Don't's of Social Media

Things to Avoid

○ **Using names or taglines people can't find:** This is a large mistake many social media users do, when creating a social media site (or website) you have to make certain customers, fans, and followers can find you. For example, if you are named "Sit & Sip Café" then name your Pinterest Page "Sit & Sip Café", NOT "Lincoln's Best Sit & Sip!!". Searches are not going to know you named your site that and will not be able to find you. *Note-If you have to create a special name due to someone else having yours, make certain you advertise what your site is called.*

○ **Using employee names or information without permission:** While your employees may wear nametags or have their names and photos displayed in your store, they signed a contract agreeing to this – online is different. Business social media sites are public to anyone with access and not everyone wants their information or picture displayed – ALWAYS ask for permission before posting. Also, even if you have permission to post a photo, do not name the people in the photo unless you asked.

○ **Using foul language, put-downs, or being rude:** Your site is a direction reflection of your business, you as the owner, and what you represent so you must remember this when posting online. While it may be easy to let things slip when seated behind a computer screen you have to remember that what you say online cannot be deleted and it can be shared everywhere. Reflection is key.

○ **Ignoring fans & followers:** Social media is interactive, not a one-way avenue for advertisements and self-promotion. If your fans or followers have questions, concerns, or praise for your business remember to acknowledge all of them and respond in kind. It is important to remember that they are choosing to follow you and see what you have to say, thank them for being a part of your site.

○ **Don't discuss number of followers:** You may have a goal for the number of followers or fans you would like to have on your social media site but discussing that number in posts is not useful information. If you wish to reach a goal you can state your intentions one or twice OR create an event "10% off coupon for all customers on the day we reach 3000 fans!". If you choose to do it that way (an event or contest) then the posts are relevant: "Half way to our goal, looks like the 10% off day will be in July!".

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Business Site on Social Media

○ **Don't use business social media as private (reflection):** Even if you are the owner of the business and you are the one running the social media sites the site has your BUSINESS name on the page, not yours. Remember that when you "like", "comment", or "share" on the sites because followers are going to view those decisions as where the business stands on those issues or opinions.

○ ***However-you can use "private" social media for business:** This is when you use your personal name (private account) but advertise your business through it or direct your customers to that site to find out about your business. I have discovered this is a good approach to using Pinterest as a business. This is due to the site being a better private social media site than a business social media site. You set up a personal account then have a few boards named for your business – this is an easy way to gain more followers and interaction with those pins. Just remember you are still representing the business.

○ **Don't brag about your company or products by putting someone else down:** This only shows that you think you are better than others, doesn't really make your business look good. You can "brag" by showing your accomplishments through awards or thank-you's "Thank you to everyone who helped us achieve our 5th year as number 1 company in Lincoln" instead of "Thanks for naming us number 1 over Danny's Café!"