

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the world of social media! This guide is designed to help USA Archery high performance athletes build and maintain a strong and effective social media presence. In 2023, there are nearly 5 billion social media users worldwide and it is the easiest, most affordable way to market yourself; a strong online presence is crucial for athletes to connect with fans, sponsors, and potential revenue streams. Here are some key points to consider:

1. DEFINE YOUR BRAND

- **Identify Your Unique Selling Points:** What sets you apart from other athletes? It could be your achievements, personality, or unique skills. Define these points to create a strong personal brand.
- **Establish Your Archery Persona:** Showcase your passion for archery and give followers an inside look into your life as an elite athlete. Use your unique sense of humor, vision, knowledge base, and life outside of archery to craft your story.

2. CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLATFORMS

- **Focus on Key Platforms:** Identify the platforms where your target audience is most active. Platforms like Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and TikTok are popular among sports enthusiasts. TikTok is where you may reach your youngest audience, and older social media users likely still gravitate towards Facebook.
- **Tailor Content to Each Platform:** Understand the strengths of each platform and customize your content accordingly. For instance, Instagram is visual, X is text-based, and TikTok is short-form video. If you want to create more longform video, YouTube may be where you thrive, and you can use Facebook and Instagram to drive traffic to your channel.
- **Education is an Investment in your Success:** Meta Blueprint offers tons of free courses in social media that can be very helpful. They cover a huge variety of topics from How to create a Facebook or Instagram page, to community building, advertising strategies and more. Consider making yourself more attractive to sponsors with a Digital Marketing Meta Certification.

3. CONTENT STRATEGY

- **Share Behind-the-Scenes Content:** Give your followers a glimpse into your training routines, daily life, and competitions. Authenticity builds stronger connections.
- **Highlight Achievements:** Showcase your successes and milestones. This could include podium finishes, personal bests, or even the process of overcoming challenges.
- **Engage with Followers:** Respond to comments, ask questions, and run polls. Engagement builds a loyal fan base. Going live and taking questions is another great way to engage.
- **Be Yourself:** It's good to be human – talk directly and honestly to your audience, don't be afraid to share the good, the bad and the ugly. Be approachable and real and you'll find your audience connecting with you and building loyalty to stick around and see your story unfold.

4. QUALITY VISUALS AND MULTIMEDIA

- **High-Quality Photos and Videos:** It's amazing how good phone cameras have gotten in recent years – you probably have the tools you need to create high-resolution visuals. Share captivating videos, slow-motion shots, and action clips.
- **Consistent Aesthetics:** Maintain a consistent visual style across your posts to create a visually appealing feed.

5. FREQUENCY AND TIMING

- **Regular Posting Schedule:** Develop a posting schedule that aligns with your audience's online habits. Consistency is key. Facebook and Instagram accounts that post about 5x per week (once per day) are often rewarded within the algorithm. Posting more frequently in Instagram is not recommended. Posting to X, Stories, Threads, etc. is recommended 3–5x daily. If this is not realistic for you, set an attainable goal to start, such as posting 1–2x per week as you work to build a stronger social media presence.
- **Optimal Posting Times:** Identify when your audience is most active and schedule posts during those times. Use built-in platform analytics to study your insights and see when your audience is online.
- Use platforms like Meta Business Suite to build a calendar and schedule your content to post at opportune times.

6. UTILIZE HASHTAGS STRATEGICALLY

- **Research Trending Hashtags:** Include popular and relevant hashtags to expand your reach beyond your followers.
- **Engaging with Sponsors:** If your sponsors have a specific brand hashtag they want you to use, you can add that to the end of your post (i.e. #BowsofChampions for Hoyt), but to get your post in the eyes of a sponsor, visible on their tagged page, easy for them to share, you'd want to tag their page instead of (or in addition to) hashtagging.

7. COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- **Engage with Fellow Athletes:** Collaborate with other athletes for joint projects, challenges, or shout outs. This expands your reach to their followers. There are tools that allow you to Cross post, Collaborate, Remix, etc. on content that increase your reach while allowing content to appear organic on multiple pages.
- **Brand Partnerships:** Explore sponsorship opportunities with brands aligned with your values and interests.

8. MONETIZATION STRATEGIES

- **Creator bonuses:** If you have a Creator or Business account on Facebook and/or Instagram, you may be eligible for Creator Bonuses, where Meta will pay you up to \$30,000/month for engagement with your content. Several USA Archery athletes are using this opportunity to earn an average of \$5-10 per post. TikTok has a CreatorFund, which operates similarly once your account reaches a minimum threshold of followers/views. While it may not be a huge amount, it starts to add up if you post regularly!
- **Affiliate Marketing:** Promote archery-related products and earn a commission for every sale made through your unique affiliate link. While this is common for Amazon and other large online brands, you can ask sponsors if they can generate a trackable link for you to drive traffic to their site and if they'd be willing to create a commission program for sales you generate. Another way to do this would be to ask for a custom discount code you could promote to your audience and have them track the success of that program.
- **Online Merchandise Store:** Sell branded merchandise such as apparel, accessories, or equipment. There are print on demand platforms that will dropship your clothing/accessories as they are ordered, instead of needing to manage housing inventory or sales on your own. This merchandise can be promoted on your social channels, or even sold directly through these platforms!
- **Virtual Coaching or Workshops:** Offer online coaching sessions or workshops to fans interested in improving their archery skills. You can create accounts on platforms like Patreon, Instagram Subscriptions, Substack, etc. where you can offer premium content for a fee – fans may be interested in joining you live for a training session, being able to ask questions in a community setting, etc.

9. MONITOR ANALYTICS AND ADJUST STRATEGY

- **Track Performance Metrics:** Use analytics tools on each platform to monitor engagement, reach, and follower growth.
- **Adapt and Evolve:** Based on analytics, adjust your content strategy to maximize impact. Don't be afraid to try something new and see how it performs!

10. PROTECT YOUR IMAGE

- **Maintain Professionalism:** Remember that your social media presence is an extension of your professional identity. Avoid controversial topics that may negatively impact your image. If you do have sponsors or athlete agreements tied to your social channels, make sure your content reflects positively on those companies/organizations.
- **Use Privacy Settings:** Balance openness with privacy. Use platform privacy settings to control who sees your content.

By following these guidelines, you can harness the power of social media to build a strong personal brand, engage with fans, and generate revenue streams that support your archery careers. Good luck, and happy posting!