

# Digital Leadership in Higher Education

## *Purposeful Social Media in a Connected World*



### Chapter 6: A Values-Based Strategy for Social Media

#### Values Sources

##### APPLICATION EXERCISE 6.1

Review the categories listed in the far-left column of the table. Then, use the middle column to write out as many values as possible for each category. You will refer to them throughout the discernment roadmap. Start with your individual values that you hold no matter the context (work, home, etc.). Next, move on to your institution—what are the values of your current institution or organization? You might start with publicly available documents like the mission statement or strategic plan, but are there other unwritten values—traditions, rewards, and systems that are valued by the organization? You can repeat this same exercise for your division, college, or department.

In the far-right column, write out any similarities or differences between your values and those of your institution/organization. Now repeat the same comparison between your individual values and the values held by the field of higher ed, as well as society as a whole. Finally, reflect on the entire activity by completing the bottom row of the table. Did you find any values that were very or completely misaligned? What natural alignments did you find between the categories? How might these aligned and misaligned values impact how you currently/plan to use social media?

Source	Values	Similarities/Differences
Your Personal Values		
Current Institution's Values		

Source	Values	Similarities/Differences
Higher Ed Values		
Societal Values (City, State, Country)		

# Chapter 6: A Values-Based Strategy for Social Media

## My Community

### APPLICATION EXERCISE 6.2

Who are you specifically here to serve—current and ideal? Based on your current position and/or career objectives, use the table to determine the primary audience and secondary sources that are part of the equation. Who has influence on your work? Try to get very specific: ages, demographics, experiences. The more you know who you are serving the easier it will be to create a values-based digital strategy to connect with them.

### Claim Your Community

Primary Community	Secondary Community	Influential Stakeholders

# Chapter 6: A Values-Based Strategy for Social Media

## Know, Be, Do

### APPLICATION EXERCISE 6.3

An exercise to reflect on engaging and activating your audiences on social media is called Know, Be, Do: *Know* your intended audience; *Be* aware of how they already use a platform(s); and finally, ask yourself, “*Do* you want to engage with your audience on that platform?” Pick a very specific community/group/audience that you serve. For example, let’s say you’re an academic adviser for the college of business and you primarily serve students in an executive MBA program where students are already working full time in the local area. You’ve observed that nearly every student has a LinkedIn profile, as they add their LinkedIn URL to their application materials and dozens of students tend to request to connect with you throughout the year. You decide that yes, you *do* want to connect with these students, so you add your LinkedIn URL to both your campus email signature and your introductory email to new students that welcomes connections on that platform. You’ll be making the same sort of social media engagement decisions for your own position in this warm-up exercise found in the table. Don’t get caught up on the “Do” part of this; a simple “Do” or “Do Not” is a great place to start.

Know	Be	Do

# Chapter 6: A Values-Based Strategy for Social Media

## Community Engagement and Stakeholder Activation

### APPLICATION EXERCISE 6.4

Consider the following questions:

- Who are all the major players in your life: friends, family, children, community organizations, brands, and so on? Where are you already connected with these individuals/groups online?
- What are the different audiences you serve in your current professional role? Which of them do you enjoy and/or find easy to connect with? Which tend to be the most challenging? Which tend to need more direct communication, resources, or support?
- Beyond people/communities to whom you directly provide services, who are the stakeholders impacting your work? Who has vested interest or power over your position or programs?
- Are there certain audiences or demographics that you are not currently comfortable connecting with through social media platforms? Why is this?
- Are you willing to entertain the possibility of connecting with students, colleagues, supervisees, and community members based on a platform and its privacy settings?
- Given the boundary collapse of nonwork circles and work-related populations online, are there certain people or platforms you would not be comfortable meshing with?
- Based upon the population, can you think of types of communication that this audience already tends to respond positively to (or is known to, based upon research/practices shared so far in this text)? Who is most likely to check/open email, watch a video, or be on Facebook, Snapchat, and so on?

Now, use the table on the next page to spell out your target community and stakeholders, matching each with a communication tool, any privacy settings you'd require for this connection, and the related values you spelled out earlier in the chapter.

<p><b>Example</b>  <i>Students, recent alumni, and incoming students</i></p>	<p><i>Individual:  Approachability,  Accessibility, and  Humor  Institutional:  Intentional Student  Engagement</i></p>	<p><i>Instagram</i></p>	<p><i>Public university  branded account</i></p>

# Chapter 6: A Values-Based Strategy for Social Media

## Digital Tools and Strategic Communication

### APPLICATION EXERCISE 6.5

To get started thinking (or rethinking) about digital tools and strategy, answer these reflection questions:

- What digital communication tools are you already active and comfortable on? What is your low-hanging digital fruit for curating presence and community?
  
- For newer (to you) platforms for which you lack knowledge/skill, is there training available to you on your campus, in the community, or on an educational portal like LinkedIn Learning?
  
- Using the audiences and stakeholders we explored in the first pillar, what tool(s) makes the most sense?
  
- What social and human capital do you have on your campus or in your network?

- Based on your current calendar, could you carve out just 10 minutes per day in the early morning, at lunchtime, or in the evening? What about 30 minutes or an hour? What day of the week and on what platforms will you post? Whenever you can commit to it, go to your calendar and add it now.

Revisit the table from Exercise 6.4 to modify or clarify your audience and platforms, based on what you've discovered in this pillar.

<b>Example</b> <i>Students, recent alumni, and incoming students</i>	<i>Individual:  Approachability,  Accessibility, and  Humor  Institutional:  Intentional Student  Engagement</i>	<i>Instagram</i>	<i>Public university  branded account</i>



# Chapter 6: A Values-Based Strategy for Social Media

## Social Media SMARTs

### APPLICATION EXERCISE 6.6

Use the SMART method to come up with two objectives. After you've gone through each part of the discernment framework, update your goal in the table. Want some feedback and/or accountability? Post one of your goals in the Digital Leadership Network.

### Drafting SMART Social Media Goals

Social Media SMARTs	Draft Goal 1:	Draft Goal 2:
Specific		
Measurable		
Assignable		
Realistic		
Time-Related		

Updated Goals	<b>Revised Goal 1:</b>	<b>Revised Goal 2:</b>
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## Chapter 6: A Values-Based Strategy for Social Media

### Real-Time Digital Contribution

#### APPLICATION EXERCISE 6.7

Here are a few questions to consider for your real-time digital contribution:

- If someone were to scroll through any profile you have on a platform, what are the themes, values, and messages you would immediately want them to find?
  
- What are your passions, interests, hobbies? What can't you stop talking about, or what topics come very easily to you?
  
- What parts of you are people drawn to or get positively remarked on (i.e., sense of humor, work ethic, seeing possibilities)?
  
- What type of efforts, energies, and commitment does your work already call you to amplify?

- Are there topics or a tone you strongly feel should not show up in the way you post or interact online? Do these differ based on the platform?
  
- What in the next month is happening within your professional role that you should celebrate, educate, amplify, or debate?

Let's get you warmed up to crafting a plan for what to post for one specific day. Select one day in the future, and come up with ideas for content. In the first column of the table, I've listed times in case what you want to post is time-sensitive. In the second column, sketch out the copy or graphical elements (photo, GIF, link, video, etc.) that you'd want to include for at least one of these ideas.

### One Day of Digital Contributions

Plan	Post
7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.	
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	

Plan	Post
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	
3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	
9:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.	
11:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.	

# Chapter 6: A Values-Based Strategy for Social Media

## Map the Mission

### APPLICATION EXERCISE 6.8

In the table below, use the first column to list your university mission, vision, or any other seminal guiding values it has. For example, Loyola Marymount University’s (2018) mission includes the following intentions:

- The encouragement of learning
- The education of the whole person
- The service of faith and the promotion of justice (paras. 2–4)

In the second column, list your institution’s current practices that are directly mission-vision-values-driven. Finally, use the third column to document specific online opportunities based on your institution’s mission or vision statement for social media. Are there opportunities for you to amplify this mission on social media? Use this exercise to begin to connect the dots between mission/vision, practices, and social media.

## Infusing Mission Into Social Media

Mission/Vision Statement	Current Related Practices	Possible Social Media Integration

# Chapter 6: A Values-Based Strategy for Social Media

## Intended Purpose

### APPLICATION EXERCISE 6.9

Answer these questions to further explore the intended purpose pillar:

- How would you describe your life purpose? What are the major drivers for you working in higher ed?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- If you scrolled through your emails, text messages, and Twitter feed, how do the core values that represent all the parts of your life come out? Are there one or two values that you want to ensure come across more clearly?

- What is one goal, metric, or challenge you are currently taking on at work? How could not only social media but also other technology tools aid in these efforts? Who else is also working through this challenge in higher ed? Where online can you network with these colleagues to share resources and strategies?
  
- To whom are you drawn in your current professional level or higher who is implementing a style and strategy on social media that you admire? What comes across no matter the platform or physical/digital space? What about this presence can you learn from and apply in your leadership practice?
  
- In three years, after implementing a realistic strategy on one social media platform, what would be different in your life? What networks would you attain, what relationships will have grown, what knowledge will you acquire, and what collaborations will have been kicked off?



These pillars guided you through a clear and conscious process that sets you up for strategic and purposeful digital engagement. What did you discover in these pillars that will direct your choices?

# Chapter 6: A Values-Based Strategy for Social Media

## Discernment in Your Digital Leadership Process

### APPLICATION EXERCISE 6.10

Strategizing your purposeful digital leadership presence puts you through a process to discover what tools and tactics are best suited for your community in order to make an impact today and in the future. In order to detect your social media strategy overall, as well as for each platform, use this section to collectively document why and how digital engagement platforms will help you reach your goals. Refer back to the result of previous application exercises and fill them in below, so everything is in one place.

**Community Engagement and Stakeholder Activation.** List your ideal community (audience), campus stakeholders you need to consider, and greater communities you serve.

**Digital Tools and Strategic Communication.** Identify specific platforms and tools that fit these groups. Take this a step further, and spell out when and how you will carry out these goals with strategic communication tactics.

**Real-Time Contribution.** What type of content do you want to share now and in the immediate future? Think about events, topics, and causes.

**Intended Purpose.** Clearly document long-term goals and map this work to your institution's mission/vision. This should all connect back to your life purpose, values, and legacy and help you determine whether social media is worth your time and investment.

# Chapter 6: A Values-Based Strategy for Social Media

## Six Strategy Considerations

### APPLICATION EXERCISE 6.11

The four pillars of discernment for digital leaders fill up three quarters of what completes a values-based, purpose-driven social media strategy. The final step is creating a realistic and flexible plan, as well as implementing social support systems that bring your strategy to life. Collectively, they are purpose (real time and long term), people, platforms, and a plan. All your responses in the discernment pillars should be the rationale and reminders when creating and implementing your plan. In case you have made it this far into the chapter without cracking the code of your purpose, I offer six critical questions in the table to answer when you are creating your plan; reevaluating your strategy; or considering adding a new tool, tactic, or platform to your online presence.

1. What are your goals?	
2. Who is your audience?	
3. How much time and resources can you commit?	
4. How can you produce quality content for your community?	

<p>5. Who else can you collaborate with and/or what resources are available?</p>	
<p>6. What is your “why” for this platform or strategy? Do you really need it to accomplish your goals?</p>	

# Chapter 6: A Values-Based Strategy for Social Media

## Creating a Purposeful Plan

### APPLICATION EXERCISE 6.12

For a future week, plan out in detail a social media plan that connects a platform with people and purpose using Table E6.12.1. For the sake of this exercise, let's plan out three times you will post. At this point, it's okay to make the content ideas general. You will learn how to create engaging and meaningful content in chapter 7.

### One Week Social Media Strategy

Posting Day/Time	Plan: Content Ideas, Topics, Events	People: Community You Want to Connect With	Platform(s): Best Channel for Reaching Your Audience	Purpose: Goals, Values, and Outcomes

## Chapter 6: A Values-Based Strategy for Social Media

### Craft Your Tech Terms and Conditions

#### APPLICATION EXERCISE 6.13

This topic deserves its own book, as your health and wellness are definitely being impacted by digital tools and online interactions. As a digital leader, you need to develop and prioritize your technology terms and conditions. Answer the following questions:

- When will you log off your social media accounts, not answer emails, and so on?
- What support do you need to do this? How will you communicate this to your staff, students, or family?
- What signs do you need to pay attention to when you are logging on too often and/or feel depleted?
- What will be your process when you receive criticism publicly on social media?
- What actions would cause you to report, block, or mute someone?

- What campus resources do you have if you're required to respond in a crisis or mediate conflict on digital platforms?

Then, in the table below, craft the tech terms and conditions to which you will hold yourself. Share them with your family and staff so they can both support you and hold you to them.

### My Technology Terms and Conditions

<p>I will log off during the following times:</p>	<p>I will accomplish this by:</p>	<p>I'll know I need a technology break/boundary when I feel the following:</p>
<p>My process when I receive criticism or conflict on social media will be to:</p>	<p>When harassment occurs, I will:</p> <p>Report:</p> <p>Block:</p> <p>Mute:</p>	<p>I have the following campus resources if needed:</p>

⇒ Now head to our book community, the Digital Leadership Network found at <http://bit.ly/DigitalLeadershipNetwork>, and find the chapter 6 topic, where you can share a few of your reflections and discoveries on any of these exercises.