

## Benefits of Using Social Media in Credit

- 1. Make Connections:** Events like Credit Congress and those held by FCIB, among others, provide not only education but all-important networking opportunities. However, availability and budget constraints, can make attendance at such events much less frequent than desired. That doesn't automatically make it less important to make professional contacts, or deem others less worth knowing. Getting involved on social media sites like LinkedIn, which is the most widely used and accepted for professional use, provides the same opportunity to start a beneficial relationship with a contact as face-to-face contact. Granted, it's not quite as personal as a lunch or phone call, but it can set the stage for future onsite meetings, sharing of information and developing more contacts.
- 2. Go Where the People Are:** The service objectives of social media sites are clear: to connect people that may not otherwise have large numbers of contacts. LinkedIn, for example, has 225 million members and a presence in more than 200 countries. It's not even nearly the biggest social media site, just the most business-oriented. This makes the amount of resources in various forms nearly endless: links to articles of note, tips and commentary by industry experts, conversations about important topics of the day. Granted, this doesn't replace the importance of conferences or industry trade groups, but it's another important tool in the credit professional's belt (and a free one, no less). Besides, nowadays, contacts and customers are likely at some point to ask if you are on such and such (insert name of social media site). How will it look if your answer is that you don't use any social media? How with it will you look?
- 3. Track Your Debtors:** Increasingly, social media is being used in the collections function to find and gather information on debtors increasingly beyond terms and harder to engage. While there is plenty of innocuous information on sites like Facebook (many of you probably have that friend who regularly posts pictures of what they had for dinner or which sports/political/entertainment figures they dislike at the moment), there is often information willingly put up by the users...loads of it. For example, a sole proprietor, who is "having trouble paying on time" or at all, just bought a fancy car or boat or took a luxurious trip is something that has value. And, odds are, that person is going to put pictures up of such expenditure. Studies find social media users are much more relaxed and quicker to share all sorts of personal information through their profile pages than they would over the phone or by email. Why not tap into such information, especially if they are putting it on public display? Granted, there are lines that shouldn't be crossed and ethical dilemmas that can come up. It's a tool to be used, but not abused. Doing so could land a credit manager in a bit of hot water with their reputation, or even legally. Using it cautiously and in a calculated manner for collections is advised.

**Insert specific affiliate message, if desired. Also consider using "Reasons to Be Wary of Using Social Media When Discussing Customers," also available in these files.**