- **How to Connect Twitter and Facebook to create automatic posts.** If you typically post the same updates on Facebook as you do on Twitter, you can save time by setting up your Twitter account so it posts your tweets as updates on Facebook automatically.

  Sign in to Twitter and then click profile photo in the top right corner of the menu to access your "Profile and settings."

  Click "Settings" from the dropdown menu. In the left sidebar, click "Apps." Click on the "Connect to Facebook" button. Log in to your Facebook account by clicking "Okay" in the Facebook tab that pops up.

  Next, you'll see a message that says, "Twitter would like to post to Facebook for you." Use the dropdown menu below that message to select how you want your tweets to be displayed when they're automatically posted on Facebook (to be seen by the public, your friends, only you, or a custom option). Click "Okay."

  It can take a little while for your Twitter RSS feed to be updated and pulled by Facebook but you’re good to go! Your tweets will now appear on Facebook.
How to use @ and .@. One of the things that makes Twitter so amazing is its powerful connectivity thanks to the "@" symbol in front of each user’s unique account that allows you to tweet "at" (get it?) anyone in the WORLD who’s on Twitter.

But if you want your tweet to be seen by more than just the person you’re sending it too – and, let’s be honest, most Twitter users tweet so they can have their tweets seen by followers – you can’t begin your tweet with the "@" symbol. If you do, only the person you "@’d" and those of your followers who ALSO follow that person will see it. To avoid that and have your tweet populate on your timeline for everyone to see, the most common technique to get around one of Twitter's many quirks is to place a "." in front of the tweet.

Let’s say we wanted to reach out to Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi -- but we also wanted to make sure ALL of our followers saw it. Here’s the wrong way and right way to do it:

WRONG: @AGPamBondi Morning, Ms. Bondi! Thanks for the recent $500K gift to @FlaATCJ and your continued support of Florida's Commission on Access to Civil Justice!

RIGHT: .@AGPamBondi Morning, Ms. Bondi! Thanks for the recent $500K gift to @FlaATCJ and your continued support of Florida's Commission on Access to Civil Justice!

Just use the "." before the account and your tweet will be seen by all!

Online editing by Grammarly – FREE. When you’re managing social media, it’s not hard to get in a hurry and post typos and grammatical errors – we see that all the time. Add Grammarly to your browser and download the desktop app. Grammarly automatically detects typos, double words, missing apostrophes, etc. and offers suggested fixes.
How to Follow and Get Followed or “Liked” and How to Find Content that is Relevant to Your Followers (Lisa Tipton). When you first get started on social media, it’s helpful to see who your key contacts are following, so you need to do some searching.

- **Find people and organizations.**
  Search for “bar association” and start following other bars around the state and country. You can find out what types of CLEs they offer, what events they promote and, more importantly, who sponsors their events. See who The Florida Bar and its key entities follow (@theflabar, @FlaBarYLD, @FLBarPresident, @FloridaBarPRI and numerous sections), and select entities that might have connections to your potential audiences. Search for key lawyers and law firms in your area. Follow potential sponsors. LexisNexis, Florida Lawyers Mutual Insurance Co., SoFi and Thomson Reuters are examples. Follow local businesses and publications – media outlets, chambers of commerce, law schools, etc.

  Most importantly, follow members of your organization or law firm who are active on social media; they are most likely to repost, share and retweet your information to make your posts more “engaging.”

  Once you are following people, most social media sites will suggest followers for you based on the types of entities you’re following.

- **Find Content.** Search for #SoloSmall or #SoloSmallfirm, bar association, #TechTips, etc. The hashtags sort posts together so you can see who regularly posts information that is relevant to you. Regularly monitor websites and blogs that offer practice management tips, business best practices, tech tips, etc. so that you can generate original content. You also can follow these entities on their social media sites. Here are some ideas to get you started:

  - The Florida Bar Practice Resource Institute
  - Florida Trend Small Business
  - ABA GP Solo
  - ABA Solo and Small Firm Resource Center
  - Jim Calloway’s Law Practice Tips
  - Law Technology Today
  - myShingle
  - Solo Practice University
  - Small Firm Innovation
  - ABA Division for Bar Services
  - Jim Calloway’s Law Practice Tips Blog
  - Modern Solo
- **Get Notified.** Set up notifications so you can pay attention to key content posted by your followers; interact by liking, sharing or retweeting with comments as often as possible.

You can opt for text messages or email notifications and you can change the settings at any time.

- **How to Tag a Place or Business.** Tagging someone in a tweet on Twitter is easy, just "@" them ... and viola, you pop into their mentions. But what about Facebook? How do you ensure that your favorite social spots, restaurants, businesses and organizations know you're talking about them on social media? Well, the process is actually pretty similar: Use the "@" on Facebook, too.

Let's say the Tallahassee Bar Association is having a get-together at Madison Social – one of Tallahassee's most happening spots – and they wanted to write a post alerting members. All they would need to do when mentioning Madison Social in the post is type the "@" symbol first, followed by the title. Whether or not to put a space between the words differs by browser. The place you're tagging should then populate in a drop-down list below the text for you to easily click and tag.
If you want The Florida Bar to see that you’ve posted about a Florida Bar event, just type "@The Florida Bar" and tag away.

How to Translate Your Content into Information That is Relevant to The Florida Bar and Its Followers. Make your posts involve as many other people and entities as possible so it becomes more relevant to audiences beyond just your members or followers.

The Florida Bar Solo & Small Firm Section’s “Member Spotlights” feature member stories and photos, and it’s no coincidence that the people who are featured are also active on social media.

Include entity names in the post, tag the person and others in his/her photos, like the post and photos, share it on as many timelines as possible. Most importantly, notify people about the post. Members of the Solo & Small Firm Executive Council are notified by email and/or text when a member is profiled, and they immediately repost, share and comment.

How to Use Social Media Effectively to Promote Yourself and Your News by Connecting with the “Big Bar” online network (Joann Gore). Voluntary bar associations communicate with their members in various ways, mostly by email. However, some of your news needs to reach wider (or much more narrow) audiences than publication in The Florida Bar News. You might need more versatile ways to communicate than just email or your newsletters.

And you might need to communicate more quickly: Your bar or law firm might publicize a last-minute reminder that nominations are due for an award, announce award winners, promote events or post “breaking news” by members.
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- **Cross-pollinate.** The Tallahassee Bar is the Capital City’s only staffed bar. We use our social media, news briefs and website to help other local bars get their news into the larger bar social media communities.

  Cross-pollination of communication serves two functions: 1) It helps other bar associations extend their reach, and 2) It helps the Tallahassee Bar interact with – and gain followers from – a wider variety of audiences than if we posted information related only to our own organization.

  The key to effective connection with The Florida Bar and its followers is to ensure that your posts are also directed at online communities and not just your own members.

Here are some examples of news posted for TBA and for the Solo & Small Firm Section that was picked up by The Florida Bar and others and then disseminated to wider audiences’ followers on Facebook and Twitter. In each post, there is an outside entity name, people are tagged, or the post capitalizes on someone else’s breaking news, like the Animal Law Committee – now a section – and use of #MyFloridaBar.

*Figure 25*

*Figure 26*
The Florida Bar — our super hero — is always here to help. The Florida Bar wants to make sure its voluntary bars are represented in “Big Bar” events and are using social media effectively. This is a chain of communication in Twitter direct messaging between the TBA and Danny Aller asking for photos from The Florida Bar President’s Pro Bono Awards Ceremony at the Florida Supreme Court ... and a correction that he sent us. Thank you, Danny!

How to Promote Trending Events and Topics to Help Your Social Media Posts Gain Greater Momentum — and Earn More Publicity for Your Bar Association (Lisa Tipton)

- #MyFloridaBar was the hashtag for 2016 Florida Bar Annual Convention. All posts on any social media sites that included this hashtag are sorted together online.

- The Florida Bar this year offered a “social wall” that tracked all #MyFloridaBar hashtags during annual convention. Your association or firm, if posting during annual convention, would have become part of this collection of posts.

How to establish a system. The TBA’s system works like this: Joann Gore, TBA officers and members send their photos to Lisa Tipton via text or email with brief captions and/or names of the people in the photos. Lisa then posts the photos on Facebook and Twitter, tags each person, “@’s” each organization, etc. Often this happens “real time” during an event, such as an award presentation or before the Judicial Luncheon during Florida Bar Annual Convention. When it’s relevant, Lisa will also include the appropriate hashtag to ensure that our posts are grouped with others who are posting on this topic.
How to create effective hashtags that identify your events.

Once your association is established on social media, you can start to get your members engaged. Using “universal” hashtags groups your content with others who are using them. Example: #SoloSmallFirm has created a body of content online that can be used as a resource for solo or small firm lawyers — you don’t have to be on Twitter to access it.

You also can use hashtags as a fun way to get your members involved with an event. The Solo & Small Firm Section’s annual technology conference had a Western theme two years ago, and we created the hashtag #WildWildTech. It took off in such a big way that we’ve continued to use it.

The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division in May sponsored its second annual “Health and Wellness Month,” designed to bring awareness to the mental and physical issues that affect lawyers’ quality of life. Participants were encouraged to use #livewell, even though that hashtag was not unique to the event. BUT, it put all of their information and others’ posts into the larger body of information online about living well. TBA got in on the action with its own Young Lawyers Section Healthy Lifestyles for the Legal Professional event.

Florida Bar Advertising Rules Regulate Use of Social Media (The Florida Bar Standing Committee on Advertising “Guidelines for Networking Sites” document is included)

Lawyers.

The social media guidelines are the same as any other Florida Bar advertising rules: When you use social media for the purposes of obtaining or attempting to obtain legal business, promoting the lawyer or law firm’s practice, asking potential clients to “follow” or view social media pages for the purpose of soliciting business those solicitations — instant messaging, posts on social media sites, banner ads on social media sites, etc. — must meet the requirements of the lawyer advertising rules.

The exceptions are the same as for direct mail and email when a recipient is the lawyer’s current client, former client, relative, has a prior professional relationship with the lawyer, or is another lawyer.
Pages of individual lawyers on social networking sites that are used solely for social purposes, to maintain social contact with family and close friends, are not subject to the lawyer advertising rules.

Lawyers are responsible for all content that they post on their own pages, but a lawyer is not responsible for information posted on the lawyer’s page by a third party, unless the lawyer prompts the third party to post the information or the lawyer uses the third party to circumvent the lawyer advertising rules. If a third party posts information on the lawyer’s page about the lawyer’s services that does not comply with the lawyer advertising rules, the lawyer must remove the information from the lawyer’s page. If the lawyer becomes aware that a third party has posted information about the lawyer’s services on a page not controlled by the lawyer that does not comply with the lawyer advertising rules, the lawyer should ask the third party to remove the non-complying information. In such a situation, however, the lawyer is not responsible if the third party does not comply with the lawyer’s request.

**Bar Associations.**
Bar associations need to keep lawyer advertising rules in mind if they tag individual lawyers and include statements characterizing skills, experience, reputation or record – unless they are objectively verifiable.

WRONG: “Congratulations to TBA member John Smith, who has been named one of the best lawyers in America!”
RIGHT: “Congratulations to TBA member John Smith, who recently was selected by his peers for inclusion in the list of Best Lawyers in America© 2016 in the fields of litigation and tax law.”

**Twitter – Public or Private?**

**Lawyers.** If lawyers post information on Twitter and their settings allow anyone to see it, the posts are subject to lawyer advertising rules. If the lawyer restricts access to the posts to only the lawyer’s followers – people who have specifically signed up to receive posts from that lawyer – then the information posted there is information at the request of a prospective client and is still subject to the lawyer advertising rules, but is exempt from the filing requirement.

**Bar Associations.** Communication via Florida Bar related social networking sites is a public record. This means that the posts of entities who communicate online with The Florida Bar will become part of the public record. The Florida Bar is part of the judicial branch of government, and records of the judicial branch are defined to include "all records, regardless of physical form, characteristics, or means of transmission, made or received in connection with the transaction of official business by any judicial branch entity."
For the most part, interaction on social media sites with The Florida Bar or any of its sections or entities would be considered "transitory" in nature – created primarily for the communication of information, as opposed to communications designed for the perpetuation of knowledge. The retention requirement for a transitory message is until the message is obsolete, superseded, or the administrative value is lost.

If communications on the site are intended to perpetuate, communicate or formalize knowledge of some type, then the communications could not be designated as transitory. These types of social media communications must be available for access to the public and must be maintained for the appropriate amount of time as determined by the judicial branch records series. Non-transitory information sets policy, establishes guidelines or procedures, certifies a transaction or becomes a receipt.

Because others might not be aware of the public records law, entities should include the following statement in the organization section on the social networking site: Members of Florida Bar entities communicate via this site. Consequently, any communication via this site may be subject to monitoring and disclosure to third parties.

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Don’t Miss Out on the *Social*

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