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Snider: The golden rules of social media

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Chris Snider

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If I had to sum up what I teach my social media strategy students at Drake University into four words, it would be this: Be human, be generous.

Social media is about building connections, not broadcasting content.

With that in mind, here are my golden rules of social media — no matter what platform you use.

- Listen first. There is a lot being said already on social media. Before you jump in, see what others are saying. Maybe someone already shared that cat video you were about to send out. You could simply retweet them — and build a connection with them — instead.

- Stop talking about yourself. We don't talk nonstop about ourselves in real life (some of us, anyway). The same applies in social media. For every self-serving, self-promotional tweet you send out, make sure you share at least a few that aren't all about you.

- Engage. If others are tweeting at you or posting Facebook comments on your page, make sure you respond. It's 2013. Customers have an expectation that you will respond to them in social media, and they'll think less of your brand if you do not.

- Share photos and videos. We've seen social media go from long blog posts to short tweets to Instagram photos. People respond well to visuals in social media, so think about what photos or videos you can use to get your message across.

- Help the up-and-comers. Stop trying to impress the big guys and start connecting with the small ones. Social media has always been about helping others be more connected, so find someone with fewer followers than you, share what they are doing with your followers, and help raise their profile.

Chris Snider is an instructor of multimedia journalism at Drake University. Follow him at [twitter.com/chrissnider](#).

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