Getting Started with Piedmont College Social Media

Social media refers to online tools that people use to connect with one another, including social networks, thereby building online communities. These tools allow Piedmont College to share information with the world and also allow our constituents to communicate with us in return. The appropriate use of social media can support the college in reaching its communication goals.

There are several important things you should be aware of before jumping into the social media arena. You will find resources and guidelines on this page that will help you get started. Contact Brian Carter or David Price if you have questions that are not answered on this page – we can help!

Piedmont College Social Media Policy

Piedmont has developed a social media policy that establishes standards and guidelines for interacting online, protecting professional reputations and the college. Before you get started on your social media journey, be sure to read the Social Media Policy.

Strategy

Don’t jump in without a plan! Develop a strategy that answers these questions:

1. Why are you doing this? What is the goal of your social media effort?
2. Who will manage and update the account? This includes monitoring and posting new content.
3. Who are you trying to reach? Knowing your audience demographic will help you choose the appropriate platform. You can’t be social by yourself; having followers is central to making it work.
4. What content will you share? Do you have enough material to make at least one post per week?
5. Do you have the technical ability to produce photos or videos that may be needed for some of these sites? Many social media sites rely on visual content to engage users.

Set Measurable Goals & Be Realistic

Set goals that will help you determine if your social media efforts are focused correctly. Social media takes an investment in time in order to achieve success. Be active. If you can’t spend the time regularly to post fresh content and interact with your fans, then reconsider your decision to participate in social media. It’s much easier to start out small with one platform before branching out when you experience more success.
Getting Registered

Once you’re ready to make things official, register your social media account by contacting Brian Carter or David Price in Institutional Advancement to ensure your site is added to the social media directory.

Facebook Page vs Group: What’s Right for You?

Facebook Pages are ideal for two-way communication: from you to your members and from your members to you (if you allow it), but not so much between members. They are good for Piedmont College organizations and departments who want to make announcements to large groups of people. Visitors of a Page become members simply by “liking” the Page. Pages are open to anyone who wants to follow, giving you no control over members of your page.

Facebook Groups allow equal communication between all members of the group: they are good for friends or enthusiasts who want to talk between themselves with no one person or organization dominating. They promote online community. Visitors of a Group become members by “joining” the group and waiting for approval from a Group administrator. Groups are ideal for Piedmont clubs, departments, work/class groups or teams that desire to stay connected with each other without letting outsiders in.

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<tr>
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<th>Groups</th>
<th>Fan/Business Pages</th>
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<tbody>
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**Twitter: What's the Point?**

Twitter is an information network made up of 140-character messages called Tweets. It’s an easy way to share the latest Piedmont College news and information.

Twitter can be used to effectively share achievements, news or promote events and activities of your Piedmont College group/organization/department to your fans or followers. Twitter’s effectiveness is increased when linked to your Facebook account. Twitter is great for branding/marketing and connecting with followers/fans and divulging news. Remember, to use Twitter effectively you should plan to tweet at least daily.

**Instagram**

Take a picture or video, choose a filter to transform its look and feel, then post to Instagram — it's that easy. You can even share to Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and more. It's a new way to see the world.

After you download the app for your smartphone, make sure to choose a recognizable username and profile picture.

Best practice for Instagram would include social sharing across any/all social media platforms you also use for your group (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

Be ready to share your first photo soon after opening an Instagram account. Spread the word about being on Instagram, and begin to follow others to help your account grow.

**LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is like Facebook for businesses and organizations. It is an excellent place to network professionally, to find employees, and to advertise your group.

**University Page**

Colleges and universities often have an “official” university page as does Piedmont College. This page helps market Piedmont College and keeps us connected to our friends and alumni.

**Groups**

Members on LinkedIn may create Groups and join Groups. Groups are smaller networks on LinkedIn; they are sometimes private, and so only members may post and read other posts. This is a useful way for organizations/departments to communicate with each other. Open Groups may be read by any LinkedIn member. Open Groups serve as a way of communicating
with other Group members and doing a little advertising at the same time. An example is the Piedmont College Alumni Group.

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