



SING  
*for*  
PLEASURE

# SfP Pointers

## #12: Promoting your choir on social media - Part 1

There are myriad social media channels which you can use to publicise your choir and concerts nowadays - and as coverage of them all in one Pointers tipsheet would run to pages and pages, I'm opting to focus on each of the key platforms one at a time, with further Pointers available during the year. First, let's turn our attention to Facebook.

Sadly, gone are the days when your posts - especially as a page - automatically pop up every time in friends' and followers' news feeds. As Facebook made the move some years ago to encourage paid advertising from business pages, the complex algorithms governing visibility of posts have changed to such a degree that growing your organic reach (ie, free advertising) is increasingly difficult to achieve. However, there are some tried and tested ways to maximise individual or page post reach without shelling out for advertising (although more on that later!). You may well be doing most of these, but if there's just one idea which is new to you, it's worth trying.

### Some general hints

- Good quality visual posts are more enticing and encourage people to share; for example, photos of your choir at rehearsals or a short video - either pre-recorded, or using the Live feature - or an image of your concert flyer if you're publicising a specific event.
- If you have a choir website and/or online ticketing for concerts, include the link with a relevant photo, rather than just sharing the link; remember the rule above...
- If you're promoting a local concert, or you're touring, make sure you add your current location to posts (this is possible for individuals and pages). This will increase the chances of post visibility for friends or page followers in the same location.
- Facebook events for concerts, recruitment drives, etc can be created by individuals or pages; set them as public if you're doing this yourself, so that anyone can find or see the event listing even if they're not friends. Page-created events can also specify people (or other pages) as co-hosts, which can help to increase reach.
- For choir pages: make sure you post relevant, engaging material regularly; and don't overdo self-promotion - experts in the field suggest 80% of page posts should be "social" in nature!

### Spreading the word (for free) as an individual

If you don't have a Facebook page for your choir and you're publicising events, etc personally, here are just a few ideas for targeting your efforts, rather than just simply posting to your timeline as is. Some of them are particularly helpful if you have a huge number of Facebook friends.

- Create a specific Friends list, adding all your choir members and other choral enthusiasts you've friended; when you share your choir-related posts, select this list as your audience. It'll improve the likelihood of them cropping up in your list members' news feeds. Keep the list updated if you can - although this can be rather time-consuming.

- ❑ Consider tagging key friends in your posts, to extend reach to their friends automatically - tags can be added in photos, or in your body text comment/s. Be warned, though: some people really resent being tagged. Although they can remove tags in photos themselves, it's worth checking out in advance if they're happy to be "exploited" in this way, especially if you're adding tags in your post text which only you can delete.
- ❑ Send your post links via Messenger to choral and music-minded friends, asking them to share the details on their timeline; you can build conversation groups for this, too, for regular use.
- ❑ Copy/paste your post links on music-oriented pages - either local or national - which allow visitor posts (you don't necessarily have to like the page to do this). It's an idea to add a comment asking if details can be shared on the page's main timeline, as this will increase visibility.
- ❑ Give the new Messenger Day feature a try - introduced last month by Facebook as a Snapchat Stories clone, it allows you to upload a photo or video to Messenger where it will be visible to all your friends for 24 hours. While you have no control on who clicks on your upload, well-chosen images or short videos might fuel interest amongst your wider circle of friends if you're in the run-up to a concert, and it's handy if you don't have time to create specific lists.
- ❑ Finally: if you can do nothing else, just like and comment as much as possible on key friends' posts (and share if you can/feel able). Facebook algorithms will not only show you more of their posts in your news feed - they'll see more of yours, including your choir-related posts.

### Getting maximum (free) exposure for your choir page posts

This is really tricky to do nowadays. Organic (ie, not paid-for) reach of page posts on Facebook is reported in the social media marketing "industry" as being at an all-time low of 2% to 6% of your page followers, depending on the number, and it continues to decline. That said, there are still some steps you can take to spread the word as much as possible.

- ❑ First and foremost - and this isn't about posts per se - try to recruit multiple page admins who are active on Facebook and willing to share the workload involved in running a page effectively. The more people who can be involved to like comments, write replies and find/research relevant, engaging content to post, the better!
- ❑ If that's not possible, see if you can enlist a team of dedicated "helpers" for content research, and also to share page posts at every opportunity as individuals. All of the suggestions outlined for personal posts above can be applied to page posts either shared in the usual way or copied/pasted by the team, except Messenger Day - although it's still possible to utilise this feature using page photos/videos which have been downloaded and/or shared (off Facebook).
- ❑ Your Page Insights tab shows when followers are most active online, so try setting key posts to be published during peak times/days - you can schedule these direct on Facebook, or use a multi-platform facility like Buffer or Hootsuite (useful if you're on Twitter and Instagram too.)
- ❑ Encourage followers to add your page to their Favourites/Shortcuts list, so that they can easily visit the page and check for posts which they may miss in newsfeeds; this could appear in your About Us information, or as a welcome post pinned permanently to the top of your page.
- ❑ When publicising concerts, have a fair amount of activity on your page-created events, adding photos, videos and comments regularly in the run-up to the actual day; they can act like mini Facebook groups, with lots of interactivity. This is a challenge for one person alone, so add as many willing, proactive co-hosts from your choir as possible to keep up the momentum. Note: links for buying/ordering tickets online feature prominently in event listings, so if you can offer this, do! There are many different ticketing platforms you can use, some pricier than others.

- ❑ If you're feeling brave (and you've worked out the finances), you can create an offer for your concert on your page to be shared by individuals in the ways outlined above, such as an early bird discount on tickets bought by a certain date.
- ❑ If the concert venue has a Facebook page, add text tags mentioning it in post comments if you can - it's mutually beneficial for both parties, so isn't likely to be an issue. You can also text tag pages for composers of the pieces you're performing, to reach out to those page followers too.
- ❑ Seek out possible cross-promotion "partner" pages - such as local music shops, or even other choirs - and negotiate mutual sharing of posts. It's very unlikely that cross-promotion will be detrimental to either organisation, and shouldn't cause mass follower unlikes on both pages!

### If you're lucky enough to have a small event marketing budget...

... it's worth looking at Facebook adverts. This is pretty much another full topic in itself as there are so many complexities and finer details for full-blown advertising campaigns, but the simplest approach - boosting your post or event - is probably the best route for most choirs. Here are some key points about what you can (and can't) do:

- ❑ Boosts of all kinds must be placed and paid for by an individual only on behalf of a page (usually a page admin or manager) - it's not possible to boost personal posts any more.
- ❑ Try to use as little text as possible on the image used in your boosts (this is an issue for most concert flyer photos, but you can replace your image if needs be). Previously, if text was over 20% of the advert image area, Facebook wouldn't approve the campaign; while this rule has been relaxed, lots of text on an image can result in reduced visibility in audience news feeds. An image text area checking tool is offered on Facebook's Help Centre as a guide.
- ❑ You can edit the existing text in your event before and during boosting, but your post text can only be changed after boosting has begun - something to consider, though, if you want to make your message more punchy and intriguing, or more relevant to a wider audience.
- ❑ Tailoring your audience: you can target your event or post to reach a) page followers only, b) followers and their friends or c) people you choose through targeting, based on location, interests, age and gender. The last option is great for reaching out to local choral enthusiasts who've not yet come across your page!
- ❑ Setting your budget and the boost duration: you can play around with both these options before confirming your boost, to see the estimated audience reach depending on how much you spend per day, and how long your advert runs for.
- ❑ When boosting an event, choose your objective carefully; if it includes a link to online ticket purchases/applications, opt for **Increase Ticket Sales**, as the advert will automatically carry a *Get Tickets* button. If you have no online link for buying tickets, go for the **Reach More People** option, and ensure you have contact details somewhere in the event listing for ticket enquiries.

And away you go... good luck!

This only just scratches at the surface, however; if you need more information or advice on any aspect covered in this guide, or if you have a question, I'd be only too happy to help if I can. Just email me at: [fundraising@singforpleasure.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@singforpleasure.org.uk) and I'll get back to you soonest.

**Caroline Sindall**