



## **Best Practices for Productive Social Media Conversations**

Are you a social media manager? DNCR Marketing and Communications is here to support your efforts. We know that you have questions — lots of them. Now that you're ready to commit the time and resources needed to manage an account, here are some best practices to help set you up for success.

### **The prep work: Where to start**

#### **Build your team**

Have a team of at least two people in place to oversee account maintenance. Staff may move to different departments and someday, your intern will graduate. You don't want to be stuck without the one person who has the keys to your account.

#### **Do the research and be choosy about your platforms**

Decide where you'd like to devote your time — if you're just getting started, we recommend focusing on 1-2 social networks that make the most sense for your key audience and goals. A one-size-fits-all approach (the same message across five channels) likely won't boost engagement, because it's not catered to the audience.

If you need insight on the platforms that would be the best fit for your unit or group, please email us and we'd be happy to chat with you.

#### **Gather the right tools**

Smartphone apps like Facebook Pages Manager and Twitter are helpful to have on your phone for general account maintenance and engagement on-the-go. Hootsuite (for desktop and mobile) can help you schedule content, shorten links, monitor/analyze posts and much more.

#### **Brainstorm and organize**

Once you've determined your general content themes (what you will post about), drill down and organize items in a content calendar. Leave enough flexibility in your schedule for unplanned news, events and announcements. Also, don't just post for the sake of posting — first ask yourself, is this post relevant? Does it provide value? And is it engaging?



## **Content considerations: Writing**

### **Find your voice**

Even with a team managing your online presence, it's wise to have one person write the content to maintain a consistent voice. Since you represent an entire unit (department, division, etc.), use 'we' instead of 'I.' Don't 'like' your own posts as the brand account — it looks self-serving and is not a common practice of brand accounts.

### **Write like you talk**

Social media is a two-way conversation — ask questions, be an active listener and respect your audience. Carry yourself online just as you would in person. Use upbeat and conversational, yet professional language.

### **Spelling counts**

Check for spacing, spelling and grammar — it matters!

### **What's OK to post?**

News, achievements, announcements, highlights, celebrations, questions/polls and more as it relates to your page or represents DNCR are all acceptable to post.

### **What's NOT OK to post?**

- Information that isn't meant to be public — like confidential/proprietary information about DNCR, its employees, students, visitors, affiliates, vendors or suppliers. Some examples: personal information, strategies, legal issues or non-published research
- Copyrighted graphics or work that you don't have the rights to use. It's OK to share content as long as you credit the owner accordingly in the post itself, and have permission to do so.
- Be cautious with endorsements: it's fine to share a project or collaboration but not OK to post overly favorable content about goods or services.
- Photos and video you don't have permission to post — not everyone wants their picture on social media.



- Developing crisis situations
- Your personal opinions
- Controversial topics
- Contests or sweepstakes that haven't received legal approval

### **Pause and think**

If a potential post gives you pause, then you probably shouldn't post it. If you need a gut check because you're uncertain of how something might be received, please email us.

### **Content considerations: Photo and video**

#### **Do:**

- Do post photos and video that are clear and relevant to your topic.
- We have a photo database, that you can select images from if you need help.

#### **Don't:**

- Don't post photos that are blurry, out of context or unprofessional.
- Don't post logos, clipart or graphics that DNCR does not have the rights to use.
- The occasional emoji is fine, but use with restraint.

### **Community management**

#### **Join forces**

We encourage you to support our overall DNCR social media footprint by engaging with and sharing related content.

#### **Set guidelines for posts**

It's important to remember that everyone has the right to share their opinions, whether positive or negative. However, there will be times when appropriate actions are needed in response to particular posts.



### **Handling inappropriate posts: be cautious about deleting**

**Your first instinct should not be to delete a post because you disagree with it.** Unless a commenter goes against the page rules you've laid out, don't delete. If possible, use the opportunity to solve a problem or generate a productive discussion.

While DNCR fully supports free speech activities, our social media sites are for official DNCR activities and must comply with DNCR policies prohibiting discrimination and harassment.

**What to do for any post that involves the promotion of violence, or is believed to be discriminatory, harassing, defamatory, or obscene:**

1. Do not respond to the post.
2. Print and save a copy of the post for your records. Include the date when it was originally posted and who posted it.
3. Notify your immediate supervisor.
4. Consult with DNCR Marketing and Communications as to the appropriateness of removal of the post and taking further action.

If there's a misunderstanding, it's often best to move the conversation offline to get to the root of the matter.