

Social Media Best Practices

Social media is Northern Kentucky University's voice to its students, faculty, staff, alumni and community. We use social media as a platform to tell the NKU story, and we will continue to develop each network as a go-to location for news and information about NKU. Follow these best practices as guidance for how to run your NKU-branded account. The social media policy can be viewed [here](#).

Is social media right for me?

Want to start a social media account? Already have one, but want to improve it? Get started by asking yourself the following questions:

Objectives

- WHO is your audience? Who are you talking to?
- WHAT is your purpose in using social media?
- HOW do you plan to accomplish your goals? Identify three objectives.
- HOW will you measure your effectiveness?

Content

- What social media channels do you want to use?
- What type of content do you want to share?
- How do you know your audience is interested in that content?
- What will be your tone and social media personality?
- How do you plan to engage with your followers?

Frequency

- How often do you plan to post?
- Do you have enough original content to post daily?
- Will you have enough resources to effectively manage your accounts?

Social media channels

Each social media channel has a unique audience. Here is a list of channels NKU currently uses and information about their respective audiences:

- Facebook – used to connect with parents, alumni, and community members
- Twitter – used to connect with current and prospective students
- Instagram – used to connect with current and prospective students
- LinkedIn – used to connect with alumni and community members
- YouTube – used to connect with everyone
- Snapchat – used to connect with current and prospective students

Not sure which channel is right for you and your audience?
Marketing and Communications is happy to provide advice.

Social media dos and don'ts

Do	Don't
Follow the strategy and tactics of the main NKU accounts.	Use social media with no clear objective.
Create a communication plan with specific objectives for social media use.	Feel like you have to be on every channel.
Be strategic in deciding what social media channels to use.	Put your social media presence solely into the hands of one person or in the hands of too many.
Designate one person to oversee your social media. Designate a backup, too.	Leave yourself open to being unable to respond to hackers or attacks.
Share your login information with Marketing + Communications in case of an emergency.	Try to over-inform your audience with your account name or description.
Brand your account with the appropriate images, name, and description. Shorter social media handles are better.	Take unlicensed images from the Internet.
Use images whenever possible.	Use too many hashtags and tags. It dilutes your message.
Use relevant hashtags and tag your followers to grow your audience.	Use social media with no clear objective or strategy for success.
Measure the effectiveness of your social media presence through analytic tools.	Cram your posts together. They should be spread out during high-traffic times of day when your audience is most active.
Post to social media frequently (at least once daily). Use analytic tools to understand when your followers are most active.	Become argumentative with followers.
Monitor and respond to comments, mentions, shares, etc., when appropriate.	Reply, retweet, or share posts that aren't of interest to your audience.
Build relationships with your followers by replying, retweeting, and sharing their Tweets and posts.	

Voice

Social media networks are not just bulletin boards to post information. They are an ongoing conversation with an external audience. Your voice should reflect who you are. Authenticity is important.

Remember that your social media account is representing NKU. Keep your voice professional, and make sure to use proper grammar and spelling.

Think twice before hitting the “send” button. Read a post aloud or to a friend to ensure it has the desired tone and personality.

Tools

Hashtags

Hashtags turn any word or group of words that directly follow it into a searchable link. This allows you to organize content and track discussion topics based on those keywords. Be sure to check for accepted meanings of existing hashtags to avoid unknowingly promoting a campaign you would rather not be associated with. Examples of approved NKU hashtags include: #BeANorse #NextStopNorse #NorseNation #NorseUp.

Tagging

Tagging other social media accounts in your posts can increase your social media visibility and followers. If using a graphic on Twitter, you can tag up to 10 accounts on the image without losing characters.

Hootsuite (hootsuite.com) / Free for up to five social media accounts

Hootsuite is one of many tools referred to as a “Social Media Management System.” It helps you track and manage your many social network channels. It can enable you to monitor what people are saying about your brand and help you respond instantly. You can view streams from multiple networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google+, and post updates or reply directly.

Facebook Insights / Free

Facebook Insights is a tool to easily track user interaction on a Facebook fan page. Facebook Insights can be seen by all the admins of your page, and can help you track the number of active users to better understand page performance and engagement.

Twitter Analytics / Free

Measure engagement and learn how to make your Tweets more successful. Explore the interests, locations, and demographics of your followers.

Alt Text

Accessibility is important. Be sure to utilize each social media channel’s tools for accessibility. You can learn more by visiting the [accessibility guidelines for social media](#).

Miscellaneous

If you are planning to advertise through Facebook and Instagram, please check if you have access to Ad Manager. If you do not, please consult the marketing managers who will be able to assist you. Are you nervous about linking your personal Facebook account to your department or organization's page? You're welcome to create a fake account with a similar title but be sure to only post from your page and do not add friends on your fake account.

If you have an upcoming event that affects the entire campus community and would like the event promoted, please speak with the social media specialist. It will then be determined if the promotion should come directly from the university's pages or if the content will be signal boosted (shared/retweeted) from your pages.

Criticism

If you use social media, you will be criticized at some point. You will receive a negative post or Tweet. In this case, please abide by the NKU social media policy and seek guidance from NKU's Marketing and Communications department on how to respond.

Questions

You may also receive questions from followers to which you do not have the answer. For example, a prospective student asking about admissions or a current student asking about parking. In those situations, it is advisable to refer the person to the correct department, social media account, or to nku.edu for information.

Need help?

Contact Marketing and Communications at: marcomm.nku.edu | social@nku.edu | (859) 572.6948