# Social Media

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Module Overview
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA
Today, we'll be going over my favorite part of digital: social media.

Customers nowadays are using social media in increasing numbers to interact, not just with friends, but with businesses. Furthermore, as we'll see in this module, customers these days expect businesses to reach them on social media.

And for businesses, not only does social media provide invaluable data about customers, it provides a great way to promote your products and services and grow your business.

Hi, I'm Philippe Polman and for the past 10 years, I've worked as an advisor for a range of companies in many sectors, helping clients to get best marketing insights from digital, and specifically from the social forms of media.

This module is designed to help you understand the key features and benefits of social media for business.

You'll learn the key concepts and terminology, which are essential to understanding the role that social media can play in engaging with customers, providing support and generating business.

I'll also take you through the most popular social media tools which can add real value to your organization, the ways to advertise through social media, topics like personal branding and how an active community can be a real differentiator for your organization.

And finally, we'll look at how social media supports your overall business objectives.
Section 1: Key Concepts of Social Media
OVERVIEW
Now, we’re going to look at a number of areas within social media and look at why it’s become so popular over the past number of years.

First, we'll go over some of the fundamentals, as well as some of the key features of social media platforms like personalized user profiles, notifications, engagement and connections.

We'll also look at the major social media platforms, like LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram.

And finally, we'll cover why it's important for businesses to consider the primary uses of the main platforms.

SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH
Over the past 10 years, a number of social networks have appeared on the scene. In fact, social media is so big in today's world, over 2 billion people are using various networks across the globe, and as device usage surges, this number is expected to grow. 1

KEY TERMS: CONCEPTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA
It is important to get to grips with the wide range of terms that are used across the social media landscape. Take a look at the terms listed here. Remember this is not meant to be an exhaustive list, so feel free to do your own research at a later point.

• **Messenger**: An app that allows users (on Facebook) to message each other instantly on a smartphone.

• **Follower**: A user who has subscribed to follow your Twitter account – they receive your tweets in their home feed.

• **Post**: An update on Facebook (or other networks) – can be a status update or an item on a blog or forum.

• **Friend**: Another user that you connect with on Facebook or other social networks – they can see your profile and engage with you.

• **Like**: An action users can take on Facebook, Instagram, etc., as a way to show approval for a post or comment.

• **Tweet**: A Twitter message – which can be up to 280 characters of text, plus photos, videos, etc.

KEY FEATURES OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

• **Personalized user space**: Enables a user to create a personalized profile that can be constantly updated and visited by their network or community.

• **Notifications:** Users are continually notified when there are updates within their community or items of interest. This increases engagement and is a great way to keep up to date on what's happening.

• **Engagement:** Platforms allow users to fully interact with both content generated by themselves and others. This enables the creation of stronger relationships between people and the ability to grow your network or community.

• **Connections:** These are key to social media networks – allowing you to connect with other users. Often social media platforms will recommend connections based on what they know about you.

**MOBILE DEVICES ARE THE MOST POPULAR DEVICES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE**

It should come as no surprise that mobile phones are the most popular way to access social media. In particular, smartphones enable users to access, interact and engage with social media content is an easy and flexible way.

Nearly 80% of social media time is now spent on mobile devices.²

**SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND CONTENT CREATION**

One of the major reasons for the growth of social media is how easy it has become to use and share content. Social media tools are designed to be easy to use – you don't have to be technical to get up to speed quickly.

• **Comments:** Users can comment on others' posts. That's often the first step to creating your own content as other users can join the discussion and add to your comment.

• **Curation:** With curation, you find that content that others will find useful and simply pass it on by sharing it. That then gets added to the social media ‘newsfeed’ where it is seen by others.

• **Creation:** With smartphones, it is easier than ever to create and share content in a variety of formats such as video, audio and text.

**POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS**

Let's take a look at the most popular social media platforms:

• **Instagram:** This social channel is for sharing photos and videos. Owned by Facebook, it has 400 million active users and has filters along with photo and video editing options. It’s almost entirely a mobile channel, and is for the more artistic-oriented businesses who have access to high-quality imagery.

² [https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-5-4-mobile-first-indexing-what-does-it-mean-for-seo](https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-5-4-mobile-first-indexing-what-does-it-mean-for-seo)  
• **YouTube**: Allows users to upload, view, rate, share, add to favorites, report, and comment on videos, as well as subscribe to other users. It offers a wide variety of user-generated and corporate media videos.

• **Pinterest**: Pinterest is the world’s largest site for social bookmarking of ideas. It’s available as both a web and mobile application and is a visually stimulating tool where users can share ideas and information by pinning them to their digital board.

• **Snapchat**: Snapchat is a messaging application with a difference. It’s possible to share messages, videos and photos with other users, but they will only appear for a few seconds at a time, creating a degree of intrigue and curiosity for brand and consumer with a host of playful functions including face-swapping and other amusing effects.

• **Facebook**: A social network that enables people to share information and content with others who work, study and live with them all around the world.

• **Twitter**: Twitter is a social networking channel that allows users to send and read short posts called ‘Tweets’ on a public platform. It has a ‘live’ dimension and is also conversational.

• **LinkedIn**: LinkedIn is a social media platform for building and developing professional connections. It’s business-to-business focused and allows you to build up connections with contacts whom you know and trust on a professional level.

**SUMMARY**

Social media has seen huge growth over the past 10 years – it’s become much easier for people to use, and mobile devices are by far the most popular way to access social media.

The key features of social media platforms are personalized user profiles, notifications, connections, interactivity and engagement.

There are a number of key terms to be aware of – these are covered in the resources section.

Finally, the most popular social media platforms to be aware of are: LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat and Pinterest. Each one has its own key features and are used by different audiences.
Section 2:

Benefits of Social Media
OVERVIEW
Next, we're going to look at some of the key benefits of social media to business and why having an active community out there can be a differentiator for the business.

First, we'll go through some of the ways that social media can increase sales by identifying new opportunities, increasing traffic, and targeting and building stronger relationships with customers.

We'll also see how you can monitor social media, not just for mentions of your company or brand, but also for reviews of your products and services.

You'll learn that social media (like any other part of the business) needs to demonstrate return on investment by measuring results to see the contribution to business goals.

I'm also going to walk you through some interesting business use cases for social media outside of marketing and sales.

We'll also look at some of the advantages of having an active community – from increasing customer loyalty, to empowering your customers.

You'll learn about the importance of continually managing a user community and I'll take you through what social customer service really means.

Finally, we'll look at the paid social media: what options are available to you and what the advantages are.

KEY TERMS
It is important to get to grips with the wide range of terms that are used across the social media landscape:

- **Connection**: People you connect with on LinkedIn (connections are similar to Facebook friends).
- **Engagement**: The interaction between people and brands on social networks.
- **Forum**: A site (also called a message board) where users can hold discussions.
- **Influencer**: A social media user with a large audience who can drive awareness about a topic, product or service.
- **Hashtag**: A word or phrase preceded by a ‘#’ to mark the topic or information so it is discoverable for users.
- **Tag**: A keyword added to a post to categorize related content. A tag can also be used to tag someone in a post which links to their social media profile and associates them with the content.
- **Pins**: Favorite links stored on Pinterest. Each pin is made up of a picture and description given by the user.
- **Share**: When content (photos, videos, links, etc.) is sent to other users. Often users share content created by others.
BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO BUSINESS
Social media is not just a tool for individuals but increasingly businesses are using it as a channel to connect with new customers, build stronger relationships, increase sales and build a stronger brand. Some of the key benefits of social media for business are as follows:

- **Increased engagement**: Users constantly engage with social media, growing their communities and sharing content and opinions.
- **Gathering insights**: Enables the greater understanding of consumers as they share their opinion and views on key topics.
- **Sharing content/products**: Easily and cost effectively share content with a large number of people.
- **Brand awareness**: Ability to grow your network and customer base that then leads to greater brand awareness.
- **Better customer loyalty**: Facilitates the development of a relationship between each party and therefore generates a higher degree of loyalty.
- **Increased customer satisfaction**: Due to the continued engagement and shared understanding, higher customer satisfaction levels can be achieved.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAN INCREASE SALES
Social media can increase sales in a number of different ways:

- **Identifying new business opportunities**: Through monitoring social media for updates on areas within your own industry, it's possible to identify opportunities (you can also see the problems customers require solutions to).
- **Identifying key decision makers**: By looking at other organizations (either customer organizations or industry leaders), you can become aware of the key individuals to influence.
- **Building stronger relationships/loyalty with customers**: By engaging with customers on social media, you can increase loyalty and trust, increasing the likelihood of doing business with the customer again.
- **Targeted advertising**: Most of the platforms allow defined targeting for your target customers base, meaning the message gets to the right people.
- **Increasing website traffic**: By engaging viewers and offering them relevant, useful content, they are more likely to visit your site.

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL LISTENING
The benefits of social listening go far beyond customer satisfaction. A carefully constructed social listening strategy can help boost your brand’s reputation.

1. Identify what to listen out for.
2. Get armed with social listening tools.
3. Spy on your competitors.
4. Learn how to respond to comments.
5. Take note.
6. Take action.
SOCIAL MEDIA REVIEWS
Social media can be used as a way for businesses to monitor what their customers are saying about products and services. Customers very often leave reviews of their experience, both positive and negative, that can be used by businesses to make changes to their products or services.

SOCIAL MEDIA: RETURN ON INVESTMENT
Measuring the effectiveness of your social media (marketing) activity helps to optimize your approach and guarantee ongoing success. There are a range of analytics tools available to gain these insights. The main social media platforms, including LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, have native analytics tools that you can access to provide you with performance data on each. An alternative is to use one tool that pulls in data from a variety of sources and combines it into one easy-to-digest report – for example, Buzzsumo will aggregate data based on social shares, social shares based on content type, length and the channels from which those shares came.3

COMMON BUSINESS USE CASES
There are many common use cases for social media within businesses outside of marketing and sales.

For example, within HR, LinkedIn is a great way to recruit new employees – by direct contact, through recommendations and through advertising.

For Customer Service, we've mentioned the importance of social media as a channel for customers.

For Purchasing and Administration, you can research services and products on social media before buying to provide extra validation.

Legal departments often engage in social listening also for key issues affecting the business.

Even the Finance department may find it useful for compliance and industry trend updates.

Finally, social media is a useful place for managers to find insights into the market which may affect the business.

BENEFITS OF AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY
Building an active community of followers of your business can be very positive as these people will act as advocates and can often be lead generators. Take a look at some of the key benefits for businesses with active communities on social media:

- Provides real-life insights to the business (customers will share their real experiences).
- Increases customer loyalty (again, the more you interact and provide with customers, the stronger the loyalty).
- Empowered customers (because they can ask questions and get direct answers).

3 https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/understand-effectiveness-guide-content-marketing-metrics
• Owns your own insights (within the community) – there are so many ways the customer community can help you – feedback on potential and current products and services (through surveys/questionnaires).
• Opportunities to provide customer service (as we've seen you can deal with issues which customers have, as well as leaving solutions to problems for others to find).  

REASONS TO MANAGE YOUR COMMUNITY
• **Responding to questions/comments in a timely manner**: Customers expect a higher level of services across social media and therefore companies must constantly monitor and react to customer questions or comments in order to maintain high customer satisfaction rates.
• **Keeping a consistent voice which matches your brand**: Companies must ensure that their social media is consistent with all other channels in order to avoid potential confusion or diffusion of their brand messaging.
• **Building trust/reputation, posting relevant content**: Given the peer-to-peer nature of social media, engaging with customers through these media is a good way to win trust and enhance one's reputation.

SOCIAL CUSTOMER SERVICE
Before social media existed, consumers might have shared a poor customer service experience with a few family members, close friends and co-workers. However, once Twitter and Facebook became prevalent platforms, angry customers gained the ability to broadcast tales of terrible customer service to a massive potential audience.

Social customer service is providing customer service through social media channels.

AUDIENCE TARGETING
Audience targeting allows you to target your ads to specific audiences based on the following:
• **Interest**: Professional interest or hobbies.
• **Demographic**: Factors such as age, life stage, and gender.
• **Location**: Factors such as geographic location.
• **Device**: Which device you access content through.
• **Others**: Other factors such as risk profile or attitudes.

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4 [https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-3-28-10-quick-tips-for-online-community-management](https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-3-28-10-quick-tips-for-online-community-management)
5 [https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-2-16-7-7-essential-tips-for-stellar-social-customer-service](https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-2-16-7-7-essential-tips-for-stellar-social-customer-service)
[https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/social-media-is-a-customer-service-channel-whether-you-like-it-or-not](https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/social-media-is-a-customer-service-channel-whether-you-like-it-or-not)
[https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-8-8-what-skills-do-i-need-to-be-a-social-media-manager](https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-8-8-what-skills-do-i-need-to-be-a-social-media-manager)
CUSTOMERS CONTROL THE CHANNEL
Using social media for customer service is important because customers expect businesses to use the channels that they control and use, rather than the other way around. This brings with it new expectations of the level and pace of service a customer expects and when this expectation is not met, it can lead to higher levels of dissatisfaction.

The statistics tell a story of their own, and as a business, it's one that you want to be on the right side of.6

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING
Social media advertising is when companies pay for content to be delivered through social media networks. Social media advertising has increased considerably over the last few years with all of the major platforms offering it. Companies recognize the importance of being where their customers are, and as many customer segments spend a considerable number of hours each day on social media, it's no surprise that the area is growing.

- **Sponsored InMail** on LinkedIn allows a company to send, on a mass scale, personalized messages directly to the inbox of their target audience.
- **Twitter Ads** offer promoted Tweets and Trends.
- On Facebook, **Canvas** provides a mobile ad experience for businesses to tell their story and showcase products. The Canvas ad format is also available on Instagram Stories, allowing a brand to tell a story on a simple creative canvas.
- **Snap Ads** are 10 second video ads (between Stories) or sponsored lenses – special effects applied in real-time using face detection for Snapchat.

PAID SOCIAL CAMPAIGN BENEFITS
- It’s cost effective.
- It allows very specific targeting.
- There are many different types of ads (videos, etc.).
- Multiple platforms are available.

SUMMARY
Social media has many benefits, including more engagement, gathering insight, sharing content; it’s also a good way to generate traffic for your website, to increase brand awareness, as well as customer loyalty and satisfaction.

Social media can increase sales in a number of different ways: through identifying new business opportunities and key decision makers, targeted advertising, increasing website traffic and building stronger relationships with customers.

6 [https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-2-16-7-7-essential-tips-for-stellar-social-customer-service](https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-2-16-7-7-essential-tips-for-stellar-social-customer-service)
It also has uses in areas you may not be aware of such as in HR for recruitment, for social customer service which as we've seen is of particular importance, as well as for researching within your own industry and for products or services you are considering.

There are also many benefits to having an active community for businesses including:

- real-life insights
- increased customer loyalty
- authentic content
- empowered customers
- own insights
- increased opportunities to provide customer service

Finally, there are many useful options for social media advertising within the main social media networks. These can provide a cost-effective way to reach a very targeted audience with different types of media.
Section 3: The Role of Social Media Within the Wider Business
OVERVIEW
In this section, we'll look at the role of social media platforms and tools within the wider business and why social media needs to be part of an overall strategy.

First, we'll see that customers want to communicate in a channel that best suits them – and that it's important to match the social media platform with your target audience.

We'll also see why it's important that your social media strategy is integrated with other mediums to have maximum effect.

I'll also take you through the main kinds of social media tools for business.

We'll look at some examples of the most effective tools, such as Hootsuite, TweetDeck, Buzzsumo and Conversocial, what they are used for and how they can add value to your business.

And finally, we'll see why the tools you use need to support your overall strategy.

KEY TERMS
It is important to get to grips with the wide range of terms that are used across the social media landscape.

- **Chatbot**: A type of automated bot that uses artificial intelligence to interact with users.
- **Feed**: A steady stream of information updates you get through social media.
- **Podcast**: One or more audio files (often produced in a series) available for download through the internet.
- **Reach**: The potential audience that a message can reach.
- **SlideShare**: A popular social platform for sharing presentations and other business-oriented content.
- **Trend**: A topic or hashtag which is popular on social media at the current time.

SOCIAL MEDIA: A KEY PART OF DIGITAL STRATEGY
Because of the growth of social media (the number of users), it has become a key part of the digital strategy for business. There are few businesses that haven't already acknowledged and begun to harness the dynamic capabilities of social media for marketing.

Some interesting facts:

- 92% of marketers agree that social media is important for their business, up from 86% in 2013.
- 92% say that social media efforts have generated more exposure for their businesses.
- 80% of marketers agree that their social media efforts have increased traffic.\(^7\)

\(^7\) [https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-roi-stats](https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-roi-stats)
[https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-11-30-which-social-media-platforms-should-you-use-for-your-business](https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-11-30-which-social-media-platforms-should-you-use-for-your-business)
GAIN POWERFUL INSIGHTS THROUGH MONITORING AND REVIEWS
Customers want to communicate through channels that best suit them – businesses need to match the social media platforms used with those the target audience use. Identifying the platforms (most) used by your target audience is therefore an important piece of work which needs to be completed beforehand and forms part of an overall digital strategy.

CROSS PLATFORM ADOPTION IS IMPORTANT
Customers spend time using a wide range of channels – ranging from traditional to digital and social channels. It's therefore important for businesses to ensure a consistent message can be seen across all channels in order to maximize its effectiveness.

SOCIAL MEDIA IS PART OF OVERALL STRATEGY
Because social media is part of the overall strategy, it must be integrated with other mediums such as the website, email, etc. Aside from having a consistent message across different media, it may for example be that your main goal is to drive customers to your website – so your social media efforts may be directed at pointing customers to the website. Similarly, email contacts may be available through the social media presence, and your organization's website likewise can reference your social media presence (usually in the form of icons present on your website).

TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS FOR BUSINESS
- **Social media monitoring tools** allow you to monitor online conversations, track your mentions, learn about your customers and know what people are saying.
- **Scheduling tools** allow you to make sure you reach your core audience in the right time-zone. They also allow you to schedule real-time updates in advance.
- **Social media analytics and reporting tools** allow you to measure the impact of social media and the performance of individual elements.
- **Content creation tools** – there's an expression, “Content is king”, that still holds true with social media. Superior content drives higher conversion rates. There are tools available to help you from choosing the perfect image through to writing the best tweet with the perfect hashtag.

It's important to recognize that whichever tools you use need to be able to reach the target audience, be within the defined budget and achieve the overall objectives within your company's digital strategy.

COMMON SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS USED BY BUSINESSES
The social media tools selected need to support the digital strategy (objectives, budget, audience, targets).
- **Hootsuite**: A social media management tool that allows you to schedule/post updates to many platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.
• **Twitter Analytics**: Helps you to understand how the content you share on Twitter grows your business.
• **Buzzsumo**: Allows you to find out what content is popular on websites.
• **Facebook Insights**: Allows you to track active users on your pages.
• **Bitly**: A URL shortener (e.g. often used in Twitter to shorten a URL before posting so it doesn't use up the 280-character limit).
• **TweetDeck**: A social media dashboard for managing multiple Twitter accounts.
• **Conversocial**: Cloud-based customer service.

**CORPORATE SOCIAL COMPUTING**

Businesses' social media presence – including all content, posts and messages – must adhere to the company's social media computing guidelines.

**SUMMARY**

Customers want to communicate through a channel which best suits them, so it's important for businesses to match the social media platform used with the target audience.

It's also important to understand that social media is part of an overall strategy, and that it needs to be integrated with the website, email and other media to maximize results.

There are a number of useful social media tools, which can help your organization by monitoring social media, maximizing posts and providing analytics and reporting.

Finally, it's important that your organization's social media use adheres to your company's guidelines and that the tools used are matched with the objectives within your organization's overall strategy.
Section 4: Personal Branding
OVERVIEW
In the final section, we’re going to look at the topic of personal branding.

We'll look at what personal brand means, as well as how it can benefit your business by expanding the reach of the business, connecting with others, increasing trust and showcasing your products and services.

We'll walk through the key steps of setting up an optimized LinkedIn profile, and also see why it's important that your personal brand is aligned with your company's brand.

Finally, we'll look at some dos and don'ts with posting on social media and why you should stick to your organization's social media guidelines.

PERSONAL BRANDING
Personal branding is people marketing themselves and their careers as brands. Today, almost every individual has a personal brand – you may not have consciously cultivated it, but a digital footprint exists for most people.

Building your personal brand on social media takes some work, but it can help you build valuable connections.⁸

PERSONAL BRANDING CAN BENEFIT YOUR BUSINESS
In today's business climate, trust is very important. Customers want to not only know about your products and services, but also who the people are behind the business. Therefore, having a personal profile and brand is becoming increasingly important for key individuals within the business. Let's take a look at some of the advantages:

- Expand the reach of the business
- Connect others with contacts in your network
- Increase trust
- Showcase your company's products/services

CORPORATE AND PERSONAL BRANDING CAN WORK TOGETHER ON SOCIAL MEDIA
There is an intersection between a personal and corporate brand, particularly for key individuals within a business. It's therefore important to maintain a balance between corporate and personal messages on social media, so that they work together. In particular, these should be unified when discussing a mission, vision or values to ensure the wider community sees a strong alignment between the corporate and its key people.

⁸ [https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-11-09-10-steps-to-building-your-personal-brand-on-social-media](https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-11-09-10-steps-to-building-your-personal-brand-on-social-media)
SETTING UP AN OPTIMIZED LINKEDIN PROFILE
The key elements of an optimized LinkedIn profile:

- Profile picture
- Education
- Cover photo
- Location
- Headline
- Background summary
- Posts
- Rich media
- Experience
- Skills
- Projects
- Recommendations
- Courses
- Honors and Awards
- Interests
- Groups
- Following

THE DOS AND DON'TS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS
It's important to understand the dos and don'ts of posting on (personal) social media accounts. Even if you only use social media occasionally, the content you create, share or react to reflects into a public narrative.

How you conduct yourself online is now just as important as your behavior offline.

Some simple rules for posting on social media are: check the information before you post (for grammar issues, spelling, accuracy etc.); don't over-do it (frequency of posts); don't share too much; don't accept every connection; don't forget about privacy; do use photos and videos; don't post content that could be viewed as obscene, threatening or which might constitute harassment or bullying.9

For employees, you should be aware of your organization's social media guidelines – it's important that social media activity adheres to these guidelines. They will usually cover the kind of content to avoid, negative comments (including those related to customer service) and rules for engaging with clients on social media.

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9 https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-11-02-how-to-act-and-react-on-twitter
https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/2017-11-09-10-steps-to-building-your-personal-brand-on-social-media
SUMMARY

Personal branding is people marketing themselves and their careers as brands.

It can benefit the business in a number of ways – by expanding the reach of the business, connecting with others (including customers) in your network, increasing trust and as a way to showcase your company’s products/services.

It's also important that your personal branding works with the corporate brand – in other words, that your brand aligns with the company’s in terms of mission and values.

Finally, make sure to keep in mind the dos and don’ts of posting on social media and your organization's social media guidelines.