

ABC's of Social Media

Edie Melson & DiAnn Mills

A is for Answer. Think about the questions your target audience has and use social media to give them the answers. For instance, my followers want to learn how to use social networking efficiently, so I Tweet short-cuts, tips and easy solutions that take up very little time.

B is for Basics. Whatever you're doing, make it excellent. That means take time to check for typos and readability, in your Tweets, Facebook posts and in your blog. Also be sure you're using giving accurate links. There's nothing more frustrating than clicking on a link that takes you nowhere.

C is for Conversation. Remember social networking is all about interaction between people. It's NOT talking at them...it's talking with them.

D is for Direction. Think about what you're trying to accomplish and be deliberate.

E is for Effort. Social Networking feels like it should be easy. But learning a new language is never done without expending effort.

F is for Friends and Followers. These are the basis of your social interaction online. Don't neglect them and only chase new connections. Be true to this foundation and it will sustain you over the long haul.

G is for Google Alerts. Google alerts are one of your best social networking friends. You can set up alerts to let you know when someone has mentioned you or a subject you're interested in. And best of all, it's a free service. Just click **GOOGLE ALERTS** and follow the instructions.

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H is for Hashtags. These are the gems in the fields of Twitter. Learn to follow Hashtags and use them correctly to increase your cyber-reach. Here's an article I wrote about HOW TO FIND RELEVANT HASHTAGS.

I is for Include. Include others more often than yourself when you send out Tweets, Posts and Updates. The litany of Me, Me, Me gets old fast in social networking.

J is for Journey. Social networking is all about the journey and the joy of discovery. It's NOT about arriving at a static destination.

K is for KISS. KISS is an old-fashioned acronym for Keep It Simple Stupid. When you try to use too many different social networking tools you can get overwhelmed. Stick to three or four that work and leave the dabbling to others who aren't working to become writers.

L is for Links. Used correctly, links or (hyperlinks) can increase your visibility and make your content much more valuable to those who follow you. Not sure how? Here's another post I wrote on the BASICS OF LINKS.

M is for Mobile. In the social networking world, more and more people view your blogs, tweets and Facebook through a mobile device (phone, tablet, even e-reader). Make certain you're mobile friendly and all your sites are optimized for mobile viewing.

N is for Nice. Nice is the basic etiquette for social networking. My grandmother would have loved social media because the rules are simple—treat others the way you want to be treated.

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O is for Original. Remember that original is who you are. There isn't another person like you anywhere. That is the essence of your value, the way you see things, share things and interact is filtered through you. Don't be a copycat, be yourself.

P is for Permission. Just because you see it online doesn't mean it's yours to borrow. Remember to respect the rights of others and take time to learn a little about copyrights. To get you started, here's a [COPYRIGHT QUIZ](#) that can test your knowledge.

Q is for Quit. That's right, quit. Set a time limit for social networking and then quit when it's reached. You're trying to be a writer, not a full-time marketing manager.

R is for Reach. Always look for new places to reach new people. Comment on a new blog or follow a friend of a friend.

S is for Start. Many people put off social networking because they think it's hard or unpleasant. You'll never know till you try (sorry, that's my grandmother again).

T is for Tease. When you compose a Blog Title, Tweet or Facebook post, don't sum up your message. [USE COPYWRITING TECHNIQUES TO WRITE EFFECTIVE HEADLINES](#). Tease your audience with something compelling that will encourage them to look further or interact with you and each other. In other words, become a social networking flirt!

U is for Understand. Take time to understand the social networking world. Learn the etiquette involved before you run headlong into embarrassment. Here's an [article on TWITTER FAQS](#) to help you get started.

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V is for Value. This is ALWAYS the basis of your message, no matter your social networking medium. Bring value to your followers and they'll be friends for life.

W is for Wait. There are lots of people out there who are trying to sell you a shortcut to friends and followers. The problem is that audience is fickle. Take time to build your network through value and personal relationships and your numbers will mean something—to you and to potential publishers.

X is for X-ray. Make certain the bones of your social networking strategy are strong. Take time to build a solid framework and you'll spend less time and get more results.

Y is for YouTube. Videos are popular on Twitter, Facebook and in Blogs. Learn to leverage the use of videos to add value and fun to your relationships.

Z is for Zoo. Yes the whole social media thing is a bit of a zoo. I tell people truthfully, if you don't feel like you're behind in learning everything then you're doing something right. It doesn't matter who you are, NO ONE can know everything about social media, the field is just expanding too quickly.

As co-directors of the Blue Ridge Mountains Christian Writers Conference and the Mountainside Publishing Retreats, DiAnn Mills & Edie Melson bring much more to the table than their combined half-century of writing expertise. They both exhibit a proven passion to equip writers today. Individually and together, they have encouraged thousands of writers as they stay true to the call of "changing the world one writer at a time."

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