



The \$50,000 Facebook Comment

Navigating Social Media 2.0

Presented by Sam Toles | Founder, CiviSocial

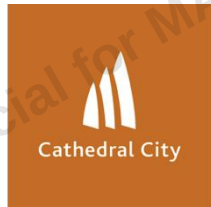
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Meet Your Speaker



Media Exec



Elected Official



Social Media Guru



Why This Matters...



RISK

- Budget: one comment can become a \$50,000 problem
- Reputation: who defines us?

RELEVANCE

- Are you meeting your constituents where they are?
- If you're not on social media, you're invisible!

REALITY

- The media landscape has changed.
- Traditional approaches don't work anymore.
- AI is coming fast and we're still focused on Facebook!

REGRET

- I wish we had started sooner
- They never heard our side of the story

Are you...

Hear No Evil

- Comments are turned off
- Ignoring social media



Say No Evil

- VERY careful on social media
- Priority is to avoid the wrath



See No Evil

- Our social media is working
- No misinformation / anger



What Is Your Why?

Why did you choose public service?

- Was it to serve your community?
- Was it to make a difference?
 - Or Was it to be the concierge to a small group of loud voices on social media?

***"People don't buy what you do...
they buy why you do it."***

— Simon Sinek

Neighbors Serving Neighbors



Are these your
neighbors?

Them Too?



Also These Folks?

Neighbors Serving Neighbors

They are
your WHY!



Neighbors Serving Neighbors

So WHY
do we only
talk to
THEM...



Neighbors Serving Neighbors



Neighbors Serving Neighbors

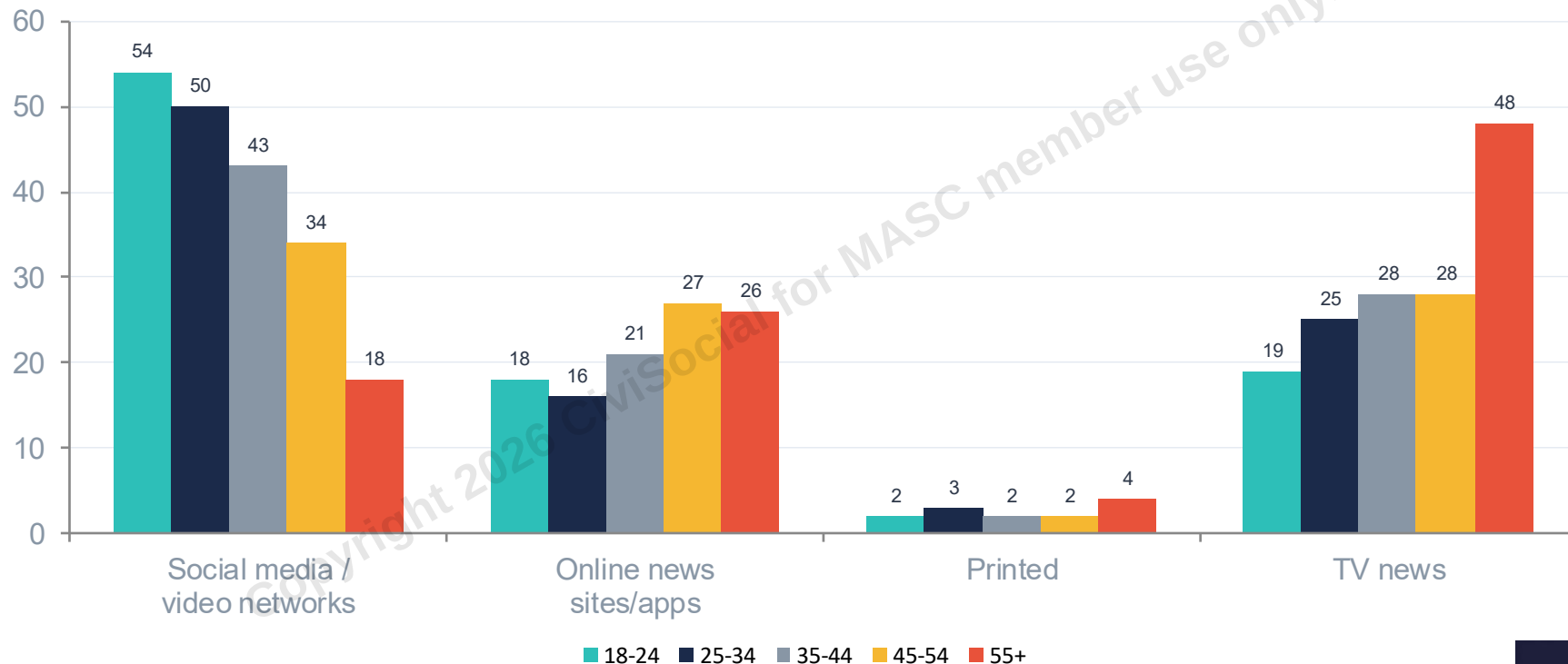


If a tree falls in a neighborhood and...

- A group of City Staff clear it
- But only the people on that small street see that
- **Does your work have value?**
 - **YES!**
- **Is that value being communicated?**
 - **Not broadly.**

Let's Look At The Data

The New Communications Landscape

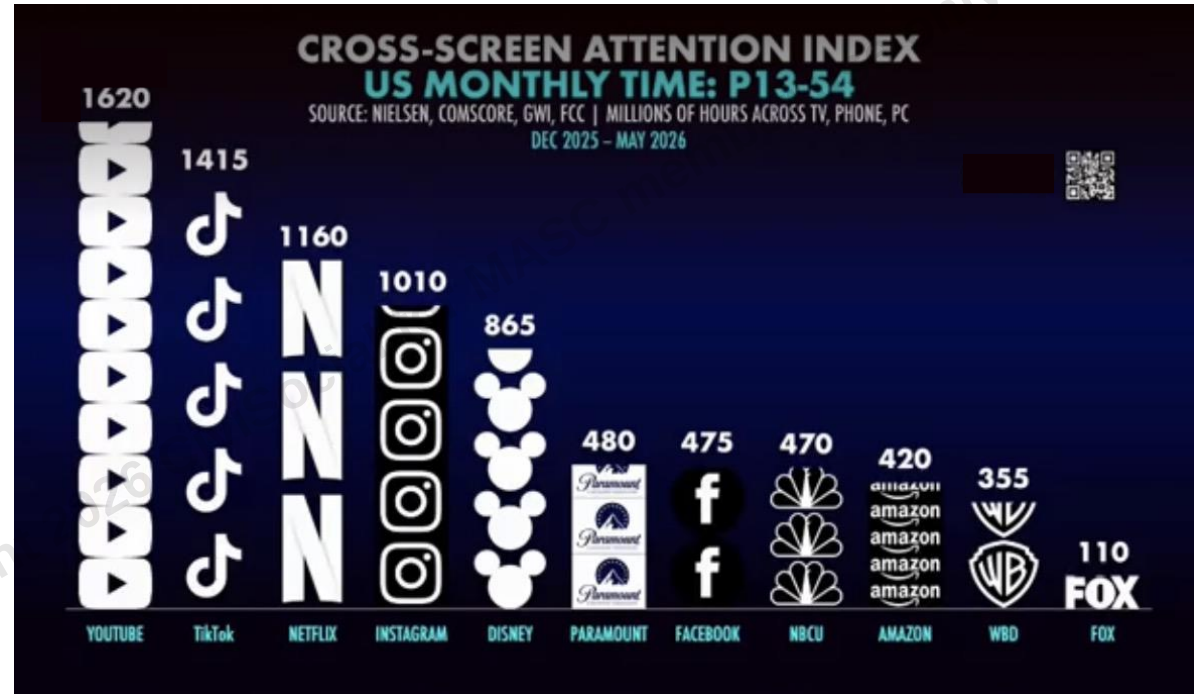


Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report (Oxford University)

The New Communications Landscape

Facebook Mirrors Traditional Media

- Among 70% of the US population, YouTube, TikTok, Netflix and Instagram are dominant
- Disney + Hulu sits as a generational bridge
- Facebook lives among traditional networks and Amazon Prime



The New Communications Landscape

Age

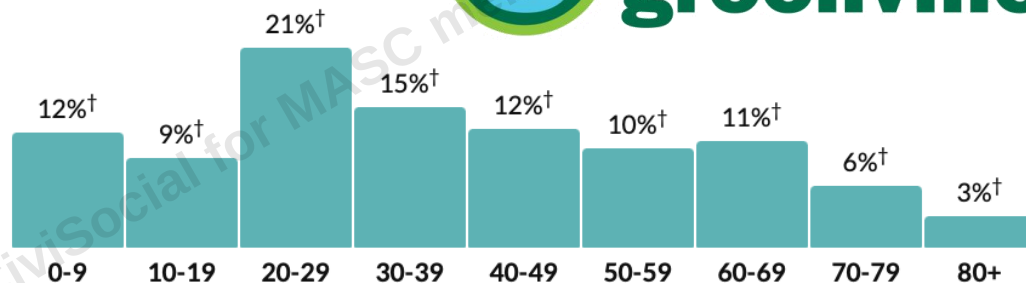
35.8

Median age

about 90 percent of the figure in the
Greenville-Anderson-Greer, SC
Metro Area: 38.9

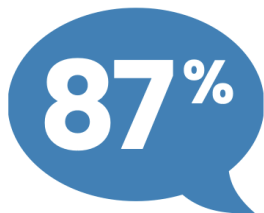
about 90 percent of the figure in
South Carolina: 40.7

Population by age range



The Trust IS There...

Governance



of residents feel the **overall customer service** is excellent or good.

SIMILAR to Peer Cities benchmark.

79% feel quality of services rank higher than national benchmark

Percentage of excellent/good or very/somewhat likely.

KEY ASPECTS

Overall services have positive review, however residents feel the City can enhance communication efforts about issues facing the community and have more resident involvement.

But you aren't telling your story!

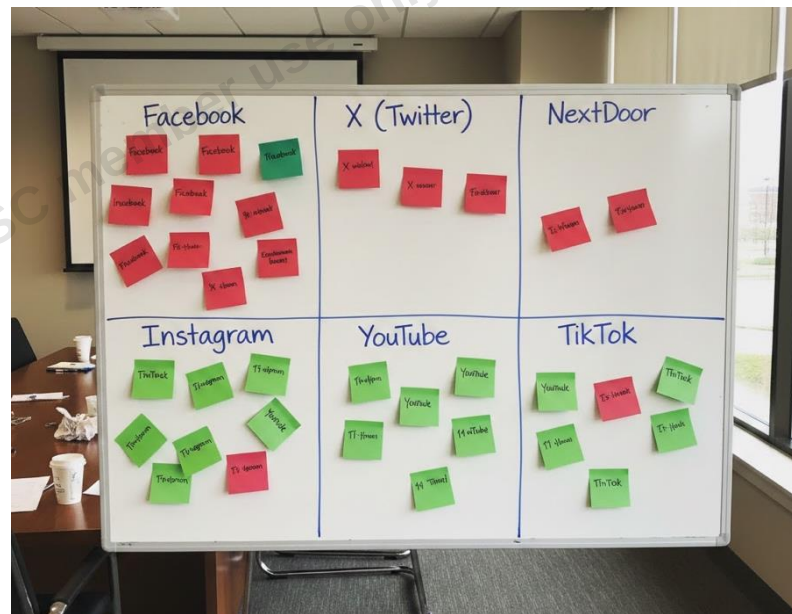
Social Media 2.0

Is Social Media ALL BAD?

Is ALL Social Media BAD?

You have two sticky notes...

- On the RED note — one platform that makes you feel:
 - **Nervous / Anxious / Triggered**
- On the GREEN note — one platform that makes you feel:
 - **Humor / Curious / Relaxed**



What the Research Says...

	YouTube — A Viewing Platform 	Facebook — A Forum Platform 
Motivated?	72% feel motivated or inspired after watching content	Consistent detrimental effect on mental health with regular use
Smarter?	Content reinforces learning and builds real-world knowledge	Upward social comparison drives depression and inadequacy
Lonely?	Creator content reduces anxiety, depression, and isolation	Passive scrolling linked to higher negative emotion
Bottom line	You go to learn and be entertained. Content is the product.	You go to see other people's lives. Argument is the product.

Social 1.0 vs Social 2.0: Comment Culture vs Share Culture



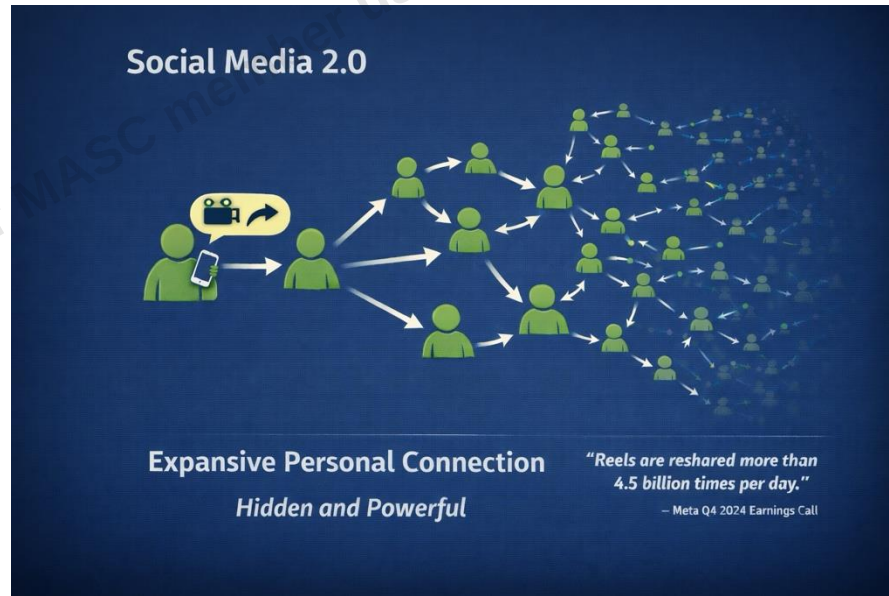
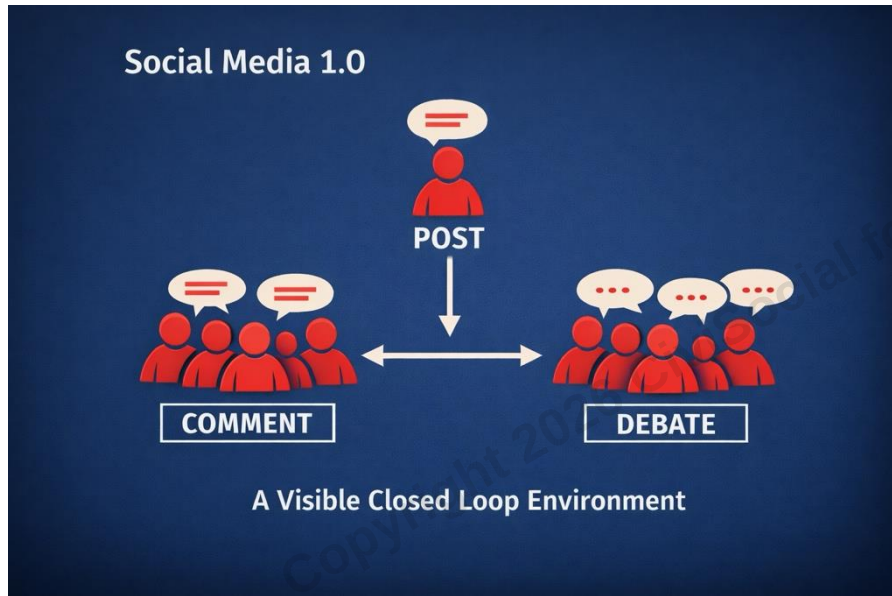
- Original platform algorithms are driven by **comments**
 - Built for keyboards



- Modern platform algorithms are driven by **shares**
 - Mobile first



Social 1.0 vs Social 2.0: Community Groups vs. The Silent Majority



Does your social media look like...



THIS

OR THIS



The Social Media Essentials For #LocalGov

The 5 keys to unlocking success:

- 1 Align with your community
- 2 Establish a culture of content
- 3 Meet your audience where they are
- 4 Video first (no more flyers!)
- 5 Efficiency tools make it easier than ever



Step One: Aligning with your community

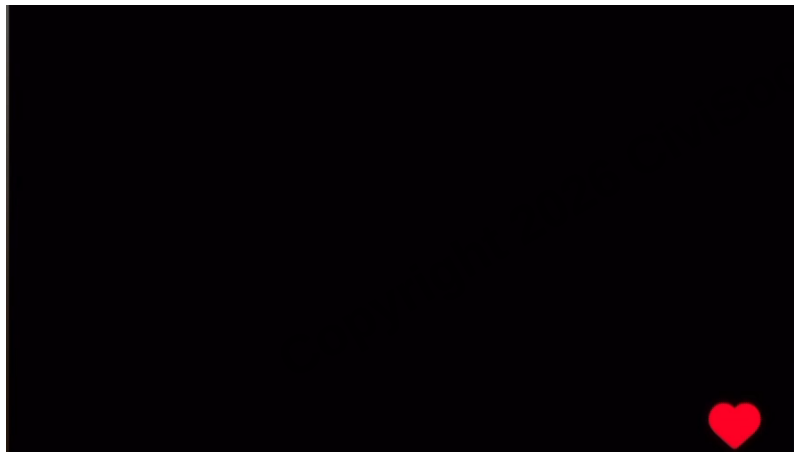
Begin asking yourselves these key questions...

WHO	WHAT	WHERE	WHEN	WHY
We are not hearing from our community. We are hearing from the Same Ten People.	They are not reading our announcements. They are watching video. Short, human, and authentic.	Not just on Facebook. Our residents use a portfolio of platforms.	We can be a visible presence in their day. Before the kids wake up. After dinner. In the carpool.	The majority should hear from us. When neighbors see us working for them, they'll feel pride in us too.
The Silent Majority is not in the room.	61% of social media time is now video.	84% of US adults use YouTube.	Not just in the comments of our usual suspects.	Trust is earned by meeting people where they are.

Electeds should *also* align with their CAOs

A conversation for elected officials and managers

- Managers: schedule a conversation with your board
- 1:1 with each member
- 1 hour to align together



Scan for *FREE* Conversation Guide

Step Two: Establish a culture of content

This **CANNOT** be the role of a single person

- You have members of the team adept at social media
- You have a diversity of platform users on staff
- Increased job satisfaction among younger workforce

57%

of Gen Z choose Content Creator
as their #1 career choice!

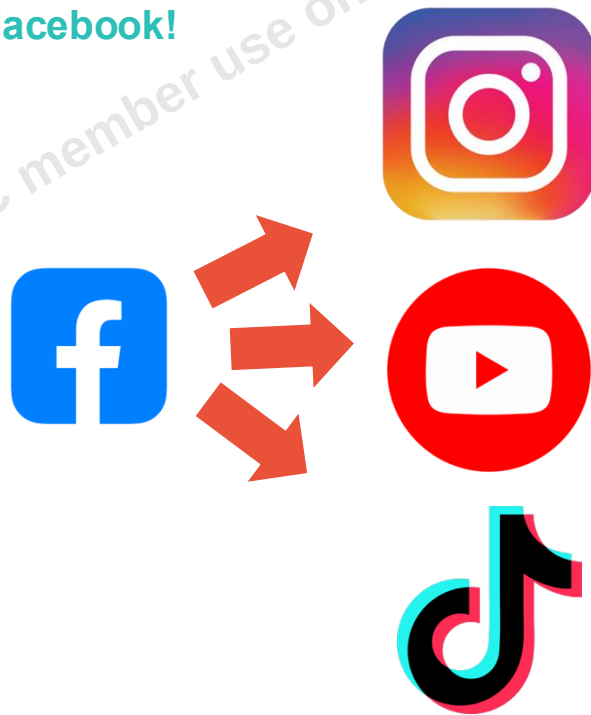
Source: Morning Consult (2024)



Step 3: Meet your audience where they are

Your demographic sweet spot is likely Instagram, not Facebook!

- Make your Facebook content count (3–5 posts/week)
- No cross-posting from FB → Instagram (NOT the same)
- Focus on video content for Instagram:
 - < 60 second reels (2–4x week)
 - < 20 second stories (daily!)
- High engagement video can be cross-posted 2.0 → FB
- Learn TikTok and experiment with trends (TikTok ↔ IG)



Step Four: Video First

They say a picture is worth 1,000 words.

- Each second of video is 30 pictures
- A 60 second video is worth 1,800,000 words!

The focus is to build a parasocial connection between you and the neighbors you serve

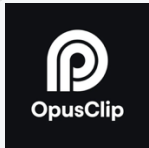
- Engaging, human stories (entertain & inform)
- Show your work (remember the tree removal)



Step Five: Technology makes it easier



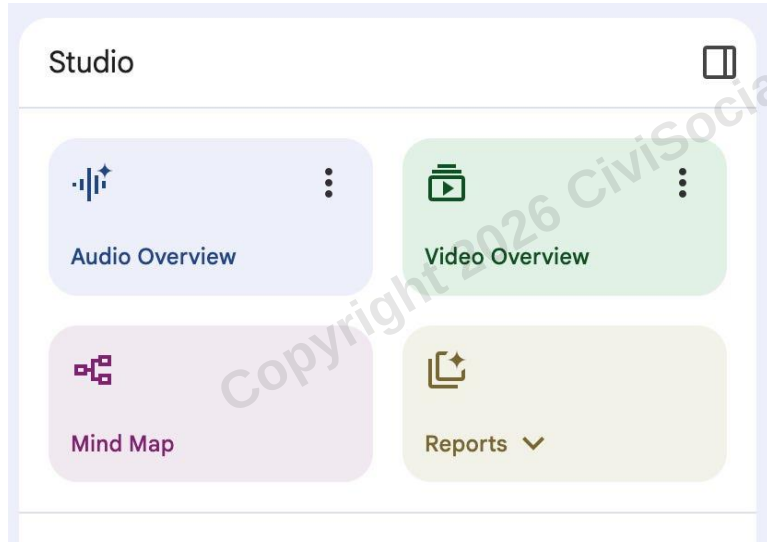
These inexpensive tools are a game-changer for video content

IDEATION	EDITING	IMAGE CREATION	VIDEO GENERATION
 Claude  ChatGPT  Gemini	 CapCut  Adobe Express	 OpenArt  Leonardo.Ai	 Veo 3  KlingAI  Grok
CAPTIONS	REPURPOSING	NOT THIS	WHY THESE TOOLS
 CapCut  Adobe Express	 OpusClip  descript		Built for creators, not marketers. Fast, human, short-form. Most are free or low-cost.

Step Five: Technology makes it easier

This **FREE** tool helps make complex issues clear

- Turn the agenda into a conversational podcast
- Turn the initiative into an animated presentation



Don't Feed The Trolls...

Engagement 101

The 90 > 9 > 1 rule



90% of Facebook users primarily scroll (the lurkers)



9% comment or engage, but occasionally (the curious)



1% generate most of the noise (the agitators)

Engagement 101

Intent Matters



A genuine question

“When is that pothole going to be fixed?”



Someone seeking attention

“Why don’t they ever fix our streets?!?”



Answer each with a **Direct Message** versus a **reply**!

Engagement 101



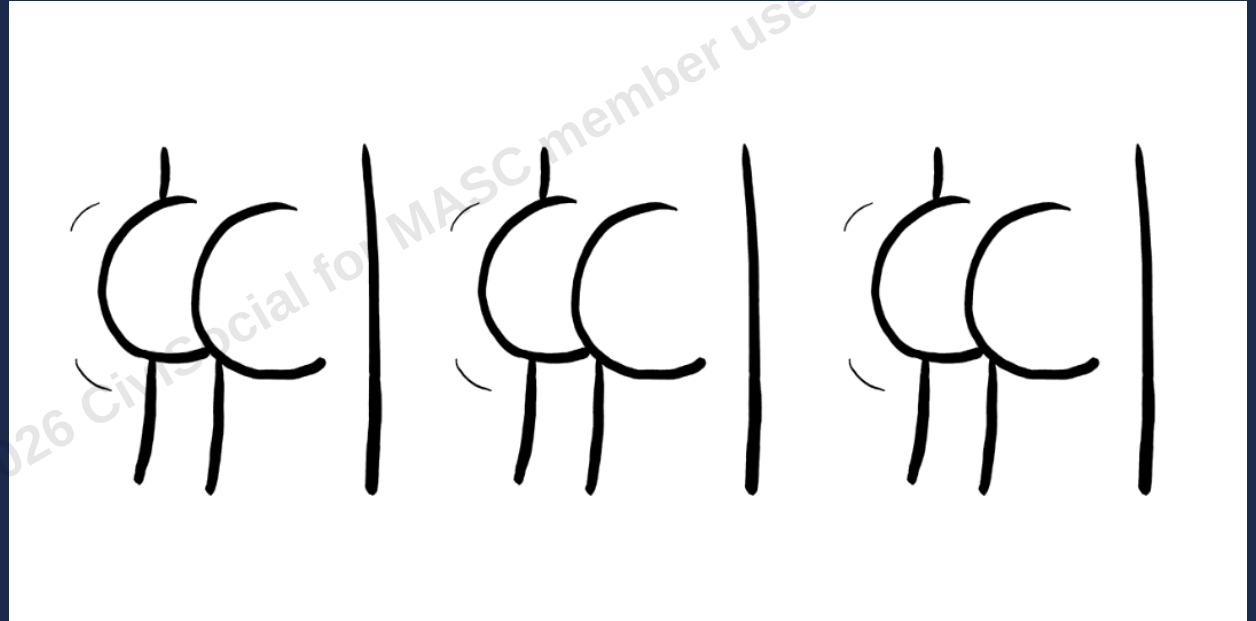
Bad News Wins Trust

“Just get to the ribbon cutting!”

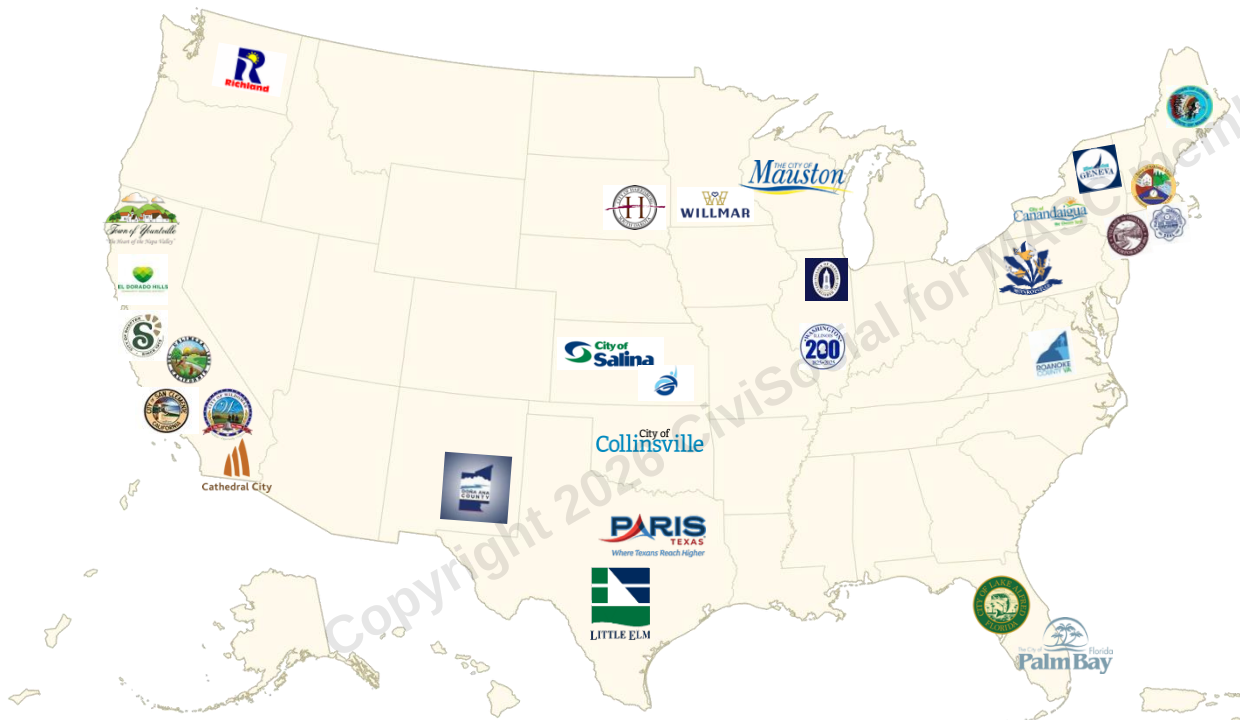
- ❑ Truth is your most powerful currency
- ❑ Misinformation spreads when:
 - ❑ Honest messengers feel absent
 - ❑ We act and sound like Polyana’s
 - ❑ Bad news is pushed under the rug
- ❑ Honesty is surprisingly effective:
 - ❑ We trust those who “level with us”
 - ❑ It’s better for us to explain a bad situation than let the STPs do it for you

But...But...But...

Q&A



Join The CiviSocial Family



Amanda Mack, ICMA-CM, EMPA · 1st

City Administrator, City of Harrisburg South Dakota
11m ·

We brought [Sam Toles](#) to town back in June to help guide our social media efforts. Harrisburg is unique for a lot of reasons, but one being the lack of any kind of local media. Prior to Sam's arrival we had a city Facebook page (that we were afraid of!) and an Instagram page that was home to some lovely Canva created posts. Here we are six months later, and the numbers don't lie:

Facebook:

Views 58.2%

Follows 70.3%

Content interactions 309%

Link Clicks 304%

Instagram:

Views 100%

Reach 605.9k%

Visits 1.2k%

Followers 1.0k%

Tik Tok (brand new in 2025)

Video Views: 64,117

Reached Audience: 48,309

Profile Views: 2061

Likes: 2433

Shares: 474

Comments: 120



Additional Resources

Free Social Media Playbook



Free (AI) Therapy



Elected Playbook



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