



We often get asked how much value social media is for churches, and how value can be increased. Each platform gives us the options to track lots of different numbers, known as analytics, but which ones should we be looking at, and how can we use them to show the value of your efforts for your church community?

Before we get started, why you should be trying to understand how social media is playing a role in your community?

- You will become more effective as you'll focus your time on doing what works.
- You will enjoy it more because you can see how it is having a wider impact.
- You'll have a greater understanding of who your audience is.
- When you understand the value, it will be easier for you to share this with others in your church and help them see how social media is playing a role in your community.

If you are looking after the social media for your church and want to know what data you should be tracking to show its value for your online and offline community, here's what you need to consider.

## 1. Look at your reach and engagement on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Getting to grips with the numbers will set a baseline for where you are now and help you think about where you can go from here.

Each post on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter will show you how many likes, comments and shares each post received.

If you want to know where to find your insights on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter take a [read of this blog](#).

When you have found your analytics, take a look at these numbers:

- Reach
- Video views
- Clicks
- Comments
- Shares
- Likes

Once you've found these numbers take a deeper look:

a) Which posts are your top performers for engagement? You'll need to add up your likes, comments, shares and clicks.

b) Which posts are the worst performers?

When you've answered these questions, think about how you are going to respond to this to improve your social media strategy. What could you do more of, or what could you stop?

Once the numbers are out of the way, it's time to dig a little deeper into your insights.

## 2. Understanding your audience

Each social media platform offers some insight into your audience and what they like to engage with.

Use the insights to find out:

- What time of day is your audience online?
- When are you getting the most engagement?
- What type of posts are encouraging your community to get talking and sharing?
- Which platforms are your community using? Each platform will have a slightly different demographic.



1 engagement to answer this question.

## 3. Stories

There is more you can understand about social media by looking beyond the data and finding stories from your community.

Is there a parent that discovered your toddler group from a shared post on social media, or perhaps an encouraging comment responding to a prayer shared online?

This story was shared with us after Christmas from one of A Church Near You editors:

**“We have a comment in our visitor book that says they visited our church purely because of the warm welcome felt on ACNY.”**

Find an opportunity to share these stories with people in your church to build advocacy and support for what you are doing.

## 4. Ask questions

A simple but often overlooked way to find out how social media is adding value to your community is to just ask! Asking the right questions may provide you with some valuable insight into how your social media platforms are viewed, and ways you may be able to improve your communication.

Don't shy away from asking your audience directly on social media. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram all have options to create polls to help you ask questions and invite conversation.



t you could be sharing online.

## 5. Research

If your church is new to social media or has a smaller audience, you may not have all the answers to the questions above, however, there will be other churches who have a similar audience that you could learn from. Look at how they are using social media, what type of posts they are sharing and what their audience is responding to. This may give you some ideas on how you can improve your social media strategy and add more value to your community. Remember to tailor your strategy to your audience, and reflect your personality to create your own style online.

## What do you do now?

1. Make a report and track the results on a monthly basis. This will help you know how you are growing and identify any trends.
2. Talk about your findings with others!
3. Ask yourself how you are going to improve your social media strategy as a result.
4. Think about how you can use social media to support your church's priorities.

Your social media community is so much more than numbers and digging a little deeper beyond the figures can help you understand the true value it is adding to your community, help you to communicate this with your wider church and in turn build support and advocacy for what you are doing.

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