



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

Boise State University Social Media Handbook

A best practices and style guide for social media management
and networking using the Boise State University brand

Compiled by *Marketing Minds* and implemented by the Office
of Communication and Marketing



Introduction

- What follows is a compilation of advice, suggestions and practical guidelines for employees and students at Boise State University who want to create an official social network on behalf of a university department, group or affiliate.
- This is not meant to be a complete or exhaustive guide, but a tool to strengthen your social networking efforts at Boise State University.
- The content was created by the Social Marketing Subcommittee of the Marketing Minds group with input from the General Counsel's Office.
- Information, data and recommendations were compiled between January 2010 and January 2011, then revised in August and December 2012, from various sources and surveys and by utilizing and testing many communication tools and styles while engaging in social networking communities.
- This guide does not include AP style or formatting direction – please refer to the [Boise State Writing Style Guide](#).



Checklist

Use this checklist to help navigate the process of starting a social media account(s) for your organization, and understanding Boise State's policies and guidelines.

Getting Started - Three Questions

Getting Started – Steps to Take

- Who will manage?
 - Do I have an official email address?
 - Have I registered for a social media account(s)?
 - Have I joined the “B Social” network?
-
- I've read and understand the best practices
 - I've read and understand how to grow and maintain these accounts
 - I've addressed all questions (if any), and consent to be a professional and responsive representative of Boise State University
 - I've registered my social networks via this link:
<https://secureforms.boisestate.edu/news/social-network/>
 - I'm ready to post and engage with my audience!



Getting Started – Three Questions

1. Is there a need?

Does your organization or department have a consistent flow of information and compelling overall message that will sustain audience engagement? Can you commit to a steady schedule for management and scheduling?

2. Who is your audience?

Defining who your audience is will help you know which social media platforms are best to use, what tone of voice to use in messaging, how often and when to interact, and what to say.

3. Who are we?

Any department, office, building, group, club, organization, cause/campaign, or other affiliate of the university wanting to be recognized and supported by Boise State as an official university account should observe the information provided in this handbook. We are Boise State University – by having a social media presence you can share unique messages while still unifying with the Boise State brand.



Getting Started – Steps to Take

1. Decide who will manage content and updates

- Maintaining a social network as part of a marketing mix requires an estimated 1-10 hours per week*
- Identify who is in charge of updating the network and recognize that a consistent, respectful ‘voice’ is important
- Ideally, more than one employee should have full access as an administrator to any social network affiliated with the university

2. Create an Official Email Address

- The email address used to register and manage a social network should be a generic Boise State University address such as sample@boisestate.edu, which the [OIT Help Desk](#) can create. Having an official Boise State email address serves as a safety net for account management
- The exception is Boise State Google+ pages, which must be linked with a personal Boise State email account
- Alumni groups recognized by the Boise State Alumni Association may establish a network using a personal, non-Boise State email address



Getting Started – Steps to Take

3. Register for social media account(s)

- It is suggested that an element of “Boise State University” be included in the name of your account – this is important for recognition and resonance, search engine optimization and consistency of the Boise State brand
- Include a Boise State web address (available to all departments and offices) in the about/profile section
- The “avatar” or profile image used should be consistent with [Boise State Brand Standards](#). Social media specific logos are available for download [here](#)
- See the appendix section of this document for steps on opening a Facebook and Twitter account

4. Join the “B Social” Network

- Once the social profile is established, register the network(s) on this [form](#) to be added to “[B Social](#),” the online social networking directory for Boise State University
- The Office of Communications and Marketing will confirm the network’s affiliation with the university, then add it to the directory
- This helps to promote the network, leverage the Boise State brand and add interest in your online social community



Best Practices

- **Professionalism**
 - Social media networks should not be used by university employees to endorse private businesses, or for personal financial gain
 - State laws and university policies governing ethical conduct and conflicts of interest are applicable to social media sites
- **Opinions**
 - Public criticism of the university or its officials by university employees should be avoided on these social networking sites
 - This does not mean that legitimate concerns cannot or should not be discussed; however, recent Supreme Court authority has made clear that First Amendment protections do not guarantee the right of public employees to publicly criticize their employers in the course of their employment
- **Politics**
 - Social networking sites should not be used by university departments to endorse particular political candidates or electoral causes



Best Practices

- **Privacy and Disclaimer**

- You are responsible for what you post
- Any information that should not be shared with a third party under existing policy should not be disclosed on a social networking site
- It is critical that employees contributing content to Boise State social networks adhere to all policies and laws governing privacy of information and records, whether concerning students, employees, protected health information, trade secrets, or otherwise
- Establish for the online community that the social network is a public page and that you reserve the right to delete content
- Suggested disclaimer text:

This network is a public page. Please do not post confidential material or photos. By adding content to this network you agree to be solely responsible for the information you contribute and release Boise State University from any liability related to your use. We reserve the right to remove content.



Managing Your Social Network(s)

- **Grow**

- Give the community a reason to listen and interact and with you: ‘like’ your page, comment on posts; follow your tweets, @reply, retweet your messages; follow your boards, repin your content; add you to a circle, 1+ your posts; like and comment on your images
- Create inviting, unique and exclusive dialogue
- Share what you know: expertise can be highly valuable to your voice
- Ask questions to prompt a response, invite the community to share an experience or opinion
- Photos and brief videos have impact, but keep in mind you need to have a student’s permission before posting their likeness to a public network
- When appropriate, offer meaningful incentives to your audience but ALWAYS be aware of the network’s policy on promotions, giveaways and marketing campaigns – follow this link for a helpful article on the topic, from [Social Media Examiner](#)
- Be consistent and concise with messaging – don’t let “dead air” happen on your network, you will lose credibility with your audience



Managing Your Social Network(s)

- **Maintain**
 - Monitor comments and questions and reply to all inquiries, as appropriate – there is a “customer service” aspect of running a social account
 - **Any and all threats to campus safety or security should be taken seriously – notify University Security and Police Services at 426-6911**
 - Two-way street: follow others, share and interact with content that is relevant to your focus
 - Watch for opportunities to cross-promote and link to other Boise State interests and “B Social” profiles
 - Allow the community to express itself, but monitor comments for profanity or personal attacks and remove such posts
 - Posts by third-party vendors attempting to sell a product or service should be removed – beware of spam and clicking on untrusted links
 - Keep track of the community’s growth - benchmark numbers from launch and note discussions that prompt a response
 - Update profile and account information as needed



Conclusion

- **Final Thoughts**
 - When using a social network for official Boise State University business, maintain professionalism at all times and limit the communication and postings on the site to official business or university activities only
 - When in doubt, ask! The Office of Communications and Marketing is here to help and support you in your activities.
 - Enjoy your network, keep the conversation going, listen to your community and have fun!
- **Questions**
 - Questions or concerns regarding the development and maintenance of your network can be directed to the Office of Communications and Marketing communications@boisestate.edu or 426-1577



APPENDIX



Why B Social?

- How people send and receive information is changing all over the world and social media networks are playing a major role in the growth of digital communication. Just as the telephone revolutionized how we share over one hundred years ago, so is social media today.
- More than 66% of adults in the United States are connected to one or more social media network.
- Degree holders, college students, or those who have completed some college, represent the majority on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Digg and Reddit.
- According to a Dartmouth study, the Millennial generation (those born after 1980) are less likely to have land-line phones, but they communicate through Facebook profiles, Tweets, and send and receive as many as 50 texts everyday (determined by a recent Nielsen Report).



Why B Social?

- **Facebook**
 - Of more than 1 billion monthly active users (October 2012) 58% log-in daily and spend an average of 20 minutes on the network
 - 57% of users are female, 43% male
 - People 45 and older make up 46% of Facebook users
 - 57% have completed some college, while 24% have earned a bachelor's or master's degree
 - 300 million photos uploaded each day (Summer 2011); research done by a Harvard professor claims that photos showing females get twice as many “likes, tags and shares” than photos showing males
 - Pictures = YES! Long text = NO! If you don't grab the attention of your audience in the first couple of seconds, you'll lose them. Most people look at an image before reading text
 - Analytics show that the optimal amount of sharing by a Facebook Page is 1-10 posts every three days, with additional follow-up in the comment sections as needed

<http://visual.ly/facebook-photos-numbers>

<http://www.website-monitoring.com/blog/2012/10/19/facebook-2012-facts-and-figures-infographic/>



Why B Social?

- **Twitter**

- Twitter has over 100 million users
- 300,000 new visitors every day
- 600 million search queries... a day!
- 59% of Twitter users are female
- 37% of users update their status via a mobile device
- Retweets (RT): most RTs are generated by interesting content, personal connection, humor, or RT requests
- Twitter #Hashtags are great for generating buzz and tracking a topic. You can create your #hashtag that is relevant to you or use ones that are already trending. See Twitter's "Basics" for Hashtag

<http://socialcolleague.com/twitter-stats/>

<http://mashable.com/2012/03/09/social-media-demographics/>

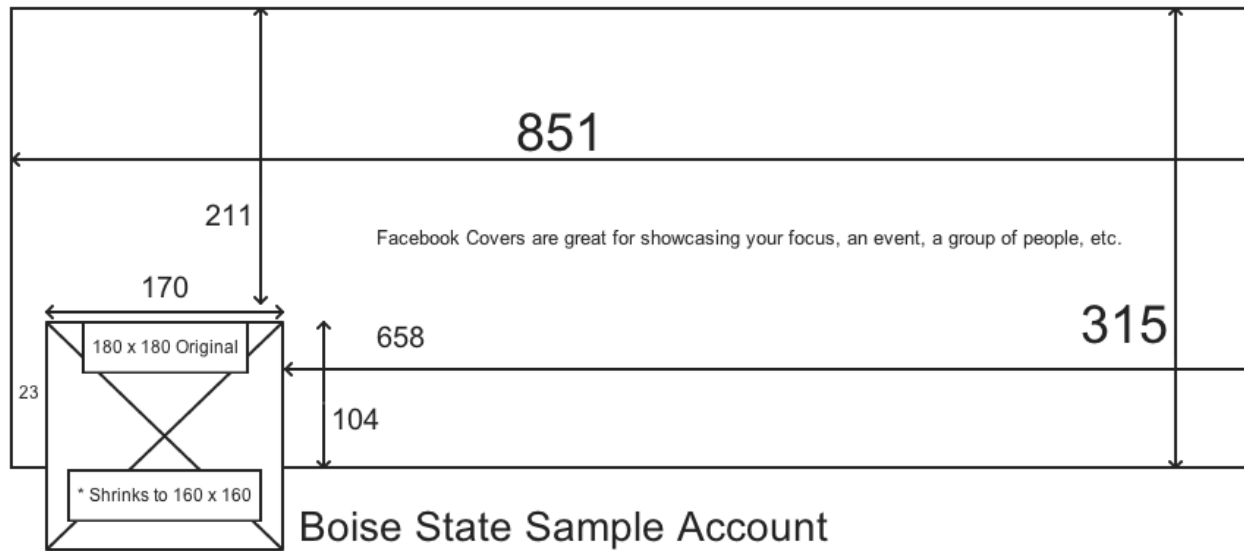


Create a Facebook Page

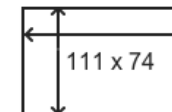
1. Select “Company, Organization or Institution” from options
2. Select appropriate category, such as “University,” “Education,” or “Organization”
3. Company Name: Your Facebook account name should include “Boise State” or “Boise State University” (not BSU, as there are several universities that use the b.s.u. acronym)
4. Custom URL: Facebook only allows one lifetime change to a page URL – be sure to select one carefully
5. Website: include your official Boise State URL (such as www.boisestate.edu); if your Facebook page will act as your website, add your new Facebook URL in this area. Note – if using Facebook in lieu of a website, be sure to include as much accurate and up-to-date information as possible
6. Upload an appropriate Boise State logo – downloadable logos exclusive to Boise State social media profiles are available [here](#)
7. Upload a visually interesting cover image
8. Register the new Facebook page via this [form](#) for approval and to be a part of the “B Social” network
9. Post content, share and like other pages!



Create a Facebook Page



About Content



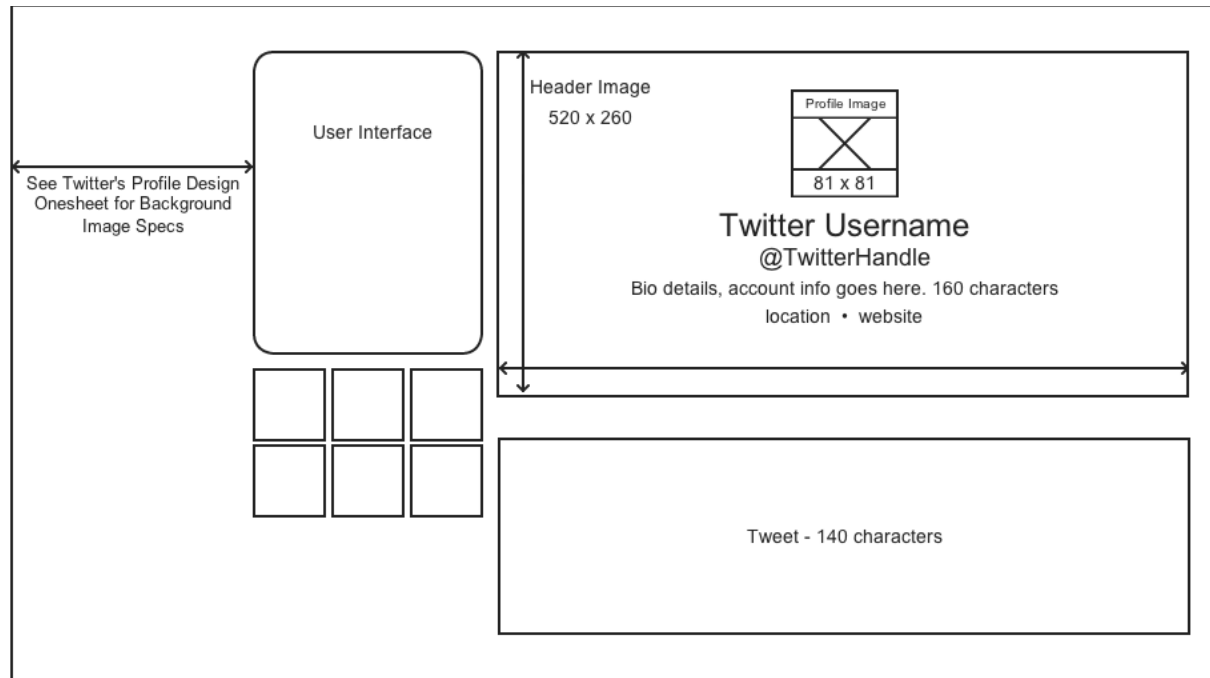


Start a Twitter Account

1. To sign up for a new Twitter account enter the full name you want your account to reflect (up to 20 characters), and the generic Boise State email address you set up, then a secure password
2. Next step, select the handle (example: @BoiseStateLive) you want
3. Follow the next few steps Twitter requires, then upload an image for your profile (aka: twavatar) – this should be a Boise State “B” logo, downloadable [here](#). Enter bio info (up to 160 characters).
4. Twitter will redirect to the newsfeed page, but you’re NOT done with your profile yet. Click on the gear icon on the upper right page, and select “settings.” From here you can customize your account, add a website link, change info, customize the header image and background, etc. Download Twitter’s profile design *onesheet* [here](#)
5. Register the new Twitter account via this [form](#) for approval and to be a part of the “B Social” network
6. Tweet, favorite, start conversations and retweet!



Start a Twitter Account





Logos for Profile

Facebook

Must be
uploaded
180x180 px,
resizes to
160x160 px



Twitter

Shrinks to 81x81 px



* These logos are **exclusively** for use
on university social media profiles
only



Logos for Profile

* These logos are **exclusively** for use on university social media profiles **only**

YouTube
55x55 px



Instagram
150x150 px



Google +
Horizontal logo 250x250
px



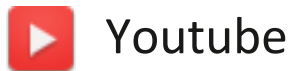
Pinterest
160x165 px



Other Social Networks

A list of Boise State “B Social” networks can be found at <http://news.boisestate.edu/social-networks>

Currently, Boise State uses the following social media platforms –



However, you’re welcome to open accounts on different platforms that are more relevant to your focus. Just let the Office of Communications and Marketing know which platforms you’re on when ready to join the “B Social” network.