

Four foolproof tips for South Africa's sporting accounts

 By [Antoinette Muller](#)

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Many of South Africa's sports teams and its associated sponsors are completely missing the plot when it comes to using social media. Far too many seem content with absolutely no plan and willy-nilly approach to using social networks, instead of actually making the most of the power of social media.

One prominent example came just last weekend. The RAM Cricket account - the main sponsor of South Africa's domestic T20 competition - went on a bit of a RTing rampage. It was RTing tweets - including match results - that were more than two days old. A few people question whether the account had perhaps been hacked, but received no response. It just went on its merry way doing whatever slapdash approach to social media it was doing. It was annoying and garish and it's not the only sporting account guilty of this sin.

Many social accounts for sporting teams in the country routinely RTs some of the most banal tweets and offers absolutely nothing to the user. One account which does get spot on most of the time is the [Lord's Cricket Ground account](#). While this is not a South African account, it does serve as a blueprint for just how well social media can be used - it's a cricket ground for goodness' sake and still it's better than most sporting accounts out there.



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What is the point of a sports team or an associated sponsor having a Twitter account? In its most basic form, it is there to inform, interact and integrate with a community of fans.

Stop RTing absolutely everything your fans send you

Nobody wants to see how great your fans think you are as a team. It's lovely that they think so, but that is not the point of having a Twitter account. The more inane the comments, the more annoying they get. Similarly, we don't want to see one user expressing sympathy with another user that their power is out and they cannot watch the game.

Before you hit RT on social media stop and think whether it's really going to offer anything substantial to the people reading the feed.

Have a strategy and stick to a format

When it comes to handling big accounts, especially with things like sporting leagues that have a lot of games, it is crucial that you have a blueprint for updating results and scores. Too many updates and readers will feel like their feed is being flooded. Too few and they'll go elsewhere for their updates. Decide what purpose you want the account to serve and stick to

that strategy through the duration of the tournament.

Offer unique content

Sponsors and teams are in the pound seats when it comes to being able to interview players and offer their unique perspective. It doesn't have to be anything fancy, a short audio or video clip taken at training or a little blog post or image will do just fine. For brands in charge of a whole league - do not RT every single score from every single account. Write your own tweets and refer to the above: find a format that works.

Realise that you have to spend money to make it work

None of the above is going to happen unless you are actually willing to pay a few bucks to somebody who knows what they are doing. Forcing the task of social media management on somebody in the office is not only foolish, but pointless.

Brands and sports teams do not have to pay big bucks to agencies to get the best out of their social media. There are many capable freelancers who can do the job just as well, if not better, than a whole agency. Stop being content with mediocrity and make sure the players are accessible to your content manager. It'll be a worthwhile investment in the long run.

ABOUT ANTOINETTE MULLER

Antoinette Muller is a freelance writer and content strategist. She writes regularly about sport for the Daily Maverick and was named SAB Sports New Reporter of the year in 2014. She has also consulted on social media and content for Cricket South Africa and Momentum.

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