

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION:



Join the Online Conversation

by Stephanie Wielinski, OAC Outreach Coordinator

Did you see their
Facebook page?

I just Tweeted
that!

You have to start
"following" them
on Facebook!

Any of these statements sound familiar? Any of them sound confusing? Don't worry because you're not alone. Throughout the past few years, social media has taken the world by storm, creating a new forum for people to discuss various issues, connect with family and friends, as well as brands and organizations they support. The OAC is continuously building our social media presence and we want you to join in the conversation!

This new form of communication may be overwhelming at first, but once you get your feet wet, you are sure to love the accessibility that social media offers. To give you a little head start, we wanted to offer you a "Social Media 101" tutorial. Once you realize how easy it really is, you can connect with the OAC on social media and stay up-to-date with all our efforts!



Facebook

Facebook was one of the first types of social media to emerge, and it has grown by leaps and bounds. With the creation of Facebook Pages, organizations like the OAC were able to create their own presence on Facebook. The OAC's Facebook Page is one of the easiest and best ways to stay connected with the OAC. OAC Facebook fans stay up-to-date with OAC news and can read a wide variety of informational articles on obesity and health-related topics. In addition, our Facebook fans can view pictures from different events the OAC participates in and hosts, as well as voice their opinion on current obesity and health topics. We post to the OAC's Facebook Page multiple times a day, so there is always something new!

Create a Facebook page

Creating a Facebook account is simple. All you have to do is visit www.facebook.com. On the homepage, you will see the sign-up form. An email address is required to start a Facebook account. Once you create your account, simply enter "Obesity Action Coalition" in the search bar to find our Facebook Page. You can also become a fan of the OAC Facebook Page by visiting www.facebook.com/ObesityActionCoalition.



Twitter

Twitter was one of the next forms of social media that launched online and helped change the face of social media. Twitter is a little different from Facebook in that your posts, or "tweets," are limited to 140 characters. This means that Twitterers have to be short, concise and to the point with their tweets. The OAC posts tweets on Twitter multiple times a day, ranging from news stories about obesity to our educational materials that you can view free-of-charge. We also post all major announcements on Twitter and share (retweet) messages from other helpful resources.

Create a Twitter Account

Setting up a Twitter account is easy. When you visit www.twitter.com, there is a sign-up form right on the homepage. An email address is required to create a Twitter account as well. Once you sign-up for Twitter, your next step is to create your Twitter handle, or your username. After you set-up your Twitter account, you can search for the OAC. In the search box at the top, enter "@ObesityAction." @ObesityAction is the OAC's Twitter handle and the best way to find our page. You can also find the OAC on Twitter by visiting www.twitter.com/obesityaction.



LinkedIn

LinkedIn was created as a social media outlet for professionals. Individuals have a profile that details their professional history and their current job position, and they can connect with others in their professional field. Getting started on LinkedIn is just as easy as Facebook and Twitter, and an email address is required too. The sign-up form is right on the homepage of www.linkedin.com.

One unique feature of LinkedIn is discussion groups. The OAC has a discussion group on LinkedIn and it is a great way to get discussions started about obesity and related health issues. We post new topics regularly, and it gives individuals the chance to voice their opinion and discuss them with other professionals. You can find the OAC's discussion group using the search box at the top of each page. Choose "Groups" then enter "Obesity Action Coalition."



Many people are familiar with YouTube, but did you know that the OAC has a YouTube Channel? For those of you that are not familiar with it, YouTube is a social media forum that allows individuals to upload videos, as well as view videos others post. You do not have to create and upload videos to have a YouTube account. You can create an account just to connect with organizations and brands that interest you. You can then subscribe to a YouTube channel, so you receive updates and stay informed when something new occurs on that channel.

Recently, the OAC has been using video messaging to communicate with our followers on social media. All of these videos are hosted on our YouTube channel, ObesityAction. YouTube users have the ability to subscribe to our channel, comment on and "like" our videos, as well as share them on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. You can find the OAC's YouTube channel by visiting www.youtube.com/obesityaction or enter "ObesityAction" into the search box when visiting www.youtube.com.



pinterest

Pinterest is the newest social media forum that the OAC has recently joined. Pinterest is a virtual pinboard that allows you to "pin" images from Web sites and categorize them on "pinboards." The OAC uses Pinterest as an online educational resource. We currently have eight pinboards on the OAC's Pinterest. These boards include: nutrition, fitness, healthy recipes, weight-loss options, obesity education, weight bias, advocacy and the *Your*

Weight Matters National Convention. We are continuously “pinning” resources to our boards, creating a one-stop educational resource for you!

Creating a Pinterest account requires an email address as well, and you can get started by visiting **www.pinterest.com**. Once your account is created, simply search for the OAC by entering “ObesityAction” into the search box at the top, or by visiting **www.pinterest.com/obesityaction**. You can then choose to follow all of our pinboards, or only the pinboards that interest you. We are constantly posting new pins, so there are always new resources to be discovered!

Conclusion

The world of social media is constantly evolving, and while some thought it might just be a fad, it is here to stay. One thing to keep in mind, all of these social media outlets are accessible from a smartphone, making them easily available. Do you want all of the OAC’s latest news and resources right at your fingertips? Then following the OAC’s social media on at least one forum is your best bet! Get started, join the conversation today and see what you’ve been missing!

About the Author:

Stephanie Wielinski is the Outreach Coordinator for the OAC. She manages all social networking and is responsible for the creation of all of the OAC’s electronic correspondences. Stephanie is a graduate of the University of South Florida with a degree in mass communications.





ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



JOIN TODAY: GO TO OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN

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