



Social Media Strategy

It's exciting to see so many Westsiders communicate online! Instagram, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc. are an incredible way to share your faith journey, learn, chronicle your life, and generally connect with people you wouldn't otherwise.

As a Westside leader, in a staff or volunteer role, you may be seen by our members, attendees, and outside parties as a representative of our organization. That means that while you may view your online presence as a personal space, many readers will associate you and the views you express with the church and even with Christianity. In light of that, we ask that you observe the guidelines below. Please keep in mind that these guidelines will continue to evolve as new social networking technologies emerge.

1. YOU'RE AMONGST FRIENDS—SOMETIMES. As much as your blog, Twitter stream, Facebook page, etc. might feel like your cozy Internet home where friends stop by to catch up, it's really a public space. What you post lives on forever long after you've forgotten about it. So, think of your web space less like a family room and more like your front yard.

2. BUILD BRIDGES, NOT WALLS. Remember that the things you share on social media could potentially put up walls between you and others we are trying to reach and serve. It would be sad if you unintentionally hindered your ability to have a voice in other's lives because you weakened your voice through your social media presence. Keep those bridges intact so you have opportunities to minister down the road.

3. RESPECT YOUR AUDIENCE. Be thoughtful. Be aware when referring to Westside volunteers, attendees, or vendors by name and/or when posting their photo. Make sure you have their permission.

4. SPREAD NEWS, CAREFULLY. It can be helpful when we can use our personal web spaces to share the great things God is doing through Westside. But make sure what you post is ready for public consumption. If it has been discussed from stage or in Westside's website, it is fair to share.

5. DETRACT? DISTRACT? NEITHER. Most of us know that certain activities can **detract** from the mission of Westside...and we should wisely stay away from that territory. But you'll also want to be on the lookout for things that will **distract** from the mission. You might post about something that is 100% accurate and true to our beliefs that can still draw people's attention away from Jesus and take substantial time to manage and explain. If you're in doubt, please reach out to a staff member who'll help you figure out whether something falls into that gray area.

6. ASK QUESTIONS. If you want to spur conversation about a topic, think about open-ended posts and questions, instead of opinions.

7. WHEN IN DOUBT, GO POSITIVE. Whether you're responding to a snarky comment, frustrated with someone or with an experience, or trying to decide if you should write about something that's bothering you, you'll never regret taking the high road (and more than often, that road is not saying anything at all).

Gratefully and Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brooks Rice". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'B'.

Brooks Rice

Signature: _____

Date: _____