



Online Do's and Don'ts

Description

Harnessing the powers of your online presence

By Shelly Elsliger

Social media is hot, but some of its etiquette is not. Learning and applying social media etiquette is necessary for a successful social business. Building a strong social presence online will help you stay connected, extend your reach, and build better relationships.

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Every day, more and more people are using the power of social media— not just in a social way, but to extend their business reach, create buzz, and interact with customers. Most websites can't entice repeat visits unless they have a strong and savvy social-media strategy to successfully attract and retain the right people.

Each social media platform has a purpose and serves a particular part of the population. But what is often forgotten is that the same level of customer service that is expected with face-to-face and telephone interactions is that social media etiquette (intelligence) is necessary for continued growth in business and reputation.

Here are some social media etiquette tips for better online business practices:

- Be visual, consistent and creative. Boring does not do the trick on social media. It is important to take an 80-20 percent approach: 80 percent dedicated to entertaining and informing your audience and 20 percent dedicated to promoting your products or services.
- Originality and novelty are key. Continuously develop fresh and engaging content and stay away from repeating the same message over and over again. Followers will relay your posts until the content presented is no longer share-worthy.
- Do not use social media to sell, but to build, confidence. Do not mix personal and professional accounts, such as posting entertainment reviews, IQ riddles or anything related to pets or family on LinkedIn. Similarly, do not promote your business marketing message on your personal Facebook timeline; do it in an ad-hoc Facebook "page" which you can manage as your business promotion page. Always remember,



business will follow once respect is gained.

- Always communicate in the first person (i.e. say “I used this” rather than “this was used”) since the human connection is very important to establish trust and confidence online.

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- Make sure all your social media profiles are as complete and descriptive as possible to ensure that your audience knows you are responsible, knowledgeable and credible.
- On social media, one message does not fit all. Get some social media strategy advice on when to post, how often to post, and what your targeted audience enjoys and is interested in. Match the content and the tone of your posts with the social media platform you’re using. Adjust to the platform’s audience and make sure the content is developed and posted accordingly.
- Use reposting automation with caution. Too many automated posts and replies to posts will take the “social” out of your social media communication. Balancing your automated post with new content is necessary to grab and keep the attention of your audience. You can tweet many times a day, but posting the same content too often and on the wrong platform will quickly result in loss of audience attention and involvement.
- Use the right platform for the task. For example, events and reviews are best promoted through YouTube or Vimeo, or any video channel you own. Successful networking, on the other hand, can be achieved with a well-furnished LinkedIn profile and regular postings of business news or events on a LinkedIn company page for posting information related to your firm.
- Answer all communications from clients and customers, even when they are not positive. Ignoring, deleting, or simply not responding to negative customer comments or complaints will lead them to think you don’t care. It is best to handle all communications with respect, professionalism, and transparency, and do your best to solve any issues at hand.

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- A thank you can go a long way. The power of those two simple words can make a difference and heighten the level of respect and gratefulness you when you receive positive feedback.
- Don’t forget to have fun. If you make social media a fun part of your overall online strategy, you will enjoy the process as well as reap the potential long-term benefits resulting from following social media etiquette.

Image: [Jason Howie](#) via [StockPholio.com](#)





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