Workbook for

Writing an Effective and Scalable Social Media Plan for your College or University

October 10, 2018
Step 1: Research

Look at your external environment and think about the forces that are affecting your institution. You will refer to this chart throughout the research exercise as well as the *A Checklist for Communications and Marketing Research* (Wilson & Ogden).
| 1. The External Environment | - Economic, political, and social environment within which the organization operates and the problem or challenge has occurred including underlying issues  
- Pressures on the organization and the impact of current events on its operation and the maintenance of key relationships |
| 2. The Industry | - Organizations, companies, sales figures, strengths, challenges  
- Industry growth patterns, primary demand curve, per capita consumption, growth potential  
- History, technological advances, trends  
- Characteristics, distribution patterns, control and regulation, promotional activity, geographic characteristics, profit patterns |
| 3. The Client | - History, size, growth, profitability, scope of business, competence, reputation, strengths, weaknesses, structure, personnel |
| 4. The Product, Service, or Issue | - The product, service, or issue story, development, quality, design, packaging, pricing policies and structure, sales and profit history, trends, distribution, reputation  
- Product, service, or issue sales features (exclusive, nonexclusive, differentiating qualities, competitive position in consumer's mind)  
- Sales force (size, scope, ability, cost/sale)  
- Product research and planned improvements |
| 5. Promotions | - Successes and failures of past policy, sales force, advertising, publicity  
- Expenditures, budget emphasis, relation to trends  
- Ad/PR/marketing strategies, themes, campaigns  
- Promotions of competitors and like organizations |
| 6. Market Share | - Sales history industry-wide and share of market in dollars and/or units  
- Market potential, industry trends, company trends, demand trends |
| 7. Competition | - Who and where the market is; how it is segmented; consumer needs, attitudes, and characteristics; how, why, when, and where consumers buy  
- Customers past and future, what they have in common, what they like/dislike about product or issue, how they are reached  
- Competitors and their potential, competing ideas and attitudes |
| 8. Resources | - Intervening publics and current relationship, influentials  
- Public's attitudes and opinions toward product, issue, or organization  
- Physical facilities and personnel |
| 9. SWOT Analysis | - Internal and external strengths and weaknesses including publics, resources, attitudes, organization, structure, sales force, ideas, allies, and enemies  
- Emergent or possible opportunities  
- Threats to the organization and to success |
| 10. Public Profiles | - Demographic and psychographic data  
- Current relationship to product, service, or issue  
- Motivating self-interests and influentials  
- Information sources and media use |
1. Define your institution as best you can as well as the industry. Are you in higher education? Do you work at a community college, private university, public university, vocational school, liberal arts college, distance education, for-profit university, law school, medical school?

2. What is your current market share? Do you know who the competition is in your market?
3. What is the product, service, or issue that you are working on with social media (it’s OK that the answer is “I don’t know”)?

4. What resources (human or otherwise) do you currently have to contribute to your institution’s social media efforts now? Six months from now?
5. Are there any promotional activities that you are thinking about planning to run on social media? Have you done any in the past that have been successful — or that have not been successful?
6. Do you know who your target audiences are? Do you the demographic / psychographic make-up of your target audiences?

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<th>Audience</th>
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7. Social Media Audit

A social media audit is the process of reviewing what’s working, what’s failing and what can be improved upon across your social media channels.

Some items to review during the audit:
- Social network
- URL to profile
- Owner of the profile
- Objective of the profile
- Branding
- Password

The following pages are a template for a social media audit, which you can complete at a later date since it is a time intensive process.
This template is designed to help you conduct a social media audit for your college / university. Follow these steps to execute your next social media audit.

### Step 1
Create a spreadsheet and write down all the social networks you own and the owner for each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Network</th>
<th>URL to Profile</th>
<th>Owner</th>
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### Step 2
Search on Google for any other social media profiles that are representing your university that you do not own (imposters). Create a separate spreadsheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Network</th>
<th>URL to Profile</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Shutdown Y/N</th>
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### Step 3
Evaluate the needs for all your social media profiles and create objectives for each. For example: Instagram Profile - To share culture and university achievements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Network</th>
<th>URL to Profile</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Objective(s)</th>
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Step 4
Make sure that all of your accounts are on brand (refer to your university’s brand guidelines). Use proper profile images, cover photos, bios, and descriptions for all social media networks. Ensure that all URL’s are listed correctly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Network</th>
<th>URL to Profile</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Objective(s)</th>
<th>Branding Check Y / N</th>
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Step 5
Centralize the ownership of passwords.
For example: have your Social Media Manager own the key to all the passwords for the social media profiles for the university (at least the central profiles). Use a tool like LastPass to share access on a need to use basis. It is recommended never to share passwords via email.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Network</th>
<th>URL to Profile</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Objective(s)</th>
<th>Branding Check Y / N</th>
<th>Password Centralized Y / N</th>
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Step 6
Create a process for how new social media channels will be established going forward and create a criteria. Make sure to also take not of who is going to approve the requests.

For Example:
-- Requester:
-- Who is the target audience?
-- What type of content will be posted on this profile?
-- Who is going to respond to content?
Writing an Effective and Scalable Social Media Plan for your College or University

8. SWOT Analysis:

- Internal and external strengths and weaknesses including stakeholders, resources, attitudes, organization, structure, ideas, allies, and enemies

- Emergent and possible opportunities

- Threats to the organization and to success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Origin (attributes of the organization)</th>
<th>Helpful (to achieving the objective)</th>
<th>Harmful (to achieving the objective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
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<td>Weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
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<td>Threats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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Step 2: Action Planning

GOALS VS. OBJECTIVES

Goals
A goal is a statement of being for the social media plan. Often, one goal is enough. Social media goals should always be consistent with institutional goals and they should be carefully crafted with the end result in mind.

A social media goal might be “to create a comprehensive social media and digital strategy that will build upon our current followers and attract new fans and followers.”

While the completion of the goal signifies the end of your plan, the objectives, strategies, and tactics are the means to that end.

Objectives
Compared to the goal, the objectives are more focused and specific, and the best-formulated objectives express results as measurable outcomes. Think in terms of awareness, attitude, or action that you hope to invoke. Often there are multiple objectives in support of a single goal. Meaningful objectives start with action verbs and have four parts; they:

- Identify a specific audience being addressed
- State a measurable outcome
- Set an attainment level
- Set a timeframe

An example of an objective: “increase the number of social media fans and followers across all platforms by 1,000 each month for the next six months”.

When writing objectives, keep these tips in mind:

- Seek input from your Director, VP, Dean
- Don’t force yourself into a long time frames like a year
- Get a second opinion
- Audiences do not have to be limited to external targets
- If you know you cannot measure it, don’t build it into an objective
1. Use this space to sketch out your institution’s social media goal.
2. Brainstorm 3 social media objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Measurable Outcome</th>
<th>Attainment Level</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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</table>

Write out your objectives below:

Objective 1:

Objective 2:

Objective 3:
BRAND POSITIONING & FRAMING POINTS

1. What does your institutional brand look like? How can that be adapted for social media?

2. What are the 2-3 framing points that you would want your institution to focus on in your social media plan?
STRATEGIES & TACTICS

Once you’ve translated your university’s goals into social media goals, the next step is to map out the specific actions you need to take to accomplish the goals you’ve set.

Or Simply...
• How to send the Message
• to a Stakeholder
• through a Social Media Channel
• to motivate an Action

What’s the difference between strategies and tactics?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Tactics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The plan</td>
<td>The tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Game plan</td>
<td>Execution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience-specific</td>
<td>Action-specific</td>
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<tr>
<td>An approach for each audience</td>
<td>Task to carry-out the approach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some examples of sample strategy and tactics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Platform(s)</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Sample Tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prospective Students</td>
<td>📚AllWindows, 🎥YouTube, 🎥Twitter, 🎥Facebook</td>
<td>Inspire more of these prospects to make Mason their school of choice.</td>
<td>- Snapchat reminders about deadlines</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Instagram stories</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>- Facebook groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Podcasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>📚AllWindows, 🎥YouTube, 🎥Twitter, 🎥Facebook</td>
<td>Strengthen their connection to Mason, helping them see themselves as lifelong members of the Mason Nation.</td>
<td>- Contests</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Mason Nation Twitter Takeover</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Facebook events</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>- Snapchat stories</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Video (any platform)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>📚AllWindows, 🎥YouTube, 🎥Twitter, 🎥Facebook, 🎥Google</td>
<td>Make all our graduates proud to tell the world where they went to school before anyone asks.</td>
<td>- Facebook events</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- LinkedIn posts</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Video (any platform)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Podcasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donors</td>
<td>📚AllWindows, 🎥YouTube, 🎥Twitter, 🎥Facebook</td>
<td>Position Mason as a philanthropic priority and energize those who feel strongly about Mason to act on their feelings and give.</td>
<td>- ROI features (news stories, infographics, video)</td>
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<td>- Reminders to give (Giving Tuesday, Giving Day at Mason)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Student testimonials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty &amp; Staff</td>
<td>📚AllWindows, 🎥YouTube, 🎥Twitter, 🎥Facebook, 🎥Google</td>
<td>Strengthen a sense of connection to the university and a shared understanding of the mission.</td>
<td>- Mason Nation Twitter Takeover</td>
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<td>- Facebook events</td>
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<td>- Video (any platform)</td>
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<td>- HR related news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and Government Leaders</td>
<td>📚AllWindows, 🎥YouTube, 🎥Twitter, 🎥Facebook</td>
<td>Position Mason as an institution worth supporting, partnering with, and turning to for expertise.</td>
<td>- ROI features (news stories, infographics, video)</td>
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<td>- Reminders to give (Giving Tuesday, Giving Day at Mason)</td>
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</table>
Think about your own institution and sketch some strategies and tactics. They do not have to be platform driven like the example provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Tactics</th>
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Step 3: Communication

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

*Content Strategy*….
Planning, crafting and discovering the right media mix to leverage your unique messaging; storytelling to the right audience.

*Sometimes you have to stay nimble*…
- Sometimes when you spend months crafting and launching a campaign strategy, you find the landscape has already shifted.

- Staying nimble and being able to pivot in a tumultuous media environment is increasingly important.

- Instagram Stories copied Snapchat (almost verbatim) and continues to see record-breaking growth.

*You’ll want to tailor your content to your audience*…
- Create a range of content types (photo, video, infographic, news articles, events, research, student profiles, information) to add value to your social media efforts.

- Find your institution's unique media mix. Select the right media to connect your audiences at the right touch points (this is not a “one size fits all” strategy).

- Deliver relevant messaging to segmented audiences in distinct ways.

PLANNING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

- Create a content calendar to plan your messaging in advance
- Develop continuing themes through weekly content
- Ask questions to or prompt conversations with your audience
- Designate specific content creators
CONTENT PLANNING AT A UNIVERSITY

HOW OFTEN YOU SHOULD POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>1 time per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>6 times per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>1 time per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>1-2 times per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>1 time per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td>1 time per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>3 times per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>1 story per day</td>
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</table>
When looking at your institution, think about striving to have an integrated campus in terms of your content and messaging. At George Mason University, we strive to ensure that all aspects of our campus have a voice in terms of our social media.
SOCIAL MEDIA DAILY CHECKLIST

The tasks listed below may or may not apply to you and your institution on a daily basis, simply use this as a guide to help you get in the mindset of daily steps to social media success. Of course, you should be sharing content as well!

Facebook
- Reply to comments
- Thank anyone that has shared your content
- Like or Comment on a few relevant status updates or messages
- If you are running Facebook Ads, look at your stats and make any adjustments

Twitter
- Monitor mentions via keywords and respond to any questions, needs, or concerns
- Respond to influencers, make new connections, and schedule posts to share
- Thank people for retweeting your content
- Thank a few new followers
- Use keywords to find and engage with potential influences, prospective students, etc.

LinkedIn
- Drop into other groups and see if you can volunteer answers
- Share relevant content in industry-specific groups
- Manage spam
- “Like” a few pieces of content daily
- Reply to any comments on items you published

Instagram
- Post 1-2 times per day (if you have the capacity to do 2 times per day)
- Share an Instagram story
- Like a handful of posts from your follower base that liked your posts
- Search popular hashtags to find new people / departments / institutions to follow
- Comment on other’s posts
Step 4: Evaluation

Social Media Analytics vs. Social Media Engagement

Social media engagement involves a two-way conversation; with engagement, there’s a ‘personal’ interaction between brands and their fans. Examples of social media engagement include interactions with customers, prospects, and influencers on social networks. When engaging with customers, brands can reach out to customers to remediate any issues they might have found through social monitoring.

Therefore, social media analysis and social media engagement are not the same. Ultimately, social media analysis is about listening, whereas social media engagement is joining the conversation.

Establish Your Most Important Metrics

• Don’t get wrapped up in vanity metrics (follower count) - it does not tell the whole story of your brand.

• We often get wrapped up in viewing followers and likes as the truth to a campaign, but it’s smart to take a step back and evaluate the social metrics associated with your overall goals.

• Engagement metrics sometimes paint a better picture, because they show us building lasting relationships works on social media.

What To Measure?

• Audience demographics, volume, engagement and interactions
• Measure to evaluate effectiveness
• Measure according to existing objectives
• Measure social media as a component of an integrated communications plan.

What Analytics Can’t Tell You

• Your objectives/goals
• The qualitative measures
• The ‘what’ but not the ‘why’
• Who your audience could be and how they could behave
• What your audiences want or why they are engaging with you
DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK - SUMMARY

• Look at interaction rates rather than audience volume
• Analyze what people interact with in terms of both your objectives and post type
• Review your social media metrics in relation to your objectives not just growth
• Develop a framework that balances what the organization wants with what the audiences want

ENGAGEMENT METRICS TERMINOLOGY

Reach: Post reach is the number of unique users who saw your post. How far is your content spreading across social? Is it actually reaching user’s feeds?

Clicks: This is the amount of clicks on your content, university name or logo. Link clicks are critical toward understanding how users move through your marketing funnel. Tracking clicks per campaign is essential to understand what drives curiosity or encourages people to take an action.

Engagement: The total number of social interactions divided by number of impressions. For engagement, it’s about seeing who interacted and if it was a good ratio out of your total reach. This sheds light on how well your audience perceives you and their willingness to interact.

Hashtag performance: What were your most used hashtags on your own side? Which hashtags were most associated with your brand? Or what hashtags created the most engagement?

Sentiment: This is the measurement of how users reacted to your content, brand or hashtag. Did customers find your recent campaign offensive? What type of sentiment are people associating with your campaign hashtag? It’s always better to dig deeper and find what people are saying.

Organic and paid likes: More than just standard Likes, these likes are defined from paid or organic content. For channels like Facebook, organic engagement is much harder to gain traction, which is why many brands turn to Facebook Ads. However, earning organic likes on Instagram isn’t quite as difficult.

A Note on Owned, Earned, and Paid Media

• Owned media is generated by the brand in channels it controls.
• Earned media is publicity not directly generated by the brand, but rather by other entities such as customers or journalists.
• Paid media refers to external marketing efforts that involve a paid placement.
• Assign different weights to different channels. Are 1 million Twitter impressions equal to 1,000 unique pageviews on on your institutions website?
TRACKING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA RESULTS

By using Google Campaigns you can track information that could be tied to actions outside of social: clickthroughs to web content, request for information, campus visits, applications, ticket sales, etc.

You can use Google’s native website, or you can add a Chrome extension.
Example of Google Campaign URL builder from a Chrome extension.

Google Analytics URL Builder - Dock version (Ctrl+D for bookmark)

**INPUT URL**

- gmu.edu

**Configuration**

- Facebook

**FILL FORM:**

- **Source**: social
- **Medium**: gmu-facebook
- **Keyword**: Identify the paid keywords or other value
- **Content**: Use to differentiate ads
- **Campaign**: alumni-weekend

**FINAL URL**

- [gmu.edu/?utm_source=social&utm_medium=gmu-facebook&utm_campaign=alumni-weekend](gmu.edu/?utm_source=social&utm_medium=gmu-facebook&utm_campaign=alumni-weekend)

[Copy URL] [Copy Parameters] [Shorten & Copy]
Appendix

The Cheat Sheet: Social Media Images Sizes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Profile Photo</th>
<th>Photo Size</th>
<th>Cover Photo</th>
<th>Background Photo</th>
<th>Shared Images</th>
<th>Shared Photo</th>
<th>Pin Sizes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FREE SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS TOOLS
Find the full article here: https://blog.bufferapp.com/social-media-analytics-tools

- Followerwonk
- ViralWoot
- Google Analytics
- Quintly (Update: Quintly now offers a free 14-day trial rather than a free plan)
- Cyfe
- Tailwind
- Keyhole
- Klear
- Audiense
- TweetReach
- IBM Watson Personality Insights
- Peakfeed
- WolframAlpha Facebook Report
- SocialRank
- Talkwalker
- LikeAlyzer
**Air Force Web Posting Response Assessment V.2**

**DISCOVERY**
- **Web Posting**
  - Has someone discovered a post about the organization? Is it positive or balanced?

**EVALUATE**
- **Trolls**
  - Is this a site dedicated to bashing and degrading others?
- **Rager**
  - Is the posting a rant, rage, joke or satirical in nature?
- **Misguided**
  - Are there erroneous facts in the posting?
- **Unhappy Customer**
  - Is the posting a result of a negative experience?

**CONCURRENCE**
- A factual and well-cited response, which may agree or disagree with the post, yet is not factually erroneous, a rant or rage, bashing or negative in nature.

**LET STAND**
- Let the post stand -- no response.

**RESPOND**
- **Share Success**
  - Do you wish to proactively share your story and your mission? (See Response Considerations)
- **Final Evaluation**
  - Write response for current circumstances only. Will you respond?

**RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS**
- **Transparency**
  - Disclose your Air Force connection.
- **Sourcing**
  - Cite your sources by including hyperlinks, video, images or other references.
- **Timeliness**
  - Take time to create good responses. Don't rush.
- **Tone**
  - Respond in a tone that reflects highly on the rich heritage of the Air Force.
- **Influence**
  - Focus on the most used sites related to the Air Force.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**
- **Phone:** 703-896-1158
- **Email:** afbietube@gmail.com

**MONITOR ONLY**
- Avoid responding to specific posts, monitor the site for relevant information and comments. Notify HQ.

**FIX THE FACTS**
- Do you wish to respond with factual information directly on the comment board? (See Response Considerations)

**RESTORATION**
- Do you wish to rectify the situation and act upon a reasonable solution? (See Response Considerations)
Writing an Effective and Scalable Social Media Plan for your College or University

HIGHER ED SOCIAL MEDIA ONLINE COMMUNITIES

Slack: teamhesm.slack.com

Google+ Social Media - Higher Ed:
https://plus.google.com/u/0/communities/108180052843417168257

REFERENCE BOOKS

- The Art of Social Media: Power Tips for Power Users
- Contagious: Why Things Catch On
- The Cluetrain Manifesto: The End of Business as Usual
- The Zen of Social Media Marketing
- Enchantment: The Art of Changing Hearts, Minds, and Actions
- Socialnomics: How Social Media Transforms the Way We Live and Do Business
- Here Comes Everybody
- Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us
- Strategic Communications Planning for Effective Public Relations & Marketing