



CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

2020-2021 Social Media Strategy, Procedures and Best Practices

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Strategy statement

Central Michigan University's official social media channels position CMU as a major university where students will find real-world results through hands-on experience.

Our accounts facilitate personalized engagement and interaction that reflect our supportive and friendly community, while reinforcing academic rigor and leadership.

Audiences visit CMU's social media channels for interesting, informative and relevant content and resources, as well as content that fuels their passion and pride for the university.

The key elements of the brand pillars are continuously communicated through CMU's social media content, reinforcing key messages that resonate with various audiences.

Goals

CMU's official social media channels:

1. Reach, engage and connect with prospective students to support CMU's enrollment goals.
 - o Messaging is amplified through the relationships we create with secondary audiences (current students, alumni, faculty, staff, donors, families and fans) who act as a conduit to prospective students.
2. Create and facilitate an engaging online community for all mentioned audiences.
3. Act as stewards of the CMU brand and protect the reputation of the university in the event of a crisis, misinformation or negative content.

Brand on social media

For all things brand, [visit CMU's brand guidelines website](#). Delve into the specifics regarding how to effectively use visuals and voice to bring the CMU brand into your social media communications.

Brand training

Did we mention brand training workshops? These are the cornerstone for executing the brand effectively. Bonus: Attend a brand graphic training and receive your area's signature mark or lockup to use through social media, on the website and in publications.

Signature marks and spirit marks

Central Michigan University's marks represent us at the highest level. They act as our signature and stamp of quality. They are, and always should be, the most consistent element in our communications.

[Spirit marks](#) are permitted only under specific circumstances and must be approved and created by Media Graphix before implementation. Do not attempt to develop a unique mark or any other mark. Developing your own causes confusion and undermines our visual identity.

Use of university signature marks and lockups must comply with CMU's Trademark Licensing policies and brand standards. Find our brand standards and guidelines on cmich.edu/brand.

Social media profile pictures

Your profile image must be an icon or image that accurately represents your college, department or service unit and is unique to minimize confusion. We recommend that you use the official lockup provided to you by University Communications. You may not use the icon used by the flagship Central Michigan University social media channels. You also may not design your own image/mark/logo.

Voice and tone

[Voice and tone](#) can't be fully conveyed by a list, so sign up for brand voice training and confidently write for CMU's official social media accounts. Keep this list for quick reference later on to verify that your voice and tone meshes seamlessly with the brand:

- Be clear and concise.
- Know your audience.
- Say one thing well.
- Focus on doing.
- Provide a benefit.
- Back it up.
- Give the reader something to do.
- Be confident, not cocky.

Strategy Worksheet Procedures and Best Practices

The *Social Media Strategy Worksheet* is required for all official accounts, as it provides managers and moderators clear goals and benchmarks to guide their social media presence. Your worksheet should be updated and reviewed annually to assess account growth, health and opportunities for improvement.

Glossary

- KPI – key performance indicator. A set of quantifiable measurements used to gauge the university’s overall long-term performance.
- Objective – tangible actions or implementation steps needed to achieve the goal.
- Tactic – action steps required to complete the objective.

Procedures and best practices

- There are two types of goals in the social strategy worksheet: overall goals and SMART goals.
 - **Overall goals** should be created based on the goals of your department, unit or college, as well as CMU’s overall social strategy goals, which you can find on page 2. These goals should be individualized based on what your area is hoping to accomplish on social media.
 - Copying and pasting the overall strategy goals from page 2 of this document into the goal section of your social strategy worksheet is not permitted. These are the general goals of CMU’s social media presence as a whole and should be used only to guide in the creation of your own goals.
 - Copying and pasting goals from the example worksheet included into the goal section of your social strategy worksheet is not permitted.
 - **SMART goals** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) are the goals directly correlated to your work on a specific platform. These should always include a numerical component tied into the analytics.
 - Copying and pasting the overall goals you created into subsequent sections of your strategy worksheet as your SMART goals is not permitted.
 - Copying and pasting goals from the example worksheet included into the goal section of your social strategy worksheet is not permitted.
- The second page is designed to help you determine how your strategy will flex and differ on each platform.
- Include KPIs in your SMART goal, so you can better quantify if the work you are doing is leading to the intended outcome. For example, if the goal is to increase applications, we would want to increase the number of link clicks sending people to the website and utilize UTM’s to determine the number of applications attributed to our posts.
- Use KPIs that indicate action and engagement such as engaged users, engagement rate and link clicks. These will help you better assess performance versus high-level vanity metrics that indicate general brand health and growth.

SAMPLE
Social media strategy worksheet
 Date updated: Sept. 30, 2020

This worksheet is required for all official CMU social media accounts. Please fill out the following sections, and submit the completed form to the University Communications social media team at socialmedia@cmich.edu. This worksheet should be updated anytime there are staff changes and at the beginning of each fiscal year.

Area: What college, department or service unit will this/these social media account(s) represent?

University Communications

Social Media Managers: Social media managers are designated full-time employees responsible for monitoring official CMU social media platforms; creating content; maintaining compliance with laws, regulations and policies; and overseeing others who help with day-to-day social media management. Every official account must have two registered managers and a maximum of four.

List names, titles and email addresses)of the designated social media managers.

<i>Emily Stulz</i>	<i>Assistant Director of Social Media and Communications</i>	stulz1e@cmich.edu
<i>Erick Fredendall</i>	<i>Social Media and Content Manager</i>	frede1ej@cmich.edu

Social Media Moderators: Social media moderators are additional student interns, graduate assistants or full-time employees or staff who assist social media managers in the day-to-day oversight of social media management. Every official account may have up to five social media moderators.

List name(s), title(s) and email addresses of the designated social media moderator(s).

<i>Adam Sparkes</i>	<i>Associate Director of Multimedia</i>	sparkes2a@cmich.edu
<i>Kelsey Whing</i>	<i>Digital Strategist</i>	whing1ka@cmich.edu

Goals: List two or three goals you will accomplish utilizing social media. Things to consider:

- How does the proposed social media presence tie into your overall communications strategy within your department, college or service unit?
- How does this social media presence align with the goals of your college, department or service unit?
- How does this social media presence differ from the website, marketing and other social media efforts within your department, college or service unit and CMU as a whole.

- Reach, engage and connect with prospective students to support CMU's enrollment goals.
- Create and facilitate an engaging online community for all mentioned audiences.
- Entertain and engage audiences, enabling education about CMU's premiere programs and attributes.

Channel: Identify the channel(s) that your college, department or service unit wants to implement. The following options are supported: Facebook, Facebook Groups, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and LinkedIn Groups.

Facebook

Audience: List the primary and secondary audiences you plan to target with your proposed social media account(s). For the primary audience, explain how this/these platform(s) will effectively reach them. Provide evidence and/or examples of institutions effectively reaching this audience through these channels.

Facebook gives us the opportunity to reach everyone because it is the social media platform most ingrained in current culture. According to our Facebook insights, the majority of our fans range between 18 to 34 in age. However, our engagement metrics show that our most engaged audiences tend to fall in the 18-25 and 45-54 age ranges.

Content: List the content topics and types you would share, and how you would target your above audience(s) through this content. Note how this differs from content already being shared within your department, college or service unit and on CMU's official channels.

Major topics we will cover include: Campus updates, Points of Pride about excellent faculty, staff and students, coverage of big events (homecoming, commencement). Types of content we will share include photo galleries, motion graphics, short videos and CMU News stories.

SMART Goals: Set your SMART goals. SMART goals are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-bound. List two or three SMART goals you plan to work toward this fiscal year with the proposed social media account(s).

- 1. 2% engagement rate on 50% of posts.*
- 2. Five link clicks on average per post, sending people back to cmich.edu.*

Objectives and tactics: What are the objectives and tactics you are going to utilize to reach your SMART goals? List two or three objectives for each SMART goal you created and two or three tactics for each objective.

- Goal 1:**
- Objective: Create monthly social media contests to increase engagement.*
 - Tactics: Find swag to give away as prizes, figure out off-social promotion plan, determine content types.*
- Goal 2:**
- Objective: Create bi-weekly social media campaign for the fiscal year.*
 - Tactics: Find student stories, analyze traffic each quarter to tweak strategy.*

Facebook Procedures and Best Practices

Facebook's terms change often. While we do our best to update social media managers and moderators about changes in Facebook's terms, it is your responsibility to follow their rules. [Find the most recent version of the terms online.](#)

Audience

Your audience on Facebook is the most diverse of all social media platforms. Followers will be of any age and any gender, race or ethnicity. Data shows that the most active age group of Facebook users is 25-34 years old.

Posting frequency

A minimum of three posts per week is required, as noted in the official social media policy. Posting regularly ensures that you are regularly appearing in followers' timelines. Lack of posting drives your pages' presence within the algorithm down. Avoid posting multiple times a day to avoid competition between posts within the algorithm.

Community management

Response to all relevant/non-spam direct messages, comments or tags is required within a 24-hour period during the work week.

Optimal image sizes

Images that are not optimized for the web can show up cropped or pixelated, which can make your content look unprofessional.

- Profile photo – 180x180 pixels
- Cover photo – 820x462 pixels
- Photos or graphics – 1200x630 pixels

Official policy to post in Facebook page's "Additional Information" section

We encourage you to share your thoughts and experiences about Central Michigan University with the community, as well as use this page to network with others and ask questions. CMU is not responsible for the comments and wall posts created by visitors to this page. Community-generated content does not reflect the opinion of, or represent, the university. We reserve the right to remove any content that is racist, sexist, abusive, profane, violent, obscene, pornographic, advocates illegal behavior, is libelous, or that incites harmful behavior or threatens a person. Solicitation also may be removed at the discretion of the university. If you have questions or concerns, email socialmedia@cmich.edu.

Best practices

- Avoid text-heavy graphics.
- Keep your text as short as possible. Posts between 40 and 80 characters perform best.
- Utilize your website, and link to it if needed; however, posts without a link will generally reach more people.
- When sharing universitywide updates or information, share the post made by the original source rather than create a competing post.

Facebook Group Procedures and Best Practices

Audience

Your audience will depend on the topic and goal of your group.

Posting frequency

Work with your group administrators, and share posts two to three times a week.

Community management

Response to all relevant/non-spam direct messages, comments or tags is required within a 24-hour period during the work week.

Optimal image sizes

Images that are not optimized for the web can show up cropped or pixelated, which can make your content look unprofessional.

- Cover photo – 1640x922 pixels
- Photos or graphics – 1200x630 pixels

Create official rules for the Facebook Group (example)

1. **You must be a CMU student.** This group is for CMU students who are members of the Class of 2024. This group is not for parents, other classes, individuals promoting products or services, or other unrelated individuals.
2. **Respect community guidelines, and don't spam.** Posts that violate Facebook's community standards for objectionable content will be removed. Solicitations and other forms of spam or irrelevant content will be removed at admin/mod discretion.
3. **Be kind and courteous.** Please respect fellow group members. Refrain from harassment, bullying or trolling. Group members are free to disagree and debate but are expected to treat each other respectfully.
4. **CMU policies and procedures.** The expectations set by CMU's policies and procedures apply in this Facebook Group (such as the Code of Student Rights, FERPA and other institutional policies).
5. **Respect everyone's privacy.** Being part of this group requires mutual trust. Authentic, expressive discussion makes groups great but may also be sensitive and private. What is shared in the group should stay in the group.

Best practices

- Groups are forums that prioritize community content, making them more challenging to regulate than a Facebook Page. Be aware that while there is leeway in how much moderation is acceptable in groups, it is important that you still respect users' right to share their thoughts, concerns and feelings.
- Recruiting relevant faculty or staff to help moderate can significantly improve the quality of your group. These supporting moderators can help by accepting members, approving content, creating content and answering questions that appear.
- Groups thrive on user-generated conversations, so create content that encourages conversations and posting from users.

Twitter Procedures and Best Practices

Twitter's terms change often. While we do our best to update social media managers and moderators about changes in Twitter's terms, it is your responsibility to follow their rules. [Find the most recent version of the terms online.](#)

Audience

Your audience on Twitter is much younger than on Facebook, with the majority of users between 18 and 29 years old.

Posting frequency

A minimum of five posts per week is required, as noted in the official social media policy. Retweets do count as content, as they show engagement on the platform.

Community management

Response to all relevant/non-spam direct messages, comments or tags is required within a 24-hour period during the work week.

Optimal image sizes

Images that are not optimized for the web can show up cropped or pixelated, which can make your content look unprofessional.

- Profile photo – 400x400 pixels
- Cover photo – 1500x500 pixels
- Photos or graphics – 1024x512 pixels

Best practices

- Use only one to three hashtags to avoid cluttering your tweet.
- Schedule content directly before or after the hour to increase engagement.
- Add alternative text when sharing graphics.
- Do not overuse emojis, as they are difficult to render using screen-reading devices.
- Visuals are the best way to engage your audience.
- Keep your text as short as possible. Posts between 71 and 100 characters perform best.

CMU's official hashtags

- #LifeAtCentral (General, campus life)
- #FireUpChips (Campus spirit, athletics, points of pride)
- #ForeverMaroonAndGold (Alumni)
- #cmichGraduation (Commencement)

Instagram Procedures and Best Practices

Instagram's terms change often. While we do our best to update social media managers and moderators about changes in Instagram's terms, it is your responsibility to follow their rules. [Find the most recent version of the terms online.](#)

Audience

Your audience on Instagram is very young, with the majority of users falling between ages 13-35.

Posting frequency

Share two to four posts per week.

Community management

Response to all relevant/non-spam direct messages, comments or tags is required within a 24-hour period during the work week.

Optimal image sizes

Images that are not optimized for the web can show up cropped or pixelated, which can make your content look unprofessional.

- Profile photo – 110x110 pixels
- Square post – 1080x1080 pixels
- Landscape post – 1080x566 pixels
- Portrait post – 1080x1350 pixels

Best practices

- Use only three to five hashtags to avoid cluttering your caption.
- Avoid text-heavy graphics, as most Instagram users engage with content on their phones.
- When sharing graphics, always add alternative text.
- Do not overuse emojis, as they are difficult to render using screen-reading devices.
- Keep text as short as possible. Posts between 138 and 150 characters perform best.

CMU's official hashtags

- #LifeAtCentral (General, campus life)
- #FireUpChips (Campus spirit, athletics, points of pride)
- #ForeverMaroonAndGold (Alumni)
- #cmichGraduation (Commencement)

Instagram Stories Procedures and Best Practices

Instagram's terms change often. While we do our best to update social media managers and moderators about changes in Instagram's terms, it is your responsibility to follow the rules. [Find the most recent version of the terms online.](#)

Audience

Your audience on Instagram is very young, with the majority of users falling between ages 13-35.

Posting frequency

Share two to four cohesive stories per week, with each set of stories including three to five slides.

Community management

Response to all relevant/non-spam direct messages, comments or tags is required within a 24-hour period during the work week.

Optimal image sizes

Images that are not optimized for the web can show up cropped or pixelated, which can make your content look unprofessional.

- Stories – 1080x1920 pixels

Best practices

- Create content that is cohesive and tells a story.
- Focus on finding images that are simple and not super busy.
- Avoid text-heavy graphics, as they can be hard to read in the time allotted.
- If it is relevant, save stories to your “Highlights” section, located at the top of your profile. This will allow new users to see what pieces of information you feel are the most relevant and be able to look at them, regardless of how long ago they posted.
- Review content saved to highlights every three months to ensure it is still current and useful for viewers.
- Share engaging content, such as polls, quizzes or countdown timers.

CMU's official hashtags

- #LifeAtCentral
- #FireUpChips
- #ForeverMaroonAndGold
- #cmichGraduation

LinkedIn Procedures and Best Practices

LinkedIn's terms change often. While we do our best to update social media managers and moderators about changes in LinkedIn's terms, it is your responsibility to follow their rules. [Find the most recent version of the terms online.](#)

Audience

Your audience on LinkedIn is also extremely diverse, with the most active users 26-55 years old.

Posting frequency

Share two to four posts per week.

Community management

Response to all relevant/non-spam direct messages, comments or tags is required within a 24-hour period during the work week.

Optimal image sizes

Images that are not optimized for the web can show up cropped or pixelated, which can make your content look unprofessional.

- CMU wordmark (profile photo) – 300x300 pixels
- Cover photo – 1536x768 pixels
- Post – 1200x1200 pixels

Best practices for pages

- Keep your text as short as possible. Posts between 50 and 100 characters perform best.
- Posts with auto-populating links perform best on LinkedIn.

Community Management Procedures and Best Practices

Community management is an important component to managing a social media platform, as it is how you engage and build relationships with your followers.

Response to all relevant/non-spam direct messages, comments or tags is required within a 24-hour period during the work week. Find additional guidance on procedures and best practices below.

Facebook

- When responding to questions, determine if it is something that must be addressed publicly or communicated through a direct message.
 - General answers, such as sending people to a website, should be done publicly.
 - Sharing contact information for individuals or areas on campus, or requests for additional information, should be communicated through a direct message.
- When appropriate, “like” people’s comments, posts, check-ins, etc. It is the quickest and easiest way to engage with your followers.

Twitter

- Twitter will be the platform on which you receive the most spam direct messages. Be careful when responding to or clicking shared links, as this is the platform where most phishing attempts happen.
- Engage with followers who share content using CMU’s official hashtags. Positive reinforcement will encourage them to continue sharing content in this manner.
- Before retweeting content, ensure the person you are amplifying is a good representative of CMU and is not sharing lewd or vulgar content on their page. When we amplify others’ content, it can be seen as an endorsement of their behavior.

Instagram

- Periodically check the Instagram application on your phone to identify messages that may have ended up in the “Message Request” inbox. Due to Instagram’s privacy settings, messages can be sent into “Message Requests” rather than directly into your inbox.
- Engage with followers who share content using CMU’s official hashtags. Positive reinforcement will encourage them to continue sharing content in this manner.
- When appropriate, “like” people’s comments on your posts, and respond.

Hashtag Strategy

Hashtags were originally created as a way to categorize content and allow social media users to connect with one another in a simple fashion. Adding a hashtag to your post allows your content to be incorporated into a “living folder” that is constantly being updated with other users’ content.

Once a post that includes a hashtag is shared, the hashtag becomes a clickable link. This allows user followers to click it and be taken immediately to the aforementioned living collection of content.

Having living collections easily accessible allows social media users from around the world to interact with one another, explore places they have never visited and share their own life experiences, all from the comfort of their own couch.

Best practices

- Hashtags are most commonly used on Twitter and Instagram. While the feature is available on other platforms, we recommend not using them.
- Spell out hashtags in camelCase (see below) to make them easier to read by users and those using screen-reading devices.
- Avoid overusing hashtags, as they make posts spam-like.
- Double-check the meaning of a hashtag before utilizing it, by looking at the other content being used in conjunction with it. Misusing a hashtag or using one that has a hidden meaning can be extremely detrimental.

Hashtags at CMU

We highly encourage all social media managers to use only CMU’s official hashtags. Using the same set of hashtags consistently allows our CMU online community to easily interact with us and one another.

CMU’s official hashtags

- #LifeAtCentral
- #FireUpChips
- #ForeverMaroonAndGold
- #cmichGraduation

What is camelCase?

CamelCase is the practice of writing phrases with no spaces or punctuation and with the first letter of each word capitalized: #LifeAtCentral. All you need to do to adapt to camelCase is to capitalize the first letter in each word in a hashtag. CamelCase is also imperative for the visually impaired utilizing a screen reader to look at the website. Including that differentiation makes it easier for the software to recognize and read.

Livestreaming Procedures and Best Practices

Livestreaming is a social media tactic to engage in real time with your online community. While it can be an effective tool, it is important to remember that it is most effective when used in conjunction with a larger communications plan.

University Communications does not prohibit departments, colleges or services units from livestreaming. However, we require that departments, colleges or services units evaluate the following before proceeding, due to the risks involved with live interactions:

- Does this make more sense as a piece of static content that users can refer to?
- How long do you plan to go live for?
- Do we have information pre-prepared to share if users are not submitting questions?
- How will you handle a question that you don't have an answer to?
- Who on your team will help monitor the conversations and comments?
- Do you have time to practice one or two times before going live?

Livestreaming best practices

- **Show up early.** Begin 15 minutes before the livestream starts to make sure that your equipment is working.
- **Do not read directly of scripts.** You lose your normal voice inflection, which can make you less personable. A natural delivery is especially important to have when presenting via the web.
- **Be vigilant about your microphone status.** If you are not muted, participants can hear everything. Pay attention to where you are in the presentation, and be ready to turn it on in a timely manner when it is your turn.
- If you are not streaming from your phone, always turn off your phone. If you are streaming from your phone, mute your notifications.
- **Record in a well-lit area.** Natural light (mostly from windows) is recommended. Face windows when you record; do NOT record with a window behind you.
- If you can, **position your camera near or above eye level**; shots angled from below can make people look angry or intimidating.
- It is best to **continue talking through technical difficulties.** Audience members are more inclined to stick with the streaming session if you take on mistakes confidently and continue communicating throughout the unexpected intermission.
- **Double-check your internet connection** at least a day before the official stream. If you find that you are experiencing issues, you may need to consider relocating somewhere with a better connection.
- **Practice, practice, practice.** Presenting in person can have a very different feel than presenting via livestream, so spend some extra time going over your slides.
- **Always introduce yourself when you speak for the first time.** Always greet the host and the audience.
- **Just remember to take a deep breath and have fun!**

Event Promotion Procedures and Best Practices

Promoting an event on social media is a great way to increase awareness about the event and increase attendance. Below are some procedures and best practices for event promotion, in general and by platform.

Before the event

- In all posts, link to the relevant event landing page.
- Use any relevant hashtags on Twitter and Instagram (e.g. #LifeAtCentral).
- If sharing graphics, include alternate text for web accessibility.

Day of the event

- Post reminders on all channels.
- Have answers to commonly asked questions that might appear.

After the event

- Thank attendees, partners, sponsors and/or volunteers.
- Recap with photos/videos from the event.

Facebook

- Create an event to gauge the number of attendees.
 - Include a full, interesting description of the event.
 - Use a cover photo that reflects what the event is about.
 - Monitor the event daily to answer any questions or concerns.

Instagram

- Try using photos instead of event graphics to avoid cluttering the Instagram feed.
- Use Instagram Stories to display information in small, readable chunks. Take your original flyer and segment out information to create a cohesive story.
- Use Instagram Highlights to keep information about the event up for more than 24 hours.