

# Digital Leadership in Higher Education

## *Purposeful Social Media in a Connected World*



### Chapter 8: Invest in Your Online Amplifier

#### Connect With and Create Digital Communities

##### APPLICATION EXERCISE 8.1

Part of your role as a digital leader is to be active in existing digital communities and build opportunities for others to connect online.

- First, find at least one personal learning network—for example, start following a Twitter hashtag or chat or add yourself to a higher ed–related Facebook or LinkedIn group.
- Second, commit the time to engage with this community, both contributing to conversations with your knowledge and seeking feedback. Furthermore, use these interactions to activate relationships both online and offline.
- Third and finally, as you become more comfortable and active in digital communities, start to look for the gaps. What groups or topics aren't represented? This could be for your students, faculty, staff, or even parents. For example, I created a Facebook group community for current, inspiring campus executives who want to have a genuine approach to digital engagement called "The Connected Exec" (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/connectedexec>). I created it after discovering that this audience didn't have ongoing support or education other than conference sessions about social media at the executive level.

## Chapter 8: Invest in Your Online Amplifier

### Watch, Listen, and Learn

#### APPLICATION EXERCISE 8.2

Open up Twitter or Instagram, and perform at least two searches using a location, hashtag, or keyword. Take notes about your observations:

- Who's posting content? Current students, alumni, or parents?
- Was there a recent event that a lot of community members posted about?

In addition to observations, reflect on the following:

- What have you learned about your community and their use of this platform?
- Are there lessons you could apply to using this tool to better connect with your community members and create relevant and meaningful content?
- Remember that the approach to this exercise is to watch, listen, and learn, not to judge or adjudicate or take immediate action.

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### Statistically Significant Social Media

#### APPLICATION EXERCISE 8.3

In Part One, you worked on a few exercises that had you spell out your presence on a number of platforms, including your privacy settings, ideal audience, and average usage. This exercise builds on that list and tasks you to find and review your data and metrics on these platforms. This can be a very simple list that includes your follower growth or a robust database that tracks content engagement rates and impressions. This table is an example of tracking one platform, Twitter, over time. I would recommend doing this exercise monthly, as Twitter in particular gives you data based on the last 28 days.

#### Twitter Tracking

Platform: Twitter	Total Connections	Impression Rate	Engagement Rate	Profile Visits
Date:				
Date:				
Date:				

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### Offline Evaluation of Digital Engagement

#### APPLICATION EXERCISE 8.4

A vital sign of digital engagement is no longer guessing if your strategies on social media are working by investing in methods to obtain data. Digital leaders need to actively seek out confirmation these tools are aligned to their goals, and one method to accomplish this uses focus groups to gather feedback. In this exercise, bring together 12 ideal online audience members to be part of a focus group. For example, a focus group of your Young Alumni Academy made up of 30 under-40 alumni. Think about your ideal audience(s) as you consider the following questions:

- What questions, activities, or participant demographics need to be included?
- In addition to your online presence, what other feedback, ideas, and insights would you want to learn from this group?
- Who would run this focus group and give you the feedback?
- Without administering this evaluation tool, what results do you already anticipate receiving? For example, do you think students are drawn to your Instagram account? Do they even know you accept connections from your campus community on LinkedIn? Who are the primary readers of your blog?

⇒ Now head to our book community, the Digital Leadership Network found at <http://bit.ly/DigitalLeadershipNetwork>, and find the chapter 8 topic, where you can share a few of your reflections and discoveries on any of these exercises.