

# Should You Establish a Social Media Account?

Social media sites require a large amount of time and attention to create, update, and monitor. Users often expect fresh content and engaging conversation; sites that lack these elements will experience little success.

If you wish to create an official social media account for your department, organization, or club at San Jacinto College, the following strategy and self-evaluation has been developed to assist you before officially registering your account with the External Relations office.

## Step 1: Identify Your Purpose and Goals

What purpose are you trying to achieve with social media? Is your goal to communicate, provide instruction, promote an event, or something else? Determine how a social media tool will fit in with your current communication tool(s). A key to success is ensuring that you have a clear purpose before diving into social media. It is also important to consider how you might measure progress of your goals over a period of time to determine the success of the social media implementation, which is covered more in Step 7.

## Step 2: Listen, Engage, and Explore

Are people already talking about your program or department online? If they are, a great place to begin on social media is to simply join the conversation and offer your valuable expertise as a College employee (be sure to disclose that you are an employee of the College).

In addition, ask your audience what social media tools they use the most - if they aren't using social media, it might not be the best communication tool for you or your group. Do you have a personal social media account? If not, create one and explore a bit to get a feel for how the technology functions.

As you explore social media sites online, keep in mind the following:

- Is the College already present in the social media space?
- Are there opportunities to partner with existing initiatives?
- Are there other avenues of communication already in place which might meet your needs? Often, joint efforts are easier to maintain and can be more influential.

### **Step 3: Learn All You Can**

You don't have to tackle social media alone; we are here to help! Within the External Relations department, the digital media coordinator can offer consultations on choosing appropriate social media tools, best practices on the use of these tools, and technical trainings on how to use and implement the tools. For assistance, reach out to us at [socialmedia@sjcd.edu](mailto:socialmedia@sjcd.edu).

We also provide guidance about the official branding and naming of your social media space on our website. For additional information on creating, maintaining, and branding a social media site, visit [sanjac.edu/social-media](http://sanjac.edu/social-media).

### **Step 4: Choose a Tool**

Now that you have done the legwork, you should decide on which tool will best achieve your goals and help you communicate with your audience. The most effective approach is focusing on and actively engaging on just one or two social media platforms, not trying to maintain accounts on all the platforms.

\*\*\*Please Note: On Facebook, you must create a Page or Group, not a Profile. Pages help ensure a level of anonymity between your personal profiles and your College-related pages. Please contact the digital media coordinator at [socialmedia@sjcd.edu](mailto:socialmedia@sjcd.edu) for information on how to create this type of site.

### **Step 5: Create a Plan and Develop a Workflow**

Now that you have decided which tool you would like to use, it is time to develop a plan for your use of social media. Start by answering the following questions:

- How much time can you commit to your social media space?
- How will you keep the dialogue active?
- What types of information will you post, and how often will you update it?
- How will you handle negative comments?
- Do you have the necessary resources to perform the job properly?
- Will you leave the site up indefinitely, or is it a limited duration project?
- What is your exit strategy?

Create a workflow to manage your social media space. Here are some suggestions to guide your workflow development.

#### **Account Creation and Administrative Roles:**

Identify at least two people within the department to serve as administrators on the social media account – one primary and one backup.

Establish an email address for account creation, but do not use your personal email address to set up a social media site related to the College. Use department, organization, club, etc., specific email addresses (e.g., [socialmedia@sjcd.edu](mailto:socialmedia@sjcd.edu)). To create an email for this purpose, please contact tech support at [techsupport@sjcd.edu](mailto:techsupport@sjcd.edu). These departmental email addresses can be configured so that the social media account administrators all receive the same communications.

### **Administrator Responsibilities:**

Determine which account administrators will be assigned to specific responsibilities. This will take the workload off of one individual and help to ensure the effectiveness of the initiative. A few things to consider:

- Is there one person that is responsible for responding to comments and another for posting content? Or will you rotate on a schedule?
- Who is the backup in the event someone is out of the office or leaves the College?
- How often will you update content, keep your site fresh, respond to comments, etc.? Once your schedule is agreed upon, create an editorial calendar for each administrator to ensure that management of social media becomes a part of your regular, day-to-day activities. The most important part of having a social media site is keeping it updated on a regular basis with information that is relevant to the consumer.

Here's a GREAT article about creating an [editorial calendar](#) for social media content.

## **Step 6: Engage**

Using social media to actively communicate and engage your audience will result in loyalty and the promotion of your events, therefore organically growing your efforts. This is done with constant communication and the introduction of fresh, interesting, and relevant content.

## **Step 7: Monitor and Track Usage**

You may want to measure social media to determine the success of your efforts. It will be up to you to determine the tools necessary to monitor your sites (remember, the digital media coordinator can assist you and recommend monitoring tools). Some things you might want to keep track of are:

- number of fans/followers
- number of comments and likes
- number of times that links shared are clicked

Many social media sites actually include insights and statistics about your accounts. The ability to accurately monitor this information and analyze the results can help you determine future plans regarding your social media efforts.

## **Step 8: Stay Current**

Social media is constantly evolving, so it's important to keep learning! Our favorite educational resource for all aspects of social media is [Sprout Blog](#).

## **Step 9: Adhere to the College's Social Media Policies**

It is important to remember that when you refer to San Jacinto College on social media, you impact our brand and reputation. Although these platforms are "social" media and not "professional" media, it is still very important to use the correct College logos, marks, and approved colors on social media sites relating to the College.

Please do not use the College's logo and marks on your personal social media sites as others can perceive that you are officially representing the College and take your comments as those of an official spokesperson for the College.

To ensure a unified presence online, individual departments that plan to develop a social media presence, or already have a presence, should visit [www.sanjac.edu/logos](http://www.sanjac.edu/logos), or contact the marketing department ([marketing@sjcd.edu](mailto:marketing@sjcd.edu)) for assistance with branding.

San Jacinto College reserves the right to monitor San Jacinto College-affiliated sites and make requests upon faculty, employees, and students, should questionable content be displayed on a site that the College name, logo, seal or any version thereof appear.

For more details about the College's requirements and procedures regarding College-affiliated social media accounts, visit [sanjac.edu/social-media](http://sanjac.edu/social-media).