

## SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS:

We take a look at how Auckland's largest BID, Heart of the City, approaches social media in the third of our series.



**HEART**  
OF THE CITY™  
AUCKLAND

## View us, like us, follow us

Digital communications, social media included, are at the beating heart of the business association's destination marketing and member engagement strategies.

And the city's heart is in excellent health: home to almost 12,000 businesses, 114,000 employees and close to 45,000 residents. About 200,000 people visit the CBD every day including more than 50,000 students. Retail spending reached \$1.8 billion during the past financial year.

Heart of the City's Head of Marketing Kate Cleaver says the organisation's websites – [heartofthecity.co.nz](http://heartofthecity.co.nz) (for destination marketing) and [hotcity.co.nz](http://hotcity.co.nz) (for business members) – offer a rich source of information, central to growing an engaged digital following.

"We have the content," Kate says. "The volume and breadth of information – from events to fashion, arts and culture, to dining and nightlife – provides a diverse offering. Our challenge is serving the right content, at the right time, in the best places to be relevant and inspire action."

Response to its digital channels is going from strength to strength in 'the city that never stops'.

**In an online survey, 86% of Aucklanders said they found the digital content useful, with 76% saying it encouraged them to come into the city centre.**

The screenshot displays four social media engagement metrics:

- MOST VIEWED TODAY:** A list of six articles: 1. Ice Cream Sundae Market, 2. Our Favourite Festival Outfits: For Her, 3. Summer at Silo Park, 4. The Art of Banksy, 5. Dinner in the Sky, 6. Vector Lights Launch.
- LIKE US:** A Facebook post from Heart of the City with a 'Like Page' button. The post text reads: "the corner, we've got outfit ideas from some of our favourite retailers in the central city." Below the text is a photo of a clothing store.
- VIEW US:** An Instagram post featuring a photo of the Auckland Harbour Bridge at night, illuminated with colorful lights. A button below the photo says "VIEW US ON INSTAGRAM".
- FOLLOW US:** A Twitter post from Heart of the City (@HeartOfAkiCity) dated Jan 23, 2018. The tweet text reads: "This Anniversary Weekend, the Auckland Harbour Bridge will come to life with Vector Lights, a world-first solar, battery and peer-to-peer powered light show that demonstrates a smarter way to power our city." Below the text is a link: [heartofthecity.co.nz/article/vector...](http://heartofthecity.co.nz/article/vector...) and a photo of the bridge at night. A "Follow @HeartOfAkiCity" button is visible at the bottom.

HOTC's weekly email newsletter reaches around 47,000 subscribers and highlights the leading stories published on its online channels.

“We’re heavy users of Facebook, moderate users of Instagram and occasional users of Twitter. We use Twitter (and LinkedIn) to talk to our city building and advocacy content,” says Kate. “We’ve also been trialing Snapchat to reach a younger audience interested in fashion and we launched an app back in 2014. This provides a handy source of information and inspiration for people when they’re on the go and looking for what’s on and where to go next in the heart of Auckland’s city.

“Facebook is about sharing our online content while we use Instagram more in-the-moment, it’s great for live events or openings. Usually it’s the of-the-moment, topical content, coupled with a strong visual impact, that gets good engagement.”

Like a photo, an infographic like the one below speaks a thousand words. Among the many advantages of digital communications are the immediacy of feedback and measurability of impact.



“We can track the effectiveness of what we’re doing, the results of which provide us with great insights into what’s attracting interest among our audiences and allowing us to plan future content.

“Everyone’s time poor today while the media environment gets busier and more fragmented. We’re all talking about similar content but the acid test comes with ‘is it interesting to me? Have I learned anything’,” says Kate.

HOTC has learned a lot during the six years since it introduced its first social media campaign in the winter of 2011.

“Back then we sent out a monthly email, now we’re posting on Facebook at least once a day and emailing once, sometimes twice a week if we have lots to say. We try to always be out there, connected to our audience, trying new things, and learning as we go,” says Kate.

**Attention social media newbies:**

- Look before you leap – do your homework on how to use SM, attend training
- Research your audience(s), find out what they’re interested in & want to hear about
- Content is key: invest in creating words & images that attract & inspire your audience
- Try new things, to test & learn & look at what other town centres/precincts (that you admire) are doing.

