



## Final Transcript

### **HUD-US DEPT OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT: Establishing Your Social Media**

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#### **SPEAKERS**

Virginia Holman  
Jerry Mayer  
Kevin Michaels

#### **PRESENTATION**

Moderator                      Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by. Welcome to the Establishing Your Social Media conference call. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode. Later, we will conduct a question and answer session. [Operator instructions]. As a reminder, this conference is being recorded.

I would now like to turn the conference over to our host, Ms. Virginia Holman. Please go ahead.

Virginia

Good afternoon, good morning, wherever you are, and welcome to the first webinar in the series of social media outreach. It's going to be a very valuable series and we're glad you were able to join us today. Before we get started with the program, I'd like to go over some logistics. Next slide, please.

As the operator said, the audio is being recorded. We will be posting the playback number, the PowerPoint, and a transcript on our HUD Exchange page. We'll send out a listserv letting you know that that posting has happened, and it usually is within 7 to 10 days of the actual webinar. Again, as the operator said, all your lines are muted.

Please ignore the last one. We did not send out the presentation this morning, nor have we posted it, but it will be available on the archives.

There are going to be a couple of polling questions, so please respond to them, give the presenters some guidance. There will also be a question and answer period at the end, so the operator will give you instructions on how to ask the questions. Next slide.

There are also a couple of other ways to ask questions. On the panel on the right-hand side of your screen there's a box labeled Questions. If you just type your question in there, we have people that are monitoring those.

Also, after the webinar is over, if you think of a question or have a comment, please send it to [housing.counseling@hud.gov](mailto:housing.counseling@hud.gov) and put the webinar topic, Social Media, in the subject line, so we can get it to the right person.

During the discussion, we may unmute all the phones, depending on what kind of discussions we want to have. But if we do do that, make sure that you mute your phone so that there's no background noise. Next slide.

There's going to be a brief survey at the end, so please answer that, because all your responses do help us with planning our future webinars. Next slide.

If you have logged into the webinar within 48 hours, you're going to get an email from GoToWebinar saying thank you for attending. This email is also going to say, "This is your Certificate of Training." Please realize

that there is no attachment, it is just that email, so print it out and save that for your records to support that you took this training.

You can also get credit for viewing the webinar in the archives. I told you that we would be posting all of this material in the archives. If you just go to HUD Exchange under the webinar page, it'll be really easy. You just click on the button on Get Credit, so that's another way for you and/or your staff to get the training.

At this point, I'd like to turn the webinar over to Jerry Mayer, the Director of Outreach and Capacity Building in HUD's Office of Housing Counseling. Jerry?

Jerry

Thank you, Ginger. Good morning to everyone and welcome to today's webinar. Utilizing social media is a growing and important part of any outreach campaign. To accomplish their missions, housing counseling agencies rely on connecting with clients in their communities. Social media platforms, largely accessed on smart phones, are widely utilized by a broad range of Americans, and this training provides an opportunity for housing counseling agencies to learn how to reach new clients and clients that they might not otherwise be able to reach with traditional outreach

strategies. Today's webinar will also help counselors understand and navigate the world of social media and promote the important work that housing counselors do every day in communities around our nation.

So, I'm pleased to introduce Kevin Michaels of CMR, who will be leading today's webinar. Without further ado, take it away, Kevin.

Kevin

Thank you so much, Jerry. Thank you, everyone, for joining us today.

First, we'd like to go over the agenda for today's webinar. Today, we'll go over our goals and desired outcomes of the Social Media webinar series. We'll establish a rationale for agencies to use social media to reach consumers. We'll also discuss how to get started and all that goes with it. Last, we'll open up the floor to questions. Let's go ahead and get started.

Our goals for today's webinar are to establish and strengthen a digital and social media presence for all housing counseling agencies. We also want to broaden our conversation to reach all consumer stakeholders that we provide services to, and last, we want to arm you with the tools to win on social media.

In terms of desired outcomes, we want to help you increase consumer engagement and awareness of HCA services. We want to increase consumer buy-in and trust for housing counseling agencies, and ultimately, we want to increase the number of consumers who use HUD-approved HCAs.

To whom will we be talking to on social media? Consumers of course, but specifically we're going to be talking to renters, first-time homebuyers, homeowners in default and/or facing foreclosure, reverse mortgagers, and also existing homeowners.

Now, let's discuss why social media will be impactful for your agency. First, with social media you'll be able to meet the consumers where they are. We know that most, if not all, consumers engage on social media in some way, especially those consumers that are currently renting and/or looking to buy their first home.

Second, there's no barriers to entry with social media. Social media is one of the easiest communication channels to launch from scratch.

Third, it helps build relationships and trust. When you have more opportunities to connect and converse with consumers, trust and relationships are built and strengthened.

Next, social media can help to increase recognition. This will help make HCAs in your agency more accessible to consumers, and it will also make your agency more familiar to existing clients.

Next, it's also a very cost effective way to disseminate information.

Social media is cheaper than any form of advertising today. It's actually one of the only channels that allows an organization to reach over 1,000 people for less than \$3. It also is a very nimble way to disseminate information, as you're able to share information more quickly than traditional forms of advertising. Last, homebuyers are searching online, period.

For this series, we're recommending that we get started using Facebook and Twitter as the two main social media channels. This is for a number of reasons. First, they're the largest and most trusted. They're the most widely used social media channels amongst US consumers, and for the most part, they're very trusted.

Next, they're really easy to use. These are probably the easiest places to start when creating a social media presence. It's also easy to communicate, unlike, say, an Instagram, where high quality photography can be intimidating.

Next, 81% of millennials check Twitter at least once a day. This makes it a great channel to reach first-time homebuyers. Also, there's quite a bit of internet users on Facebook. Out of all internet-using consumers in the United States, 75% of all males and 83% of all females use Facebook. There are a whopping 214 million Facebook users in the US, or roughly 65% of all Americans.

Now that we've established a rationale for using social media, let's address some of those frequently asked questions of social media marketing.

The first question that I get asked all the time is, do I really need social media? The answer is yes. Consumers are on social media. Once more, every popular social media platform alone has a bigger reach than all TV channels combined. If done right, social media helps resonate with consumers and provide a strong credibility for your agency.



I also get asked, how much time will I need to invest on social media each week? This varies widely depending on your agency, but on average, a social media manager spends anywhere from four to eight hours per week. Once more, according to HubSpot, 95% of marketers who use social media at least six hours per week indicated their efforts increased exposure for their business.

Also I get asked, how often should I post to social media? We recommend posting to social media at least three times per week to keep your audiences engaged. That's not to say that posting less frequently won't make an impact, although.

Also I hear, what time of day should I post? This one just really depends widely on your audience, but generally speaking, the best time to post would be to the middle or the end of the week between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. local time.

Question five, this is a big one, how do I handle negative comments? This can be some of social media's worst nightmares for sure, but it's best to address any negative engagement head on. Many negative comments can

present an opportunity to respond in a way that further solidifies the importance of HUD Housing Counseling to those reading the comments.

Last, where will I find content? Stay tuned. We'll discuss that later on in this webinar, and we've also included a sample social media content in the Social Media 101 Toolkit housed on HUD Exchange to get you started.

Our first polling question: Does your agency currently use social media? It looks like about 87% of you said, yes, you do use social media. That's excellent. But don't sign off just yet, we may cover some things that you're unaware of.

Now that we've discussed why social media's important, it's time to get started. In terms of starting your account, Facebook has published a great resource that walks you through creating a business page step by step. You can find this link in the toolkit which will be housed on HUD Exchange.

There's a few things you'll need to get started on Facebook. First, you'll need a name for your page. We recommend you consider adding Housing Counseling Agency to your name so that it's clear what services you offer.

You also need a profile photo and a cover photo. In the toolkit, you'll see more explanation on this as well as sizing requirements, so that everything is sized properly.

Next, you'll have an opportunity to add a call to action or the button that you may notice on certain Facebook pages. This call to action can be anything from "Call Now" with a link to your number, to "Learn More" with a link to your website, as well as many additional options which we've outlined in the toolkit as well.

Last, you'll need an About section. Here's where you put in your hours, your location, and a brief agency description. Lastly, don't forget to turn on the Facebook Messenger so that consumers can reach out directly.

Next, we get into Twitter. There's also a great resource from Twitter to help you create your business Twitter profile, and you can also find this link in the toolkit, which should be housed on HUD Exchange within the next couple of days.

Just like Facebook, you'll need a few things to get you started. First, you'll need a Twitter @ name, which is called a Twitter handle. This is

the name of your business and your unique identifier amongst other  
Twitter users.

And then similar to Facebook, you'll need a profile photo and a header  
image. There's also sizing requirements for those housed in the toolkit.  
We also recommend that you consider using similar images as your  
Facebook profile and cover photos for consistency across your marketing  
channels. As with Facebook, you'll need to create an About section for  
Twitter. This will serve as your agency profile.

Now that your channels are established, it's off to the races, which brings  
us to our second poll: Do you currently have an employee in charge of  
social media management at your agency?

Great, so 80% of you answered yes. This should be a nice review for all  
of you then, but for those of you that answered no, not to worry. With this  
webinar series we'll teach you how to manage a social media presence  
from the ground up. These webinars will also be archived on HUD  
Exchange in case you'd like someone else on your staff to manage your  
agency's social channels.

Let's take a quick overview of all the different types of content you can post to social media. We have traditional text posts. There's posts that feature video. You can do a post that features infographics, photos, and visuals. There's posts that feature GIFs. Then there's also posts that feature original content, such as blogs, and then also content curation. Lastly, you always want to keep in mind our promise of "Let's Make Home Happen."

Now, we'll walk you through each one of these types of posts we just outlined. With traditional text posts you can simply post a quick update to get information to consumers in your area. Although we recommend avoiding typical text posts where possible, based on social media algorithms you'll have a better change reaching more consumers with a photo or a video attached to the post.

Videos are a great way to engage consumers on social media. As you can see, video on average generates 1200% more shares than traditional text posts.

Another great way to share content is by sharing an infographic on social media. They're a great way to avoid text heavy posts. In short, they're

effective. Infographics help to paint a picture using stats, and they also generate three times the shares of any other type of content on average.

Next, as I said before, include a visual element with every post if possible. Great photos equal great engagement on social, so give a glimpse into life at your agency with candid pictures. Also, remember HUD offers a lot of great imagery in the Office of Housing Counseling Style Guide housed on HUD Exchange. If you still can't find what you're looking for, there's plenty of free to use stock photo websites. Hint, hint, check the toolkit on HUD Exchange.

This brings us to our next poll: Is the word G-I-F pronounced GIF or JIF? We're pretty torn on this; about 53% said JIF, 47% said GIF. Actually, the correct pronunciation is JIF, almost like the peanut butter, and that's according to the creator of the GIF himself.

You might be wondering what are GIFs. They're fun, bite-size rotating images set on a loop. See this example showing the US Housing Index's change over a 12-year period.

If you want to try to share GIFs on your own social media channels, giphy.com is a great place to find GIFs to use. We've also outlined other resources in the toolkit.

Next, blogs and articles are a wonderful way to keep consumers engaged beyond a single post in their newsfeeds. Ninety-four percent of consumers share blog content because they think it might be useful to other people. Another quick hint would be to check [blog.hud.gov](http://blog.hud.gov) for great relevant to consumer blog posts to share on your agency's social media.

Next, we move on to internal and original content. Here's where you can have some fun. Build trust and relationships with your consumers by giving a candid glimpse into life at your agency. Some ideas of sharable images and original content include pictures with consumers that you've helped make home happen, celebrations within your agency, profiles of employees at your agency, new hires, work anniversaries, etc.

If you're struggling to come up with some content on your own, no worries. We do too sometimes. When you have a case of writer's block,

keep your channels current by sharing articles from like-minded organizations that are relevant to consumers.

But where will you find the content? You can search online for recently posted articles that will be helpful to consumers. We recommend only using articles that have been published within the last three months to avoid being old news. We also recommend following like-minded social media accounts for inspiration. Some options include HUD, obviously, realtors, mortgagers, and the like.

You might be asking, when do I start? The answer is start now, today, tomorrow, as soon as possible. Post soon and post often, as practice makes perfect.

In terms of posting frequency, everyone is different, but we found that a minimum once per day is best, and afternoons tend to be best for most posts. Remember to post a good variety of forms of content. It keeps things fresh, interesting, and engaging.



Also, use a conversational and friendly tone to entice consumers to interact with your content. Last, always keep in mind “Let’s Make Home Happen.”

What’s next? You can join us next Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 p.m. Eastern for the next webinar in the social media series. The next webinar entitled, “Maintaining Your Social Media,” will take us a step further on the path to becoming social media superstars. We’ll discuss how to keep up an ongoing social media presence. We’ll discuss how to create your agency’s social media voice or tone, and we’ll also discuss ways to draw insight from your social media analytics, and much more.

Now at this time, operator, I think we’re ready to open the floor for questions.

Moderator Thank you. [Operator instructions]. One moment, please, for the first question. It looks like we do have one person queuing up for a question.

Kevin Okay, great.

Moderator [Operator instructions].

Carl                               While we're waiting for the person to dial in, I just wanted to invite everybody to also type in questions into the webinar's interface, if you'd prefer to do that rather than going to the queue to ask a question verbally.

We do have one question that's popped into the queue. The question is, "How much does it cost to have a social media person?"

Kevin                             Thanks, Carl, for that question. It widely depends. Depending on the size of your agency, I don't think it's necessary to hire an additional person just for social media. I think this is something that can be learned and can be managed in tandem with your day-to-day operations as well. But if you start to get to the size where you need a social media person, it really varies based on your market. There's some great resources online such as [glassdoor.com](http://glassdoor.com) where you can go to look to see what an average social media manager makes.

Moderator                     There are no questions on the phone lines at this time.

Carl                               Another question came into the queue. "Should we use hashtags?"

Kevin Absolutely. Yes, that's a great question. Hashtags are a great way to identify certain things that you want to promote, such as saying #housingcounseling will then help people who are looking for a way to make informed decisions on their housing buying process or any sort of housing process, that can be something they might go and look for.

To understand a little bit more about hashtags, you can stay tuned for future webinars in this series. We'll dive quite a bit more into that topic.

Carl Another question came in that asks, "How much text should each post have?"

Kevin That's a great question. It really depends. We like to recommend that you have as short of a post as possible while still getting your message across. You never want to have too much text within a post.

Let's say if you want to get across a message that's going to be longer than, say, a couple hundred words, we recommend that you post that as a blog on your website and then link to it on social media. The harsh reality is that people don't have the attention span on social media to read more than, say, a couple hundred words.

Carl Thank you. Our next question that popped up is, “What’s the average length of time for a video that’s being posted?”

Kevin That’s a great question as well, so we’ll discuss that even more in the last webinar in this series. Just for a quick tidbit, I’d say we see the best engagement on Facebook specifically would be a video that’s between 30 and 45 seconds. We see a great decline in engagement once a video gets past about a minute long, so make sure to keep them short and impactful and powerful.

Carl Thank you. A comment came in. Somebody posted that, “Interns can help do social media,” which is definitely true as long as you’re monitoring them to make sure that the things that they’re posting are appropriate for your agency.

The next question that came in is, “How do you message current efforts and upcoming events and feel fresh without feeling like you’re spamming people?”

Kevin I’m sorry. Could you repeat the question one more time?

Carl Sure. “How do you message current efforts and upcoming events and make them feel fresh without feeling like we’re spamming people?”

Kevin I’d say the biggest way to do that would be planning. Let’s say you’re hosting an event, we usually like to start promoting those events about a month in advance and do little teaser updates throughout the month rather than posting all the information at once.

If you have access to any sort of basic graphic design, which we’ve included some tools in the toolkit, that’s a great way to create a nice little image or a graphic that identifies the event as well, and that makes it a little less spammie. It makes it a little bit more visually striking for users in their newsfeeds.

Carl The last question that’s currently in the queue is, “What type of content should we be using when starting a social media site?”

Kevin I think that’s a great question, and I think the biggest thing when you’re starting is you have to try pretty much everything you can. I think the best way to learn it is to get out there and try posting videos, try sharing articles, try writing your own copy, try everything.

There's really no way that you can go wrong when you're starting out.

You just need to try different things and learn what's getting the most response from your community, and then keep doubling down on the types of content that are getting the most engagement.

Carl Thank you. There are currently no other questions in the queue. One just popped up. "Graphic program in the toolkit." I believe they're asking about what's included in the toolkit graphic-wise.

Kevin We've identified a number of free online tools to create simple graphics. There's a number of them from one named Canva to Pixlr, to a couple others. The toolkit should be published on HUD Exchange within the next couple of days, and within the toolkit you'll see all sorts of links to different online simple graphic makers.

Carl Another question popped up that asks, "Is there a way to track the responses from followers?"

Kevin I'd have a follow-up question to this question. Are you asking in terms of followers' responses coming to an event? Perhaps the person asking the question can clarify.

Carl                    If you heard that, please clarify your question. We'll be sure to get you a response. There are currently no other questions in the queue right now.

Everyone, please don't be shy to submit a question. We'll give you a response either right here on the phone, or we'll follow up with you if we can't give you a response right away.

Followers reviewing your site, is the question.

Kevin                If I understand it correctly, you're asking if there's a way to reach out to followers that are reviewing your site. That gets a little bit tricky. To do that you would need to install a pixel through Facebook advertising, through Twitter advertising, and that gets a little tricky. So, if you stay along with us throughout this series, we touch on advertising and tools used with advertising in the last webinar in the series.

Carl                    One more question just popped in, and I'm reading this verbatim. "If we share an event someone else is having and you just want to share the information, is it appropriate to tweak around their marketing materials to not bore our audience with the same flier or media content?"

Kevin                   That's a good question. I would say you never tweak things like a flier or any sort of thing that they've created, but what you can do is share. Let's say they post something with their flier attached, you could share that post and add your own text to it, but I would recommend against tweaking anyone's actual fliers or graphics.

Carl                    Thank you. One more popped in. "How effective do you think a live video stream would be compared to a pre-produced video?"

Kevin                   Extremely effective. The way that social media works is Facebook and Twitter have algorithms that weight different posts heavier and lighter depending on how they think the engagement will happen. Naturally, since live video is a new feature of Facebook, they're placing a lot of weight on live videos in the feed.

A lot of times, your followers will get a notification when you go live, versus if you just post a prerecorded video it will just show up in a fraction of your followers' newsfeeds, so whenever you have the option, we definitely recommend going live. That's another thing that we will cover here later in the webinar series.



Carl “Could you please give a little explanation to the Call to Action button’s purpose and intent?”

Kevin Sure. These are great. If you go to anyone’s Facebook business page, you’ll see in the top right-hand corner, and this is all in the toolkit, it’ll explain this a little more as well with screenshots, but if you go in the top right-hand corner there’s a button on everyone’s Facebook page. They can be anything from Learn More, to Shop Now, to Sign Up, to Call Now, and that’s a button that people will see, and it’s very prominent, and that’s the action that you hope people will take.

Let’s say if you’re with social media marketing, if you’re trying to drive traffic to your website, you can have a Learn More button, where you go in and you add your website’s URL to the button. And then when visitors on your Facebook or Twitter page click Learn More, they’ll automatically be redirected to your website.

Similarly, if you would like to get more phone calls, you can add a button that says Call Now. If the user is on mobile, which many of them are on social media, if they click Call Now, it will pop up a prompt to say Call,

and then it will have your phone number, and they'll easily be able to reach out to you without having to look up your phone number.

Carl

There are no other questions currently in the queue.

Lauren

Hi, Kevin. This is Lauren from CMR. I'm going to ask a question that I think has come up a number of times as we've been presenting among housing counseling agencies, and that question is, what's the best way to use social media when promoting an event or a workshop?

Kevin

Thank you for that question, Lauren. That's a great question. With Twitter, you can do it in kind of a more limited way, where you can just share little tidbits of information about the event. But I'd say if you're having an event come up, I recommend that you strongly use Facebook.

There's actually a way to create a separate event page that's hosted by your Facebook page that allows to give a lot of information about the event. It allows people to RSVP. It allows you to do kind of event-specific promotions within that page. It becomes kind of a micro Facebook page within your Facebook channel that you're able to promote,

you're able to advertise. We actually get quite a bit more into events in the next couple of webinars series as well.

Lauren

Thanks.

Jerry

No other questions have been added to the queue, I believe. Ginger, would you like me to turn it over to you to wrap up the webinar for the day?

Virginia

Certainly. I'll say a brief message. Thank you, again, for everybody attending. As a reminder, it will be on the HUD Exchange page, our Archive section. So, you'll have the opportunity to view both the presentation and a transcript as well as have an audio replay number where you can hear it. Remember, you or your staff can also get credit for watching the webinar.

Future questions, go to [housing.counseling@hud.gov](mailto:housing.counseling@hud.gov), and just send us your comment or question, and we'll get it to the right person and get back to you. But as Kevin has said, we certainly encourage you to come to the future webinars in this series. We will be sending out a listserv on a

regular basis with a registration link, so please join us for those so you can have a highly successful social media campaign. Thank you very much.

Moderator

That does conclude your conference for today. Thank you for your participation and for using AT&T Executive TeleConference. You may now disconnect.