

Social Media Etiquette

The use of social media in the world is the norm these days. Facebook has over a billion users worldwide, and LinkedIn has hundreds of millions of active accounts. Social media has become so prominent that, on average, people spend over two hours a day engaging with it. And with so many new platforms popping up, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by which ones are right for you.

While social media is great for staying connected with friends and colleagues, it comes with certain risks. One careless post can cause significant damage. If you are a regular social media user like most, following social media etiquette can protect you (and your career) from backlash.

When used appropriately, social media can be extremely beneficial for business and can also help you define your personal brand and establish a positive online reputation.

This guide defines the dos and don'ts of using social media as a professional to help you stay on top of best practices and avoid social media mistakes.



Do

Use social media to build your personal brand and elevate your career.

- Consider keeping personal and professional accounts separate to minimize risk and maintain privacy.
- Be intentional in how you portray yourself.
- Post insightful thoughts on your industry along with some fun posts to help enhance your reputation and career.
- Remember: Anything that is posted is never private, and even personal posts can get you into trouble. If you question whether it's a good idea to comment or post something, it is probably best to skip it.

Understand how different social media platforms are used differently.

- While following general social media etiquette should be used across the board, pay attention to how Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are used, and follow suit.

Give More Than You Take

- It can become habit to scroll social media without stopping to react, leave a comment or answer a question a friend or colleague has posted. Make a conscious effort to pause and reply or share a link. You may even spark a new connection. You may also inspire your friend to return the favor down the road.

Know When to Keep Scrolling

- Avoid heated online debates and remember that your comments will be visible to more than your connections. While proving a point may feel urgent in the moment, practicing restraint will serve you better in the long run.

Always Know What a Hashtag Means Before You Post

- Hashtags can be helpful in making content easier to search for on social media, however, it can be humiliating when they are used inappropriately. Be sure you fully understand the relevance of a hashtag before using it.

Check Your Accounts Daily

- Staying engaged is a critical piece of building your presence on social media. Build time into your day to respond to comments, mentions, tag and DMs, even if it is only 5-10 minutes.

Be Mindful of Your Friend List

- To friend or not to friend? Professionals across the globe have differing opinions on whether they should “friend” their colleagues (or even direct reports) on social media. While connecting with co-workers on social media can be a great way to connect and build a relationship outside of the office, it can also influence workplace dynamics.

Don't

Overshare Content

- Posting too many updates and photos can water down your personal brand and cause your followers to lose interest.

Overuse Hashtags

- Hashtags play a key role in any social media strategy but using too many can become distracting and make your post look like spam.

Type in All Caps

- Typing in all capital letters ("all caps") is meant to be interpreted as shouting. To increase the visibility of a post, try using spacing in your text to make it easy to read and to control the reader's pace.

Say It Online If You Wouldn't Say It in Person

- If something does not fit with or properly convey your personal brand, do not post it. Offensive, rude, or insulting posts can permanently damage your reputation, even with the passing of time.