How to optimize your social media posts

Boost online student engagement with your career center
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General tips & tricks

Save time for Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter
Try a free or low-cost social media planning tool, such as Hootsuite or Later, which will allow you to preplan and schedule posts in advance. However, when posting to Facebook, we recommend posting directly with Facebook Creator Studio to avoid any algorithmic penalties.

Focus your social energy on the platform(s) where you can really thrive
Don’t feel pressured to create a TikTok or Twitter just because they’re there; stick to platforms where you think you’ll have the best chance of reaching your students and be able to maintain a regular content cadence. Social media can be time consuming, and there’s no shame in leaning into only one or two platforms where you can really shine.

Leverage your students to create content
If your career center staff don’t feel up for figuring out the world of TikTok, a student volunteer might be up to the task. Be sure to spotlight students and their successes on social media. When other students see a peer who’s landed a great job with the help of your career center, it helps build confidence in your advice and tools and inspires them in their own hunt.

Use pre-built assets from Handshake
Save time by using Handshake’s library of pre-made social media assets to inspire and engage students! Also check out Handshake’s Student Blog for more shareable student career tips, and follow Handshake (@joinhandshake) across social media for content that you can easily share and repost.

Pro-tip: Tag Handshake in any student success stories! We’re always happy to repost or feature your students and shout out your career center. You can also email student stories to stories@joinhandshake.com.
Click to follow Handshake on Facebook

Catch their eye
Utilize visual imagery in your posts—because photos and videos take up more space in the feed, they’re more likely to catch your audience’s attention as they scroll! Most links serve the same function, as they auto-pull their own image.

Streamline your message
When communicating on social media, assume that your audience is quickly skimming. Identify your main points and lead with them. When targeting students, consider the following:

• What’s the main goal of your post? Are you announcing a virtual career fair, promoting Handshake signups, or closing your office for the holiday break?

• Why is it relevant to them? Communicate clearly (and concisely!) why they need to know and what benefit it will have for them.

• What is their next step? End with a strong call to action.

Engage your audience
When relevant, encourage conversation in your Facebook comments by asking a question in your caption or encouraging sharing among the student body.

Post using Facebook’s own tools, either directly or using Facebook Creator Studio
Content is sometimes penalized by not being shown to as many people when posted to Facebook through third party services like Hootsuite. Content is sometimes penalized by not being shown to as many people when posted to Facebook through third party services like Hootsuite.
Use threads when relevant
Twitter is a LOUD platform, and it’s easy for messaging to get lost. That’s why we recommend using threads to continue bumping up your content in a student’s feed! If they miss the first tweet, they might see a response tweet later on as they scroll.

Utilize hashtags
School-specific and topical hashtags will help your audience find the content that’s relevant to them.

Pin and retweet important and timely tweets
Have a message you don’t want your students to miss? Pin it to the top of your page and retweet it periodically to increase visibility.

Hold Q & A sessions
Twitter is a great real-time engagement tool. Closely monitor your feed for student questions during special events like career fairs.

Streamline your message
Twitter’s 280-character limit ensures a relatively brief message, but always consider the following:
• What’s the main goal of your post?
• Why is it relevant to students?
• What is their next step?
Use features beyond the feed to optimize your reach

The Instagram Stories function is the best way to ensure visibility on the platform, as algorithmic changes make Feeds somewhat unpredictable. Even when posting something new on your Feed, “share” it (using the paper airplane icon) to your page’s Story for quick, easy cross-promotion.

“Polls” and “Q&A” in Stories are easy ways for students to engage with your content.

Reels is Instagram’s answer to TikTok and an easy space to engage students with quick tips and tricks content. These 90 second videos don’t need to be highly polished and produced; use Instagram’s own fonts and tools to easily create fun content like answers to common interview questions, outfit ideas, and more. Check out examples on Handshake’s account!

Pro-tip: If you really need to save time on creating videos, you can also download and repost TikTok content that’s under 90 seconds long. While this will leave an unsightly TikTok watermark in your Reels video, Instagram does not currently penalize performance of reposted content.
Guides are a good way to breathe new life into older (or other accounts') content. You can use them to compile your own older posts around a specific topic or theme, such as interview tips or internship advice. You can also use them to compile saved posts from other accounts (like Handshake!) on a specific topic and add your own commentary.

Streamline your caption post

Instagram cuts off long bits of post caption text, so be sure to frontload the important information. Consider:
• What's the main goal of your post?
• Why is it relevant to students?
• What is their next step?

Use relevant hashtags on every post

If your university has a hashtag, be sure to include it in every Feed and Stories post to increase your likelihood of being seen.

Optimize your posting schedule

When is your audience most likely to be surfing Instagram? Explore Instagram “Insights” (located within the menu at the top right of your profile page) for information about your audience's prime activity periods, and time your posts accordingly.

Geotag your posts

Be sure to add a relevant location to each Instagram post to help increase its visibility. When you tag yourself on your campus, that means students exploring Instagram are more likely to come across your content. (This counts for Stories, too!)
Make your content more easily discoverable
Use appropriate trending hashtags and sounds to boost your content. Users will often click into a popular sound to peruse several posts that utilize it.

Hook your viewer in the first five seconds
How will they benefit from watching the video? Is there a personal anecdote or juicy stat that makes your advice extra grabby? Some good examples are:

- “I finally landed my dream job at Instagram after sending 200+ applications; here's what helped me stand out.”
- “80% of students who do these three things on Handshake receive a message from a recruiter. Let me break ‘em down!”
- “I've been in career counseling for 20 years. Here are the worst mistakes I've seen job-seekers make.”

Break related videos into multiple parts
Although TikTok has a 10-minute cap on their videos, don't be afraid to post short follow-ups for related content. If you direct a student to "check out part two!" for more, they're more likely to click into your profile and discover the rest of your content.

Use text
TikTok is an extremely visual platform that rewards accessibility, so be sure to summarize or caption your content with text to allow anyone to follow along.
LinkedIn

Click to follow Handshake on LinkedIn

Use tags, hashtags, and photos to amplify your posts
LinkedIn is another platform where images can help catch somebody's eye in the feed, especially because so much content on LinkedIn is text-based. Break up your posts by tagging collaborators, using a relevant hashtag, or including an image.

“Like” and comment on posts that support your message
Even if you’ve posted a link or update on your own page, be sure to engage with others who share your post—this activity will show up in followers’ feeds and ensure that they see your content. Check your page notifications regularly to engage early and often.

Pin important updates to the top of your profile
If you direct a student to "check out part two!" for more, they’re more likely to click into your profile and discover the rest of your TikTok content.

Follow relevant hashtags
Tracking hashtags that are applicable to your university or content focus areas allows you to join in on conversations even if not tagged directly. You can access this feature within the "manage" module.

Handshake

Follow Handshake for more social media inspiration