

Chapter 78

Leveraging New Media as Social Capital for Diversity Officers: A How-To Guide for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Professionals Seeking to Use Social Media to Carve a Niche in the Social Networking Space

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ABSTRACT

While most have grasped how to utilize social media in their personal lives, very few have been able to bridge the gap in leveraging new media effectively to enhance their careers. This chapter is a how-to guide for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) professionals seeking to use social media to carve a niche in the social networking arena. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight how EDI professionals can benefit from utilizing new media marketing tools to position themselves as subject-matter experts and use this authority to create engaged communities surrounding the topics of equity, diversity, and inclusion in higher education. A current review of new media technologies and emerging strategies starts the chapter. It continues with further details on the steps needed to develop and implement a successful social media marketing strategy. The chapter concludes with how to turn plans into actionable steps and includes a social media marketing planning worksheet.

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INTRODUCTION

We're living at a time when attention is the new currency... Those who insert themselves into as many channels as possible look set to capture the most value. – Pete Cashmore, Founder of Mashable.com (Cashmore, 2009)

Social media has changed the way people do business, and as such, it has brought about many changes to the higher education landscape. Terms like *new media* and *social media* are rapidly becoming commonplace among higher education diversity professionals seeking to master new media technologies and understand how these tools can be useful for career development. While most have grasped how to utilize social media in their personal lives, very few have been able to bridge the gap in leveraging new media effectively to enhance their careers.

This chapter is a how to guide for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) professionals or diversity officers seeking to use social media to carve a niche in the social networking arena. Social media marketing initiatives work best within enclaves where tenets of *old school* word-of-mouth marketing can grow exponentially with technology among enthused participants. Therefore, this chapter serves a niche-within-a-niche because the topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion provide the ideal place to explore the use of social capital via social media, given the collegiality of those in the genre and altruistic aims within the field. To that end, this chapter specifically benefits the following groups:

- Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs) looking to make their mark and leave a lasting impression on their organization.
- Aspiring Chief Diversity Officers (i.e. Entry-to-Mid-Career Practitioners) seeking to add a useful skillset for career advancement, or the possibility of a long-term career change.

- Enthusiastically curious, but non-technical EDI practitioners who are eager to learn how new media technologies can aid their marketing initiatives.
- Current EDI Practitioners with a waning social media effort, who have started using social media, yet are not seeing the returns they expected.
- Current EDI Practitioners that have ditched their social media efforts and found social networking to be “*useless*”.
- EDI Practitioner Skeptics and Technophobes who aren’t fans of social media and think the field is “*useless*” and inapplicable to their careers, and
- Non-EDI academic faculty, staff, and paraprofessional staff members that can use some faction of “*cause marketing*” to gather interested parties around a topic the group can become passionate about.

Chapter Roadmap

The chapter begins with an overview of the social media space and current review of new media technologies and emerging strategies in the field. The key to the beginning of the chapter is to lay the foundation such that readers understand the social media landscape and some of the tools that are available within it. The chapter continues with further details on steps needed to develop and implement a successful social media marketing strategy, including 1) determining the time and resource commitment of the initiative; 2) creating achievable goals; and 3) monitoring and assessing the initiative’s effectiveness, while modifying plans and goals accordingly. The chapter then moves into a discussion of identifying the right combination of tools and how to tailor them for their intended audience. The chapter ends with a series of suggestions for next steps to turn the reader’s theoretical plans into actionable steps. In addition to this format, throughout the chapter, anecdotal evidence is used to highlight industry best

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