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Cliffs Notes for Social Media

Remember Cliffs Notes? They're summaries of longer work, designed to get a student up to speed quickly without having to read the entire book. Sort of a cheat, you might say, but a very effective cheat at that.

There are volumes written about how to succeed dramatically and radically with social media. And then there's my own version of Social Media Notes, designed to help you become a social media savant in no time.

Ready? Here are the commandments to follow, the mistakes to avoid and the creative methods of engaging others that produce real results. Remember, these are short but exceedingly powerful. Ignoring any one of them may be perilous to your bottom line.

The 15 Commandments of Social Media:

1. Help others often, eagerly and without thought of benefit to yourself.

2. Be patient with others. Remember, you were once new to social media, too.
3. Share great content.
4. Forward great content and credit generously.
5. Thank often and thank liberally.
6. Be yourself, not a cardboard cutout. Show your personality.
7. If you don't have a personality, grow one and then show it.
8. Blog often and intelligently.
9. If you don't know something, say so. Then find out and get back to them.
10. Don't just talk - have real conversations. Remember, these are real people, not just avatars and photos.
11. Find the time for social media. Schedule it in and then just do it.

12. Use tools to schedule posts and monitor mentions. Social media is one facet of your marketing campaign – it's not your life.
13. Don't automate the whole process. Be there. Reach out and interact. Find the balance between automation and the personal touch.
14. Laugh at yourself. Tell tales on yourself. Show your human side – people aren't friends with Superman, they're friends real people who have real challenges and real faults and can laugh at themselves.
15. Admit your own mistakes and then move on. The mistakes make you human, but dwelling on them makes you annoying.

The 12 Dumbest Mistakes to Avoid In Social Media

1. Posting long, messy, nasty URLs. Use a URL shortener like bit.ly.
2. Posting too often. Rein this in by posting only when you actually have something to say.

3. Not spacing your posts. Sending 20 posts in 10 minutes and then not posting the rest of the day is – well – dumb.
4. Not making sense. Posting, “ARGGHHH” with no other information just annoys people. Post complete thoughts that actually mean something.
5. Too much personal stuff. You're doing social media to promote your business or service, right? Then keep it 90+% business and less than 10% personal.
6. Being boring. Posting that chocolate tastes good (No! Really??) or that you had cold cereal for breakfast is so.....
~ yawn ~
.....
Excuse me, I fell asleep for a second.
See what I mean?
7. No picture. Yes, you need a profile picture. And yes, it should be a good one. If need be, pay to get your portrait taken – it's worth it.
8. Wrong picture. Your profile picture needs to be of YOU, not a puppy or a cheerleader (unless the puppy

or cheerleader is you.)

9. Not giving credit or attributing the wrong source. Give credit where credit is properly due. Always.
10. Being wrong. Again, check your facts if you're unsure.
11. Being a jerk. No matter how much you disagree, the other person is never an idiot, a moron or a jack***. Remember, once you put it on the net, you can NEVER take it back.
12. Getting political. You're entitled to your own politics, but they have no business mixing with your business. Keep them 100% separate at all times.
13. Using TrueTwit. Someone wants to follow you, so you punish them by making them click a link and enter CAPTCHA code? What a great way to piss new followers off and lose them in the process.
14. Ignoring shares and RT's. Someone retweets or shares something of yours, what do you do? If the answer is nothing, you lose. Instead, THANK them for sharing your content and start a conversation.

15. Spamming. Think about community, relationships and building trust as your first priorities. Yes, you can send out an affiliate link now and then, but 90+% of the time you should be sending content or having a conversation.

10 Creative Ways to Engage People On Social Media

1. Acknowledge. It's no accident that this is #1. Comment on your friends statuses and posts. Reply to their tweets. Interact. Acknowledge when they say something bright, funny or helpful. The fastest way to engage others is to meet them halfway.
2. Like and retweet. Maybe you can't respond to everyone, but it only takes a second to give a like on Facebook or retweet on Twitter, and it makes the other person appreciate you all the more.
3. Don't tell – tease. Next time you post a new article or blog post, don't tell all. Instead, simply post a teaser that gets your readers wondering what the post is about. And don't forget to add the link – the better the tease, the more clicks you'll get.
4. Play caption-this-photo. Find a

weird/strange/bizarre/humorous photo, and then ask your friends and followers for funny captions.

5. Offer weird trivia and facts about interesting things. For example, "To keep food from freezing, Eskimos use freezers." or "In the 1830's ketchup was sold as medicine." Here are pages of weird facts that will get you started: <http://www.triviachamp.com/Weird-Trivia-Facts.php>
<http://www.corsinet.com/trivia/>
<http://www.weirdfacts.com/weird-fact.html>
6. Variation on #5 above – ASK weird trivia questions. You can do this one of two ways: Either ask a question they can find online, such as; "How many dimples are in a golf ball?" or "What is the only domesticated animal not mentioned in the Bible?" The second way is to ask a trivia question they cannot find online. Example: "How did I earn \$674 in one day when I was 12 years old?" Or if you're good at research, you can find something online that's obscure, such as; "About 100 people choke to death each year on what common object?" (Answer: A ballpoint pen.)
7. Play "who-said-it." Post a quote from a movie you're watching and ask people who said it and what's the

name of the movie they said it in.

8. Update your photo. This works better on Facebook than on Twitter, because on Twitter the photos are so small to begin with. But on Facebook you can post a new photo everyday if you like, and because people notice photos before anything else, they'll notice yours.

9. Play "fill-in-the-blank." You make a statement but you leave one or two of the words blank. This way your followers and friends can complete it. HINT: Always make the statement about THEM, not about you. Try to use potentially humorous subjects. For example: "I like to ___ while I'm ___." or "In bed, I often ___ while thinking of ___."

10. Ask. Ask for thoughts, opinions, help, advice, etc. People love to be asked and will take the time for surprisingly thoughtful responses. NOTE: Be sure to THANK them!