

PART I

FOUNDATION FOR CREATING A STRATEGIC MINDSET

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1

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA

An Art and Science

CREATIVE EXERCISE AND SELF-AWARENESS ASSIGNMENTS

These exercises can be done as take-home assignments or implemented in class (individuals and groups).

Social media is both a science and an art, so it is important to emphasize the creativity of what can be accomplished using social media. Creativity is a process, and this exercise will help in creating more opportunities to formulate your own vision of not only what creativity means to you but also for how it can be applied in a social media context. It is important not only to have a great idea but also to be able to execute it effectively and strategically.

Individual Student Activities

1. *Describe what social media means to you visually:* How would you describe social media visually? Pick one of the following creative options to help you share how you would define social media:
 - Draw what social media means to you (hand or computer).
 - Emojis. Create a 3×3 grid (nine total boxes) and choose nine emojis that represent your view of social media.
 - Memes. Create a 3×3 grid (nine total boxes) and choose nine memes that represent your view of social media.
 - Influencers and creators. Choose six influencers and creators you follow that represent your interests on social media.
 - Make a social media mood board (like fashion designers do) or collage on what comes to mind when you think of social media.
 - Create a 15-second video (using Adobe Spark Video, Adobe Premiere Rush, TikTok, Instagram Reel, or any other mobile app video) showing what social media means to you.
2. *Think of how social media can help solve a big problem or opportunity:* In your opinion, what big problem facing the world can social media address?

Use your imagination when considering how social media can help address and solve this problem.

3. *Understanding social media culture:* Working in social media, as you will learn in the chapter 5 covering careers in social media, is a culture and community in itself. Review the products that are sold on FreeTheEditButton.com. This is an online story that sells products and swag for social media professionals. Pick one product you would like to discuss and highlight for this exercise:
 - a. What is this product and why did you choose it?
 - b. How does this product represent social media and working in social media?
4. *Self-awareness of social media:* This exercise will gauge how students perceive their overall expertise and understanding of the field of social media. Provide this exercise either before the semester begins or during the first class. *Note:* Review the answers at the end of the semester with the Self-Reflection and Actualization Exercise in Chapter 16 to see if there is a difference for the students. Have the students watch Gary Vaynerchuk's self-awareness video, available from www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6tKf1IR5j8 (but be aware of language).
 - How would you define social media? List several attributes that come to mind.
 - How would you characterize yourself as a social media user?
 - How would you characterize yourself as a social media strategist? Provide evidence and support for your answer.
 - On a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*completely*), how self-aware are you about your social media work? Discuss how this applies to what Gary Vaynerchuk highlighted in his video.
 - What do you consider to be your strengths in your understanding of social media? What are your challenges?
 - What are some takeaways you hope to get from this class?
 - During this class, we will do several exercises and assignments. How confident are you that you will be able to master each of the following?
 - The content for the class
 - Assignments
 - Exercises on- and offline
 - Presentations (class clients, group presentations, individual presentations, client presentations, etc.)
 - How confident are you in the content for this class? What areas are you most concerned about? List these and explain. Discuss also what steps you will take to address these challenges during the class.
 - What are three goals you have for this class and beyond?

Group In-Class Projects

5. *Implement new ideas for how to use social media:* Pick a company, nonprofit, or brand that is known for a platform (Facebook, Pinterest, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, etc.). Describe how the company, nonprofit, or brand is using this platform, and propose a *new* and innovative way to use it.
6. *Social media platform debate:* Break the class into groups where each group represents a different social media platform, such as the following:
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Instagram
 - TikTok
 - Reddit
 - LinkedIn
 - YouTube
 - Twitch

Each group has to prepare and answer the following question: Why is my platform the best platform out there in the social media industry? They have to prepare 2-minute arguments on what makes their platform unique and amazing, and how they are better than the other platform they are debating. The following groups debate each other:

- Twitter versus Reddit
 - Instagram versus TikTok
 - Facebook versus LinkedIn
 - Twitch versus YouTube
7. *What social media campaign or brand comes to mind?* Choose from the following brands to look at their social media profiles (choose Twitter, Instagram, and Tiktok—if applicable):
 - a. Aviation Gin
 - b. Chipotle
 - c. Steak-umm
 - d. Xbox
 - e. Popeyes
 - f. Fortnite
 - g. Nintendo
 - h. U-Haul
 - i. Clorox
 - j. Dunkin'
 - k. *Washington Post*

Identify some of the things you notice they showcase and emphasize in their profiles. What stands out? How does this brand make you feel in reviewing their content? What are some things you feel they are trying to convey in their messages?

8. *Science versus art challenge:* As the chapter discussed, social media can be considered to be an art or a science. What is your perspective on social media? Explain your rationale and perspective in a 200-word max statement, with a visual element to support your stance. This can be one of the following:
 - a. Short video clip from TikTok or Reels (max 30 seconds)
 - b. Infographic
 - c. Image collage (3 max)
 - d. Memes (3 max)

Consulting Projects

9. *State of social media presentation:* As a rising social media professional in the industry, it is important to do research before getting into strategies and practices. You have been asked to create a “State of Social Media” presentation to a local professionals group in your city, and the focus is to discuss in your presentation to identify the following items:
 - a. What is the current state of social media?
 - b. What does the industry say are the key trends to watch?
 - i. Rise of privacy and data protection issues
 - ii. Spark of creativity and brand voice
 - iii. Employees as the star influencers for brands
 - iv. Nanoinfluencers and their trustworthiness
 - v. DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) initiatives
 - vi. Advocacy and activism
 - vii. Etc.
 - c. Present your top 10 social media trends (with research and case studies) to back up your points here for each of the trends.
 - d. Conclude with a Call to Action slide (e.g., what you want the audiences to know and do based on your presentation).
 - e. Have a reference list for the resources you have cited (at least 10 references).
10. *Analysis of social media trends and recommendations:* You are asked by a start-up in your local hometown for assistance in understanding new emerging trends on social media. They are on the basic channels (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), but they want your insights on what they can do with some of their other channels like Instagram and TikTok to engage with Generation Z more effectively.

Your role in this project is to create a slide deck to present (10 minutes max) and evaluate each of the platforms based on the following:

- a. History and characteristics of the platform (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram)
- b. Overview of new platforms (propose two new ones)
 - i. Provide the background of each platform and timeline.
 - ii. What is significant about this platform?
 - iii. Why is this platform popular? Highlight at least two cases for each new platform in your analysis.
- c. Current user base for each platform (refer to the latest WeAreSocial and Hootsuite Digital Reports) for each platform mentioned
- d. Pros and cons based on their history, specific cases the platform is involved in, and features (cite articles and references)
- e. Your recommendation moving forward with the platforms
- f. List of resources (e.g., Creators to follow on Tik Tok, e-mail newsletters to sign up for trends, websites, or blogs that cover these new trends and resources, Facebook Groups to join on topics, Professionals to follow on Twitter) you would recommend for this start-up to take advantage of (a minimum of five resources should be included)

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