Los Angeles Harbor College
Life Skills Center

Tips on Social Media Etiquette

Things to consider when demonstrating effective etiquette:
- **Say "hello," and don't forget "goodbye," either**. You wouldn't come to a logical conclusion in a face-to-face conversation and just walk away would you? The same rules apply online also
- **Be clear with people** throughout. Social media is a transparent mechanism; people will soon know whether you are a trustworthy/knowledgeable source. Clarity is especially important within a limited message field i.e. twitter; things can often be misunderstood/misinterpreted
- **Be honest**. If you make claims akin to a second-hand car salesman or a rogue estate agent, people will soon switch off. It will certainly warn off followers quickly and the damage to your image will be clear for all to see
- **Be careful what you say** – think before you speak. An example which highlights the importance of using your brain before you publish online follows, these are extreme examples and I hope they don't apply to any of you. Say for instance if you made false statements about friends or discriminated against anyone, why wouldn't you expect consequences? People make rash decisions saying things online which they believe do not impact them. Truth is, if you do anything that comes across as deceptive you could face legal consequences as if you had done those things offline
- **Sharing is caring.** If someone shares your content, thank them. If it's possible, engage them in a conversation about the topic – enhancing your reputation as a specialist
- **Reach out.** The worst thing you can do is get stuck in a 'social bubble.' Engage with those outside your network – tell them about you and make it punchy. A great exercise for this is the renowned 15-30 second elevator pitch. Also those who are still following you, but you haven't engaged with recently should be paid some attention from time to time. It will make both audiences feel valued and thus, more engaged with you

Some quick tips for LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter:
- **Only attempt to connect with people you actually know**. LinkedIn is self-policing; those who try to connect with loads of contacts that they themselves don't know get a poor reputation within the LinkedIn community
- **Personalize invites.** LinkedIn sends a standard template when you request to connect. If you personalize it with, for instance, one fact about your relationship/relevant background to them, the more likely they are to recognize the value of the proposed relationship and connect with you
- **Don't buy a paid-for account unless it's absolutely necessary**. LinkedIn initially started as an interactive job board, the premium version is not essential for most. For the most part, the primary functionality is available in the free version anyway
- **Listening first** – again. If you listen and even get polling online, it can help you determine the content which is of most interest to your audience before you speak
- **Keep private things private.** As Facebook is very much in the public domain (yet it's often perceived as private at the same time), there are numerous examples of how private (often extremely personal) information has ended up in the public domain. It has been widely reported over the last 12 months about how common it is that potential employers are finding out how people behave on Facebook before proceeding with an interview or,

even more crucially, a job offer. If you say the wrong things, it could damage your professional reputation

- **<u>Separate business and pleasure.</u>** One of the most important things on Facebook is to separate business and personal content.
- **<u>Status updates encourage conversation.</u> <u>Tag pictures.</u>**
- **<u>Vary your content.</u>** Providing different types of multimedia has been proven to engage audiences more effectively. So even if you haven't produced videos yourself consider adding some relevant YouTube or StumbleUpon content, too
- **<u>Sharing is caring</u>** – once again
- **<u>Keep it personal.</u>** Social media savvy people aren't stupid; if you use an automated program it removes the personal aspect completely.
- **<u>Thank people.</u>** When you get new followers, thank them and use their name in the direct message thanking them – adding the personal touch once again
- **<u>Never be aggressive.</u>** If you have a problem with an individual or organization, keep it neutral as you never know how any potential customer might interpret the message in the future
- **<u>Don't re-tweet unless you've read it yourself</u>** beforehand. Headlines can be deceptive. Unless you've read it, how can you put your stamp of approval on it?
- **<u>Only provide the finest content</u>**

Please come see us at the Life Skills Center for individual coaching in social media etiquette and attend our regularly offered workshops. We have much more to teach you about social media etiquette.