

BECTU Communications tips for reps and branches

3 things to try if... your branch is new to communications

1. **Elect or ask someone on your branch committee to be in charge of communications.** You could also have a roster, so it's a shared responsibility throughout the year.
2. **Start a branch newsletter.** This could be once a month or once a quarter. It can be as simple bullet points in an email to start, or speak to your organiser or the comms team about how we can help set you up with a basic template. Talk BECTU week would be a great time to launch a newsletter and let members know what they can expect for the year ahead.
3. **Put up some posters.** Are there notice boards in the workplace you can use? Can you stick leaflets on the back of doors in communal areas? Have a look at some of the posters and resources we have available here: www.bectu.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/Union-Week/resources

Or contact communications@bectu.org.uk if you need stickers and other promotional items.

3 things to try if... you're part-way on the comms journey

1. **Get a newsletter upgrade.** If you already have a branch newsletter you might want to consider increasing the frequency or updating the template. It's also worth checking with members if the content is relevant and timely? Speak to your local organiser or the comms team if you'd like help or advice.
2. **Identify member priorities.** During Talk BECTU week you could run an online survey to find out what members are most interested in and how they want you to communicate with them. You can then tailor your communications and campaigning to target these priorities.
3. **Deliver a local campaign.** Talk BECTU week is an opportunity to run a campaign on an issue previously identified. If there are no hot issues to campaign on, you might want to consider a fundraising drive for a local charity, organising a talk or seminar or running a networking event for members. Try to find something that will get a buzz going in your workplace about what the union is doing.

3 things to try if... you are already nailing the basics

1. **Get social.** Have you considered starting a Twitter or Facebook social media group for your office or branch? You do need the time and people able to resource this to make it effective, so don't start one unless you're sure you'll be able to keep it updated. Speak to the comms team if you'd like support and ideas. If you've already got a social media account up and running, talk to us about how we can help you grow it.
2. **Get vocal.** If you're already campaigning on a local issue, it might be worth seeing if the media is interested. Contact communications@bectu.org.uk for advice.
3. **Go beyond your branch.** If you already have an active, engaged branch or workplace, why not see if you can expand your connections?

Social media campaigning

If your branch is on social media, here are some tips:

If you think you want to post on Twitter or Facebook, there are some important questions to ask yourself first.

- Do you have an engaging or relevant piece of content?
- Do you have a picture/graphic/video? – if you don't contact communications@bectu.org.uk and we will be happy to help

Have you considered:

- Who this is aimed at?
- What is the call to action for the viewer?

If yes to the first two questions and you have a clear answer for the last questions you are ready to go.

Remember content needs to be relevant, engaging and frequent

Facebook

WHEN:

- Try and post once a day
- People are usually on Facebook when they're on their way to work (8-10am) and after work (6-8pm) – posting at these times will hit the biggest audience.

CONTENT:

- Keep it concise – aim for no more than 100 words per post. You can link to a website/blog/YouTube account to elaborate. Longer posts are ok, as long as they're broken down and clear- a list is probably best
- Always include a video, picture, web link or graphic in your posts
- Always have a call to action. Examples inc. find out more, read a blog post, share if you agree, become a Prospect member today, watch a video
- Why not ask your followers a question and start a discussion?

- Remember - people share content online when it elicits humour, urgency or a sense pride in their values.

Twitter

WHEN:

- Tweet a couple of times a day with your own content, and retweet relevant content from SMT, unions and other high-profile trade union reps etc.

CONTENT:

- Be informal and relaxed – Twitter is about personality.
- Always be punchy and succinct – keep your call to action at the front of your mind when tweeting
- Always post content with an image, video, web link.
- Utilise the #TalkBECTU so people can feel like they're part of something bigger and get on board. Make sure you use it consistently and get others to do so too. This will also allow you to find content to retweet easily.
- Start conversations on Twitter – ask schools, local businesses, faith organisations etc to meet with you, retweet your content, or thank them for their time.
- Emojis make everything more fun

- Remember – putting out too much content can have a negative effect too. It's better to post less frequently but with high quality content than post for the sake of it!

Grow your audience

It's important that we're not only talking to our pre-existing members, we want to grow our audience as much as we can.

- Think about who your post is aimed at. Is it all members, the public or people only with an interest and understanding of a sector?
- Use # to join conversations that are being had by people in our sectors or to comment upon national issues
- If you want to promote a post add something like "Agree? Please share" or "to show your support share today"

Photography tips

If you are out and about, you will be most likely to want to use your mobile phone to take pictures.

Here are 9 tips for taking high quality photos with a phone.

1. Think about who you are trying to reach and what you are trying to say to them. With this in mind also consider your subject matter and what you want to capture
2. Action shots are best with people at work or doing something, rather than standing outside an office. Try and keep the background of the shot clutter free. As a union groups of people tend to reflect what we do best, but think about representing the diversity of the whole membership
3. Frame your shot. Use the rule of thirds. When composing a picture, imagine two horizontal lines and two vertical lines crossing like a grid on top of it. Place strong lines and divisions on the gridlines. Let elements of interest fall on the intersections.
4. Set your phone to its highest picture quality and resolution
5. Make people the subject of the photo and avoid backs of heads
6. Try and shoot as close as possible to the subject. Most smartphone cameras have a digital zoom, but using this won't help you get detailed pictures from far away. It will essentially crop your picture on the screen rather than during editing
7. Try and use natural light where possible. Position your subjects so they are well lit from the front. Avoid strong lighting behind your subjects, unless you want to end up with a silhouette effect
8. Don't forget to clean the lense
9. And lastly don't forget you will need to get permission from everyone photographed that the picture can be used. A GDPR form like this should be used:

Permission granted to BECTU/Prospect to use photographs to promote the union

By signing this form you grant permission to BECTU/Prospect to photograph you and to use such photographs in any manner or media whatsoever, including unrestricted use for the purposes of publicity, advertising and promotion of the union. You further acknowledge that BECTU/Prospect owns all rights to the photographs.

Name in full

Signature

Date

