



## How Lake Metroparks stays a step ahead on social media using Sprout Social

**11.9%**

YoY increase in total social impressions

**23.5%**

YoY increase in total social followers

**49.6%**

YoY increase in total social engagements

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With more than 60 miles of trails, over 35 parks, two golf courses, a state-of-the-art wildlife rehabilitation center, a cross-country skiing center and much more, it's easy to see why millions of visitors flock to Lake County, Ohio every year.

**Lake Metroparks** strives to provide visitors with recreational and educational experiences that will keep them coming back for more, and social media plays an integral role.

But how does an organization with limited staff, time and budget effectively reach the right audiences, deliver exceptional customer care and measure return on investment, all while maintaining oversight of multiple social accounts?

The answer is Sprout Social.



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**John Venen**

Promotions and Advertising Manager

## **Simplifying social**

John Venen has worked with Lake Metroparks for the better part of three decades, and currently holds the title of Promotions and Advertising Manager.

He wears many hats, but is primarily focused on demonstrating Lake Metroparks’ genuine commitment to the community via social media, public relations and other promotional efforts.

This includes maintaining the organization’s presence across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube.

“Social media is our most effective form of communication,” Venen said. “We use it not only to provide information about upcoming programs and events, but as a way to educate and entertain.”

The transparency offered by social is particularly important to Lake Metroparks.

“The open nature of social media provides users a platform to express impressions or experiences in our parks,” Venen said. “This gives us the opportunity to engage with them to demonstrate our concern for solving any problems. It’s a two-way communication tool.”



However, with so much content to publish and so many visitors to engage with, keeping up with daily demands was easier said than done.

“We were doing things manually,” Venen said. “People would email me things or text me things, and I would take it and go from there.”

The organization began searching for a platform that would support team contributions and simplify workflow.

“We discovered Sprout, and its ease of use, customer support and exceptional reporting were all deciding factors,” Venen said. “The ability to use the team approach of submitting posts certainly made life a lot easier.”

It wasn't long before Lake Metroparks discovered other ways Sprout could simplify social.

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## Streamlining strategy

Data shows 46% of social marketers wish they could **spend more time developing strategy** instead of working on tactical execution. However, 59% say lack of time prevents them from doing so.

The team at Lake Metroparks realized Sprout could help it spend less time on day-to-day tasks and more time pursuing strategic goals, all while improving customer service.

“Sprout provides the tools to effectively manage and engage with all our social networks from one simple user interface,” Venen said. “It allows for the curation of content through team contributions. The reporting options give us an easy-to-follow and up-to-date look at the effectiveness of our outreach. And it allows us to communicate effectively and quickly to those who reach out directly through the use of **Chatbots**.”

Using Sprout’s Bot Builder, Lake Metroparks is able to automate repetitive tasks, resolve customer issues at a faster rate and create unique marketing experiences.

“Sprout’s Chatbots are absolutely amazing,” Venen said. “They provide the ability to respond to our customers’ most frequently asked questions in a very timely manner at any time of day. With the way we’re able to personalize them, it’s kind of like building a mini-website. People can reach out to us on social and say, ‘Okay, I want information on this,’ click, and then go to the page they need.”

Meanwhile, Sprout’s [Smart Inbox](#) empowers Lake Metroparks to stay alerted to potential opportunities or crises brewing on social by unifying all social channels into a single stream, making it easy to monitor incoming messages and surface mentions of specific keywords.

For instance, the Cleveland Browns’ Myles Garrett recently asked his Twitter followers where to bring his new puppy for a playdate. Loyal members of the Dawg Pound, one of the NFL’s most passionate fan communities, pointed him toward Lake Metroparks’ Canine Meadow Dog Park.

“All the TV stations and local radio stations were all over it,” Venen said. “It brought a lot of attention to our dog park and its Facebook page.”

Page impressions jumped by 829%, and the number of new fans for the page increased by 540%.

“Once we were aware of what was happening, we were able to monitor the situation from Sprout,” Venen said. “I was able to add “Myles Garrett” as a keyword in the Smart inbox to ensure we’d stay on top of anything that came up and be the first to know what people were saying online.”

In this way, Lake Metroparks is able to proactively identify opportunities to expand its reach and connect with new audiences.



## Assessing impact

Sprout not only makes it easy for Lake Metroparks to measure ROI, but improve it.

“Sprout’s reporting has given us a better look at our analytics and helps us adjust our social strategy through better targeting,” Venen said.

“Engagement across all our networks is made simpler through the use of the Smart Inbox and through timely responses utilizing Chatbots. These things have all had a positive impact on our metrics.”

The ultimate goal is increasing attendance at park locations, usage of park facilities and registration for park-affiliated programs. This ties back directly to how many people are seeing and interacting with Lake Metroparks' social posts.

Year over year after signing up with Sprout, across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest, Lake Metroparks achieved a:

- 11.9% increase in total social impressions
- 23.5% increase in total social followers
- 49.6% increase in total social engagements

Lake Metroparks is committed to conserving, preserving and keeping people connected to the beautiful natural resources of Lake County. With the help of Sprout Social, it will continue its mission while saving time, providing excellent customer service and easily maintaining oversight of its expansive social presence.