

Moving to a Social Media Marketing and Management Tool in Nonprofits

A Proposal for the Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre

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Executive Summary

This proposal recommends a social media marketing and management tool for the Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre (OCCSC) as requested by Robert Parungao, the chair of the board of directors. It comes in response to increasing feedback regarding a lack of social media presence and expertise within the organization.

Given the limited budget, overburdened staff, and a lack of training, OCCSC has not used social media to its fullest capacity. Despite these constraints, OCCSC needs to create a social media strategy amidst an atmosphere of competition among newcomer services nonprofits and a steady population of immigrants in Ottawa. By developing a social media strategy, OCCSC can expand its visibility in newcomer and immigrant communities and reach potential clients, donors, and community partners.

A proposed solution must meet the needs of OCCSC as outlined by the following criteria:

- **Easy to learn**—built-in user guides and tutorials for novice learners
- **Cost-effective**—nonprofit discount preferred to help lower costs
- **Centralized management**—an all-in-one system to manage social media platforms
- **Data-driven**—analytics gathered to optimize social media strategy
- **Scalable**—flexible plans to support future growth

Hootsuite, a social media marketing and management tool, meets these requirements. It is designed to centrally manage a suite of social media platforms directly on its interface.

Using an easy-to-use dashboard that integrates multiple social media platforms, users have access to a universal inbox to manage and respond to messages, custom reports to show the impact of social media efforts, and multi-platform publishing to post and schedule in one click. Hootsuite offers multiple learning resources and a discount for nonprofits on two plans depending on the budget and team size.

Within a month and a half, Hootsuite can be fully implemented within OCCSC, ensuring that staff maximize their value by completing training during the 30-day free trial and successfully using Hootsuite by the end of the trial. With the help of a social media freelancer, the costs will be (depending on the type of plan):

Professional Plan	Team Plan
Cost - \$35/month \$420/year	Cost - \$91/month \$1,092/year
Hootsuite Training - \$0	Hootsuite Training - \$0
Freelancer - \$25/hour 24 hours	Freelancer – \$25/hour 24 hours
Total Cost - \$1020	Total Cost - \$1692

Glossary

Social media	Interactive technologies that allow users to create and share content and communicate with each other on the internet. Popular social media platforms include Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn.
Social media campaign	A coordinated marketing effort that uses social media platforms to achieve specific goals over a period of time.
Immigrant	A person who has moved from their country of origin to another country as their primary and permanent residence [1].
Refugee	A person who has come to another country seeking safety because they are escaping their homeland due to war, disaster, or persecution [1].
Newcomer	A person who is an immigrant or refugee who has been in Canada for less than five years [1]. Newcomers have access to services for language, immigration, and employment support.
Content calendar	A strategic schedule of what, when, and where to publish upcoming content on social media platforms.
Engagement	A social media metric of how people interact with a social media account and its content. This metric includes likes, comments, shares, saves, messages, mentions, and clicks.

Introduction

This proposal recommends a social media marketing and management tool for the Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre (OCCSC) as requested by Robert Parungao, the chair of the board of directors. It comes in response to increasing feedback regarding a lack of social media presence and expertise within the organization.

Currently, OCCSC relies on their staff to run its social media management. Without a defined social media strategy, the staff post sporadic content on OCCSC's social media channels, failing to engage with the larger immigrant and newcomer community in Ottawa. Based on the feedback from the staff and community, OCCSC needs a solution to re-imagine how the nonprofit manages its social media. The goal of a social media marketing and management tool is to increase content publishing, brand awareness, and communication tactics while being aware of budgeting constraints and a lack of social media training among the staff.

This proposal will:

- Examine present-day challenges in OCCSC's social media
- Explore the suggested solution: implementation, costs, evaluation, and alternatives

Present-day Social Media Challenges

As a nonprofit, OCCSC has a limited budget with funding from the city and federal government. OCCSC has little room for investing in a social media team, leading to overburdening existing staff to run their social media. Connected with this financial constraint, OCCSC lacks the resources to provide adequate social media training for staff.

Not only do the staff have to juggle multiple roles, but they also are unprepared to navigate social media platform analytics and the best practices for social media campaigns. Checking the inboxes of multiple social media accounts also bogs down the staff. This limited investment into social media management indicates a lower prioritization by the board.

Nonprofit Constraints

The lack of financial flexibility requires OCCSC's budget to be restructured for the following fiscal year to allocate more funding towards social media, which would include funding towards a social media management tool and staff training. Approval for budgetary adjustments or new strategies to boost social media requires the board's authorization, which may involve delays while the board deliberates. Despite these constraints, an investment in social media is a valuable opportunity for nonprofits like OCCSC.

Finding Community through Social Media

Ottawa has a diverse immigrant population. According to the 2021 Census, about 26% of the population in Ottawa are immigrants [2]. Nearly 50,000 people settled in Ottawa from 2016 to 2021 [2]. Immigrant service nonprofits play a critical role in helping immigrants, newcomers, and refugees adapt to their new home in Canada. OCCSC must compete with more than 20 newcomer services that offer these individuals with help in creating a settlement plan, preparing for the citizenship test, job-hunting, language training, and connecting with a community [3]. In this crowded nonprofit landscape, these organizations must vie for public and donor support.

OCCSC serves clients from over 60 countries. According to its mission and values, OCCSC is dedicated to promoting the social integration and participation of newcomers, immigrants, and refugees, while ensuring professionalism and inclusivity in its operations (Appendix A) [4].

Social media presents a powerful opportunity to create community among newcomers and immigrants and display competence as a nonprofit. By investing in social media marketing and management, OCCSC can increase its visibility in these communities and become a leader among newcomer services nonprofits. OCCSC can share immigrant stories, promote cultural events, and facilitate conversations that resonate with their audience. By creating engaging and targeted content, OCCSC can help newcomers feel a sense of belonging while reaching potential clients, donors, and community partners.

The criteria for an ideal solution include:

- **Easy to learn**—built-in user guides and tutorials for novice learners
- **Cost-effective**—nonprofit discount preferred to help lower costs
- **Centralized management**—all-in-one system to manage social media platforms
- **Data-driven**—analytics gathered to optimize social media strategy
- **Scalable**—flexible plans to support future growth

The Solution: A Social Media Marketing and Management Tool using Hootsuite

To meet the criteria of an ideal solution, OCCSC should adopt Hootsuite to manage its social media platforms.

What is Hootsuite?

Hootsuite is a Canadian social media marketing and management tool designed to centrally manage a suite of social media platforms directly on its interface. Using an easy-to-use

dashboard that integrates multiple social media platforms, users have access to a universal inbox to manage and respond to messages, custom reports to show the impact of social media efforts, and multi-platform publishing to post and schedule in one click (**Figure 1**). Hootsuite comes with an AI writing tool and built-in templates to make content creation faster.

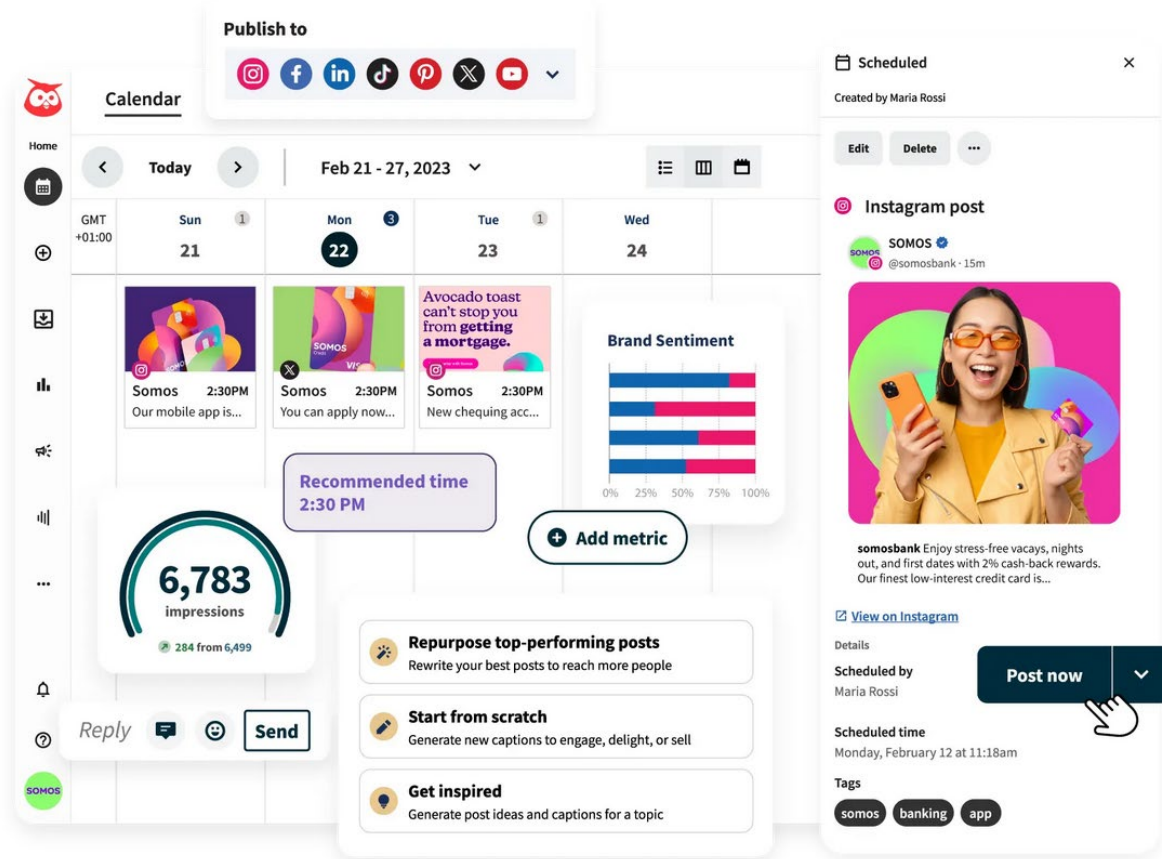


Figure 1: Dashboard View of Hootsuite's Interface [5]

By tracking social media performance, Hootsuite can tell you when to post to boost follower engagement. It can track mentions and conversations about the brand. Users can pre-schedule an unlimited number of posts across their social media channels from the Hootsuite dashboard. Hootsuite can also identify and fill gaps in the content calendar.

To get started with Hootsuite, users create an account, choose a plan that fits their needs, and connect their social media profiles to the dashboard. From there, they can plan, schedule, post, and monitor their social media performance.

Implementation of Hootsuite

To successfully integrate this social media management tool within OCCSC's operations, Hootsuite should be introduced in three phases: (1) Planning the Social Media Team, (2) Starting the Free Trial and Training, and (3) Rollout.

Phase I: Planning the Social Media Team

OCCSC's executive director will hire a freelancer to help train an existing staff member who will become the social media coordinator. With the help of a freelancer, the coordinator will create a social media strategy and develop a content calendar to test social media content during the free 30-day trial for Hootsuite.

Phase II: Starting the Free Trial and Training

The free trial will begin when the social media coordinator creates an account on Hootsuite and links OCCSC's social media channels—LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, WeChat, and X. The coordinator will practice creating posts and scheduling content based on the content calendar. The social media coordinator will also complete the training modules by participating in the Hootsuite Academy course, watching self-guided video tutorials on the website, and attending free webinars. Phase II will end after the free trial.

Phase III: Launching Hootsuite

The social media coordinator will finalize the setup for Hootsuite by authorizing permissions and integrations. The coordinator will launch the finalized content calendar, creating and scheduling posts on Hootsuite. Once the posts have been published, the social media coordinator will monitor performance. Based on Hootsuite's analytics, the coordinator will optimize the social media strategy, create social media campaigns, and look into expanding into more social media platforms.

A visual overview of the project schedule can be seen in **Figure 2**.

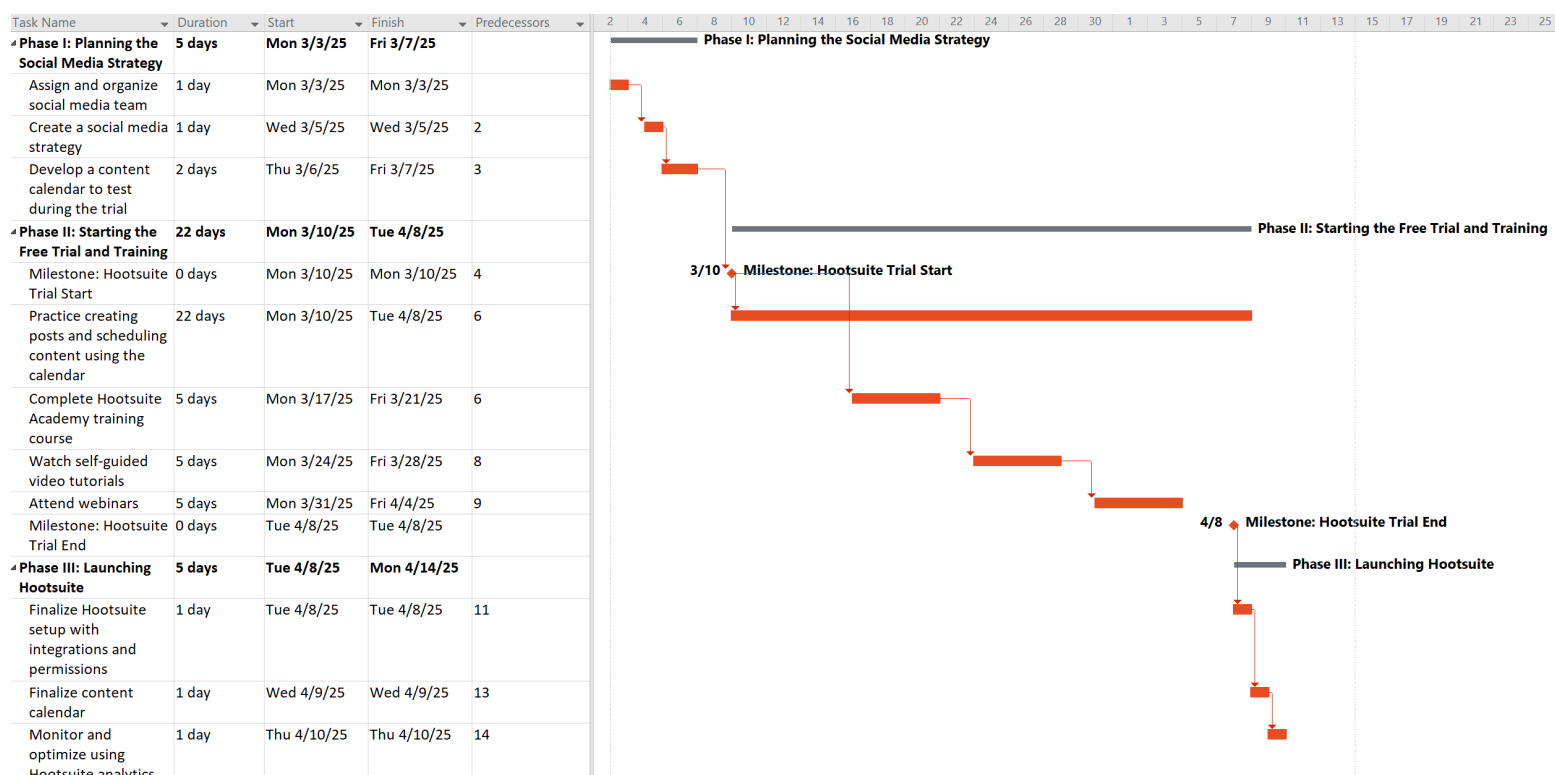


Figure 2: Hootsuite Gantt Chart

Cost of Hootsuite

Nonprofits receive up to a 75% discount on the Hootsuite Professional or Team plans (**Table 1**). The Hootsuite training courses are free, but additional fees will apply for the optional training certification. No advanced software or hardware is required. Users only need an internet connection to access Hootsuite through its web or mobile app. The prices below have been converted to Canadian dollars and do not include taxes.

Table 1: Breakdown of costs for Hootsuite

Professional Plan	Team Plan
Cost - \$35/month \$420/year	Cost - \$91/month \$1,092/year
Hootsuite Training - \$0	Hootsuite Training - \$0
Freelancer - \$25/hour 24 hours	Freelancer – \$25/hour 24 hours
Total Cost - \$1020	Total Cost - \$1692

Considering the budgetary concerns and the small size of the initial social media team, OCCSC should begin with the Professional Plan. If the social media team expands in the future, then OCCSC can upgrade to the Team Plan. For a comparison between the Professional and Team Plans, see Appendix B.

Evaluation of Hootsuite

For Hootsuite to be considered a viable approach at OCCSC, it must be superior to the current system and meet the needs of the nonprofit. Hootsuite surpasses the current system and meets the criteria of the ideal solution (**Table 2**).

Table 2: Evaluation of the Current System vs. Hootsuite

Criteria	Current System	Hootsuite
Easy-to-learn	X	X
Cost-effective	X	X
Centralized management		X
Data-driven		X
Scalable		X

Features and Benefits of Hootsuite

Hootsuite addresses the shortcomings of the current system and offers additional advantages beyond the capabilities of the existing social media approach at OCCSC. To make this direct connection between the criteria, features, and benefits of Hootsuite, see the following table:

Table 3: Hootsuite Features and Benefits

Criteria	Feature	Benefit
Easy-to-learn	Access to Hootsuite Academy, webinars, self-guided videos	Novices learn at their own pace with multiple resources
Cost-effective	Nonprofit discounted rate and free Hootsuite training materials	Maximized value from Hootsuite while reducing financial strain
Centralized management	Single dashboard to oversee all linked social media accounts	Streamlined workflows and improved efficiency for scheduling content
Data-driven	Customized reports to analyze social media data (including views, engagement, and follower growth)	Actionable insights tailored to OCCSC's social media performance
Scalable	Professional and Team plans available for nonprofits	Flexible plans that align with OCCSC's budget and team size

Alternatives to Hootsuite

Hootsuite outperforms its competitors. These competing tools lack Hootsuite's comprehensive functionality when stacked against the ideal criteria (**Table 4**).

Table 4: Hootsuite vs. Competitors

Criteria	Hootsuite	Sendible	Later	Crowdfire	Agorapulse
Easy-to-learn	X	X	X	X	X
Cost-effective	X				
Centralized management	X	X			X
Data-driven	X	X	X		X
Scalable	X	X	X	X	X

Conclusion and Recommendations

In a city, where newcomer services offer support for a quarter of the population, OCCSC has to leverage social media to drive its growth and increase its awareness among immigrant, newcomer, and refugee communities.

OCCSC has the opportunity to advance its social media strategy by adopting Hootsuite, a social media marketing and management tool. Hootsuite offers a discount for nonprofits while incorporating in-depth features, including a robust dashboard, abundant learning resources, and intelligent report creation.

Hootsuite can be implemented within a month-and-a-half timeframe, ensuring that staff maximize their value by completing their training during the 30-day free trial and successfully integrating Hootsuite once the trial ends.

Appendix A: OCCSC Mission and Values

Mission: The Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre is a non-profit, non-partisan, charitable organization committed to advancing the full social and economic integration and participation of newcomers, immigrants, refugees, and people of Chinese descent in the City of Ottawa.

Values: The Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre ensures that the values of client-based professionalism, inclusiveness and commitment are implicit in all agency operations.

Appendix B: Hootsuite Professional vs. Team Plans

Hootsuite offers special rates for nonprofits with the Professional Plan and Team Plan. For details on the Professional Plan, see below (**Figure 3**):

Hootsuite Professional Plan

- 1 user
- 10 social accounts
- Schedule unlimited posts
- Access messages in one inbox
- Bulk scheduling
- Real-time analytics
- Unlimited integrations
- Schedule posts in advance

Figure 3: Hootsuite Professional Plan Features

The Team Plan offers all of the features of the Professional Plan along with the following add-ons (**Figure 4**):

Hootsuite Team Plan

- 3 users
- 20 social media accounts
- Team assignments
- 1 custom branded URL
- 1 social media certification

Figure 4: Hootsuite Team Plan Features

References

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Interviews: The information regarding OCCSC was collected by interviewing Robert Parungao, the chair of the board of directors at OCCSC. Two interviews were conducted on November 11, 2024 and November 20, 2024.