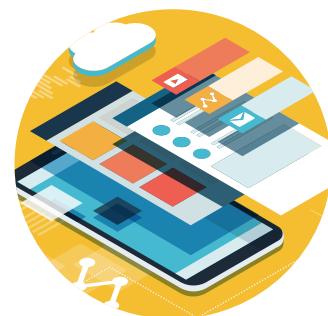


# Social Media Playbook



There are many benefits to launching an active social media campaign. You can build a sense of community through shared conversations and discussions, distribute news and information that interest your audience, monitor and research public opinion about your unit, and reach a large audience in a crisis.

The purpose of this “playbook” is to help you develop a strategy for your unit’s social media presence.

## Survey the Landscape

As you start exploring the use of social media, it is important to get a sense of the landscape. A good place to start is examining what social networks are available to you, taking note of what is unique about them, discerning how they are used to communicate with audiences and how your unit may be able to fit into those networks.

## Popular Social Networks

Below are some of the most popular social networks groups are using to communicate with their audiences. These are just a few of the social networks that exist, so do your own research to find the social network that makes the most sense for your unit.

### FACEBOOK: BUILD AN ONLINE COMMUNITY AROUND YOUR UNIT’S ACTIVITIES.

- Facebook is perhaps the most well-known social network in the world, hosting 2.7 billion monthly active users and offering the most robust suite of features of the major social networks. Visit the Facebook guide to Facebook pages to learn more about how you can use Facebook to interact with your audience.

<https://www.facebook.com/business/pages#basics>

### TWITTER: SHARE BRIEF MESSAGES OF 240 CHARACTERS OR LESS.

- Twitter is a microblogging platform that lets you share messages of 240 characters or less. By posting to Twitter, you can share news from your unit as well as information your audience would be likely to find interesting. Visit the Twitter Help Center for more information on getting started with the platform.

<https://help.twitter.com/en/twitter-guide>

### LINKEDIN: TAKE YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

- LinkedIn is a social network built around employment-oriented services and building professional relationships. This platform can be a great place to share news and information about your unit or connect with faculty, staff, or alumni. Learn how you can create a LinkedIn page or a LinkedIn group for your unit.

<https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/710/create-a-linkedin-page?lang=en>

<https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/6/create-a-linkedin-group?lang=en>

### INSTAGRAM: SHARE PHOTOS AND VIDEOS WITH YOUR COMMUNITY.

- Instagram is a social network focused on sharing photos and videos. It is the perfect platform for sharing an engaging look at what your unit does and connecting with the community you are trying to reach. Learn more about getting started on Instagram.

<https://business.instagram.com/getting-started>

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## **YOUTUBE: PUBLISH VIDEOS THAT SHOWCASE WHAT YOUR UNIT IS ALL ABOUT.**

- YouTube is a video-sharing platform that allows units to upload short- and long-form videos that your audience can view, comment on, and share. The platform is a great place to share video content that highlights your unit's strengths and helps tell your story.

<https://creatoracademy.youtube.com/page/course/bootcamp-foundations>

Other popular social networks that may be worth exploring for your unit include the multimedia messaging app Snapchat, short-form mobile video platform TikTok, and social news aggregator Reddit.

## **Know Your Audience**

In addition to reviewing the social networks available to you and their capabilities, review the core audiences that you want to reach. In looking at your audiences, ask:

- Who are our primary audiences?
- What messaging are our audiences already receiving about our unit and through what channels?
- What social networks are our audiences most active on?
- How will our social media supplement our existing outreach strategy?

It is also important to build your awareness of entities you may be competing with, including other Rutgers accounts, to gain your audiences' attention.

## **Know Your Team and Their Skills**

While thinking about who you want to reach and what tools may be best to use, it's also important to think about your team and how their skills may be best utilized in the social media plan you are developing.

Do you have a good photographer on your team who may be able to help you leverage Instagram? Do you have good writers who can craft great tweets or Facebook posts?

Focus on the strengths of your team and who will be able to help you as you begin to work more with social media and position them correctly based on their strengths.

## **Know Your Content**

Social media is largely about what you post, so it is important to know what content you can share with your audience. As with thinking about your team, you want to focus on elements that would be highlights for your unit.

- Does your unit create work that photographs well?
- Are there videos that help tell your unit's story?
- Is written news about the impact of your unit your strong suit?

Whatever the case, assess whether the elements you have—and can create in the future—allow you to develop a consistent posting schedule to keep your audiences engaged.

## **Develop Your Plan**

What is the course you are going to take? Using what you have looked at so far, start to make a plan around how you and your team are going to use the content you have or will create for social media to reach your audiences.

When working on this plan, consider:

- What are we hoping to achieve on social media?
- How are we defining success?
- Who will be overseeing our unit's social media?
- What will our posting schedule look like and how will we remain consistent?
- How will content be vetted and approved for posting?

# Rutgers Social Media Playbook

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## Tell Your Story

When managing your social media presence, it is important to not treat your channel solely as a posting board for information that is already being sent to your audience via your other communications channels. In addition to sharing news and events, think about ways that you can use your social channels to better tell your unit's story.

- What are ways in which you highlight your unit's impact?
- Are there ways to showcase behind-the-scenes aspects of the work your team does?
- Are there success stories from students or other organizations you can promote?
- Is there relevant user-generated content that can help speak to your unit's work?

Find ways to showcase what your unit does and how it affects people. These stories go a long way in helping people understand the impact of not just your unit but Rutgers more broadly. Video is another great tool to leverage for storytelling and easily integrates into the different social networks that you may choose to use.

## Do Your Unit Justice

No one wants to look bad, so do not take chances. Make sure that all posts are well written, grammatically correct, and free of spelling errors. These posts should also tell the right stories and entice your audience, so avoid underselling your unit.

If you are posting photos, they should be clear and well composed. Avoid sharing blurry, out of focus, grainy, and poorly composed images to ensure that your unit is represented in the best way possible.

[Learn more about photo resources available at Rutgers.](#)

When you can, share high-definition videos with clear audio. You want your audiences to be able to easily tell what is happening. Remember, you want your content to get people excited about what you have to offer, and high-quality pieces of content can help you do just that.

## Do Not Spread Too Thin

Your unit does not need to be on every social network, and there is no imperative to post every hour of every day. Focus on creating channels where you can most effectively reach your audience. There is no magic number for the accounts you should have. Think about what platforms your audience may use the most.

As you develop your unit's social media presence, stay focused on your team, content, and audience, and only expand to more channels if you have the means to or find a need to do so.

## Assess How You Are Doing

There are several ways to assess how your social media is performing. Three very simple ones to consider are tracking your followers, impressions, and engagement.

**Followers** are exactly what they sound like, the people who follow your page. If you are consistent, create compelling content, and engage with your audience, you will probably see the followers of your unit's page increase. As you increase your followers, you increase the likelihood of your content being seen by your audience.

**Impressions** are the number of times your content appears on social media users' feeds. Generally, impressions will rise if the content you have created is engaging, as most social networks promote your posts more if people are interacting with them.

**Engagement** is one of the most important metrics when judging the effectiveness of your content. The three most popular forms of engagement on social media channels are likes or reactions, comments, and shares.

Of these three types of engagement, comments and shares are the most beneficial in expanding the overall reach of your page, so think about ways to create content that people will want to talk about and share with their followers. Creating calls to action in your posts that ask for your audience to comment, share photos, etc. are another great way to promote engagement.

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## **Pay Attention to Your Audience, Even If They Are Not Following You**

This may seem like a strange concept, but your audience is not always following you. Sometimes parties who are interested in your content may not be aware of your existence or are just not interested in following another account. These audience members can still provide valuable insights and feedback.

Social listening—the process of monitoring social media for mentions of your brand, competitors, and more—can be incredibly important for hearing what these audiences have to say. By using social listening tools, hashtags, or Facebook searches, you can see if there are conversations about your unit, or something relating to your unit, even if it is not directly addressed to you. Social listening can also help you gain some valuable insight on changes in your audience’s behavior and new trends.

## **Have a Conversation**

Social media is inherently a social experience. Your audience will comment on your posts and send you messages, and, in some cases, you will need to respond. Make sure that you respond in a timely manner—missing messages or failing to provide information can turn off a follower from engaging with you in the future. Additionally, do not be afraid to post content where you ask your audience to respond. Social media is a great way to gain feedback and insights that may be difficult to achieve in person.

## **Be Ready to Respond**

Keep an eye out for questions or concerns you can reply to, showing your audience that you care and are there to help. Do not be afraid to make handoffs if you know there is another unit that could better assist with an issue or comment. Your followers will also have emergency situations that they may approach you with via social media. Work with your team to figure out the best way of monitoring these elements and create a response plan.

## **Take It Offline**

Social media can be a powerful tool, but face-to-face interaction has a place in everything that we do. Be sure to supplement the use of social media with activities that encourage in-person conversations and interactions, which can help feed into the social media channel(s) you are building. Offline is also one of the best places to promote your accounts, so do not miss out on that opportunity.