Social Media Proposal

Presented to: **ERSL Administrative Committee 2014**

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Why Social Media?

We can use social media to compliment our Web site and engage with the rest of the soccer world in a meaningful way.   The platforms can be used to promote competitions, generate more sponsorship leads, share information, and ultimately direct individuals back to our Site. The key to achieving our objectives and reaping the benefits of a social media presence will be to set goals and monitor them.

The reality is that if we can increase our ERSL.ca Web site traffic we will be more attractive to potential sponsors. To increase traffic to our web site we must draw in our audience from other areas of the Web. We can successfully use Twitter, Facebook, Linkedin and other platforms to create exposure of the ERSL. As a non-profit organization this increased exposure is integral to the development of our sponsorship initiative and increased awareness of our organization.

Social Media will not only bring more traffic to our web site, and provide a more attractive incentive for sponsors, but it can be used as a secondary venue for sponsor promotion. Twitter and Facebook are ideal for posting sponsor media, promotions, coupons, or displaying a sponsor logo. These platforms will become integrated in our sponsorship package incentives. As we market ourselves around the Web on different social media platforms, we also provide greater marketing reach for potential sponsors.

Social Media Status

The ERSL does not currently have a presence on social media. With no social media use we have no connections with social media users. Our presence on the Web is limited to our Web site. It is necessary that a strategy be developed in order to determine how a presence on social media will benefit our organization.

Current Social Media Inventory

By conducting a Google search of "East Region Soccer League", it is determined that the following pages come up as the top 5 results:

1. ERSL.ca - Homepage
2. EODSA.ca - ERSL information page
3. OntarioSoccer.net – ERSL information page
4. SoccerSOSA.com – Youth Competitive page
5. OttawaSoccer.net – ERSL information page

Peer Pages

An investigation of what our peers are doing online reveals that there is very little presence on social media platforms for soccer leagues and associations. The Web presence of our peers is in most cases limited to an official Web site.

Peer	Presence
Central East Soccer League	▪ **NONE**
Central Girls Soccer League	▪ **NONE**
National Capital Industrial Soccer League	▪ **NONE**
Ontario Soccer League	▪ Discussion Forum

Ontario Youth Soccer League	▪ Facebook button on Homepage
	   o Links to OYSL Facebook page with 194 'Likes'
	   o Last post was in August 2013
	▪ Youtube button on Homepage
	   o Links to OSATV Youtube Account
	▪ Twitter button on Homepage
	   o Links to OYSL Twitter feed
	   o Feed has not been used since August 2013
	   o 388 Followers
	   o Only 65 tweets since June 2011

Ottawa Carleton Soccer League	▪ Discussion Forum for players looking for teams and teams looking for players
South Region Soccer League	▪ **NONE**
South Side Soccer League	▪ **NONE**
South West Regional Soccer Association	▪ Twitter, Facebook, and Youtube buttons are present on Homepage o Twitter button links to OSA Twitter feed, and others do not function. ▪ Social Media Guidelines posted on Web site
Western Ontario Youth Soccer League	▪ **NONE**

Web Site Improvements

An analysis of the existing pages of our peers – in most cases an official Web site - lends insight into what features are attractive, how information is organized, and how we may improve our own presence and set-up. The majority of our peers are using Web sites powered by E2E so we should have the same capabilities.

Organizing the content of our web site in a meaningful and clear way will help our Members find the information they are looking for more readily.

ERSL Social Media Goals

Since the ERSL does not have any current figures from web site traffic or social media presence we cannot set goals for growth at this time based on a numerical baseline. What I hope we can do is develop a set of goals to attain that are focused on page hits, followers, 'likes', shares, traffic etc. These goals can be set for attainment 3 months after platforms are launched. With goals set every 4 months following this point we can monitor our progress in a measurable way.

Launch **Set Goals** **Check Progress & Set new Goals** **Check Progress & Set new Goals**

3 months   4 months   4 months
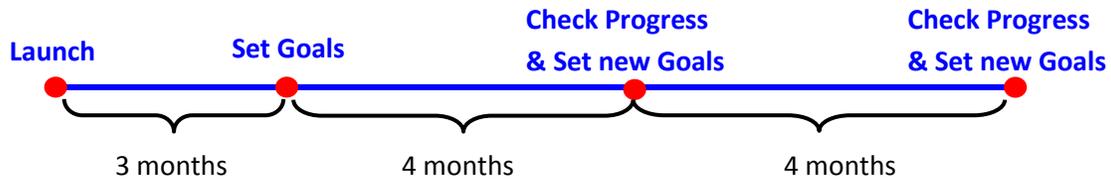
As we grow our social media presence we can also set goals for our desired number of weekly or monthly posts or updates. It is important that our goals for social media relate to our overall goals for our organization. A key to this endeavour will be to increase our site traffic and in turn provide us with a better platform for sponsorship, as well as a more informed membership and public.

#1 – Drive People Back to Our Site

While we want to connect with as many people as possible on each social media site, we want to be sure to direct them back to our own site as often as possible.

When we engage with other social media users through posts or updates we can find opportunities to get them to share the information we are providing, but it is all for the purpose of driving people back to our organization's website.

#2 – Connect with New Prospects

The second main activity we want to conduct on social networking sites is connecting with new prospects. The best way to do this is to get our current members, supporters and followers to "share". We want to post such interesting, entertaining or compelling items on your social media sites that people want to share it with their own followers and friends. This will help us grow our presence on the site and will encourage new prospects to not only follow us but seek out more information about us.

#3 – Stay in Touch with Current Sponsors

The third main goal of our social networking activity is to stay in touch with current donors and unobtrusively stay "front of mind" with them. By sharing content on these sites on a regular basis, our donors will have a constant reminder of our work and their commitment to be part of our team.

As well, it reminds our sponsors of the social networking platforms we employ, and the reach that we have. They can then see our connections and our advertising outlets.

#4 – Maintain an Active Conversation

Social media presence will provide a valuable way to "keep our ear to the ground" and see what people are saying / thinking about. It also provides us with a means to distribute information in a quick and abridged way. We can do things as simple as posting a notification when something has been updated on the web site, when a notice has been posted, or to update our members on our progress regarding a particular deadline.

If the public shows interest in something we can take the steps through social media platforms to appropriately:

- Drive more traffic to a specific landing page on our website.
- Solicit photos and/or videos taken at an event.
- Publicize new or available information
- Link to peers' web sites
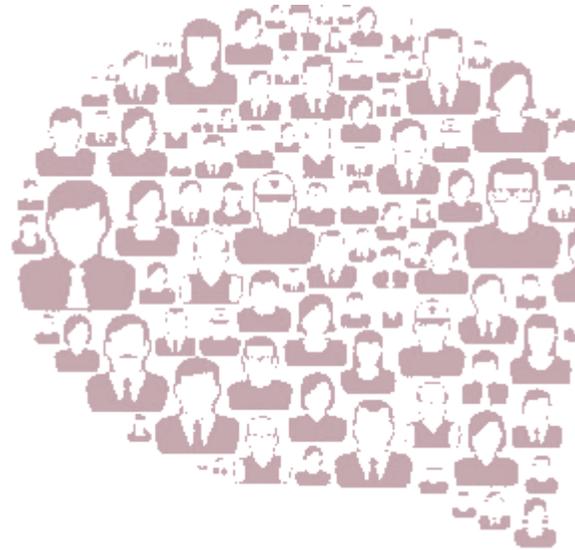
Content Strategy

A comprehensive content strategy for our social media campaign is important so that we may determine how we wish to use social media, and how we wish to monitor our presence.

Types of Content

- What types of content we intend to post and promote via social media
  - Photos, event information, deadline updates, sponsor information

The content that we choose to post will be created in order to build relationships, answer questions, share information and ultimately create an online presence that increases awareness of our organization. Our social media will not simply be an add-on for communicating the same information that is posted on our Web site – it will be a means to communicate new information and build a social network by sharing posts and information created by relevant sources, following or subscribing to our supporters and partners, and connecting with their audiences. We can smartly look for new connections, and push people back to our site using the content that we choose to post and promote.

Post Frequency

- How often we will post the content

As part of our content strategy, an editorial calendar may prove to be our best planning tool. It will list the dates we intend to post content. This may also involve creating posts in advance to be posted later.

Contributors

General Manager
  - Major contributor of information
  - Answering questions
  - Building online presence through posts

Interns/Staff
  - Important for networking
  - Content contributors as provided by GM or Board members

Board Members
  - Potential occasional contributors
  - Board members with access to the accounts can post information, or can contribute from their personal accounts as social media contacts

Public
  - Active participants in conversation, commenting, liking, and sharing posted information

Platforms

Twitter

- Promote content
- Share Information
- Retweet relevant information
- Listen to relevant conversations
- Build reputation

Metrics

- Followers
- Mentions
- Retweets
- Tweets

Facebook

- Share a mix of relevant links and engaging content
- Share photos
- Promote upcoming events and create them in the events tab

Metrics

- Likes
- Posts
- Shares
- Mentions

Linkedin

- Create a group
- Maintain up to date content
- Identify other groups to follow and participate
- Encourage employee participation

Metrics

- Connections
- Group members
- Discussions

Tracking Progress

Aside from checking the metrics outline in the previous section, checking our analytics frequently will allow us to see how our campaign is performing.

Facebook Insights

- On Facebook we can use **Facebook Insights** to find out when our fans are online, how many are seeing our posts and who's sharing or responding.

- Insights provide measurements on our Page's performance and are available after at least 30 people like our Page.

Google Analytics

- **Google Analytics** can show us who is viewing and engaging with our web page

- These analytics will be matched with our goals in order to measure specific progress towards our objectives

- Generates detailed statistics about a website's traffic and traffic sources. Google Analytics can track visitors from all referrers, including search engines and social networks, direct visits and referring sites.

Contingency

Once we have a social media campaign started we will resolve to do more of what is working and revise things that are not working. Our strategy will need to continuously be developed using analytics to guide our next steps throughout our social media campaign.

Social Media Guidelines

It is important that we establish guidelines for our members to follow when using social media. Below is a sample of guidelines, as well as best practices for publication on the ERSL web site

Sample Guidelines

The East Region Soccer League (ERSL) understands that with global networking easily accessible via Social Network tools such as Facebook, Twitter and You Tube etc, we have a responsibility to our Membership to create a guideline of what is acceptable Social Media use.

The East Region Soccer League Membership encompasses Players, Referees, Team Officials, Administrators and Clubs. Our membership represents the ERSL and our soccer community. We require our membership to exercise good judgment in its use of Social Media websites. It is important to conduct yourself in a responsible and respectful manner.

- Members are not permitted to post information, photos, or other representations of sexual content, inappropriate behaviour, or items that could be interpreted as demeaning or inflammatory.
- Members are not permitted to post any racial, sexist, homophobic, anti-religious or any other comments of that nature to members or non-members.
- Members are not permitted to post any comments that could be deemed derogatory about other the league, players, team officials, teams, club officials, clubs or referees.
- Members are not permitted to comment on injuries, officiating, or team matters that could reasonably be expected to be confidential.
- Members are not permitted to post any threats of violence or harassment.
- The ERSL reserves the right to delete comments in violation of this policy.
- Members must always follow the guidelines established by the Social Media website being used.
- Any online postings must be consistent with ERSL policies and guidelines

Monitoring and Consequences

• Violation of these policies is subject to investigation and possible sanctions by the ERSL Management Board.

• Violations may be subject to Disciplinary action under policies set by the OSA (or until such time that the Ontario Soccer Association issues a Social Networking Policy).

If you have any doubt about posting content on these social media sites, please consult the ERSL General Manager. Due to the evolving nature of social media, the policies and guidelines are subject to revision by the ERSL Management Board.

Best Practices

- Be genuine: Social media is all about people connecting with people. Remember to humanize your social media interactions.
- Be truthful: Make sure you have all of the facts before you post. Cite and link to sources whenever possible to help build a community.
- Be respectful: Respect for the dignity of others and to the civil and thoughtful discussion of opposing ideas is critical. Please do not propagate online confrontation.
- Be positive: A good rule of thumb is that if you would not say it in person, do not say it online.
- Allow comments: Encourage thoughtful discussion with the understanding that all comments must be civil, respectful, and appropriate for your audience.

These Guidelines should be used in conjunction with OSA, District, and Club guidelines.