

Social Media Account Preparation

Updated 09.02.14

(prepared by Office of University Communications)

So you want to participate in Social Media as a representative of Mount Mary University. Fantastic! Before you jump in, please consider the following:

Platform

There are many platforms in Social Media with varying features and specialized users (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Wordpress, Tumblr, etc.).

Which platform best suits the needs of those you want to reach?

Is this a social group or a professional group?

Is the content better presented visually, in discussion format, as a link?

Can you work with other areas to expand upon existing accounts and audience groups rather than start a new account (i.e. a LinkedIn group; a private (permission controlled) FB group vs. a separate FB page, a Twitter feed, etc.)

Do you plan to integrate several accounts?

Goals and Strategy

Social Media is another form of communication that needs cultivating. It is not “if you build it they will come.”

What larger strategy governs its use in your area?

What is the end goal for your efforts?

How will you measure its success?

Are you willing to learn about analytics and use them to inform future decisions?

How do you plan to grow/market the account/engagement? (i.e. links, members, followers, likes, etc)

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Expense, Personnel and Budget

Engaging in Social Media takes time, planning and effort. It moves very fast; consider it the express lane of the information highway.

Do you have a budget (time or cash flow) to engage? (if not, perhaps a channel vs. a location is better i.e. Linked In or Twitter vs. Facebook or a blog)

Who will be in charge of monitoring the activity on the account and are they willing do it 24/7 if needed?

Who will be in charge of generating and posting content and how often will they do it?

Do you have the technology and the knowledge of that technology to handle the immediacy social media requires? (i.e. mobile phone with data plan, access to computer, video capability, etc.)

Content and Management

This page is an extension of Mount Mary, therefore brand protection is important. Transparency, immediacy, consistency, accuracy and relevance are important as well.

What brand images will you require?

What content will be used and how fresh/relevant will you be able to keep it?

How will you handle the privacy/permissions issues inherent to social media?

How will you handle negative feedback?

Are you willing to allow another representative of Mount Mary to have administrative rights to your account in the event that you are unable to respond or manage the account?

Tips for Any Social Media Use

1. **Use active voice, find your cadence.** Social media is a conversation in which you engage one-to-one with your reader and they want to get to know your personality.
2. **Be honest and factual.** Acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly. If you make a mistake, quickly recall the post or respond.
3. **Know your readers.** It is not about you. Celebrate them. Ask them to act, answer or offer their opinion. No spamming. No self-promoting; it is viewed negatively.
4. **Add value--become a trusted resource.** Provide links where you can and information readers need.
5. **Be present, timely and committed to engagement.** Reply to comments when appropriate. Consistently monitor accounts. Respond appropriately to negative feedback, answer questions, and thank the readers. Different platforms require different levels of engagement. Know what is appropriate for your platform.
6. **Be respectful and of good moral character.** Be respectful of the opinions of others. Don't vent or bash another organization or person. Avoid anything obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or embarrassing content.
7. **Be aware of liability.** You are legally liable for what you post. Consider copyright infringement, plagiarism and comments that might be viewed as discriminatory, libel, or slander.
8. **Use common sense.** Social media is permanent, retrievable and global.
9. **Be educated.** Rules/policies of engagement for the various social media platforms change often. Participation in social media requires ongoing education.