Social Media Guidelines for NBCC Affiliated Accounts

PURPOSE and SCOPE
We recognize that social media sites are important and influential communication channels for our staff, students, alumni, stakeholders, and community. We encourage the use of and participation in social media, blogs, and websites in supporting the College’s vision, mission, and objectives.

We have created some guidelines, tools, and tips to help you be successful in the social media activities your department or initiative may undertake using the New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) name.

1.0 DEFINITIONS
None

2.0 IMPLEMENTATION
Important: When you are considering the creation of a social media profile, or if you have created one, please be sure to follow these steps:

Steps:
1. Notify Marketing and Communications:
   • we keep a log of all approved NBCC affiliated accounts to ensure that we’re aware of what is in the public sphere
   • as we’re aware of all approved accounts, we can ensure that there is no duplication of efforts
   • we can advise on the best approach and identify opportunities for growth or, alternatively, potential issues
   • we can provide tools to use, such as the NBCC logo
2. Read the policy, guidelines, and best practices
3. Use approved branding
4. Enjoy and have fun!

2.1 Guidelines

2.1.1 Be Accurate
Ensure the information you communicate is accurate and factual. Avoid speculation as it can be misconstrued as fact and repeated. As a post-secondary institution, we are held to a higher standard for spelling and grammar than others, so proofread your content before publishing. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly.

2.1.2 Be Responsible
Remember that anything you post reflects on NBCC as a whole. Follow all appropriate policies and procedures. For example, if you post a photo of students working on a project, make sure they are wearing safety gear where required and that you have obtained their express consent by using our model release form.
2.1.3 Be Respectful
Communicate in a constructive, civil, and respectful manner. Add value to the conversation. Refrain from harassing, abusing, threatening, intimidating, endangering, fear-provoking, or using dishonest, deceptive, coercive, or harmful language toward others. Think before you post.

If someone posts something harmful or contentious, notify Marketing and Communications immediately. Keep your channel clean of spam, but don’t remove posts of other valid contributors. Rather than jumping the gun to remove negative comments, which could exacerbate the problem and make us appear controlling and unapproachable, think of it as an opportunity to resolve problems and provide clarity. If you receive negative comments that can easily be dealt with, do so in a timely manner. If you are unsure of how to respond, contact Marketing and Communications as soon as possible.

2.1.4 Be Careful
Before you post, be sure you know how your contribution could be used or interpreted. Your words could be edited for content by the media. Observe the social media site policies and be observant about how your content can be used by the site and others. Comply with all applicable College policies and procedures and provincial and federal laws and regulations, especially regarding privacy, conflict of interest, copyright, intellectual property, confidentiality, and ethics. You are legally liable for what you say in public or post online, so act, speak and post responsibly.

2.1.5 Be Approved
You must be authorized by the College to post on behalf of the College or as a representative of the College to provide approved information that falls within the College’s mandate or represents the College’s position or views. Please notify your supervisor and the Manager, Marketing and Communications if you wish to post on behalf of the College.

2.1.6 Refer Media Inquiries to Communications
All media contacts must be referred to the Marketing and Communications department for coordination and guidance. Authorized spokespersons should consult with the Manager, Marketing and Communications before responding to any media inquiry or request. All new releases and media advisories must be written and/or reviewed and released by the Communications department.

2.1.7 Don’t Make Endorsements Using the College Name or Logo
Do not use the College logo or any other official College marks to promote or endorse any product, cause, political party, or candidate.

2.2 Best Practices
It may be easy to open a social media account but maintaining the profile and engaging your community take much more time and effort. No profile at all is better than one that is dormant or poorly managed.

Here are a few best practices to help you make the most of your social media channel. If you would like further advice or more detailed tips, feel free to contact the Digital Marketing Officer.
2.2.1 Determine Your Goals
Ask yourself: what is the purpose of this social media profile? What kind of content will I share and why? Who is my audience? There should be a reason for establishing a profile. If your content could be integrated into the main NBCC social channels with a larger audience, consider sharing it with Marketing and Communications instead of starting your own profile.

2.2.2 Choose the Right Platform
Choose the right platform for your goals and your audience. There are hundreds of social media platforms, so take a little time to see where your audience is and decide which would best suit your needs. Choose quality over quantity and don’t spread yourself too thin.

2.2.3 Assign a User or Team
Determine who will be responsible for managing the profile. This can include regular posts, content creation, answering questions and responding to comments in a professional manner, separating personal preferences from the College brand. Be careful not to accidentally post personal posts using the NBCC account. If it is too much work for one person, establish a team but ensure collaboration to avoid duplication of efforts or confusing messaging.

2.2.4 Look Good
Fill out your profile with the relevant information and branding. Make sure logos and images aren’t fuzzy or distorted and use the brand colours where appropriate. Ask Marketing and Communications if you are unsure.

2.2.5 Be Frequent and Timely
Be current and update regularly. On Facebook consider posting no more than 1-2 times per day and spread posts throughout the day. On Twitter, you can post more frequently, but again try to spread activity and post when your followers are likely to see them. Know the best days and times to post for your audience and demographics. For many, this is Monday to Friday from around 8am to 7pm. However, this will vary depending on who you’re targeting. Do your research.

2.2.6 Know Your Platform
Make sure you know the conventions and best practices for the platform you are using. Do not auto-post across multiple platforms at once. Each post should be written in context of the platform it is being posted on. Not only do the conventions vary from platform to platform, but so do the audiences.

2.2.7 Be Valuable
Provide useful, interesting content and stay on topic. Be of value to your audience. Don’t use it for hard sales and avoid topics related to religion, politics, and contentious issues. Don’t post for the sake of posting, but if you find you don’t have anything to post regularly, consider that your social profile might not be necessary or that it might be better to combine with other NBCC profiles. A separate profile is really only worthwhile when you have a voice or community that is not served through the main NBCC social channels.
2.2.8 **Keep in Context**
Before you post, take a look at what has been posted recently through your channel. Ensure you spread posts throughout the day and that your posts aren’t repetitive or out of context. Keep on top of current news and see what else is being discussed in social media. If there is a sensitive news item or crisis situation happening, do not post until the crisis has abated.

2.2.9 **Be Responsive**
Get into the habit of checking for messages every day. If you see a question that has been unanswered, answer it as soon as possible if you can, or if not, respond to say that you’ll get back to them soon.

2.2.10 **Use Images**
Posts gain more visibility when you include a photo or a link, and people respond better to visual content. However, be careful not to overdo it or post images just for the sake of it.

2.2.11 **Plan Ahead**
Creating useful and interesting content takes time. Plan ahead as much as possible and think about what you could post over the coming months. Consider creating a content calendar which can give you a great overview of what you will post and when. Content calendars make it easier to establish balanced content distribution and a consistent voice.

2.2.12 **Build a Relationship**
Try not to use social media only as a news broadcasting tool. Encourage conversation, be professional but not cold or distant, and consider content that invites input. Share relevant content by others and remember that you are still talking person to person. Engage with other related brands and profiles as well as the people interacting with yours.

2.2.13 **Correct Your Mistakes**
Mistakes happen. If you make a mistake, admit it and correct it as quickly as possible. If you correct a mistake by modifying an earlier post, indicate that the earlier post has been updated.

2.2.14 **Find Useful Tools**
If you only have a few minutes a day to post on your channel, consider using tools such as Hootsuite to schedule posts. Facebook also provides the option to schedule a post for a later time or date. This can be useful for spreading out posts or lining up a few posts for the week. However, be careful not to seem impersonal and be mindful of your scheduled posts in times of sensitive crisis situations.

2.2.15 **Let People Know About You**
Spread the word that your profile exists, online and offline, but don’t be overzealous. Communicate to those who would find value in following your profile.

2.2.16 **Measure**
To make sure you are providing useful and interesting content, use the available analytics to see what people are responding to. See who your audience truly is and how it is growing. Many analytics tools are free and part of the site itself (e.g. Facebook
Insights), but there are also third-party tools that can provide further analysis. Don’t just collect reports. Translate them and turn them into action.

2.3 Style Tips

- Keep posts short but write in full sentences.
- Check and double check spelling and grammar. Watch out for typos.
- Try not to overuse multiple exclamation points!!!!!
- Think as if no-one knows what you’re talking about. Explain what it is you’re describing and don’t use acronyms (or at least spell them out).
- Find a balance between personal and professional.
- Refer to campus locations as NBCC Fredericton Campus, NBCC Moncton Campus, etc.

2.4 Logo

Use the approved NBCC logo as provided by Marketing and Communications. E.g.:

![NBCC Logo](image)

Make sure the logo is clear, in proportion and fits your profile requirements. If you would like to use a logo other than the standard NBCC logo, please contact Marketing and Communications.