

Workbook for

**Writing an Effective and Scalable
Social Media Plan for your
College or University**

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Step 1: Research

Look at your external environment and think about the forces that are affecting your institution. You will refer to this chart throughout the research exercise as well as the *A Checklist for Communications and Marketing Research* (Wilson & Ogden).

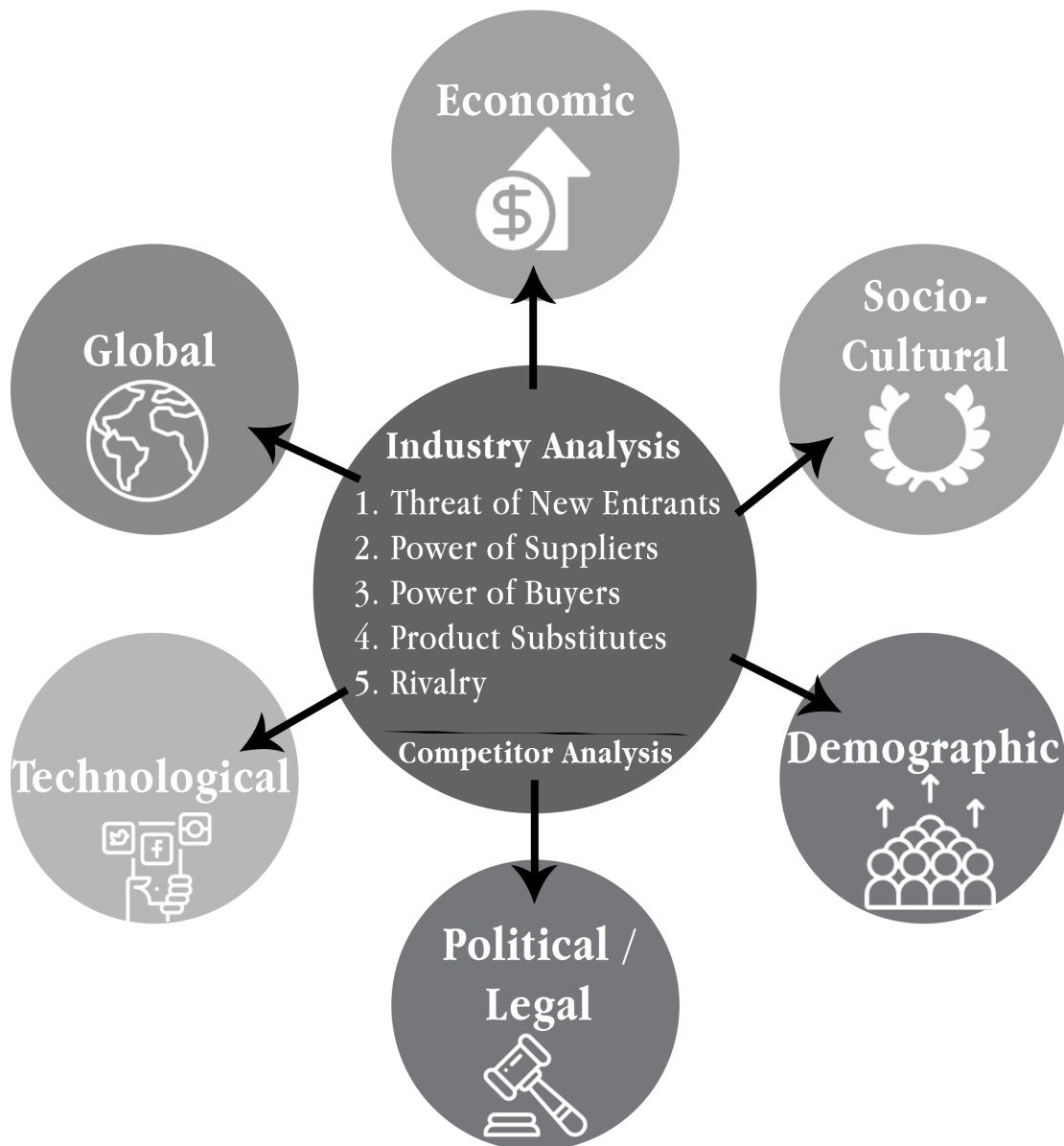


Figure 4.1 → A Checklist for Communications and Marketing Research

1. **The External Environment**
 - Economic, political, and social environment within which the organization operates and the problem or challenge has occurred including underlying issues
 - Pressures on the organization and the impact of current events on its operation and the maintenance of key relationships
2. **The Industry**
 - Organizations, companies, sales figures, strengths, challenges
 - Industry growth patterns, primary demand curve, per capita consumption, growth potential
 - History, technological advances, trends
 - Characteristics, distribution patterns, control and regulation, promotional activity, geographic characteristics, profit patterns
3. **The Client**
 - History, size, growth, profitability, scope of business, competence, reputation, strengths, weaknesses, structure, personnel
4. **The Product, Service, or Issue**
 - The product, service, or issue story, development, quality, design, packaging, pricing policies and structure, sales and profit history, trends, distribution, reputation
 - Product, service, or issue sales features (exclusive, nonexclusive, differentiating qualities, competitive position in consumer's mind)
 - Sales force (size, scope, ability, cost/sale)
 - Product research and planned improvements
5. **Promotions**
 - Successes and failures of past policy, sales force, advertising, publicity
 - Expenditures, budget emphasis, relation to trends
 - Ad/PR/marketing strategies, themes, campaigns
 - Promotions of competitors and like organizations
6. **Market Share**
 - Sales history industry-wide and share of market in dollars and/or units
 - Market potential, industry trends, company trends, demand trends
7. **Competition**
 - Who and where the market is; how it is segmented; consumer needs, attitudes, and characteristics; how, why, when, and where consumers buy
 - Customers past and future, what they have in common, what they like/dislike about product or issue, how they are reached
 - Competitors and their potential, competing ideas and attitudes
8. **Resources**
 - Intervening publics and current relationship, influentials
 - Public's attitudes and opinions toward product, issue, or organization
 - Physical facilities and personnel
9. **SWOT Analysis**
 - Internal and external strengths and weaknesses including publics, resources, attitudes, organization, structure, sales force, ideas, allies, and enemies
 - Emergent or possible opportunities
 - Threats to the organization and to success
10. **Public Profiles**
 - Demographic and psychographic data
 - Current relationship to product, service, or issue
 - Motivating self-interests and influentials
 - Information sources and media use

1. Define your institution as best you can as well as the industry. Are you in higher education? Do you work at a community college, private university, public university, vocational school, liberal arts college, distance education, for-profit university, law school, medical school?

2. What is your current market share? Do you know who the competition is in your market?

3. What is the product, service, or issue that you are working on with social media (it's OK that the answer is "I don't know")?

4. What resources (human or otherwise) do you currently have to contribute to your institution's social media efforts now? Six months from now?

5. Are there any promotional activities that you are thinking about planning to run on social media? Have you done any in the past that have been successful — or that have not been successful?

6. Do you know who your target audiences are? Do you the demographic / psychographic make-up of your target audiences?

Audience	Traits

7. Social Media Audit

A social media audit is the process of reviewing what's working, what's failing and what can be improved upon across your social media channels.

Some items to review during the audit:

- Social network
- URL to profile
- Owner of the profile
- Objective of the profile
- Branding
- Password

The following pages are a template for a social media audit, which you can complete at a later date since it is a time intensive process.

Social Media Audit Template



This template is designed to help you conduct a social media audit for your college / university. Follow these steps to execute your next social media audit.



Step 1

Create a spreadsheet and write down all the social networks you own and the owner for each.

Social Network	URL to Profile	Owner



Step 2

Search on Google for any other social media profiles that are representing your university that you do not own (imposters). Create a separate spreadsheet.

Social Network	URL to Profile	Owner	Shutdown Y/N



Step 3

Evaluate the needs for all your social media profiles and create objectives for each. For example: Instagram Profile - To share culture and university achievements.

Social Network	URL to Profile	Owner	Objective(s)



Step 4

Make sure that all of your accounts are on brand (refer to your university's brand guidelines). Use proper profile images, cover photos, bios, and descriptions for all social media networks. Ensure that all URL's are listed correctly.

Social Network	URL to Profile	Owner	Objective(s)	Branding Check Y / N



Step 5

Centralize the ownership of passwords.

For example: have your Social Media Manager own the key to all the passwords for the social media profiles for the university (at least the central profiles). Use a tool like LastPass to share access on a need to use basis. It is recommended never to share passwords via email.

Social Network	URL to Profile	Owner	Objective(s)	Branding Check Y / N	Password Centralized Y / N



Step 6

Create a process for how new social media channels will be established going forward and create a criteria. Make sure to also take note of who is going to approve the requests.

For Example:

- Requester:
- Who is the target audience?
- What type of content will be posted on this profile?
- Who is going to respond to content?

8. SWOT Analysis:

- Internal and external strengths and weaknesses including stakeholders, resources, attitudes, organization, structure, ideas, allies, and enemies
- Emergent and possible opportunities
- Threats to the organization and to success

	Helpful (to achieving the objective)	Harmful (to achieving the objective)
Internal Origin (attributes of the organization)	S Strengths	W Weaknesses
External Origin (attributes of the environment)	O Opportunities	T Threats

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Step 2: Action Planning

GOALS VS. OBJECTIVES

Goals

A **goal** is a *statement of being* for the social media plan. Often, one goal is enough. Social media goals should always be consistent with institutional goals and they should be carefully crafted with the end result in mind.

A social media goal might be “to create a comprehensive social media and digital strategy that will build upon our current followers and attract new fans and followers.”

While the completion of the goal signifies the end of your plan, the objectives, strategies, and tactics are the means to that end.

Objectives

Compared to the goal, the **objectives** are more focused and specific, and the best-formulated objectives express results as measurable outcomes. Think in terms of awareness, attitude, or action that you hope to invoke. Often there are multiple objectives in support of a single goal. Meaningful objectives start with action verbs and have four parts; they:

- Identify a specific audience being addressed
- State a measurable outcome
- Set an attainment level
- Set a timeframe

An example of an objective: “increase the number of social media fans and followers across all platforms by 1,000 each month for the next six months”.

When writing objectives, keep these tips in mind:

- Seek input from your Director, VP, Dean
- Don’t force yourself into a long time frames like a year
- Get a second opinion
- Audiences do not have to be limited to external targets
- If you know you cannot measure it, don’t build it into an objective

1. Use this space to sketch out your institution's social media goal.

2. Brainstorm 3 social media objectives

Audience	Measurable Outcome	Attainment Level	Timeframe

Write out your objectives below:

Objective 1:

Objective 2:

Objective 3:

BRAND POSITIONING & FRAMING POINTS

1. What does your institutional brand look like? How can that be adapted for social media?
2. What are the 2-3 framing points that you would want your institution to focus on in your social media plan?

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

Once you've translated your university's goals into social media goals, the next step is to map out the specific actions you need to take to accomplish the goals you've set.


































Or Simply...

- How to send the **Message**
- to a **Stakeholder**
- through a **Social Media Channel**
- to motivate an **Action**

What's the difference between strategies and tactics?

Strategy	Tactics
The plan	The tools
Game plan	Execution
Audience-specific	Action-specific
An approach for each audience	Task to carry-out the approach

Some examples of sample strategy and tactics

Audience	Platform(s)	Strategy	Sample Tactics
Prospective Students	    	Inspire more of these prospects to make Mason their school of choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Snapchat reminders about deadlines - Instagram stories - Facebook groups - Podcasts
Students	      	Strengthen their connection to Mason, helping them see themselves as lifelong members of the Mason Nation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contests - Mason Nation Twitter Takeover - Facebook events - Snapchat stories - Video (any platform)
Alumni	     	Make all our graduates proud to tell the world where they went to school - before anyone asks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facebook events - LinkedIn posts - Video (any platform) - Podcasts
Donors	   	Position Mason as a philanthropic priority and energize those who feel strongly about Mason to act on their feelings and give.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ROI features (news stories, infographics, video) - Reminders to give (Giving Tuesday, Giving Day at Mason) - Student testimonials
Faculty & Staff	      	Strengthen a sense of connection to the university and a shared understanding of the mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mason Nation Twitter Takeover - Facebook events - Video (any platform) - HR related news
Community and Government Leaders	   	Position Mason as an institution worth supporting, partnering with, and turning to for expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ROI features (news stories, infographics, video) - Reminders to give (Giving Tuesday, Giving Day at Mason)

Think about your own institution and sketch some strategies and tactics. They do not have to be platform driven like the example provided.

Strategies	Tactics

Step 3: Communication

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

Content Strategy....

Planning, crafting and discovering the right media mix to leverage your unique messaging; storytelling to the right audience.

Sometimes you have to stay nimble...

- Sometimes when you spend months crafting and launching a campaign strategy, you find the landscape has already shifted.
- Staying nimble and being able to pivot in a tumultuous media environment is increasingly important.
- Instagram Stories copied Snapchat (almost verbatim) and continues to see record-breaking growth.

You'll want to tailor your content to your audience...

- Create a range of content types (photo, video, infographic, news articles, events, research, student profiles, information) to add value to your social media efforts.
- Find your institution's unique media mix. Select the right media to connect your audiences at the right touch points (this is not a "one size fits all" strategy).
- Deliver relevant messaging to segmented audiences in distinct ways.

PLANNING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

- Create a content calendar to plan your messaging in advance
- Develop continuing themes through weekly content
- Ask questions to or prompt conversations with your audience
- Designate specific content creators

CONTENT PLANNING AT A UNIVERSITY

HOW OFTEN YOU SHOULD POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA?



1

TIME
PER
DAY



6

TIMES
PER
DAY



1

TIME
PER
DAY



1-2

TIMES
PER
DAY



1

TIME
PER
WEEK



1

TIME
PER
DAY



3

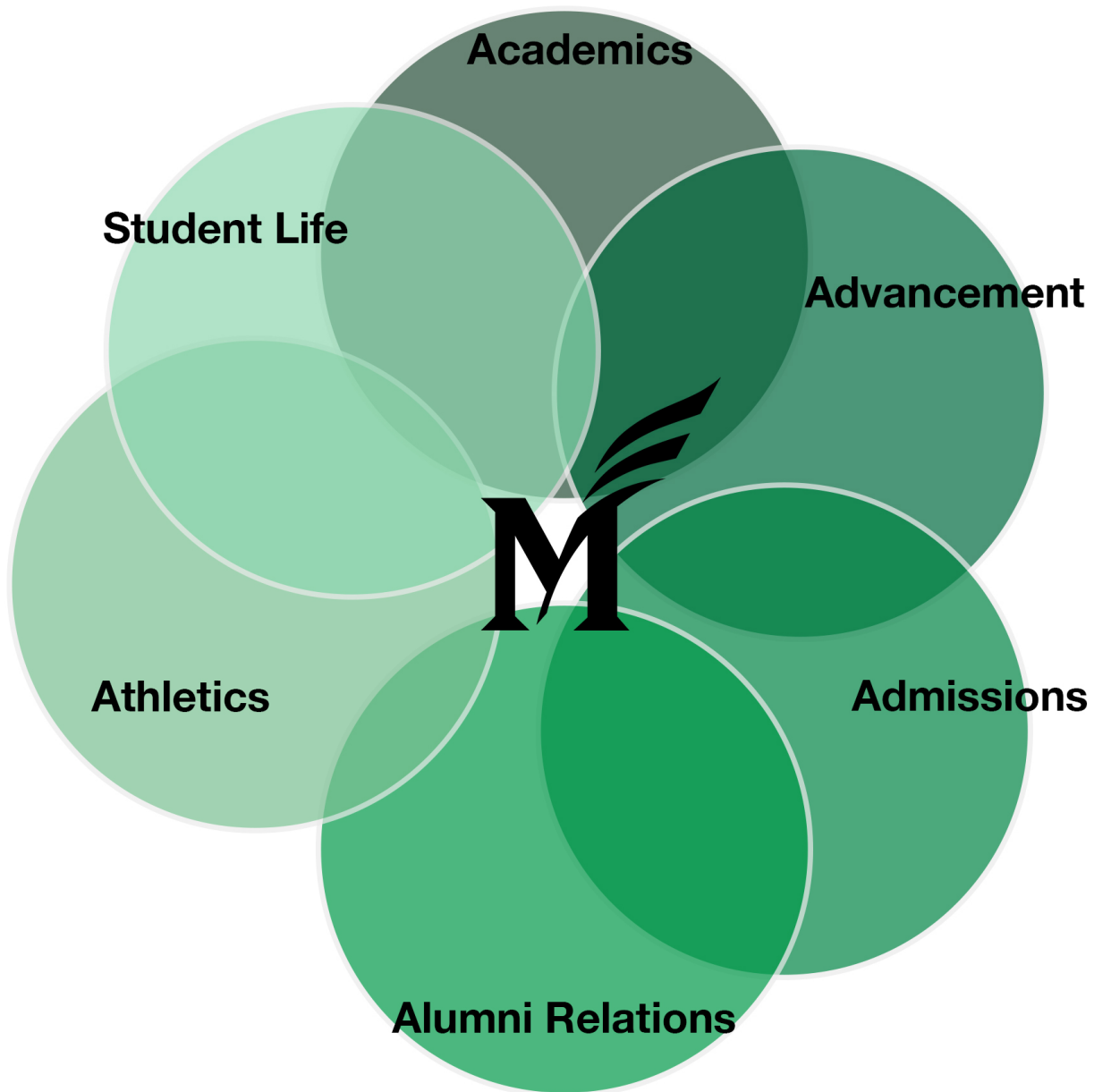
TIMES
PER
DAY



1

STORY
PER
DAY

When looking at your institution, think about striving to have an integrated campus in terms of your content and messaging. At George Mason University, we strive to ensure that all aspects of our campus have a voice in terms of our social media.



SOCIAL MEDIA DAILY CHECKLIST

The tasks listed below may or may not apply to you and your institution on a daily basis, simply use this as a guide to help you get in the mindset of daily steps to social media success. Of course, you should be sharing content as well!

Facebook

- Reply to comments
- Thank anyone that has shared your content
- Like or Comment on a few relevant status updates or messages
- If you are running Facebook Ads, look at your stats and make any adjustments

Twitter

- Monitor mentions via keywords and respond to any questions, needs, or concerns
- Respond to influencers, make new connections, and schedule posts to share
- Thank people for retweeting your content
- Thank a few new followers
- Use keywords to find and engage with potential influences, prospective students, etc.

LinkedIn

- Drop into other groups and see if you can volunteer answers
- Share relevant content in industry-specific groups
- Manage spam
- “Like” a few pieces of content daily
- Reply to any comments on items you published

Instagram

- Post 1-2 times per day (if you have the capacity to do 2 times per day)
- Share an Instagram story
- Like a handful of posts from your follower base that liked your posts
- Search popular hashtags to find new people / departments / institutions to follow
- Comment on other’s posts

Step 4: Evaluation

Social Media Analytics vs. Social Media Engagement

Social media engagement involves a two-way conversation; with engagement, there's a 'personal' interaction between brands and their fans. Examples of social media engagement include interactions with customers, prospects, and influencers on social networks. When engaging with customers, brands can reach out to customers to remediate any issues they might have found through social monitoring.

Therefore, **social media analysis and social media engagement are not the same**. Ultimately, social media analysis is about listening, whereas social media engagement is joining the conversation.

ESTABLISH YOUR MOST IMPORTANT METRICS

- Don't get wrapped up in vanity metrics (follower count) - it does not tell the whole story of your brand.
- We often get wrapped up in viewing followers and likes as the truth to a campaign, but it's smart to take a step back and evaluate the social metrics associated with your overall goals.
- Engagement metrics sometimes paint a better picture, because they show us building lasting relationships works on social media.

WHAT TO MEASURE?

- Audience demographics, volume, engagement and interactions
- Measure to evaluate effectiveness
- Measure according to existing objectives
- Measure social media as a component of an integrated communications plan.

WHAT ANALYTICS CAN'T TELL YOU

- Your objectives/goals
- The qualitative measures
- The 'what' but not the 'why'
- Who your audience could be and how they could behave
- What your audiences want or why they are engaging with you

DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK - SUMMARY

- Look at interaction rates rather than audience volume
- Analyze what people interact with in terms of both your objectives and post type
- Review your social media metrics in relation to your objectives not just growth
- Develop a framework that balances what the organization wants with what the audiences want

ENGAGEMENT METRICS TERMINOLOGY

Reach: Post reach is the number of unique users who saw your post. How far is your content spreading across social? Is it actually reaching user's feeds?

Clicks: This is the amount of clicks on your content, university name or logo. Link clicks are critical toward understanding how users move through your marketing funnel. Tracking clicks per campaign is essential to understand what drives curiosity or encourages people to take an action.

Engagement: The total number of social interactions divided by number of impressions. For engagement, it's about seeing who interacted and if it was a good ratio out of your total reach. This sheds light on how well your audience perceives you and their willingness to interact.

Hashtag performance: What were your most used hashtags on your own side? Which hashtags were most associated with your brand? Or what hashtags created the most engagement?

Sentiment: This is the measurement of how users reacted to your content, brand or hashtag. Did customers find your recent campaign offensive? What type of sentiment are people associating with your campaign hashtag? It's always better to dig deeper and find what people are saying.

Organic and paid likes: More than just standard Likes, these likes are defined from paid or organic content. For channels like Facebook, organic engagement is much harder to gain traction, which is why many brands turn to Facebook Ads. However, earning organic likes on Instagram isn't quite as difficult.

A Note on Owned, Earned, and Paid Media

- Owned media is generated by the brand in channels it controls.
- Earned media is publicity not directly generated by the brand, but rather by other entities such as customers or journalists.
- Paid media refers to external marketing efforts that involve a paid placement.
- Assign different weights to different channels. Are 1 million Twitter impressions equal to 1,000 unique pageviews on your institutions website?

TRACKING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA RESULTS

<https://ga-dev-tools.appspot.com/campaign-url-builder/>

By using Google Campaigns you can track information that could be tied to actions outside of social: clickthroughs to web content, request for information, campus visits, applications, ticket sales, etc.

Campaign URL Builder

This tool allows you to easily add campaign parameters to URLs so you can track **Custom Campaigns** in Google Analytics.

Enter the website URL and campaign information

Fill out the required fields (marked with *) in the form below, and once complete the full campaign URL will be generated for you. *Note: the generated URL is automatically updated as you make changes.*

* Website URL

The full website URL (e.g. <https://www.example.com>)

* Campaign Source

The referrer: (e.g. [google](#), [newsletter](#))

Campaign Medium

Marketing medium: (e.g. [cpc](#), [banner](#), [email](#))

Campaign Name

Product, promo code, or slogan (e.g. [spring_sale](#))

Campaign Term

Identify the paid keywords

Campaign Content

Use to differentiate ads

!

Fill out all the required fields above and a URL will be automatically generated for you here.




You can also tie the Chrome extensions to your existing bit.ly account to conduct even more analysis of your social media efforts!


You can use Google's native website, or you can add a Chrome extension.



Example of Google Campaign URL builder from a Chrome extension.

Google Analytics URL Builder - Dock version (Ctrl+D for bookmark)

 Settings

 Configuration

INPUT URL

Facebook ▾

FILL FORM:

✓ Source* Referrer: i.e. Google, Newsletter, Facebook, Twitter

✓ Medium Marketing Medium: cpc, banner, email, QR

Keyword Identify the paid keywords or other value

Content Use to differentiate ads

✓ Campaign Product, Promo code or slogan

FINAL URL

Copy URL

Copy Parameters






Shorten & Copy

25

Appendix

The Cheat Sheet: Social Media Images Sizes



				
Profile Photo: 110 x 110	Profile Photo: 400 x 400	Profile Photo: 170 x 170	Profile Photo: 400 x 400	Profile Photo: 165 x 165
Landscape: at least 1080px wide	Photo Size: 1024 x 512	Cover Photo: 820 x 312	Background Photo: 1536 x 768	Background Photo: 600 x 900
Portrait: 320 x 1080	Header Image: 1500 x 500	Shared Images: 1200 x 630	Shared Photo: 698 x 400	Pin Sizes: 600 x 900
Photo Thumbnail: 161 x 161				

FREE SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS TOOLS

Find the full article here: <https://blog.bufferapp.com/social-media-analytics-tools>

- Followerwonk
- ViralWoot
- Google Analytics
- Quintly (*Update: Quintly now offers a free 14-day trial rather than a free plan*)
- Cyfe
- Tailwind
- Keyhole
- Klear
- Audiense
- TweetReach
- IBM Watson Personality Insights
- Peakfeed
- WolframAlpha Facebook Report
- SocialRank
- Talkwalker
- LikeAlyzer

AIR FORCE WEB POSTING RESPONSE ASSESSMENT V.2

AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY - EMERGING TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

DISCOVERY

WEB POSTING

Has someone discovered a post about the organization?
Is it positive or balanced?

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: 703-696-1158
E-mail: afbbluetube@gmail.com

EVALUATE

CONCURRENCE

A factual and well cited response, which may agree or disagree with the post, yet is not factually erroneous, a rant or rage, bashing or negative in nature.

You can concur with the post, let stand or provide a positive review.
Do you want to respond?

NO

YES

LET STAND

Let the post stand -- no response.

"TROLLS"

Is this a site dedicated to bashing and degrading others?

NO

YES

MONITOR ONLY

Avoid responding to specific posts, monitor the site for relevant information and comments. Notify HQ.

"RAGER"

Is the posting a rant, rage, joke or satirical in nature?

NO

"MISGUIDED"

Are there erroneous facts in the posting?

YES

FIX THE FACTS

Do you wish to respond with factual information directly on the comment board?
(See Response Considerations)

YES

"UNHAPPY CUSTOMER"

Is the posting a result of a negative experience?

YES

RESTORATION

Do you wish to rectify the situation and act upon a reasonable solution?
(See Response Considerations)

YES

NO

RESPOND

SHARE SUCCESS

Do you wish to proactively share your story and your mission?
(See Response Considerations)

YES

FINAL EVALUATION

Write response for current circumstances only.
Will you respond?

YES

RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

TRANSPARENCY

Disclose your Air Force connection.

SOURCING

Cite your sources by including hyperlinks, video, images or other references.

TIMELINESS

Take time to create good responses. Don't rush.

STONE

Respond in a tone that reflects highly on the rich heritage of the Air Force.

INFLUENCE

Focus on the most used sites related to the Air Force.

HIGHER ED SOCIAL MEDIA ONLINE COMMUNITIES

Slack: teamhesm.slack.com

Google + Social Media - Higher Ed:

<https://plus.google.com/u/0/communities/108180052843417168257>

REFERENCE BOOKS

