The BBC and Social Media Activity Around Programmes

Social media activity around BBC programmes can be used for a variety of purposes including: to help with casting, to assist with marketing or to tie in with editorial. This could include but is not limited to setting up an official Twitter account, promoting an official hashtag on-air or setting up an official Facebook page.

Casting

With regards to casting, the Production needs to consult with the BBC in relation to any advertising that it intends to undertake in order to secure contributors to a programme. This includes social media. It is the BBC’s preference that independent production companies do not set up bespoke social media accounts for the purpose of casting. If a production believes that social media is essential for the casting process then the BBC advises that a social profile is set up for the company such as chosensocialnetwork.com/companynamecasting or that the production speak to BBC Television’s Head of Social Media to use pre-existing BBC-owned social media accounts to aid with casting.

Marketing, Publicity and Promotion

As the broadcaster, the BBC is responsible for all marketing and publicity activity relating to its programme broadcasts and channels in the UK and for bringing the audience and the content together. BBC Marketing will therefore decide whether or not to use social media platforms as part of that activity, when there is a good opportunity to publicise the programme and engage with audiences effectively in this way. The new BBC social media strategy is to focus the majority of social media marketing efforts on accounts for individual BBC Channels, ie The BBC One Twitter account or the BBC Two Facebook page. Please speak to the production marketing contact or BBC Television’s Head of Social Media to discuss promoting a programme on the relevant social media account.

Editorial

For a small selection of titles, the BBC may commission social media specific additional activity in order to support the programme editorial (ie where contributions or viewer sentiment on social networks may be used on air). For independent productions these elements will be commissioned as part of the programme commission.

If a programme does make social media references on-air, for example using a hashtag, it must comply with the relevant BBC Editorial Guidelines. (http://www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines/page/onair-refs-to-socialmedia-full)

If the BBC opts not to commission an independent production company to run social media activity for a programme then the production may only run it’s own accounts with the written agreement of the BBC. This activity will need to be approved by the BBC Business Affairs Manager in consultation with BBC Marketing & Audiences and/or the BBC

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Commissioning Editor. Any such activity must be clearly marked as not being BBC-run, ie in the account bio, and must be mindful of the contractual obligation not to bring the programme or the BBC into disrepute or infringe the BBC Guidelines. In relation to the inclusion of any programme content in any authorised social media activity, it would need to comply with the BBC’s Release Policy For The Use of BBC Commissioned Audio Visual Content in Digital and Online Services & Products in the UK.