

# **SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES**

## **Gauge Your Commitment**

Social media channels are most effective when content is fresh and interactive. While it is relatively easy to set up social media pages, University departments, clubs and organizations must reflect on the time commitment necessary to develop and upload content and to respond to input from users. At minimum, they require a weekly commitment of two to three relevant postings for each social media outlet.

## **Not Individual Pages**

Departmental or club accounts must be treated more professionally than individual accounts (e.g., a personal Facebook page) and must contain reliable, factual, and updated information regarding the Scranton office or group they represent.

## **Understand Your Strategy**

Social media efforts should be part of a larger communications strategy. Know what you're trying to accomplish, and why. Who is your audience? What do you want them to do? Is social media the best way to do this?

## **Identify yourself**

When participating in or maintaining a social media site on behalf of the University, clearly state your role and goals. Keep these in mind as you determine the most effective use of social media to deliver your message. Never hide your identity for the purpose of promoting Scranton through social media.

## **Be accurate**

Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information with a source first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible; after all, that's how you build community. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly. This will earn you respect in the online community.

## **Be respectful**

As a member of the Scranton Community, you understand the University's commitment to the freedom of inquiry, respect for others and the civil and thoughtful discussion of ideas. Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the poster and/or the University and its institutional voice.

## **Be mindful of copyright laws**

Show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others. Do not use images retrieved from the web without permission from the author or artist.

## **Target content to your audience**

Post news, events and items that are relevant to your targeted audience. Keep your audience engaged with meaningful and relevant information about the University. Also, make sure to consider the wide range of audience potentially following your site. Before making a post ensure that it will not alienate, harm, or provoke any groups.

### **Choose appropriate online names and images**

When choosing a name for your account, choose something obvious and relevant. When selecting a page image or avatar, stick to simple graphics that represent the Scranton brand and complies with the University's Identity Standards.

### **Be conversational**

Remember to talk to your readers like you would talk to real people in professional situations. Avoid overly pedantic or "composed" language. Consider content that is open ended and invites response. Encourage members of the online community to comment and contribute their thoughts.

### **Monitoring and upkeep**

Assign an administrator who can regularly monitor postings and content. Aim for frequent postings and updates – the recommended frequency is at least once a week, but that varies across platforms. Take the time to learn what the best practice is for each site and pay attention to your audience. If you see a lot of fans/followers "unliking" your page you may be posting too much. If you invite questions and comments through your social media accounts, make sure to respond in a timely fashion. Clubs and Organizations: At the end of each year, we strongly advise assigning one outgoing officer the responsibility of passing on the usernames and passwords of any active social media account your club or organization may have to incoming officers. This ensures consistency from year to year, and eliminates multiple accounts being made for the same club or organization.

### **Measure for results**

To evaluate post activity and interaction with a community, make use of analytics and tracking tools. Most social media platforms have built-in analytics for pages. When posting links on any social media site, we recommend using a link tracking service such as bit.ly. Some applications, like Hootsuite, have this feature built into their software interface for convenience. These tools can help to refine your strategy and better understand you audience's preferences and behaviors.

### **Remember**

When you create a social media site and list your affiliation to The University, understand that you are representing The University as a whole and that any poor behavior you exhibit reflects poorly on The University.

Access The University of Scranton Social Media Community Guidelines [here](#).