

## Digital collaboration

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Digitisation has long been part of our lives. We use mobile phones, stream films, skype, chat, read digital versions of newspapers and search for information on the internet. Digital media do not simply replace analogue works and services. They become really useful, however, when they also change and reshape procedures and processes.

The range of digital collaboration tools is enormous and constantly changing. At the same time, though, each one of us varies greatly in their openness to and knowledge about it. So, where does one start? This little checklist can help with taking first steps:

- ✓ **Analysis of the current state:** Where do we already use digital media? What works well, and where do we need to do more?
- ✓ **Identifying potential:** Where do members and volunteers expect digital tools today as a given? For example, electronic newsletters, e-mails and chats for coordinating activities.
- ✓ **Decision:** For which other areas and tasks do we want to use digital media in our association?
- ✓ **Support:** Who and what supports us? It always helps to start with the digital tools that someone on the executive committee is already very familiar with. Or you can look for someone in your personal environment or in the association who can give an introduction to the executive committee.
- ✓ **Having the courage to experiment:** start small, go step by step, create a sense of achievement, and take your time.

## Opportunities and obstacles in the digital space

### Opportunities:

Going digital ...

- allows us to communicate much more quickly (saving time), promptly and cost-effectively (without much effort).
  - ensures that all members of a group (e.g. executive committee) have a better overview, everyone is always up to date and, depending on the tool, always has access to the current documents.
  - means that work can be handed over more easily in the event of a change on the executive committee.
  - allows for volunteer work and gainful employment to be reconciled more easily, if for no other reason than that it is possible to work independently of time and place.
  - allows us to reach new target groups, especially young people.
  - increases the attractiveness of the association: digital communication improves the visibility and image of the association, thus reaching a much larger audience.
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**Obstacles and possible solutions:***The executive committee lacks user knowledge*

- Is there a digitally savvy member or someone in the association's environment who could brief the executive committee or take on some of this work?
- Experiment, taking small steps!
- Do not be afraid of failure, it's not the end of the world ...

*Data security and protection*

- Keep member data confidential
- Business documents must be readable for 10 years (hard copy)
- Respect copyright and personal rights
- Create content for social media yourself (photos), use Creative Commons or public domain content, or ask the creator of an image, video or text
- Always respect the right to one's own image: asking too many questions does not hurt.
- Study the data protection of the tool used (where are the servers located? What happens to your data?)

*Scepticism and/or active resistance to digitisation on the executive committee or among members*

- Communicate simply and transparently, involve members (listen to and collect ideas and preferences)
- Set guidelines: define procedures, establish responsibilities
- Avoid coercion. Instead, provide opportunities to make use of digital media. Offer support if necessary

**What can digital tools be used for?****Internal communication***Chats and messengers*

Most of us have been using chats and messengers like WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram, Threema or Slack for personal and business purposes for a long time. This allows you to communicate easily and quickly with one person, or also with an entire group. You can forward pictures and texts and usually receive an answer quickly.

It is important for the executive committee of an association to choose the tools with which most of the members are familiar.

*Video conferencing*

As a result of the pandemic, we have already become accustomed to holding meetings via video conferencing. Zoom, Skype, MS Teams, Whereby, WhatsApp and other tools are now seen as indispensable. It is usually advisable to have a mixture of face-to-face meetings and video conferences when there are no risks.

Here, too, it is important to look at the needs of the members (executive committee, working groups, members) and then decide on a tool. It may also be necessary to try different tools!

Visit [www.vitaminb-e.ch/digital-meet-ups](http://www.vitaminb-e.ch/digital-meet-ups) for a detailed description of different tools.

### **External communication**

Social media is a topic in itself. There are different channels that are suitable depending on the target group. For example, if you are targeting an older audience, Facebook, Instagram or YouTube are better choices. Young people are easier to reach via TikTok or Snapchat.

### **Collaborating on documents**

When collaborating on documents, tools such as GoogleDocs, OneNote, Evernote and others can be helpful. They allow all members of a group to work on the same document, and everyone always has the latest version.

Thanks to clouds such as Dropbox, Microsoft, Onedrive, Google Drive and Adobe Cloud, all members of the executive committee have access to all important documents at all times.

### **Participation**

Always a crucial and highly relevant topic! With Mentimeter, for example, it is very easy to create an interactive survey that can be evaluated in real time. Kahoot, for example, is suitable for simple quizzes. There are many digital tools that are easy to use!

### **Creativity**

Moderation boards or whiteboards are extremely useful for developing something together. Different people can work on it at the same time, set Post-its, draw, insert pictures, etc. Successful examples include Miro-Board, Google Jamboard or Padlet. Canva can be used to collaborate on designs, e.g. for a flyer. Video greetings or simple explanatory videos can be created directly on the screen with Loom, which requires little knowledge.

### **Collaborative planning and work process management**

Trello, a kind of digital pinboard to which you can attach notes, as well as documents or pictures, can be useful for managing shared tasks. Of course, there are also more comprehensive project management tools, but they do cost money. Digital calendars (e.g. Teamup,) and, of course, Doodle can help to coordinate appointments and dates.

### **Association software**

There are now various options with different functionalities. Again, choose the one that best suits your needs, is recommended to you by another association or appeals to you the most. Clubdesk and Webling are popular products. For a more comprehensive collection, visit [www.vitaminb-e.ch/digital](http://www.vitaminb-e.ch/digital).

## Checklist for choosing and introducing digital tools

### A digital tool

- ✓ is not an end in itself!
- ✓ is intended to help achieve objectives or implement requirements.
- ✓ must be appropriate for the requirements of the association.
- ✓ should take into account the resources of the association.

### When introducing a tool, you should

- ✓ take small steps.
- ✓ proceed step-by-step.
- ✓ create a sense of achievement.
- ✓ take your time.
- ✓ allow for time to test the tool.
- ✓ offer training.

### Further links and work aids:

*Website:*

*Tools:* [www.vitaminb-e.ch/digital](http://www.vitaminb-e.ch/digital)

Video conferencing: [www.vitaminb-e.ch/digital-meet-ups](http://www.vitaminb-e.ch/digital-meet-ups)

*Work aids:* [www.vitaminb-e.ch/tools/work-aids](http://www.vitaminb-e.ch/tools/work-aids)

Social media

Online meetings