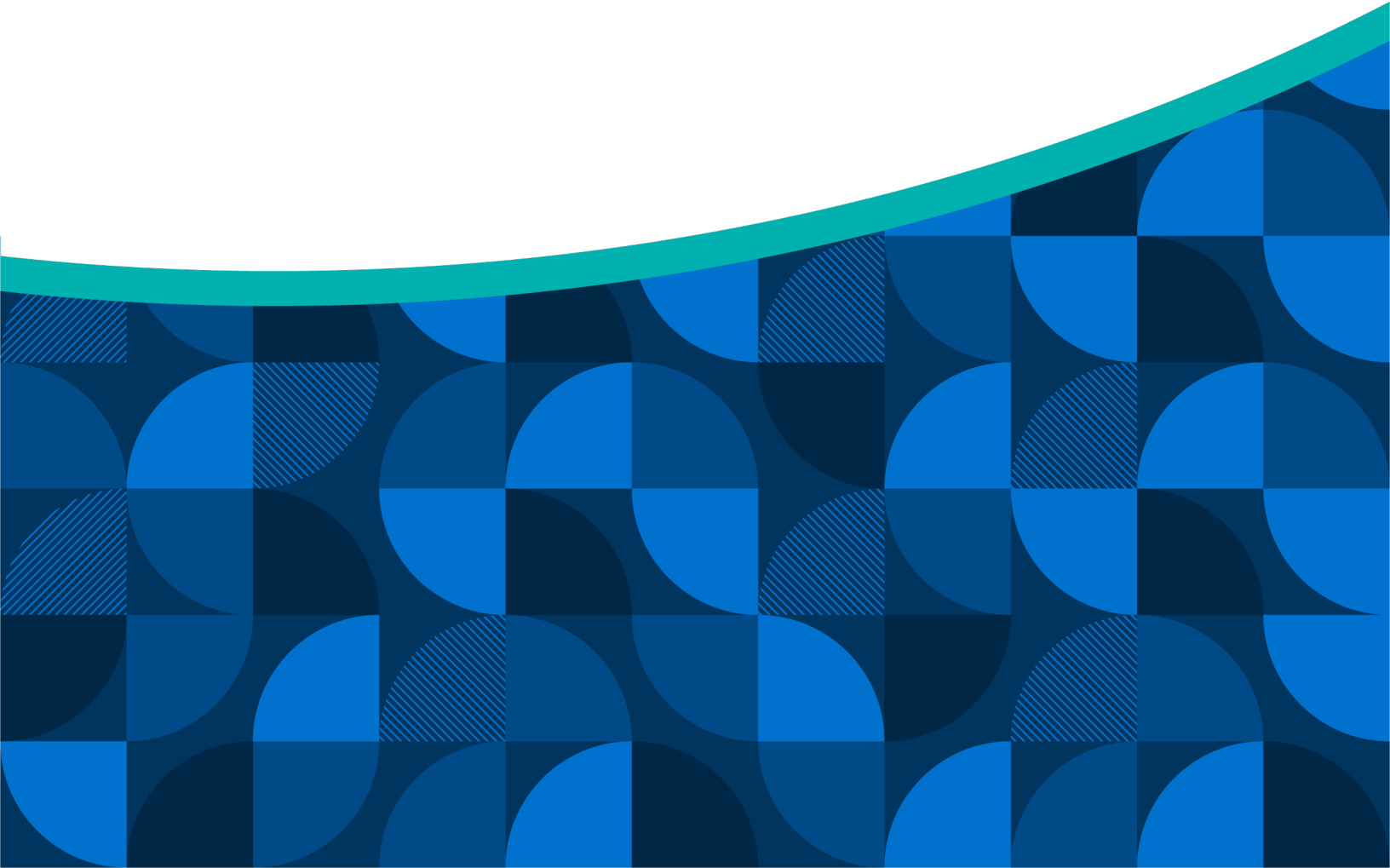




PROFESSIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION ADVISORY SERVICES

Social Media Toolkit



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How to Use This Toolkit

As stealth shopping continues to dominate the prospective student search for professional, continuing, and online (PCO) education programs, institutions must continue to build out their social media presence. Social media posts can serve to grow brand awareness, engage directly with prospective and current students, and promote the benefits of a particular program.

To support institutions in these efforts, this toolkit offers twelve tools that provide detailed, step-by-step instructions to expand organic social media capabilities. The tools are divided into three sections: **strategy, content, and impact and ROI**. The table below outlines each tool and what it helps the user do. The primary audience is the PCO marketing manager and any marketing staff assigned social media responsibilities.

This toolkit also includes two resources to support utilization. First, the **Glossary of Common Post Types** taxonomizes the intent of different posts and provides examples. Second, the **Social Media Self-Review Checklist** helps users assess current strengths and opportunities and diagnose where to start.

Outline of Social Media Toolkit

Tool	Description
Glossary of Common Post Types	Taxonomizes the intent of different posts and provides examples of common types of social media posts.
Social Media Self-Review Checklist	Helps users assess current strengths and opportunities and diagnose where to start.
Social Media Strategy	
Tool 1: Social Media Strategic Vision Worksheet	Guides institutions through the process of creating an overarching strategic plan for social media.
Tool 2: Social Media Platform Primer	Describes the most popular platforms used by prospects.
Tool 3: Social Media Pilot Program Guide	Aids institutions in testing previously unused platforms to determine if they are a good fit.
Tool 4: Sample Content Calendar and Post Plan	Supports marketing staff in building a schedule to plan out a cadence of posts across a given timeframe.
Tool 5: Guide to Social Media Deadline Campaigns	Outlines how to manage a social media campaign centered on highlighting a pending enrollment deadline.
Tool 6: Guide to Gathering and Using Student Feedback	Guides teams through the process of collecting student feedback about their institutions' social media presence.
Social Media Content	
Tool 7: Build Your Own Content Sign-Off Checklist	Equips institutions with the tools to ensure that their posts meet high standards before going live.
Tool 8: Student Story Collection Form	Provides a form for institutions to collect student stories to share on social media.
Social Media Impact and ROI	
Tool 9: Social Media KPI Builder	Lists the most important key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure on social media.
Tool 10: Tying Social Media Metrics to Dollars	Explains how to demonstrate the impact of social media success on enrollment revenue.
Tool 11: Internal ROI Newsletter Template	Guides marketing teams through the process of communicating social media success in a newsletter.
Tool 12: Guide to Social Listening	Demonstrates how to assess a PCO unit's brand perception on social media.

Post Content That Resonates with Prospective Students

Goal

Use this glossary to learn about the social media posts that perform best with prospective students.

Intended User(s)

- Social media manager
- Social media staff
- Marketing manager
- Marketing staff

Overview

This list of successful post types is designed to help PCO marketing teams understand the kinds of posts that appeal to today's stealth shoppers.

The glossary lists four types of posts: thought leadership posts, student user-generated content, student testimonials, and user-generated content. It also provides explanations for why each content type is successful and includes example posts for reference.

Glossary of Common Post Types

Institutions with successful social media presence often share posts that fall into one of the four buckets below. These common post types will be referenced throughout the toolkit.

Type and Description	Why these posts are successful	Examples
<p>Thought Leadership</p> <p>These posts display faculty expertise, either through reposting articles or interviews with faculty or collaborating with faculty to create a post about their research.</p>	<p>Consumers indicate appreciation for marketing content that is educational. Additionally, students rate faculty expertise as one of their top considerations when selecting programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middlebury Institute of International Affairs at Monterrey – this article was posted on Facebook and profiles the work of faculty • University of Florida – this reel shows how a geoscience faculty member is reimagining her courses • Johns Hopkins School of Public Health – this account shares helpful information about public health
<p>Student User-Generated Content</p> <p>These posts center the student voice and allow students to share about their daily life. Common types of user-generated content include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day-in-the-life videos, where students show the details of a typical day. • Student takeovers, where students have access to the Instagram for a particular event or time-frame to share their experience during their internships, jobs, classes, etc. • Two-way engagement posts, where institutions make posts that encourage users to respond with their own content. Institutions then typically re-post student responses. 	<p>Prospective students (and all types of consumers) trust their peers more than they trust institutions. These posts also allow prospects to understand what life will actually be like as a student; they help prospects see themselves at an institution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toronto Metropolitan University – this post shows what a student does during their typical day • Southern New Hampshire – this story post demonstrates that SNHU students study from everywhere
<p>Student Testimonial</p> <p>These posts share the details of a student’s journey from prospect to graduate.</p>	<p>Student stories are an important part of outcomes marketing. They allow prospects to hear from students with experiences like their own and they provide tangible proof of a program’s impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSU E-Campus – this post shows that OSU enhances students career trajectories
<p>Meme-able Content</p> <p>These posts show that an institution has a sense of humor. They generally apply internet trends to the institution, demonstrating that the institution is aware of the current cultural moment.</p>	<p>Gen Z appreciates absurdist, self-deprecating humor that is inclusive and avoids poking fun at others. Many PCO prospective students fear that college is not for them, and relatable humor can demonstrate that they have more in common with the institution and its students than they originally anticipated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duolingo – Duolingo’s owl has been a marketing phenomenon on social media • Grand Valley State University – was inspired by Duolingo to use their mascot

1) Note: Example links subject to change.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Social Media Self-Review Checklist

Assess Your PCO Organic Social Media Practices

The goal of this self-review is to help PCO units identify where their current social media strategy aligns with best practice and where it has room for growth.

Instructions

Each prompt in the review corresponds to a practice that units should consider. Select "yes" or "no" after each prompt to indicate if your unit has achieved the listed practice. Users should jump to the relevant tool when the answer is "no."

Assessment Questions	Yes	No	Relevant Tool
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

This checklist contains the following three sections that correspond to sections in the overall social media toolkit:

- Social Media Strategy
- Social Media Content
- Social Media Impact and ROI

Social Media Self-Review Checklist

Assessment Questions	Yes	No	Relevant Tool
Social Media Strategy			
1. Has your unit created a dedicated social media plan that outlines your strategy to achieve key goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Media Strategic Vision Worksheet
2. Has your unit analyzed the landscape of social media platforms to develop a strategy for those best suited to your goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Media Platform Primer
3. Does your unit test out previously unused social media platforms to gather information about impact and efficacy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Media Pilot Program Guide
4. Does your unit plan out your content schedule in advance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sample Content Calendar and Post Plan
5. Does your unit have a system to develop a campaign that assuages typical prospect fears?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Guide to Social Media Deadline Campaigns
6. Does your unit gather student input (e.g., deploys surveys or focus groups) to inform your social media strategy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Guide to Gathering and Using Student Feedback
Social Media Content			
7. Does your unit share content that upholds the standards and values of your institution and unit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Build-Your-Own Content Sign Off Checklist
8. Does your unit have a structured plan for collecting student stories and other forms of user-generated content via a submission center?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student Story Collection Form
Social Media Impact and ROI			
9. Does your unit keep a list of key performance indicators (KPIs) for different platforms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Media KPI Builder
10. Does your unit connect ROI to estimated monetary value of acquired students when possible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tying Social Media Metrics to Dollars
11. Does your unit regularly share social media impact and ROI metrics with internal stakeholders?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Internal ROI Newsletter
12. Does your unit monitor how your brand is perceived on social media?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Guide to Social Listening



Social Media Strategy

SECTION

1

Tool 1

Social Media Strategic Vision Worksheet

Goal

Use this tool to create an actionable strategic vision and plan for your organic social media presence.

Intended User(s)

- Social media manager
- Social media staff
- Marketing manager
- Marketing staff

Overview

This tool is designed to help PCO marketing teams create a long-term, adaptable social media strategy. This is important because social media trends evolve rapidly, and it is critical for units to maintain a strategy while adjusting to shifting online trends.

This tool is divided into three sections: social media strategy, social media content, and social media impact and ROI. Each section contains prompts to help marketing teams articulate goals and plan next steps.

Tool 1: Social Media Strategic Vision Worksheet



Organic Social Media Strategy

This section focuses on your overall goals for social media and the importance of maintaining a nimble strategy.

List your team's top three social media goals. Then, select the social media platform(s) that align with each goal. We provide a few examples below. See [Tool 2: Social Media Platform Primer](#) for more information on the ideal platforms for different goals.

Social Media Goal	Platform(s) That Align with This Goal
Example: Foster brand awareness	Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter
Example: Engage with prospects and current students	Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Twitter
Example: Communicate student outcomes	Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn

Tool 1: Social Media Strategic Vision Worksheet



Organic Social Media Strategy

Create an action plan for getting on the platforms that align with your goals. We have included an example in the first row.

Channel	Channel Owner	Timeline to Launch Account	Task List
Example: Instagram	Social Media Manager (posting tasks to eventually be delegated to student workers)	6 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the "Glossary of Common Post Types" section for content guidance Hire social media student worker(s) Direct student worker(s) to spend time on Instagram to develop content ideas Design posts on existing channels to advertise new channel launch Create content calendar for first month Make the inaugural post on the new channel

Tool 1: Social Media Strategic Vision Worksheet



Organic Social Media Strategy

List 2-3 ways your team will ensure that you will remain nimble and adjust to changing social media trends and technologies.

Adaptive Strategy	Plan to Implement
<p>Example: Utilize student focus groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite students to focus groups using incentives (e.g., free pizza, gift card raffle) • Develop a list of questions to pose to students; <i>questions should either be focused on 1) generating ideas for social media content/strategy or 2) determining how students perceive current social media practices</i> • Analyze focus group results to identify next stems • Implement changes to align with identified next steps • Hold focus groups once a year to maintain an adaptive strategy <p>See Tool 6: Guide to Gathering and Using Student Feedback for guidance.</p>
<p>Example: Engage in social listening to inform content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track tags and hashtags associated with your unit, programs, and institution • Document trends, common themes, and sentiments across posts mentioning your unit • Develop next steps based on your current brand perception <p>See Tool 12: Guide to Social Listening for guidance.</p>

Tool 1: Social Media Strategic Vision Worksheet



Social Media Content

This section focuses on creating content to align with the specific needs and fears of your prospects.

List the types of content that your team will create for each social media platform you plan to use and develop an action plan for sharing this content. Use the "[Glossary of Common Post Types](#)" and [Tool 2: Social Media Platform Primer](#) to help identify types of content.

Content Type	Appropriate Platform(s)	Action Plan
Example: Student testimonials	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a form for students to share testimonials • Decide upon testimonials to post • Run testimonials through a content sign-off checklist • Post testimonials
Example: "Day-in-the-life" reels	Instagram, TikTok	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select students to post the reels • Run their content through sign-off checklist • Post reel
Example: Two-way engagement posts	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a post encouraging students to respond • Ensure there is a staff member/intern assigned to respond to comments or repost student content
Example: Thought leadership content	Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to faculty • Schedule time with faculty to create post or video • Run content through sign off checklist • Post the faculty content
Example: Memes, humorous posts	Instagram, TikTok, Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with students to generate ideas • Create the post • Run the post through the content sign off checklist • Post the meme

Tool 1: Social Media Strategic Vision Worksheet



Impact & ROI Evaluation

This section focuses on measuring ROI with a particular focus on strategic planning.

How will your team integrate ROI evaluation into your social media plan? List three or more action steps below.

Activity	Action Steps
Example: Engage in social listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record total number of tags and hashtag posts Document trends in tagged posts Use these trends to inform your posting strategy
Example: Track key performance indicators (KPIs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select the KPIs most relevant to your social media goals Track these KPIs over time Report KPIs to internal stakeholders such as deans, provosts, etc.

How will your team create buy-in for ROI measures before beginning new social media initiatives? List three action steps below. See [Tool 10: Tying Social Media Metrics to Dollars](#) for more information.

Activity	Action Steps
Example: Discuss key metrics with stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold meetings with stakeholders to explain how your selected metrics impact revenue Implement feedback from stakeholders Make a final selection of metrics to monitor Begin measurement and calculation process

How will your team communicate the impact of different social media campaigns? See [Tool 11: Internal ROI Newsletter](#) for more information.

Activity	Action Steps
Example: Send a monthly social media impact newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a template and text for the newsletter Fill in the template with important monthly metrics Send the email to internal stakeholders

Social Media Platform Primer

Goal

Use this tool to understand the current popular social media platforms and to strategically post content based on audience preferences.

Intended User

- Social media manager

Overview

This tool is designed to help PCO marketing teams consider the advantages, disadvantages, and user characteristics of the most popular social media platforms. Institutions can use this tool to strategically select content based on that platform's primary audience.

This tool provides information on the following platforms:

- Instagram
- TikTok
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter

There is also an addendum with brief information on Reddit and YouTube.

Tool 2: Social Media Platform Primer




Instagram: The Gen-Z and Millennial Social Media Hub

Overview	Instagram is a platform where users view a feed of content from followed or suggested accounts. Types of content on the platform are photos and Reels, a Tik-Tok like stream of continuously playing videos. Users can also post short-lived Stories. A user's account shows previous posts and Highlights, a series of previous Stories that the user chose to preserve. The platform is popular among Gen-Z and Millennial users. Institutions should use the platform to promote brand awareness by centering the student voice, sharing thought leadership content.
User demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of monthly users: > 2 billion • Age group distribution (as of early 2023): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 18-29 (33%) - 30-39 (31%) - 40-49 (20%) - 50-64 (16%) • Average user spends 29 minutes per day on the platform
What PCO prospects look for on an Instagram account	When PCO prospects land on an institution's Instagram page, they are generally looking to hear the experiences of their peers and assess the general culture and values of an institution.
Latest platform trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instagram is the hub of social media for Gen-Z and Millennials. It is a place where they find information; follow pop culture, brands, and celebrities; and connect with friends. • Since 2020, the platform has been slowly shifting away from a photo-only platform to a space where users find information, share and watch videos, and connect with peers. • Over the last few years, infographics to share news and information have become more popular on the platform, along with video content through Instagram Stories or Instagram Reels. • The user base doubled between 2019 and 2022, and growth is projected to continue in 2023.
Types of posts on this platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos: The typical Instagram post is a square photograph or series of photographs. In addition to traditional photos, these posts might include infographics with informative or educational content. Photos usually include a caption and sometimes direct users to click on a link in the profile bio for more information. • Stories: These are ephemeral posts that last for 24 hours. These can be saved as Highlights if you want them to remain on your profile. Instagram stories are a premier tool for reposting user-generated content. Since these posts eventually disappear, students are more likely to share details about their daily life, including their institution. • Reels: This feature allows users to post videos and was created to compete with TikTok. Like on TikTok, users can scroll from video to video, and the Instagram algorithm will show videos based on user behavior and preferences.
Ideal content for this platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User-generated content posts • Thought leadership posts • Student testimonial posts • Meme-able posts
Platform advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of Gen-Z and Millennials use this platform daily. • Facebook and Instagram are both owned by Meta and they have many features in common. This can decrease the learning curve for social media teams looking to use both platforms. Additionally, users can cross-post the same content directly to Facebook when they publish Instagram content.
Platform disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instagram is no longer the de facto social media platform given the age and rise of more recent platforms (e.g., TikTok).
Successful accounts to follow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Florida Undergraduate: @uflorida This account features strong video reels. • Johns Hopkins School of Public Health: @johnshopkinssph This account shares strong thought leadership content. • Western Governors University: @westerngovernorsu This account demonstrates a commitment to interactive posts.

Sources: Sprout Social "Social Media Demographics to Inform Your Brand's Strategy in 2022," 2022; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 2: Social Media Platform Primer

 TikTok: The Trendy Gen-Z Social Media Platform	
Overview	TikTok is a platform that allows viewers to view a feed of algorithmically suggested videos on their For You page. A user's account shows previous video posts. This platform is very popular with Gen Z users. Institutions should use TikTok to connect to Gen Z through user generated content and appropriate humor.
User demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of monthly users: 1 billion+ Age group distribution (as of early 2023): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18-29 (39%) 30-39 (30%) 40-49 (18%) 50-64 (12%) Average user spend 89 minutes per day on the platform
What PCO prospects look for on a TikTok account	PCO prospects use TikTok to assess the general culture of an institution. They specifically appreciate when an institution can effectively use tasteful humor to connect with them. Prospects also use TikTok to assess the typical student experience.
Latest platform trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gen-Z and some older users look to TikTok as a search engine to compliment or even replace Google. Users express that a short video allows them to learn more about a product, brand, or restaurant than a page of text. TikTok has lengthened the maximum video run-time to 10 minutes to enable informational and educational content. The app wants to move away from being seen as a dance app to a center of valuable information. TikTok has faced scrutiny for its data privacy practices. Starting in late 2022, many states and universities have banned the use of TikTok on work and personal devices or on state networks. Despite increased scrutiny, TikTok continues to grow in popularity¹.
Types of posts on this platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Videos: The typical TikTok post is a video that ranges in length from a few seconds to several minutes. The average run time of a TikTok video is 20-30 seconds. Reposts: TikTok recently unveiled a reposting feature, which allows users to share videos from other users with their followers. Stiches: A stitch is a post where one user adds a video onto another user's video. They usually add their new video to the end the existing one and often agree with, criticize, or make fun of the original. Users also often create stiches to continue or build off the content in the original post.
Ideal content for this platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User generated content. On TikTok, this often manifests as day-in-the-life videos. Meme-able content Thought leadership content
Platform advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The app has a large Gen-Z audience (in terms of quantity and time spent on the app). Videos need not signal high production costs. In fact, videos with low production value do well on the app.
Platform disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TikTok is facing bans by state governments across the country, impacting usability for some university systems. The TikTok algorithm feeds users content based on their interests, identified by previous behavior on the app. This makes it difficult to determine who will see your posts in advance, and there is no guarantee of your content landing on the For You pages of prospects. The algorithm has been criticized for prioritizing content of white creators and perpetuating racial bias.
Successful accounts to follow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grand Valley State University: @grandvalleystate This account demonstrates an innovative use of humor in a higher ed context.


1) This includes up to 2022 Q3. Growth trajectory could change due to multiple state TikTok bans and restrictions after 2022 Q3.

Sources: Sprout Social "[Social Media Demographics to Inform Your Brand's Strategy in 2022](#)," 2022; New York Times, "[For Gen Z, TikTok is the New Search Engine](#)," 2022; EAB interviews and analysis.


Tool 2: Social Media Platform Primer

 Facebook: The Gen-X and Baby Boomer Social Media Platform	
Overview	Facebook is a platform that allows users to view a feed of content from friends. Content includes photos, text-based posts, and Reels. Users can also post short-lived Stories. A user's account shows all previous posts. The platform is primarily used by older Millennials and Gen Xers. It is rarely used by Gen Z prospects. Institutions should use this platform to share content that appeals to older adult-learners.
User demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of monthly users: 2.9 billion • Age group distribution (as of early 2023): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 18-29 (21%) – 30-39 (28%) – 40-49 (22%) – 50-64 (29%) • Average user spends 33 minutes per day on the platform
What PCO prospects look for on a Facebook account	Facebook is used by older PCO prospects. These prospects might use Facebook to find news about an institution, read testimonials from current students, or evaluate the institution's capability to improve student's career outcomes.
Latest platform trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gen-X and Baby Boomers use Facebook primarily to connect with friends and family and to follow the news. Younger users who visit the platform report they continue to use Facebook to invite people to events and monitor groups. • The platform continues to spread globally (1.3% increase in global users in 2022) but growth has plateaued in the US.
Types of posts on this platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General multimedia posts: Facebook consists of a timeline that allows for long-form text posts. These posts can include videos, links, or photos. The maximum text length is 62,000 characters. • Reels: Reels were recently added to Facebook to combat the competition of TikTok. They are video posts virtually identical to Instagram Reels and TikTok posts. • Stories: Facebook allows for Story posts that exactly mirror those of Instagram.
Ideal content for this platform	Facebook is a good platform to share introductions to longer form content. This includes links to blogs about student experiences, reposts of any articles that faculty members are featured in, reused content from other social media platforms, and links to helpful articles with advice for career changers
Platform advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook is the social media platform with the largest user base. • It is easy to use Facebook to repost content from other platforms. • Facebook and Instagram are both owned by Meta and they have many features in common. This can decrease the learning curve for social media teams looking to use both platforms. • Facebook has global reach, making it an ideal platform for institutions looking to expand international enrollment.
Platform disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook is not often used by the primary PCO demographic.
Successful accounts to follow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middlebury Institute of International Affairs at Monterey This account demonstrates strong use of faculty content. • Southern New Hampshire University This account frequently fosters interaction with prospects.

Tool 2: Social Media Platform Primer

 LinkedIn: The Cross-Generation Professional Social Media Platform	
Overview	LinkedIn is a platform that allows users to view a feed of professional content from connections. Content includes career updates and advice, important articles, and industry news. A user's account shows all previous work experience. The platform is used by all age groups. Institutions should use LinkedIn to share career-focused information, formal thought leadership articles, and to profile student career highlights.
User demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of monthly users: 2 billion • Age group distribution (as of early 2023): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 18-29 (18%) – 30-39 (31%) – 40-49 (24%) – 50-64 (27%) • Usage details: 63% of users access weekly, 22% access daily
What PCO prospects look for on a LinkedIn account	PCO prospects generally use LinkedIn to learn about the career opportunities that a specific program or institution could provide for them. They may occasionally use LinkedIn to follow institutional news.
Latest platform trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early- to mid-career professionals use LinkedIn most often. • LinkedIn has reported record revenue and user engagement since the economic disruptions of 2020 and afterward. The tight job market of the Great Resignation also spurred increased engagement.
Types of posts on this platform	General multimedia posts: LinkedIn consists of a timeline that allows for long-form text posts. These posts can include videos, links, or photos.
Ideal content for this platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thought leadership content; it should use a formal tone and may include links to blogs offering career advice, professional webinar registration, and posts about faculty and student research. • Student testimonials; as a career-focused social media platform, posts that share career outcomes are ideal for LinkedIn. This includes student testimonial posts and reposts of career updates from current students and alumni. • LinkedIn allows users to create groups, making it a good place to create career or industry-focused groups for current students and alumni.
Platform advantages	LinkedIn is the top platform to connect with career-focused individuals looking to make a change in their professional life.
Platform disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users don't visit as often as they visit other social media sites. • The platform's professional nature makes it difficult for brands to share memorable content.
Successful accounts to follow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purdue University Online This account regularly communicates student career outcomes. • Harvard Business Review This account demonstrates strong thought leadership.

Tool 2: Social Media Platform Primer

 Twitter: The Cross-Generation Short-Form Social Media Platform	
Overview	Twitter's homepage consists of a feed of tweets, user-generated posts of no more than 280 characters. A user's account shows all previous tweets. Tweets often link to external articles and videos. The platform is used by all age groups, and over 1/3 of users have a college degree. Institutions should use Twitter to share thought leadership and meme-able posts.
User demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of monthly users: 211 million • Age group distribution (as of early 2023): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 18-29 (30%) – 30-39 (31%) – 40-49 (21%) – 50-64 (18%) • Average user spends 31 minutes per day on the platform
What PCO prospects look for on a Twitter account	PCO prospects generally use Twitter to find news about a program. Many Twitter users appreciate institutions and programs that can tastefully use self-deprecating humor on the platform.
Latest platform trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter users quickly peruse lots of information on the news, pop culture, or other subjects. The best accounts often provide links to blogs, articles with more information, or include a series of tweets in a "thread," which is a series of self-replies to an original tweet. • Many Twitter accounts mix humor with educational content. • Twitter grew from 2021-2022, but research predicts it will lose about a million followers to other platforms over the next five years, partially due to recent upheaval in leadership.
Types of posts on this platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tweets: Twitter's primary feature is the 280-character text post or tweet. Users can attach photos and videos to tweets. When individuals post a series of replies to their own tweets, this is referred to as a thread. • Retweets: Users can repost tweets from other users that they want to share with their followers. Users can add their own commentary to retweets as well. Retweets with this type of commentary are referred to as quote tweets. • Threads: These are a series of tweets, usually focused on a specific niche subject area.
Ideal content for this platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thought leadership threads. On Twitter, these are usually media with educational content that link to blogs, websites, and other social media platforms. • Meme-able content. Content that involves irony and self-deprecating humor tends to be very popular on Twitter.
Platform advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/3 of users are college educated and make over \$75k per year. This market is prime for master's degrees and professional credentials.
Platform disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The platform has been in disarray since late 2022 due to leadership changes. Experts predict that these changes and layoffs will lead to decreases in the platform's popularity over time.
Successful accounts to follow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starbucks: @Starbucks This account shows a tasteful use of humor. • Ohio State University's Mascot: @Brutus Buckeye This account shows a tasteful use of humor in a higher ed context.

Tool 2: Social Media Platform Primer

Addendum: Social Media Platforms Not Typically Used for Marketing

These platforms are not traditional social media platforms but can be useful for marketing (depending on the program) and social listening.



Reddit: Social Media for Social Listening

What do you need to know about Reddit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reddit is a discussion thread platform that has grown in popularity for Gen-Z and Millennials amidst growing distrust of corporations and marketing in this age group. Most users post anonymously, operating through a unique username. • PCO units should not post on Reddit but should follow relevant Reddit threads and subreddit¹ threads to hear what people are saying about their institution and programs. • Social media teams can easily set up alerts for threads in the Reddit notification settings.
How PCO prospects use Reddit	PCO prospects use Reddit to hear the unfiltered perspectives of current students and alumni.



YouTube: Social Media for Long-Form Videos

What do you need to know about YouTube?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YouTube is a social media platform for long-form videos. • YouTube is an ideal place to share interviews with students and faculty. It is also ideal for sharing high-budget promotional videos. • Your team can share YouTube videos on other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. • Users can also feature content generated by other users on their profile by creating a playlist and clicking the Add To feature beneath the other user's post.
How PCO prospects use YouTube	PCO prospects use YouTube to learn about an institution's values through any long-form videos that they post. They might also use YouTube to search for day-in-the-life videos or other videos about student experiences.

1) A subreddit is a micro-community within Reddit based on a specific topic. There are subreddits on crafting, cooking, sports, colleges, adult education, and almost any other topic.

Sources: Sprout Social "[Social Media Demographics to Inform Your Brand's Strategy in 2022](#)," 2022; EAB interviews and analysis.

Social Media Pilot Program Guide

Goal

Use this tool as a step-by-step guide for designing, implementing, and measuring the impact of pilot programs for social media platforms. This includes new platforms or popular platforms where your team lacks a presence.

Intended User(s)

- Social media manager
- Social media staff

Overview

This tool is designed to guide PCO marketing teams through the process of testing out previously unused social media platforms. This is important because it can be difficult to convince internal stakeholders to allow your team to invest time and resources into an unproven channel.

This tool includes a guide to creating a social media pilot along with templates for selecting content and evaluating the success of the platform in question.

Tool 3: Social Media Pilot Program Guide

1. Develop Familiarity with the Platform of Choice

Carve out a small amount of time (~30 minutes) each day for 2-4 weeks for a staff member or student employee to investigate the platform of choice.

The investigator should:

- Develop an understanding of what kinds of content perform well on the platform
- Explore how users engage with accounts on the platform
- Create a short list of content ideas for the PCO unit to use on the platform

2. Create a Content Plan

Once the list of content ideas is complete, should develop a content posting plan. A content posting plan should include:

- A recommendation for how often to post each content type
- Any additional recommendations for the platform.

Use the template below to list the content types that your team will post on the platform and create a posting plan.

Content Type	Posting Schedule	Action Steps	Additional Notes
Example: Day-in-the-life reels	Once per month	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select a student to post the video• Edit the video before posting	Be certain to evaluate student content with the "content sign-off checklist"

Tool 3: Social Media Pilot Program Guide

3. Implement Your Content Plan

With the content plan in place, your team can officially begin the pilot program. Ideally, the pilot should run for at least six months to account for changes in user interest in continuing education during different times of the year.

4. Determine a Threshold to Evaluate Success

To evaluate success, your team should do the following:

- Select the most important key performance indicators (KPIs) to track for this platform. When selecting the KPIs, consider how these will connect to metrics that are meaningful to internal stakeholders. See [Tool 9: Social Media KPI Builder](#) for guidance.
- Determine a threshold for success. This is a performance level that would indicate your team should continue using the social media platform under consideration.
- Associate the performance on each KPI with a point value (e.g., poor=0, fair=1, good=2, excellent=3). Add these scores together and compare to the score your team identified as the threshold for success. This will allow your team to decide if you will permanently adopt the platform under consideration.

Use the chart below to select KPIs and threshold scores.

KPI	Threshold Score	Evaluation and Relevant Notes
Example: Total number of comments per post	0 (poor): 0-5 comments 1 (fair): 5-10 comments 2 (good): 10-20 comments 3 (excellent): 20+ comments	This month's total number of comments was higher than last months. Last month our posts were in the 1 range. This month, we were in the 2 range.
	Total Score: ____	Total Score: ____

5. Build a Final Report to Evaluate the Pilot Program

In the final report, include:

- The name of the platform assessed
- The chart of content types posted on the platform (see chart under item 2)
- The KPI evaluation chart (see chart under item 4)

Share your evaluation template with relevant stakeholders such as marketing, admissions, enrollment, and/or financial leaders. Make a final recommendation on whether further investment is warranted.

Tool 4

Sample Content Calendar and Post Plan

Goal

Use this tool to develop a social media posting calendar to ensure that you are regularly posting high quality content.

Intended User(s)

- Social media manager
- Social media staff

Overview

This tool is designed to help PCO marketing teams post content on a regular schedule. It contains a sample post schedule and includes a template to plan individual posts.

For more information on the types of posts mentioned in this tool, see the [Glossary of Common Post Types](#) on page 6.

Tool 4: Sample Content Calendar and Post Plan

Week 1: Thought Leadership Post

Description of post: These posts display faculty expertise, either through reposting articles or interviews with faculty or collaborating with faculty to create a post about their research.

Total time required: 9-10 hours

Steps to follow:

Step	Task	Estimated Time	When to Complete
1	Determine a faculty member with whom to collaborate for the post. This could involve sending an email to department contacts or selecting a faculty member you are already aware of.	30 minutes	Three weeks before posting
2	Prep for a meeting with the faculty member. Decide on interview questions for the faculty member if necessary and send them to the faculty member to review in advance.	Two to three hours	Three weeks before posting
3	Meet with the faculty member to capture the content that you need.	One hour	One to two weeks before posting
4	Edit the content you collected from the faculty to craft the post. This could involve editing the video or creating an infographic.	Three hours	Week of posting
5	Craft the post for multiple channels. This will involve slightly adapting the length and content. A thought leadership video post will be best suited for Instagram or TikTok.	Two hours	Week of posting
6	Review the post using a content sign-off checklist. Use Tool 7: Build Your Own Content Sign-off Checklist for guidance.	One hour	Week of posting
7	Publish the post.	5-10 minutes	Week of posting

Week 2: Student User-Generated Content Story Post

Description of post: User-generated content centers the student voice and allow students to share about their daily life. Common types of user-generated content include day-in-the-life videos, student takeovers, and two-way engagement story posts. The instructions below describe how to make a two-way engagement post, where the social media team shares a prompt on their story for students to respond to. The social media team can then repost these responses to their own stories. These types of posts are best for social media platforms with a stories feature such as Instagram or Facebook.

Total time required: 3-4 hours

Steps to follow:

Step	Task	Estimated Time	When to Complete
1	Decide upon a prompt for your story , design the graphic, and make the post. Story posts are typically best suited for Facebook and Instagram.	Two hours	Week of posting
2	Review the post using a content sign-off checklist. Use Tool 7: Build Your Own Content Sign-off Checklist for guidance.	One hour	Week of posting
3	Make the post and monitor student responses to the post. Repost these to your story. Save the responses as a Highlight on your page.	One hour	Week of posting

Tool 4: Sample Content Calendar and Post Plan

Week 3: Meme-able Post

Description of post: These posts show that an institution has a sense of humor. They generally apply internet trends to the institution, demonstrating that the institution is aware of the current cultural moment.

Total time required: 3.5-7 hours

Steps to follow:

Step	Task	Estimated Time	When to Complete
1	Draft ideas for the post based on current online trends.	One hour	Week before posting
1	Collaborate with student workers to test your idea and ensure that it resonates with their demographic.	One hour	Week of posting
2	Craft the post. Do any necessary organizational work and/or outreach.	One to four hours	Week of posting
3	Review the post using a content sign-off checklist. Use Tool 7: Build Your Own Content Sign-off Checklist for guidance.	30 minutes	Week of posting
4	Publish the post.	5-10 minutes	Week of posting

Week 4: Student Testimonial Post

Description of post: These posts share the details of a student's journey from prospect to graduate. Best practice institutions collect student stories via an online form. See [Tool 8](#) for further guidance.

Total time required: 4 hours

Steps to follow:

Step	Task	Estimated Time	When to Complete
1	Sift through your student story collection form to select a student to profile.	One hour	Week of posting
2	Draft a post about this student. Consider pairing with a blog post about the student on your website.	Two hours	Week of posting
3	Review the post using a content sign-off checklist. Use Tool 7: Build Your Own Content Sign-off Checklist for guidance.	One hour	Week of posting
4.	Notify the student that their story will be posted. If they already gave permission to post their story, you only need to notify them and don't need to ask for permission. If your student story submission form does not include a release or consent form, ask the student for permission to share their story.	30 minutes	Week of posting
4	Publish the post.	5-10 minutes	Week of posting

Tool 4: Sample Content Calendar and Post Plan

Use this template to plan the posts you want to make each month. Fill out the template for each post type.

Post Idea:

1 What type of post will this be?

2 To which platforms should your team share a version of this post?

3 List the steps needed to complete this post. Check them off as they are completed.

4 Does this post require any outreach or collaboration? With whom? How long will this take?

5 How many weeks in advance should your team begin preparation for this post?

Guide to Social Media Deadline Campaigns

Goal

Use this tool to post helpful content to assist prospects as application and/or enrollment deadlines approach.

Intended User(s)

- Social media manager
- Social media staff

Overview

This tool is designed to help PCO marketing teams share content that resonates with applicants at different inflection points in the recruitment funnel. Prospective students might need a final push to apply or enroll, and this tool highlights which content types are needed at different times.

This tool provides guidance on sharing posts before application and enrollment deadlines. It also includes a reflection worksheet to help your team decide which content is most appropriate for your accounts.

Tool 5: Guide to Social Media Deadline Campaigns

Pre-Application Deadline Campaign

➤ **When to start this campaign:** Two months before application deadline.

➤ **How to alleviate prospect anxiety:** Use the grid below to communicate to prospects why they should not be afraid to apply to your programs

Prospect Anxiety	How to Alleviate This Anxiety	Type of Content to Help Alleviate This Anxiety
"How will I pay to continue my education?"	Share information about financial aid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testimonials from a student or alumni who received aid that allowed them to complete a program.
"Will further education actually help me advance in my career?"	Share student outcomes with data and testimonials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reposts of alumni LinkedIn career updates • Profiles of your partnerships with employers • Student testimonials focused on their career outcomes
"Will I have any community as a non-traditional student? How will I form connections with classmates and professors in an online environment?"	Share examples of students supporting one another and demonstrate the benefits of joining your institution's community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video of students and faculty saying what your community means to them • Posts (ideally on Instagram Stories) asking students to share messages of support to their peers during finals. Repost student responses to your story.

Pre-Enrollment Deadline Campaign

➤ **When to start this campaign:** One month before enrollment deadline.

➤ **How to alleviate prospect anxiety:** Use the grid below to communicate to prospects why they should not be afraid to enroll in your programs.

Prospect Anxiety	How to Alleviate This Anxiety	Type of Content to Help Alleviate This Anxiety
"Will I receive any support in this program? How will I receive support in an online format?"	Share information about student support services, and profile student's experiences with these services.	Posts (ideally on Instagram stories) asking students to share how your student support services benefited them. Repost student responses to your story.
"Will I be able to balance this program with my job, family, and additional responsibilities?"	Elevate the student voice and encourage students to share their experience balancing school and other responsibilities.	"Day-in-the-life" posts where students share how they spend their time both studying and outside of school

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 5: Guide to Social Media Deadline Campaigns

Use the question and table below to plan your own pre-application/enrollment campaigns

1 What deadline will this campaign precede?

2 What are the top anxieties for prospects before this deadline?

3 Which resources at our institution might alleviate these anxieties? How can we profile these resources via social media?

4 List the types of posts that our team could make to alleviate prospect anxieties.

Guide to Gathering and Using Student Feedback

Goal

Use this tool to solicit feedback from current students in order to develop and revise your social media strategy based on prospect needs.

Intended User(s)

- Social media manager
- Social media staff

Overview

This tool is designed to guide PCO marketing teams through the process of collecting feedback from current students to inform organic social media strategy. This is an important practice because students who have recently participated in the recruitment and application process will have valuable intel on an institution's approach. Teams that implement student feedback tend to be able to share content that specifically resonates with students most likely to attend.

This tool includes a step-by-step guide to help your unit determine how to best solicit feedback to meet your needs. It also includes a question bank and guidance on how to evaluate student responses.

Tool 6: Gathering and Using Student Feedback

1. Determine Your Goal for Seeking Feedback

Institutions typically have one of the following goals when soliciting student feedback on their social media presence.

- **Understanding how to begin creating content that appeals to prospects:** Institutions in this situation are generally in the early stages of developing a social media strategy. They need to determine which kinds of content will resonate with prospective students.
- **Understanding how to refine current content to better speak to their prospects:** Institutions in this situation have been running a social media strategy for some time and need to determine what kinds of posts are most effective with prospective students.

2. Decide if a Survey or Focus Group is Best for Your Team

- **Option 1 - Focus Group:** Focus groups can be beneficial for institutions seeking to engage with students in open-ended conversation about social media strategy. However, they tend to take a significant amount of time and effort to plan, and they yield a lower participation rate than a survey.
- **Option 2 - Surveys:** Surveys are ideal for institutions that do not have the staff time and resources to host focus groups. They are easy to disseminate and require little staff time to administer. Please note that multiple choice survey questions tend to yield higher response rates than open-ended questions.

3. Ask the Right Questions to Maximize Effectiveness

Use the following list of sample questions in a focus group or survey. Consider making survey responses multiple choice in order to increase ease of completion. The most important questions to ask are those focused on 1) student motivation for attending your institution and 2) student social media preferences. These questions will maximize the implementation potential of student responses.

Student Motivations



1. What is your ideal outcome from your program at our institution?
2. Do you feel like you will be able to achieve this goal?
3. What motivated you to pursue higher education at [INSTITUTION NAME]?
4. What drew you to our institution?
5. What drew you to your program of choice?
6. What were your anxieties about pursuing a program at our institution?

Marketing and Social Media Efforts

1. How did you hear about our institution?
2. Did any advertisements from our institution particularly resonate with you?
3. Did you interact with our social media while searching for a program?
4. What are your thoughts on our institution's social media?
5. Do you have any ideas for how our social media presence could improve?
6. Did our social media content influence your decision to choose a program?
7. What types of social media content are helpful for making an enrollment decision?
8. What are some brands you like to follow on social media?
9. What do you think our marketing team can learn from those brands?

Tool 6: Gathering and Using Student Feedback

3. Critically Analyze Responses to Update Your Social Media Strategy

Use information learned during sessions to develop student personas – To develop personas, consider responses to your question about student motivations for enrollment. Group responses into general buckets based on type of response. These buckets will represent the top personas of students who enroll in your programs. Consider the examples below to develop personas specific to your institution:

- Workforce returners: people who haven't worked professionally for some time
- Passion pursuers: people who are seeking to turn a passion into a career
- Promotion seekers: people trying to advance in their career field
- Career switchers: people looking to switch career fields

Check out these additional EAB resources on developing personas:



- Blog: [3 Key Strategies to Recruit Graduate, Online, and Adult Students](#)
- Case Study: [Multichannel Marketing Drives Results Throughout the Candidate Journey](#)
- Infographic: [Understanding the Needs and Motivations of Working Professional Student Segments](#)

4. Use Response Analysis to Inform Social Media Strategy

Map social media preferences to each persona. Use responses to the questions you ask about social media content preferences for ideas on which types of posts align with different personas. Pay specific attention to any answers from students who very clearly fit into specific persona categories. You can use this information to inform your social media strategy. **Examples:**

- Workforce returners: share student stories from students who used a program to return to the workforce
- Passion pursuers: share career advice
- Promotion seekers: share career advice
- Career switchers: share student stories about people who switched careers



Social Media Content

SECTION

2

Build-Your-Own Content Sign-Off Checklist

Goal

Use this tool to ensure that your marketing content meets quality standards.

Intended User(s)

- Social media manager
- Social media staff

Overview

This tool is designed to ensure that PCO unit posts meet quality standards before going live. This is important because, in many cases, student workers are tasked with creating posts. Failure to run these posts against a checklist can result in subpar or biased content.

This tool provides a step-by-step guide that your team can use to create your own content sign-off checklist. It also includes a template for building your own checklist.

Tool 7: Build-Your-Own Content Sign-Off Checklist

Develop a List of Values that Your Unit Wants to Uphold With Your Marketing Materials

Follow these steps when selecting values:

- List values (broadly defined, see the table below for examples) that are important to your institution and your marketing team. If your institution has a codified list of values, consult these as you create your list.
- Write clear definitions for each value on your list.
- Develop reflection questions for each value. These should be consulted before posting any content to social media.

Value	Value Description	Reflection Question(s)
Example: Authenticity	Our images and videos represent the true experience of students at our institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this content represent the student’s true experience? • Do students share both the positive and challenging aspects of their experience? • Are we using photos of real students rather than stock photos?
Example: Inclusivity	We make a concerted effort to profile the broad range of students at our institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does our content positively portray students from marginalized communities? • Are we avoiding tokenism (i.e., misrepresenting marginalized student’s experience for the purpose of value signaling in marketing)?
Example: High Quality Standards	We ensure that our content is professional and easy to understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the names of the students or professors in the post spelled correctly? • Are there any grammar errors in the post or in the caption?

Tool 8

Student Story Collection Form

Goal

Use this tool to collect student testimonials to share on your website and social media.

Intended User(s)

- Marketing manager
- Marketing staff
- Social media manager
- Social media staff

Overview

This tool is designed to facilitate the process of collecting student stories to feature on PCO social media accounts. This tool provides a template form that can be posted on the PCO website and used to collect student stories. This form is based on **Oregon State University ECampus'** student story collection form. Click [here](#) to view their form.

PCO units should post this tool on their website in a section with other student testimonials. They should advertise the form on social media and encourage academic advisors to ask students to submit their stories when appropriate.

Tool 8: Student Story Collection Form

Background Information

First Name:
 Last Name:
 Pronouns:
 City:
 State:
 Country:
 Email:
 Area of Study:

Student Essay

In the space below, tell us about your experiences as a(n) [INSTITUTION NAME] student and your unique story. Here are some examples of questions you could consider as you're writing:

- What's been your experience with learning online?
- How has financial aid played a role in your attendance at [INSTITUTION NAME]?
- What inspired your degree/career path?
- What do you see yourself accomplishing in the future?
- What challenges have you had to overcome along your academic journey?
- What motivates or motivated you to persist in your studies?
- What advice would you give someone who's hesitant to earn a degree online?
- How has [INSTITUTION NAME] helped you achieve your goals?

Student short essay (500 words max):

Student Photo

Please upload a high-resolution photo of yourself.
 If you would like, share your social media handles so we can tag you when your story is published:

E-Signature:

To electronically sign this form, type your full name in the box below. *Note: include a disclaimer that says your team reserves the right to edit typos and shorten text as needed without changing the meaning of the student's story.*

Signature:



Additional Tips for Story Collection

- **Work with faculty and staff to encourage student submissions.** When faculty or career support staff hear of a moving student story, they should encourage that student to submit their story via the form. This tactic increases quantity and quality student story submission.
- **Develop media strategies for promoting the form.** Send a periodic email to students or include links to the form in the captions of student story posts.
- **Reshape submission form to use with alumni, staff.** Your team could also create submission forms to have faculty share research impact stories and alumni share career outcome stories.



Social Media Impact and ROI

SECTION

3

Social Media KPI Builder

Goal

Use this tool to determine key social media performance indicators for your unit

Intended User(s)

- Social media manager
- Social media staff






Overview

Social media key performance indicators (KPIs) are the metrics that leaders select to track performance on social media goals. This tool provides a table of some of the most common KPIs across three categories: brand awareness, brand engagement, and web traffic conversion. It also signals which platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook) the metric applies to. EAB recommends that units track KPIs on a per-month basis.

Note that while this list is comprehensive, it is not exhaustive. Tracking patterns will evolve as new platforms and technologies come into more common use.

Tool 9: Social Media KPI Builder

Promote Brand Awareness

Metric	 Instagram	 LinkedIn	 TikTok	 Twitter	 Facebook
Account					
Total followers/connections	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Growth rate of followers/connections	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total number of profile visits per month ¹	✓	✓		✓	✓
Total number of students, alumni on platform		✓			
General Posts					
Total number of impressions ²	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Average number of impressions per post	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total reach (number of unique views) per post ¹	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cost per impression ³	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stories					
Total views	✓				✓
Story completion rate (% of viewers who watch all stories in a series) ⁴	✓				✓
Videos/Reels					
Total views	✓		✓		✓
Average number of views per reel	✓		✓		✓

1) Typically requires a business account.

2) Impressions are the total number of views on a post.






3) Divide the total cost of social media by total impressions in a given time period (ideally a month or year).

4) Divide viewers on final story by viewers on first story and multiply by 100.






Sources: Sprout Social "[The ultimate list of social media KPIs to leverage business growth](#)" 2021; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 9: Social Media KPI Builder

Generate Brand Engagement

Metric	 Instagram	 LinkedIn	 TikTok	 Twitter	 Facebook
Average engagement rate ¹	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total number of likes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total number of shares	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Amplification rate (rate of followers resharing account content with their own followers)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total number of comments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Applause rate (% of positive comments)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total number of tags/mentions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social share of voice (how many people mentioned PCO brand compared to competitors)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total members of groups created by your PCO		✓			✓
Total number of posts in groups created by PCO unit		✓			✓

Drive Clicks and Web Traffic

Metric	 Instagram	 LinkedIn	 TikTok	 Twitter	 Facebook
Total web visits generated from social media	Applies to all platforms				
Clickthrough rate (% of people who view links or complete calls to action associated with a post; measured as total clicks/total impressions)	Applies to all platforms				
Bounce rate (% of web visitors who leave page immediately after clicking link)	Applies to all platforms				

1) Total engagement (likes, comments, or shares) divided by total number of followers in a particular period (usually a month or a year).

Sources: Sprout Social "[The ultimate list of social media KPIs to leverage business growth](#)" 2021; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 10

Tying Social Media Metrics to Dollars

Goal

Use this tool to gauge ROI from social media by connecting known performance metrics to institutional objectives.

Intended User(s)

- Social media manager
- Social media staff

Overview

This tool is designed to help institutions select metrics that illustrate the positive outcomes of social media activity. This is important because direct ROI from social media efforts is often unobtainable. By connecting social media metrics to institutional currency (such as enrollment dollars), units can better communicate the impact their efforts have on the broader university.

This tool illustrates the process of selecting social media metrics that can be translated to revenue. It also includes a space to list metrics that your institution could connect to important outcomes.

Tool 10: Tying Social Media Metrics to Dollars

1 Select a social media metric that your team can easily connect to enrollment. For instance, you might know that on average 2% of all web visitors enroll at your institution. In this case, you would select web traffic from social media as the social media metric to tie to enrollment. Other social media metrics might include:

- Clicks on web links shared in Instagram captions
- Engagement with student testimonial posts¹
- Engagement with posts related to your monthly newsletter²
- Engagement with posts about faculty research³
- Number of comments on posts asking students to share career updates⁴

2 Project revenue from social media success. Continuing with web traffic from social media as our example, multiply the number of web visitors from Instagram by average percentage of web visitors who enroll. Then, multiply that number by tuition to project total revenue from Instagram. See the theoretical example below:



3 Communicate revenue generated from social media to stakeholders: Many Deans and Provosts will not understand the value of 1500 web visits generated from Instagram, but they will clearly understand the impact of \$450,000 in revenue. Use [Tool 11, Internal ROI Newsletter Template](#), to communicate this information with stakeholders.

1) When student testimonial posts link to the website for a full article on the student, they can drive increased web traffic.
2) More students submit RFIs when they receive valuable resources in return. Offering a monthly "career tips" newsletter for students who submit RFIs could increase submissions.
3) When prospects find faculty research interesting, they may be more likely to attend webinars. This can create top-of-funnel leads.
4) Comments on these posts demonstrates the enthusiasm that alumni express about their degree. This often correlates with positive word-of-mouth marketing.

Sources: Inside Higher Ed "[We're Measuring Social Media Wrong](#)" 2021; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 11

Internal ROI Newsletter Template

Goal

Use this tool to communicate social media ROI with internal stakeholders

Intended User(s)

- Social media manager
- Social media staff

Overview

This tool is designed to help PCO marketing teams communicate social media success to internal stakeholders. This is important because many senior leaders underestimate the importance of social media. By communicating ROI from social media, marketing teams can generate support for their efforts.

This tool provides a template for drafting an internal social media newsletter. EAB recommends sending newsletters once per month.

Tool 11: Internal ROI Newsletter Template

Use the key at the bottom of the page to fill in the blanks in the template.

SUBJECT: [INSERT MONTH] Social Media Update

EMAIL:

Dear [INSERT RECEIVING GROUP],

I want to provide an update on our organic social media marketing strategy. This month, our team has focused on **(A)** in preparation for **(B)**. Research shows **(C)**. Our posts this month **(D)**. Our campaign has seen great success, as illustrated by the metrics below.

Our team is proud to support our institution's goal of **(E)** and we are grateful to others across our institution doing the same.

Best,

[INSERT NAME]

Web Referrals

XXX

Referrals from social media posts that included links to XXX mental health service resources

Web referrals drive students from brand awareness to consideration.

Positive Mentions

XXX

Tags and hashtag posts from students sharing their positive experience with student services

Positive online mentions demonstrate brand health through word-of-mouth marketing.

Focus on the metrics that align with your team's goals at a given time. Choose these metrics from Tool 1 (Social Media KPI Builder). Stakeholders value goal-aligned metrics more than vanity metrics.

Choose 2-3 metrics for each goal. Notice that metrics in this template include those connected to the goal of brand engagement.

Explain your metrics as we do here. This will communicate the actual meaning of a metric to those who are not familiar with organic social.

Key

A: Specific social media goal
Example: driving positive mentions via tags in user-generated content from current students

B: Upcoming important event
Example: next month's enrollment deadline

C: Insight about what prospective students want
Example: students in the consideration phase of the recruitment process are nervous about receiving adequate academic and mental health supports from their institution of choice

D: How your goal ties to what students want
Example: encourage students to share videos about their experience with our unit's academic mentorship and mental health programs

E: Large marketing goal
Example: driving brand engagement and enrollment

Tool 12

Guide to Social Listening

Goal

Use this tool to evaluate brand health on social media and to determine next steps based on current perception.

Intended User(s)

- Social media manager
- Social media staff

Overview

This tool provides a step-by-step guide to social listening along with a template to track mentions. It is designed to prepare PCO marketing teams to analyze social media engagement to gauge brand health. This information can be used to better understand prospect needs and develop a plan of action to improve perception.

Tool 12: Guide to Social Listening

1. Track Conversation Volume with Tags and Hashtags

➤ **Record the total number of times your unit is tagged.** The number of tags is typically straightforward because most platforms send a notification each time your account is tagged. Most business accounts allow users to access analytics on tags. Use the template below as an example.

Post Date	Channel	Engagement Type (mention or tag, hashtag, comment, share, etc.)	Engagement Content (Positive, Negative, Neutral)	Voice Type (Student, Prospect, Alumni, Employer, Other)
Example: 5/4/23	Instagram	Share	Positive	Alumni
Example: 5/5/23	TikTok	Comment	Negative	Student

➤ **Monitor hashtags associated with your brand.** Monitoring hashtags can help your team get a general feel for how users are discussing your brand. As a starting place, view the hashtags that your unit and institution use in your own posts and those that come up when you search your institution. Do not attempt to identify every hashtag post associated with your brand. Instead, focus on the tags most used in reference your unit and use them to track the elements called out in the following steps. Use the template below as an example.

Hashtag	Channel	Total Posts With This Hashtag	Type of Engagements Associated with This Hashtag (Positive, Negative, Neutral)	Primary Voice Type Using this Hashtag (Student, Prospect, Alumni, Employer, Other)
Example: #GoEAB	Twitter	45	23 positive, 12 negative, 10 neutral	23 alumni, 22 student
Example: #EABUni	Instagram	545	323 positive, 200 neutral, 22 negative	Mostly students, some alumni

Note: Measure Types of Voices in Addition to Number. Develop a list of the types of voices that are important to track. While most units are only tagged by **current students**, looking out for other voices can help you understand your brand health with other subpopulations. Other important voices could include:

- Prospective students
- Alumni
- Employers
- Industry organizations
- Faculty and staff

Tool 12: Guide to Social Listening

2. Evaluate Brand Health

➤ **Document trends, common themes, and sentiments across the posts.** After determining if a post is positive or negative, make an assessment as to why the user shared that perspective. This process can generate nuanced insight to inform strategy.

➤ **Translate post sentiment into a brand perception rating.**

- **Great Brand Perception:** >75% of mentions on social media are positive
- **Good Brand Perception:** 50-75% of mentions on social media are positive
- **Poor Brand Perception:** <50% of mentions on social media are positive

Note that while these ranges are approximate, so too are the perception figures generated through this exercise. They're meant to be a proxy for overall perception rather than an exact measure.

3. Develop Recommended Next Steps

➤ **Use your current brand perception to identify next steps.** See examples below.

- **Great or Good Brand Perception:** Think of campaign ideas that will lead to high levels of user-generated content that you can easily track and repost. This will build on your student's positive perception of your institution.
- **Poor Brand Perception:** Develop a plan to make posts showing how your unit is changing to meet student needs. This will build credibility with dissatisfied consumers.



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