# Social Media Strategy Overview and Planning Guide

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*This overview and planning guide has been adapted from the Graduate Social Media Council Planning Guide and the Social Media Strategy – Undergraduate School.*
Social Media Strategy Overview

The tools available to Babson within social media – from blogs to social networks and beyond – represent new ways to support the achievement of the following key goals:

- Enhance the College’s reputation (brand awareness)
- Build community among Babson stakeholders (community-building)
- Achieve incoming and outgoing recruitment goals in major lines of business (business goals)
- Enhance stakeholders’ ability to achieve their goals (stakeholder goals)

Our activities, experiments and resources are focused on the achievements of these goals. There is enough data from Babson experiments, from peer institutions, and from research and other enterprises to understand some baseline concepts.

- We must, as an institution, be present and listening to understand how our brand is perceived and be a part of any specific conversations about the College
- We must be able to represent Babson authentically, in appropriate different voices

Guiding Principles and Best Practices

- Be authentic
- Be present, listen and participate
- Support institutional and departmental objectives; stay on message as appropriate
- Create goals, analyze and define success
- Be sustainable and flexible – take into consideration resources (time, people, money)

Goals and Objectives

- Enhance Babson reputation and brand awareness
- Build community and engagement among Babson’s stakeholders
- Promote Babson.edu and related websites
- Improve enrollment, retention, recruitment and alumni relations
- Improve communications and feedback systems
- Enhance stakeholders’ ability to achieve their goals
Audiences

- Prospective students
- Current students
- Alumni
- Faculty and staff
- Executive Education community
- Businesses, organizations, and partners

Applications

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- Flickr
- Blogs
- Pinterest
- Google+
- Instagram

Roles and Responsibilities

- Administrators post with consistent voice, adhere to internal policy.
- Content contributors post with unique voice, adhere to public policy.
- Administrators vs. content contributors.
Administrators have access to create events, photo albums, modify tabs, delete.

Content contributors have access to post on the Wall (comments and photos) and add to the discussion board only.

**General Guidelines**

- Be credible, respectful, helpful, relevant, and interesting.
- Update often. Write posts and responses regularly.
  - Promptly respond to comments and questions.
- Engage users. Allow comments on public content. Encourage contributions. Offer polls, discussions, contests.
- Be consistent. Maintain consistent brand identity, tone and format of messages, and responses.
- Measure performance and improve strategy.
  - Monitor analytics data. Track links with bit.ly.
  - Review quality of engagement (comments, posts, photo/video contributions).
  - Research and monitor trends.

**Content and Topics**

- Appropriate content and topics
- Role: administrator
  - News and announcements
  - Public events
  - Photo galleries and video
  - Polls and discussion topics
- Role: content contributor
  - Wall posts: personal stories, comments, questions
• Group discussions
• Photos, links to news and events

• Inappropriate content and topics
  o Proprietary information (never plagiarize).
  o Confidential information, including personal emails, letters, and copyrighted content.
  o Material that is harassing, obscene, defamatory, libelous, threatening, hateful, or embarrassing to any person or entity. Do not post words, jokes, or comments based on an individual’s gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, or religion.*
  o If you are uncertain about whether it’s okay to post something, check with Digital Marketing Director.
  o Use of the Babson brand to promote or endorse a product, service or cause, without the consent of Marketing.

Responding to Inquiries and Criticism

• Only admins should respond to criticism and public policy violations. Anyone can respond to comments and general inquiries.

• Designate appropriate contacts for related inquiries. For questions regarding appropriate response to comments with negative sentiment, please contact the Digital Marketing Director.

• Do not delete user comments unless there is a clear violation of our public social media policy. Direct users to public policy, as needed. (in draft with legal counsel)

• Do not engage in controversial or heated arguments. This activity is often unconstructive and threatens participation by others.

• Reply to all user comments, but do not respond to questions you can’t answer correctly. Direct users to appropriate contacts.
Writing Guidelines

• Proofread all posts for spelling and grammar.

• Be concise. Try to limit wall posts, event descriptions, and other detailed copy to one paragraph equal to three short sentences. For additional information, try linking to additional sources.

• Use relevant titles for wall posts, events, photo albums, and links. Ask yourself, does the title adequately define the related content? What would a typical user search for to find this information?

• Grammar and punctuation should follow AP style guidelines, when possible.

• Promptly and visibly correct mistakes, including misinformation. This is important to maintain credibility and respect in the online community.

• Cite and link to all sources. Protect confidentiality and propriety information.
  o Acquire all necessary release forms before posting photos or videos of anyone (policy details pending).
  o Ask permission from faculty before publishing class content, including lesson plans and video presentations.

• Identify yourself when posting personal details. Make it clear your opinions are your own.

• Before you post a comment or voice an opinion, consider your audiences and their potential reactions, including prospective and current students, parents, faculty, administrators, alumni, outside vendors and partners.

• Use Twitter editorial conventions.
  o Posting
    ▪ Although tweets are limited to 140 characters, it’s important that tweets are clear and understandable. If you can’t meet this requirement, don’t post the tweet.
    ▪ Use proper spelling and punctuation. Do not use acronyms or abbreviations that are not widely accepted.
    ▪ Use proper grammar, when possible.
  o Replying
When addressing or replying to another Twitter user, place their username first, such as “@starbucks My coffee is cold”. (Note: only users who jointly follow the addressee will see the tweet in their twitter feed.)

When addressing or replying to another Twitter user that you want all followers to see, place a period before the username, such as “.@starbucks My coffee is cold.”

- Retweeting

- When retweeting, place “RT” in front of the username, such as “RT @BabsonMBA Evening classes are cancelled due to adverse weather.” (This formatting convention is also referred to as “quoting”.)

- When possible, add value to a retweet by placing a comment before the RT, such as “Be careful, the streets are slippery. RT @BabsonMBA Evening classes are cancelled due to adverse weather.”

- Do not use Twitter’s Fall 2009 retweet function because it is not properly supported in all Twitter clients.

- Linking

- Use the Bit.ly account (http://www.bit.ly/) to shorten all links, including web pages, images and video. This service is used to reduce the length of links as well as generate analytic data.

- All links and hashtags should be preceded by a colon and placed at the end of a tweet, such as “View current student group events: http://bit.ly/123xyz #BabsonEvents” (note: if you include a link and a hashtag in the same tweet, place the hashtag last).

- If the link directly opens a video or PDF, indicate that in brackets after the link, such as “Babson is in the news: http://bit.ly/123xyz [video].”
Publishing Schedules

- Respond to comments daily.
- Updates should be made regularly and consistently to social media sites. The following are recommended publishing schedules, based on application type.
  - Facebook: 3-5 times a week.
  - Twitter: 1-4 times a day.
  - LinkedIn: 1-2 times a week.
  - YouTube: 2-4 times a month

Public Social Media Policy

The creation of a formal school-wide policy is underway, but current policy guidelines that should be adhered to include:

- Babson Computer Code of Ethics**
- Do not publish harassing content.
- Respect the rights and property of others.
- Do not forge or misrepresent anyone’s identity.
- Do not distribute re-distribution, attempt downloading, or download copyrighted materials without the permission of the copyright owner.
- Do not display vulgar language or other offensive content.


** http://www3.babson.edu/Offices/ITSD/about/Computer-Code-of-Ethics.cfm