Welcome

Thank you for joining us for this College of Continuing Education webinar.

Writing for Social Media

Moderator: Julia Dugan
Information Center Representative
College of Continuing Education
Please submit questions at any time during the webinar. Questions will be addressed as time permits at the end of the webinar.

To submit questions:
• On the upper left-hand portion of screen, click the “Ask a question” button.
• Type your question and click send.
Webinar Recording

A link to a recording of this webinar will be e-mailed to all registrants.

You can expect to receive the webinar link in the next few days at the e-mail you submitted during your registration.
Ben Shank, M.A.

- Has taught writing and written professionally since 1975.
- He has worked as a writer and editor, for newspapers, technical journals, and corporations.
- Ben is the owner of his own writing consulting firm.
- He has an undergraduate degree in communications, graduate training in industrial relations and ethics, and a master’s degree in psychology.
After this session, what you write will have stronger impact.

And you’ll probably have more fun writing.
From this session, you will:

- Set appropriate expectations for yourself and your organization.
- Get the big picture of where social media is headed.
- Pick up all-purpose social media writing tips.
- Learn specific blog, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn writing tips.
- Avoid social media writing SNAGS.
- Gather great resources to keep learning about social media.
- Have time for your specific questions and concerns.
To succeed at social media writing, SEE.
Expectations

To succeed at social media writing, SEE.

Develop a plan for your writing that you can:

• **S**ustain – Be realistic about goals and resources.
• **E**njoy – Cranking out text kills style.
• **E**volve – Build in learning time.
To succeed at social media writing, SEE.

- “Going viral” is not the goal.
- Remember: If you never “go viral,” you have lots of company with thousands of effective writers.
Expectations: Time

Social media writers sometimes wonder how much time others are spending on social media.
Most social media marketers spend 10 hours a week or less.
Ready for the Big Picture?
Social Media Big Picture

✓ User numbers (daily) still strong:

- 500 million tweets
- 4.5 billion Facebook likes
500 million tweets/4.5 billion Facebook likes
Social media = sharing using words and visuals.

Research repeatedly shows that in social media writing, words + images succeed better than just words.
Oreo’s strategic tweet during the Super Bowl blackout went viral.
Demonstration: Effective Use of Text & Visuals

Image

Words

Words
Smart social media = picking the words and visuals that best represent and help your organization.

Tip: Link words and visuals. To maximize SEO, be sure that you use identifying words both in the text on screens near the visual and in the code (alt= naming your image).
Demonstration: Link words and visuals

Use our cloud to brainstorm? The sky’s the limit.
Social Media Big Picture

- User numbers still strong.
- Social media knowledge is growing fast.
- Organizations are in one of three social media use stages:
  - Mulling
  - Dabbling
  - Committing (to long-term strategies using web and digital insights to shape social media efforts.)
- Most big organizations have committed; a few, opted out. Most others are dabbling.
Commit to using these basic tips for social media writing:

1. Think before you write.

Carefully review WWHH:
- Who are the key groups in our audience?
- What are our goals (build awareness, loyalty, sales)?
- What are the key messages we want to convey?
- How will we convey those messages (blog, Facebook, Twitter, and so on)
Commit to using these basic tips for social media writing:

1. Think before you write.
2. Much shorter is much better.
3. Simpler is better.
4. Keep your tone friendly and real.
Demonstration: Tone

Post below sounds both friendly and fake.

From a bank’s Facebook page

Remember that special day you opened your first bank account? After our ATM wished her a happy bank-iversary, a customer reflects on the day 39 years ago.
Effective Writing Tips # 1- 5

Commit to using these basic tips for social media writing:

1. Think before you write.
2. Much shorter is much better.
3. Simpler is better.
4. Keep your tone friendly and real.
5. Focus on your followers’/readers’ words and values.
Common question: Do you still have to follow the English grammar rules that govern U.S. business writing?
Do you still have to follow the English grammar rules that govern U.S. business writing?

Yes, sort of.
Question: Do you still have to follow the English grammar rules that govern U.S. business writing?

Answer/Tip #6: Follow English grammar rules.

Break the rules only when your readers won’t notice that you have broken the rules.
Here’s what “Weird Al” Yankovic has to say about Tip # 6.
If you follow these first six tips, everything you write will be more likely to succeed.
Boil down excellence in social media writing to a single word?
Effective Writing Tips
Effective Writing Tip # 7

What you write should

(Pop = instant comprehension)
Effective Writing Tip # 8

Put active verbs in key positions on screens to make them.
Demonstration of Writing Tip # 8: Put active verbs in key spots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Learn</strong></th>
<th>Avoid IAGS (I’m a genius syndrome)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simplify</strong></td>
<td>Use “use” and not “utilize”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cut</strong></td>
<td>Never use five words when one will do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respect</strong></td>
<td>Keep your tone friendly, real, never condescending, fake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Always write keeping in mind: what are your goals and who are your readers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effective Writing Tip # 9

Edit and collaborate to hone down to what’s essential.
Edit and collaborate to hone down to what’s essential.
You should work alone and together to cut out what does not pop.

No • POP! • ? • POOF!
Effective Writing Tip # 9

Edit and collaborate to hone down to what’s essential.

This editing tip # 9 is in step with writer Elmore Leonard who said, “I try to leave out what readers will skip.”
1. Set realistic blogging goals – and stick to them.

2. *Blog,* don’t *flog* with wordy filler. *Shorter is better.*

3. Aim for blogs of 400 – 1000 words, depending on your audience.

4. First sentence must hook/fascinate; don’t warm up slowly to what you want to say.

5. Ask questions and provide links.

6. Use subheadings so readers can glance over what’s ahead.

7. Final section of blog should touch on topic of your next blog, when possible.
Facebook Tips

1. Avoid fluff: Link meaningful words with relevant images. It’s Facebook, not Fluffbook.

2. Try to distinguish your tone from your competitors.

3. Remember: Calm enthusiasm works best. Avoid sounding overly peppy or pedantic.

4. Vary your posts: some should be for your universal audience; others (preferably shorter) for targeted audiences.

5. Don’t dismiss teens and the millennial generation even though many have left Facebook. Many more remain.
Facebook Tips: Demographics

![Facebook users by age group, percent of total](image-url)

- 2011
- 2014

Quartz | qz.com

Data: iStrategyLabs
I can understand your frustration, Steve. I have had a tablet fail shortly after purchase and had it sent out for repair under manufacturer's warranty. It's never ideal when products fail, in this case your Amazon product, and we don't like for our customer's to experience this.

With all that being said, I would expect us to be transparent with the terms and conditions of Total Peace of Mind protection and you signed the keypad at the time of purchase agreeing to them. Additionally, you would have been handed a pamphlet detailing this information.

I respect your choices as a consumer and I sincerely apologize that we have not found an outcome that could be more positive for you.
Twitter Tips

1. Think ahead about likely tweets at events.
2. Be spontaneous. But be sure to: create, pause, then post.
3. Tweet on what’s unusual, not what’s obvious.
4. Tweet not on what’s in headlines, but what’s before, after, or under the headlines.
5. Tweet on what’s happening your followers care about.
6. Retweeting is as valuable as tweeting.
7. Don’t overuse hashtags.
8. **Beware that humor and sarcasm often backfire or are misunderstood.**
9. Tweet sometimes under 100 characters for variety.
**Twitter Tweets: Good and Bad**

**Dunkin' Donuts @DunkinDonuts**
Squeeze fruit into your Hump Day with our flavored Iced Teas! Choose from peach, raspberry or blueberry.

**Valpak @ Valpakcoupons**
Getting in shape for Summer or a Wedding? Then get some cute workout gear, we've got #coupons for @SportsAuthority http://bit.ly/1srsLTr

(From Designer Kenneth Cole on 2/3/11)

**Tweet:** Millions are in uproar in #Cairo. Rumor has it they heard our new spring collection is in now available online.
LinkedIn Tips

1. Keep in mind that the LinkedIn audience is primarily professionals.

2. Topics: Anything to do with careers and getting ahead in the world.
   - Tone: More serious, “buttoned-down”
   - Humor: Less appropriate here
   - Proofreading: Whatever you post here rates your top proofreading efforts.

3. Write and regularly hone your profile/summary.

4. Use links, questions, and subheadings in longer posts/articles, just as you do in blogs.
Avoid social media writing **SNAGS**.

**S**ell before you connect.

**N**ail down wrong or incomplete audience.

**A**ct out pure genius syndrome.

**G**et more than you give.

**S**ound snarky or bouncy instead of friendly.
SOCIAL MEDIA BOOKS

A Social Strategy: How We Profit from Social Media by Mikolaj Jan Piskorski (Princeton University Press, 2014)

Likeable Social Media: How to Delight Your Customers, Create an Irresistible Brand, and Be Generally Amazing on Facebook (And Other Social Networks) by Dave Kerpen (McGraw-Hill, 2011)


The Big Book of Social Media: Case Studies, Stories, Perspectives by Robert Fine (Yorkshire Publishing, 2010)

**Resources**

**ONLINE READING ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

**SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES**

*Usage, Impact, and Strategy*

- [http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com](http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com)
- [http://www2.uncp.edu/home/acurtis/NewMedia/SocialMedia/SocialMediaHistory.html](http://www2.uncp.edu/home/acurtis/NewMedia/SocialMedia/SocialMediaHistory.html)
- [http://www.slideshare.net/BrandNetworks/the2014-socialmediamarketingguide-short-30905928](http://www.slideshare.net/BrandNetworks/the2014-socialmediamarketingguide-short-30905928)
A. Socialmediaexaminer.com
   Excellent, slightly pushy social media practitioner and educational resource

B. @TEDTalks
   Ted’s Twitter account has more than two million followers.

C. @PizzaHut
   Funny

D. @Starbucks
   Interactions/Promotions

E. @Oreo
   Famous for Twitter during blackout at 2013 Super Bowl that went viral.

F. @popchips
   Fun, clever

G. @JetBlue
   Customer service

H. T-Mobile USA
   Customer service
Additional Writing Tips For Social Media
(BLOG, FACEBOOK, TWITTER, AND LINKEDIN)

- Think before you write. Then before you post, cool off and edit.
- Be relentlessly curious about what interests your readers/audience. And care enough to feed them.
- Shorter is better:
  - Write clearly and concisely about what you know well.
  - Fluff, sales yapping, and unclear rambling are the top faults in social media writing.
- Keep your voice/tone real, humane, and respectful; humility trumps arrogance.
- Write mostly on positive topics.
  - Too much negativity: disapproval and anger push readers away.
- Keep your writing “verb rich.”
  - More verbs, fewer nouns and adjectives.
- Blog in the morning; tweet after 4 p.m.
- In Facebook, ask them to like; in Twitter, ask them to “please retweet.”
- In Facebook, use of “I” is fine; in Twitter, use of “I” is less fine.
- Gathering and sharing new, interesting content is at least as important as whatever original content you write.
Wrap-Up & Questions

We’ve covered a lot including:

• Expectations
• Social media big picture
• Writing tips such as:
  1. Think before you write.
  2. Much shorter is much better.
  3. Simpler is better.
  4. Keep your tone friendly and real.
  5. Focus on your followers’/readers’ words and values.
  6. Follow English grammar rules.
  7. What you write should POP!
  8. Put active verbs in key spots.
  9. Edit and collaborate to ensure consistent quality.

What social media writing questions do you have?
Look for an e-mail with a link to this presentation in the next few days.

Upcoming Business Writing course dates:

- **Business Grammar Update** – August 22, 2014
- **Advanced Editing and Proofreading Strategies** – September 19, 2014
- **Technical Writing** – October 3, 2014
- **Writing for the Web and Social Media** – December 3, 2014

For more information
www.cce.umn.edu/bwc
612-624-4000