



# How to Make Great Social Content



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# Introduction

Running and organising social media accounts for your rugby club can be hard work, there's no denying that. But done right it can be very rewarding too – both for you and your club.

This guide is part of an RFU project helping you do two things:

**A**

Communicate effectively with your players, member, stakeholders and fans on social channels

**B**

Coordinate your club's social media – whether that's just you, a group of club volunteers or those lucky enough pay a professional



# Understanding who you're talking to

Building personas for your rugby club



# What Are Personas?

Personas are fictional characters that represent the different customer segments at your rugby club.

They can help rugby clubs better understand the needs, goals, and behaviours of their users – and map how audiences differ from each other.

They can help guide your decision making when it comes to things like content creation, advertising spend and sponsorship activities.



# Example Personas

For instance, a club may have typical personas such as these:

## Rashida

The local journalist who attends semi-regularly but importantly is a positive mouthpiece for the club.

## Richard

The local social drinker who is not as passionate about rugby as others and rarely attends matches, but is a regular at social events

## Ayub

The rugby-mad university student who isn't particularly loyal to one team and watches different sides every month. He may also be looking for a new club to play for

## Martin

The loyal match going fan whose social life revolves around the matchday experience

## Jenny

The Mum with children who may want to play in the Youth Teams. She watches matches sporadically but doesn't go to social events.



# Building Your Personas

To get specific information about the personas you want to target, you can use the following sources:

## Social analytics

Facebook has an analytics section which describes who your audience is likely to be demographically, and tools like SparkToro give you insight into your followers too.

## Social research

Consider which are the types of content which get the most engagement on social channels. What does that say about your audience?

## User research

ask individuals across your club who they see as your different audiences, and what differentiates them from each other. People in customer-facing roles, such as bar staff, ticket sellers, stewards are particularly valuable here

## Customer research

ask your club's paying customers (whether ticket holders, merchandise buyers or those who attend social events) what their motivations are and what they love or dislike about your club



# Filling In Your Persona Document

Every club will have a **Mapping Personas** tab on their [Club Social Media Toolkit](#) which should be filled out by people at your club.

The following sections need to be filled out:

8

## Name

a one-line way to tell them apart.

## Broad demographics

their rough age, gender or geographic information that sets them apart

## Their relationship with the club

how the club fits in their lives and is important to them

## How they contribute commercially

what it is that they do that drives revenue for the club, if at all

## Social media habits

where they tend to congregate online, if at all

## What we communicate about

based on what we know about them, the kind of language or calls to action that would appeal to them.





# Filling In Your Persona Document

For instance, if we were to create one persona about a matchgoing regular, it could look something like this:

## Martin

The loyal match going fan whose social life revolves around the matchday experience.

Martin is a relatively affluent 45-0 year old man who lives 10 miles from Old Bigglesworth rugby club

A long-standing fan who loves all kinds of rugby but attends as part of a longstanding social routine rather than purely as entertainment. Our rugby club offers a social space to see old friends.

He's a season ticket holder, drinking in the club bar and occasionally attending social events.

Martin uses Facebook and Twitter, but does tend to spend less time online than other demographics and doesn't use social networks to organise socially

We communicate to Martin about the latest club news and fixtures, with messaging based around belonging to the local community



# Deciding how you're going to speak

## Tone of Voice



# What Is Tone of Voice?

Tone of voice guidelines define the language used by your rugby club in content.

They ensure that anyone who speaks on behalf of the club does so consistently and effectively. Deciding on your tone of voice means deciding how you speak. That can be measured on two scales:

Speaking formally vs speaking casually

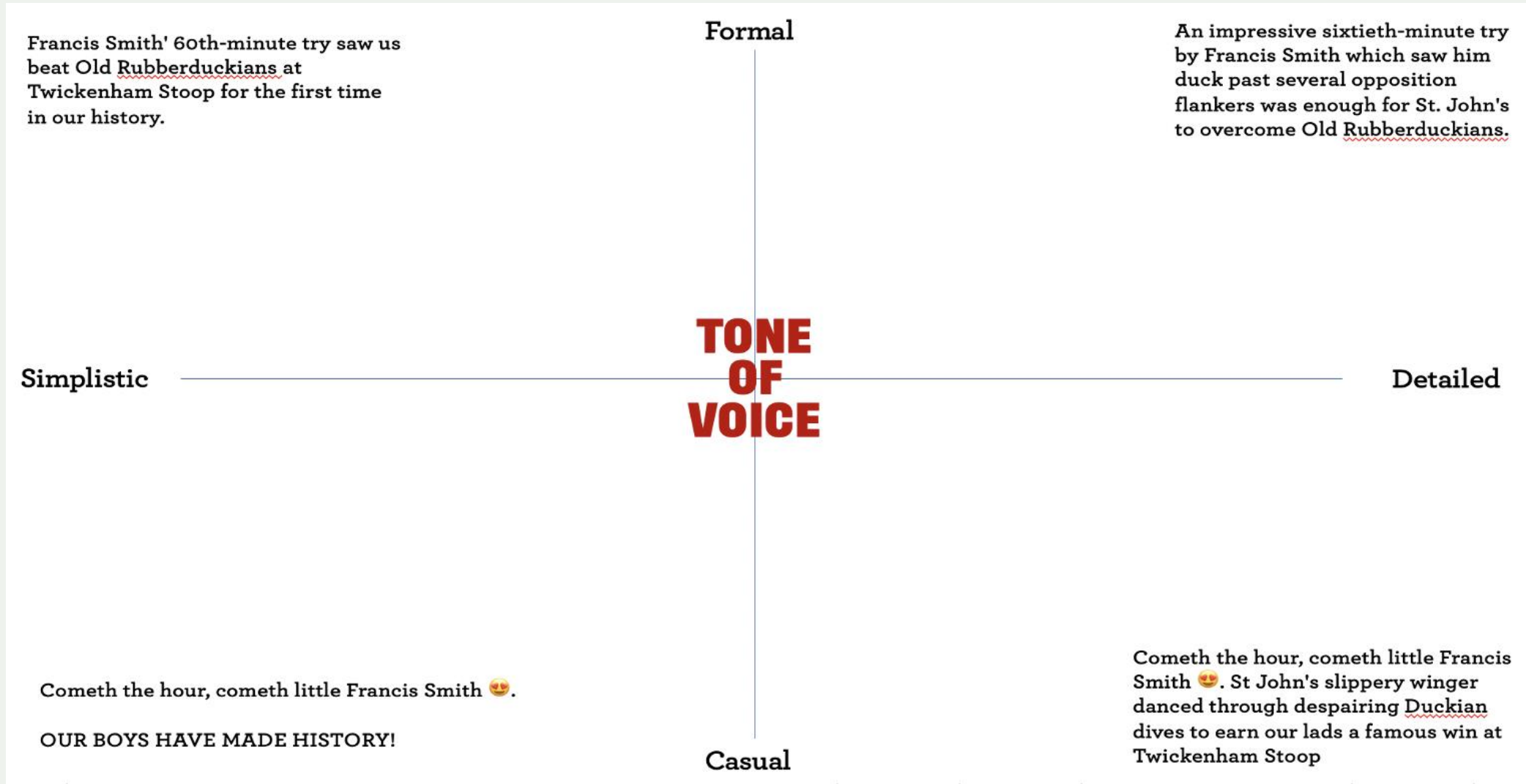
Speaking in detail vs speaking concisely

The image on the next page shows how a rugby club could discuss a match-winning try in a big match against Old Rubberduckians in a variety of different ways, depending on how formal or detailed their tone of voice is.

In the [Social Toolkit](#), the **Tone Of Voice** tab allows you to identify how you want to speak, and communicate that to everyone who creates content at your club



# What Is Tone of Voice?





# Tone of Voice Details

When deciding on your tone of voice, it's worth considering the following questions:

What is the professional knowledge of my reader?

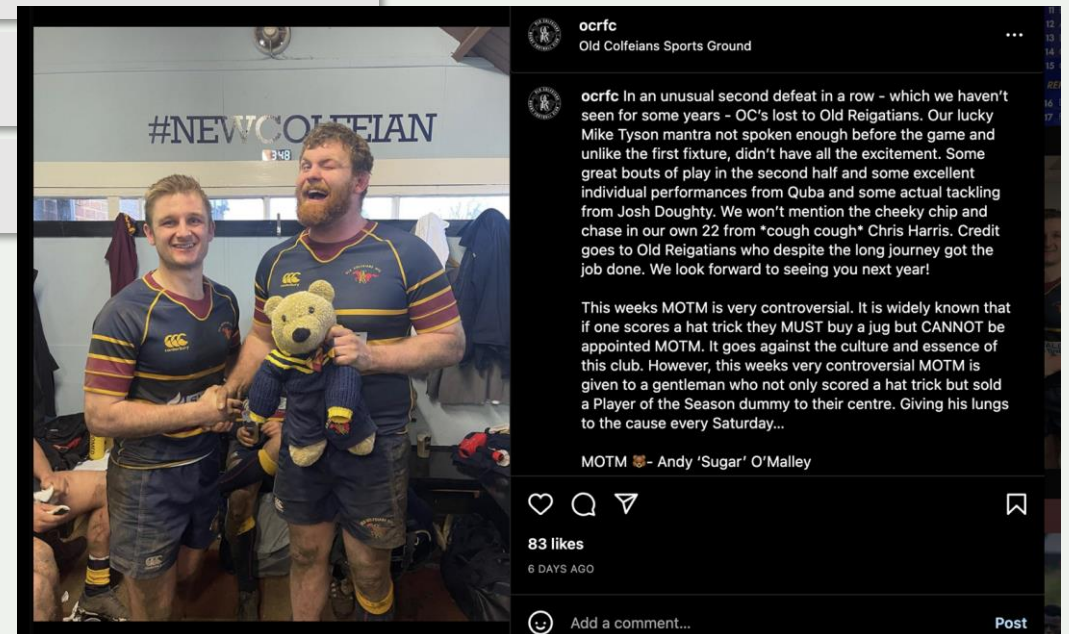
Will rugby jargon engage or perplex them?

What word counts are needed to appeal to them?

Do you want to educate, entertain or provide insight?

For instance, see how Old Colfeians use detailed, witty language [in their posts](#), compared to [Coventry Rugby](#), whose copy is shorter, more concise and more serious – letting the image do the talking.

There's no right or wrong way, but you should **decide how you want your club to speak, and what you think your audience would love, and be consistent from there.**





# Different Voices in Different Situations

It's recommended to know where your club broadly sits on the tone of voice matrix, but also how content creators should talk about specific content types, such as:

Live match updates

Match reports

Promotional posts

Community posts

Historical posts

Tone of voice can also change depending on the channel. TikTok, for instance, has a younger demographic so is usually more casual than Twitter or Facebook.



# Planning Social Content

**Social strategy**



# Interacting, Not Broadcasting

Social content works when it's based around giving value to your audience. It's about:

**Educating**

**Entertaining**

**Inspiring**

So:

**What would you like  
people to know  
about your club?**

**How can people at  
your club make  
other people laugh?**

**How does your club  
help people?**





# Planning Content

Planning the majority of your content in advance is incredibly important. It allows us to be:

Consistent

Ensuring that there's content to be posted regularly a set number of times per week sets expectations with audiences and helps build trust with social algorithms. This in turn increases the visibility of your content, and improves affinity with your club.

Efficient

It's easier and more efficient to plan content in advance, while it also ensures there's time to research, write and edit content.

Strategic

Planning advance helps clubs think more about the types of content being created, how it fits into the overall strategy and whether it's speaking to a range of target personas.

Flexible

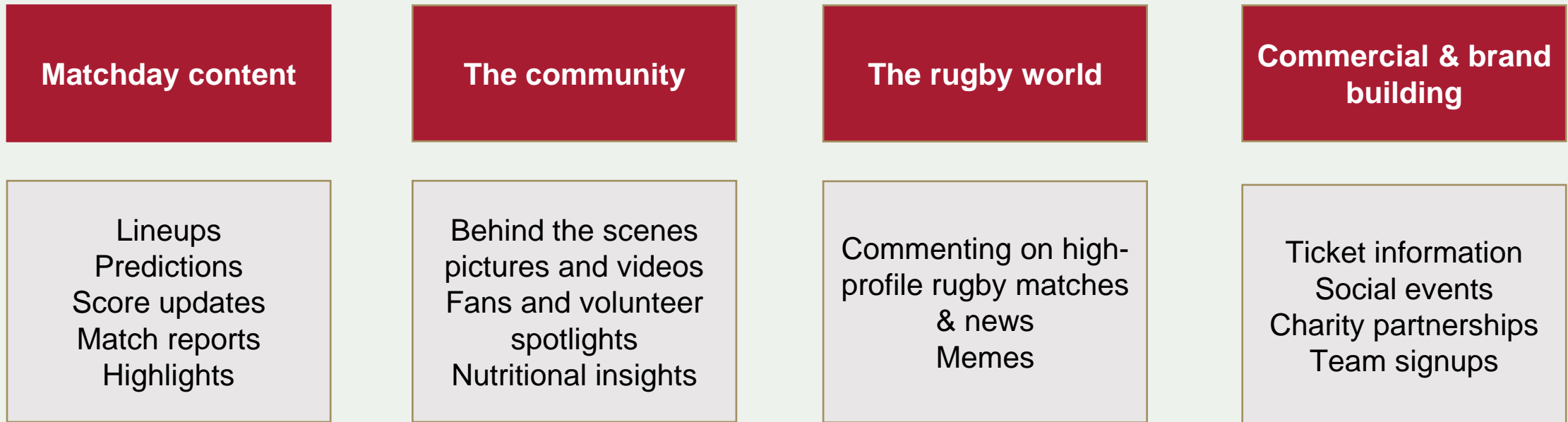
A content plan is a living document and it should be updated and tweaked as needed. This means you can adjust your strategy based on new information or feedback, making it more effective over time.

You can use your **Monthly Content Plan** in your Social Toolkit to plan out content and get it approved by whoever has the responsibility at your club.



# Establishing your content pillars

Content pillars are topics your rugby club will consistently discuss, amplify, and create content for on social media.



Establishing content pillars also allows you to delegate responsibility to different people across your club, if necessary – so for instance, having one person responsible for creating content about Matchday Content, and another for Community posts.



# Planning Content Ideas

**Highlights packages:** showing impressive tries, tackles or passes, particularly from recent matches.

**Exclusive imagery:** giving your audience a sneak peek behind the scenes through pictures or short videos is a great way to provide value.

**Exclusive quotes:** sharing insight from players, coaches and fans about their experiences will provide an insight into your club

**On This Day content:** taking users back in time to show what happened in previous years taps into nostalgic . This can include highlights or images from matches, famous wins, club signings or social occasions.

**Match schedules and reminders:** telling your audience about upcoming matches and getting them excited about what's to come.

**Team and player statistics:** Keeping your audiences informed on the essential numbers of the season so far.

**Birthdays and anniversaries:** celebrating special occasions of people who work at the club – not just players, but staff and volunteers too.

**Promotional posts:** from club social events to selling tickets and merch, it's recommended to have a portion of your total social posting which promotes commercial goals – but this should never constitute the majority.

All of these content ideas can be planned in the Monthly Content Plan tab of your Social Toolkit



# Reactive Content

However, there are some regular events or situations where we should be creating content, but it's not possible to plan in advance.

Match days are the clearest example of this. On Twitter in particular users expect instant updates, while at the very least users on other platforms will require content that communicates full-time results.

Likewise, the club's social media accounts may want to reply or share messages they receive from fans or affiliated accounts. Mentions or replies from other accounts: you will have a strong understanding on when these will be more frequent, such as during matchdays.

These events can be planned in the Monthly Content Overview tab of your Social Toolkit, without the individual posts in the Content Plan.

It's important to have a process in place to maintain quality control of content such as this, and more stringent reviews after the event to ensure the content, posted in the 'heat of the moment' reflects the social strategy and the club's tone of voice.



# Nailing the social basics

**Improving through marginal gains**

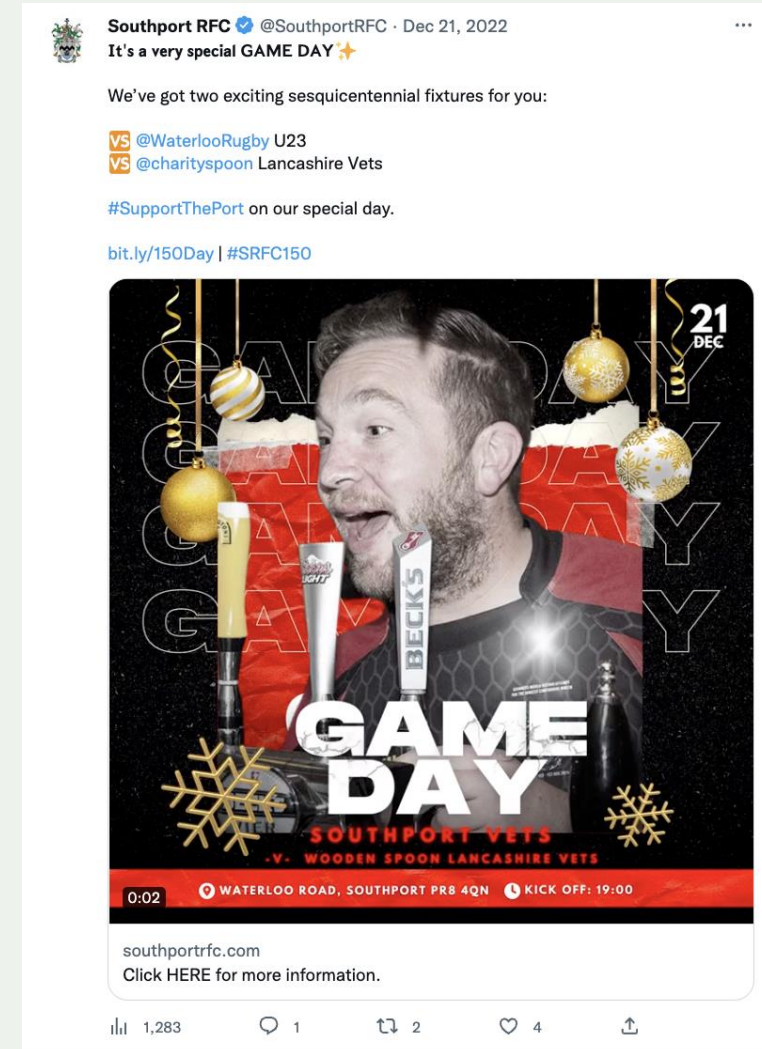


# Getting Copy Right

When drafting a social post, the right copy presented in the right way can make all the difference. Ensure you're adding in lots of white space to increase comprehension.

So:

- ✓ Use paragraphs liberally
- ✓ Use emojis (through [emojipedia](#))
- ✓ Use different fonts ([Fonts For Twitter](#) helps you make copy stand out by using bolded or italicised text)
- ✓ When you're writing a social post, draft up 4-5 versions of the same post. Brainstorming different ways to talk about the same thing will help you come up with engaging copy.





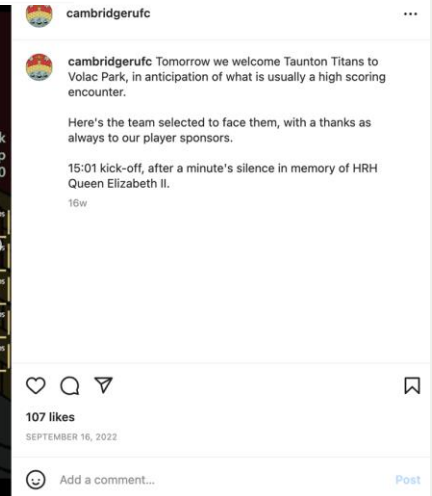
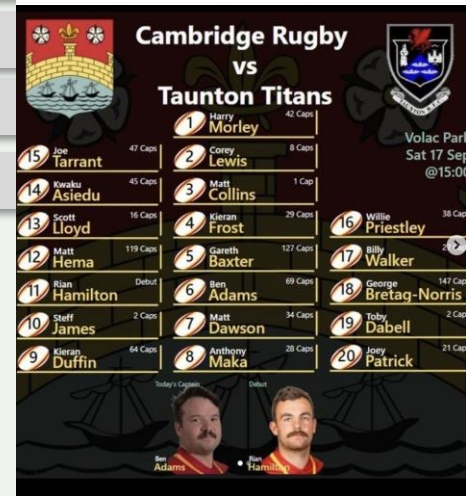
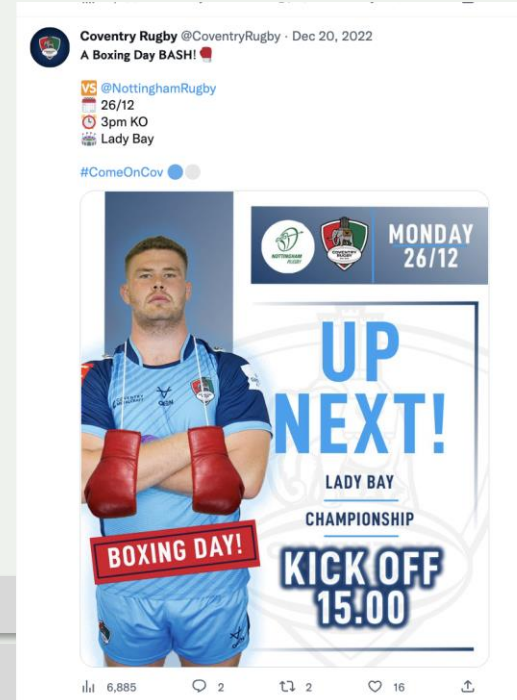
# Creating Visual Assets

There are a number of different ways to create social media assets. The simplest, and most popular, design platform is [Canva](#) which has free and relatively inexpensive membership options.

We recommend building a bank of templates which can be used and amended for common content types such as:

- ✓ Matchday squads
- ✓ Match results
- ✓ Player or team statistics
- ✓ Club news (such as match cancellations)
- ✓ Promotional posts

How playful or creative you want to be depends on your rugby club's brand guidelines. Cambridge RUFC focuses on being factual, with plenty of team information, while Coventry Rugby are more playful, amending social assets to make them specific to seasonal events.





# Creating Visual Assets

To get started, here are a few tips for creating social media assets

1. **Ensure there is one focus of each visual/video** – This will draw the eye in and provide balance on the image.
2. **Use natural light with images** – Too much artificial light, or not enough, can make an image hard to see.
3. **Ensure there is enough contrast** – This will ensure that details and/or text can be easily seen. Complimentary colours can help with this! Avoid over-editing or using too many filters - Followers want to see authenticity.
4. **Understand copyright** – take your own photos and videos, and make your own graphics. If stock imagery must be used, read the fine print to ensure you have permission to use it.
5. **Add your logo** – small and in the corner usually works.
6. **Be mindful of representation** – think: do your assets reflect your fan base?
7. **Use alt text** – describing images in alt text is helpful for sight-impaired users.







# Community Management

Community management is all about curating your audience and making them feel part of the club.

However, remember that social media is also a customer service channel. Your audience will use your social channels to respond to your content, but also to find answers to questions and potentially air grievances too. So:



- 1 Respond quickly** – followers appreciate prompt replies. So, try to monitor replies and, where it's appropriate, respond to them.
- 2 Encourage engagement** – When replying, ask questions and create opportunities for your audience to continue the conversation and share their own experiences. See how Hartbury rugby responded to interest from the above post by continuing the conversation.
- 3 Set escalation points** – because some replies will be negative, you need a plan for dealing with problems appropriately. In the **Passwords and Governance** section of your Social Toolkit there is an Escalation Scale where you can set responsibilities for dealing with different messages.
- 4 Be yourself** – ensure that your responses echo how you want to speak as a club, as detailed in the **Tone of Voice** section of your Social Toolkit.



# Learning on the job

Every community is different, so it's your job to learn what kind of content gets people talking and reacting.

Don't give up on specific ideas, but you might have to post it again differently:

✓ Change the format

✓ Change the image or videos

✓ Involve more people, or different people

✓ Boost it with some budget

Also, remember to follow other rugby clubs in your division, as well as sports clubs in your area. What can you learn from them? How can you collaborate?



# Accessibility

Ensuring that your social content is accessible is not only the right thing to do – it also means it has the largest possible potential audience.

See [this accessibility guide](#) from the Government Communication Service for more information on how to ensure that the social content you create meets accessibility standards.



# Image Guidelines

If an asset is not the correct size, the social platform will autocorrect it.

This means the platform may crop your selection omitting certain elements, or add in areas of black and white blank space. The following dimensions are the sizes your images need to be on social channels.

Social Platform	Instagram	Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn
Profile Photo	320 x 320	170 x 170	400 x 400	400 x 400
Landscape	19080 x 566	1200 x 630	1024 x 512	1200 x 627
Portrait	1080 x 1350	630 x 1200	n/a	627 x 1200
Square	1080 x 1080	1200 x 1200	n/a	n/a
Stories/Reels	1080 x 1920	1080 x 1920	n/a	n/a
Cover Photo	n/a	851 x 315	1500 x 500	1128 x 191



# Growing your audience

Social Media Best Practice



# How to Grow Your Social Followings

There are a number of steps that your rugby club can take to improve its social following, including:

- 1 Using local hashtags when posting on social channels.** This will make it easier for people in the area to find and follow your club.
- 2 Engaging with other local sports teams, organizations, and businesses.** This can help to expose your club to new, relevant audiences.
- 3 Partnering with local media outlets or influencers.** This could include local newspapers, radio stations or people with strong social followings. Think about the things happening at your club that they'd be interested in too.
- 4 Hosting events or promotions that encourage people to follow you on social media.** This could include ticket discounts, priority access or exclusive social events
- 5 Encouraging existing followers and staff to share your content.** This can also include creating content with them to tap into the audiences that follow their specific social media channels.

In this section, we'll go in-depth into some of these recommendations, alongside social content creation tips, to help you do more with your social media platforms.



# Getting Fans Engaging

There are a number of ways to engage your audience on social channels, such as:

<b>CONTESTS AND GIVEAWAYS</b>	Giving fans the chance to win match tickets, merchandise, free jugs of beer or a Club Tie.
<b>FAN-GENERATED CONTENT</b>	Encouraging fans to submit their own content, such as photos and videos from games, and share the best submissions on your accounts.
<b>LIVE Q&amp;AS</b>	Organising live Q&A sessions with players, coaches or other team staff, allowing fans to ask questions in real-time, or ask them ahead of player interviews.
<b>NOSTALGIC CONTENT</b>	Talking about what happened On This Day - asking fans for their perspectives. Where were they on the days of famous wins?

Remember, the best social media strategies are about building a community, not broadcasting your news.

So when you're asking your followers for their perspectives and involving them in your content, make sure you respond to them and share what they say.

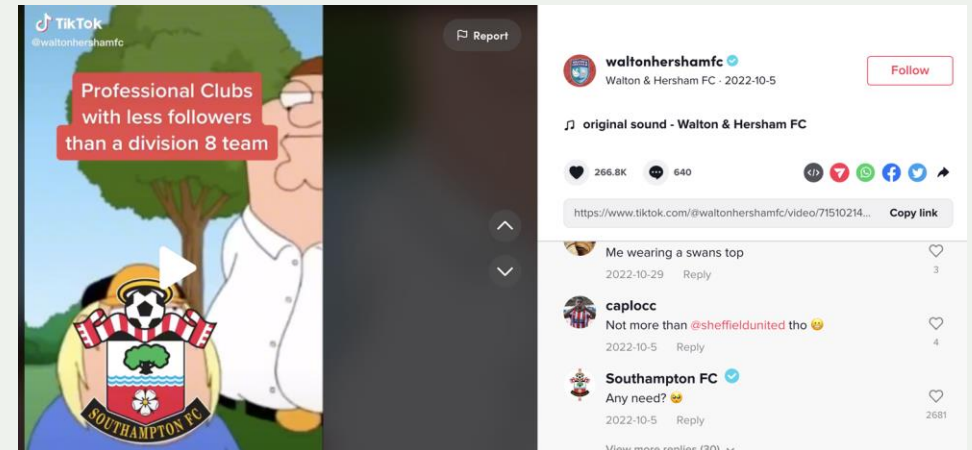


# Getting Other Accounts Involved

One of the best ways to grow visibility of your social content – particularly on Twitter and Instagram – is by involving other accounts in your content, or responding to what they’re creating.

By doing this, your rugby club gets seen by the audiences which follow the other accounts – so growing your reach.

See how Walton and Hershham FC, a tier-8 football club with nearly 1m followers, [create amusing content](#) on TikTok that relates to big clubs and gets them responding.







# Getting Internal Perspectives

Engagement rockets when content features real people talking about real stories and real perspectives.

Who do you know within your club, or from your fanbase who has a specific story to tell? Or how can you involve people when there are big sporting events being talked about?


See how Hartbury Student Rugby joined in a conversation (alongside Hartbury RFC) with Austin Healy about the structure of the rugby season.

Players are an obvious choice, but what about:

- Kitmen and women
- Groundspeople
- Junior coaches
- Bar staff

**Think: What interesting or entertaining perspectives could they share? What things are trending this week that you could ask them about?**


Hartpury University RFC Retweeted

 **Hartpury Rugby**  
@HartpuryRugby

Hi @IamAustinHealey 🙌

We like your thinking on this, we would love to invite you to [@Hartpury](#) to show you how our pathways work in the men's and women's game. We are the only institution with college, university and elite teams on the same campus. 📖 1/3

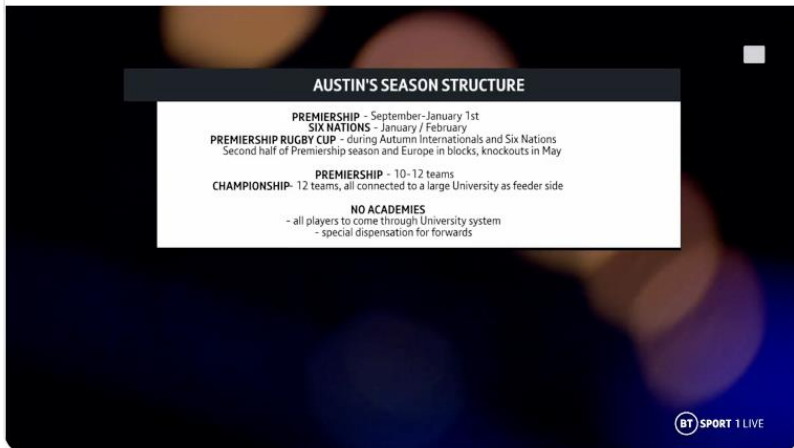
Keen?

 **Rugby on BT Sport** ✓ @btsportrugby · Oct 16, 2022

Austin has been doing some homework 📖

From an updated schedule to changes to academies, what do you make of Austin Healey's proposed plans for the future of rugby?

#RugbyTonight



**AUSTIN'S SEASON STRUCTURE**

- PREMIERSHIP** - September-January 1st
- SIX NATIONS** - January / February
- PREMIERSHIP RUGBY CUP** - during Autumn Internationals and Six Nations  
Second half of Premiership season and Europe in blocks, knockouts in May
- PREMIERSHIP** - 10-12 teams
- CHAMPIONSHIP** - 12 teams, all connected to a large University as feeder side
- NO ACADEMIES**
  - all players to come through University system
  - special dispensation for forwards

BT SPORT 1 LIVE



# Knowing your partners

Who can you involve and tag in social content?

## CLUB PEOPLE

- ✓ Historic players
- ✓ Current players
- ✓ On-field volunteers or staff
- ✓ Off-field volunteers or staff

## FANS

- ✓ Hobbyists (photographers or writers)
- ✓ Matchgoing fans
- ✓ 'Celebrity' fans

## THE RUGBY WORLD

- ✓ **Other RFU social accounts** such as local game development and club support
- ✓ **News accounts** such as Rugby World, The Rugby Paper, Rugby Dump or Planet Rugby
- ✓ **Prominent rugby players and coaches:** particularly those from your area.

## ORGANISATIONS

- ✓ Partner businesses
- ✓ Bigger local organisations
- ✓ Other local sports clubs
- ✓ Other rugby clubs in your division

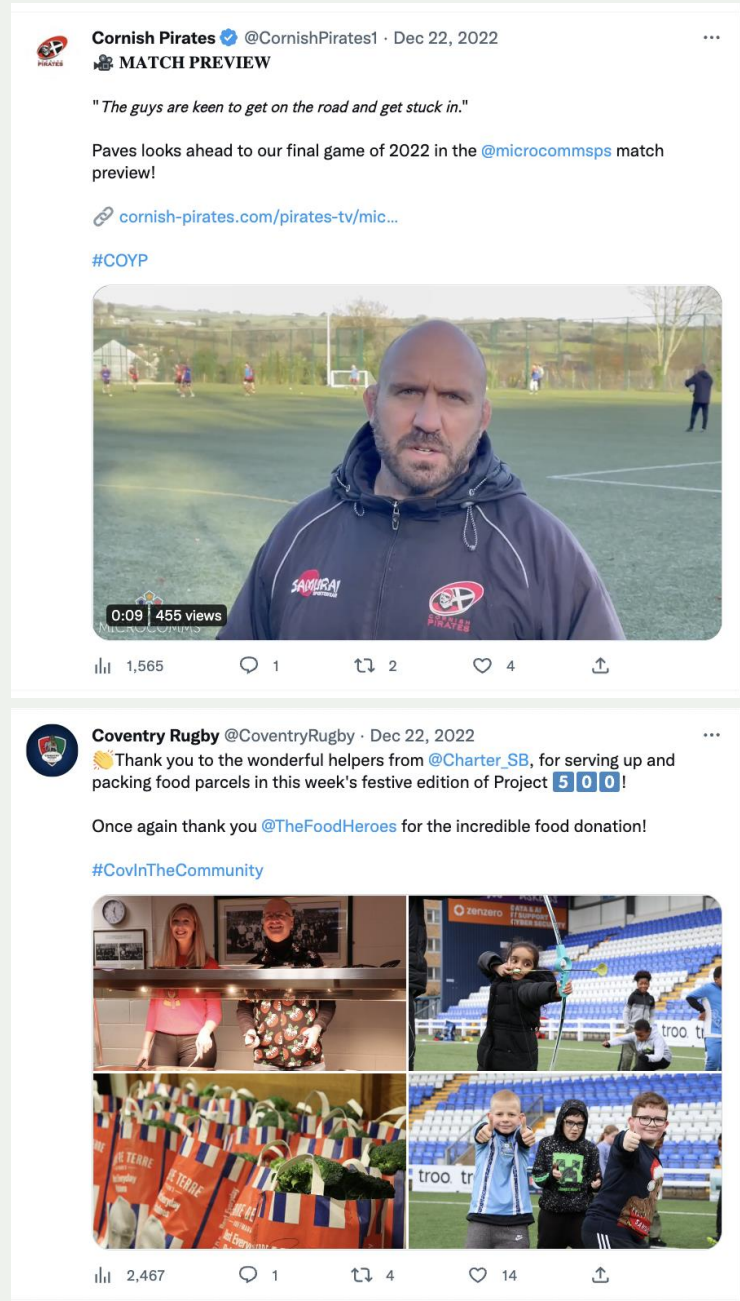
# Using Hashtags

Hashtags are a great way to drive visibility of posts – particularly on Instagram and TikTok – because they help people who don't follow your account see your content. They also tell algorithms what your content is about, which they can recommend to audiences who they think will be interested.

For Twitter or Facebook, use a couple of really relevant hashtags, but don't use any more than that as it can look untrustworthy.

For Instagram, use 3-5.

For each platform, choose one hashtag which you can use on your posts, which can help users find related content. See how Cornish Pirates do this with their branded hashtag #COYP, or how Coventry use #CovInTheCommunity to highlight their community activity.





# Finding Hashtags

Use hashtag research tools such as [Hashtagify](#) and [Ritetag](#) to find popular and relevant hashtags in your local niche.

Look at the hashtags that other local sports teams or leisure organisations are using. Could they be used in your posts?

Use Instagram's "Explore" feature to find popular and trending hashtags in your industry or niche.

Twitter's search bar also allows you to search for hashtags and will show you related hashtags.

You can also create your own hashtags for your brand or campaign, and encourage your followers to use them in their own posts.

Relevant hashtags that you will use on different social channels can be documented on the **Social Channel Strategy** tab of your Social Toolkit.



# Getting Fans Talking

Social algorithms (those clever bits of tech which decide the posts that get shown to the most people) love users talking under your posts and interacting with your content:

So, when you plan out content try to:

Ask questions

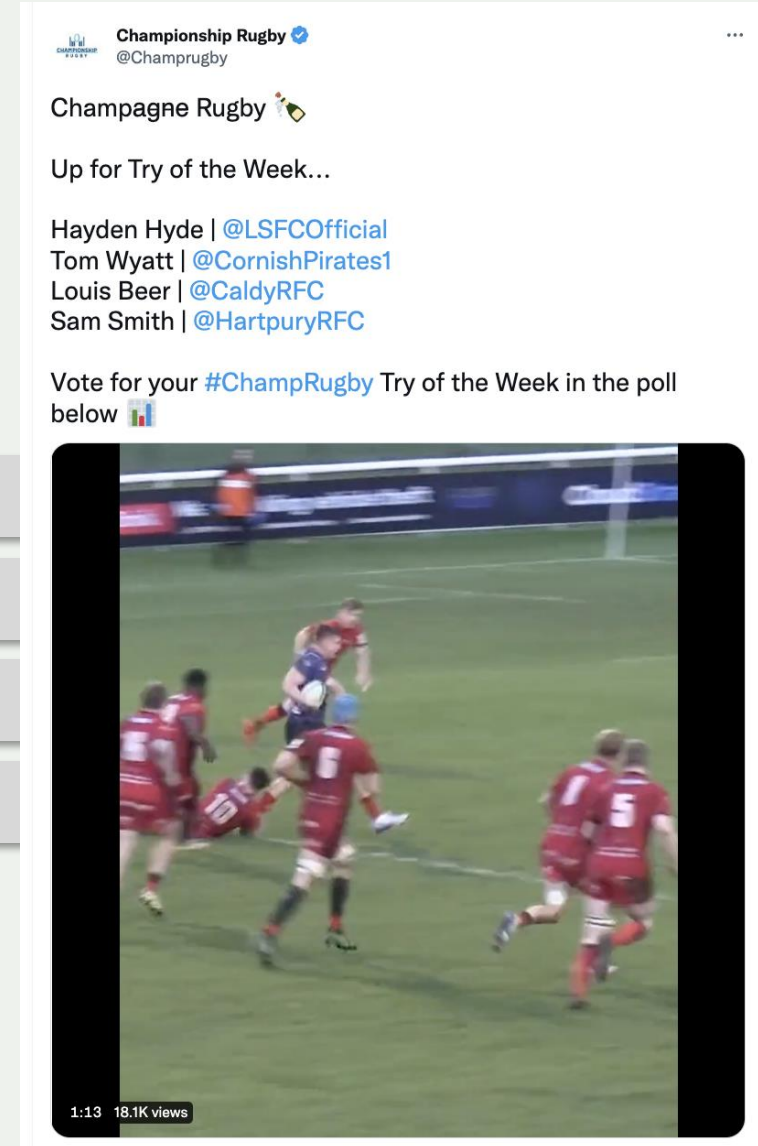
Test users' knowledge

Create polls

Introduce contests

See how The Championship use polls on Twitter to get fans to choose their Try of the Week.

**Think: What discussions could you foster underneath your posts?**





# Re-using Content

Social networks' algorithms prefer content that keeps users on their channel. Facebooks want its users to only view content on Facebook, and Instagram wants its users to stay on Instagram.

By extension, social content that links to other websites will get less reach on that platform. So, when you're posting on different channels, ensure each has content that be seen on that channel – not linking elsewhere.

For instance, a post-match interview with your manager can be repurposed in a number of ways:

- ✓ Full video uploaded to YouTube
- ✓ Edited video uploaded to Twitter, to Facebook, to Instagram as a reel or TikTok as a video
- ✓ Quotes from the interview turned into an image for Instagram
- ✓ Quotes from the interview used as caption copy on match highlights or previews
- ✓ Post promoted on Instagram Stories



# Social Media Checklist

## HAVING A PLAN

- ✓ Planned-out content from different pillars
- ✓ Adapting content across different channels
- ✓ Having target personas in mind

## NAILING THE BASICS

- ✓ Copy that's proofed and sounds like you
- ✓ Consistent colours and fonts in your visuals
- ✓ Using emojis in copy
- ✓ Using white space

## GROWING VISIBILITY

- ✓ Using hashtags
- ✓ Getting other accounts involved in your content – and tagging them
- ✓ Sharing and adapting content across channels