

PIEDMONT COLLEGE

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 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 [John Roberts](#) 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's the goal of your social media effort? What are you after?
2. Who will manage 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. Know your target audiences: Current Students, Prospective Students, Alumni, etc.
4. What content will you share? Do you have enough material to post regularly?
5. Do you have the technical ability to produce photos or videos that may be needed for some of these sites? Incorporating visual content is imperative to increasing your reach.

Furthermore, Follow the POST questions:

People – Who are you trying to reach?

Objective – What's the main thing you want from them?

Strategy – What kind of social interaction will lead to what you want?

Technology – What tool will best support that interaction?

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 into multiple accounts.

Getting Registered

Once you're ready to make things official, register your social media account by contacting The Office of Institutional Advancement. Prior to opening any account, per Piedmont's Social Media Policy, you must fill out a [Social Media Request Form](#) and, if approved, you will be required to submit all login information for your social media account(s) to be kept on file.

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

Is your primary audience public? – "Fan Page"

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 organizations and departments who want to make announcements to large groups of people. Pages act as entire corporate-like entity. Connections are "Fans" not "Friends" and pages are always public - open to anyone who wants to follow, giving you no control over members of your page.

Is your primary audience internal? – "Group"

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. Visitors of a Group become members by "joining" the group and waiting for approval from a Group administrator. Groups are ideal for clubs, departments, work/class groups or teams that desire to stay connected with each other without letting outsiders in.

Facebook posts are almost always more effective if a photo or video (some visual element) is accompanied. You don't have to be too wordy – you can and should always link to the www.piedmont.edu website to drive traffic to a page that relates to your post, if applicable. Facebook posts don't have to be daily, but they should engage your audience weekly on average. It's good practice to proof your posts before posting them, checking for spelling. Read it back to yourself to ensure the clarity of the post.

Twitter: What's the Point?

Twitter is an information network made up of 140-character messages called Tweets. 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. You should, if possible, always include a URL that links back to the www.piedmont.edu website to a corresponding page that is tied to your post, if applicable.

Remember, to use Twitter effectively you should plan to tweet multiple times per week. Always spell check your tweets before sending them, but remember that Twitter allows for shorthand (ex: "Tomorrow" can be "tmrw") to conserve characters. It may be helpful to read back your tweet before posting to ensure the tweet makes sense.

Instagram: A Mobile, Visual Presence

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, adhering to Piedmont's Graphic Standards and Social Media Policy.

Unlike the other social media platforms, Instagram is only accessible to post from a smart device. Best practice for Instagram includes 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. Be sure to post at least weekly, and spell check your posts before sending them.

LinkedIn: Professional Networking

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.

Snapchat: Tell Your Story

Snapchat is one of the more popular, new social media apps used by the younger generation. Snaps are sent to friends and will appear for ten seconds before disappearing. Users can of course screenshot snaps sent to save them. Snapchat also offers the ability to publish a brief snap as your "story" that remains available for 24 hours. A great way to engage users is by the use of On-Demand Geofilters as well.

Snapchat could be a valuable tool for a club or organization and can help attract prospective group members. Snapchat accounts must adhere to the Social Media Policy of Piedmont College, including all graphic standards set by the college.