

Social Media Club Chapter Launch and Group Management Guidelines

This is a living document (updated often) and meant to be used as a guideline when launching/managing SMC in your local city.

Table of Contents

- Why SMC?
- Put Your City on the SMC Map
- Choose Your Network Portal
- Build a Leadership Team
- Set date/time for planning meeting
- Gathering Participants
- Launch
- Membership
- Collateral
- Miscellaneous

Why SMC?

Social Media Club is being organized for the purpose of sharing best practices, establishing ethics and standards, and for promoting media literacy. This is the beginning of a global conversation about building an organization and a community where the many diverse groups of people who care about social media can come together to discover, connect, share and learn.

STEP #1: Put Your City on the [SMC Map \(wiki\)](#)

The first step is to check the list of both 'active' and 'in the works' chapters to see if your city is already listed.

- If YES (with a link to a city page): check the 'Local Leadership' section on your city wiki page and contact the person/people listed to let them know you are interested in helping and they will bring you up to date and make sure you are involved going forward. We also recommend you send an email to SMC President, Kristie Wells, at [Kristie @ socialmediacub.org](mailto:Kristie@socialmediacub.org) so we may add you to the local leader communications list.
- If there is no one listed in the Local Leadership section, please add your name and contact information, then contact Kristie Wells, at [Kristie @ socialmediacub.org](mailto:Kristie@socialmediacub.org) for next steps.
- If YES (but not linked to a city page): someone requested a chapter be launched in your city, but it has not moved forward as we need to build a local leadership team to start the process.

To start, you will need to add a new page on the wiki that will be used to build out your team, ideas and events. The password to edit the wiki is

'media'. To create a new city page, the easiest thing to do is to use the [SAMPLE CHAPTER CITY](#) page as a template and simply copy/paste that info into a new page, then update the city/contact info for your specific group. Once this is down, please proceed to step #2.

- If NO: If your city is not listed, you will need to add a new page on the wiki that will be used to build out your team, ideas and events. The password to edit the wiki is 'media'. To create a new city page, the easiest thing to do is to use the [SAMPLE CHAPTER CITY](#) page as a template and simply copy/paste that info into a new page, then update the city/contact info for your specific group. Once this is down, please proceed to step #2.

STEP #2: Choose Your Network Portal

SMC is building infrastructure that will provide a portal for each city to share their insights, communicate with their local members and connect you to the wider SMC network. We expect to have Version One ready in Spring 2009.

In the meantime, we recommend you:

- Choose either Facebook, Ning or LinkedIn to be your communications hub and give your local group a place to gather. Facebook seems to reach a more broad user base, Ning is more robust and better for planning purposes. I have not seen anyone use LinkedIn yet, but it is an option if you feel that is the best suited place to gather. Choose which one you are most comfortable with and then notify Kristie Wells at Kristie@socialmediacub.org and she will set your group up and then provide you admin privileges so you may work on building it out. Please do not set up the group on your own, please have Kristie do this for you. Again, this process will change over time, but for now – please adhere to this simple request.
- We also encourage cities to use the [SMC wiki](#) as your whiteboard, gather a leadership team here, post topic ideas to discuss, list upcoming events/venues/possible sponsors. Great collaboration space.
- Some cities have a Twitter account in addition to a Facebook or Ning portal (SMCIndy, SMCKC, etc.).
- We also have a relationship with icontact.com and can set up a mailing list for you for free if you prefer to communicate via that channel. It is a one way communication line (you email those who register, but it seems to work well for some cities (Boston and Austin use it) over posting messages via Facebook, Ning or Twitter.
- There is also a wordpress blog option available if you prefer that type of portal to communicate and update your group. If you would like a

Wordpress site, please contact Kristie Wells and we will set up the shell for you to tweak as needed.

Again, all of these are temporary channels for you to communicate through, we hope to have all of this consolidated over time so you and your local group have one portal to manage, making this easier over time.

STEP #3: Build a Leadership Team

We recommend every city have a group of 4-6 people who manage various tasks (see sample roles in the Local Leadership section on the wiki). We have cities being managed by one or two people struggle and some fade as the local leader gets busy or goes on vacation. We want to make sure once a chapter is launched that it meets consistently (monthly) and is diverse in both the attendees and the topics discussed. Having several people* lead the local group goes a long way towards ensuring success.

If you do not know of anyone in your local area that is able to help you launch SMC, please contact Kristie Wells and we can help enlist folks to help you.

NOTE: We believe in granting anyone that wishes to help lead a SMC chapter a role. If the leadership team gets larger than six (6) people, we suggest a monthly rotation of assigned roles (with some sitting out that month) to ensure everyone is given the opportunity to contribute. If you are not being allowed 'a seat at the table', please contact Kristie Wells immediately. We will not tolerate exclusions.

NOTE: *Once the new SMC City Portal is in place and a formal membership drive is launched, we will ask that at least one representative in each city leadership team hold a Professional membership (\$100 per individual). We expect this to start on or around January 1, 2009.*

STEP #4: Set date/time for planning meeting

Once you had a base for your leadership team, set a date/time to meet and send an email to Kristie Wells at Kristie @socialmediacub.org so we may announce your intentions to launch a club in your city.

During this planning meeting, you should be prepared to discuss:

- Goals for local group
- Possible venues to host meetings (some cities, like Phoenix started in a café, people could buy drinks, etc. When they outgrew the space, they were able to move into a business office space). Reach out to PR firms and Newswires (BusinessWire, PR Newswire, Marketwire, etc. as most are willing to offer up their offices to meet in). Venues should allow for easy conversation and can range from chamber of commerce offices to corporate conference rooms to restaurants/cafes to art studios depending on your size and technical needs.

- Meeting date/times (i.e. some chapters meet every 3rd Thursday to make it easy for their group to keep track of the meetings, others meet varying days over breakfast. Note: some chapters switch format and dates, but we find this does not, on average, work as well).
- Sponsors (food/drinks for group or to cover venue expenses if any)
- Calendars to use for announcements - we use the following resources to announce gatherings and other events: Upcoming, Craigslist, Twitter and Facebook. We also set up an Eventbrite page for each gathering to keep track of participants. We ask that all events are listed under the main Social Media Club section to keep track of them, so for now, please email Kristie Wells with your details and we can add manually for you. We are working with Eventbrite to allow individual organizers to add events directly to the SMC section, and hope to have this for you shortly. Ideally, meeting notices should be pushed out 4 weeks before an event, with weekly reminders. Send a final reminder the day of the event. Event announcements should include date, location, topic name, speakers (if available), directions and price.
- Event fees* – some cities don't charge, others charge \$5-\$20 to help cover expenses (food, drinks, venue). All give discounts to paid SMC members (enter for free or heavy discount). If you are just starting out, we recommend you don't charge, show value first, even more critical that you're finding a place with no cost, you don't have to do food and drink, but found it really helps, especially at dinner. Side Note: You may secure a list of paid members in your local area/state from Kristie Wells.
- Topics to be discussed with potential guest speakers. We are working on a master database of all topics discussed at previous SMC events with related collateral (if any) to help you going forward. This will be released in Fall 2008.
- Assign roles and responsibilities for the Local Leadership team
- Equipment requirements – ideally try to video or podcast each event to ensure ease of sharing discussion with global SMC.
- Format. How each meeting is run really depends on what the participants feel comfortable with to start (can always change depending on topic/interest). Some suggested formats are:
 - Speaker or Panel discussion (works for any sized gathering) – bring in an industry leader (or several) to discuss topic for anywhere between 15 minutes to one hour. Ensure plenty of time allowed for Q&A and group discussion.
 - Demos or presentations by attendees/members

- [World Café](#) (works best for 20 or more people) – participants broken out into groups of 3-4 people and are given three (3) questions to answer around a given topic. They rotate three times (15 minute intervals), then group reconvenes and reviews discussions.
- Social mixers – we are finding mixing a breakfast, lunch or happy hour meetups in between ‘educational’ events goes a long way to building community.

Please make sure all of this information is put into the [SMC wiki](#), which should be used as your group ‘whiteboard’ for planning purposes.

* With collection of fees, you have to keep accounting records. Please keep this in mind – if you collect any door fees or sponsorship fees, please keep an Excel spreadsheet of the money that comes in and the money that goes out as we will need to report this to the IRS.

STEP #5: Gathering Participants

Once you have decided to launch SMC in your city, please contact Kristie Wells and she will promote the upcoming city launch via our various SocNets to help you raise awareness.

The goal in each city is to bring a diverse group to gather and share what they know – this can be people in PR/Marketing roles, teachers, journalists, attorneys, doctors, bloggers, photographers, videographers, etc. Getting a cross section of folks will keep conversations interesting and expand knowledge across multiple industries.

We know this could require some time to build the group outside of the standard network you connect with, but would like to keep this as a long term goal in every city.

There are various channels we recommend you reach out to, including:

- Your own personal network
- Your employer, partners and vendors
- Chamber of Commerce
- Small Business Administration
- PRSA, AMA, Refreshers, Podcampers, Wordcampers, Barcampers, etc. or any other local group that is already meeting in the city

STEP #6: Launch

One very important thing to keep in mind – this is not a numbers game.

Gatherings can be 2 people or they can be 200 people. The number of people gathering is not important. What IS important is making sure that conversations are happening in your local area and that you have the opportunity to connect with a global network. Success is always ensuring that people are happy to have met each other and shared what they know.

Also, keep it open and laid back and don't put so much pressure on yourself, whoever shows up are the right people. Keep it as easy and low key as you can until you find the right group and the format until it fits.

Isn't structure around that per se, should be a balance between ad hoc and formal, trying to get the right mix. The reality is that different people have different needs. What we find is people into technology tend to be more of the do-it-yourselfers. People in companies tend to lean towards more formal. They want to bring people who have more formalized mindsets. You have to put out different programming choices to attract different kinds of people. Result of more of cultural nuances.

And communicate openly with those attending the SMC gatherings. Let them know they have a say in the topics they hear and how each event is run. Make it as participatory as possible. And be flexible.

Have fun.

Also, one thing we have done with recently launched clubs is offer a 15-20 video chat with Founders, Chris Heuer or Kristie Wells, either during the planning session, or the official launch or both. In the chat we share the history of SMC and our goals going forward. It also gives you the ability to ask us any questions you or your local members might have.

Logistics:

Here are some tips on what to consider when running a meeting:

- Host Company/Location related items:
 - Security List
 - When does the list need to be downloaded and delivered?
 - Who at the host company needs it?
 - What is the procedure for walk-ins?
 - Where should attendees park?
 - What fees are associated with host location?
- Technical Considerations:
 - Who at the host company is the contact for AV?
 - Does the facility have a projector to loan?
 - What does presenter need for AV- mic, projector, connectivity, screen
 - Can they provide a mic?
 - Do they have Internet?
 - Is it restricted (ports blocked or sites blocked?)
- Attendee Issues
 - Purchasing and producing nametags (pre-printed or bring pens for attendees to make their own)
 - Assign at least two members to handle registration (if desired)
 - Who takes the sign-in list?

- Who inputs the attendees?
- Is there a fee to attend this event?
 - Determine fee (free for SMC national members, \$10 for non-members)
 - Who is in charge of the money?
 - Did you get change to give to people w/o exact change?
 - Provide receipts upon request
- Speaker Issues
 - Who has contact info for the speakers and is confirming with them?
 - tent Signs for the speakers necessary?
 - Water bottles for speakers
- Invitations - who is writing it, first invite should go out 4 weeks in advance, with weekly

Everyone's time is valuable. To have a successful chapter, people have to find the meetings worthwhile. Most people attend meetings to 1) network and 2) learn something. If you are going to be a successful leader, you can't leave that to chance. YOU have to help them achieve their objectives.

Recommendations for your events:

- Allowing remote presentations (we had Chris Pirillo stream in)
- Present information about other events SMC members might like to attend
- Collaboration with other professional/community groups
- Scheduling the meetings at the same time/place/location for a year at a time so people can easily remember where and when they are and just "show up."
- Asking members to bring a friend
- Becoming a focal point for social media activity in the community
- Making sure the content is educational
- Giving different people responsibility for the meetings every few months.
- Adjournment after the meeting to a less formal setting (we go out to drink at a Mexican Place)

At the end of each meeting, please write up a summary of the event (blog post, on wiki, record video, etc). and send the link to socialmediacub [at] gmail [dot] com. We will be building a database of these notes so other cities can use the information and expand their knowledge.

Lather. Rinse. Repeat.

Membership

Membership with Social Media Club will always been open (free). It is extremely important to us that this is not the standard 'Club'. All are welcome. All have value to contribute. We never want there to be a barrier to entry.

With that said, we do need paid memberships to support our work and ensure the missions of the organization are met. We have decided to launch a formal

membership drive at the beginning of 2009 that will have various levels available, all hoping to meet the needs of our community and provide benefits that make sense to receive in return.

We are also working on National and International sponsorships that will hopefully see funding for future local chapter events. Lastly, a portion of the membership fee (thinking 10%) of anyone in the your local city area that signs up will go to your local chapter to help fund activities.

Collateral

Member t-shirts are only available for Professional and above membership levels. We will work on a standard t-shirt that will be available for sale and expect to have this ready by early November 2009.

Each chapter can obtain a stack of SMC stickers to hand out to their local community, which will help extend the brand. Please contact Kristie Wells to receive a supply.

Miscellaneous

- If you are looking for speaker suggestions, please contact Serena Ehrlich at serena.ehrlich@gmail.com or @serena on twitter.com.
- We are working on a formal sponsorship document that informs sponsors what they get out of sponsoring an event on the local, national and global levels.
- We are holding a weekly chapter phone call every **Wednesday at 8am PST** to answer questions and provide advice to help your chapter be a success. The conference call information is:
 - **Conference Dial-in Number: (269) 320-8400, Access Code: 509633#**
- We will be recording each call, so if you are not able to join us live - feel free to take a listen when time allows:
 - **Playback Number: (641) 715-3445, Access Code: 509633#**
- We are in the process of launching a Sister City program to have existing chapters help new chapters set up and grow (i.e. Austin is helping San Antonio, New York is assisting Miami). If there is another Social Media Club that's not that far from you, work with them. You may contact Serena Ehrlich or Kristie Wells for details on this program.
- Feel free to contact Serena or Kristie at any time if you have questions this document or the weekly phone call did not answer.