Helpful Tips: Managing Facebook

Twitter allows groups and individuals to stay connected through the exchange of short status messages (140 character limit). Twitter encourages frequent updates, engagement and “retweeting” content and account managers should be able to respond with some immediacy and engage in conversation.

Before creating any social media account, be sure to complete the “Considering Social Media” worksheet to make sure maintaining a social media presence is the right fit for your needs and resources. If it is determined you have both the content and time to maintain a channel, you are required to complete the “Social Media Strategy” document. You should also be sure to check with your school’s communications office for any school specific regulations or branding guidelines. Digital Communications is happy to meet with you to discuss goals and strategy, as well as offer insights and ideas for creating and maintaining the account.

Setting up your account:

- **Image**: When you upload your user image, it will only show as a 48 x 48 pixel avatar when seen via Twitter on the web or a client (such as Hootsuite or TweetDeck), but users can click on the image to see a larger version. Instead of uploading an image that is 48×48, upload a larger version (e.g., 300 x 300 px). Also, be sure it is either an image in the public domain or an image that you own the rights to.
- **Theme**: Twitter provides some default themes and allows a great degree of color customization for profile pages. You can also upload a custom background, but make sure the image is public domain or you have rights to the image prior to using it. The hex code for Brandeis Blue is 003366.
- **Name**: The limit is 20 characters and most accounts should include the university name along with the department, school or organization name (e.g. Brandeis University Department of Philosophy). If you are promoting the identity behind the Twitter account, you may include that in the name (e.g. Justin in Admissions).
- **Username/Twitter Handle**: The limit is 15 characters and it should align with your name if possible (e.g. Brandeis Department of Language and Literature could be “BrandeisLangLit”) while still conveying meaning (e.g. “BrandeisLL” has no obvious meaning). Athletics groups may use “Judges” in place of Brandeis (e.g. “JudgesSoftball”). Even if you are publicizing the identity behind the Twitter account (e.g. Justin in Admissions), you should consider keeping a non-personal name (e.g. @BrandeisAdmissions) in case of staff turnover, change of roles/focus, etc.
- **Bio**: Be sure to include the full name and description of your department or organization in the Bio field.
Who to follow?
You can’t control who follows you (unless you block them, which should only be done in the case of obvious spam accounts), but you can control who you follow.

- You’ll want to follow the main Brandeis University handle and other official Brandeis accounts. We have two lists that include official Brandeis and student group handles. You can follow these lists to see what other people and departments are tweeting. It is good practice to follow other Brandeis handles and occasionally retweet relevant information.
- As you gain followers, it is good practice to “follow back,” in order to build relationships and community. However, as in all aspects of your social media usage, use your judgment. If you are followed by accounts focusing on inappropriate material, you should not follow them back. If spammers follow you, you can block them. If you receive a direct message or a tweet with suspicious content, do not click on the link – spammers often use links to get people to click on sites that include inappropriate or malicious content.
- You can search Twitter users and lists to see others who may tweet about things that are relevant to your office or department or subjects related to your field. You may want to follow similar departments at other universities, leaders in your industry, faculty in your department, etc.
- You can search specific hashtags to find users who are tweeting about topics that are also of interest to your department or group.

Speak the Language

- **Clients:** Many people prefer to use a client like TweetDeck or Hootsuite to manage their Twitter accounts, rather than just using the Twitter website. Clients like these allow you to schedule future tweets, keep lists open, track search terms, be alerted to mentions, etc. Try different clients to see which fit your needs best.
- **Links:** You will often tweet links to blog posts, industry articles, events, Brandeis information and more. Since Twitter is a 140-character format, links can take up a lot of real estate. Twitter and most clients now automatically shorten URLs for you, but you may want to use a link shortening service, such as bit.ly, to conserve space and track links (it will generate a link such as bit.ly/abc123).
- **Hashtags:** Hashtags, #, are used to call out certain words or phrases. Adding a # in front of a word or phrase makes it clickable and will return every tweet that has used that hashtag. Before using a hashtag, search it to make sure it is not already claimed for something that is perhaps not how you intend to categorize your tweet. We often hashtag Brandeis (#Brandeis), but there are many other hashtags on twitter and you may want to include them to contribute to other conversations.
- **Cross-posting:** If you have both a Facebook and Twitter account, simultaneously and automatically sharing on both platforms is not recommended. Twitter and Facebook are
very different platforms with different languages, frequency of posts, and goals for your departments and each should have their own content. Occasionally you may want to post the same information to both places, but the message should be slightly different for each. For instance, you may want to use a hashtag in the tweet, but not on Facebook since hashtags are not used on Facebook.

- **Photos:** Everyone loves photos. You can use twitpic, yfrog, or other services to upload photos from your desktop and most clients and phone apps have built in photo options. Instagram photos can easily be tweeted from the Instagram app.

- **Direct Messages:** Sometimes you may prefer to take a conversation off of the public twitterverse and have a private conversation. For example, if someone is asking very specific questions or has a complaint. You can only send someone a direct message (DM) if that person is following you and you can only receive DMs from people you are following.

Remember, unless you have explicitly protected your account (which is not recommended), all of your updates are public and findable, so, as we like to say: think twice, post once.

**Insider Tips:**

**RT:** Retweeting, or RT, is a primary way of sharing content on Twitter. If you are posting content you would like to be retweeted, be sure to make your tweet short enough to allow for “RT @yourusername” to be prefaced to the beginning. **Use judgment in what you retweet, as you are sharing content on behalf of the university.**

**MT:** MT means “modified tweet.” If you are retweeting someone but you’ve changed some of the content of their tweet, instead of using RT you can use MT to signify the tweet is not exactly the same.

**HT:** HT or H/T means “heard through.” If you are not retweeting something from twitter, but would like to attribute the source where you saw the information, you can mention the handle after HT.

**Via:** If you learned of something via someone else or if an article you are tweeting is from a news source, you can attribute that by using via.

**CC:** Just like emails and memos, cc means “carbon copy.” If you want someone else to see your tweet, you can cc them.

**Periods:** *Beginning a tweet with a handle means that only those who follow both you and that handle will see that tweet.* For this reason, you will often see a dot before a handle’s name if that handle is at the beginning of the tweet. Ex. “.@BrandeisU has the best students in the country.”

Contact [social@brandeis.edu](mailto:social@brandeis.edu) with questions or for more information.

Adapted from Tufts University