

Leveraging Social Media *For Young Professionals*

Red Cross young professionals groups are committed to targeting and incorporating an important segment of the population—21- to 35-year-olds—in all aspects of the Red Cross. Young professionals groups are assemblies of dedicated volunteers who support the Red Cross mission. They build awareness for the Red Cross among young, civic-minded professionals by promoting opportunities in fundraising and service delivery, including disaster relief, blood services, and preparedness education. Young professionals across all industries and backgrounds and with differing levels of Red Cross experience join young professionals groups because of a common interest in the mission of the Red Cross.

The purpose of the Leveraging Social Media Guide is to provide the social media standards and best practices for Red Cross young professionals groups.

This guide also focuses on LinkedIn strategies to assist Young Professionals Groups:

- Research and build relationships with local businesses who are interested in sponsoring an event.
- Become Red Cross Ambassadors.
- Organize and communicate with potential Group members.
- Create networking incentives for joining a Young Professionals Group.
- Expand and engage with the Group's network.

Tapping into inner circles of friends and colleagues is one of the best ways to attract new people to Young Professionals Groups. LinkedIn is a free external resource group members can use to engage young professionals for either an established or start-up group.

Be a Good Social Media Citizen

The Red Cross has no better advocates than its employees and volunteers. Social engagement – the use of social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube – is a means for showing Red Cross pride, and for communicating with and inspiring our stakeholders. (donors, clients, partners)

Below are some tips for being a good online and mobile citizen:

1. Be Accurate

Your network depends on you to tell the truth. Have fun, but make sure any news you report has been verified. If you are tweeting, sharing, or otherwise linking to someone else's content, give him/her credit.

3. Be Relevant

Post conversation starting content – then stay engaged. Find others who have shared interests.

3. Be Considerate

Encourage healthy debate but don't inflame others' opinions.

4. Be Transparent

If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction.

5. Be Human

The social web is like a dinner party. Be yourself, but with good manners.

6. Be Compassionate

Even though many connections on the social web are with people you might never meet in person, be a friend.

Be a Red Cross Advocate

You do not have to be a Red Cross advocate with your personal social networking accounts. You are not obligated to engage with stakeholders, support campaigns or use these tools to connect with other subject matter experts in your field. You are in charge of your own presence online.

If you do want to take any of these actions, we ask you to follow these guidelines:

1. Respect

- i. Follow the Code of Conduct and Fundamental Principles. When you were hired either as an employee or a volunteer, you signed the Code of Conduct and were made aware of the Fundamental Principles. They both apply to your activities on the internet.

2. Disclosure

- i. If you are posting anything about the Red Cross, you have a duty to disclose your relationship to the organization. Use your real name, identify that yourself as an employee or volunteer for Red Cross and be clear about your role.
- ii. If you have a vested interest in the conversation, disclose your interest with specifics.
- iii. Be yourself. Stick to your area of expertise and write what you know.

3. Be Responsible

- i. Do not violate our clients' privacy. Before you post any identifying information via text, photo, or video, you must have a signed release.
- ii. Do not post financial or service delivery numbers until they are triple checked, approved, and publicly published by the Red Cross. We value transparency and want to avoid publishing conflicting reports.
- iii. Remember if you're online, you're on the record.

4. Use Common Sense

- i. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in social networking. By identifying yourself as a Red Cross employee or volunteer, you are creating perceptions about your expertise and about Red Cross.

Source: Red Cross Social Engagement Team's Online Personal Communications Guideline 2.0 and Social Engagement Handbook 2.0

Young Professionals Group Social Media Guidelines

Young professionals groups utilizing social media should leverage their local Red Cross unit's staff and should discuss the overall social media vision. Aside from LinkedIn which is professional networking focused, young professionals groups are discouraged from creating their own Red Cross branded public group accounts and pages on social media sites. Young professionals groups should work closely with the local Red Cross unit to post group updates on the unit's social media accounts, and ask for permission before creating a LinkedIn group or a private Facebook group. Your group should build a strong working relationship with your local unit. Also keep in mind that when individual group members use personal accounts to engage friends they can include their Red Cross affiliation in their bio, but not in their handle.

Another important aspect of utilizing social media is actively engaging the group's networks. Good "word-of-mouth" is one of the top ways the Red Cross gains new volunteers and young professionals groups increase membership. Using social media is a great advantage for young professionals groups, especially to increase exposure, engage their networks of friends and colleagues, build and strengthen relationships and give the group a more authentic feel. Encourage group members to use their social media influence to promote the young professionals group.

With all social media, be sure not to spam your followers with constant updates. Try to create a regular posting schedule and make sure posts are relevant to the group and their interests.

Best Social Media Practices



[LinkedIn](#) is a social networking site specifically for professionals to network and connect. With over 300 million users worldwide, LinkedIn is one of the fastest growing and most active social media sites in the world.

LinkedIn Account Types

LinkedIn offers two account types. The **basic account** is free and allows users to:

- Build and maintain a large trusted professional network.
- Find and reconnect with colleagues and classmates.
- Request and provide recommendations.
- Create a professional presence on the web.
- Request up to 5 introductions at a time.
- Search for and view profiles of other LinkedIn users.
- Receive unlimited InMails.
- View 100 results per search.
- Save up to 3 searches and get weekly alerts on those searches.

[Premium accounts](#) charge users a monthly fee and offer more advanced features. There are four types of premium accounts:

- [Business](#) - for general business users
- [Job Seeker](#) - for job seekers
- [Sales Professional](#) - for sales professionals
- [Recruiter](#) - for enterprise and individual recruiters

All of the LinkedIn features described in this guide can be used with a free account.

LinkedIn Connections

On LinkedIn, people in your network are called 'connections' and your network is made up of your 1st-degree, 2nd-degree, and 3rd-degree connections and fellow members of your LinkedIn groups.

1st-degree - People you're directly connected to because you have accepted their invitation to connect, or they have accepted your invitation. You'll see a **1st** degree icon next to their name in search results and on their profile. You can contact them by sending a message on LinkedIn.

2nd-degree - People who are connected to your 1st-degree connections. You'll see a **2nd** degree icon next to their name in search results and on their profile. You can send them an invitation by clicking **Connect** or contact them through an InMail or an introduction. Use LinkedIn's "get introduced" feature to easily make 2nd-degree connections 1st-degree.

3rd-degree - People who are connected to your 2nd-degree connections. You'll see a **3rd** degree icon next to their name in search results and on their profile.

- If their full first and last names are displayed, you will be able to send them an invitation by clicking **Connect**.
- If only the first letter of their last name is displayed, clicking **Connect** is not an option but you can still contact them through an InMail or an introduction.

Fellow members of your LinkedIn Groups - These people are considered part of your network because you're members of the same group. You'll see a **Group** icon next to their name in search results and on their profile. You can contact them by sending a message on LinkedIn or using your group's discussion feature.

New LinkedIn users can use the [Import Contacts and Invite page](#) to search their email address book for friends and co-workers on LinkedIn.

Keep in mind that LinkedIn is slightly different from Facebook and other social media platforms. When a user views another LinkedIn member's profile, the LinkedIn member is notified that their profile has been viewed by the specific user.

LinkedIn Keywords

LinkedIn is essentially an online database of professionals, companies, groups, universities and jobs. As a result, LinkedIn makes use of [keywords](#) when users search for information to display results. LinkedIn will recommend certain keywords to users. Keep keywords in mind when designing your profile and Red Cross young professionals LinkedIn group because using the right keywords can increase search engine optimization and increase the likelihood that your Group's page will show up in someone's search results.

LinkedIn Searches

LinkedIn has a more advanced search engine than other social media sites. Groups can use LinkedIn to search for people, local businesses, and other professionals groups.

Search results can be filtered by a wide range of categories. Use LinkedIn's search engine to research and gain insights an online search would not reveal.

LinkedIn Features for Young Professional Groups

LinkedIn has features Red Cross young professionals groups can use to:

1. **Become an online Red Cross Ambassador.** Showing others your involvement with the Red Cross is a powerful way to spread awareness and engagement. By showing others you support the Red Cross, you can become a subject matter expert people approach to learn more about the Red Cross. Sharing your involvement with the Red Cross and the young professionals group allows you to become the gateway to another's involvement. Become a Red Cross Ambassador on LinkedIn by:
 - a) Highlight your Red Cross involvement on your LinkedIn profile. List your volunteer experiences with the Red Cross to have the Red Cross logo on your profile, include your involvement in the young professionals group, add the Red Cross as an organization you support, follow the Red Cross on LinkedIn and join your young professionals group's LinkedIn group.



Organizations

Example Red Cross Young Professionals Group

Committee Member

July 2014 – Present

I help fundraise for the Red Cross Young Professionals Group. Last year I raised over \$1,000.



Volunteer Experience & Causes

Volunteer

American Red Cross

July 2014 | Disaster and Humanitarian Relief

I serve as a Red Cross Disaster Action Team (DAT) volunteer. I am a member of the my local Red Cross Young Professionals Group .



Organizations you support:

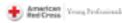
- American Red Cross
- American Red Cross National Capital Region
- Red Cross Youth



American Red Cross

Young Professionals

Groups



Example Red Cross Y...

Visible ▶

Following



American Red Cross

Nonprofit Organization

Management

✓ Following

- b) Share Red Cross stories on your LinkedIn news feed, especially during times of disaster. Official Red Cross news & events are posted at <http://www.redcross.org/news-events> and press releases are posted at <http://www.redcross.org/news-events/press>. Sharing Red Cross news can engage your network and introduce them to a Red Cross line-of-service they were previously unaware of.

2. **LinkedIn group.** Young professionals groups can create a group on LinkedIn for their members. LinkedIn groups have more advanced communication and management features, making groups a great external tool for young professionals groups to attract and engage potential members. Creating a LinkedIn group also allows young professionals groups to attract people who are searching LinkedIn for a young professionals group to join in their local city. There are currently over 2.1 million LinkedIn groups, and 81% of all LinkedIn users belong to at least one group. A LinkedIn group is a great tool to use to interact with interested people, but it doesn't take the place of your Volunteer Connection GroupShare. Continue to use your GroupShare as an internal management tool for the Group.

- a) When **creating a group**, young professionals groups can choose from a wide range of **group settings**. Consult the LinkedIn help menu for specific information about [Creating a Group and Customizing Group Settings](#).
- b) LinkedIn allows groups to be [Member-Only and Open Groups](#). Young professionals groups can choose to have either an open or closed group. Young professionals groups can offer joining the LinkedIn member-only group as a membership benefit. Keep in mind groups do not have to permanently be open; group owners and managers can change the open setting at anytime.

- c) All **Group Members** have access to:
 - a) **View all members** in the group and their profile, even if members are not a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd-degree connection.
 - b) **Post a general discussion, promotion or job opportunity** within the group. Group members will also receive an email when a new group post is made.
 - c) **View group statistics** including summary data, demographics, growth and activity. To access group statistics click the “i” icon on the group’s page.
- d) **Group Moderators** have additional access to:
 - a) **Limiting and monitoring discussions** and comments, and managing submission and moderation queues. They can also feature a discussion.
- e) Group **Owners and Managers** have full access to the group **manage** options. Useful manage options for Young Professional Groups include:
 - a) **Approving** requests to join the group.
 - b) **Moderating** group discussion, promotions and job postings.
 - c) **Sending an announcement** to all group members once per week. The announcement is sent as an email to group members and appears as a discussion on the group’s discussion page. This can be another avenue to promote events and share information.
 - d) **Sending LinkedIn invitations** to join the group to your LinkedIn connections and email invitations to others in your network that do not have a LinkedIn profile.
 - e) **Promoting the group outside of LinkedIn** by posting the “Group join link” on the Young Professional Groups Red Cross webpage, other social media accounts and announcements.
 - f) **Assigning group roles and managing participants.**
 - g) **Editing group settings, information, and rules.**
 - h) **Creating templates** including Request-to-join, Welcome, Decline, and Decline and Block messages.

Encourage members to post discussions, promotions and job opportunities within the LinkedIn group. Also encourage group members to use the group to communicate with each other. If a new member attended an event and joined the group, encourage group members who were not able to attend the event introduce themselves to the new member. Groups are a powerful way to engage with the community and also build professional relationships among the group members.

For more information on Group management visit [LinkedIn Group Management - Best Practices](#) website.

Join the [American Red Cross Young Professionals group](#) on LinkedIn as well to make connections with Red Cross young professionals across the country.

Example Red Cross Young Professionals Group LinkedIn Group Page:

American Red Cross

Red Cross Young Professionals (RCYP) of Cincinnati

10 members [Join](#) [i](#) [↗](#)

[Discussions](#) [Promotions](#) [Jobs](#) [Members](#) [Search](#)

Let the world know what you think.
Why not become a member of this open group and start your own discussions?

Popular Recent

RCYP's Speaker Series is kicking off!!

As part of our goal to help each other further develop professionally, we will be having our first installment of the speaker series on Thursday, July 17th!

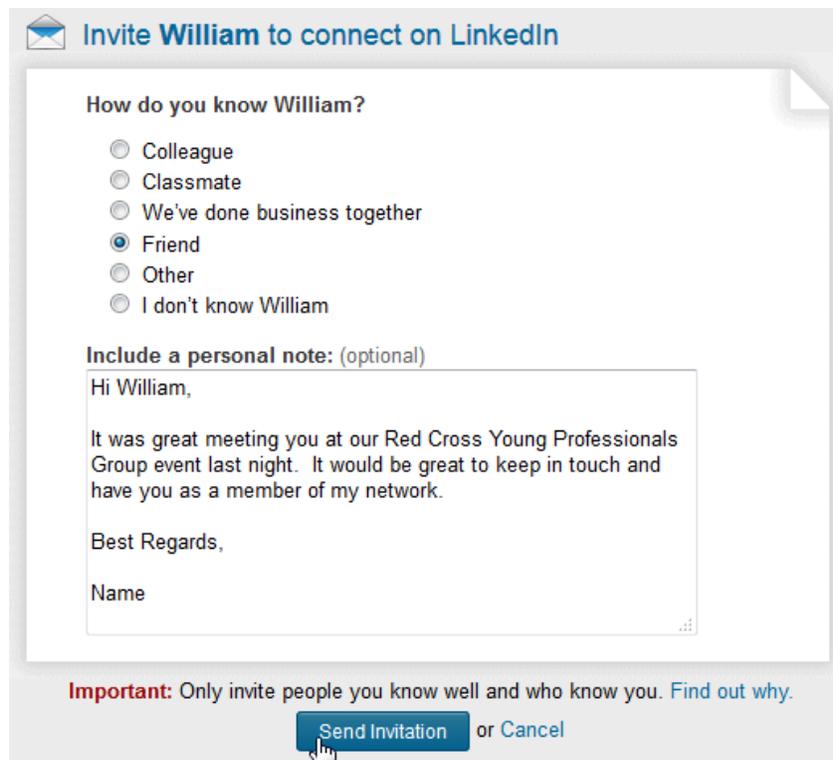
We will be joined by Ross ...

Like • Comment (1) • Follow • 10 days ago

Your group contribution level
Start by commenting in a discussion. Group participants get 4x the number of profile views.

Getting Started

3. **Grow and Engage the Group's Network.** LinkedIn can be used by young professionals groups as an external tool to promote an event among your network and follow-up with new attendees afterwards.
- a) **Send a message** to 1st-degree connections personally inviting them to attend an upcoming event for the young professionals group. Encourage all Group members to engage their personal networks.
 - b) **Use LinkedIn's [Advanced People Search](#)** to find and follow-up with attendees after a Red Cross event. When you send an invitation to connect, write a short personal note in the invitation saying it was great to meet at the event and it would be great to keep in touch by having you as a member of my network. Following up can be a powerful motivator for someone to join the group, and it also allows you to reach out to this person to attend future events.



Invite William to connect on LinkedIn

How do you know William?

- Colleague
- Classmate
- We've done business together
- Friend
- Other
- I don't know William

Include a personal note: (optional)

Hi William,

It was great meeting you at our Red Cross Young Professionals Group event last night. It would be great to keep in touch and have you as a member of my network.

Best Regards,

Name

Important: Only invite people you know well and who know you. [Find out why.](#)

or

flickr

Young professionals groups can ask the local Red Cross unit if they can post pictures from group events on the unit's flickr account.

The Red Cross Young Professionals Auxiliary in the Dallas Metroplex posts pictures from group events on the unit's [flickr account](#). The Auxiliary's webpage on the local Red Cross unit's website links to their flickr account so the public can view information about the group. At group events, designate a group member to take pictures that can be uploaded to flickr afterwards, and then share the link to the album on social media accounts.

facebook

Young professionals groups should not create their own Facebook pages. Groups can create a private Facebook group as well as work with the local unit to post about the group on the unit's Facebook page.

The Auxiliary Society of Greater Chicago promotes events on Facebook by working closely with the local unit. Groups can ask the local unit to create a [Facebook event](#) using their facebook page. Then, ask group members to register for the event if they can attend, and encourage them to share the event link with their friends on social media using their personal accounts. The event link can also be posted in the young professional's private Facebook group so the link can more easily be shared. After the event, pictures can be posted on the unit's Facebook page.

You Tube

Young professionals groups can ask the local unit if they can create and upload a video to the unit's YouTube channel that briefly introduces the group.

The Red Cross Young Professionals Auxiliary in the Dallas Metroplex worked with the local unit to [upload a video](#) introducing the group on the local unit's YouTube channel.

twitter

Young professionals groups can work with the local Red Cross unit to promote events on the unit's Twitter account.

Create a #hashtag for events, and let event attendees know they can use the #hashtag to tweet about an event and tweet at the local Red Cross using their personal accounts. (Use the same #hashtag across all platforms) Event information can be tweeted by the local unit's Twitter account and then group members can retweet the message using their personal accounts.

Pinterest

[Pinterest](#) is currently the fastest growing social media network with a growth rate of 88% over the past 12 months. Promoting a young professionals group on Pinterest is an important way to give the Group more exposure, especially for mobile social media users. Red Cross units are not allowed to have Pinterest accounts at this time, so group members should use their personal accounts to promote the Red Cross and the young professionals group on Pinterest.

A young professionals group can create an event logo and have group members and event attendees pin the logo on their personal boards. Work with the local Red Cross unit to create a logo using materials on [Brand Central](#).

Instagram

Instagram can be used to create excitement for an event and share pictures from the event afterwards. Instagram is an especially great way to engage mobile social media users in the group's network. You can also use the event #hashtag on Instagram so that attendees can post their own photos and tag them to the event. Red Cross units are not allowed to have Instagram accounts at this time, so group members should use their personal accounts to promote the Red Cross and the young professionals group on Instagram.



Work with the local Red Cross unit to create a webpage on their website, and be sure to promote the Group's social media presence on the webpage.

Information to include on young professionals groups Red Cross webpage:

- A brief introduction of when the Group was founded and its purpose.
- Group's mission statement.
- How to join and contact information for questions.
- Upcoming events.
- Benefits of membership.
- Link to the local Red Cross unit's blog.
- Social Media including Facebook, Flickr, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.
- List of group members on the leadership committee, with possible individual pictures and description of their roles.

Example Red Cross young professionals webpages:

[Chicago Young Professionals Auxiliary Society](#)

[Dallas Young Professionals Auxiliary](#)

[Young Professionals – Chesapeake Region](#)

[Club Red – Young Professionals Group of Silicon Valley Red Cross](#)

Engaging your young professionals group's network is an essential part of growing the group. Social media allows group members to more easily share the group with their network. LinkedIn has more advanced features which allow groups to communicate, network, research and raise the group's profile. Be creative and come up with new and exciting ways to engage your networks on social media. Start using social media to take your young professionals group to the next level today!

Resources

[Online Personal Communications Guidelines 2.0](#)

[Social Engagement Handbook 2.0](#)

[Red Cross University: Social Basics](#)

[Brand Central](#)

[Red Cross Social Basics \(webinar\)](#)

[Social Engagement Team's Exchange Topic Hub](#)

[Social Engagement Team FAQ](#)

[Red Cross Social Media Managers Exchange Page](#)