How to Use Social Media for **Good**

Our social networks tell a story about us. You want to make sure that the story your social media tells about you is a good one. As articulated in a blog from the Digital Marketing Institute: "Sharing online allows you to craft an online persona that reflects your personal values and professional skills. Even if you only use social media occasionally, the content you create, share, or react to feeds into this public narrative. How you conduct yourself online is now just as important as your behavior offline."

A positive online reputation is vital in today's digital world. Like it or not, your information is out there. What you can do is help to control it and what it says about you.

Social media is so ingrained in our society that almost everyone is connected to it in some form. With every social media account you sign up for, every picture you share, and every post you make, you are sharing information about yourself with not only your friends and family but the entire digital world. How can you make sure your information and reputation stay safe online? Here are a few easy steps to get you started.

▸ Oversharing and geotagging
Never click and tell. It can seem like everyone posts personal information on social media all the time, including where they are and where they live. As noted on the DHS. gov site: "What many people don't realize is that these seemingly random details are all criminals need to know to target you, your loved ones, and even your physical belongings—online and in the real world. Avoid posting names, phone numbers, addresses, school and work loca-tions, and other sensitive information (whether it's in the text or in the photo you took). Disable geotagging, which allows anyone to see where you are—and where you aren't—at any given time." If you really want to post that picture of your friends at brunch, consider following the concept of #latergram and post your content at a later time than when it actually happened. It is a win-win. You get to share your experience and at the same time still maintain the privacy of your location in real time.

▸ Keep it clean and positive
Be entirely sure about what you're posting. Make sure to post content that you feel positively reflects you, your creativity, your values, and your skills. Remember that future employers may look at your social media accounts before hiring you. Questionable content can leave a bad impression; this can include pictures, videos, or even opinions that make you seem unprofessional or mean and may end up damag-ing your reputation. Always think before you post or share negative or inappropriate content. Use the 24-hour rule before posting, allowing yourself 24 hours before posting any content that may be questionable to give yourself time to reflect on whether it is a good idea.

▸ Don't rely on privacy settings
You have a private social media account so you can post anything you want? Nope. Privacy settings make it harder to see your full account, but it's not impossible. Also, there is always the chance that one of the people with access to your private account could screenshot and share the content. Make sure to keep your social media apps up to date and check the privacy settings frequently. Under no circumstances should you rely on privacy settings to shield inappropriate content. If there is any question that the content is inappropriate, don't post it.

▸ Make sure you're professional
Keep it classy! Every post is a reflection of you.
Your social media accounts allow you to put your best foot forward or stumble if you aren't careful. A positive social media presence can help create both personal and professional opportunities. Promote your personal brand or what you want people to think of you. And, your high school English teacher was correct—proper spelling and grammar are always a plus.

▸ Control your content
Claim your identity on social media. Set up social media accounts and keep the profiles current. You don't have to join every platform; a few key ones will do. You can also look into apps that will cross post the content to all of your social media accounts, freeing up some of your valuable time. Use your accounts to engage professionally and personally in a positive way. Your social media accounts should tell the story of you that you want employers and others to see. Google your own name on a regular basis to make sure that that information out there is accurate. If you find incorrect information online, request that the website update it or take it down.