Creating a Social Media Strategy

The key to institutional social media success is having a solid strategic plan. Use the prompts below to create or revise your campus unit’s social media strategy.

**What are your OBJECTIVES?**

What do you hope to accomplish with social media? Objectives should relate to specific University or office/department goals. Examples include:

- Recruit students
- Highlight student, faculty, or staff accomplishments
- Decrease marketing costs
- Increase attendance at events
- Increase sales (revenue-generating units)
- Increase customer service
- Market research and development
- Improve product/service
- Increase positive brand sentiment
- Decrease negative brand sentiment
- Improve brand monitoring/management
- Generate and increase social engagement
- And more! Add your own strategic objectives — the more specific the better.

**Who is your TARGET AUDIENCE?**

Who are you trying to reach? The platform you use should depend on your strategic plan, including the demographics of your target audience. Examples include:

- Prospective students
- Current students (undergraduate)
- Graduate students
- International students
- Parents
- Faculty
- Staff
- Alumni
- Donors
- Employers
- Public officials
- Media
- Peer institutions
- And more! Who does your campus unit interact with the most?
**What is your CONTENT STRATEGY?**

When thinking about content, ask yourself the following questions: Where will the content come from? What types of content will be posted? Is the content created internally or externally? Remember, content should be truly engaging to your target audience. Possible content includes:

- University websites
- External media websites
- External research websites
- Events and calendars
- Videos, photos, and photo-audio slideshows
- Podcasts
- Interactive maps and polls
- Blogs and other social media platforms
- Student, faculty, staff, and alumni news
- And more! Be creative when deciding how best to engage your audience.

**Who will ADMINISTER the account?**

This is an important step. Choose your main and secondary administrators wisely, by considering the following questions: Who is the best communicator on the team? Who has the time to post to social media on a regular basis? Who will monitor and moderate comments? Who will be the secondary administrator in case of illness, vacation, etc.?

**How will you MEASURE SUCCESS?**

Social media success is about more than just the number of followers you have. It also includes engagement levels, meeting your objectives, strengthening the Richmond brand and your campus unit's identity, interacting with a wider community, and more. How will you measure success?

It's always a great idea to identify specific metrics for goal-setting and measuring success.

For new accounts, look to what others are doing for inspiration. Find a few pages that engage a similar audience successfully. How often do they post and what are their engagement levels?

If you're revising your strategy, look at your previous levels of growth and engagement. Push yourself to do better in the future, but don't set the bar unattainably high. Remember, the best goals are ambitious yet realistic.
Which PLATFORM will you use?

You may have had a social media platform in mind from the beginning; however, by comparing your objectives, target audience, and content strategy to the users and uses of the different platforms, you should discover the one that's best for you. Examples include:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Google+
- Pinterest
- Flickr
- Storify
- Snapchat
- And more! New social media sites pop up daily. Many come and go, others only apply to specific audience segments. If you create a strategy first, choosing the platform should be a cinch.

For help creating a social media strategy, or to set up a new account, contact the communications specialist at (804) 287-1945.