



# **Using Twitter and LinkedIn Effectively to Promote Your Research**

## *Guide and Resources*

*October 12, 2022*

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the workshop on how to use Twitter and LinkedIn effectively to promote research. The workshop content is based on best practices within higher education (including several individuals at Boston University), content from my book *Maximize Your Impact: How Academics Can Translate Knowledge through Traditional and Digital Media* and my experiences working for various institutions.

The brand voice description noted on the Boston University Marketing and Communications website states: *“Our goal is to disseminate a brand voice to external audiences that is vibrant, smart, bold and authentic. We want to be confident, yet down-to-earth and personal. We shouldn’t sound institutional, stilted or overly authoritative. We want to speak clearly, simply and see the world through our audiences’ eyes, not ours.”*

One of the key ways to live out such a brand voice goal is by equipping researchers to effectively communicate on social media. It is not enough just for a university institutional brand to communicate with excellence. You play an important role in this as you are the faces of Boston University!

Throughout my years working in higher education, I have seen the individual benefits that are possible when researchers leverage social media. These include increases in research citations, promotion of programs or initiatives and new personal opportunities to name a few. You also are able to support the institution and have an impact on society.

Most academics are not necessarily trained on how to communicate research findings through social media. Hence the importance of social media training workshops. During the October 12<sup>th</sup> workshop, you will learn the value of communicating to external audiences, thinking through your goals, developing key messages and delivering these key messages via your own social media channels. This booklet is intended to be a reference guide as well as a workbook for you to take action and apply communications principles to your particular context. Within these pages you will find frameworks, tools and examples as well as a series of questions and exercises that you are encouraged to answer for yourself.

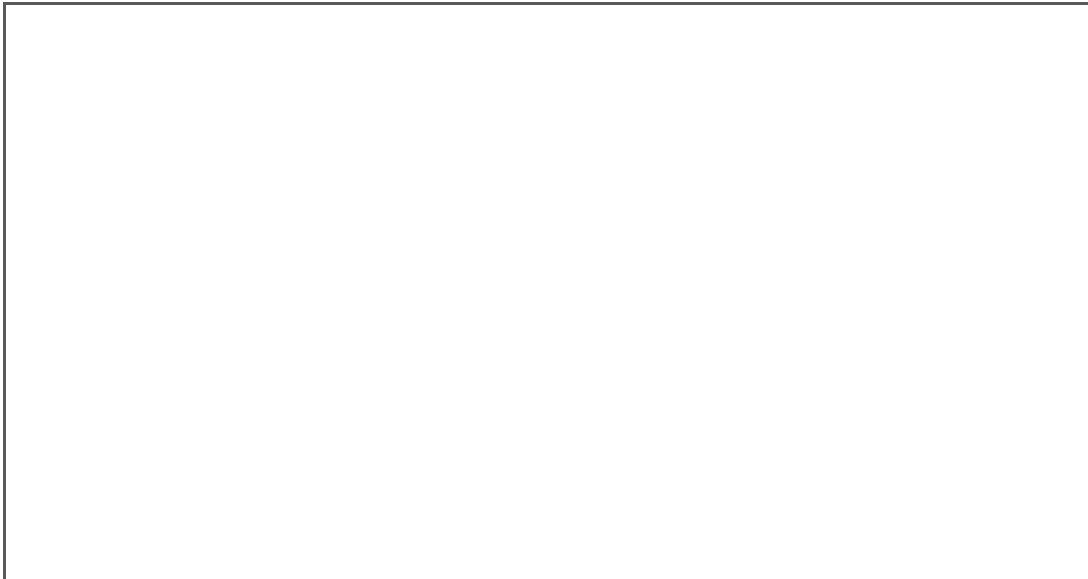
I am excited to see your research and ideas communicated effectively and strategically!

All the best,

Kevin Anselmo, Founder of Experiential Communications

## Formulating Your Goals

*How can you benefit individually by engaging in public communications activities? How can this help Boston University and any organizations you are associated with?*



## The Communications Mix

**Earned media:** Traditional media relations. This essentially entails securing coverage in a media outlet, whether it is through writing content or taking part in interviews. You need to work with a “gatekeeper” – an editor, producer or reporter.

**Shared media:** Social media.

**Owned media:** Content that is created on a platform that you “own” (like a blog or podcast). There is no traditional media gatekeeper.

**Paid media:** Advertising.

## Key Messaging

What is it?

- Explains importance in a clear, concise and jargon-free way.
- Potentially incorporates stories, statistics and sound bites (succinct and punchy comments).
- You can put together separate message point documents for both specific projects and your overall body of work.

Example of a Researcher's Talking Points on Eating Disorders (Professor Cynthia Bulik from UNC based on her CBS This Morning interview)

### **1. PERCEPTION HAS TO CHANGE**

- Eating disorders can affect anyone.
- Eating disorders don't discriminate.
- Eating disorders come in small, medium and large.

### **2. BINGE EATING DISORDER NEEDS TO BE RECOGNIZED**

- It is the new kid on the block.
- Recognized by the American Psychiatric Association.
- Simple definition and examples.
- Midlife triggers and bookends.

### **3. THERE ARE SOLUTIONS**

- Information.
- Book.
- Evaluation.

## Eliminating Jargon

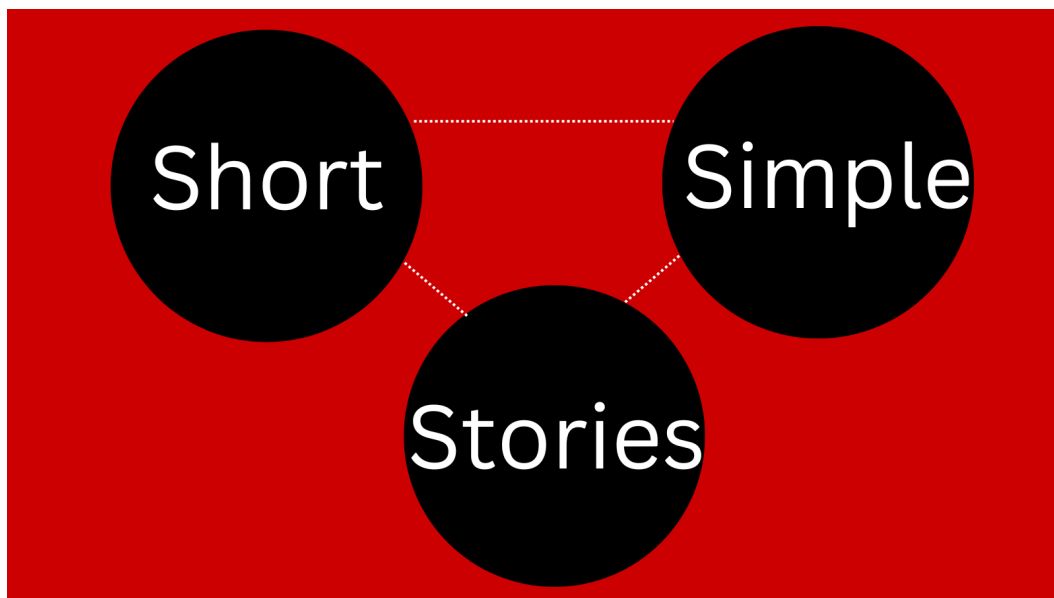
*"I'd advise someone to be as relaxed and informal as possible, and to explain concepts the way you might to a family member or friend who isn't an academic. To the extent possible, avoid jargon, keep the tone conversational and use specific examples to illustrate your points. The more interesting or colorful the better."* – **Katherine Mangan, Senior Writer for the Chronicle of Higher Education**

*"What I usually do is to compare a complicated situation to a simple situation that everyone can understand. For example, in explaining the largest heist in history,*

*the Mt. Gox bitcoin theft, I said that 'Mt. Gox was like your community bank ... except there were no tellers or security personnel, no cameras, and a vault full of cash with the door wide open.'"* – **Duke University Professor Campbell Harvey**

*"It's far better to use a simple term and commonplace words that everyone will understand, rather than showing off and annoying your audience. As somebody who didn't understand the difference between net and gross for many years, despite running several billion dollar companies, I have always preferred when financial issues are explained clearly."* – **Sir Richard Branson** as stated in his article on LinkedIn entitled *Why You Should Do Away with Jargon*

### Eliminating Jargon: 3 S's



### Your Key Messages

*What are the 3-5 key message points related to your overall work or a specific research project? This is an applicable exercise for any communications activity. Back up each message with stories, data, statistics and sound bites (punchy, succinct and memorable comments that you know will resonate with an audience). Sound bites might consist of humor (done in good taste), analogies, rhetorical questions or bold action words and phrases. Make sure that you*

*communicate your messages in a way that is understandable to a general audience.*

*After you have written out your key messages, write out / update your Twitter profile and LinkedIn "About" based on the information you provided.*

*The following questions can serve as your guide.*

**KEY MESSAGE 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

Why is this important?

Stories / illustrations:

Statistics to backup point:

What is one sound bite that might resonate with the targeted audience?

**KEY MESSAGE 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

Why is this important?

Stories / illustrations:

Statistics to backup point:

What is one sound bite that might resonate with the targeted audience?

**KEY MESSAGE 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

Why is this important?

Stories / illustrations:

Statistics to backup point:

What is one sound bite that might resonate with the targeted audience?

**KEY MESSAGE 4:** \_\_\_\_\_

Why is this important?

Stories / illustrations:

Statistics to backup point:

What is one sound bite that might resonate with the targeted audience?

**KEY MESSAGE 5:** \_\_\_\_\_

Why is this important?



Stories / illustrations:

Statistics to backup point:

What is one sound bite that might resonate with the targeted audience?

## Questions to Consider

At the [PR section of the Boston University website](#), we outline questions to consider when developing a social media strategy. Designed for schools and centers, many of the questions are also applicable for individuals. Here is the applicable information:

*Before diving headfirst into a social channel, you'll need to think some things through. What's the account's mission? Have you determined a voice? How will you measure success? For those looking to start from the ground up or revive a stagnant account, consider these questions before you begin posting for the world to see. The clearer your strategy, the better ROI:*

**Mission Statement:** What is the intent of this account? What does it hope to accomplish?

**Prospective Audiences:** Who will follow this account? What do you know about this audience, i.e., what are their motivations, what moves them? How can you find out more? Consider listing primary and secondary audiences.

**Key Followers:** Who will you follow? Who are the influencers in your desired audience? Who would you like to follow this account?

**Sources of Content:** From where will this account obtain content?

**Content Types:** What types of content will you need (photos, videos, web links, etc.)?

**Cadence:** How frequently will you post?

What tone and voice will you adopt? (e.g., informative, formal/informal, use of jargon, etc.) Consider listing personality adjectives you'd like to convey via your voice and tone.

**What does success look like?** How will you know if this account is successful?

**Relevant Metrics:** What metrics will you report on? How frequently?

**Brand Hashtags:** Which hashtags will you use often, if any?

## Researchers to Follow

*The following are individual researchers from throughout the university who are among the examples of effective individual social media users. Follow them and consider adopting some of their best practices.*

- Sabrina Assoumo, assistant professor at the Boston University School of Medicine. Follow Sabrina on [Twitter](#).
- Sandro Galea, dean of the BU School of Public Health. Follow Sandro on [Twitter](#).
- Lucy Hutyra, professor of Earth and the Environment. Follow Lucy on [Twitter](#).
- Malika Jeffries-El, associate dean of the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences. Follow Malika on [Twitter](#).
- Connie Noonan Hadley, organizational psychologist and lecturer in the Management and Organizations Department at Boston University's Questrom School of Business. Follow Connie on [LinkedIn](#).

- Joan Salge Blake, Program Director and Clinical Professor, Nutrition. Follow Joan on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).
- Steve Ramirez, assistant professor, Psychological and Brain sciences. Follow Steve on [Twitter](#).
- Paul Shafer, assistant professor in the Department of Health Law, Policy, and Management at the Boston University School of Public Health. Follow Paul on [Twitter](#).

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