

Social Pro's & Con's

There's no shortage of social media platforms available to Little Athletics clubs and centres. Evaluating five of the most popular options we reckon one is essential, another a nice to have, with a third worth keeping an eye on.



Summary

Despite its shortcomings Facebook is likely to remain the platform of choice for Little Athletics clubs and centres for the foreseeable future due to its adoption rate, audience size, familiarity, functionality and (zero) cost.

Utility

Increasingly Shunt is seeing Facebook replace club websites for the reasons outlined above.

Content

It's an anything goes type platform re content format, length and type (eg. livestreams, video, pictures, text and links).

Audience

Parents and increasingly grandparents.

Verdict

We might not like it for a bunch of reasons but it's now an essential communications tool for sport.



Summary

Instagram initially gained prominence for its food and travel imagery, then morphed into the home of selfies, now its shifting to video as it takes on the popularity of TikTok.

Utility

Think of it as a showcase for your club or centre's best visual (image or video) content.

Content

Ideal for images (carousels) and increasingly video. Hint! Avoid excessive use of text or graphics as it performs poorly for engagement.

Audience

Teenagers, younger adults and 'hip' parents.

Verdict

If your club or centre can consistently deliver high quality images and video Instagram is worth investing in.



Summary

Favourite of traditional media (print, radio and television) due to its micro-blogging, headline snippet type format. Sports audiences overall have slipped from number two (to Facebook) to a distant third to Instagram.

Utility

One of its last high engagement strongholds in sport is national team and league accounts.

Content

Most effective if your club or centre has LOTS of short, sharp event type content and a receptive audience.

Audience

Some parents. Plus sponsors that uses the platform (eg. Government) and sports media.

Verdict

Covid has driven a significant reduction in sports activity on the platform due to disrupted event calendars. Likely pass.



Summary

The new kid on the block. Making major headway with kids due to often silly but really addictive content, supported by a clever algorithm that's quite different to competitors.

Utility

Fills a largely untapped content niche in sport for endless bloopers-reel type content.

Content

Sports content themes include; silly, absurd, weird, comedy, embarrassed and failed.... You get the picture!

Audience

Teenagers and young adults.

Verdict

This could well become THE big platform to drive future participation. Ask your kids for advice on how your club or centre might crack the 'code' to make Little Athletics more TikTok-able.



Summary

Positioned as the B2B, Peer-2-Peer, business, advocacy, employment, career development and personal brand building platform. Phew!

Utility

While its networking (sponsorship) potential is clear, many sports don't know what to do with it.

Content

Requires a very specific type of content to be effective (see Summary). Many sports struggle to get this right (see Utility).

Audience

Parents. Emerging little athletes interested in building their personal (career) brand.

Verdict

If you've got plenty of time, resources and an engaged local business community then LinkedIn might be worth a look? Otherwise it's a pass.

Are you an informer or engager?

Inform Content

Purpose:
SPORT DELIVERY

Smooth running of your Little Athletics club or centre.

Description:
ACTION and REMINDER

Inform posts typically include a 'CTA' (Call-to-Action) asking or reminding audiences to take a given action.

Content Mix:
MAJORITY to ALL

For most clubs, the percentage of Inform content starts at around 60% of the total and often extends all the way out to 100%.

Pre, On or Post Event Reporting:
ALL

*Pre-Event; CTA (Call-to-Action) content
On-Event; Livestreaming
Post-Event; Event Results*

Difficulty Rating:
EASY

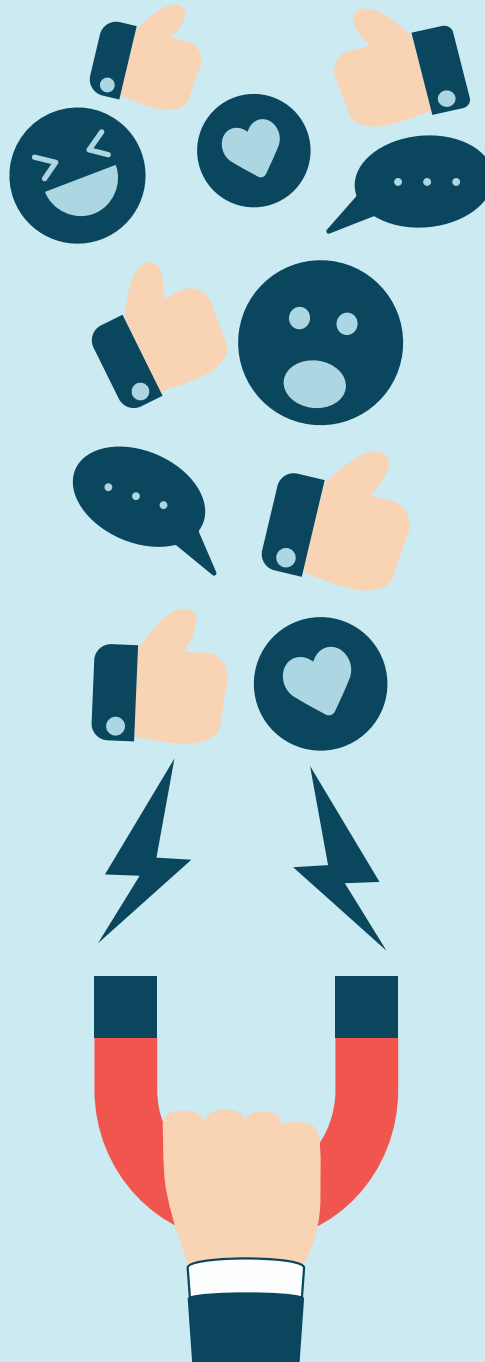
Inform content is integral to the delivery of Little Athletics.

Audience Growth Rating:
LOW

Inform type content is unlikely to translate to high audience growth but this isn't its purpose.

Engagement Rating:
LOW

But this doesn't mean it hasn't worked! The only way to know for sure is to look at related data eg. Registrations, Sign-Up's.



Engage Content

Purpose:
EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

Make an emotional connection with Little Athletics audiences.

Description:
TRIBAL

Engage posts resonate with and reinforce the emotional reasons as to why audiences 'love' their Little Athletics.

Content Mix:
MINORITY

Generating engaging content is a challenge for Little Athletics clubs or centres. As a result percentage mix is low, circa 0-30%.

Pre, On or Post Event Reporting:
ALL

*Pre-Event; Inspiring volunteer award nomination
On-Event; Athlete empathy to a fellow competitor trackside
Post-Event; Motivational athlete result*

Difficulty Rating:
HARD

Getting engage content consistently right is really hard.

Audience Growth Rating:
MEDIUM

If you can crack the code for generating engaging content, significant audience growth is usually the result.

Engagement Rating:
VERY HIGH

When you get this right posts go viral. There is almost no limit to how engaging this content can be!

Timing is everything

Deciding to post before, during or after an event can have a significant impact on your club or centres audience engagement.

Pre-Event

Description:

Content posted prior to an event. Typically a CTA (Call-To-Action) type post asking or reminding audiences to do something in advance.

Common Content Themes:

- Event entry
- Pre-event updates and announcements
- Program or campaign launch
- Course registration
- Call for award nominations

Examples:

- "Good Luck!"

Call-to-Action

- "Sign-up for event....."
- "Register for coaching course....."
- "Come and try!"

Reminder

- "Registrations closing soon....."
- "Don't miss out on your chance to....."

Engagement:

Most pre-event posts are Inform type content. As such, these posts generally don't perform well for engagement. NB. This doesn't mean they haven't been effective. The true test is whether your club or centre has a;

- Full entry list?
- Fully subscribed course?
- Strong field of award nominees?

On-Event

Description:

Content that is "live" or posted from an event that is underway but not yet completed (see Post-Event).

Common Content Themes:

- Livestreams
- Live results service
- On-event updates and announcements
- Public Holiday 'eventjacking'

Examples:

- "Livestreaming NOW!"
- "Results of Heat 1 now available....."
- "The state record has been smashed....."
- "Happy Easter!"

Engagement:

On-event posts can be hit and miss for engagement. Often the act of viewing a livestream or checking-in for real-time results IS the engagement with audiences not following-up by reacting, commenting or sharing a post.

Post-Event

Description:

Content posted after an event. The bulk of content posted by Little Athletics clubs or centres is 'after the fact'.

Common Content Themes:

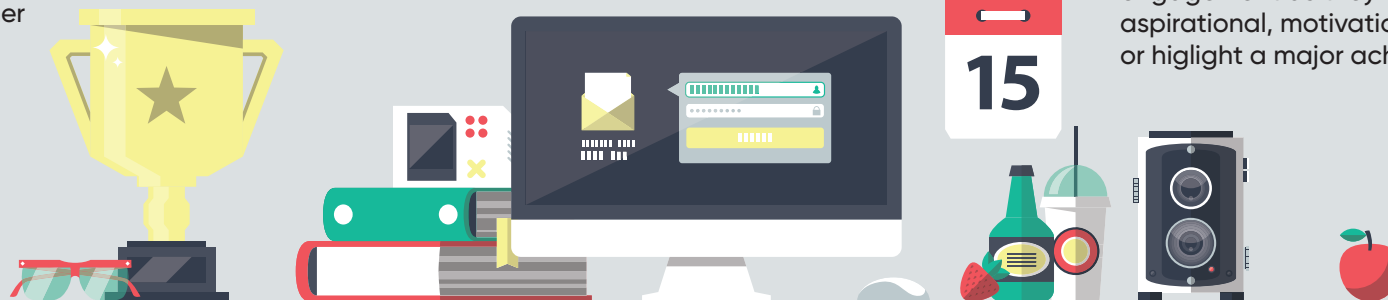
- Results (the most common content theme of all!)
- Highlights Reel
- Milestone
- Thankyou
- Retirement
- Throwback (retrospective post)
- Living life: Births, Birthday, Weddings or Passing

Examples:

- "And the winner is....."
- "Champions!"
- "On this day 20 years ago....."
- "Huge thankyou to our volunteers...."
- "Happy Birthday!"
- "Congratulations to....."

Engagement:

Post-event posts tend to perform best for engagement as they are often celebratory, aspirational, motivational, recognise a contribution or highlight a major achievement.





Delivery time!



The 60-30-10 rule to getting the most from your club content

DELIVERY

Content required to deliver and administer Little Athletics such as training times, event schedules, coaching, uniforms, equipment and results.

Inform

Primary purpose is to inform audiences.

60%

Recommended Content Mix.



CONTENT THEMES THAT DELIVER

- Events and Programs
- Officials and Volunteers
- Awards and Recognition
- Coaches and Judges
- High-Performance
- Inclusivity
- Facility Management

TRIBAL

Content that reinforces a sense of 'belonging' amongst Little Athletics audiences built on the unique history, culture and language of athletics.

Engage

Making an emotional connection with audiences as to why they 'love' Little Athletics.

30%

Recommended Content Mix

Always try to add more Tribal content if available.



CONTENT THEMES THAT ENGAGE

- Aspiration
- Achievement
- Celebration and Congratulations
- Inspiration and Motivation
- Irreverence
- Reflection
- Relatable
- Thankyou
- Triumph

ADVOCACY

Advocacy content is targeted at third party stakeholders of your Little Athletics club or centre such as local government, suppliers and sponsors.

Inform

Primary purpose is to inform audiences.

10%

Recommended Content Mix.

If unavailable, substitute with Delivery or Tribal content.



CONTENT THEMES THAT ADVOCATE

- Accessibility
- Charity or Cause
- Grant
- Government
- Policy and Legislation
- Sponsor
- Voucher

What's your target?

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Assessing the success of your clubs social media.

1

AUDIENCE

The simplest data point to track via a quick scan of your account data. Little Athletics clubs and centres can still expect solid organic audience growth (range 5-15% per annum) but anything above this will likely require organic posts to go viral or be supported by an advertising boost.

The bigger your audience, the larger the following you have the ability to engage.

OLDIE BUT STILL A GOODIE

2

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement (reactions, comments and shares) measures an audiences response to your posts. If followers are the maximum number of people you can speak to, the percentage engaged measures how effective your communications skills are.

There is a direct relationship between output (posts) and engagement. The more you post, typically the higher the reactions, comments and shares.

SENSE OF BELONGING

3

POST PERFORMANCE

Average engagement per post is a really simple metric (total engagement divided by the number of posts). The trick here is to strike the right balance between the quantity and quality of your posts. Publish too little and engagement is missed, post too much and you risk 'spamming' audiences.

If time is tight (when isn't it!) then this could be your most important metric?

EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS

“THE SUCCESS COMBO”

Growing audiences, while engaging followers through high quality content is a winning strategy. *Simple!*

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA?

4

MEMBERS FIRST

No other organisation within the sport is better placed to first attract and then keep kids involved in Little Athletics than your club or centre.

Use social media to ensure you have the right content, in the right place at the right time to make members feel both welcome and valued.

5

VALUE PROPOSITION

Social media platforms like Facebook are a really useful (free) tool to both inform and engage your club or centre community.

It's this highly engaged, emotionally connected audience sport has by default that really appeals to local businesses. How are you unlocking your greatest sponsorship asset?

6

SUSTAINABILITY

Everyone connected to Little Athletics has a vested interest in ensuring the next generation of Australian's are able to participate in your sport.

Long-term success will be defined by how well each level of the sport pulls together to deliver a financially sustainable, fun, family and friendly environment!

What day should we post?

Most Popular Days?

Friday & Saturday

The green bars illustrate the total number of Facebook posts published on a given day by Little Athletics clubs and centres around the country monitored by Shunt during last season.

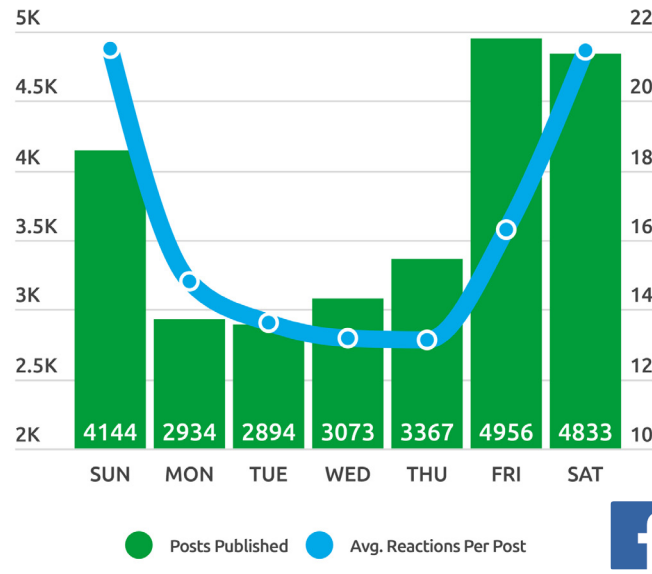
Friday takes top spot (just) at 4,956 posts then Saturday (4,833) with Sunday (4,144) rounding out the top three.

Recommendation

If time is short, focus on essential pre-event information (Friday) and on-event reporting (Saturday & Sunday).

Nb. Engagements are the total number of Facebook Reactions (eg. Likes), Comments and Shares a post receives.

Season 2020-21 Guidance



Most Engaging Days?

Saturday & Sunday

While Friday and Saturday are popular days for clubs to post, when are social media audiences most likely to engage with content?

The blue line shows the 'performance' of a post (average number of engagements per post). This is a really simple ratio that divides the number of engagements in a given period by posts published.

What this tells us is that Sunday (21.50 engagements per post) and Saturday (21.43) are the most efficient and effective days for engaging fans.

Consider

**What's your priority?
Total post engagement or post 'performance'?**

Fun Fact #01

30,000

There were 30,000 posts published nationally by Little Athletics clubs and centres last season (2020-21).

Fun Fact #02

450

There are 450 Little Athletics club and centre Facebook accounts monitored by Shunt.



How often should we post?

Post Frequency

AUDIENCE	Average TOTAL Posts Per Season	Average TOTAL Posts Per Week (25)
Less than 300	35	1.4
300 to 499	55	2.2
500 to 700	85	3.4
700 to 1,000	115	4.6
1,000 Plus	155	6.2

Recommendation

If your social media audience is between 700-1,000 aim to publish approximately 115 posts this season.

Each sport is unique, so the best place to start is by better understanding how Little Athletics clubs and centres are managing their Facebook publishing nationally.

As can be seen above the average number of posts published each season reflects the size of a clubs audience. The bigger you are (audience) the more we recommend you post.

Post Type

AUDIENCE	VIDEOS	PICTURES	LINKS
Less than 300	Less than twice a season	Three times a month	Once every two months
300 to 499	Twice a season	More than once a week	Less than once a month
500 to 700	Three times a season	Twice a week	More than once a month
700 to 1,000	Once a month	Three times a week	Ten times this season
1,000 Plus	Once a month	Four times a week	More than twice a month

Recommendation

If your social media audience is between 500-700 aim to publish approximately 3-Videos, 50-Pictures and 9-Links this season. To be precise!

Videos Fun Fact #01

6% of all posts are Videos, the largest total published by a Little Athletics club last season was 99.

Pictures Fun Fact #02

83% of all posts are Pictures, the largest total published by a Little Athletics club last season was 380.

Links Fun Fact #03

12% of all posts are Links, the largest total published by a Little Athletics club last season was 86.

Consider

Guide

Recommendations are based on an analysis specific to Little Athletics. If you can post more - awesome! If you can't hit these targets do the best you can.

Quantity vs Quality

There's a fine line between posting carefully selected, high quality content that engage audiences and posting so much content that it becomes 'spammy'. **Choose wisely.....**

Consider

Key factors influencing audience size and engagement:

- Club Size (Membership)**
Determines revenues, resources and content quantity.
- Account 'Age'**
Social media early-adopters have a big head-start.
- Priority**
How important is social media?
- Resources**
A clubs or centres size and priorities determine resources available for social media.
- Skillset**
Strong volunteer social media skills can offset any club size, priority or resource limitations.
- Systems & Processes**
Social media success is driven by robust systems that aggregate, curate and consistently publish high quality content.



How many words should we use?

Most Popular word count?

20-49 Words

The green bars highlight the number of words, emoji and emoticons used in Facebook posts published by Little Athletics clubs and centres around the country monitored by Shunt during last season.

20-49 words comfortably takes top spot (8,197 posts) then 50-99 words (5,099) with 10-19 words (4,250) cruising to third most popular.

Recommendation

Eg. If time is short aim for a 10-19 word post, while a 'long-form' approach (+100 words) will deliver the highest average engagement.



Most Engaging word count?

100+ Words

While a 20-49 word count is particularly popular for clubs to post, what 'wordplay' length is most likely to engage social media (Facebook) audiences?

The blue line shown here illustrates the 'performance' of a post (average number of engagements per post). This is a really simple ratio that divides the number of engagements in a given period by posts published.

What this tells us is that long-form content at 100+ words (20.10 engagements per post) and 50-99 (18.01) are the most efficient and effective text totals for engaging fans.

Fun Fact #01

0-1

There were 2,700 posts published by Little Athletics clubs and centres that used one or no words!

Fun Fact #02

2,310

The longest post published last season contained a whopping 2,310 words.... HUGE!

Consider

**What's your priority?
Total post engagement or
post 'performance'?**

NB.
Shunt's 'Wordplay' count includes words, emoji and emoticons.



audience engagement

What engagement can your club or centre expect from Facebook audiences this season?

AUDIENCE	Average POSTS Per Season	Average REACTIONS Per Season	Average COMMENTS Per Season	Average SHARES Per Season
Less than 300	35	165	30	15
300 to 499	55	355	60	20
500 to 700	85	745	130	35
700 to 1,000	115	1,150	185	50
1,000 Plus	155	2,150	360	80

The key to increasing audience engagement is audience growth and more frequent posting.

There is a direct relationship between the number of times a club publishes posts and the audience engagement it receives.

As can be seen in the table above, the larger the audience the greater the average reactions per season.



audience sentiment

Not all Reactions are created equal!

SENTIMENT	Season TOTAL	Percentage of TOTAL
Like	345,700	87.6%
Love	43,250	11.0%
Wow	1,875	0.5%
HaHa	885	0.2%
Sad	2,705	0.7%
Angry	325	0.1%

Wow, HaHa, Sad, Angry and Love audience Reactions are 'worth' a lot more than Likes.

The table above shows the total number of Facebook reactions Little Athletics clubs around the country generated last season by sentiment.

As you can see, a "Like" is the easiest to achieve and viewed as the default Reaction. Where it gets interesting is looking at alternatives available to audiences that first began to appear back in 2016.

The amount of "Love" in the sport is growing rapidly, already reaching 11% of the total. This infers a "deeper" connection to a post than a "Like" and as such has a greater value from an engagement perspective.

All of the remaining Reactions have totals below 1% suggesting that they are in effect 10x harder to achieve than a "Love".

This group of Reactions is even more valuable due to its rarity. Consider investigating what characteristics of these posts are different, what can be learned and what can be applied to future posts?

A "Wow" reaction infers post content that is extraordinary.

Getting someone to laugh on social media is not as easy as it seems so any "HaHa" responses should be viewed as a major achievement.

Unfortunately, a "Sad" Reaction is most commonly associated with a death within the club community, hence it has the highest percentage of the four.

Thankfully there isn't a lot of anger in sport (!) but when there is, the "Angry" Reaction is most commonly associated with event cancellations or disruptions.