



PurpleSpace

Remploy

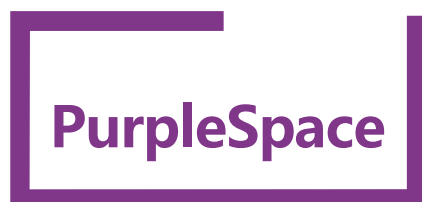
Putting ability first

#VirtuallyPurple

A guide to social
media for Disabled
Employee Networks
and Resource Groups


#VirtuallyPurple

A guide to social media for
Disabled Employee Networks
and Resource Groups




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www.stevebest.com

PurpleSpace

PurpleSpace is a unique professional development and networking hub for Disabled Employee Network/Resource Group leaders and others who may have an interest in setting one up or supporting an employee network.

Membership is available to anyone working in any sector or trade, and across the UK. This includes private companies, government departments and agencies, police forces, NHS Trusts, Universities and local authorities.

Members join in order to increase the effectiveness of their employee networks, develop their skills and learn how to help their organisations to become disability confident from the inside out. Membership gives access to all the tools and know-how to develop positive networks / resources groups and to help support disabled employees to flourish at work.

Virtually Purple is an open resource available at www.purplespace.org

Find the space to think networks. PurpleSpace.

A message from our sponsors Remploy

“At Remploy we proactively use a range of social media platforms from Twitter to YouTube to share stories and information to help disabled people into work. Our corporate communications team oversee our social media work and they also shared their skills and experience to help our Disabled Employee Network, Purple Platform to get started on social media. We are very proud to be supporting *Virtually Purple* and encourage other disabled people and staff networks to find a social media platform that feels right for them and to join the conversation about #ourdisabilityconfidence at work. This publication and the *Virtually Purple* toolkit is a great place to begin”.

Gareth Parry, Chief Executive, Remploy



“Don’t be afraid! Retweet or share what interests you until you find your voice”

Debbie Pheasey, Social Media Champion, SEED Network, Fujitsu

Foreword

The digital power of purple

As the Internet evolves, digital social communication is now a regular part of our daily lives. Globally there are over 2 billion¹ active social media users with 38 million² of us using social media in the UK. Social networking platforms can create large global communities acting as a force for good for social, environmental and even political change.

LinkedIn was the first social networking platform specifically aimed at professionals but in today's business world, personal social media networks like Facebook and Twitter have been adopted as primary communication tools. In 2015, 95% of the FTSE 100³ used social media for corporate communications.

Popular social media platforms are used by business to:

- Market products and services
- Increase brand awareness and loyalty
- Build relationships, particularly with new recruits and potential customers
- Encourage employee advocacy

Businesses not embracing social media are losing out. With the right know-how, it's one of the most inclusive marketing and communication tools available.

As employee networks flourish we see again and again how their use of social media can make a powerful contribution to the disability confidence social movement.

Done well, the use of social media can position an organisation as confident and comfortable in its journey of disability confidence – and that isn't the same as saying you are getting everything right.

At PurpleSpace we are proud to be part of an inclusive and accessible digital movement, providing disabled employees and business allies with the opportunity to join our fresh conversations about disability and business. Without social media this would not be possible and *Virtually Purple* is our way of helping other disabled employees, Networks and Resource Groups to see the benefits.

Come and get involved.

Kate Nash, CEO and Creator

1 www.investis.co.uk/social-media-review

2 www.warrenknight.co.uk/2016/01/04/the-demographics-of-social-media-users-in-2016/

3 www.investis.co.uk/social-media-review



Introduction

Joining the #PurpleTalk

Virtually Purple is for any individual, or group of individuals, who want to explore with their organisation, the pros and cons of using social media to drive disability confidence from the inside out.

In 2014, Kate Nash, CEO and Creator of PurpleSpace put the spotlight on the subject of disability in the publication *Secrets & Big News* and in particular the challenges people have in bringing their authentic selves to work. The publication which sought the views of over 2,500 disabled employees and 55 organisations, set out to find out why and how people will choose to share information about their disability at work.

It was a stark reminder about how hard it is for people to share information about disability and ill health, in the context of one's working life. The book offered fresh ideas to help disabled employees to become more confident about sharing information including the value of talking to other disabled employees, networking, learning from standout campaigns, becoming the 'home-grown' change-agents and story-tellers and, vitally, being yourself at work.

As PurpleSpace grows and becomes the 'go-to' community of disabled employee change agents we are acutely aware of the potential that social media has for supporting the ideas that came from *Secrets & Big News* and stimulating employee engagement and cultural change.

In the world of employee networks and resource groups, BAME, Gender and in particular LGBT networks, have embraced social media and run with it, growing their own communities, educating the employer community and engaging in global conversations about being yourself at work.

In 2015 we surveyed Disabled Employee Network Groups on their use of social media and uptake and interest was overwhelmingly low. There are a number of reasons why this may be the case from: external social media not being supported by your organisation, difficulty in knowing how to 'brand' disability, feeling that social media is not relevant or just not knowing where to start.

We have created *Virtually Purple* to help disabled employee networks and resource groups to work, in support of their organisation, to take their first steps towards joining the big social conversations about disability at work. We talk you through overcoming the fear factor, engaging allies, strategy and planning and keeping you and your network safe online.

We have also included case studies from organisations that might be further ahead in their social media journeys to show the potential it has for changing the world.

The tips and guidance have been gathered from the PurpleSpace community, and beyond – a wonderful team of social media enthusiasts who are at different stages in their level of skill – and include novices, practitioners and experts. You can find their names on page 34.

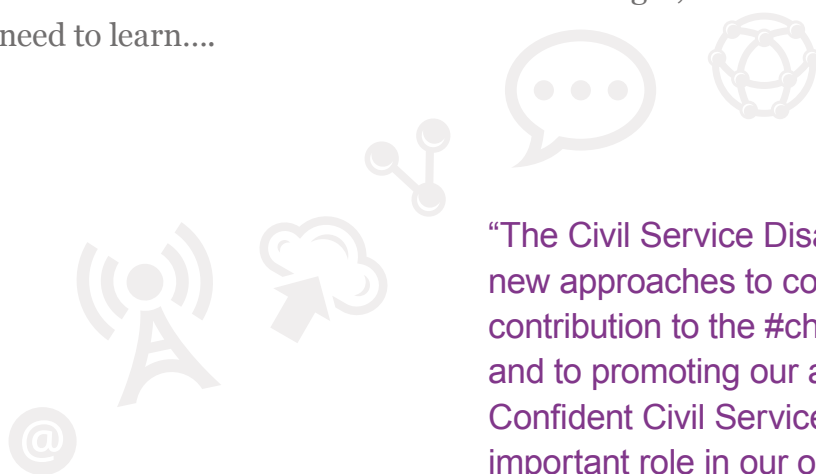
We look forward to supporting your work to highlight and enhance the economic contribution of purple talent at work – #purpletalk

Vanessa Hardy, Social media strategist, PurpleSpace

1

Learn to love the #hashtag

Yes we know...the idea of loving the #hashtag does not necessarily warm the soul but trust us, once you have overcome the inevitable fear associated with communicating in a different way, getting social through Twitter, LinkedIn or Yammer is easier, and more engaging, than you might think. You might also be surprised at the variety of ways social media is used in business in general as well as helping to raise the disability and inclusion agenda. So immerse yourself in the world of social media and become a passionate advocate – or get someone on your network committee to take the lead. For some it can be love at first sight, for others, we need to learn....

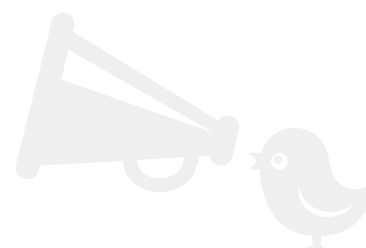


“The Civil Service Disability Network is exploring new approaches to communicating our contribution to the #championdifference campaign and to promoting our aim to be a Disability Confident Civil Service. Social media will form an important role in our outreach.”

Alex Freeguard, Chair of Civil Service Disability Network



Tip If you, and/or your organisation are completely new to social media, ask whether any of your network members or Disability Champions use social media for business or pleasure. Ask them to show you what they love about using it. Form a core group to take a deep-dive into the pros and cons of using different social media platforms to raise the profile of purple talent and disability confidence. It has to be right for the network, and the organisation, so learn to love together.





“Social media is increasingly being used to help businesses tap into the disabled talent pool. As an outsider I might not know how inclusive or accommodating an employer is. Social media allows any business to connect with disabled talent, showcase their inclusivity and encourage them to apply.”

Toby Mildon, Diversity & Inclusion Lead, BBC

“Social media, when used well is an excellent tool for making contacts. It’s also a great place to promote the activities of others, which can help you and your network to build relationships for the future.”

Vanessa Vallely, MD WeAreTheCity and Chair/ Founder of Gender Networks

“It’s surprising how quickly the realisation that you can connect with 1000’s of like-minded people can become addictive. Twitter in particular is like a tailor made tool for building a community of people who want support positive change.”

Neil Milliken, Head of Accessibility and Digital Inclusion at Atos and Co-founder of AXSChat.

“Social media brings people together in new and interesting ways: it encourages people to come forward and engage in peer-support who might be reluctant to seek out such an opportunity in the physical world. In terms of growing networks, tools like Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter mean that everyone can share important news or express a concern to the entire community. Used correctly, social media channels will help to make your network vibrant and interesting.”

Geoff Adams-Spink, Director at Adams-Spink Ltd.

“Employers, networks and business resource groups are increasingly using intranet (with blogs, webcasts and discussion forums), external on-line forums (such as LinkedIn and Facebook) and increasingly Twitter to create opportunities to stimulate employee engagement and cultural change”.⁴

Andy Kneen, HR Manager and enABLE network, Shell Global Solutions International

“I am a regular guy who happens to have a disability called Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA). I’m also an author, entrepreneur, and CEO of lifestyle magazine Disability Horizons (.com). Horizons shares stories by and for a new generation of disabled people. A generation who are out there and changing stereotypes. Social media is our marketing strategy. We would never have reached over 20,000 readers, with 19,000 Twitter followers, mainstream media features with The Guardian and the BBC, and a Skoll enterprise award without it!”

Martyn Sibley, CEO, Disability Horizons

“Social media provides us with a simple, effective and powerful tool to reach out and grow our networks ‘virtually.’ That’s where we’ve found our strongest allies.”

Dr Hamied A Haroon, Founder & Convenor, National Association of Disabled Staff Networks (NADSN)

⁴ Quote first appeared in the publication *Be Yourself* written for Kate Nash Associates by Shell

2 Everyone's welcome

One of the reasons we love social media so much, is the power it has to be inclusive and accessible to the widest possible audience. Ok, you may need to learn some tricks of the trade to ensure that your social conversation includes as many people as possible, but once you have the accessibility know-how you can share the work of your network with everyone regardless of disability or different access needs.

Tip Even the experts acknowledge that understanding accessibility can be a bit overwhelming at first. Where do you start? Will your content exclude users with a hearing or visual impairment? Are there guidelines for being inclusive to users with Autism? If you are new to accessibility be honest and ask your audience to share their tips for getting it right. In our experience there are lots of friendly and knowledgeable accessibility experts on social media who will be pleased to see you trying and who will happily point you in the right direction. Visit purplespace.org to see the Virtually Purple toolkit.



“I may not be able to spell organisation, but I can organise myself to ensure Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia doesn’t hold me back. Social media provides examples of how others organise themselves to overcome their impairments.”

Rob Loesby, Accessibility Champion, SEED Network, Fujitsu

“Communicating on social media has become second nature for most people – mailings lists have become old skool! However, some people have issues with using Facebook or Twitter (or both), or simply don’t have an account yet, so we have to be mindful not to exclude those people from our communications.”

Dr Hamied A Haroon, Founder & Convenor, National Association of Disabled Staff Networks (NADSN)

“As a visually impaired social media user, I much prefer to use apps rather than desktop version. It’s much easier to navigate with your fingers rather than constant tabbing on the laptop. Again as a visually impaired social media user, the most important aspect for those in my position is image description.”

Laura Turner, Purple Platform, Disability Network Lead, Remploy

“As I’m occasionally less mobile, social media has been a fantastic tool to stay connected with my network, both company and the wider employee network. I can’t imagine how I’d have stayed involved, motivated and included without it.”

Jacqui Wade, Facilities Manager and SEED Network Member, Fujitsu

“Social media channels are increasingly accessible! Twitter now has the ability to add image descriptions, Facebook automatically tries to do the same and overall they’re improving. Social media has been called the great leveler and that couldn’t be more true.”

Paul Smyth, Head of IT Accessibility, Barclays

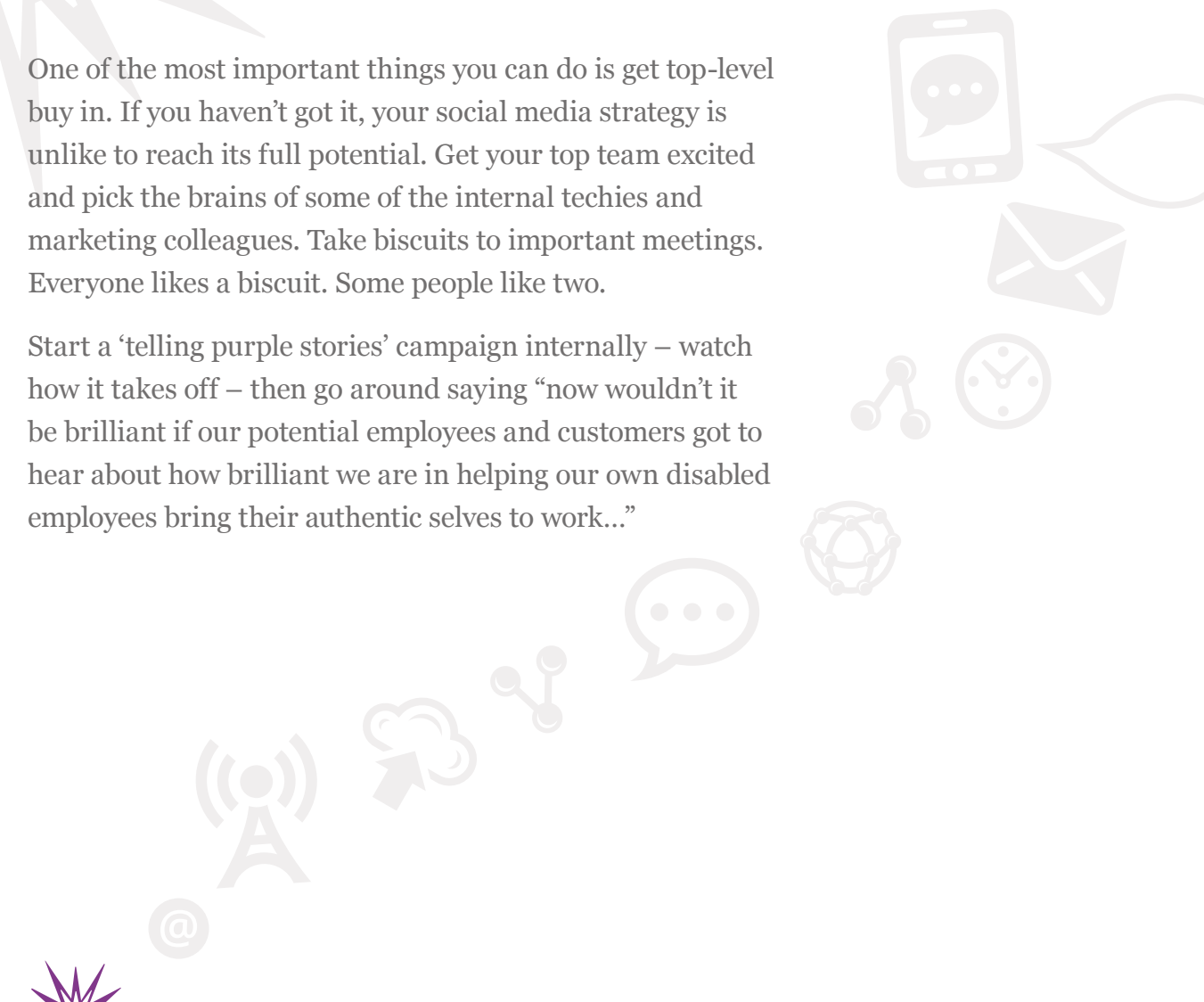
“With any type of communication it’s really important to consider your audience and how they might access and receive your information. There are lots of things to factor in such as language style and tone, the use of images, videos or audio files and what the call to action is. If for example you are using social media to direct people to a website, is the landing page on that website accessible and easy to navigate? Generally speaking it’s a good idea to have an accessibility check list. For large multi-channel campaigns your check list can be quite detailed and be built into your sign-off process. Or, your checklist can be as simple as pausing and asking yourself before you click to publish, is this Tweet accessible to everyone including disabled people?”

Catherine Grinyer, Director, Big Voice Communications



3 All aboard

One of the most important things you can do is get top-level buy in. If you haven't got it, your social media strategy is unlikely to reach its full potential. Get your top team excited and pick the brains of some of the internal techies and marketing colleagues. Take biscuits to important meetings. Everyone likes a biscuit. Some people like two.

Start a 'telling purple stories' campaign internally – watch how it takes off – then go around saying “now wouldn't it be brilliant if our potential employees and customers got to hear about how brilliant we are in helping our own disabled employees bring their authentic selves to work...”



Tip As you start to dip into the world of social media allocate the role of Social Media Champion to someone within the network who has the passion to drive engagement. And then find at least one or two other enthusiastic colleagues who might be willing to help you get up and running in the first few months. To keep top-level buy-in from the organisation's social media and diversity & inclusion experts, as well as the Disability Champion, make sure you offer a six-monthly update on the strategy and progress you are making.





“In the Civil Service we’re proud of our record as an inclusive employer, but there is still more to be done. In the next phase I think disability inclusion will be part of a much wider social movement and as organisations of every kind work become Disability Confident social media will be at heart of this, helping us all to engage and take part.”

Philip Rutnam, Permanent Secretary, Department for Transport & Civil Service Disability Champion

“Remploy are already very engaged with social media. It was my suggestion to create Facebook, Twitter and Google+ accounts for Remploy Purple Platform. We did have our communications team full support and they were happy for me to lead on it, making sure I familiarise myself with the social media guidelines that we have in place.”

Laura Turner, Purple Platform, Disability Network Lead, Remploy

“Engaging with customers in their channel of choice was an inevitable and obvious thing for us to do. We work really closely with our business social media teams to share best practice and ensure we support our customers in the best possible way.”

@BarclaysAccess team

“We’ve used social media to successfully engage both inside and outside of our firm it’s a great way to connect with like minded positive people and break down some of the initial social awkwardness we often face when initially networking with people - my best advice with Twitter is to build it into your daily routine, to make it work you really should tweet at least once a day then you’ll see your investment pay off in connections, good energy and inspiration.”


Andy Woodfield, Partner, PWC

“As a partner at EY who is passionate about improving the career prospects of people with disabilities and in particular those who stammer, I find social media a quick and effective channel through which to reach a wide variety of people. It also helps me to connect with new allies who are passionate about different employability-related causes and to learn from and support each other.”

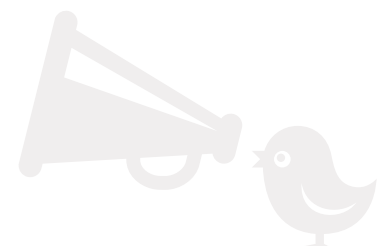
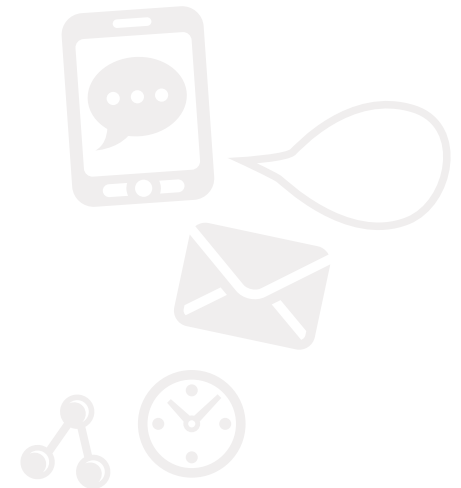
Iain Wilkie, Partner, EY

4 Take your head out the sand

Ok, so as far as technology in general and social media particular are concerned, you have been compared to a Luddite (Luddites were the 19th-century English textile workers who protested against newly developed labour-saving devices). Like it or not – social media is here to stay – and many other people networks are using it to drive cultural change positively and successfully. So take a look at the following quotes and learn from them. Why not approach some of the people quoted in this resource for further advice? You can find their Twitter handles on page 34.



Tip It's much easier to learn with support and encouragement from others. Within your organisation find a mentor either from your communications team or other people networks e.g. LGBT who are experienced social media users and ask them for top tips. If you are a member of PurpleSpace and you'd like help developing a particular aspect of social media let us know. We can connect you with other members with similar experience or set up a group learning experience in our Leaders Lounge on-line hub. Remember to visit purplespace.org for our recommended resources on improving your social media skills.





“We were very fortunate to have an experienced person with social media in our team whose skills raised our profile. We also quickly became aware of key #hashtag events which we observed, became involved and continually supported to advance our knowledge, partnerships and raised our profile further.”

Becki Morris, Steering Committee member of Disability Co-operative Network

“I am pretty confident with social media so I’ve been allowed to get on with it and make it our own. Our Communications Team have introduced me to a couple of tools that can help in scheduling posts, to allow you to work in advance. This is particularly helpful when promoting disability awareness days/weeks.”

Laura Turner, Purple Platform, Disability Network Lead, Remploy

“One of the greatest learning tools for us was look at how others used social media to interact and connect with people and for us #AXSChat and PurpleSpace taught us some great lessons that we try to apply internally and externally as well.”

Sarah Simcoe, Chair of SEED Network, Fujitsu.

“Getting started on social media is all about building up confidence. When we started out, we set up a test Twitter account so that we could see how content and images looked before sharing them on our main Twitter accounts.”

Vanessa Hardy, Social Media Strategist, PurpleSpace

“When I first started to use social media I made the most of the fact that I sat within our Communications and Marketing team. I explained to them how we wanted to start sharing our stories of disability on social media and they were interested enough to spend time teaching me the basics.”

Debbie Pheasey, Social Media Champion, SEED Network, Fujitsu

“Using social media has enabled me to be more confident about myself and to develop my writing skills to be able to share ideas of how disability awareness needs to be recognised.”

Jenny Yerworth, Blogger

5 Shape direction and set goals

You've probably seen the quote "You can do anything, but you can't do everything" and this is worth bearing in mind when planning your social media strategy. So assuming you've got the basics in place (organisational approval and a small but perfectly formed social media team) these are some of the things we suggest that you concentrate on in the first three to six months:

1. What's your primary objective? Is it to drive internal awareness about the organisation's responsible business strategy, or to tell an external audience about your organisation's commitment to the disability agenda or both?
2. Which social media platforms do your intended audience use most?
3. How will you make your chosen social media account(s) look professional and reflective of your organisation's brand and commitment to improving disability confidence?
4. How will you generate content and how often will you share it?
5. How will you measure your success?

Tip From day one view social media as an integral part of your network's overall strategy with clear objectives and goals. Social media is a key communication tool that can help you share the 'authentic' voice of your network and raise awareness of disability confidence both inside and outside your organisation. Your social media plan will evolve over time and you may eventually end up with a completely different set of objectives.





“In 2015 we surveyed Disabled Employee Network leaders about their use of social media. Although usage and awareness of social media was low, where it was used the preferred channels were Twitter and Facebook for external communications. Other networks had access to internal social media platforms like Yammer to keep in touch with each other and to share their work with the wider organisation.”

Vanessa Hardy, Social Media Strategist, PurpleSpace

“For PwC DAWN, Twitter was the natural first step into the world of social media. It provides us with a daily news feed of what others in the marketplace were doing and felt less time intensive to manage and monitor given the concise messaging Twitter is known for.”

Sophie Horsley Co-Chair of DAWN (PwC’s Disability, Ability & Wellbeing Network)

“At Business Disability Forum, our key social media platforms are Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube. We’ve found LinkedIn to be the most effective platform for sharing news about disability confident business practice and learning and development opportunities. Twitter also works well for sharing more informal stories about our work and we’ve provided Twitter training for some of our colleagues so that they can tweet about their work and help us to share key messages.”

Ashley Teupa, Market Insight & Research Manager, Business Disability Forum

“Building your social media platforms takes time. Facebook and Twitter came first and was very steady and Twitter has worked much better than Facebook for networking. Stick at it and just keep feeding in, learning from others, linking in with others and eventually you’ll find your own style.”

Laura Turner, Purple Platform, Disability Network Lead, Remploy

“It’s important to be clear about what do you want to achieve from social media. Do you want to increase visibility for your network or your organisation’s responsible business agenda? Or do you want to support other disabled employees feel good about themselves and to be driving a fresh and more meaningful conversation about disability in business?”

Kate Nash, CEO and Creator, PurpleSpace

“We want to raise inclusion and the social identity of disabled people on the agenda for heritage and culture. To do this we connect corporate business, organisations, museums, technology developers and disabled people via social media to develop good practice and keep inclusion on the social agenda and make heritage more inclusive for both the visitor, and attract disabled talent to heritage as a workplace.”

Becki Morris, Steering Committee member of Disability Co-operative Network

6

Create power and presence in your purple story telling

We are big fans of the power of story-telling at PurpleSpace and social media is a great way to share your individual stories with a wider audience. Stories can change the world. If you are new to this it might take time to build up your resources. That's ok; you can start to make an impact by sharing news and stories from others and making comments.

“From day one we decided that PurpleSpace needed to use humour as part of its brand, its tone, its style. There are too many people who feel pity and nervousness around this agenda. But when disabled employees are driving the change agenda the appropriate use of humour is essential.”

Marcus Baron, Creative Director, Creative Services Group UK&I, EY

Tip When researching for this resource we have heard time and time again about the value of sharing real stories about the lived experience of disability at work. The key is to find the ‘authentic’ voice of the network and as far as possible, support people to share information about the normality of difference at work. Think about stories that will encourage people to bring their authentic and hard-working selves to work and demonstrate where an organisation has delivered the adjustments people need to perform well and in turn, enhancing business performance. You can also share interesting stories from other people working in the area of disability and inclusion at work. Finally, develop the skills of your network members so that you become expert storytellers about the lived experience of disability at work.





“As a network leader, I’m always keen to look at the most effective ways to reach out and connect and to identify platforms from which to share our stories in a way that is easy to use. Social media has therefore played a large part of our network strategy and plan, a great mechanism for directly reaching out to our Purple community and to engage that wonderful community in the conversation around being ourselves. #PurpleTalk #BeCompletelyYou.”

Sarah Simcoe, Chair of SEED Network, Fujitsu

“Colleagues at Shell conceived the idea of a ‘Be Yourself’ campaign. Like the ‘It Gets Better’ campaign Shell wanted to maximise the use of technology and multimedia to help disabled employees to encourage each other to be themselves at work and to create a visible presence of people who may not always feel able to share information about their disability or health condition.”⁵

Andy Kneen, HR Manager and enABLE Network, Shell Global Solutions International

“The power of social media brings people together, allowing a platform for virtual collaboration and share our story through so many amazing communities. I am always looking for ways to do something new and different; Social Media brings me that inspiration everyday!”

Sarah Hart, Operations and Engagement Manager and SEED Network Member, Fujitsu

“Disability Co-operative Network has a logo and ‘sharing knowledge to break down barriers’ as our key message. We have both a business and conversational tone for dialogue between sectors and people to create innovation and standards. We are creating case studies by individuals, organisations, charities and seeking individual stories via our website. We also have our banner space on twitter and website which is a free space for disabled artists to show their work.”

Becki Morris, Steering Committee member of Disability Co-operative Network

“On social media, others have control about whether they “listen in” to your broadcasts or ignore you. It’s a busy place, with literally hundreds of posts flying in every minute. Standing out from the crowd can be difficult, but remember that vivid pictures and videos can say a thousand words (as long as there is a text description too!)”

Dr Hamied A Haroon, Founder & Convenor, National Association of Disabled Staff Networks (NADSN)

“Decide what type of content you want to share and plan in advance. If you want to discuss/debate, make sure it is worded in a way that it becomes healthy discussion/ debate rather than negative. There’s nothing wrong with some negativity but, on social media it can sometimes attract unwanted attention and the important thing to remember is, your network is part of your employer, their name and reputation is vital.”

Laura Turner, Purple Platform, Disability Network Lead, Remploy

⁵ Quote first appeared in the publication ‘Be Yourself’ written for Kate Nash Associates by Shell

7 DIY

OK so you are now convinced that social media is a brilliant way for you and your network to learn, educate and collaborate BUT for whatever reason you just haven't been able to convince the 'powers that be' to support you. So do you give up? You could always take the Bridget Jones approach and go it alone for now. One of the best examples of this is AXSChat who started independently as a collaboration of like minded individuals and to date has had over one billion impressions. The success has seen them approached by sponsors to help them bolster the work they do. Some organisations will simply not use social media as a tool to drive disability confidence – and that is ok. It's not for every organisation.

“Be yourself. If policy means you can't represent your network on external media. Still tweet in a personal capacity.”

Lesley Campbell

Tip The key driver for starting to share content about disabled talent and disability confidence at work is a passionate belief in the cause. If you are talking from the heart but being mindful about maintaining a professional and collaborative approach you have a good chance of engaging support and ultimately being able to demonstrate to your business that there is real value in sharing stories and content about disability and inclusion at work.





“I was the person behind Remploy Purple Platform’s social media accounts. Social media is such a powerful tool and we’d be lost without it. I think just from talking to people at PurpleSpace events, I realised just how well we had made it work. Twitter is the one to have. It is what it is, a networking tool. Sometimes it’s not about how many likes and followers you have, it’s about the impact that your posts make. I know at Remploy from attending our expo event last year that people do talk about the content on Remploy Purple Platform.”

Laura Turner, Purple Platform, Disability Network Lead, Remploy

“Social media is one of the most accessible communication tools available for engaging with the right people to talk about disability and to influence change in removing barriers to inclusion”.

Karthik Ramasubbu, Management Consultant and Disability Network Lead, KPMG

“As a blogger with a disability I have found social media, particularly LinkedIn, a helpful platform to promote disability awareness. It has allowed me to express my views and encourage others to be aware of those who may have life-changing circumstances through disability.”

Jenny Yerworth, Blogger

“Social media has been invaluable to my career. When seeking a training contract, it allowed me to showcase my autism consultancy work and awards won to graduate recruiters – earning me 15 interviews, 4 vacation schemes and two training contract offers in a year. Since this, it’s allowed me to showcase my autism and employment efforts, as well as allowing me to build a reputation at my future firm, Reed Smith – as of writing I’m their fourth most viewed employee worldwide – before setting foot in the office. It’s also been brilliant for making professional connections – I’ve been approached to work with the Council of Europe and Commonwealth (representing 100 nations combined) all through mutual Twitter followers”.

Jonathan Andrews, Future Trainee Solicitor at Reed Smith and Westminster Autism Commission Member

“We’re still building the business case for a specific network account as we’ve got some great work already being done by @BarclaysAccess. In the meantime myself and others in the network tweet ourselves and get the @BarclaysAccess team involved in retweeting occasionally. It helps build the network’s voice and adds to our case for a standalone channel.”

David Caldwell, Reach Network, Barclays

8

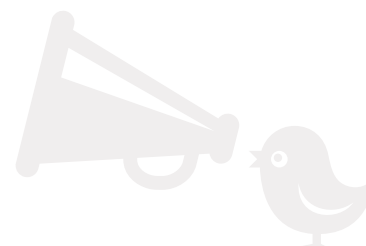
It's the little things

It's often the little things that people forget to mention that can make the difference between an exciting, sustainable and professional social media presence against one that is...well a little more risky or in fact risqué. Here are some of our tips for staying safe and professional while being the real you.



Tip

If you are given permission to set up a social media account on behalf of your network it is likely that you will be asked to agree to the terms of your corporate social media policy. If you want to talk about disability confidence in a personal capacity think carefully about whether you would be happy for your colleagues or bosses to see everything you post on Twitter or Facebook from photos of a recent night out to a joke you might hesitate to tell in the office. A lot of employees will post snippets of information about how they develop inner confidence and resilience – rather than their organisation's performance and confidence about the topic. We call this subject [#ourdisabilityconfidence](#) – so you could join this conversation in a personal capacity if you want to stay safe. If you are in any doubt we recommend that you set up a separate Twitter or Facebook account for work or focus on LinkedIn to raise your professional profile and to join in the conversation about [#ourdisabilityconfidence](#).





“With the increasing use of social media (according to Twitter, the number of tweets has grown to 500 million Tweets per day and to around 200 billion a year) there is greater risk of blurring the distinction between work and home, with repercussions for individuals, their employers and associations. When sharing information and expressing views via social media; care should be taking when expressing views and opinions and ensuring the accuracy of facts.”

Audrey Williams, Partner, Fox Williams LLP, Solicitors

“Disability Co-operative Network has a dedicated twitter account and tweets regarding legislation, news, arts and heritage. We are watchful in how we tweet and engage opinion, however mindful that audiences may have opinions or tone which we may not agree with.”

Becki Morris, Steering Committee member of Disability Co-operative Network

“As network leader, I decided to set up my own Twitter account which feeds into the SEED Twitter account. This gives me a bit more freedom to comment on other people’s posts, to retweet messages that touch me personally and from the people I follow.”

Sarah Simcoe, Chair of SEED Network, Fujitsu

“Your online professional brand needs to be consistent. Whether you are on two channels or five, the picture needs to be the same in terms of who you are and what you stand for – this builds trust with your followers from the get go!”

Vanessa Vallely, MD WeAreTheCity and Chair/Founder of Gender Networks

“Twitter and Facebook give you a global stage to speak from and showcase your work – unless you have privacy settings turned on, anyone can see what you’re posting from anywhere. That means you have to be careful about what you say and be considerate, if you want your Network to be popular.”

Dr Hamied A Haroon, Founder & Convenor, National Association of Disabled Staff Networks (NADSN)

“Remploy takes data security and safeguarding very seriously. We also have related policy and procedures in place to protect and guide colleagues. There have been occasions where negative feedback has been left via Remploy Purple Platform rather than the central Remploy accounts so it is a case of dealing with the matter in an appropriate manner at that time.”

Laura Turner, Purple Platform, Disability Network Lead, Remploy



“Striking the right tone of being professional and friendly on social media can be a bit tricky. What you and your colleagues might find amusing, someone else might take as an insult - or simply not get the joke. When you are communicating on behalf of a group, network or organisation you need to give some thought to your ‘voice’. You need to remember, you are saying something to a potentially massive audience of people who don’t know you at all, they have no context of who you are or what you stand for. As a good rule of thumb, if you wouldn’t say something to someone in person, then it’s probably not a good idea to put it in a social media message!”

Catherine Grinyer, Director, Big Voice Communications

“One of the biggest reasons that people don’t join social media is the fear of internet ‘trolling’ (when an individual or group posts deliberately provocative comments to provoke an argument or to gain attention). In our experience negative feedback and trolling is minimal. Listen to the point being made and if appropriate respond once. If this does not resolve the situation offer to contact the individual off line and if necessary escalate to a colleague with customer facing experience to help you.”

Vanessa Hardy, Social Media Strategist, PurpleSpace



Case studies

Sarah Simcoe, Head of Business Enablement EMEIA and Chair of SEED Network, Fujitsu UK and Ireland on building a social media presence

What?

When I took over the role as Chair of Fujitsu's SEED Network in the UK and Ireland, it became apparent really quickly that we weren't doing all that we could to share our message, both internally and externally. Initially our focus was to increase and improve internal engagement by leveraging our organisational intranet and communication platform. Our Network community site was therefore created with what we call, 'Conversation Buzz', a chat box where members within the Network can message and chat with each other regarding their stories, queries and thoughts. We also have an organisation wide forum called EMEIA Connect where we are able to share messaging wider than the Network. It's important to SEED and to Fujitsu that we continue to raise awareness, build confidence and maintain momentum around the conversation about inclusion.

We wanted to generate external conversations about disability to demonstrate what Fujitsu is doing to be a responsible, inclusive and accessible organisation; a message that is important for our people, our partners and our customers. In terms of social media, we started with Twitter and Facebook accounts and were amazed at how quickly and easily, Twitter in particular, helped us reach out to organisations, charities or experts within the disability sector. This provided us with a great way, as a network, to listen, to learn and take on board good practices – all of this helped to shape our Network strategy and plan.

These internal and external channels have really helped us to engage our employees with SEED, helping us to increase our Network membership by over 230% over the last 18 months. There is now a space to share stories and talk to other people who are having similar experiences. The channels are really good ways to share our #BeCompletelyYou message and encourage employees to do exactly that, be themselves.

How?

One of my first jobs as Network Chair was to build a strategy and plan and within that I'd already prioritised accessible communications, and that included social media. I had the buy in of my Executive Sponsor, but I also need to engage the SEED Network's Core Working Group. Our network strategy has four pillars of activity: Communications and Awareness, Developing an Effective Network, Accessibility and Disability Confidence. Our social media strategy underpins all four pillars and is one of the most effective tools we have for raising awareness.

Across our network strategy, we take an approach of assigning network members to different aspects of the strategy and social media was no different. We appointed Debbie Pheasey as our external social media champion and Mel Devine to our internal community site. This approach starting to bring the channels to life really quickly and an added bonus was up-skilling Debbie and Mel in an area outside of their comfort zones – both Debbie and Mel have excelled and are valued members of our Network.

We share and engage across three external social media platforms. Twitter is great for making dynamic and immediate connections and it's been a phenomenal aid to SEED, particularly in raising our reputation externally as a Responsible Business and also raising the levels of pride in ourselves as an organisation.

Facebook is definitely a slower paced environment and we use it to house more detailed information, so we'll put full case studies on there and we also share information for other peoples' websites in a bit more detail. LinkedIn is great for a more formal business orientated approach. We share SEED network content on LinkedIn, but we tend to do this through the Fujitsu UK and Ireland corporate accounts to ensure that we're in sync with our messaging.

We are very mindful that while our SEED social media accounts are lively, informative and engaging, they must ultimately showcase Fujitsu's Diversity and Inclusion agenda in a responsible way. I therefore took the decision to set up my own Twitter account which feeds in to the SEED Twitter account. This gives me a bit more freedom to comment on other people's posts, to retweet messages that touch me personally and from the people I follow, it's really important and helpful to share our messaging.

In terms of content, one of the greatest learning tools for us was looking at how others used social media to interact and connect with people and for us #AXSChat and PurpleSpace taught us some great lessons that we try to apply internally and externally.

The other key tool for us in developing content for our social media platforms is learning the art of storytelling which we have done via the PurpleSpace 'Telling Stories' toolkit. Social media and the power of telling a story are definitely two of our network's most powerful tools and they have been the key in creating the increased membership and increased engagement.

Lessons

I'm extremely pleased with what we achieved since May 2015, it has worked well and it has created the profile that we needed. We have been asked by organisations such as PurpleSpace, Business Disability Forum and other Employee Networks to share what we have learnt, and I'm so thrilled that we have been noted as making great progress in this area. There are so many people following us now that I look forward to continuing to leverage those connections and to learn from other organisations, charities and experts.

There is of course, always an opportunity to improve and my top tips would be:

1. Look to leverage the various platforms to create a wide reach – we all have a preference towards different media platforms, so embrace them all and use to their strengths.
2. Get your Network members involved – it's a great way to share their stories and get them involved in amplifying the message.
3. Be structured in your approach – a great lesson to learn is that it works far more efficiently if you have a pipeline of key messages and stories to share that underpin your activities and awareness weeks.

AXSChat using social media to build a global community focused on disability inclusion, accessibility, & Assistive Technology

What?

AXSChat is an international collaboration between Neil Milliken, Debra Ruh & Antonio Santos. We are all considered to be influencers on social media; whilst AXSChat is highly complementary to our work it is separate & in addition to our day jobs.

We created AXSChat because we wanted to broaden the conversation about ways society can benefit from inclusion of persons with disabilities and accessibility. In the beginning Antonio and Neil reached out to Debra to propose a partnership to create a weekly chat to help engage all stakeholders in conversations with a goal to help break down barriers. People often consider accessibility to be a narrow technical issue and we know that it is much wider. Our goal was also to give persons with disabilities a bigger voice on social media.

Social media has great power to connect people and we hope to accomplish and encourage in-depth discussion and spread knowledge about the work people are doing to enable greater access and inclusion through whatever means. We believe that AXSChat is a great example of how social media and communication tools allow people to come together and break down silos.

How?

We host weekly video interviews and twitter chats with people who are contributing to making the world a more inclusive place through technology or innovating to enable wider participation in society for people with disabilities.

Lessons

We have been surprised and delighted by our successes. We have interviewed parliamentarians, Ambassadors, CEO's, Disabled Actors, Musicians, Artists, Paralympians, Senior Managers, Activists, Authors, Media, Brand Influencers, Advocates and Persons with Disabilities from all walks of life.

We have partnered on UN sponsored initiative "Draw Disability" and AXSChat was chosen to be social media partner for the Rio Inclusion summit organised by the international Paralympic Committee.

Since we started monitoring in March 2015 the #AXSChat Hashtag has rippled across the internet being shared and appearing in people's feeds over 1.1 Billion times. Discussions are lively; on an average chat night we get between 3000 – 5000 tweets in the space of little over one hour.

We've had over 8600 individual participants in the chats and the sentiment is hugely positive. We found it took a lot more time to manage AXSChat than we anticipated but it is a labour of love and we believe it has changed many people's lives.

AXSChat has taught us how to use tools and helped us develop skill in social analytics that have proven valuable in our day job. We recently had approaches from a number of large corporate organisations about sponsoring AXSChat.



Barclays using a social media campaign to promote sponsorship of Pride in London 2016

What?

In 2016, Barclays used a social media campaign to raise awareness of both its sponsorship of Pride in London 2016 and its commitment to supporting the LGBT+ community. The aim of the campaign was to position Barclays as a thought leader within the LGBT community through a series of events and social media content that were designed for both our corporate clients and retail customers.

How?

A series of three events were held for our customers, clients and colleagues and the events were filmed to create shareable social content. Six videos were created and were shared through LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. Each of the events of the films were centred around the central Pride in London campaign theme of #nofilter.

The approach had to be flexible enough to deliver content that was designed to engage two very different audience types but still feel part of the same series and campaign. The LinkedIn content that was developed to engage our large corporate organisations by providing tangible advice for how to embed Diversity and Inclusion within their organisations and the tone and style had to be reflective of that. The Facebook and Twitter content was designed to make an emotional connection with our retail customers and non customers.

We also worked with well-known LGBT+ V-logger Gary C. Gary attended the Pride in London parade with the Barclays Bus and colleagues and made a v-log about his experience. By working with Gary we were able to share our content with social users who are known to be interested in LGBT+ content and therefore drive greater impact.

Lessons

The campaign led to strong social engagement scores across all channels. We will continue to use social as our preferred channel for sharing LGBT+ related content as we have seen strong engagement scores. We will also continue to hero voices from within the LGBT+ community.

We have learnt that shorter - 30 second high impact content is really important for Facebook.

Social media check list for Disabled Employee Networks

1. If you're completely new to social media, find a group of enthusiasts who can take you through the pros and cons of using different social media platforms. It has to be right for the network, and the organisation, so learn to love together.
2. Will your content exclude users with a visual impairment or Autism? Even the experts acknowledge that understanding accessibility can be a bit overwhelming at first. If you are new to accessibility be honest ask your audience to share their tips.
3. Your social media platform is more likely to take off, if you can secure the support of an Executive Champion alongside appointing at least one social media champion from within your network to drive engagement. The more the merrier here.
4. When you are starting out it may be easiest to use internal forums or platforms like Yammer to engage your colleagues and get the attention of your top team. Once you are ready to go external, Twitter is probably the best platform to begin with.
5. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery and when you are first starting to learn the ins and outs of social media. Get to know and watch how other people networks e.g. LGBT or disability organisations and allies engage and post on social media.
6. From day one, view social media as an integral part of your network's overall strategy. Social media is a key communication tool that can help you share the 'authentic' voice of your network and to raise awareness of disability confidence.
7. When researching for this book we heard time and time again about the value of sharing real stories about the lived experience of disability at work. Develop the skills of your network members so that you become expert storytellers.
8. While we encourage you to talk from the heart about disability confidence, maintain a professional approach that demonstrates that your network and business are committed to improving disability inclusion for employees and customers.

Finally visit puplespace.org and the [Virtually Purple social media toolkit](#) for more useful resources and guidance.

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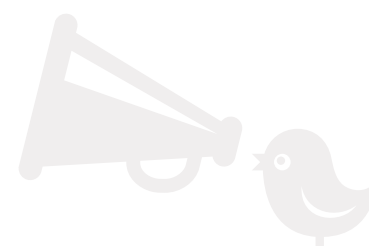
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