

CIRM

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR
REGENERATIVE MEDICINE

2024-2026 Social Media Strategy

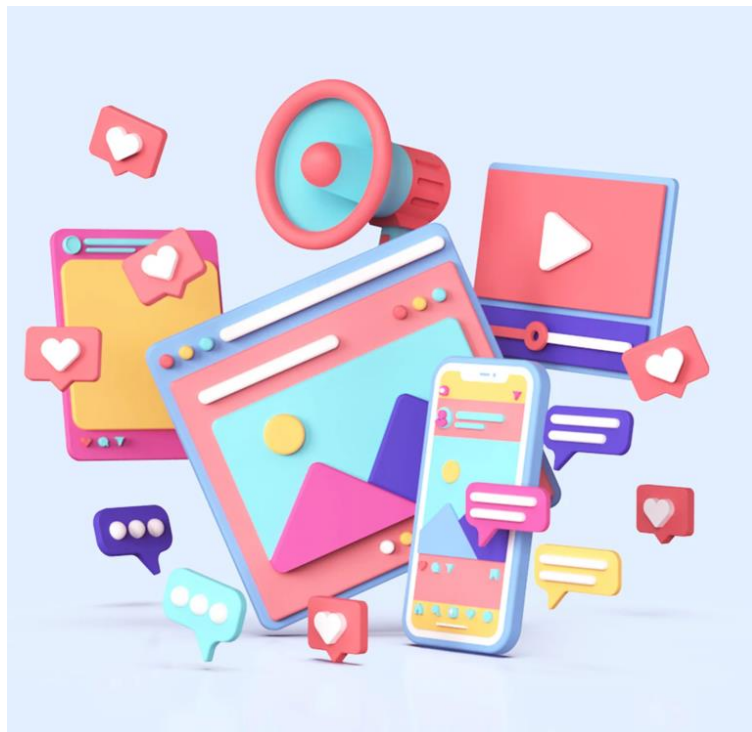


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	<u>1</u>
Team Roles	<u>1</u>
Social Media Audit	<u>2</u>
2022-2024 Goals Recap	<u>2</u>
Insights	<u>3</u>
Content	<u>4-10</u>
Top Performing Content	<u>4-7</u>
Underperforming Content	<u>8-10</u>
Summary	<u>11</u>
Goals + Plan	<u>11</u>
Awareness	<u>12-13</u>
Engagement	<u>13-15</u>
Content	<u>14-16</u>
Opportunities & Considerations.....	<u>16-19</u>

SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

“ Social media is what makes your brand's marketing ecosystem come alive. It's more than just a way to advertise. It's a place to **start conversations, forge relationships, tell stories**, and get details about your audience the way you would with a new friend at a party. ”

OVERVIEW

Social media is an essential way for CIRM to reach its target audiences, gain valuable insights, and grow its brand awareness. With almost 50,000 combined followers across its social media channels—and the opportunity to reach even more—CIRM's social media strategy aims to better engage and inform its target audiences.

CIRM uses [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Threads](#), [YouTube](#), and [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) to increase traffic to its official blog, The Stem Cellar, and website to inform followers about upcoming events, funding opportunities, and CIRM-funded projects.

This Social Media Plan and Strategy outlines how CIRM will implement best practices and tactics to meet its goals and explore new opportunities to expand our reach.

Team Roles

- **Oversees Strategy:** Esteban Cortez—Director of Marketing & Communications
- **Strategy Execution & Management:** Christina Smith—Social Media & Content Specialist
- **Content Development Support:** Katie Sharify—Communications Team Coordinator

SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIT

To refine CIRM's social media approach, we analyzed content from 2022 onward to identify what performed well and what underperformed across each platform. We reviewed post types, engagement rates, and audience interactions to reveal trends and content that resonates with our followers.

By understanding these patterns, we developed a tailored content strategy that aligned with audience interests and optimized reach. Leveraging these insights ensured that CIRM's future social media efforts would be data-driven, effectively amplifying our mission and fostering deeper connections with our community.

2022-2024 SMART Goals Recap & Results

CIRM has made significant progress utilizing social media to spread awareness of our mission. In 2022, we established social media SMART goals and KPIs. Here is how CIRM performed across several key metrics:

2022 SMART Goals	Results (June 2022-Oct 2024)
Instagram: Monthly reach of at least 1,000 users	Average monthly reach of 1,373 accounts per month— 37.3% increase
Facebook: Monthly reach of at least 2,500 users	Average monthly reach of 9,261 unique users— 270.4% increase
LinkedIn: Achieve 5,000 post impressions per month	Average monthly post impressions at 20,111— 302.2% increase
X (formerly Twitter): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve 10,000 impressions each month Receive at least 20 retweets per month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average of 7,922 impressions per month— 20.8% decrease Average of 21 retweets monthly— 5% increase

Overall, CIRM met or exceeded its awareness and engagement goals on most platforms, reflecting successful growth and strong engagement with audiences on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. At the same time, X (formerly Twitter) demonstrated solid engagement but fell short of our impressions goal.

SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIT: Insights

Insights from July 2022-October 2024

Total Accumulative Followers as of October 2024: 48,283

- **Facebook:**
 - **Followers:** 11,698— **Increased by 4.14%** (July 2022 Followers: 11,232)
 - **Total Reach:** 250,053
 - **Total Impressions:** 56,071
 - **Average Engagement Rate:** .6%

- **Instagram:**
 - **Followers:** 2,945— **Increased by 20.6%** (July 2022 Followers: 2,441)
 - **Total Reach:** 37,088
 - **Total Impressions:** 106,674
 - **Average Engagement Rate:** 1.21%

- **LinkedIn**
 - **Followers:** 9,117— **Increased by 225%** (July 2022 Followers: 2,808)
 - **Total Unique Impressions/Reach:** 457,820
 - Industry average is ~ 4,170 impressions/month
 - **Page Views:** 30,409
 - **Average Engagement Rate:** 7.08%
 - Industry standard is between 1%-3.5%

- **Threads**
 - **Followers:** 503— **Increased by 100%** (Started in December 2023)
 - **Total Reach:** 1,014

- **YouTube**
 - **Subscribers:** 9,021— **Increased by 6.19%** (July 2023 Subscribers: 8,494)
 - **Total Impressions/Reach:** 2,542,832
 - **Total Views:** 156,107

- **X**
 - **Followers:** 14,999— **Increased by 3.5%** (July 2022 Followers: 14,489)
 - **Total Impressions/Reach:** 213,887
 - **Average Engagement Rate:** 2.10%
 - Industry standard is .029%

SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIT: Content

Top Performing Content

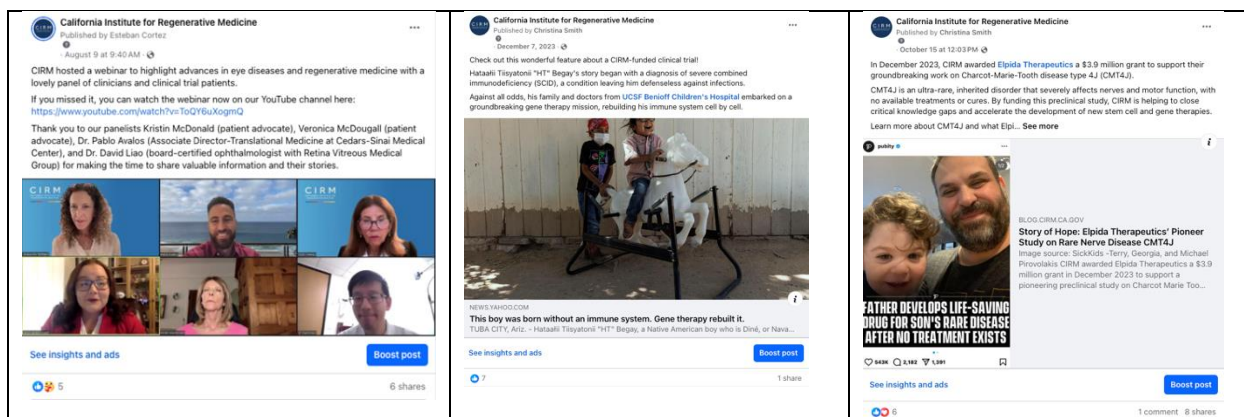
- **Facebook:**

CIRM's audience on Facebook are aged 35+, with an interest in community engagement and informative content, like clinical trial updates and accessibility. Content that is typically relevant for patients, families, and healthcare advocates.

Posts that perform well are ones that highlight stories about real people, achievements, or transformative impacts in regenerative medicine.

Visual appealing content, such as videos and high-quality images, yields higher engagement rates, especially when content contains links to in-depth articles or blog posts. Community-oriented posts, like celebrating National Stem Cell Awareness Day performs well due to Facebook's focus on fostering communities and sharing information.

- **Examples:**



- **Instagram:**

CIRM's audience is younger, between 18-34 years-old that are interested in community engagement and informative content that interests patients, families, healthcare advocates, and students.

CIRM content that performs best on Instagram includes visually striking images and short videos. Posts that feature patient stories or research breakthroughs, presented as carousels or Reels, see strong engagement. Using hashtags relevant to regenerative medicine (e.g. #RegenerativeMedicine, #StemCellResearch, etc.) increases posts' visibility.

Instagram Stories is a highly effective tactic for sharing news in real time or

recapping events. We've increased our use of the Instagram Stories format since it allows for a more informal, narrative-driven approach that resonates with a younger demographic, and have found an increase in reach.

- **Examples:**



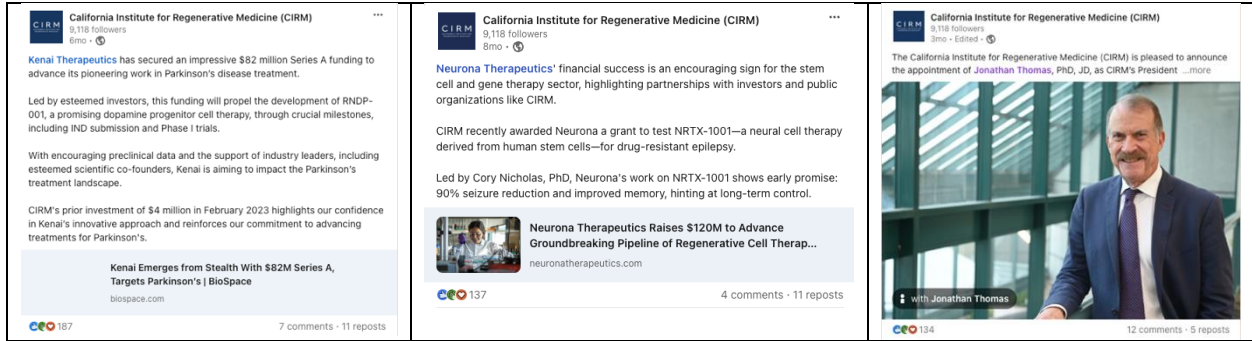
- **LinkedIn:**

CIRM's LinkedIn audience is a highly professional audience that includes researchers, healthcare industry leaders, and academic partners looking for educational and career opportunities.

Successful posts are ones that include CIRM's industry expertise and updates on partnerships, grants, and impactful CIRM-funded research. Content that positions CIRM as a thought leader, such as long-form reports on research findings or expert insights, tend to generate high engagement.

LinkedIn prioritizes native videos and image-based posts, which attracts more views and interactions among CIRM's audiences.

- **Examples:**



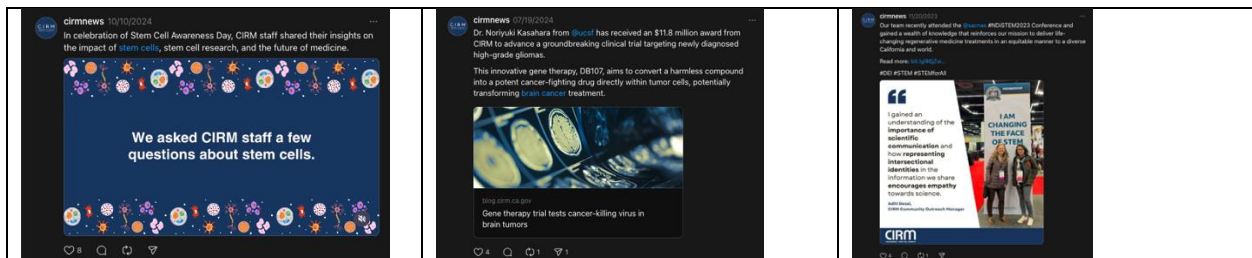
- **Threads:**

As a newer platform, audience insights are limited, however CIRM's audience falls in the age range between 25-54.

From observation, Threads tends to be more conversational and focused on community-building. Content that asks questions and sparks discussions on current research could be effective.

Short-form posts with behind-the-science insights or interesting facts about CIRM-funded research combined with Threads trend tagging feature can be a useful tool to build community engagement and reach a broader audience.

- **Examples:**



- **YouTube:**

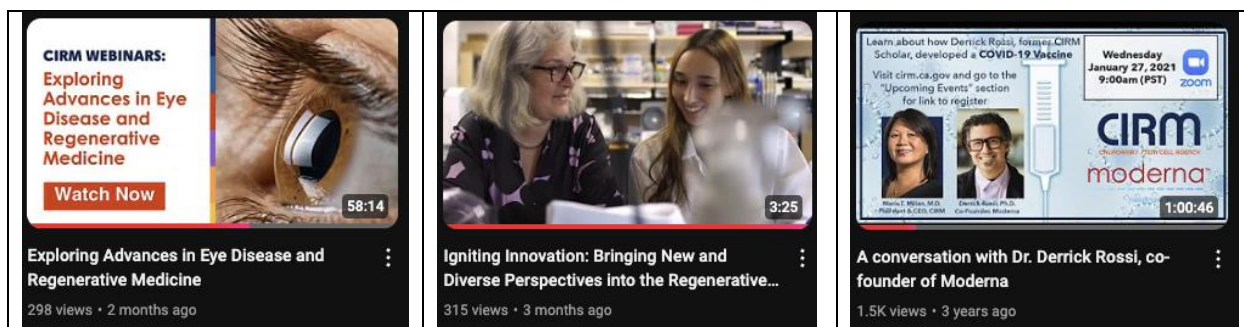
CIRM's YouTube audience is diverse in age range and typically watch videos that include interviews, webinars, and educational series on regenerative medicine.

Content that performs best on CIRM's channel involves educational and explainer videos, such as those detailing regenerative medicine or patient journeys.

YouTube Shorts can attract new, younger audiences by providing quick insights into CIRM and its leadership in advancing regenerative medicine research. CIRM has been utilizing Shorts more consistently since September 2024 and have

seen an increase in engagement with subscribers.

- **Examples:**



- **X:**
CIRM's audience on X includes regenerative medicine professionals, journalists, and scientists that are interested in real-time updates on funding opportunities, research breakthroughs, and policy discussions.

CIRM's posts on X perform best when they offer concise, impactful news updates or thought leadership insights on gene therapy or regenerative medicine advancements. Visuals, like infographics or short video clips, help increase engagement, as X users respond well to quick, informative content.

Participating in trending conversations, like live tweeting an event relevant to healthcare or scientific breakthroughs, can further boost visibility.

- **Examples:**



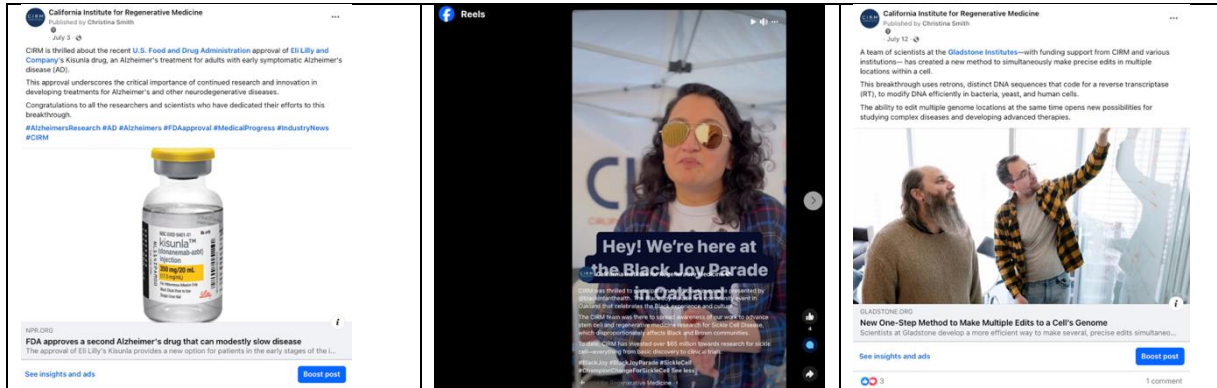
Underperforming Content

- **Facebook:**
Generally, text-heavy posts without engaging visuals or links to research tend to underperform. Posts that are also too lengthy with scientific jargon or uses too much industry-specific terminology without context for a generalized audiences

often see lower engagement, as Facebook users respond best to storytelling and visual content.

CIRM’s audience prefers posts that combine visuals, human-centered stories, or straightforward updates on research impacts and Agency goals.

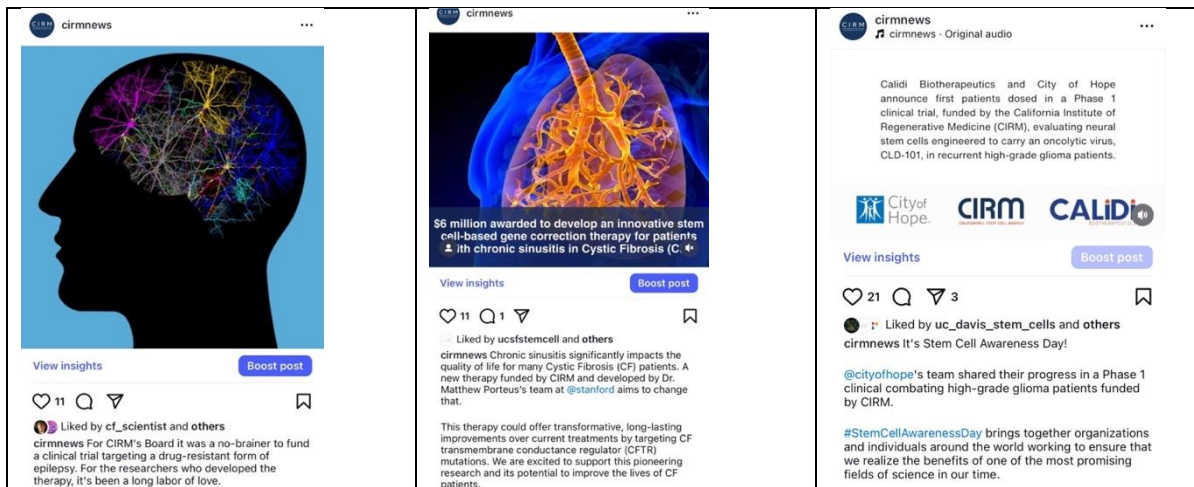
○ **Examples:**



- **Instagram:** Instagram's visual nature means that static, text-heavy images or dense information without an engaging photo or video won't perform well. Educational posts that lack vibrant images, infographics, or video elements can be overlooked on this platform's algorithm.

Instagram Stories, which offers instantaneous content, tends to see low engagement if overly complex or lacks interactive features like polls or questions.

○ **Examples:**

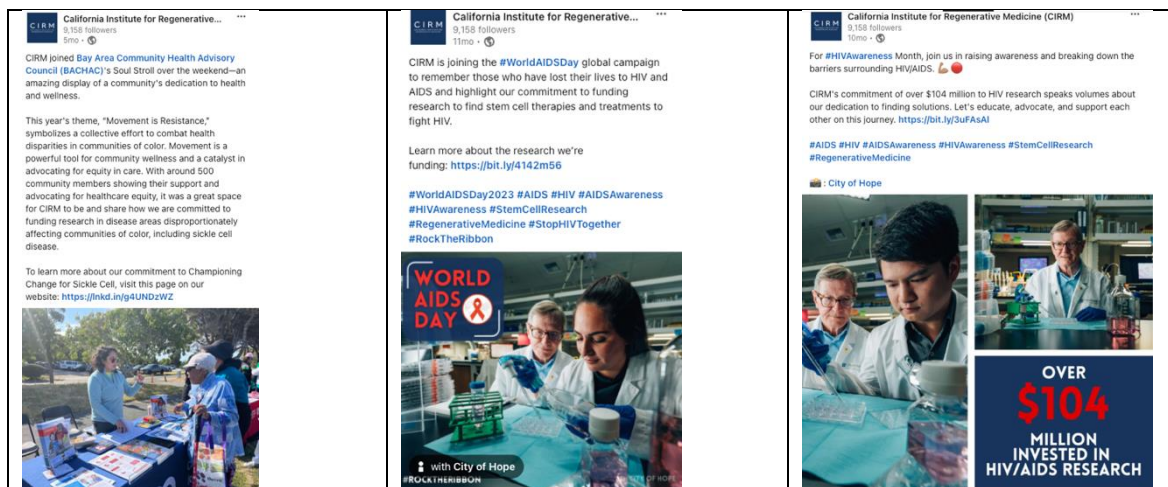


- **LinkedIn:** Plain text posts or updates that don't relate directly to professional development,

networking, or industry insights tend to underperform on LinkedIn.

Content that lacks immediate relevance to a professional audience, such as overly promotional updates or announcements without a clear connection to industry innovation or achievements receives low engagement.

- **Examples:**



- **YouTube:**

Long-form videos without a clear focus or have minimal storytelling elements can lead to lower view counts and watch time on YouTube.

Educational or technical videos that lack engaging visuals or a narrative structure may struggle, as audiences are typically more engaged by tutorials, interviews, or short explainers with strong visuals.

- **Examples:**



- **X:**

On X, posts without engaging visuals, GIFs, or videos tend to see less interaction, as users are used to highly visual content that stands out in the fast-moving feed.

Basic text-only updates or dense, information-heavy tweets without a clear

takeaway or call to action tend to perform poorly. Including links without an engaging image preview also leads to reduced clicks and.

- **Examples:**



Summary

CIRM's most engaging social media content includes patient and researcher stories, along with posts celebrating milestones like grant announcements and clinical trial advancements. These emotionally resonant narratives highlight the significance of CIRM's work. Educational content about stem cell research and regenerative medicine performs well, especially in accessible formats like infographics or short-form videos.

CIRM's less engaging content often includes updates that are too formal, too technical, and too lengthy and lack engaging visuals or personal connections. Although these posts may contain valuable information, industry announcements, and policy updates that include too much jargon typically generate lower engagement. This is particularly true when they do not relate to human interest stories or illustrate a direct impact for the public.

By analyzing these trends, CIRM can enhance its social media strategy to prioritize people-centered stories and visually engaging educational content. This ensures alignment with audience interests and CIRM's mission to make complex research accessible.

SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY: GOALS + PLAN

Defining clear social media goals for **brand awareness, engagement, and content** is essential for creating a unified and effective strategy.

- **Awareness:** Building brand awareness ensures that target audiences recognize and understand CIRM's mission, which is crucial for establishing public trust and credibility.
- **Engagement:** Engagement goals drive interactions that foster a community connected to CIRM's work, which can amplify its reach and attract new supporters.
- **Content:** Setting content goals ensures a balanced mix of information, stories, and updates that educate, inspire, and inform followers. This approach keeps the audience engaged while consistently reinforcing CIRM's core messages.

Together, these goals create a clear framework for measuring success and refining social media efforts over time.

Awareness Goal: Building brand awareness ensures target audiences recognize and understand CIRM's mission, which is crucial for establishing public trust and credibility.

Below are some key social media strategies and tactics to help us achieve this goal.

Key Strategies	Potential Tactics
Building new and leveraging established relationships with CIRM stakeholders, patient advocates, community groups, and institutions to increase brand awareness across social channels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up recurring (bi-monthly, quarterly) check-ins with partnering institutions and organizations on how to best collaborate and share content (e.g., collaborative posts, tagging, etc.). • Collaborate with CIRM's Patient Access team to facilitate relationship-building with community partners. • Utilize social media and online groups (e.g., Facebook groups) to promote research, disease, patient-focused announcements
Boost impressions and reach of CIRM's social media content and profile.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizing paid social media (e.g., \$100/month) by boosting content that is relevant to current trends or to promote CIRM's mission. • Collaborating and engaging (e.g., liking, commenting, sharing) with partner and industry leader content to boost visibility of CIRM's social media presence.
Leveraging publications and events to increase CIRM's brand awareness (e.g., Annual report, 20 th Anniversary).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing campaigns twice a fiscal year to increase name recognition and establish credibility. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 20th Anniversary ▪ Stem Cell Awareness ▪ Diseases awareness days
Build relationships with science and community influencers to boost our mission and awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and connect with science and patient advocacy influencers that can help with CIRM's brand awareness and share content to further any public messaging.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a brand ambassador program with CIRM trainees to help promote CIRM content and increase reach. • Providing influencers and brand ambassadors with social media toolkits for general and specified campaign messaging.
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Potential key performance indicators (KPIs) to track:

- Follower Growth Rate—Increase by 15% on all social media channels
- Reach—Increase by 10% on Facebook, Instagram, and Threads
- Impressions—Increase by 10% on all social media channels
- Mentions—Increase on LinkedIn, X, and Threads by 5%
- Video Views—Increase on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn by 8%

Engagement Goal: Drive interactions that foster a community connected to CIRM's work, which can amplify its reach and attract new supporters.

Below are some key social media strategies and tactics to help us achieve this goal.

Key Strategies	Potential Tactics
Establish a response protocol, guidelines for community management, and social media policy. (TBD Feb 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a crisis communications and general response protocol for social channels. • Draft an automation script for Facebook and Instagram direct messages. • Develop and implement an employee social media policy.
Utilize digital and social channels to host more online forums and webinars.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with CIRM teams (e.g., Community Outreach Manager, Patient Access team) to promote and develop online forums (e.g., live Q&A's, webinars).
Develop and distribute social media toolkits and content sharing guidelines with CIRM stakeholders, partners, advocacy groups, grantees, and trainees. (TBD Feb 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share toolkits on CIRM Hub and website. • Share and distribute SM toolkits with Education Program Directors and through alumni/trainee newsletter and communications.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with advocacy groups on content-sharing initiatives as advised by outreach and policy leads
Leveraging the Executive Team, CIRM ICOC Board Members, and staff to create, engage, and reshare CIRM social content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set-up recurring meetings with CIRM President, Executive Team, Programs teams, and Board Leadership to develop messaging, talking points and content re: policy and biotech industry updates. Provide messaging toolkits to ICOC Board Members and CIRM staff to promote on their social media networks. Leverage internal communications (emails and e-newsletters) to provide campaign messaging.
Increase multi-language and accessible content to engage with Californians and non-English speaking audiences. (TBD Jan 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify multi-lingual translation online service tools (ex: DeepL) to streamline translation services for social media captions and graphics. Utilize social media platform accessibility features (e.g., alt text, closed captions).

Potential key performance indicators (KPIs) to track:

- Likes—Increase by 15% across all platforms
- Comments— Increase by 6% across all platforms
- Shares—Increase by 25% across all platforms
- Saves—Increase by 5% across all platforms
- Link Clicks— Increase by 10% across Facebook, LinkedIn, and Threads
- Engagement Rate—Maintain a 2-5% engagement rate across all channels
- Mentions —Increase mentions by 15% across platforms

Content Goal: Balance a mix of information, stories, and updates that educate, inspire, and inform followers. This approach keeps the audience engaged while consistently reinforcing CIRM's core messages.

Below are some key strategies and tactics to help us achieve this goal.

Key Strategies	Potential Tactics
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<p>Increase and boost video content (Reels, YouTube shorts, etc.) across social platforms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce at minimum one video or animated graphic a month to leverage on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube Shorts. • Identify and utilize new editing tools to streamline production of video content. • Leverage event presence to build CIRM video library.
<p>Share more patient and trainee stories, PI stories, CIRM staff perspectives, CIRM-funded project successes, and behind-the-science pieces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a social media SOP to establish a content guideline and cadence for each social media platform based on the channels' recommended active times. • Establish recurring (monthly, quarterly) check-ins with CIRM department project managers and science officers to develop content. • Develop and implement a cross-department content SOP to identify CIRM-funded projects and patient milestones, and other trending topics of interest.
<p>Emphasize the importance of discovery/basic research while highlighting advancements in other research pillars, including clinical trials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more visual social graphics to educate about importance of research stages. • Through content updates and storytelling, showcase the success of CIRM's strategy to fund early research and its importance to the research ecosystem. • Set up recurring check-ins with Discovery team and science officers to identify important Discovery research updates.
<p>Increase guest writer/subject matter expert content on CIRM's digital channels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and share guest writer guidelines with subject matter experts who have insights in the

	<p>regenerative medicine field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and distribute questionnaires for PIs and trainees to streamline content development.
Increase awareness of CIRM's strategic vision and goals, including the recently implemented Strategic Allocation Framework (SAF).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate SAF goals and preapproved messaging to social content. ▪ Set up recurring check-ins with CIRM's Executive Team to align on messaging and awareness goals re: strategic vision. ▪ Develop social graphics and marketing collateral to promote the SAF (e.g., white papers, flyers, etc.).

Potential key performance indicators (KPIs) to track:

- Content volume (e.g., publish one video a month on YouTube, YouTube Shorts)
- Posting frequency (e.g., post 2-3 times a week on all social media platforms)
- Publish 10 Instagram Stories a month
- Post 1-2 times on YouTube Communities a month

Opportunities & Considerations

In addition to these goals, we have identified further opportunities and considerations that could optimize our presence and reach across social media platforms.

X (formerly Twitter)

Since its change in ownership, X has faced much controversy and criticism. From amplifying negative comments and misinformation to enforcing a verification and premium features subscription, agencies have had to rethink their presence on the platform.

Biotech and other government agencies have adjusted their strategies to emphasize cross-platform content sharing and **are using X as more of a social listening tool to monitor current topics and trends.** This ensures that even if X undergoes further changes, they will still maintain a strong presence on other platforms, such as Threads.

For CIRM, being present on X would maintain the communications established with its 15,000 followers and has the potential to reach a broad audience for accurate

regenerative medicine research information and updates. Maintaining CIRM's presence on the platform helps the organization remain aware of evolving challenges and stay informed on topics that are trending.

Threads

Threads offers CIRM a valuable opportunity to enhance its social media presence. As a newer platform closely connected to Instagram's extensive user base, Threads provides access to a new audience. Its integration with Instagram facilitates seamless cross-promotion, making it ideal for highlighting breakthroughs and sharing patient stories through engaging visuals and short videos.

Early adoption allows CIRM to differentiate itself by building a community while facing relatively low competition. The platform's conversational tone encourages accessible dialogue, making it easier to simplify complex topics like regenerative medicine. Additionally, Threads' evolving algorithm provides opportunities to experiment with content and strategically influence its visibility and engagement.

Through Threads, CIRM can enhance its storytelling efforts and engage a growing audience interested in innovative science and health initiatives.

TikTok

TikTok's fast-paced environment thrives on frequent, trend-driven content creation. Organizations must consistently produce short, engaging videos aligned with viral challenges, trending audio, or niche interests to build an audience and remain relevant. This demands rapid adaptation and resources to maintain relevance.

TikTok is also in flux due to significant scrutiny over its data privacy practices and potential national security risks associated with its parent company, ByteDance. Although the State of California has not explicitly banned TikTok, [State Attorney General Rob Bonta is currently suing TikTok for violations of state consumer protection laws](#). State Senator Bill Dodd recently dropped [State Bill \(SB\) 74](#), prohibiting TikTok from being downloaded on any state agency devices due to the [TikTok Ban signed by President Biden](#).

This necessitates careful consideration of potential risks and benefits before investing heavily in TikTok as a communication channel. CIRM will continue to monitor these developments.

Social Listening Tools

Investing in social listening tools empowers organizations to make informed decisions, maximize outreach, and refine messaging based on audience data.

For CIRM, leveraging social listening software, like Meltwater, Iconosquare, or Sprout Social, can help promote programs, engage with diverse communities, and ensure alignment with its public-facing mission in regenerative medicine.

Investing in these tools is not just about social media; it's about connecting with stakeholders, amplifying impact, and safeguarding the organization's reputation.

BlueSky Social

BlueSky Social is a newer social media platform that functions similarly to Threads and X. It offers unique opportunities as a social media platform because it focuses on decentralization and user control through the Authenticated Transfer (AT) Protocol. This enables customizable feeds, user-driven content moderation, and platform profile portability, appealing to users who value autonomy and transparency. Its advanced moderation tools make it a safer alternative to platforms like X.

BlueSky presents a chance to engage a niche audience interested in decentralized technologies. After its public launch in early 2024, its user base went over three million. Features like its customizable algorithm marketplace allow organizations to create tailored content experiences, enhancing engagement. However, due to its niche audience, it is a fledgling platform, and we should assess more before creating a CIRM presence.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is an opportunity for CIRM to engage with audiences in a personal and direct manner. With over 2 billion users worldwide, the platform can share real-time updates, answer questions, and foster meaningful connections with stakeholders, patients, and researchers. Its group chat and broadcast features can facilitate focused discussions on regenerative medicine, clinical trial participation, and funding opportunities.

Managing a WhatsApp account can be resource intensive. It requires dedicated staff to handle real-time communication and respond promptly to inquiries, which would strain smaller teams. Additionally, compared to other social media platforms, the platform lacks robust analytics and scheduling tools. This makes it challenging to measure engagement and effectively streamline content management.

Reddit

Reddit is a hub for niche communities, making it ideal for targeted outreach. Participating in relevant subreddits like science and biotech allows organizations like CIRM to engage directly with informed and interested users. Reddit's AMAs (Ask Me Anything) sessions can highlight initiatives, answer questions, and promote transparency.

However, an organization must be consistently engaged and present to build an audience. Reddit's audience is also well-known for its skepticism of overt marketing/messaging, and organizations must be careful to avoid backlash.

Discord

Discord is a free communication app used by millions of people worldwide to talk directly with friends, family, influencers, and communities via text chat, voice, and video. It provides a unique opportunity to build and maintain a community through real-time interaction. It's well-suited for hosting webinars, Q&A sessions, or community discussions.

Organizations can create dedicated servers for patients, researchers, or educational initiatives, fostering close-knit networks.

Managing a Discord would require a lot of resources for active moderation and ongoing engagement. Due to its private and invitation-based nature, it would be less effective for broad outreach strategies.