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Project Title:

“Strengthening the entrepreneurship culture and collaboration in the eligible programme area”

Project Acronym:

STRENGTHEN

Deliverable:

D2.1.2e Social Media Plan

Developed by the Chamber of Serres - (LB) and approved by all partners

The project STRENGTHEN is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Programme



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Disclaimer:

“The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union, the participating countries and the Managing Authority”.

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I. Introducing STRENGTHEN

The development of extroversion and exports is one of the main levers in order to overcome the intense problems created by the economic crisis and the prolonged recession in both countries. In this context, the initiative for strengthening the entrepreneurship culture and collaboration in the eligible programme area, aims to highlight, promote and enhance the extroversion of quality Greek and Bulgarian products and services by stimulating their export activity, upgrading their general international trade, their international networking, the search for partners, etc.

It is challenging for the “STRENGTHEN” project to strengthen business stability and development which is one of the ultimate goals of the thematic objective 03 and investment priority 3a of the INTERREG V-A Greece – Bulgaria 2014 2020 Cooperation Programme.

“STRENGTHEN” project aims at capacity building through the provision of non-formal, general adult education and the formulation of a joint strategy for the enhancement of collaboration in the cross-border area (in addition to business support and actions targeting the entrepreneurship climate).

Project Objectives:

- Enhancement of competitiveness, sustainability and management capacity of targeted SMEs in the cross border area by stimulating cross border cooperation, enabling the promotion of local products and services and improving services and tools for business support and internationalization.

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- Exploitation of opportunities for cross border cooperation by developing common mechanisms and actions on strategic issues, such as the creation of conditions for the future development of competitive cross-border clusters

“STRENGTHEN” project contributes to the socio-economic development of the border region, providing coherence and raising the region's competitiveness.

It promotes the region as attractive tourism destination and a reliable economic player and creates opportunities for joint initiatives.

Main results include:

- Mobilization of regional policy mechanisms towards the support of SMEs
- Enhancement and extroversion of the cross border area with multiple benefits for professionals and the entire cross border community
- Extension of the geographical scope of the economic activity of SMEs
- Broadening of SMEs' customer base by exploiting jointly the traditional promotional techniques, especially in economic sectors highlighted by national, regional and European strategies
- Upgrade of human capital skills
- Implementation of joint initiatives to strengthen the local economy focusing in tourism, building / construction, creative industry and the agro-food sector
- Promotion of the commercial cooperation in the cross border area and cross border economy reinforcement

Target Groups:

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Entrepreneurs will benefit from training seminars and develop business knowledge, upgrade their skills and attitudes.

Young unemployed potential entrepreneurs will benefit from the project by giving them access to sector relevant networks (customers, suppliers) as they will get in touch with established entrepreneurs in their sector of interest

Policy makers will benefit from the project by participating in focus groups for the investigation of competitive clusters and the formation of a joint strategy and action plan for the design of future cluster policies.

II. Why Social Media?

Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social media is internet-based and gives users quick electronic communication of content, such as personal information, documents, videos, and photos. Users engage with social media via a computer, tablet, or smartphone via web-based software or applications.

Apart from the traditional methods and techniques of communication, the internet offers an array of modern opportunities to promote the Projects: the so-called social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.

Social Media networks leverage the capacity of the STRENGTHEN project to raise awareness of its activities and deliverables promoting its overall scope through the active engagement of social media users. Social Media apply the User Experience approach, since users have the opportunity to participate in

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conversations that relate to STRENGTHEN project, interact, as well as act as indirect facilitators for dissemination.

Furthermore, social media networks allow for targeted approach, through ads and direct notifications, which will be explored. In this respect, the STRENGTHEN project can target people by country, age, interests (social and/or business) as well as fan pages that they like, apps that they have downloaded and much more.

Social Media networks selected in an early stage of the project to achieve the highest impact in reaching embrace target audience, based on budget, the participating countries and the target groups audience .

Social networks are considered as a new tool, with its specificities: multifaceted, conversations, immediacy, speed of propagation. It is therefore imperative that this new medium can be mastered by the project. The aim is to achieve communication goals. Social media includes activities like posting text and image updates, videos, and other content that drives audience engagement. With social networks, embrace can generate considerable online exposure of the project, allowing partners to showcase our activities.

Through social media, the embrace project will:

- Increase website traffic;
- Raise project awareness
- Build conversions;
- Create a project identity and positive project association;
- Improve communication and interaction with key audiences.

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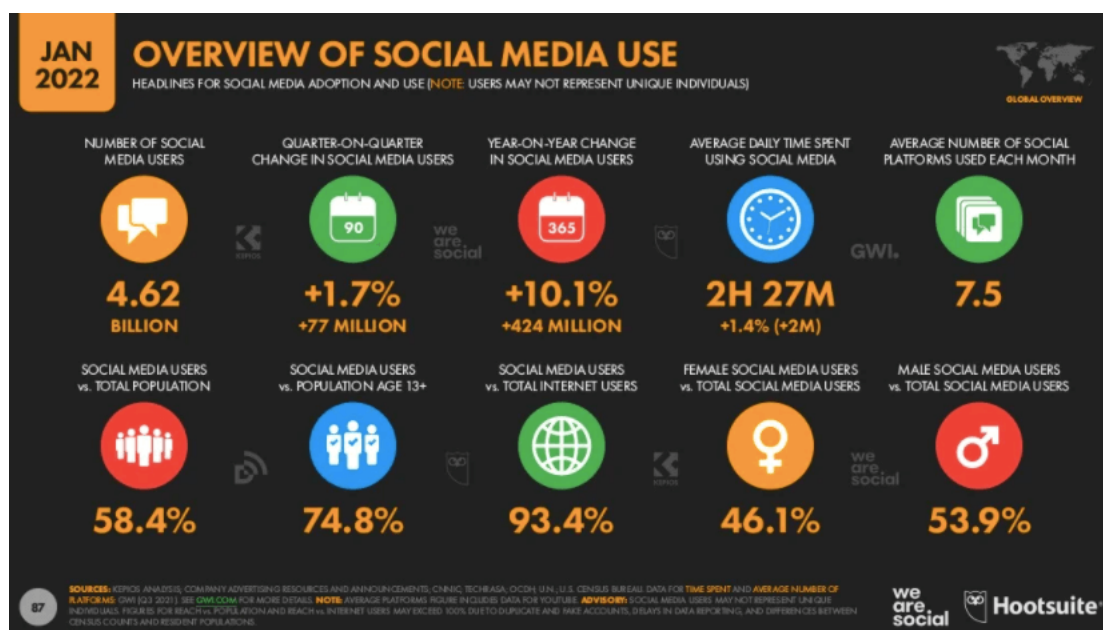


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III. Social media statistics of consumer adoption and usage of social networking platforms

As per the Datareportal¹ January 2022 global overview, social media growth has continued to increase:

- More than half of the world now uses social media (58.4%)
- 4.62 billion people around the world now use social media, 424 million new users have come online within the last 12 months
- The average daily time spent using social media is 2h 27m.



¹ Datareportal regularly updates its massive global compendium of social media statistics, which gives some great insights into the world of social media.

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DataReportal's new Digital 2022 July Global Statshot Report – published in partnership with We Are Social and Hootsuite – shows that we're still seeing solid growth in digital adoption and activity around the world.

To start with:

- Fresh updates to the UN's population data reveal that there are 7,98 billion people living on Earth in July 2022, with that figure climbing by 66 million (+0,8 percent) over the past year.
- Global mobile users grew to 5,34 billion by the start of Q3 2022, with smartphones accounting for almost 4 in 5 of the mobile handsets in use today. The global mobile population has grown by 93 million since this time last year, with almost 67 percent of the world's total population now using some form of mobile phone.
- Internet users have increased by 3,7 percent over the past 12 months, reaching 5,03 billion in July 2022. Year-on-year growth of 178 million new users has pushed global internet penetration up to 63,1 percent.
- Social media users grew by 227 million over the past year, reaching 4,70 billion by the start of July 2022. The global social media user base has increased by more than 5 percent over the past 12 months, with the latest global total now equivalent to 59 percent of the world's total population.

Social media as a source of news

The use of social media channels to access news content varies meaningfully by geography.

At a global level, the RISJ reports that 57 percent of global adults use social media to discover and consume news content.

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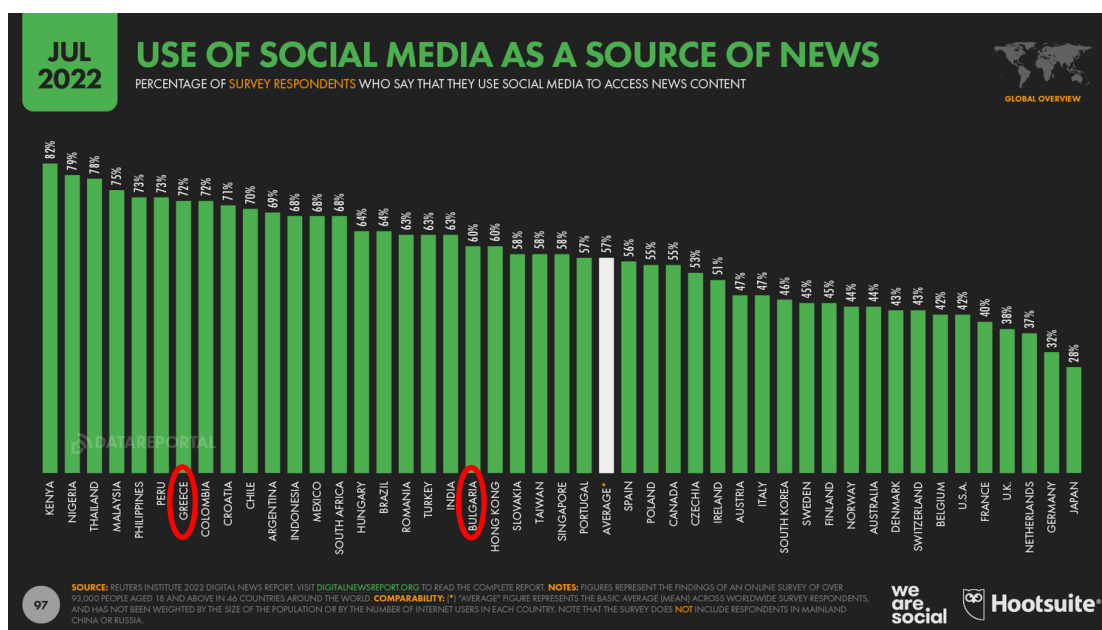
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When it comes to the two participating in the INTERREG programme countries, this rises to 72% of respondents in Greece, 60% in Bulgaria.



Regarding the amount of time that people spend using social platforms, Data.ai's analysis indicates that the average global TikTok user outside of Mainland China now spends almost a full day (23.6 hours) each month using the platform's Android app, putting it at the top of the latest rankings. For context, assuming that the typical person sleeps for between 7 and 8 hours per day, these latest numbers suggest that TikTok users now spend close to 5 percent of their waking hours watching TikTok video.

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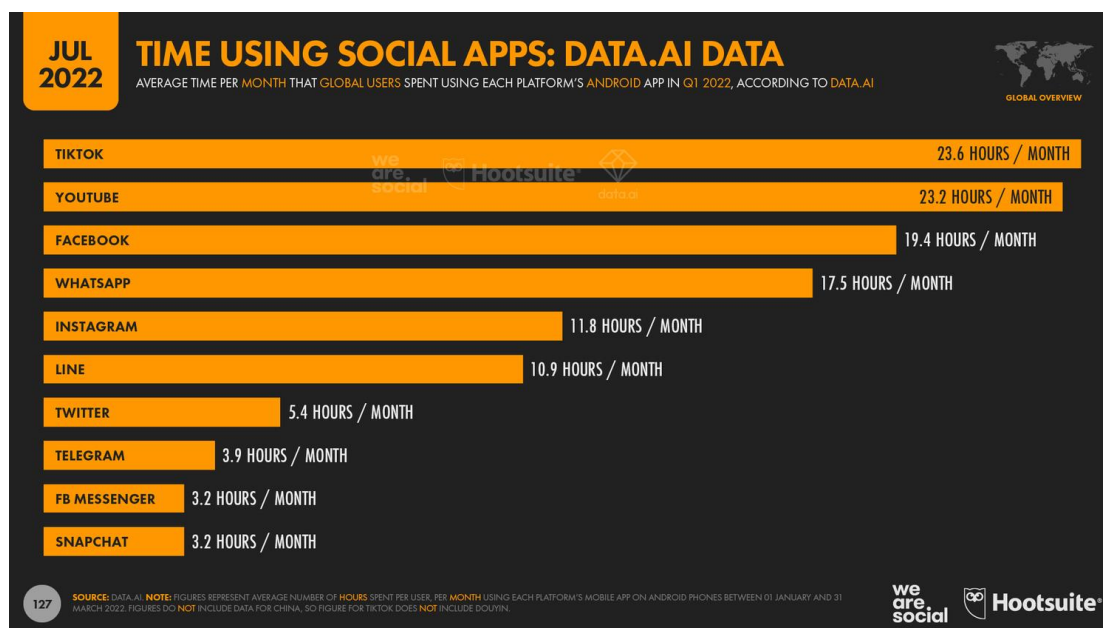
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IV. How to use social media

- What are your communication objectives?
- Who is your target?
- What are your resources (number of persons and time)?

Decision:

- Choose the social media used by your target group and in line with your objectives
- Don't worry about criticism, worry about human resources!
- When you are on social media, non-engagement can look worse than absence

Then, it's time to plan SM activities:

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- What are your social media objectives?
- Who is working on the social media for your project?
- What content can you create and share on the social media?
- How do you address your audience? What is the general tone and approach?

V. Main social media used by the projects



Key Objectives:

- Educate and engage the General Public
- Raise brand awareness of STRENGTHEN project
- Raise awareness of certain events (only if open to public)

Our priorities are entrepreneurs, young unemployed national, regional, EU stakeholders, clusters, associations and policy makers but the general public as well.

The FB content will aim those groups aiming at specific messages created per group.

Engagement must be on-going with carefully chosen topics based on seasonality, current events, publications, links etc.

The call-to-action: Like our FB page or read more on our Topic. We need to create at least 1-2 posts (article) per week, ideally more!

Moreover, with specific lead times before each of the planned events, we will use Facebook to raise awareness and engage interested parties, driving them into participation.

Pros:

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- largest community on the internet;
- possibility to have several page administrators;
- management of milestones on the timeline;
- easy integration of links, pictures and videos.

Cons:

- mostly used for private communication;
- it takes a long time to build a community of subscribers;
- more time consuming than Twitter.

Tips:

- subscribe to many accounts dealing with your project's issues or geographical area;
- be active on the pages you subscribed to by liking, sharing and commenting posts;
- mention people and pages and pages in your posts;
- try to be active on a weekly basis;
- always illustrate your post with media content;
- use Facebook manager to schedule and manage posts.
- Make sure you post relevant content
- Promote your partners and celebrate their achievements
- Make it less generic, more personal

What do you need to know before setting up the page on Facebook?

Your audience!!!

Our audience @strengthenproject

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Entrepreneurs

Young unemployed

Potential entrepreneurs

Policy makers

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TWITTER

Pros:

- most active community;
- used by many professionals, policy-makers and journalists;
- ideal to inform and get informed quickly;
- building a community of followers is relatively fast.

Cons:

- very limited writing space, you have to be very synthetic;
- no formatting options;
- you have to tweet regularly to be interesting for your followers.

Tips:

- plan and tweet live;
- include media content (pictures / videos) in your tweets;
- subscribe to accounts dealing with your project's issues;
- subscribe to partner regions, policy-makers and local/regional press accounts;
- use hashtags such as #topic to appear easily in search results;
- mention other accounts (e.g. @Interreg), re-tweet and respond to others;
- use TweetDeck to monitor accounts, topics and manage several accounts.

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Radio needs 1,3 month, TV one to six days, FB 22 hours and Twitter just 3 min to transfer the message to 120m users



Pros

- Great tool to create networks (Groups);
- Great recruitment tool;
- Good tool to emulate discussions by being active in your groups;
- No “trolls”, no junk email (trusted relations), used only by professionals.

Cons

- not the most innovative and intuitive social media;
- most people use Facebook and Twitter on a daily basis and check their LinkedIn
- account once in a while;
- the visibility to the general public is quite limited, your communication remains in a circle of professionals who already know about you.

Tips

- join groups dealing with your project’s topics and issues;
- be sure to make a complete profile

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VI. The best times to post on social media

Reach vs engagement

- Reach: How many views
- Engagement: How many reacted (no of likes, comments, posts, shares, retweets, reposts etc.)

As brands and consumers settled into a new routine that was caused by the disruption from the pandemic, there's been a shift in how we all interact and use social media today. And what seemed like the best time to post on social media last year has become more concentrated and focused in 2022.

With nearly 5 billion social media users across all platforms and the average person using several social platforms per month, there's no doubt that social media presents opportunities for many businesses and projects.

Sprout Social's has worked closely to review findings and trends in social media usage over the past year from its more than 30,000 customers and understand when their content was most and least frequently engaged with, broken out by platform and industry.

Data from Sprout Social include users from various plan types, industries and locations. All time frames are recorded in Central Time (CST). Number of engagements represents total engagements a brand received on the specific channel during that hour time frame. Industry-specific data includes mid- to high-level engagement times.

Each social platform has its own benefits depending on your goals, content type and audience. If you're noticing your engagement isn't where you want it to be,

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consider revisiting your social media goals and overall KPIs. Of course, knowing which days you get the most engagement helps you reach those goals as well.

While interpreting the data for each social network individually, we consistently noticed that the highest times of engagement were Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 9 or 10 a.m. Midweek mornings proved to be a successful time across most social platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.

- Best times to post on social media overall: Tuesdays through Thursdays at 9 a.m. or 10 a.m.
- Best days to post on social media: Tuesdays through Thursdays
- Worst days to post on social media: Sundays

Best times to post on Facebook

- Best days to post on Facebook: Tuesdays through Fridays
- Worst days to post on Facebook: Saturdays

Best times to post on Twitter

- Best times to post on Twitter: Everyday Monday to Friday at lunch hours
- Worst days to post on Twitter: Saturdays and Sundays

Best times to post on LinkedIn

- Best times to post on LinkedIn: Tuesdays 10 a.m. to noon
- Worst days to post on LinkedIn: Saturdays and Sundays

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VII. The use of social media in STRENGTHEN context

According to STRENGTHEN application form, partners are expected to promote project activities' through Social Media, which requires a strong commitment from their side.

It is essential that in the Project's social media web-pages, the Project's background and co-funding sources shall be highlighted, including:

- a reference to the Cooperation Programme and the EU co-funding: *"The project is implemented in the framework of the Interreg V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020" Cooperation Programme and is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Programme"*
- a short description about the Project: its nature, goals, benefits; expected results.
- links to: the project's website; the Programme's website and the institutional websites of the Project Beneficiaries

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Blagoevgrad (PB3) is responsible for Social media management (creation of three accounts on 3 social media channels, post cover / header photo and profile image, monitoring of social media demographics). All project partners will promote the project in social media as follows:

- LB: at least 70 posts in social media throughout the project
- PB2: at least 100 posts in social media throughout the project

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- PB3: at least 100 posts in social media throughout the project
- PB4: at least 100 posts in social media throughout the project

It is suggested that all partners act as co-administrators, i.e. when the three accounts are created, each partner should inform PB3 and appoint a person as administrator / co – editor so that all partners have to posting.

Ideally the content is project-like (regarding the project activities) and preferably in English. Of course there will be cases in which postings will be in Greek or Bulgarian as long as they are relevant to the project topic.