Social Media Do’s and Don’ts, Tips and Tricks

Why Social Media for the Chapter?
You can reach people where they already are.
You can reach more people than via email, which may not get open or shared.
It’s constantly evolving, so you can keep your content fresh and appealing!
You can highlight events, past and future to generate enthusiasm.
Highlighting face-to-face networking events can be an especially effective recruitment tool.
You can shine a light on your volunteers—in the moment!

Chapter Do’s and Don’ts
Know your audience. Know who is watching and remember your mission as a Chapter.
Be consistent—give people a reason to pay attention.
Be authentic. Anyone can use social media without trying to be hip.
Celebrate the membership. Remember, you as President, are not the brand.
Monitor your sites for conflicts with the mission and values of the Society or inappropriate content.
Do use relevant keywords, hashtags and handles.

Why Social Media for the Individual?
It allows easy participation in conversations relevant to the profession.
There is a lack of coverage of landscape architecture. We need more voices to highlight our work, our process and our professionals.
An individual’s audience is different than the Chapter’s and may be more diverse.
It helps you keep abreast of the latest issues and trends in the design world.
Remember, the more we amplify our collective voice, the greater impact we as a profession we will have!

*A special thanks to members Maggie Aravena and Jonathon Geels for their social media insights.
Q1 Who/what inspired you to become a leader in ASLA?

In college had the opportunity to lead Cornell’s student ASLA chapter as Co-President. After graduation, I joined the society to be connected with my peers. Buffalo, NY does not have a large group of landscape architects, so it was a great way to socialize and it was also an opportunity to develop leadership skills separate from the workplace.

In the year 2000, the NY Upstate Chapter was co-hosting their annual meeting with APA in Buffalo, my hometown. I took on creating the event program booklet and after that I was asked by the executive committee if I would consider running for a position. I have been involved in ASLA leadership ever since.

Q2 How do you encourage other ASLA members to lead?

I think there is something important and reliable in recognizing the “spark” that people have and then simply asking them to participate. Too often we think we shouldn’t ask, but this simple gesture is often appreciated and rewarded with a group of willing participants. I think it is also important to recognize that leaders are everywhere in our midst, and today is a perfect time to give up any preconceived ideas of what “leaders look like”. Recognizing willingness and empowering participation is a great way to encourage members to lead.

Q3 Who has influenced your leadership style and approach?

I have always been a bit of a disruptor, questioning why something was done a certain way, considering a different approach or strategy that may make more sense. Years ago I worked for an engineering firm led by a brilliant and approachable man, Dave Duchscherer. He guided, empowered and supported his teams to operate out in front of him, rather than following behind. My time with Dave let me see that no one learns to be a leader without leading. Since that time, whether it is with my own staff, ASLA Executive Committee members or community youth, I have followed an “everyone leads” approach, helping to align skill and confidence with leadership needs, while also encouraging leaders to grow as they take on new challenges.

Q4 How has ASLA has helped develop your leadership skills and career?

When I first stepped into the role of Chapter President, I saw that my leadership style for this larger group of volunteers might need to be different than the way I was leading my private practice, and I developed a more democratic leadership style and learned a great deal. Taking what I learned from my term as Chapter President and additional leadership training, I started to adapt a leadership style for both my company and other volunteer organizations that was more rooted in reciprocal empowerment. When my chapter leaders, sub-committee, or group of volunteers are empowered, then I too am empowered. I have found this style to be both effective and highly rewarding and look forward to sharing my experiences with emerging leaders.