

# Getting the Most out of Social Media: Good Practices When Using Social Media<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

This EDIS publication, which focuses on identifying and defining good practices of social media, is the fourth in a four-part publication series on getting the most out of social media usage. The series includes additional publications:

- *What is Social Media?*
- *Creating a Social Media Plan*
- *How to Successfully Use Social Media*

## Social Media and Agriculture

Social media has created an environment for individuals to interact with each other in a two-way communication pattern that has allowed for the creation and maintenance of relationships. The agricultural industry has ventured into social media seeking these relations with consumers, agriculturalists, and other industry professionals. Because the Internet has transformed the traditional model of communication into a more informal and conversational model, it is vital for agriculturalists who are interacting through social media with consumers to be creative and have fun while also maintaining a level of professionalism and appropriateness.



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## Good Practices for Social Media

1. **Keep all posts positive** and contribute something of value to your community.
2. **Position yourself as the expert.** This is what you do for a living; showcase agriculture and your personal story.
3. **Hold meaningful conversations with followers who want to learn something.** A conversation is a two-way street; give consumers an opportunity to voice their opinions, concerns, and feedback.
4. **Be productive, not just active.** Accomplish your purpose.

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5. **Quality over quantity.** Keep it simple, concise, and meaningful.
6. **Do not overdo it.** Constant self-promotion is not attractive—share more than just your product.
7. **Be open and honest at all times.** Consumers want to be able to trust you. This is your chance to show them that you are not only dedicated to providing them with top-quality products, but also your commitment to excellent customer service. This is the number one thing consumers want from you, so give it to them. You have nothing to hide.
8. **Take time to build relationships and trust.** Social media gives you the opportunity to connect with consumers in a new way. Take advantage of the two-way communication channel that you and your consumers have access to and build a relationship by including them and responding to posts or questions they may have. This relationship will not happen overnight. Be patient. Just because you have followers does not mean they will listen. Give them a reason and time to listen.
9. **Be willing to adapt.** Technology is ever-changing. If something is not working, try something new.
10. **Engage to enrich your presence.** Engagement for engagement's sake is not efficient. Contribute something that is sincere and of value to your consumers, such as trivia about your product(s) or fun facts about your farm's history.
11. **Invoke multiple senses.** Multiple platforms and multiple ways of posting information can grab different individuals' attention. Use it to your advantage. Social media allows you to post not only words, but also pictures and videos. Use them all to engage with consumers and appeal to individuals' preferred senses.
12. **Always follow up with connections.** Social media allows you and consumers to connect through two-way communication. Take advantage of this and make followers feel special. A quick response to a followers post can really make a difference.
13. **Mind your manners.** ALWAYS. Sometimes followers are not always polite, but let them speak their mind and respond in an appropriate manner. Other followers will see this in a positive light and will most likely respect you and your business more because you were polite.
14. **Listen to others on social media.** With billions of individuals on social media and millions of firms now also joining, the feedback provided through the different platforms and the ideas one can gain from viewing others' sites can allow you to learn something new, too.
15. **Most importantly, have fun!** Social media is a marketing tool. Be creative and purposeful in your communication with your followers.

## Summary

Social media attracts broad audiences from children to senior citizens. You want your social media presence to be appropriate for everyone to view, share, and learn something from. Keep these practices in mind, and you should be on your way to having a great social media presence.

## Reference

Telg, R., & Irani, T. (2012). *Agricultural communications in action: A hands-on approach (1st ed.)*. Clifton Park, NY: Delmar, CENGAGE Learning.