EMU Marketing Social Media Best Practices

At EMU, we recognize that social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn have become important and influential communication channels for our community. To assist in posting content and managing these sites, the university has developed policies and guidelines for official use of social media. These policies and guidelines apply to university faculty, staff, and authorized user representatives and can be used in connection with social media accounts associated with schools, colleges, departments, programs and offices.

Generalities to think about re: Social Media

- **REMEMBER** - the overall goal of all social media regardless of platform is:
    - To engage your audience
    - To inform your audience
- **Know your goal**(s) for each platform.
- **Know your audience**; who are you trying to reach? And how can you build/extend your community?
- **Commit to time**/content to post. Quality content takes an investment of time to curate; go with quality over quantity. Consistency of posting: you may consider giving multiple people in your department access to post making clear who is responsible for posting on specific days or for certain content areas.
- **Seek collaborations** with other social media accounts across campus. This goes both ways, help promote and share content from other campus pages.
- **Bring value with your content.** What can your followers receive from your site they can't get anywhere else?
- **Find your voice.** Each department social media account represents a group on campus with a mission, purpose and goals, as well as brand and personality. Consider your voice online and how it reflects your already established campus identity. Are you clever, compassionate, inspirational, silly, straightforward? Do you live tweet? Do you share campus tips? Make sure all SM post-ers carry out this voice/personality.
- **Engage and Interact.** Engagement and interaction is more important than the number of subscribers, followers or fans. Communications cues such as likes, comments, RT, shares and mentions are stronger than total community members.
- **Consider what your program is known for.** Look at celebrations, traditions, events, departments, the people, buildings, etc. Are there 'popular' faculty, senior leaders, administrators or student leader positions that could be showcased? Harness these influencers by showcasing them. Use your influencer's user-generated content to reach further into the influencers' followers.
- **Logos/Branding**. It is important that your social media presence and its main design accurately depict your department and the University. Use University approved logos and/or photography. Always ask for permission and/or give credit, with photos for example.

Platform-Specific Best Practices

Facebook

- **Decide on page administrators.** Clarify who is posting when and about what. Use a posting schedule at first to know who is "responsible" for the posting(s) on a particular day. Whoever is on call for that day also needs to monitor messages/ comments and be responsive.
- **Use photos /videos if possible.** Be sure to highlight photos and other visual posts, remember to delete pasted links in status updates, and edit status so they are not too lengthy. 2-4 lines should be your goal.
- **Think twice about posting the same updates on both Facebook and Twitter.** Since Twitter and Facebook are different mediums with different audiences, tone, frequency of posts, and strategy and goals, updates to each should be unique. Craft each status so that it makes the most of the style and tools of each platform.
- **Pay attention to your insights.** Facebook insights offer a lot of information on the people who like your page and what they are interested in. Go to Insights/ Posts and scroll to see the post content and which ones seem to do the best. Look for (successful) trends in terms of content, days/times of posting, and frequency of posts.
- **Good times / days to post:** Thursdays and Fridays, 9 am-7 pm, specifically 12:30 and 4:30. Check Insights / Posts to see what times of the day your posts are most engaged. Decide on how many posts per day feel right for your audience, but posting content 3-5 times each week is reasonable (though checking everyday for notifications and messages is important).
- **Ask your students, fac/staff, and affiliates to follow you:** And ask them to like your posts and to share.

Twitter

- **Keep to 100 Characters or Less.** Try to keep your post shorter than 100 characters for others to retweet and have the room to add their own comment. Posts shorter than 50 characters are often clicked more frequently than longer posts.
- **Post with Image**. Imagery (including videos) increases click rates and sharing. Be sure to use relevant images that add to the story. Consider infographics, photographs, quotes, and other elements of content.
- **Add your reason for sharing**. When curating the content of others, be sure to add your own thoughts. This may be as simple as "Nice reminder" or "Great article".
- **Use # Hashtags**. To share your content with those who are not currently following you, be sure to use relevant hashtags. Specific recommendations are included in the following sections. Keep the hashtags to less than two and research at **hastagify.me, buzzsumo, topsy, hashtags.org** to find appropriate and popular tags to use.
- **Reference Others**. When sharing the content of others (especially individuals) be sure to make reference of their Twitter handle (i.e. @EMU_Athletics) so that they will notice the share. This will typically prompt them to retweet to their followers. This can be most effective with users with higher social authority to gather additional followers.
- **Good times / days to post:** Monday- Friday, anytime, frequently is fine.
- **Avoid posting the same status updates on both Twitter and Facebook.** Since Twitter and Facebook have different audiences, tone, frequency of posts, and strategy and goals, updates to each should be unique.
- **Follow back.** Following back those who follow you is a great relationship builder. Fostering relationships and encouraging interaction is key, so following back relevant, appropriate followers builds goodwill with our audiences
- **Consider using TweetDeck.**

    - You can schedule tweets in advance, so even if you cannot check your account continuously, you can schedule appropriate tweets throughout the day.

- o Their interfaces allow you to choose various streams to monitor, so you can monitor tweets that mention you, EMU lists, search terms, direct messages, etc.
  - o Their retweet functions allow you to modify retweets before sending
- On Twitter, users are used to frequent updates. Even if you don't have enough content to post multiple times **each day, you should login and check mentions and direct messages** at least a few times each day.
- Try this general mix:
  - o replies to others (55%)
  - o your own updates (40%)
  - o retweets (4%)
  - o posing questions to your audience (1%)
- Always include **a URL** to your school/college/program/etc website. If you do not have one, then use emu.edu

Instagram

- **Good times / days to post:** Monday- Friday, *Monday & Wednesday, 2:00, 5:00, 10:00 pm.
- **Use hashtags**. Like Twitter, Instagram uses tags. Tagging your photos means that more people may see them, since they may be searching that tag. But be careful: too many tags can be overkill.
- **Tag locations**. Tagging the location where the photo was taken gives some context to the image. Great to convey our global presence. (@easternmennoniteu has a geofilter for campus – for CJP, ask your followers to tag location). Keep in mind that adding a location does add extra characters if you're sharing on Twitter.
- **Interact with others.** On the web, you can use Iconosquare to keep an eye on photos that may be relevant to your department, office or group. Interact with others by liking and commenting on photos that are relevant to you.

LinkedIn Groups

[our LI groups will be expanding to include more community members]

- **Good times / days to post:** Tuesday-Thursday, 9:00-5:00 pm.
- **Don't focus on "selling" your organization/entity.** Rather, put the focus on the group and members. Provide content that is appealing to them.
- **Consider using the polling function.** Implement a poll to gauge the pulse of the group.
- **Carry on the conversations**. Facilitate group discussions by posting useful information and prompts for future discussions.
- **Thank people for contributing.** If a member becomes a frequent poster, acknowledge them and encourage them to keep it up.
- **Make introductions between members.** Simple introductions can add a personal touch to your group members' experience.
- **Promote the group.** Promote your group to your personal LinkedIn network or by posting the group URL on external websites and marketing materials.
- **Create a LinkedIn badge.** Members can post the badge on their external sites.

-Based on EMU practice, SM practices outlined by Tufts University & Colorado State, Higher Ed Marketing articles, Microsoft infographics.