University of Central Oklahoma Social Media Best Practices

Official Social Media Sites

The following is an overview of some social media basics. The Office of University Communications maintains Central’s main social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat and Pinterest.

Purpose: Why do I need a social media page?

The initial thought is usually something along the lines of, "Sure we need a social media account! Everyone else has one!" Given the flexibility of social media and its options for creativity, many pages have an audience available to them and are able to gain ground on the basis of sharing content with which users want to engage. The part of the equation that many do not consider, however, is the regular maintenance running a social media presence requires. Consistency is key, and is easily one of the most important aspects of running a social media presence. A neglected page or profile gives the appearance of disinterest, laziness, or even the possibility that the brand being represented has been shut down or is in trouble. In short, it’s better for the page not to exist at all than to be created and used infrequently.

That being said, you should always consider why you’re creating a social media brand page and who you’re trying to reach. If you know what your brand is about and what kind of messaging you want to employ, you will be better able to market it to your target audience. It is very important to spend some time considering who your audience is, what you want to say to them, and how/how often you want to say it. You also need to identify who in the office will manage the account.

Social media pages and profiles are a public and high-profile way in which Central can interact directly with students, prospective students, faculty, staff, alumni, families, donors and the greater community. Because of this, it is important to always remember that social media administrators — including student workers — are considered representatives of Central and are responsible for acting professionally in their digital interactions.

Content: Frequency, Tone and Context

Before creating a page, consider the amount of content you need to share with your audience. For Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram, you need to be able to post at least 3-4 updates per week; preferably more if using Twitter. If you can’t meet or think you might struggle to meet this level of frequency, it may be better to consider routing your content through a related page. In most cases, a page will already exist on campus whose audience will be one you want to reach.

YouTube is another social media channel through which you may consider distributing content; again, it is important to keep in mind that a consistent calendar of content is what makes a social media channel successful. In most cases, it is preferred that video content be produced and distributed through the main university YouTube channel, in an effort to ensure that said content is produced ethically, legally and professionally.
Please also keep in mind that the Internet is forever, and once content is posted, it may be redistributed through the Web or other media channels. Even upon deletion or modification, older versions may continue to exist. Posts should also be unique to the social medium. For example, a tweet will have a different format from a Facebook status update, and users can easily discern if a piece of content is automated or duplicated.

Content that depicts controversial or dangerous activities should be posted within the proper context and with the support of university administrators. In some cases, a legal disclaimer may be necessary. A university-affiliated social media account or its associated page/profile should also not be used to post content that represents the personal views or interests of a manager or administrator for that account. Lastly, content should not show the university in a negative light, and should be suitable for audiences of all ages.

Furthermore, university affiliated pages are prohibited from posting copyrighted content, such as other organizations' logos, copyrighted music, etc. For more information on the use of copyrighted music, please refer to this report issued by the American Council on Education: Use of Copyrighted Music on College and University Campuses  http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Copyrighted-Music.aspx