INTRODUCTION

The University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service (UT IPS) Digital Communications Handbook is a comprehensive guide that walks agency employees step-by-step through the process of communicating online.

This handbook is a guide for all agency and Institute employees - you do not have to have the term “communications” in your job title to benefit from this information! Every single employee is a brand ambassador, and this handbook will help you better understand your role in how we market ourselves as agencies and as a part of the University of Tennessee system.

For agency communicators, this handbook will be a very brief overview of some digital communications’ best practices. If you are new to communications, hopefully this guide will help you navigate the basics of managing agency digital platforms. This handbook does not discuss print communications or print production.

If you need any additional assistance, please contact the IPS communications manager within the IPS administration or any of your fellow agency communicators. We work as a team to help communicate the impact and story of the Institute for Public Service and its agencies.
## SECTION 1: Agency Communications Goals

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<th>AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS GOALS</th>
<th>Institute for Public Service (IPS)</th>
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<td><strong>Agency Business Goals</strong></td>
<td>• Assist the agencies with communicating the impact, value and stories</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Communicate the impact, value and stories of IPS</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Agency Audiences</strong></td>
<td>• UT President and his staff; UT chancellors and their staffs</td>
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<td>• UT Board of Trustees</td>
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<td>• Tennessee Governor Bill Lee and his cabinet members</td>
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<td>• Tennessee legislators</td>
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<td><strong>Audience Technologies</strong></td>
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<td>• Twitter</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Existing Digital Platforms</strong></td>
<td>• IPS Website – <a href="http://www.ips.tennessee.edu">www.ips.tennessee.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Facebook – <a href="http://www.facebook.com/UTIPS">www.facebook.com/UTIPS</a></td>
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<td>• Twitter – <a href="http://www.twitter.com/UT_IPS">www.twitter.com/UT_IPS</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• LinkedIn - <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/university-of-">https://www.linkedin.com/company/university-of-</a></td>
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<td>tennessee-institute-for-public-service/</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Agency Roles</strong></td>
<td>• Communicator - Manages IPS communications and agency communications upon request</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Vice President of Public Service - works with communicator to provide direction for IPS communications</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Established Advertising Accounts</strong></td>
<td>• Twitter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Google Ads</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gmail Account</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:UTIPS2012@gmail.com">UTIPS2012@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Email Marketing Platform</strong></td>
<td>MyEmma</td>
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<td><strong>Who Communicates with the Public in the Event of an Emergency?</strong></td>
<td>• Communicator - Susan Robertson</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Vice President of Public Service - Dr. Herb Byrd</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Who Communicates Major Updates?</strong></td>
<td>Dr. Herb Byrd via Susan Robertson</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Back-up Communications Employees</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Digital Account Administrators</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS GOALS</td>
<td>Center for Industrial Services (CIS)</td>
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| **Agency Business Goals**  | • Help our clients achieve (or pursue) performance excellence through technical assistance  
|                            | • Provide high-quality consulting  
|                            | • Provide high-quality training |
| **Agency Audiences**       | • Small to mid-sized manufacturers and businesses  
|                            | • Community and economic developers  
|                            | • First responders |
| **Audience Technologies**  | • Facebook  
|                            | • Twitter  
|                            | • LinkedIn  
|                            | • Email  
|                            | • Web |
| **Existing Digital Platforms** | • Facebook - www.facebook.com/utcis  
|                            | • Twitter - www.twitter.com/UTCIS  
|                            | • LinkedIn - www.linkedin.com/company/utcis  
|                            | • YouTube - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyvp9lfWkVfwasOBcq6gBA?  
|                            | • Google My Business |
| **Agency Roles**           | • Communicator: Handles day to day communications (social media, e-newsletters, event promotion, website management), works with CIS leadership to develop and implement marketing strategies  
|                            | • Executive Director: Ensures communications align with mission, vision, and values as well as strategic plan.  
|                            | • Program Manager(s): Work with their staff to keep communications consistent and timely. Encourage staff to submit content for social media, website. Encourage and remind staff to share news with the communicator.  
|                            | • Training Managers: Work with their staff to keep communications consistent and timely. Encourage staff to submit articles for the newsletter at least once a year. Encourage and remind staff to share news with the communicator.  
|                            | • Other Employees: Encourage staff to share news with communicator. |
### Center for Industrial Services (CIS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Communications Goals</th>
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<th>Email Marketing Platform</th>
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<th>Who Communicates Major Updates?</th>
<th>Back-up Communications Employees</th>
<th>Additional Digital Account Administrators</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Established Advertising Accounts</td>
<td><a href="mailto:utcenterforindustrialservices@gmail.com">utcenterforindustrialservices@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>MailChimp</td>
<td>Executive Director, Paul Jennings via Communicator, Hannah Holder</td>
<td>Executive Director, Paul Jennings</td>
<td>IPS Communicator, Susan Robertson, CIS Productivity Consultant, Audra Pinson</td>
<td>IPS Communicator, Susan Robertson, CIS Productivity Consultant, Audra Pinson</td>
</tr>
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### County Technical Assistance Service (CTAS)

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<tr>
<th>Agency Communications Goals</th>
<th>Agency Business Goals</th>
<th>Agency Audiences</th>
<th>Audience Technologies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Agency Business Goals</td>
<td>Provide accurate &amp; timely training</td>
<td>Current elected or appointed officials and their employees</td>
<td>Current elected or appointed officials and their employees + current association employees: Email</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide useful, accurate technical assistance</td>
<td>Potential election candidates</td>
<td>All audiences: Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be the premier expert on county government in Tennessee</td>
<td>Current association employees</td>
<td>All audiences: Social Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS GOALS</td>
<td>County Technical Assistance Service (CTAS)</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Existing Agency Digital Platforms** | - Website: www.ctas.tennessee.edu  
- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/utctas  
- Twitter: https://www.twitter.com/utctas  
- LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/utctas |
| **Agency Roles** | - Communicator: Point of Contact for handling day to day social media, email blasts, and website management. This role is the main communications manager for the agency.  
- Executive Director: Drive communication plans and process. Ensure communications align with mission, vision, and values as well as strategic plan. Champion for continued customer service.  
- Program Manager: Work with their staff to keep communications consistent and timely. Encourage staff to submit articles for the newsletter at least once a year. Encourage and remind staff to share news with the communicator.  
- Training Managers: Work with their staff to keep communications consistent and timely. Encourage staff to submit articles for the newsletter at least once a year. Encourage and remind staff to share news with the communicator.  
- Other Employees: Encourage staff to share news with communicator. |
| **Established Advertising Accounts** | Twitter |
| **Email Marketing Platform** | MyEmma |
| **Who Communicates with the Public in the Event of an Emergency?** | - Communicator - Liz Gossett  
- Executive Director - Jon Walden  
- Program Manager(s) - Gary Hayes, John Sutton  
- Other Employees - Brett Howell (liaison with TCSA), Chris Payne (Training email blasts) |
<p>| <strong>Who Communicates Major Updates?</strong> | Executive Director - Jon Walden |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS GOALS</strong></th>
<th><strong>Law Enforcement Innovation Center (LEIC)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Agency Business Goals**     | • Provide professional, engaging and innovative law enforcement training to meet the needs of Tennessee Law Enforcement  
• Facilitate and increase law enforcement leadership to support Tennessee’s law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve  
• Hire and train proficient trainers from diverse backgrounds  
• Serve as the go-to law enforcement experts in Tennessee and beyond |
| **Agency Audiences**           | • Law enforcement officers  
• Criminal justice community - TACP, TSA, Medical examiners, etc.  
• State and federal agencies |
| **Audience Technologies**      | • Social media  
• Website  
• E-blasts |
| **Existing Agency Digital Platforms** | • Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/UTLEIC/  
• Twitter: https://twitter.com/UT_LEIC  
• Website: www.leic.tennessee.edu  
• Free online community calendars |
| **Agency Roles**               | • Communicator(s) – Share program/agency updates with IPS communicators; share agency/program updates with customers; contact customers with training opportunities and announcements  
• Executive Director - Share content ideas and program updates with LEIC communicator(s) or IPS communicators; works with agency communicator(s) to decide communications initiatives  
• Program Manager(s) – Share content ideas and program updates with LEIC communicator(s) or IPS communicators Training Specialists - Share content ideas and program updates with LEIC communicator(s) or IPS communicators |
| **Established Advertising Accounts** | • Google  
• Facebook |
<p>| <strong>Gmail Account</strong>              | N/A |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS GOALS</th>
<th>Law Enforcement Innovation Center (LEIC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email Marketing Platform</td>
<td>Constant Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Communicates with the Public in the Event of an Emergency?</td>
<td>Executive Director - Rick Scarbrough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Communicates Major Updates?</td>
<td>Executive Director - Rick Scarbrough</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Back-up Communications Employees | • Training Specialist - Greg Coker  
• Training Specialist - Chris Jones  
• Curriculum Development Specialist - Emily Miller  
• Administrative Support Assistant - Amy Hall |
| Additional Digital Account Administrators | • Training Specialist - Greg Coker  
• Training Specialist - Chris Jones  
• Curriculum Development Specialist - Emily Miller  
• Administrative Support Assistant - Amy Hall |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS GOALS</th>
<th>Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Agency Business Goals       | • Meet and exceed customer needs  
• Retain, hire and support a high-quality team capable of delivering our mission  
• Foster relationships with those who impact TN municipalities  
• Ensure financial resources are available to meet our mission and vision. |
| Agency Audiences            | • City elected officials  
• City staff  
• Selected state agencies  
• Partner professional associations |
| Audience Technologies       | • Email  
• Website  
• Social Media |
| Existing Agency Digital Platforms | • MyEmma  
Website: www.mtas.tennessee.edu  
Facebook: www.facebook.com/UTMTAS  
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/utmtas  
Twitter: twitter.com/UT_MTAS |
## AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS)</th>
<th>Agency Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Communicator: Social media management, Emma distributions for agency, E-news, updates for website</td>
<td>• Communicator: Social media management, Emma distributions for agency, E-news, updates for website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Executive Director: policy for communications</td>
<td>• Executive Director: policy for communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Program Managers: assist with policy; encourage staff to develop content for customers</td>
<td>• Program Managers: assist with policy; encourage staff to develop content for customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consultants: generate content for all channels as needed and as requested</td>
<td>• Consultants: generate content for all channels as needed and as requested</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Email Marketing Platform

| MyEmma |

### Who Communicates with the Public in the Event of an Emergency?

| • Communicator: post content as needed when directed by ED; generate content as needed | • Communicator: post content as needed when directed by ED; generate content as needed |
| • Executive Director: primary contact; generate content and delegate for distribution as needed | • Executive Director: primary contact; generate content and delegate for distribution as needed |
| • Program Managers: generate content as needed for distribution; send content to communicator for distributing to customers when approved by ED | • Program Managers: generate content as needed for distribution; send content to communicator for distributing to customers when approved by ED |
| • Consultants: generate content as needed for distribution | • Consultants: generate content as needed for distribution |

### Who Communicates Major Updates?

| Executive Director - Margaret Norris |

### Back-up Communications Employees

| Leadership |

### Additional Digital Account Administrators

<p>| • Social Media: Librarian, Library Support position | • Social Media: Librarian, Library Support position |
| • Website: Only one staff member has complete access to website; various staff have limited access to specific pages or areas of the website | • Website: Only one staff member has complete access to website; various staff have limited access to specific pages or areas of the website |
| • Email: Many staff at MTAS have access to Emma and can send messages as needed | • Email: Many staff at MTAS have access to Emma and can send messages as needed |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS GOALS</th>
<th>Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership (NCEL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Agency Business Goals       | • Modeling and delivering innovative leadership development practices to grow Tennessee leaders and to set national standards.  
                                  • Integrity, Relationships, Innovation, Service, Excellence |
| Agency Audiences             | • State Officials  
                                  • State Employees  
                                  • Local Government Officials and Employees  
                                  • State Associations  
                                  • IPS Employees and UT Departments |
| Audience Technologies        | • Email  
                                  • Social Media  
                                  • Website |
| Existing Agency Digital Platforms | • MailChimp  
                                  • Website - www.leadership.tennessee.edu  
                                  • Facebook - www.facebook.com/NaifehCenter  
                                  • Twitter - https://twitter.com/naifeh_center  
                                  • Instagram - www.instagram.com/naifehcenter  
                                  • LinkedIn - www.linkedin.com/company/naifeh-center-for-effective-leadership/ |
| Agency Roles                 | • Communicator: Social media management, MailChimp distributions for agency, E-news, updates for website  
                                  • Executive Director: Policy for Communications  
                                  • Program Managers: Policy for Communications /assist with policy; encourage staff to develop content for customers  
                                  • Other employees: generate content for all channels as needed and as requested |
<p>| Email Marketing Platform     | MailChimp |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS GOALS</th>
<th>Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership (NCEL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Who Communicates with the Public in the Event of an Emergency? | • Communicator: post content as needed when directed by Executive Director or Program Manager  
• Executive Director: primary contact; generates content and delegates for distribution as needed  
• Program Managers: generate content as needed for distribution; send content to communicator for distributing to customers when approved by ED  
• Other employees: Generate content as needed but must be approved first |
| Who Communicates Major Updates? | • Executive Director - Macel Ely  
• Programs Manager - Jeff Stiles |
| Back-up Communications Employees | Training Coordinator - Patrick Mills |
| Additional Digital Account Administrators | Training Coordinator - Jeff Hundley |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS GOALS</th>
<th>Tennessee Language Center (TLC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Agency Business Goals | • Provide professional, accurate and first-rate language services to meet and exceed the needs/wants of Tennesseans  
• Facilitate and increase intercultural communication to support Tennessee’s increasingly diverse communities  
• Hire and train proficient teachers and contractors to maintain our professional standards and reputation  
• Serve as the go-to language experts in Tennessee and beyond |
| Agency Audiences | • Business community  
• Language learners  
• Immigrant and refugee communities; non-native English speakers |
| Audience Technologies | • Social media: Language learners; immigrant and refugee communities  
• Website: All audiences  
• E-Blasts: All audiences |
## AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

### Tennessee Language Center (TLC)

| Existing Digital Platforms | • Facebook  
|                           | • Twitter  
|                           | • LinkedIn  
|                           | • Instagram  
|                           | • Website: www.tlc.tennessee.edu |

### Agency Roles

- **Communicator:** Oversee creation, editing and distribution of messaging; Maintain advertising partnerships (radio ads, promotions)
- **Executive Director:** Supplement ideas for content creation; guest article contribution
- **Program Managers:** Supplement ideas for content creation; guest article contribution
- **Other employees:** Supplement ideas for content creation; guest article contribution

### Established Advertising Accounts

- • Google  
- • Facebook  
- • Twitter  
- • LinkedIn  
- • Instagram

### Gmail Account
tflistaff@gmail.com

### Email Marketing Platform
Constant Contact

### Who Communicates with the Public in the Event of an Emergency?

- • Communicator: E-blasts, social media posts, website updates
- • Executive Director: Content creation for any public announcements
- • Program Managers: Contact clients, contractors, teachers, students in their department as necessary
- • Other employees: Contact clients, contractors, teachers, students in their department as necessary

### Who Communicates Major Updates?

- • Executive Director - Janice Rodriguez  
- • Specialist - Percy Person

### Back-up Communications Employees

- • Coordinator - Katie Smith  
- • Executive Director - Janice Rodriguez

### Additional Digital Account Administrators

- • Facebook: Janice Rodriguez, Katie Smith  
- • Twitter: Janice Rodriguez, Katie Smith  
- • LinkedIn: Janice Rodriguez, Katie Smith, Cesar Muedas  
- • Website: Percy Person, Katie Smith, Janice Rodriguez  
- • Instagram: Janice Rodriguez, Katie Smith
SECTION 2: Promoting IPS and its Agencies

Employees at IPS are not just contributors but part of our overall message. You are the brand! Here are some simple steps you can take to protect that brand, promote your agency’s work and the IPS public service mission.

Use the right brand assets. Logos, stationery, PowerPoint templates, email signatures and other items that represent IPS and its agencies are available in a digital asset management system to which all of our employees have access. Using a logo that you edited yourself or an old logo is never okay!

Engage with your agency’s digital platforms. Digital communication channels can help position our employee as experts in their respective fields and help us engage with our communities – geographical AND digital. Here are some reasons to connect with your agency online:

- **Reach.** Employees have the potential to reach more people than the sum of their corporate social media channels.

- **Credibility.** Compared to advertising and marketer-generated content, employee generated messages are perceived as more credible and trustworthy.

- **Personal brand development.** Employee advocacy not only empowers employees to act as brand ambassadors, but also helps enhance their personal brand.

Share agency updates. Tell your agency communicator and/or IPS communications manager about a recent agency success or developing story. We can never share too many stories about the great work of IPS employees. Additionally, these employees can offer assistance in sharing the story with the right audience or connect you to resources that can do the same.

When in doubt about how to engage with your agency on its digital platforms, ask your agency communicator. He or she will be happy to assist.

SECTION 3: Social Media

Social media initially started as an avenue for personal communications avenue and over time has increasingly been utilized by businesses, corporations and government entities to communicate with their customers and constituents. Some of the more known brands of social media are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube.

IPS sees social media as another effective tool to communicate with customers. However, to protect the reputation of the agency and its employees, some guidelines are necessary to clarify the use and role of social media by IPS. These are available on the IPS intranet.
Social Media Considerations

Be aware of the Tennessee Open Records Act. If you communicate – public post or private message – about a UT IPS/Agency service or offering on your personal or professional social media account(s), this communication could be subject to the TN Public Records Act, which means that if requested by a Tennessee citizen, the communication could be subject to public disclosure.

- For example, scheduling a client meeting through Facebook messenger likely makes that communication subject to the TN Public Records Act

- Occasionally sharing UT/IPS/Agency news on your personal or professional social media account(s) is not likely to subject those communications to the TN Public Records Act, as long as sharing the communications is not a requirement of the position held.

On all social media, think twice before posting. Social media have the ability to send your message around the world instantaneously. You need to be sure that you want everyone to read what you’ve written before you push the send button. Any comment that you would not want to make in a public forum is also one that you not want to publish on a social media page.

Check your posts carefully. By their very nature social media move quickly. The ease and speed with which you can post on these sites fly in the face of careful editing and fact-gathering. Be sure about your facts. Take time to look over grammar and spelling.

Consider your work affiliation. Do you want to use your social media channel for home life, work or both? If you answer “work” or “both”, make sure to think about how your social media post represents the University of Tennessee, the Institute for Public Service, your agency and yourself as an employee.

Understand that social media represent a conversation, not a monologue. Your posts may well generate responses. That is what social media try to encourage. But those conversations should not degenerate into inappropriate or unlawful conduct. Familiarize yourself with the University’s Social Media Comment Practices, specifically the definition of inappropriate comments. Evaluate responses carefully with this policy in mind.

Clearly identify any opinions that you might express as your own: If you choose to identify yourself as a University of Tennessee, Institute for Public Service, or agency employee on a personal web site, or a personal page/account on a social networking site, blog or other social media, you must make it clear that the views expressed are yours, that those views do not reflect your agency or IPS’s views.
Be aware of liability: Anyone who posts to a blog or other social media site is liable for that content. Individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous or obscene (as defined by the courts).

Protect your identity: We strongly recommend that you avoid publishing the kind of personal information that could be used against you by identity thieves. This includes your home address and your telephone numbers.

For more information, ask your agency director or communicator for social media guidelines.

Best Practices for Agency Communicators

Our Social Media outlets are the way we connect with our customer base. Our presences on social media need to match up with our marketing strategy to ensure that we are giving the customer base what they want and need. Below are the best practices and each one can be applied to all IPS agencies.

Learn everything you can about your audience: Get clear about your current customers, too, so you can go find and make new ones with the same traits. Such as:
- Their age
- Where they live
- What languages they speak
- How much they earn
- How much they spend
- What they buy
- What they do in their spare time
- What stage of life they are in (student, parent, retiree)

Other tactics to consider for learning about your audience include:
- Analyze website and social media analytics
- Be clear about the value for your products and services
- Create a target market statement
- Test your social ads on your target market
- Lather, rinse, repeat—to learn new ways and means over time

Know your competition: Odds are your competitors are already using social media, and that means you can learn from what they’re doing.

Conduct a competitive analysis: A competitive analysis allows you to understand who the competition is and what they’re doing well (and not so well). You’ll get a good sense of what’s expected in your industry, which will help you set social media targets of your own. Maybe one of your competitors is dominant on Facebook, for example, but has put little effort into Twitter or Instagram. You might want to focus on the networks where your audience is underserved, rather
than trying to win fans away from a dominant player.

**Use social media listening:** Social listening is another way to keep an eye on your competitors. Do searches of the competition’s company name, account handles, and other relevant keywords on social media. Find out what they’re sharing and what other people are saying about them.

**Create a social media content calendar:** Sharing great content is essential, of course, but it’s equally important to have a plan in place for when you’ll share content to get the maximum impact. Your social media content calendar also needs to account for the time you spend interacting with the audience (although you need to allow for some spontaneous engagement as well).

**Set your posting schedule:** Your social media content calendar lists the dates and times at which you will publish types of content on each channel. It’s the perfect place to plan all of your social media activities—from images and link sharing to blog posts and videos. It includes both your day-to-day posting and content for social media campaigns. Your calendar also ensures your posts are spaced out appropriately and published at the optimal times.

**Evaluate and adjust your strategy:** Your social media strategy is a hugely important document for your business, and you can’t assume you’ll get it exactly right on the first try. As you start to implement your plan and track your results, you may find that some strategies don’t work as well as you’d anticipated, while others are working even better than expected.

**Look at performance metrics:** In addition to the analytics within each social network (see Step 2), you can use UTM parameters to track social visitors as they move through your website, so you can see exactly which social posts drive the most traffic to your website.

**What Kind of Content to Share**

You want to post valuable content. You want engagement, retweets, likes, shares, followers, and all the other good things that come to social media marketers. The key is relevant content that your follower will engage with. Below are examples of the content you want to share.

- Infographics
- Interactive Content
- Content that provides strong positive emotion
- Content that has a story
- Newsworthy content

**When to Post**

**Post Timing depends on the social network.** People might be on LinkedIn during regular workday hours, but Instagram is more of a leisure time platform. From research data shows that the best time to post on social media is between 9 and 12 a.m. EST, early in the workweek (i.e., Monday to
Wednesday). This all can change depending on the platform you are on (Ex. the lifespan of a tweet is only 18 minutes but other platforms last significantly longer).

SECTION 4: e-Newsletters

Email marketing has been around for a long time, and for good reason. It’s the most direct and effective way of connecting with your customers. Here are some best practices that will get your emails opened.

**General Best Practices**

“From” line needs to create a recognizable tie to your agency. For instance, “John Smith, MTAS Consultant” Or “UT MTAS” would be a strong ‘from’ sender. This establishes and connects the sender with the brand. Individual names alone (without agency name included) may not be familiar and the email may not be opened.

Don’t bombard your audiences with emails. Make them relevant and if you do need to send a lot of email marketing messages, consider list segmentation. Sample email segments include:
- Training participants
- Clients
- Internal employees
- Highly-engaged users

Identify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). KPIs are tied to your business goals and can help you focus on the metrics that truly matter. Sample KPIs include:
- Opens
- Link clicks
- Opt outs/in
- Requests to be added to mailing
- Unopened emails / users with low engagement

**Ethical Email Marketing Practices**

Familiarize yourself with the CAN-SPAM Act. It establishes requirements for commercial messages, gives recipients the right to have you stop emailing them and spells out tough penalties for violations.

Do not manually opt a contact back into an active status. Opting back in is only something the individual contact can do. Your agency can decide if you want to follow up on opt outs to make sure they were intentional but most email services still require the individual to resubscribe themselves.
Email List Management

Identify and forecast trends in your customer base. Consider the following when managing contact information: Are the events that cause a large turnover in your customer’s contact information, such as an election, layoffs, etc.? This is the time to reach out to customers directly and ask for updated information for your database.

Make it easy for people to update their information in your emailing platform. Allow customers to update their contact information from your website or other online interactive tool. You can do this by embedding a sign-up form on your website or having a “manage your preferences” option prominently displayed in an e-newsletter footer.

Use your CRM tools to build your mailing list. Contact information can be pulled from the learning management system in use by IPS agencies to assist in promotion of newsletters and other training-specific communications.

Streamline e-newsletter communications efforts. Limit the number of staff who can edit contact information and send emails out on behalf of the agency. This ensures consistent and intentional communications.

Accessibility

Make sure that everyone can receive and understand your message. People with disabilities should be able, including with the help of assistive technologies, to access and use a product or system. For example, an “accessible” e-newsletter may be designed so that it can be interpreted and “read aloud” by screen reader software used by individuals who are blind or have low vision.

UT system-wide policy on accessible information, materials and technology (IMT) https://universitytennessee.policytech.com/dotNet/documents/?docid=165&public=true

Consider how your users will access your newsletters. How does your newsletter look if opened on a smartphone versus a desktop? Most email marketing services offer previews for the different ways in which your users will view the communication. Ensure that your customer can easily view and access information in your e-newsletter regardless of the device on which they access the communication.

SECTION 5: Branding

Branding is about more than using the same logo. It is the logo, colors, look of materials that come from the organization, photos and messaging. It is not just the visual features that create a brand,
but the feelings people have when they are exposed to the name, the logo, visual identity and message communicated.

**Use a consistent voice.** Brand voice is how we convey the brand personality to the external audience. While we can have fun with brief social media messages, we are still representing a University of Tennessee organization and need to do so in a professional manner. Brand voice communicates the company’s values, the brand identity and its role in the market (i.e. the Naifeh Center’s role is to provide leadership training to state government employees).

Consistent brand voice has uniform style and vocabulary. Our brand voice should be one of service – we serve our customers; we are helpful and responsive. We work across the state and are associated with a statewide university.

**Use consistent messaging.** Messaging is what makes customers relate to your brand. It differentiates you from competitors and ultimately makes customers want to work with your organization. All messaging, digital and print, should be consistent. The main message for IPS is We Serve Business and Government to Improve the Lives of Tennesseans. Agencies customize that message to be specific to them and their services, and to speak to their customers.

**Use consistent visuals.** When agencies post an upcoming class or event on a social media account, the look of the image/graphic must be consistent, aligning with the IPS styleguide (please contact IPS administration for access to this documentation). Profile pictures on social media and posted pictures should also maintain consistency.

**SECTION 6: Google Business Profile**

**What is Google Business**

Google My Business is a free tool that allows you to promote your Business Profile and business website on Google Search and Maps. With your Google My Business account, you can see and connect with your customers, post updates to your Business Profile, and see how customers are interacting with your business on Google.

Your free Business Profile on Google helps your business show up when customers are searching for your business, products or services like yours on Google Search and Maps.
What Information is on My Business Profile

Log into your Google My Business account to update your
- address
- phone number
- website
- open hours, holiday closings, and more

All of this information helps customers find and connect with your business. Keep your profile updated with fresh photos and important updates to make it easy for customers to choose you.

Business profile owners can post updates, which is particularly helpful if there are major updates to daily operations. For example, UT IPS and its agencies had the ability to alert Google searchers to employees working from home even though offices were closed during the COVID-19 outbreak. Updates like this are beneficial on Google so that the user does not have to search the actual website to find information like this if they need it.

Why Have a Business Profile

Google My Business gives you the power to attract and engage customers when they search for your agency on Google. Your Business Profile gives you a presence on Google Search and Maps, allowing you to respond to Reviews, post photos and add/edit your business details. Your Google business website lets you present your business professionally online, showcasing your photos and business details in a beautiful way.
How Much Does this Cost?

Anyone can use Google My Business for free.

Should I use Google My Business if I already have a website?

Yes! Your free Google Business Profile complements your website by adding more visibility to your current business website on Google Search and Google Maps. You can even add a link to your website on your Business Profile.

SECTION 7: GOOGLE: SEARCH ADVERTISING

What is Paid Search and Paid Search Marketing?

Paid search is a digital marketing method in which marketers place ads on search engine results pages (SERPs) and pay for the engagement that’s received by those ads.

Paid search marketing puts this model into practice, by allowing marketers to advertise on SERPs specifically through pay-per-click or pay-per-view means.

What is Pay Per Click (PPC) Advertising?

Pay-per-click or PPC advertising is a type of advertising where businesses pay a fee for each time that a user clicks on an ad. There are many different platforms that offer PPC advertising, including Facebook.

Paid search advertising involves placing PPC ads on search engines like Google. With paid search ads, businesses bid on ad placement to appear as a sponsored link on the search engine results page. When search engine users search for relevant keywords related to the business, the PPC ad will appear at the top of the page in their search query.

How Do Search Ads Work?

As Google is the most popular search engine, we’ll use it as the example and explain how its search ads work. Google uses an auction system to rank the ads that appear on Google search-engine results pages (SERPs) and determine the cost advertisers have to pay to appear on top of the results page. This auction system means that instead of having to pay the full price, advertisers pay the amount needed to beat the nearest competitor.

You can set a budget on your ad campaign so that you won’t be surprised by your invoice at the end of the campaign.
You can also set a time limit, so as an example the ad campaign can run for 2 days or 2 years – it’s your choice.

When creating an ad campaign, you will identify a goal. Goals include:

- Sales
- Leads
- Website traffic
- Product & brand consideration
- Brand Awareness & reach
- App promotion

**Types of Ad campaigns**

- Search Network campaign
- Display Network campaign
- Shopping campaign
- Video campaign
- App campaign

**How Do I Make My Search Ad Relevant?**

One word: keywords. Google will suggest some keywords for you, but you can add some in yourself. The important thing to remember when selecting keywords is to limit it to 20 or so and to think like your customer. What would you type into a search engine if you were looking for a specific type of training or consultation service in Tennessee?

**Why Use Search Advertising?**

**PPC ads produce fast results.** Organic – unpaid - search engine optimization efforts take time. No matter how optimized your content is for the search engines, you won’t start to see results right away. On the other hand, PPC ads bring immediate traffic to your site from the search engines.

This makes paid search advertising a great complementary tactic to help support your SEO efforts. **Paid search ads help you generate more qualified leads.** Another benefit of PPC ads is that they help businesses bring in more leads to their website. More than that, the leads that are coming to your site from your PPC ads are more relevant. With PPC ads, you are strategically targeting the types of consumers who are most likely to be interested in your brand. This means that the traffic you drive to your site from these ads is more qualified. Site traffic means nothing if they don’t need what you are selling!

**PPC ads provide measurable results.** Another benefit of paid search advertising is that it provides measurable results. You can clearly measure every aspect of your PPC ad campaigns including the number of clicks, the cost per click, and how many sales are coming from these clicks.
This helps you make better use of your ad budget and find ways to improve your results over time.

If you provide suggestions for the communications budget at your agency, you can also use this information to support your budget allocation towards next fiscal year’s search advertising efforts.

**Paid search advertising improves brand recognition.** PPC ads on Google can also help your agency improve brand awareness over time. Not every search engine user is going to click on your ad when it appears in the search engine results. However, the more often they search for related industry keywords, the more often they will be exposed to your brand name and site link. This helps improve brand recognition and may result in a later sale.

**It’s great for local search.** Many small businesses are targeting customers that are in close proximity to their location. The good news is that paid search advertising is a great way to target local traffic. This is particularly beneficial for UT IPS and its agencies as we serve Tennesseans. There is also a call option on mobile ads that allow the user to call your location right from the ad.

**PPC ads are budget-friendly.** Though it may seem counter-intuitive because you are paying per ad click, paid search advertising can be budget-friendly. This makes it an ideal tactic those working with a limited advertising budget. Since you can target specific types of consumers and measure every aspect of your campaign along the way, there are plenty of ways to optimize your budget and boost ROI. You can set budget caps, and the search engines will not spend more than you tell them to.

**Google and Bing**

Search ads are not just found on Google. In fact, Google’s search ad platform AdWords is just one way to advertise on search engine. Microsoft’s Bing has over 133 million unique searchers and nearly 34% of U.S. desktop searches, so don’t be quick to dismiss it as an option.

Like Google, it is free to set up a Bing Ads account with Microsoft.

**SECTION 8: Websites**

**Best Practices**

Our websites are often the first impression we leave upon customers (or turn potential customers into actual customers!). As such, we need to be cognizant of our web presence to ensure our websites are supplementing our marketing strategies. Websites are destinations for a lot of our digital marketing efforts – we need our websites to continue that customer interaction.

There are tons of opinions on website best practices. Outlined below are commonly agreed-upon website best practices. They have been adapted to apply to the work of all six agencies, with modification as necessary based on individual agency audience.
Keep branding consistent. Agency logos should be clearly visible on the website. Eye-tracking studies have shown that website users typically absorb content in an F-shape, starting at the left side and moving to the right. The agency logo should be at the top left of the website to make the best use of a typical web user’s attention.

Keep some white space. White space is the term that describes the empty spaces around the content on a website. When content objects are too close together on a webpage, it can cause visual fatigue for the user that may end up in their abandoning the website. The goal of a website design is to engage and keep the user on the website so your content can be consumed. Therefore, it is important to make sure adequate white space exists around your content.

Keep the number of choices low. Although it may seem counterintuitive, offering too many choices to a website user can cause confusion and delay their finding the information being sought. It is better to limit the number of choices on your website, so the user does not get frustrated (and abandon the website). Do not let “analysis paralysis” cause your website users to seek information elsewhere.

Follow the Rule of Thirds. The rule of thirds states that content should be imagined as divided into nine equal parts by two equally spaced horizontal lines and two equally spaced vertical lines. In this configuration, the most important compositional elements should be placed along these lines or at their intersections.

For websites, this means aligning calls to action or other important elements along these imaginary lines (or at the intersections of those lines). Ensure the remaining website content flows around these specifically placed elements.

Compress your images. According to certain website metrics, the ideal website load time is three seconds. Industry averages are slower than that at around seven seconds. What this means for your website is that users expect the content to load quickly. If you have a lot of images on your website, it could load more slowly than expected which could result in abandonment. For digital marketing purposes, we want users to remain on our websites for longer periods of time and reduce abandonment. It is therefore a best practice to ensure all images on your website are as compressed as possible.
Compression does not necessarily reduce image clarity or integrity; it simply reduces the file size so the image renders more quickly.

**Keep breadcrumb menus.** Websites often have a lot of content and pages that may become unwieldy for users to navigate. Simple, small menus like breadcrumb menus make it easier for users to understand where they are in a website hierarchy – and, ultimately, find the information they are seeking.

**Utilize Google Analytics.** Google Analytics is a free service that provides usage and behavioral data about website visitors. These data are useful for decision-making regarding content and organization of a website.

**Setting up Google Analytics**

To start collecting basic data from a website:

Create or sign into your Analytics account:
- Go to [google.com/analytics](http://google.com/analytics)
- Do one of the following:
  - To create an account, click Start for free.
  - To sign into your account, Click Sign into Analytics.
- Set up a property in your Analytics account. A property represents your website or app, and is the collection point in Analytics for the data from your site or app.
- Set up a reporting view in your property. Views let you create filtered perspectives of your data; for example, all data except from your company’s internal IP addresses, or all data associated with a specific sales region.
- Follow the instructions to add the tracking code to your website so, you can collect data in your Analytics property.

**Make the website accessible.** Website accessibility is creating digital resources on the web that everyone regardless of their ability can use. It means you must create a website that is accessible to people with disabilities that may affect how they use the web, including but not limited to visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, or neurological disabilities.

People of all abilities with diverse needs and preferences benefit from accessible websites. Providing an accessible website gives people the flexibility to access digital materials in whatever way they need or want to. Ways in which your website can improve its accessibility include:

**Alternative text:** Alternative text provides a textual alternative to non-text content such as pictures. It is especially helpful for people who are visually impaired and rely on a screen reader to have the content of the website read to the user.

**Document structure:** Headings, lists, and other structural elements of a website provide meaning to web pages. These elements can also facilitate keyboard navigation within the page.
**Data table headers:** Tables are often used to organize data and provide a layout of those data. Tables should use the `<th>` element so screen readers have an easier time interpreting the data for the user.

**Webform accessibility:** Ensure users can complete and submit webforms. Every form element (text fields, checkboxes, dropdown lists, etc.) should be labeled appropriately. Users should be able to submit the form and recover from any errors, such as failure to fill in all required fields.

**Captions:** Videos and live audio should have captions and an accompanying transcript.

**Non-HTML content accessibility:** Ensure access to all non-HTML content such as PDFs, Microsoft Office files (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), and Adobe Flash content. If it is not possible to make PDFs and other non-HTML content accessible, you should consider converting it to HTML. At the very least, PDF files should be tagged so screen readers can read them.

**Clear and concise writing:** Ensure all written text is clear and concise. Use clear fonts, headings and lists appropriately.

**Design standards:** Ensure your webpages are HTML/CSS compliant to provide more flexibility and accessibility of your content.

**Search Engine Optimization**

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a strategy to ensure your website is ranked high among search results. Common SEO best practices include on-site optimization, researching keywords, and building backlinks. Specific best practices for SEO on your website are:

**Front-load main keyword(s):** Ensure your main keyword(s) is located early on in your website content. The best position is at the top of the webpage – where users will start scanning your webpage. Further, Google puts more weight on terms that appear at the top of a webpage.

**Use unique titles, descriptions, and content:** Avoiding duplicate content is one of the most important SEO best practices. What this means is you should be creating unique titles and descriptions for your content so search engines such as Google can properly rank your content in search results. This rule applies to every piece of content including titles, metadata, landing pages, and image alt text. One specific best practice is to use one keyword per title. Do not use unneeded keywords in your titles; doing so will not improve your SEO.

**Optimize website loading speed:** How fast your website loads can affect how high it ranks on search engine results pages. To ascertain how quickly your website loads, you need to benchmark the current loading speed. Using a tool such as PageSpeed Insights from Google can show you how quickly your website loads. This specific tool will also provide you with a list of actions to take (called “opportunities”) to improve website loading speed. Typical actions include compressing
images, using lightweight themes, and using a content delivery network (CDN) -- a geographically distributed group of servers that work together to provide fast delivery of internet content. An example of a CDN is Cloudflare CDN.

**Optimize images for SEO:** Two of the easiest practices can immediately boost your image optimization for SEO. The first is using descriptive filenames for images. An example is naming a .JPG image of a stack of books as “stackofbooks.jpg” instead of something vague as “image123.jpg”. Google and other search engines can “read” the filename to provide context of the image content. This results in better SEO. The second practice is to fill out the alternative text (also known as “alt text”) on all images. Not only does providing alt text improve your website’s accessibility, it provides another method in which search engines can “see” the content of your images.

**Use internal linking:** Internal linking is one of the simplest and easiest ways to improve your SEO. Simply add a link from one page on your website to another page on your website. It is that easy. The internal links you create should still be context-relevant and meaningful, however.

**SECTION 9: Digital Marketing Budgets**

The information included in this section is offered as a helpful suggestion and not as UT IPS or agency policy. It is also recognized that not all communicators provide input during annual planning, therefore the details below are offered as helpful guidance for any employee who is involved in or organizes agency budgeting efforts.

One of the most critical steps in figuring out a digital marketing budget is identifying your agency’s goals. Work with your agency’s leadership team to identify what those goals might be. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- To build brand awareness
- To position your employees as experts
- To increase revenue
- To increase training registrations and course participants
- To increase number of consultations
- To build organizational partnerships

These are different goals with different approaches, so which ones you choose to pursue will have a big effect on your digital plan, and how you should be budgeting.

**Analyze Previous Efforts.** Knowing what worked and what didn’t, and, most importantly, why there was success or failure are important considerations.

**Allocate Based on Success.** Don’t allocate a large portion of your communications budget for efforts that don’t see any or much Return on Investment (ROI). Instead, review your digital platforms and identify opportunities that increased funding could help your agency meet its goals.
For example, social media may not actually cost you anything at first since it’s free to create a social media account or post on it. However, if the analysis of your past digital marketing efforts shows that building up brand awareness works very well on social media, you may want to give social media advertising some strong funding.

**Look to the Future.** Techniques that have worked before are important to keep in mind, but just as important is keeping an eye on digital platforms or activities that are relevant to your audiences and could provide more value to them.

Consider purchasing or upgrading software or services that can help save your team time or streamline your digital marketing efforts. Social media scheduling services like Hootsuite can help you schedule your postings for months out, and email marketing platforms like MyEmma or MailChimp can help you manage your audience groups and automate standard messaging.

## SECTION 10: Online Advertising Options

**Social Media Advertising:** All the major social networks offer advertising options. That doesn’t mean you should use all of them. When choosing where to place your ads, it’s also helpful to know which networks are most popular with your target audience. Most platforms will allow you to promote specific posts as well as create advertisements.

**Search Advertising:** Please see Google Search Advertising in Section 5 for more information. Businesses who place ads in the search results pay a small fee every time somebody clicks on one of their ads (this is known as “pay-per-click” advertising). This includes:
- Google Search Ads
- Bing Search Ads

**Subscriptions & Tools:** Modern marketers are expected to be a million places at once. Whether we’re digging through data or fine-tuning our social presence, relying on the right digital marketing tools means saving time and maintaining our sanity. Here is a list of tool and software categories:
- Email Marketing
- Social Media Scheduling
- Paid Social Media
- Website Testing
- Video Hosting
- Content Curation
- Website Analytics
- Customer Service
- Search Engine Optimization

Sources
https://www.crazyegg.com/blog/website-design-best-practices/
https://backlinko.com/hub/seo/best-practices