

Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices for Colorado Mesa University (2024-25)

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1. Colorado Mesa University's Social Media Guidelines

Colorado Mesa University encourages active engagement across social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, LinkedIn, TikTok and Snapchat. It is crucial to remember that these platforms are public spaces. Information shared is accessible to a wide audience, and users should exercise caution when sharing personal information about themselves or others. By participating in these platforms, users agree to the associated risks and to hold Colorado Mesa University harmless for any resulting damages.

CMU reserves the right to remove any content or comments at its discretion. Content that is unlawful, spam or abusive toward students, faculty, staff, or others will be removed and reported

to the relevant platform. Content meant solely for promoting commercial products or services will also be removed.

Comments and content posted by users do not necessarily reflect the views of Colorado Mesa University. CMU encourages users to report any abusive, unlawful or spam content according to each platform's terms of service.

For questions about CMU's social media policies, please contact the Marketing and Communications Office at marketing@coloradomesa.edu or 970.248.1277.

2. The Role of Social Media in Your Strategy

Social media is an essential component of any communication plan, offering unique opportunities for engagement and interaction with your audience. It's not just about broadcasting a message but fostering a conversation that allows for two-way communication. Effective social media management can boost brand awareness, drive engagement and build a community around your organization.

3. Account Approval Process

To create a CMU-affiliated social media account:

1. Identify an administrator for the account.
2. Define the purpose for the account.
3. Complete the Colorado Mesa University [Request a Social Media Account](#) online form and submit.
 - **Please note:** New account creation is limited to Meta's Facebook and Instagram as this is where the majority of CMU's audience is. Additionally, Meta's Business Suite allows for smooth cross-posting as well as easy access if the account becomes inactive.
4. The Marketing Office will provide branded assets, such as profile pictures and cover photos, to ensure consistency across CMU-affiliated accounts.

1. General Social Media Guidelines

Before creating a social media account:

- **Assess Need:** Not every organization needs a social media account. Evaluate if a specific platform aligns with your goals or if it's better to leverage existing CMU channels such as the Bulletin, MAVzone news feed or campus digital marquees.
- **Research Your Audience:** Understand where your audience is active. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok may be more relevant for younger demographics, while LinkedIn and Facebook may cater to older or more professional audiences.
- **Strategize Content:** Plan your content ahead of time, ideally a month's worth, to ensure consistency and relevance. Use content calendars to organize your posts. Appoint a CMU staff or faculty member who will be in charge of overseeing and managing the social account.
- **Maintain Brand Integrity:** Follow CMU's brand guidelines to ensure your account reflects the university's identity accurately. Please review CMU's [Brand Platform](#), [Visual Identity](#) and [Editorial Style Guide](#) for guidance on how to maintain the university's brand.
- **Complete the Form:** Fill out the Request a Social Media Account (see Account Approval Process above) and await approval from the Social Media Manager.

After creating a social media account:

- **Management Platforms:** For Meta's Facebook and Instagram, it is recommended to utilize the [Meta Business Suite](#) which allows the social media manager to schedule out content a month in advance. Other free options include [Later.com](#), [Planable](#), or [Metricool](#). Additionally you can now schedule posts within each social media platform itself. Please note, utilizing third-party apps such as Later.com, Planable, or Metricool may decrease the reach of a post and scheduling within the app is recommended.
- **Spread the Word:** Invite your current contacts to like or follow you, encourage your organization's members to share the link and include your page's URL on promotional materials. Creative contests and giveaways can get your site more followers, subscribers and fans, but make sure you comply with the social network's policies. There is no big trick or secret to gaining followers. It takes effort and creative, quality content to build your audience.
- **Review Analytics:** Analytics tell you what's working and what isn't working for your audience. Each social media platform has built in analytics, but you may

also collect data using a tool like [Google Analytics](#) to adjust your strategy accordingly.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

Colorado Mesa University is committed to fostering an inclusive and accessible online environment for all users. When managing CMU-affiliated social media accounts, consider the following to ensure that your content is accessible and inclusive:

- **Alt Text for Images:** Always provide alternative text (alt text) for images to ensure visually impaired users can access the content using screen readers.
- **Captions for Videos:** Include closed captions for all video content to accommodate those who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- **Use Plain Language:** Write clearly and avoid overly complex language to ensure content is easily understood by a broad audience.
- **Color Contrast:** Ensure that text and background colors have sufficient contrast to be easily readable by people with visual impairments.
- **Avoid Flashing Content:** Avoid creating content with flashing visuals that could trigger seizures for users with epilepsy.
- **Diverse Representation:** Strive to use diverse voices, images, and perspectives in your content to reflect the diversity of the CMU community.
- **Pronouns and Inclusive Language:** Use inclusive language (e.g., avoid gendered terms where unnecessary) and respect people's pronouns.

2. Best Practices by Platform

Facebook

- **Guidelines:**
 - Clearly indicate your affiliation with Colorado Mesa University or CMU Tech in your handle or bio. Avoid using the acronym "CMU" as a standalone.
 - Link back to relevant CMU websites in your profile.
 - Avoid advertisements or endorsements unrelated to CMU.

- Monitor and respond to interactions daily; refer inquiries to the appropriate department when needed.
- Follow [@ColoradoMesaU](#) on Facebook.
- Notify the Marketing Office if an account is abandoned or if there is an admin change.
- **Best Practices:**
 - **Audience:** Facebook's audience skews older, so tailor your content accordingly.
 - **Engagement:** Use Facebook's tools like polls, live videos and stories to engage followers.
 - **Content:** Post consistently (at least 3x/week) with a mix of visuals, text and interactive content.
 - **Moderation:** Manage comments effectively without stifling conversation. Use negative feedback as an opportunity for improvement.

Instagram

- **Guidelines:**
 - Clearly indicate your affiliation with Colorado Mesa University or CMU Tech in your handle or bio. Avoid using the acronym "CMU" as a standalone.
 - Use high-quality images and videos that align with CMU's branding.
 - Include links to relevant CMU pages in your bio.
 - Engage with followers by responding to comments and messages
 - Promptly.
 - Follow [@ColoradoMesaU](#) on Instagram.
 - Notify the Marketing Office if an account is abandoned or if there is an admin change.
- **Best Practices:**
 - **Visual Storytelling:** Use Instagram Stories, Reels and IGTV to share dynamic content that captures attention.
 - **Hashtags:** Use a mix of branded and popular hashtags to increase discoverability.
 - **Consistency:** Post regularly (at least 3x/week) and maintain a cohesive visual aesthetic.

LinkedIn

- **Guidelines:**
 - Clearly indicate your affiliation with Colorado Mesa University or CMU Tech in your handle or bio. Avoid using the acronym "CMU" as a standalone.
 - LinkedIn is best suited for professional content, such as alumni success stories, faculty achievements, and job postings.
 - Maintain a professional tone consistent with CMU's brand.
 - Follow [@ColoradoMesaU](#) on LinkedIn.
 - Notify the Marketing Office if an account is abandoned or if there is an admin change.
- **Best Practices:**
 - **Content:** Share articles, thought leadership pieces, and updates on university achievements.
 - **Engagement:** Encourage alumni and professionals to engage with your content by liking, sharing, and commenting.
 - **Networking:** Use LinkedIn's networking tools to connect with alumni, industry partners, and prospective students.

Snapchat

- **Guidelines:**
 - Clearly indicate your affiliation with Colorado Mesa University or CMU Tech in your handle or bio. Avoid using the acronym "CMU" as a standalone.
 - Use Snapchat for real-time, behind-the-scenes content that appeals to current students and prospective students.
 - Ensure all content aligns with CMU's brand voice and guidelines.
 - Follow [@ColoradoMesaU](#) on Snapchat.
 - Notify the Marketing Office if an account is abandoned or if there is an admin change.
- **Best Practices:**
 - **Engagement:** Use interactive features like polls and Q&A to engage with your audience.

- **Takeovers:** Allow students or departments to take over the account for a day to offer unique perspectives.
- **Timeliness:** Snapchat content is fleeting; post frequently to maintain relevance.

TikTok

- **Guidelines:**
 - Clearly indicate your affiliation with Colorado Mesa University or CMU Tech in your handle or bio. Avoid using the acronym "CMU" as a standalone.
 - Use TikTok for creative, trend-driven content that resonates with a younger audience.
 - Ensure all content reflects the values and mission of CMU.
 - Follow [@ColoradoMesaU](#) on TikTok.
 - Notify the Marketing Office if an account is abandoned or if there is an admin change.
- **Best Practices:**
 - **Trends:** Participate in trending challenges and use popular sounds to increase visibility.
 - **Creativity:** TikTok thrives on creativity; use it to showcase student life, campus events, and university highlights in fun, engaging ways.
 - **Consistency:** Post regularly to stay relevant on the platform.

X (formerly Twitter)

- **Guidelines:**
 - Clearly indicate your affiliation with Colorado Mesa University or CMU Tech in your handle or bio. Avoid using the acronym "CMU" as a standalone.
 - Regularly monitor and engage with your audience, responding promptly to mentions and direct messages.
 - Avoid engaging in political endorsements or legal discussions.
 - Follow [@ColoradoMesaU](#) on X.
 - Notify the Marketing Office if an account is abandoned or if there is an admin change.

- **Best Practices:**
 - **Language:** Use hashtags (#CMesaU, #RumbleMavs) to increase visibility and engagement.
 - **Engagement:** Participate in relevant conversations and trends to increase your reach.
 - **Content:** Use multimedia content like GIFs, videos, and images to make tweets more engaging.
 - **Analytics:** Regularly check X's analytics to refine your strategy based on what resonates with your audience.

YouTube

- **Guidelines:**
 - Clearly indicate your affiliation with Colorado Mesa University or CMU Tech in your handle or bio. Avoid using the acronym "CMU" as a standalone.
 - Use professional-grade videos that reflect the university's standards.
 - Clearly label your videos with CMU branding and provide links to relevant websites.
 - Subscribe to [@ColoradoMesaU](#) on YouTube.
 - Notify the Marketing Office if an account is abandoned or if there is an admin change.
- **Best Practices:**
 - **SEO:** Optimize video titles, descriptions, and tags to improve searchability.
 - **Content Strategy:** Create a mix of content types, including educational, promotional, and behind-the-scenes videos.
 - **Engagement:** Encourage viewers to like, comment, and subscribe to increase engagement.

3. Conclusion

These guidelines and best practices are designed to help you manage CMU-affiliated social media accounts effectively. By adhering to these recommendations, you can ensure that your social media presence reflects the professionalism and values of Colorado Mesa University

while engaging with your audience in meaningful ways. For further assistance, please contact the Marketing and Communications Office.