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Goals

The primary goals and tactics of RTD’s social media presence are the following:

1. **Improve customer service and stakeholder communications**
   - Monitor and respond to all customer service and stakeholder related messages on RTD’s core social media channels
   - Utilize core social media channels to publicize news and announcements that are relevant to our audience

2. **Strengthen the RTD brand and FasTracks brand**
   - Translate print and web marketing campaigns into relevant, creative, and contextual social media campaigns and messaging
   - Develop promotional campaigns that are exclusive to social media and play to the strengths of social media channels
   - Monitor and participate in the conversation about RTD and Denver-area transit to ensure information is accurate and consistent, and to identify communication opportunities and weaknesses
   - Grow our audience on our core channels
   - Appropriately engage with partner agencies, governments and organizations

3. **Increase ridership**
   - Utilize social media to increase awareness among potential riders
   - Utilize social media to promote the benefits of riding and remove barriers to riding
   - Utilize social media to help existing, new, and potential riders understand how RTD base system and FasTracks corridors can meet specific transportation needs currently and in the future

4. **Increase understanding and support of FasTracks**
   - Monitor and respond to all questions related to FasTracks projects
   - Monitor media coverage and public sentiment regarding the FasTracks project to better understand communication opportunities and needs
   - Publish timely and relevant content that emphasizes significant or compelling progress toward completion of the FasTracks program
   - Support the four communications goals of the FasTracks PI team
Staff stakeholders

Senior Leadership
• Scott Reed
• Tony McCaulay
• Will Adams
• Pauletta Tonilas

Marketing
• Steve Reilly
• Tiffany Angell
• Steve Szczecina
• Christine Fresneau-Fan
• Account Executives

Customer Care
• Will Adams
• Virginia Johnson
• Cee David

Public Relations
• Pauletta Tonilas
• Christine Jaquez
• Lisa Trujillo
• Julia Marvin

FasTracks Public Information
• Pauletta Tonilas
• Dave Mitchell
• Public Information Leads
Roles and Responsibilities

RTD’s Social Media marketing is managed by RTD’s Communication Department.

Marketing Department

The Marketing Department serves as the lead department over RTD’s social media channels. The Marketing Department will direct all administration, content strategy, content development, content publishing, branding, voice, community management, engagement, and expansion. Any social media related matters that are not specifically addressed within this policy should be discussed within the social media team and ultimately decided on by the Marketing Department.

Social Media Team

The Social Media Team has been created as a working group to carry out the day to day execution of RTD’s social media strategy, as determined by the Marketing Department. This team consists of staff from Marketing, Public Relations, Customer Care, and FasTracks Public Information. The team meets biweekly to discuss, collaborate, and plan content for the coming two weeks.

The goal of the team is to work together to determine the best way to meet the communication needs of all internal stakeholders represented on the team, while maintaining a consistent voice and quality content, and adhering to the social media policy. The team should foster a collaborative spirit, working together to create a successful social media program for RTD.

Any content to be posted on RTD social media channels must go through a member of the social media team. To ensure consistent style, format, and voice of all RTD and FasTracks messaging, the Marketing Department may make edits to messaging as needed when it is discussed during the social media team meeting, prior to content being posted.
Core Channels

RTD focuses its social media marketing efforts on two core social media channels: Facebook and Twitter. These two channels are the most widely used channels in the US, and offer the most effective messaging platforms for RTD, our content, and our target audience.

Facebook

http://www.facebook.com/rideRTD

Facebook is used primarily to publish promotional messaging for the RTD base system and FasTracks, notify riders of major service changes and event-related disruptions, and provide customer service. Facebook is utilized as a mass-messaging communication tool and should be used exclusively for publishing information that is relevant to large portions of our audience and ridership. The dynamics of the Facebook News Feed influence the content and frequency of our messaging on Facebook. In short, our messaging strategy on Facebook emphasizes quality and relevance of content over quantity and frequency (see Best Practices for details). Facebook is also used as a customer service tool for our riders, who are able to post questions and comments on our public wall and receive/send private messages.

Twitter

http://twitter.com/rideRTD

Twitter is utilized for broadcast messaging, engaging with riders, stakeholders, and the media, and providing customer service. Since we are limited to 140 characters rather than an algorithm metering out content, we are free to post as frequently or infrequently as needed. We use Twitter to publish promotional messaging for RTD base system and FasTracks, provide real-time information about major service disruptions, keep the public and the media updated in the midst of service disruptions and emergencies, and provide an easy outlet for the public to ask questions and report problems. Twitter is a channel with many unique conventions and its own set of jargon. Understanding and correctly utilizing Twitter’s unique conventions (140-character limit, retweets, quoting tweets, tweeting photos, short links, @mentions, DMs, and hashtags) is a vital part of our strategy for Twitter. All RTD staff creating content or engaging with users on Twitter are expected to have a full grasp of the channel.
Secondary Channels

*Youtube – RTD base system*

http://www.youtube.com/ridertdco

*Youtube – FasTracks*

http://www.youtube.com/RTDFasTracks

*Flickr*

http://www.flickr.com/photos/rtd-denver

*Linkedin*

http://www.linkedin.com/company/rtd
http://www.linkedin.com/company/31698 (duplicate page)
New Channels

Any new channels or new profiles/accounts on existing channels must be fully evaluated by the Social Media Team and approved by the Marketing Department.

Criteria for evaluating new social media channels include:

- Is this channel a good fit for RTD, our content, and our audience?
- What stated goals or objectives of RTD are met by engaging in a new channel?
- How will you define and measure success with this new channel?
- How much time and staffing resources are required for creation and maintenance?
- What is the audience profile of the new channel?
- How big is the user base? How fast is it growing? Is it big in Denver?
- How are other transit agencies using the channel?
- What does the new channel provide that our existing channels do not?
- What are users primary using the channel for?
Administration and Procedures

Biweekly Social Media Team Meeting

This meeting of the RTD Social Media Team is held biweekly with all members of the social media team present. At this meeting, the current social media editorial calendar (Outlook calendar) is reviewed and discussed by the team. This is an opportunity for the team to identify scheduling conflicts, brainstorm ideas for new content, add new content to the calendar for the following two weeks, and discuss any major upcoming content that is on the calendar but has not yet been discussed and approved. Any content to be posted must be brought up during this meeting and added to the social media editorial calendar (excluding emergency or short-notice time sensitive content, see page 13).

Social Media Editorial Calendar

The Social Media Editorial Calendar is a shared Outlook Calendar used by the Social Media Team to track all pre-planned content. Any and all pre-planned content posted on the core social media channels must be added to this calendar prior to the biweekly Social Media Team meeting so that it can be discussed, or added during the Social Media Team meeting as a result of discussion. Content must be discussed by the team and is subject to the final approval of the Marketing Department. Separate calendar entries should be made for each channel the message is posted on. Once posts have been added to the Outlook Calendar they should be scheduled for posting in Sprout Social as soon as possible (see page 10). Once a post has been scheduled in Sprout or has been actually posted, the content of the post should be added to the calendar entry.

A calendar entry should be made any time a post (authored by a user or RTD) is removed/deleted/Marked as Spam on Facebook, or if an RTD-authored tweet is deleted.

All posts on Facebook and Twitter must be added to this calendar in accordance with RTD’s efforts to adhere to the Open Records Act, per Legal and Document Control departments of RTD.
Calendar Entry Format:

- **Title:**
  Include ‘Fb:’ or ‘Tw:’ to denote the channel, a short 2-3 word description, and AM or PM to denote the time of the day it will be posted. Ex: “tw: BroncosRide AM”
  
  If entry is for a deleted post, please include ‘DEL’ at the beginning of the title. Ex. ‘DEL fb: BroncosRide PM’

- **Body:**
  Once a message has been posted or scheduled in Sprout, the content of the message should be copy/pasted into the body of the calendar item. Also include the name of the Social Media Team member that created the message.

  If the entry is for a deleted message, please include reason for deletion and the name of Social Media Team member that deleted the post.
**Sprout Social**

Sprout Social is a commercial social media dashboard and team collaboration tool used by the RTD Social Media Team to manage RTD’s core social media channels. Sprout specifically provides analytics, monitoring and listening tools, content posting and scheduling, task assignment, and team collaboration tools.

All Facebook posts, Facebook comments/responses, Facebook private messages, tweets, retweets, twitter direct messages must be sent/scheduled through Sprout Social (see *Direct Posting* for a few exceptions). Sprout Social is available through the web, iPhone, Android, and iPad.

New commercial social media dashboard products may be evaluated by the Marketing Department and implemented as required by the growing and changing needs of the Social Media Team.

**Direct Posting**

In general, content on the core social media channels should be published/posted through Sprout Social, rather than directly through the raw channel (Facebook.com or twitter.com/twitter app). However, there are some instances when this is not possible or not optimal.

- When posting a threaded comment or reply
- When posting a back-dated post or Milestone on Facebook
- When immediate posting of a message is required, but Sprout Social is not readily available to you.
- When an incoming message needs to be responded to immediately, but has not yet been received into the Sprout Social Dashboard.
- When @user tagging is required in a Facebook response.
Accounts and Passwords

Account access information will be handled by the Marketing Department. Account passwords should be made available only to members of the Social Media Team.

- **Access outside the Social Media Team**
  Passwords may be shared outside the group on a strict need-to-know basis, and the Social Media Team should be notified whenever a password has been shared beyond the Social Media Team and managers.

- **Common Login Credentials**
  Channels with a common username and passwords (Twitter, Youtube) should be changed every 3 months, or anytime a staffing change occurs. If a common password is distributed outside the social media team, it should be changed once access is no longer required.

- **Individual Login Credentials**
  Channels with individual login credentials (Facebook, Sprout Social) are up to individual users, but they should be changed at least every 6 months. Anytime a staffing change occurs or a user no longer requires access, administrator privileges should be deactivated. Marketing will determine user access levels for platforms/channels with multiple administrator levels.
Planning/Strategy

Monthly Social Media Team Meeting

The biweekly Social Media Team Meeting is where all new social media content strategy and ideas should be brought up, discussed, and approved by the Marketing Department. Excluding emergency and short-notice time sensitive messages, all content should be preplanned and discussed within the context of the biweekly meeting prior to being posted. This includes items such as event notices, service changes, major detours, planned service disruptions, special service announcements, marketing campaigns, FasTracks construction updates, photos, news releases, etc.

The goal of the meeting is to make sure that all internal stakeholders plan and strategize together to ensure everyone gets their message out while still maintaining a consistent brand voice and maintaining a good mix of content types and an optimal frequency of posts.

Annual Strategy Meeting and Campaigns

All pre-planned content should fit into a specific predetermined messaging campaign that aligns with the previously stated Goals and Tactics. This is to ensure a consistent voice and focused message. There shall be an annual meeting of all staff to discuss and plan all messaging campaigns for the year. The meeting should be used to discuss the needs of all departments involved, determine key messaging and time periods for each department, and rough-out the Social Media Editorial Calendar for the coming year. This is a vital part of ensuring that all internal stakeholders’ needs are understood and met throughout the year. For example, during the month of August 2013 Smart Card will be launching to the general public and Marketing will need a large share the messaging during that month to properly educate the public, and so FasTracks may need to post less frequently during that time. Another example could be that FasTracks may have a month where construction on a new corridor is beginning or finishing. During this time it may be appropriate to focus a larger than normal share of the messaging to educate the public about FasTracks, and scale back messaging from Marketing and Public Relations.
**Time-sensitive Messaging**

Anytime there is important time-sensitive news or information that needs to be published, any member of the social media team may post it without preapproval or discussion within the context of the biweekly meeting. Messages should be published through Sprout Social if possible and conflicting pre-scheduled content should be postponed to avoid closely grouped posts. If pre-scheduled content must be postponed, please notify the team member that scheduled the content as soon as possible.

This category of content includes important news that impacts our riders, service interruptions, emergency messages, and updates or changes to previously published content.

Short notice promotional messaging and items that were ‘forgotten’ during the previous biweekly Social Media Meeting generally do not fall into this category. Special exceptions may be made on occasion, but all un-planned non-time sensitive content must be emailed to the Social Media Team and approved by the Marketing Department prior to posting.

**Pre-planned Messaging**

All messaging that does not meet the criteria of ‘time sensitive messaging’ must be pre-planned by the Social Media Team during the biweekly Social Media Team Meeting. The Social Media Team should evaluate all ideas for pre-planned content based on RTD’s social media goals (page 3) and messaging guidelines (page 15). All approved content should be scheduled out on the social media calendar (page 9) in adherence with the Social Media Policy’s Frequency and Timing guidelines (page 24-25).
Messaging

All messaging posted by RTD and FasTracks should conform to these general messaging campaigns. All messaging should be crafted with a mass-market audience in mind (See Audience, page 26)

**RTD Marketing**
- Special/seasonal services
- Service changes
- Holiday service
- Major marketing campaigns
- Significant changes to the system

**RTD Public Relations**
- Major detours
- Emergency communication
- Awards received by RTD
- Events that affect service

**RTD Customer Care**
- Customer service for RTD operations
- Rider alerts
- Real time updates on major service disruptions

**FasTracks Public Information**
- Significant or compelling construction updates, expected completion dates
- Major milestones in completion of FasTracks project
- Information about new service corridors and benefits to communities
- Customer service for FasTracks related matters

**Mass Market Messaging Don’ts**
- Insignificant/minor construction updates, road closures, detours, stop relocation, or policy changes
  - in general, messaging on social media should be relevant to large portions of our audience or have major impacts on our ridership or our service area.
- Mentions of internal information and internal personnel
- Information and updates that are specific to board meetings
Engagement and Customer Service

Monitoring/Listening

Sprout Social is our primary tool for monitoring conversations about RTD and FasTracks. Sprout Social provides powerful tools that allow us to monitor specific keywords, phrases, hashtags, @mentions, etc and track conversations about specific subject matter. Each member of the Social Media Team is responsible for monitoring conversations and mentions of their own content and subject matter, especially conversations directly related to content that RTD has published.

All FasTracks-related questions should be assigned to FasTracks staff, and all base operations questions should be assigned to appropriate Marketing or PR staff.

The Social Media Team must work together to ensure a prompt response no matter the subject matter or who published the content. This means that if a team member encounters a post that requires a response from another team member or department, they should utilize the Tasks function in Sprout Social to notify the team members, rather than assuming they’ll see it and waiting for them to find the post themselves.

Tasks in Sprout Social

Sprout Social provides an easy-to-use task management system that allows any member of the Social Media Team to assign a post/comment/question to another team member or themselves for follow up. Anytime a team member responds to a comment/post/question the Sprout Social Tasks function should be used to track the assignment and completion of the task. All tasks should be commented as progress is made on fulfilling them, and a final comment should be made when the Task is marked as complete. Tasks need to be used even if you are immediately answering a question yourself.

Finding the Answer

Many questions and comments we receive through social media may be immediately answerable by Social Media Team members, but in other
instances we will need to seek an answer from a subject matter expert within RTD. Any time the answer or response is outside the knowledge of the social media team member, they should consult with an expert within RTD and receive confirmation of the correct answer and messaging before answering.

**Timely Responses**

Timely responses are a vital part of RTD’s social media engagement strategy. All questions should be answered immediately if possible. If a satisfactory answer or response cannot be given within an hour, then we should respond immediately with an acknowledgement of the question/comment/request/complaint and inform the user that we are working on their request. Anytime an outstanding question/comment/request/complaint is not resolved on the day after it was made, the user should be updated on a daily basis until the issue is resolved, or given a firm idea of when they can expect resolution and follow-up.

**Ignoring User Posts**

In some instances, it may not be appropriate to respond directly to a post made by a user. If the user is not specifically asking a question, submitting a compliment/complaint, making a request, or otherwise soliciting a response from us we do not need to reply. In cases where a user is clearly trying to antagonize or harass RTD, using profanity, or making a joke at RTD’s expense it would also be appropriate to ignore their post.

It may also be appropriate to stop responding to a message thread with a user once you feel that the question or complaint has been properly resolved and the user is merely stirring up trouble or controversy. An example may be a complaint to an offensive advertisement that was placed on a bus, or a response to a customer that is unhappy about a late bus or a service change.

We can’t make all the people happy all the time, and sometimes it only fuels the fire to keep responding.
Deleting User Posts

In some instances it may necessary to delete a post made by a user on RTD’s Facebook Page. Posts should only be deleted if they specifically violate RTD’s social media comment policy, which is available at http://www.rtd-denver.com/SocialMedia_Policy.shtml and is also available as an App Tab on RTD’s Facebook page. When a post is deleted it should be documented on the Social Media Editorial Calendar (see Social Media Editorial Calendar). When deleting a post from Facebook, you may also have the option to ‘mark as spam’ and to ‘ban user’. In most cases it may be appropriate to merely delete the post, but if the post is specifically spam (unsolicited promotion or discussion of an unrelated product or subject matter) it may be marked as spam. In the cases of a repeat problem user, it may be appropriate to ban the user. Any decision to ban a user should be discussed by the Social Media Team and documented.

Formal Complaints

It is RTD’s policy not to accept formal complaints that we are legal obligated to investigate through social media. This includes any complaint that pertains to ADA, Title VI, or EEO. Users wishing to make a formal complaint about these matters should be advised to call 303-299-6000 or fill out our online customer comment form at www.rtd-denver.com/comments. All other complaints may be handled and communicated about through social media.
Best Practices

All RTD staff responsible for producing content on social media is expected to have a solid understanding of each channel’s unique characteristics, conventions, jargon, customs, and best practices. This section is not intended to be a comprehensive list of best practices to be followed on each channel, but is merely intended to point out specific style and branding choices that RTD has chosen to follow, as well as common best practices that must be followed and common mistakes that should always be avoided. The Marketing Department will make decisions regarding any best practices not addressed in this section.

Facebook

- **Posting Links**
  Links may be posted one of two ways on Facebook.
  1. As a Link Post with meta information
     This format is the default when pasting a link into the body of a Facebook post. Facebook will automatically build a link post with meta information using an image, title, link url, and link description. Sprout Social gives us the ability to customize the image, title, and description. When posting a link this way you are expected to customize each aspect of the link meta information as well as the body of the Facebook post. Do not use the default link image from the RTD-denver.com header; please use a custom image link applicable to the link being posted. You should also delete the text link from the body of the posts. Do not use shortened links when posting links on Facebook unless necessary e.g. you need to track click through data or are promoting a customized vanity URL.

  2. As hyperlinked text within the body of the post
     This format is appropriate when posting a link to accompany a photo, or when the link is not the main focus of the posts. You must manually remove the meta information that Facebook automatically creates to accomplish this post format.
• **Posting photos**
Photos should be posted to Facebook using Sprout Social. Photos should at minimum be accompanied by a simple description of the photo in the body of the post, but in most cases should be part of a complete post with messaging and links as appropriate. Please see *Photography* (page 28) for guidelines on choosing acceptable photos.

• **Responding to comments**
When responding/commenting on a post on the RTD Facebook Page it may be appropriate to @tag a user to address your response to a specific user, and send the user a notification that you have replied to them. To do this type @ and the person's name and a dropdown will appear with the user profile. It may make contextual sense to only include a user's first name rather than the default full name. You may delete the last name of the user and still maintain the @tag. @tags are not required if responding directly to a post made by a user, but are useful when responding to a user comment on a post.

Please be sure to re-read a user’s comment/question before posting your response to ensure that you read their post correctly, that you are addressing all their questions, that you are giving an accurate answer, and that your response is free from spelling and grammatical errors.

• **Editing a post or comment**
Facebook allows us to edit posts and comments after they are posted. This feature should be used sparingly, but when necessary. If an edit is being made to a comment to correct factual inaccuracies, you should acknowledge in your edit that the comment has been edited as such. This is in the interest of being open and honest in our communication. Edits made to original posts do not need to be called out.

• **Backdated or Milestone posts**
It is possible to add backdated posts to the Facebook Timeline, and to add Milestone posts that mark important dates and events in RTD’s history. Any post falling into this category must be brought up in the biweekly Social Media Team Meeting and if approved will be handled by the Marketing Department.
**Twitter**

- **Hashtags**
  Hashtags are a convention used to tag a keyword in a tweet as important. They are commonly used with events, news stories, groups, tweet chats, etc to track all messages that concern a certain topic, such as the DU Presidential Debate which used the hashtag #Debate

  RTD uses hashtags when participating in events like the DU Debate, but it is not appropriate to make up our own hashtags or include arbitrary hashtags that are not already established on twitter and regularly used by users.

  Marketing may decide to incorporate hashtags into future marketing campaigns, such and the #railvolutionary hashtag planned for the Railvolutionary FasTracks campaign.

- **@Mentions**
  @mentions is the standard way of engaging with specific users on twitter. Any tweet sent with an @username at the beginning of the tweet will only be seen by users who follow the user sending the tweet and the user being @mentioned. It is never appropriate to @mention our own account in any of our tweets. If you would like to send an @mention that is publicly visible you can include a period (.) before the @mention (ex. .@username blah blah blah). This should be done sparingly and only with good reason when the message is truly appropriate for our whole audience.
• **Retweeting**
  Retweets should be done sparingly and with discretion. In most cases, information being retweeted should in fact be coming from RTD, not the 3rd party being retweeted. In some cases, we may retweet a photo from a user, a news article from an established news agency, or other content that would not seem appropriate coming from RTD. Please understand the difference between quoting a tweet, manually retweeting, and the retweet button, and use the correct method for the context.

When retweeting a user, we also must vet the user first and make sure they do not tweet objectionable content or messages that are not appropriate for RTD to associate with. Retweeting someone is effectively an endorsement of the user. It is important to remember that a retweet is an outgoing message from RTD that all of our followers will see. Retweets should be considered with the same weight as an outgoing tweet from RTD itself.

Retweets should be done sparingly and with good reason, and only if the content is truly valuable to our followers and cannot be sent as a tweet from RTD itself. Self-congratulatory retweets are not considered appropriate, an @reply should be used instead. (i.e. don’t retweet something like “I love riding @rideRTD, they are so great”).

• **Favoriting**
  In cases where it would not be appropriate to retweet something but you’d still like to engage with the user or acknowledge a tweet it may be appropriate to ‘favorite’ a tweet. Favoriting a tweet is similar to bookmarking and will notify the user that we favorite their tweet. RTD’s favorited tweets are publicly visible, so some discretion should be used when favoriting tweets.

• **Linking**
  Links should (almost) always be shortened using Bit.ly (built into Sprout) and placed at the end of the tweet. Always indicate in the body of the tweet (if possible) the context of the link and what information the link will provide the user. NEVER use the phrase “click here”. This phrase is a waste of characters on twitter. Instead use a phrase like “Get details” or “for more info”, or optimally you should convey the context of the link in the content of the message so that no extra call to action is required.
Bit.ly and Shortened URLs

Bit.ly is the URL shortening service used by RTD. Any time a short/tracking URL is required it must go through the RTD bit.ly account. This account is automatically used when posting through Sprout Social. It is never permissible to use another URL shortening service (such as Tinyurl) or to use bit.ly without first logging in to the RTD bit.ly account. This should not be an issue if you are posting through Sprout Social. Links should not be shortened when posting links to Facebook. Customized bit.ly URLs may be created through bit.ly’s web interface (ex. Bit.ly/RTDdetours) and should only be used for specific campaigns, print materials, shortened urls that will be reused, or will very prominent.

Contextualizing Content

All content should be specifically crafted for, and contextualized to the channel on which it is being posted. Content produced by RTD should never be auto-posted from one core channel to another. Along the same lines, conventions from one channel should never be used in a message posted to another channel (such as twitter hashtags on Facebook). Exceptions could include sharing a Youtube video on Facebook.
**Frequency**

**Quality over quantity**
Frequency of content posting should always be driven by the availability of timely, relevant content that adds value for our audience, not by arbitrary posting goals or benchmarks requiring a minimum number of posts each day. We should never post sub-par content just because we feel like we have to post something. It is better to post great content a few days a week than to post a mix of good and bad content everyday.

**Facebook**
There should ideally be just one post published to Facebook each day, and never more than two messages published per day. If more than one post is to be published the posts must be spaced out hours apart, ideally one in the AM and the other in the PM. A Social Media Editorial Calendar exists to assist the Social Media Team in spacing content on a one-post-per-day basis on Facebook.

These rules are in place due to Facebook's News Feed. The vast majority of content consumed on Facebook is delivered to users in their News Feed, rather than sought out by users who are visiting pages. Since algorithms determine which content is delivered to which users, and not all users see all of our content, it is important that we be deliberate about what we post to Facebook and how often we post it.

We don’t want to post multiple messages too close to one another because they will effectively compete with each other and reduce the reach of both messages. We also don’t want to post too often because users are able to unsubscribe from our posts in their newsfeeds and are likely to do so if they see our content too often, or see low quality content that doesn’t interest them. For this reason, we should also be very conscious of the relevance and quality of the content we post to Facebook. People don’t put up with junk and spam in their News Feeds. Responding to user posts and commenting on existing posts may be done freely at any frequency, as these are not outbound mass messages.
**Twitter**
Twitter has fewer considerations when it comes to frequency and spacing of our messages. As a general guideline, it is best not to publish more than a few outgoing public tweets per day and they should be reasonably spaced out if possible. @mentions may be done freely at any frequency since they are not a mass message.

**Timing**

**Facebook**
Content posted to Facebook has a relatively long shelf life. Given enough engagement and interaction, a post made in the morning may still be seen by users checking their News Feed the same evening. Generally, messaging on Facebook should be posted mid morning (to be in News Feeds over the lunch hour and during the work day) or early afternoon (to be in News Feeds at the end of the work day and into the evening) with little concern given to the specific time the post is made. As previously mentioned, if more than one message is to be posted in a given day, the messages should be spaced out hours apart (AM and PM) to minimize competition between the two posts.

**Twitter**
Much more consideration must be given to the timing of content posted on Twitter. Twitter is a much more by-the-minute channel than Facebook, and content has a much shorter shelf life. The older your tweet the less likely people are to ever see it, so much thought should be given to what time of day you are posting (lunch hour, rush hour, evening, etc) and whether content is time sensitive.
Audience

RTD’s goal is to utilize our core social media channels in a way that is useful and appealing for all of our riders. The audience we hope to reach now and in the future significantly influences our content strategy, and vice versa. This means that all content should be relevant, appealing, and useful for all of our riders. This means that our voice should be consistent and easy to understand, free from transit jargon. This means that our visual media should be attractive and compelling, not uninteresting and bland.

Example: **Construction updates.**

Construction updates can be compelling and very interesting to a mass-market audience, as long as the messaging is crafted for a mass-market audience.

- Photos should place emphasis on the scale and architecture of the project, not the equipment, workers, or process.
- Messaging of construction posts should always emphasize the final product we are working toward and when it will be available.
- There should always be a benefits statement at the core of the messaging.
- Updates should never include technical language and internal jargon.
- Updates should be published only when there are major milestones or significant progress being made, or when particularly compelling imagery is available. This could include groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings, grand openings, completion of work on a certain station or section of line, or major changes to the landscape that can be communicated with compelling visuals.

The mass-market audience we want to appeal to through our core social media channels should always drive our content and messaging.

**Good example:**
Check out this amazing animation and see what the South Terminal will look like in 2016! What do you think of how FasTracks’ plans for the East Rail Line fit into this redevelopment? (courtesy of Denver International Airport, South Terminal Redevelopment Program)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s05iuR5viZk&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s05iuR5viZk&feature=youtu.be)

**Bad example:**
FasTracks North Metro is making progress. The mechanically stabilized earth walls have started coming up at the site for the future commuter rail maintenance facility (CRMF). The CRMF will straddle two jurisdictions. Who can tell us which two? (photo)
Voice

Though there are many individuals contributing to RTD’s social media presence, it is important that there be a consistent voice, no matter who is posting or what the subject matter or context may be. This extends beyond language to include post formatting and style as well.

First person collective:
Posts should always be made in the first person collective (we, us, our, RTD). First person singular (I, me, my) should always be avoided. There may be times when it is awkward or difficult to compose a message in this perspective, especially in a customer service context, but every effort should be made to maintain consistent voice.

Formal voice:
Our voice should always be relatively formal, avoiding slang and casual language, abbreviations and emoticons, especially in the context of providing information and customer service. Promotional and marketing messages have some flexibility in this area. A formal voice does not mean boring. Copy should always be written in an engaging, compelling way.

No jargon:
Language should never include transit or construction jargon (bus bridge, girders, culverts, etc), or obscure abbreviations (UP for Union Pacific, LRT for light rail train, DUS for Union Station etc). Abbreviations may be necessary on twitter due to message length constraints, but please ensure that the meaning is clear and obvious.
Photography

A major part of social media content is visual media and photography. Photography and visual media published by RTD is expected to meet a high standard of quality. This measure of quality is of course subjective, but can be reasonably based on composition, lighting, color, contrast, subject matter, emotional impact, and visual impact. All photographs and visual media should be shown and evaluated in the biweekly Social Media Meeting prior to being posted, and are ultimately subject to approval by the Marketing Department. The Marketing Department may choose to ‘touch up’ photos in Photoshop prior to being posted.

Examples:

**Poor quality:**
- No color or contrast
- Feels claustrophobic
- Bad composition
- No defined subject
- Not very interesting
- No impact

**Good quality:**
- Good depth of field
- Lots of color
- Familiar subject
- Visually impacting
- Compelling shapes
- Interesting composition
Personal/Professional Crossover

It is expected that all staff members involved in RTD’s social media efforts are actively using social media on a personal level, especially the core channels, in order to keep up with current trends and conventions, and maintain a full understanding of how users are engaging on each platform.

It is also expected that staff members personally participating in these social media channels will conduct themselves with the professionalism becoming of an RTD employee. It is never appropriate for an internal RTD employee using their personal profile to communicate directly on RTD’s Facebook Page or RTD’s Twitter, provide information about RTD, or act as a representative of RTD. External employees, such as District Directors, AGMs, and public spokespeople, may engage as appropriate so long as they identify themselves as an RTD employee in each post/comment/reply. This restriction does not apply to non-verbal methods of engagement such as liking, sharing, retweeting, or favoriting tweets.

All official RTD communications originating from internal employees must go through a member of the Social Media Team through an official RTD account.

It is expected that any staff members with access to RTD’s social media accounts will take extreme care to never accidently post a personal message through an RTD account. This is absolutely crucial. When posting a message through a channel where the user has access to both personal and RTD accounts, always double check that you are posting from the correct account.

These rules are ultimately subject to and superseded by the Social Media Guidelines published by the RTD legal department. All RTD employees using social media are expected to have read, be familiar with, and have signed Legal’s Social Media Guidelines document.
Updates and Emerging Platforms

The Marketing Department will continually assess existing and emerging online communication and social media channels to determine how best to meet the needs of RTD's internal stakeholders. As RTD adapts to the changing landscape of digital media and communication it may be necessary to make periodic updates and revisions to this policy. All changes should be discussed in the Social Media Team Meeting and approved by the Marketing Department. The Marketing Department will maintain the Social Media Policy and Procedures document and make updates available to all internal stakeholders.

This document and its contents are confidential and proprietary, and may not be edited or shared outside of RTD without prior approval.