Social Media Guidelines

Nipissing University

Social Media Guidelines
Overview

NU Social Media

The following document provides guidance for managing new and existing social media channels that are representing the university. As the social media space gets increasingly crowded, it is more critical than ever to take a strategic approach to channel development. This will not only ensure success of any new channels, but will protect existing channels from oversaturation of our brand in the marketplace.

The Process

When managed properly, social media can be a tool for exponential growth. The idea behind this institutional guideline is that new channels take the same urgency as the core channels in regards to self management and proper cadence. Inability to do so can negatively impact the core channels and impact the institution's effectiveness on those channels as a whole.

Guide Overview

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Don't Want Your Own Channel?

Request A Post

Managing and growing a channel takes a large commitment and strategic approach to achieve effective results. Alternatively, the NU main channels can be leveraged to support your initiatives, giving you access to the tens of thousands of followers under its umbrella. Additionally, you have the option to submit an NU News article for consideration that can be displayed on the homepage of the website and supported through social media posts. Please follow the appropriate path below to learn more about your options.

Post Request

Looking for an added boost to your program, event or project? Try leveraging our existing channels to spread the word. A simple submission through the form below will supply our team with the necessary information to promote on your behalf. Often this approach will provide more benefits than owning and managing your own channel.

NU News

This is a section of our NU website that helps showcase the latest news and events at Nipissing. The added benefit of the NU News, is it is prominently displayed on the home page of our website. Additionally, a social post can be used to support and drive awareness to the article once it is published. Use the button below to submit yan NU News article for consideration.

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Creating New Accounts

Channel Protocol

When managed properly, a social media channel can provide a tremendous boost to an event or initiative, however when done incorrectly, can negatively impact the brand's reach as a whole by oversaturating the market under a similar umbrella. Below are some MANDATORY protocols to follow when considering launching a new channel leveraging Nipissing University's brand name. These protocols are in place to ensure we realize benefits to both the new channel and existing accounts. Failure to follow these actions may result in accounts being disabled.

3x Posts/Week

When it comes to social media, understanding what influences the algorithm is crucial. The most critical factor is post frequency (minimum 3/week) and producing quality content every time.

Quality Content

Be sure that content is vetted and thoughtfully considered. This means including a high resolution photo or video as well as a clear and concise caption.

Size/Scale

When designing for social media, remember that over 80% of users are engaging via a mobile device.

Growth Planning

When requesting a new channel for your department, you will be asked for a brief overview of your goals, how you plan to curate a following, and how the new account will attract and engage your intended target audience.

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Social Media
Accessibility

Following these guidelines ensures that your social media content is inclusive, reaching and engaging with a broader audience. Accessibility isn't just a legal obligation—it's a commitment to creating a welcoming environment for everyone.

Use Clear and Simple Language

Write in plain language to ensure that your content is easily understandable by a broad audience, including individuals with cognitive disabilities.

Provide Alt Text for Images, Graphics and any form of graphics

Include descriptive alt text for all images. Describe the content and purpose of the image clearly. Keep It Brief: Aim for concise descriptions, typically under 125 characters.

Ensure Video Accessibility

Always include captions for video content to make it accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Use High Contrast Colors

Ensure there is a high contrast between text and background colors to improve readability for those with visual impairments. A good rule is to have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1. Use the WebAIM Color Contrast Checker to contrast checks.

Make Links Descriptive

Avoid "Click Here": Use descriptive text for hyperlinks, so users know where the link will take them or what action it will perform.

Text in Images

Keep it concise and impactful. Use short phrases or keywords. Most of the content should be in the caption.

Consider Font Size and Type

Use clear, readable fonts. Avoid overly decorative fonts that may be difficult to read.

Educate and Advocate

Include accessibility considerations in your team's regular training. Request a Web - or Social Media Accessibility Training via the Marketing Request Form.

Social Media
Strategic Thinking

Define Clear Objectives

- Why are you on social media? Before posting, ask yourself what you hope to achieve. Objectives could include:
- Increasing awareness
- Driving website traffic
- Generating leads or sales
- Building a community
- Providing Information
- SMART Goals: Set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound goals. For example, instead of saying "I want more followers," set a goal like "Increase Instagram followers by 10% in the next three months."

Know Your Audience

Who are you targeting? Understanding your audience is key to creating relevant content. Define your target demographic in terms of:

- Age, gender, location
- Interests, behaviors, and challenges
- Platforms they use most often *look into Social Media Data

Choose the Right Platforms

Where is your audience active? Instead of trying to be on every social media platform, focus on the ones that align with your audience and goals:

- Facebook: Great for building community and driving traffic. Age 30+
- Instagram: Ideal for visual storytelling and engagement. Age 20-30
- LinkedIn: Focused on B2B and professional networking. Great for Alumni and Donor Networking
- TikTok: Excellent for younger audiences and creative, short-form content.

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Social Media
Strategic Thinking

Create a Content Strategy

What are you going to post? A well-planned content strategy prevents random posting and keeps your message consistent:

- Content Formats: Use a variety of formats to keep your audience engaged, including images, videos, stories, infographics, polls, and blogs.
- Content Calendar: Plan your posts in advance by creating a calendar. This helps ensure consistency, and allows you to align your posts with key events.

Engage, Don't Just Broadcast

How will you engage with your audience? Social media is about building relationships, not just pushing messages. Think through how you'll:

- Respond to comments and messages in a timely, genuine way.
- Ask open-ended questions or use polls to encourage interaction.
- Participate in discussions related to your industry or niche.
- Showcase user-generated content to build a sense of community.

Allocate Resources Wisely

What do you need to succeed? Strategic thinking also means being realistic about the resources required to execute your social media efforts. Consider:

- Time: How much time can your team realistically commit to social media?
- Tools: What tools or software will you need for scheduling, analytics, or design?

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Best Practices

Facebook

Get The Most Out of Your Account

To achieve success on Facebook while remaining brand compliant, please follow the steps below. It is also important to understand how content is shared across this platform and ensuring a plan is in place to manage the following:

- Feed posts (3x per week), should be feature content
- Stories, used more for day to day updates
- Engagement, responses to comments, tags and inbox messages

Profile Picture

It is important your profile picture follows standard best practices for the platform. What will be expected is to have a clear version of the NU logo on white background, with appropriate department title underneath. Ensure image is in square orientation and does not illegibly crop on different devices.

Popular Tags

When it comes to curating your posts, there should be a consistent approach to maximize engagement. You will see an example on the following page. One best practice is tagging existing NU Facebook pages that can also share your content. Please tag the following accounts, where appropriate, in your posts to increase your reach: @NipissingU @NUSUtalks @nipissingu.alum @nipissingulakers

Page Details

Since your new account is unique to your specific department, ensure the page details under the 'about us' information section are as department-specific as possible. It is important to complete these sections as well as to link to appropriate pages of the website where is seems fit. Additionally, ensure the cover photo of the page is properly sized to fit the dimensions outlined. High-quality, department-specific photos would be great to use here!

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Best Practices
Instagram

Get The Most Out of Your Account

To achieve success on Instagram, while remaining brand compliant, it is important to understand how content is shared across this platform and ensure a plan is in place to manage the following:

- Feed posts (3x per week), should be feature content
- Stories, used more for day-to-day updates
- Engagement, responses to comments, tags and inbox messages

Profile Picture

It is important your profile picture follows standard best practices for the platform. What will be expected is to have a clear version of the NU logo on white background, with appropriate department title underneath. Ensure image is in square orientation and does not illegibly crop on different devices.

Page Details

Since your new account is unique to your specific department, ensure the page details under the 'about us' information section are as department-specific as possible. It is important to complete these sections and include a link to your department webpage. One unique feature with Instagram is the 'highlights' section that can be used to properly segment and organize different topics featured on your channel.

Best Practices
X/Twitter

Get The Most Out of Your Account

To achieve success on Twitter, while remaining brand compliant, it is important to understand how content is shared across this platform and ensure a plan is in place to manage the following:

- Feed posts (3x per week), should be feature content
- Tagging institution and partner channels
- Engagement, responses to comments, tags and inbox messages

Profile Picture

It is important your profile picture follows standard best practices for the platform. What will be expected is to have a clear version of the NU logo on white background, with appropriate department title underneath. Ensure image is in square orientation and does not illegibly crop on different devices.

Page Details

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Best Practices
TikTok

Know Your Audience

Understand Trends: Keep up with trending sounds, challenges, and formats.
But always ensure that they align with your brand or message.

Create Engaging Content

- Hook Early: The first few seconds are crucial. Grab attention immediately with an eye-catching visual or a strong opening line.
- Keep It Short & Sweet: While TikTok allows up to 10-minute videos, shorter videos (15-30 seconds) generally perform better.
- Use Music and Sounds: TikTok is driven by audio. Use trending sounds or music that complements your content. You can also create original sounds.

Stay Up-to-Date

- Follow TikTok Creators: Keep an eye on popular creators in your niche to understand what works and to draw inspiration.
- Adapt to Platform Changes: TikTok evolves rapidly. Stay informed about new features, trends, and algorithm updates.
- Experiment and Enjoy: TikTok thrives on creativity. Don't be afraid to try new things, and most importantly, have fun with the process!

Helpful Resources

When setting up your new account and creating content, it is important to follow Nipissing University's brand standards. The link below will direct you to the section of the University's website where you can find all of our brand elements. Please reach out to the Marketing and Communications team anytime for help in locating existing visual assets.

www.nipissingu.ca/departments/external-relations/marketing/our-brand

Having trouble creating visual assets for your channel? Below are a few FREE tools you can explore to generate professional looking content.

Canva

Offering both a free and paid service, Canva is a great tool that allows for speedy graphic design that works perfect;y for social media. Leverage Canva's built-in templates and proper social dimension layouts for easy content creation. Upload your own photos/videos to the plaform to create custom graphics.

Powerpoint

Want to stick with the tools you already know? PowerPoint can be used as a simple way to create social media assets. We suggest setting up a slideshow and resizing the slides to a square orientation (Design > Slide Size). From there, simply add text/images. After creating your slide, save it as a JPEG or PNG. You can now use it on your various channels.

Social Media Teams Group

Join our Microsoft Team Social Media Group to connect about social media across the university. This group provides a venue for social media champions to support one another and share upcoming events and announcements that may benefit from being shared on multiple channels. In the event of a crisis situation, this group will also be crucial to ensuring streamlined consistent messaging across all platforms.

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