



OFFICE OF MARKETING
AND COMMUNICATIONS

Messiah University Social Media Best Practices

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Social media offers great opportunities for engagement but also presents challenges, especially given its ever-evolving landscape. Messiah University employees using/managing platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, TikTok, and blogs to promote their departments, offices or organizations should adhere to the following best practices:

1. Engage thoughtfully

- In addition to sharing news, invite your audience to participate in discussions by asking meaningful questions.
- Encourage interaction that reflects Messiah University's [core values, mission, and faith commitments](#).
- Use polls, stories and a variety of content to increase engagement.

2. Be accurate and authentic

- Verify facts and ensure the information is accurate before posting. Incorrect information can damage trust and credibility.
- Be transparent about updates or corrections, owning mistakes and correcting them promptly.

3. Foster respectful dialogue

- Encourage respectful, Christ-centered conversations that reflect the university's values.
- Allow space for differing opinions but expect civility.
- Monitor your platform regularly, using available tools to filter or block harmful comments. (View the [Messiah University social media channel Community Guidelines](#) for assistance in making decisions.)

4. Represent Messiah University's reputation and beliefs with integrity

- Always be mindful of Messiah University's professional, academic and faith-based reputation.
- Messiah expects employees to support the University's mission, values and identity, the [Community Covenant](#), [Student Handbook/Code of Conduct](#), and [Employee Code of Conduct](#).
- When sharing external links, ensure they align with Messiah University's values and academic integrity.

5. Individual employees may not use university social media accounts for the expression of personal viewpoints or for personal promotion or gain. **Consider online behavior as extension of in-person conduct**
 - If you wouldn't say it publicly at a conference or to the media, don't say it online.
 - Exercise wisdom and discernment, remembering that digital content can have lasting effects.
 - Interact with gracious hospitality and kindness at all times.
6. **Promote Messiah University's digital presence**
 - Link back to key pages on messiah.edu as appropriate to drive traffic and strengthen search engine rankings.
 - Tag Messiah University's official accounts to increase visibility and community connection.
7. **Address sensitive topics privately**
 - If a conversation becomes contentious or should be private, invite the individual to discuss the matter offline via email, phone or in person.
 - De-escalate heated discussions, ensuring that you respond with grace and professionalism.
 - If you learn of information that may be important to the reputation, physical safety and well-being of the campus community, make the necessary individuals aware (i.e., Dispatch, Office of Marketing and Communications, Human Resources, etc.).
8. **Use photos and videos wisely**
 - Visuals significantly boost engagement, so use high-quality, relevant images and videos.
 - Ensure you have proper permissions for all photos and videos, and that content reflects Messiah University's values and inclusivity.
 - Use alt-text on photos and captions on videos for ADA compliance.
9. **Be aware of privacy and security issues**
 - Respect privacy laws, including FERPA, and obtain necessary permissions when sharing student or faculty images or achievements.
 - Keep Messiah University's social media account information secure and avoid sharing passwords. (NOTE: There should be a *minimum* of two employee administrators on each Messiah employee-run department or office accounts.)
 - Be wary of and scrutinize all emails you receive claiming to be from Meta and other social media platforms notifying you of violations or issues. Most notifications, if legitimate, will appear directly *within* each platform. If you receive an email that is suspicious in nature:
 1. Do NOT open the email.
 2. Do NOT click on any links or download any attachment.

3. Forward the email as an attachment to security@messiah.edu. ITS will let you know if the email is legitimate or not.

10. Stay updated on social media trends and policies

- Platforms frequently change their algorithms and community guidelines. Stay informed of these changes to adjust your strategy as needed.
 - Contact Messiah's Office of Marketing and Communications' social media team for training and help.
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