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ENTREPRENEURS | 1/09/2013 @ 10:26AM | 39,506 views

Social Media Etiquette: 12 Step Checklist

As a communication tool, social media has a key role in society. On one hand, I embrace it. But on the other, I reject it.

I love social media for all the reasons many people do: I can connect with others who would normally be hard to reach, I can communicate quickly and creatively, I can find out what others are doing, and I can learn.



But there's still a lack of etiquette many people possess when using social media. On sites like Twitter and [Facebook](#), do all old-school means of social etiquette get thrown out the window? Or do most people not even know what classifies as proper social etiquette to begin with?

A recent discussion with [Lisa Filpi Goeckler](#), who has a new social media endeavor with [ON Food](#), a startup in Beverly Hills that partners with fitness professionals and real people offering all-in-one food solutions, led me to contemplate this. Lisa's shared a few stories with me, the first occurring a few months ago when she found out about her good friend and co-worker's death.

"There I was, sipping coffee one morning, when I saw a post from another former co-worker on Facebook," Goeckler said. "It read something like, 'Today, as I ride down the street on my bike, I think about how thankful I am to be alive. It is incidences like what happened to Brad this past weekend that make one stop, reflect, and cherish life.' I thought to myself, 'That seems odd, what is he referring to? Is this the Brad I know? Did something happen to him?'"

It was quickly confirmed through a string of Facebook messages that Goeckler's friend died of a major heart attack. "I was not keen on the way I found out about the death," she said. "It seemed so impersonal."

A few months later, Goeckler found out—also through social media—that a relative of hers had breast cancer. She says that finding this out via social media—not a phone call—was a disconnected and impersonal way to find out such serious news.

Both of the circumstances combined made me reconsider how we use social media. These two incidences were much bigger life events that may not have a place being blasted through with Facebook posts.

I do feel social media is valuable in many ways. But maybe we should teach etiquette to guide people on the best ways to use it as a communication tool. After all, like most technology, social media has been hoisted on our world with little or no instruction.

I encourage everyone to think before communicating through social media. Goeckler says everyone should ask themselves the following 12 questions before posting:

1. Should I target a specific audience with this message?
2. Will anyone really care about this content besides me?
3. Will I offend anyone with this content? If so, who? Does it matter?
4. Is this appropriate for a social portal, or would it best be communicated another way?
5. How many times have I already posted something today?
(More than three can be excessive.)
6. Did I spell check?
7. Will I be okay with absolutely anyone seeing this?
8. Is this post too vague? Will everyone understand what I'm saying?
9. Am I using this as an emotional dumping ground? If so, why? Is a different outlet better for these purposes?
10. Am I using too many abbreviations in this post and starting to sound like a teenager?
11. Is this reactive communication or is it well thought-out?
12. Is this really something I want to share, or is it just me venting?



Run through these 12 questions in your mind—*before* clicking “post.” Trust me—you’ll be happy you double-checked before sharing with the world.

RECOMMENDED BY FORBES

[Proper Etiquette In The Age Of Social Media](#)

[Will Employers "Like" Your Profile?](#)

[The Richest Person In Every State](#)

[Stretches and Strategies to Help You Feel Better At Your Desk](#)