

6 Golden Rules for Tweeting Politicians

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Politicians risk their careers by oversharing on social media, but can boost their popularity simply by including a few personal tweets, says Dr Ben Marder (<https://www.business-school.ed.ac.uk/about/people/879/Ben/Marder>), social media expert at University of Edinburgh Business School.

He's been working on six essential rules for politicians using social media –

- 1) Think Twice, Post Once – People often become short-sighted when making posts in the heat of the moment, but politicians shouldn't use social media to vent their frustrations – think about all the different people who might see the tweet and the impact it will have.
- 2) Be personal, but don't overshare – Research shows people are more likely to vote for politicians who talk about their personal lives on social media, not just politics, but great care should be taken. Oversharing can be detrimental.
- 3) Be careful who you follow – David Cameron's account famously automatically followed the account of an escort. People will know who politicians follow, so if you don't want the public to know, best not to follow.
- 4) Proof read – Typos may be a common mistake on social media, but for politicians, given their position and reach, mistakes can cause serious issues.
- 5) Check the background of photos – Politicians often post pictures of themselves working, but whatever else is in the shot might become the center of attention.
- 6) Be cautious about deleting comments – The chance that deleted posts have not already been seen are ultimately non-existent. Deleting a post is more likely to draw attention than divert it.

Dr Marder's research looks into the impact of social media on society, from Facebook's impact on anxiety to how we self-censor online.

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