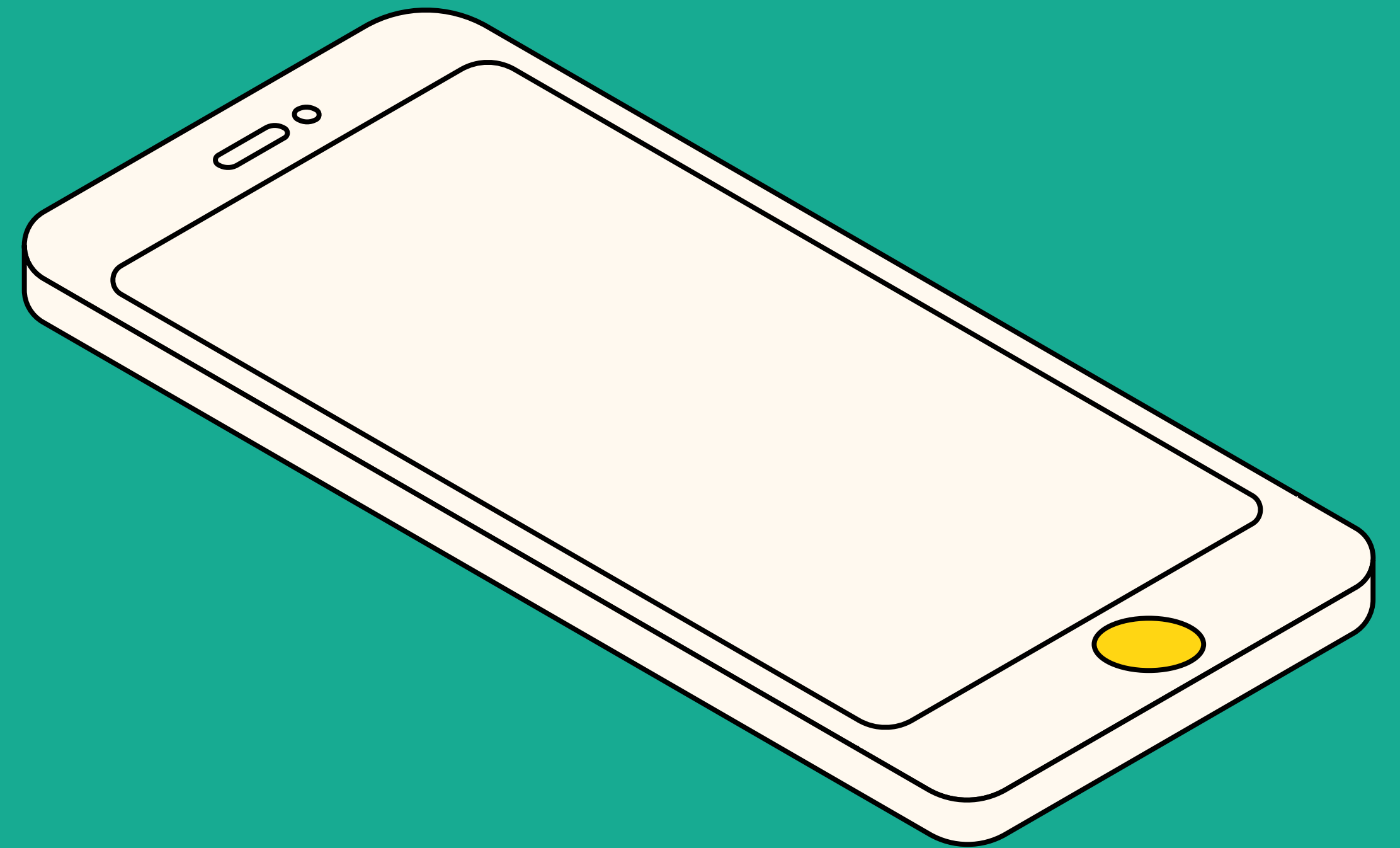


Social Media Mastery

# How to build an engaged online community and showcase your work effectively



# What's in this toolkit?

Social media can feel overwhelming when you're running a community group or small organisation. But it doesn't have to be about perfect posts or going viral. It's about showing the human side of your work, connecting with your local community and helping people understand how to get involved.

Whether you're starting from scratch or want to make your existing social media work harder for you, this toolkit gives you practical strategies that don't require hours of daily posting.

# What you'll find here

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1

**How to choose the right platforms:**  
Focus your energy where your community actually is

2

**How to create content that works:**  
Simple approaches for regular, engaging posts

3

**How to build genuine engagement:**  
Turn followers into active community members

4

**How to plan and schedule effectively:**  
Make social media manageable alongside everything else

# 1 How to choose the right platforms

## Start where your community already is

Don't try to be everywhere at once. Pick 1-2 platforms where your actual community spends time, and do those well rather than spreading yourself thin.

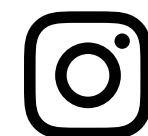


### Facebook

**Best for:** Local community groups, event promotion, older demographics

**Great for:** Detailed event descriptions, community discussions, sharing longer updates

**Time investment:** **Medium**  
– posts can be longer and more detailed



### Instagram

**Best for:** Visual storytelling, behind-the-scenes content, younger demographics

**Great for:** Before/after photos, event highlights, volunteer spotlights

**Time investment:** **High**  
– requires regular visual content and stories



### WhatsApp groups/communities

**Best for:** Direct communication with active members, event coordination

**Great for:** Quick updates, photo sharing from events, volunteer coordination

**Time investment:** **Low**  
– but requires active management of group dynamics



### LinkedIn

**Best for:** Connecting with local businesses, attracting professional volunteers, funding applications

**Great for:** Impact reports, partnership announcements, professional networking

**Time investment:** **Low**  
– less frequent, more formal posting



### TikTok

**Best for:** Reaching younger demographics (16–35), quick educational content, showing repair processes in action

**Great for:** Time-lapse repairs, before/after transformations, quick tips, behind-the-scenes moments

**Time investment:** **High** – requires regular video content, understanding trends and video editing skills

# Assess your group's capacity honestly

**If you have 1 hour per week:** Focus on Meta, you can sync your Facebook and Instagram posts to make things easier (see below). Aim to post 2–3 times weekly with event updates and photos.

**If you have 3–4 hours per week:** Keep Instagram and Facebook regular posts but add stories from events.

**If you have limited smartphone skills:** Stick to Facebook – easier to post from desktop and write longer captions.

**If you love taking photos:** Instagram should be your priority – visual content performs best there.

## Test your audience

Post the same content on different platforms and see where you get more engagement from local people (not just likes, but comments and questions).

Ask your existing members where they'd prefer to see updates – often they'll tell you directly which platforms they actually check.



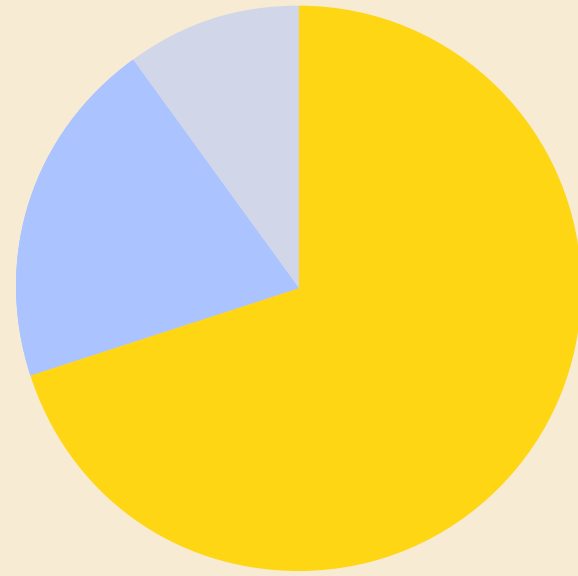
## 2 How to create content that works

### Follow the 70–20–10 guideline

**70%**

**about your activities and community:**

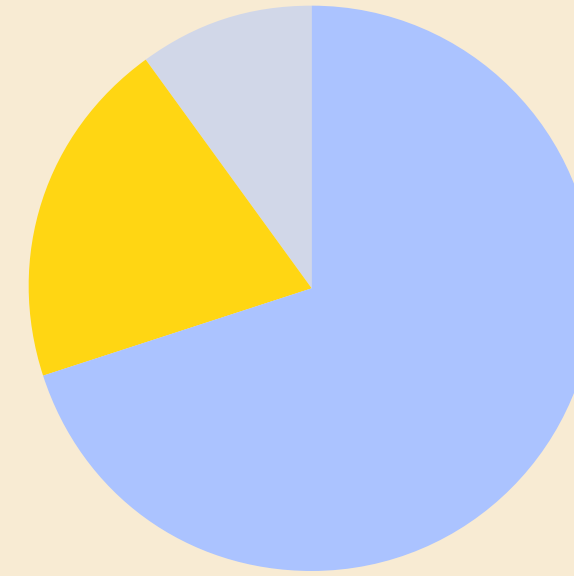
- Photos from events
- Member stories and achievements
- Behind-the-scenes preparation
- Before/after repair successes



**20%**

**educational and tips:**

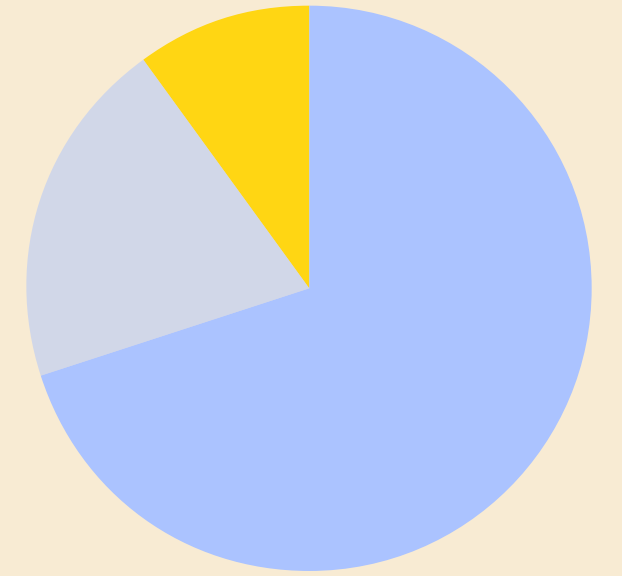
- Quick tips on repairs, etc
- Seasonal sustainability advice
- "Did you know?" facts about waste /circular economy
- How-to content related to your activities



**10%**

**promotional:**

- Upcoming events
- Volunteer recruitment
- Calls to action





# Create content themes for consistency

Themes can help you build up a consistent set of stories without having to reinvent the wheel every time. The following are examples but feel free to use or edit to work for you.

**Monday Motivation:** Member spotlight or success story

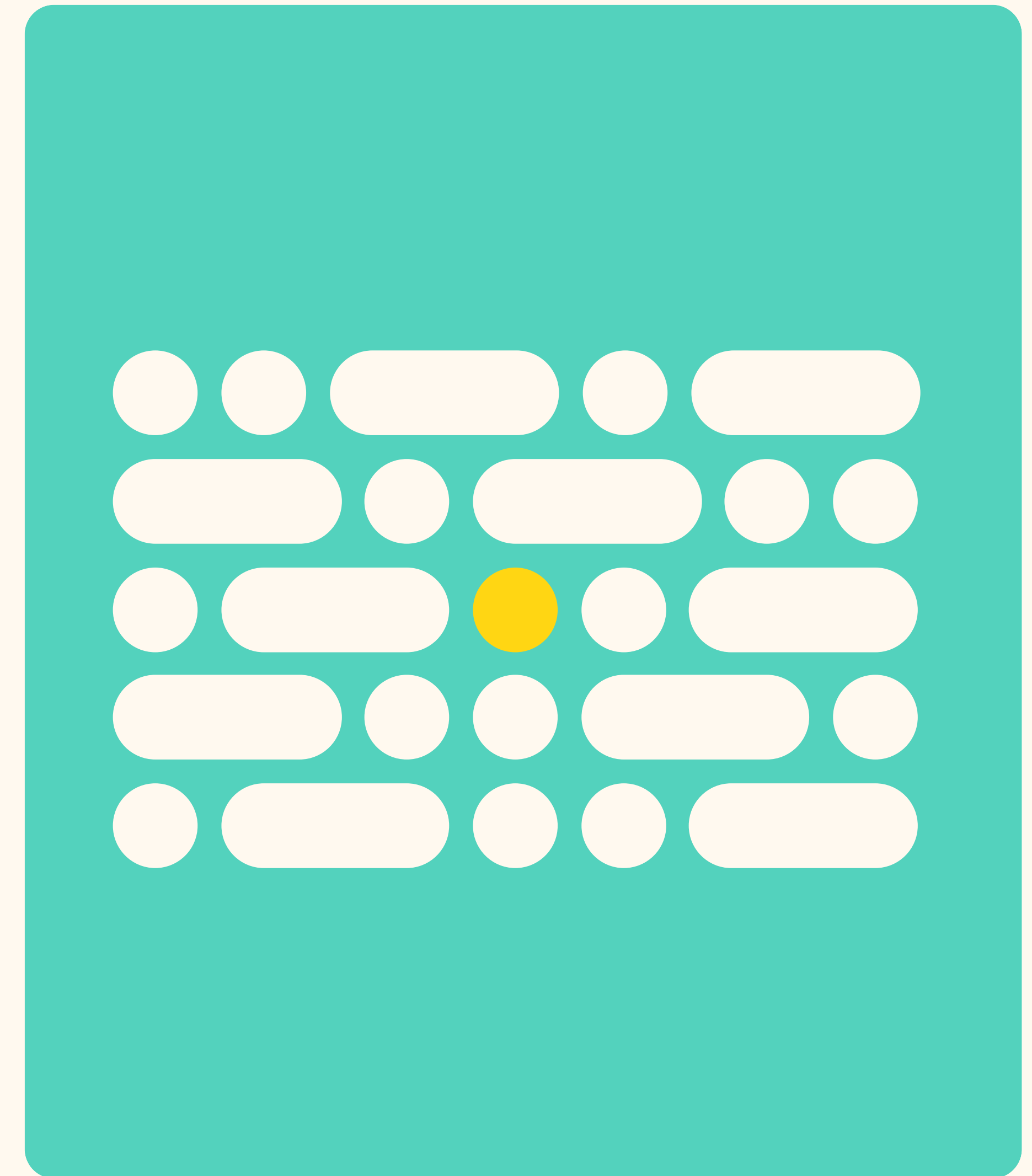
**Workshop Wednesday:** Tip or tutorial related to your activities

**Throwback Thursdays:** Celebrating a past event or win. Ensure it's at least 6 months ago.

**Friday Feels:** Behind-the-scenes or fun moments from the week

**Sunday Setup:** Preview of upcoming week/events

Pick 2-3 themes that match your group's personality and stick to them.



# Make your captions work harder

When writing a caption consider the following pointers to help make the caption work as hard as possible for you.

**Start with action or results:** "Fixed", "Saved", "Learned", "Discovered" – these sorts of updates feel like solid news that people will want to read.

**Include specific details:** Numbers, names, locations make posts more engaging

**End with a question or call to action:** Give people a reason to engage (this helps boost how many people see your post).

**Use hashtags strategically:** 3–5 relevant hashtags rather than long lists



# Use these proven post formats

**Before and after posts:**

"This [item] looked ready for the bin, but after 30 minutes at our repair café, it's got years of life left. Next repair café: [date/location]."

**Member achievements:**

"[Name] had never used a sewing machine before joining our group. Six months later, she's teaching others! What skill would you love to learn?"

**Behind the scenes:**

"Setting up for tonight's clothing swap. 200 items already donated and we're not even open yet! Doors open at 7pm."

**Community impact:**

"March update: 45 items repaired, €800 saved by our community, 12 new skills learned. Small actions, big impact."

**Community connections:**

"This month we lent out 4 lawn mowers, 2 hedge trimmers and our trusty old wheelbarrow. Looking to borrow a tool? Get in touch!"

**Question posts:**

"What's the oldest thing you own that still works perfectly? We love hearing about items that were built to last!"



# Suggested hashtag combinations

## For repair content

#RepairDontReplace #CircularLiving  
#[YourTownName] #CommunityRepair  
#FixItFirst #CircularLiving  
#CircularCommunities

## For sharing/swap content

#CircularCommunity #ShareDontWaste  
#[YourTownName]Community  
#SecondHandFirst #CircularLiving  
#CircularCommunities

## For growing/making content

#[YourGroupName] #[YourTownName]  
#CommunityAction #Sustainability  
#LocalCommunity #CircularLiving  
#CircularCommunities

### 3 How to build genuine engagement

#### Focus on conversations, not just broadcast

**Respond to every comment** within 24 hours – even a simple "Thanks!" shows you're listening.

**Ask genuine questions** in your posts and actually engage with the answers.

**Share other local groups' content** occasionally – community support builds networks.

**Use people's names when you can** – "Thanks Sarah!" feels more personal than "Thanks!"

#### Turn online followers into real-world participants

**Make joining easy:** Always include clear next steps – when, where, what to bring.

**Show, don't just tell:** Post photos of actual people at actual events rather than stock images.

**Address common concerns:** "Never done this before? Neither had most of our members when they started!"

**Create FOMO** (fear of missing out): Show the fun, learning and connections people make.

#### Build a community feel online

**Tag active members** (with permission) in relevant posts and photos.

**Create shared experiences:** Ask everyone to post photos from the same event with a specific hashtag.

**Celebrate milestones:** Group birthdays, member anniversaries, achievement landmarks.

**Share user-generated content:** Repost members' photos and stories (with credit).

# Handle negative comments professionally

**Respond publicly to show transparency:** "Thanks for raising this – let me address your concern..."

**Take detailed discussions offline:** "Happy to discuss this further – please email us at..."

**Stay factual and friendly:** Avoid getting defensive or argumentative.

**Know when not to engage:** Obvious trolls don't deserve your time.

**Recognising trolls:** New accounts with no photo or followers. Aggressive language designed to provoke rather than discuss. Comments completely unrelated to your post content. Same inflammatory comment posted across multiple groups

**When to turn off comments:** Posts about sensitive or controversial topics that might attract irrelevant debate. During local controversies where your group isn't directly involved

**Quick alternative:** Use comment moderation to review comments before they appear publicly rather than turning them off completely.



## 4 How to plan and schedule effectively

### Create a simple content calendar

**Monthly planning session:**

Spend 2 hours planning the month's content around your events and activities.

**Weekly preparation:**

Batch-create content on Sunday for the week ahead.

**Use a simple system:**

Even a basic spreadsheet with dates, platforms and content ideas works.

### Batch content creation

**After events:**

Take 30 minutes to write 3–4 posts while the event is fresh in your mind.

**During quiet periods:**

Prepare educational content and general posts for busy weeks.

**Photo sessions:**

Dedicate time to taking photos specifically for social media. If possible, appoint someone in the group to do this.

### Free scheduling tools that work

**Facebook Creator Studio:**

Free scheduling for Facebook and Instagram

**Buffer** (free plan):

Schedule up to 3 posts across platforms

**Later** (free plan):

Visual content calendar, particularly good for Instagram

**Canva** (scheduling feature):

Create and schedule posts in one platform



## Content ideas for quiet periods

**Throwback posts:** "This time last year we..." with photos from previous events

**Educational series:** Multi-part tips (Part 1: Basic repairs, Part 2: Tools you need, etc.)

**Member introductions:** Spotlight volunteers and regular participants

**Seasonal content:** Link activities to seasons, holidays, or awareness days

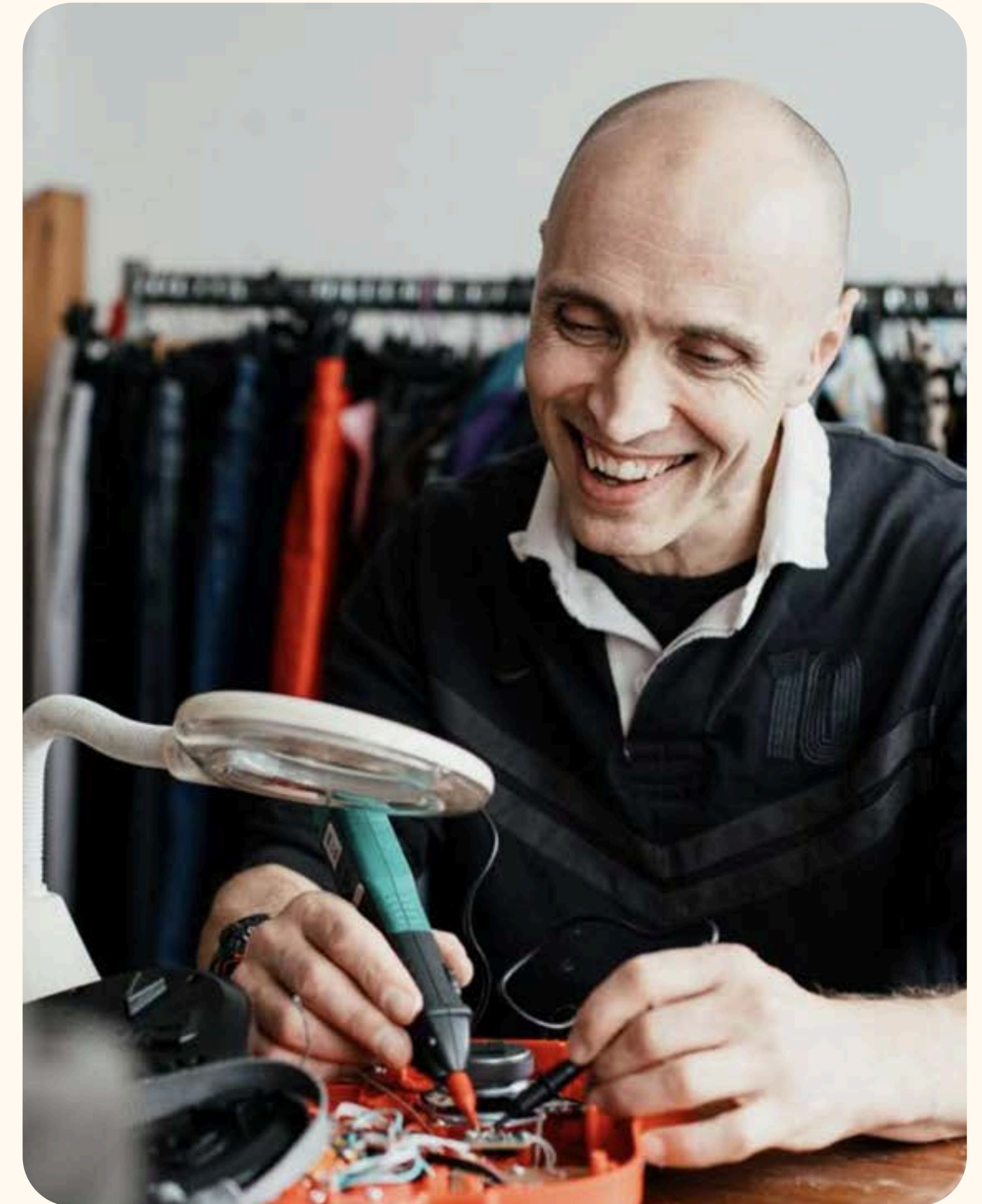
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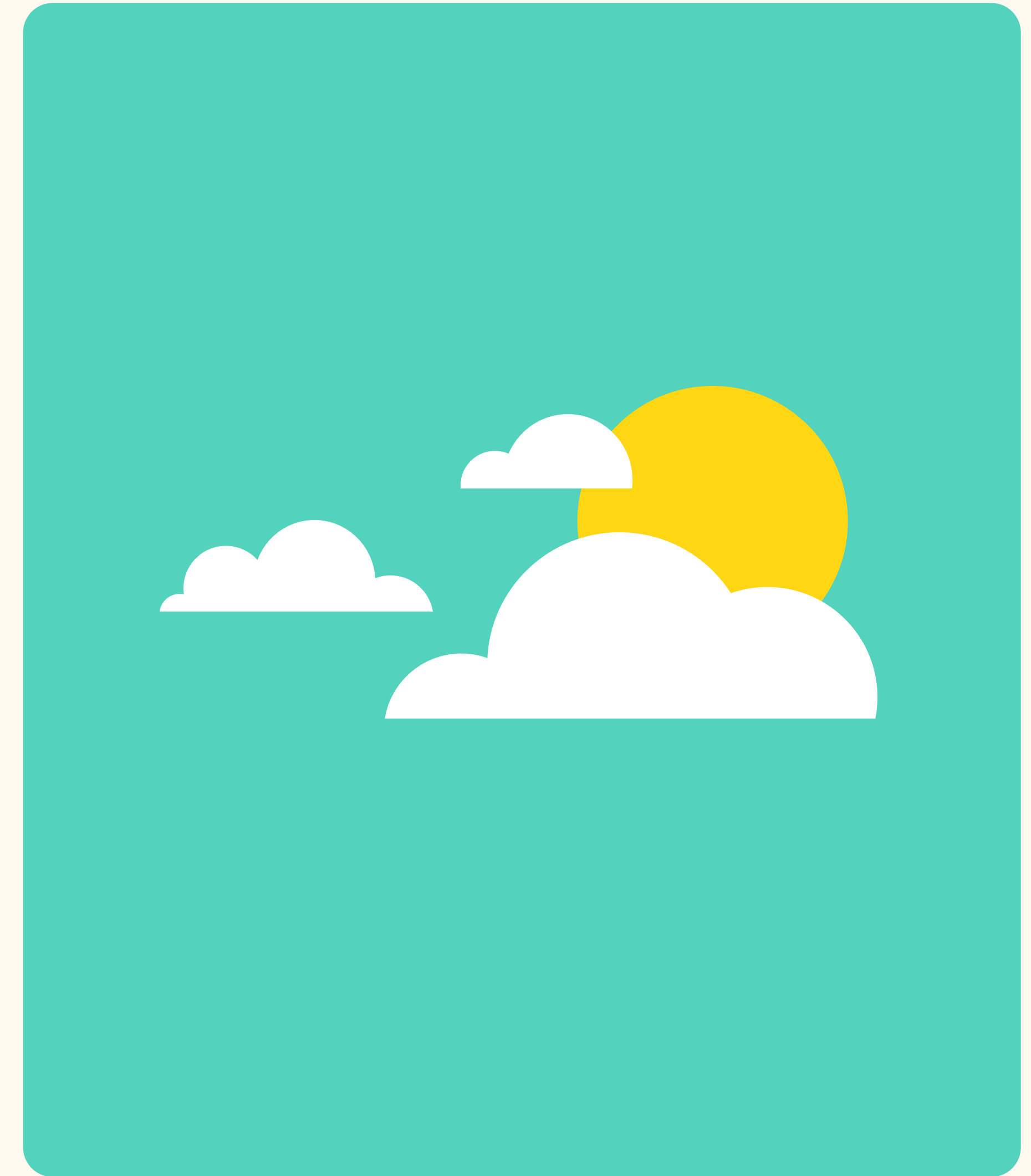
# Troubleshooting common challenges

## "We don't have enough to post about"

- Document everything: setup (people love "behind the scenes" videos), events, cleanup, conversations, small wins
- Ask members to share their stories and experiences
- Create educational content around your activities
- Show the process, not just the results

## "Posts aren't getting engagement"

- Check timing: when is your audience most active? Most apps have an analytics section that outlines when your audience is likely online.
- Ask direct questions that are easy to answer
- Use local references and names people recognise
- Share more personality and behind-the-scenes content



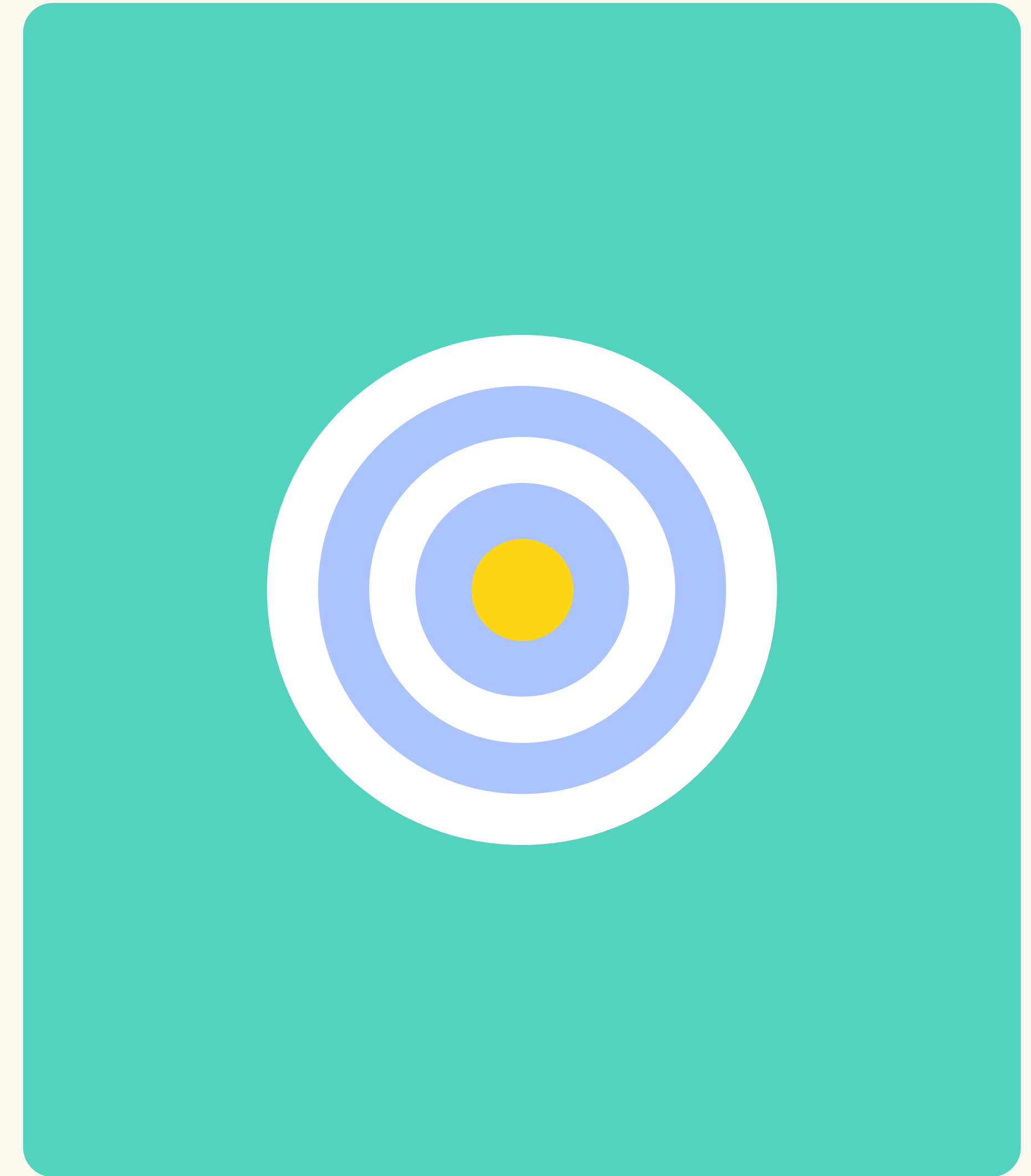
# Troubleshooting common challenges

## "Social media feels like extra work"

- Batch similar tasks together (writing, photo editing, scheduling)
- Involve volunteers: many people enjoy helping with social media
- Focus on documenting what you're already doing rather than creating new content
- Use scheduling tools to reduce daily time commitment

## "We're not seeing new members from social media"

- Include clear calls to action in every post (Want to get involved? DM us for more info, we're always looking for new members, etc)
- Make joining feel easy and welcoming
- Address common concerns upfront
- Partner with other local groups for cross-promotion



# Take action: Build your social media presence

## Week 1: Foundation

1. Choose 1-2 platforms based on where your community is most active
2. Set up or optimise your profiles with clear descriptions, photos and contact information
3. Create a simple content calendar with your upcoming events and activities

## Week 2: Content creation

1. Take photos at your next event specifically for social media
2. Write and schedule 5-7 posts using the formats from this toolkit
3. Start following and engaging with other local community groups

## Week 3: Engagement

1. Respond to all comments and messages promptly
2. Ask questions in your posts and engage with the answers
3. Share or comment on other local groups' relevant content

## Week 4: Refine

1. Review what content got the most engagement
2. Adjust your content mix based on what's working
3. Plan next month's content around upcoming events



## Remember

Authentic, consistent posting that shows the real impact and community connections of your group will always beat perfectly polished content. Your community wants to see real people doing real things – and that's exactly what you're already doing.

Updated Sept 2025

Got a suggestion on how to improve this toolkit? Or have something you'd love us to cover?

Get in touch with Eibhlin today:  
[Eibhlin@circular.ie](mailto:Eibhlin@circular.ie)

