

Abstract

This white paper is a primer for the novice implementing their first social media strategy/campaign. Detailed steps for each section will take the mystery out of creating and implementing a campaign with measurable goals. This paper will go over what success looks like for a social media campaign and how to measure it. The difference between having a smooth process, and quickly becoming overwhelmed, are the expectations and decisions regarding content. This guide provides a readily available tool for small teams in a fast-paced world regardless of business type. Attaining a successful social media campaign does not mean spending a lot of money or hiring staff. Small teams can gain social media campaign success. This paper is a starting point for teams that are new to social media campaigns. Executing a successful social media campaign starts with these crucial 7-steps:

1. Defining Your Audience
2. Choose A Platform
3. Timeline
4. Messaging
5. Scheduling
6. Assets
7. Measurement

Introduction

As business grows, most likely so does reliance on technology. Social media has been around since 2002, with LinkedIn being one of the first platforms (Terrell, 2/14/19). A platform is a place or opportunity for public discussion online and could refer to the operating system being used (Merriam-Webster Online). Social media has become a tool used for businesses to reach their audiences without spending as much as traditional marketing, but still tying in with their overall marketing strategy. For the first time small teams are now on even footing with larger teams with bigger budgets by using social media and strategy to their benefit. The success of a social media campaign is largely dependent on strategy, organization and analyzing data for future course correction and success. Small teams gain opportunities with the time and effort put into social media. The steps in this paper will show that the time and effort may not be as daunting as perceived. The main points covered in this white paper will be:

- **Implementing a social media campaign with a small team and small budget**
The risk of not being on social media is lost opportunity (Lee, 2018). Engagement in social media should not be viewed as the icing on the cake, but a crucial part of any campaign (Durkin, McGowan & Mckeowan, 2013), (Kingsnorth, 2016).
- **Measurement and Reporting**
Manage reporting expectations of data and measurement of success. Measures of exposure, no matter how precise, cannot tell us how content affects people (Webster & Ksiazek, 2012).
- **Speculation on the future of social media**
Businesses and scholars are now paying attention to social networking sites (SNS) as a medium of business communication (Bonsón & Ratkai, 2013).

It is important to remember that social media is an extension of your marketing strategy. Although social media is well researched; it has only been studied through experimental and theoretical research; studies never precisely describe the benefits gained from this marketing tactic (Paquette, 2013), (Royale & Laing, 2014). It is imperative to use social media in a way that is consistent with your business plan (Royale & Laing, 2014). Alignment with all strategies and stakeholders is vital for the future of a company.

Creating Your Social Media Strategy

There are seven (7) social media strategy steps for implementation in this white paper to help your team. There could easily be twenty (20) steps, but these seven are the crucial steps not to be omitted.

STEP 1 – Define Your Audience

Whether you are just getting started with social media, or you are an experienced marketer, there is always something new to learn (Jackson, 2018). Defining the audience is not a new concept in marketing. Research has proven as a business grows in size and complexity, its knowledge of its customers decreases (Bonsón & Ratkai, 2013). Assess whom you are directing your message to through a question and answer session with your small team to get to the root of the message conveyed. Decide if one or many different audiences are the target. Try to simplify by keeping the audiences anywhere from one to three groups (Schultz & Peltier, 2013). Messaging becomes overly complicated, hard to maintain and less effective past two groups. Keep your plan as simple and straight forward as possible for your social media strategy.

One of the most widely observed consequences of the growth in digital media is audience fragmentation. The tools we use to study fragmentation provide limited information about how people allocate their attention across digital media (Webster & Ksiazek, 2012). While there are still a lot of unknowns about how people split their attention across digital media, there are ways your team can assess what will work for you. Your team should consider the following questions (adapted from Paquette, 2013 and Bonsón & Ratkai, 2013):

- Monitor your competitor's practices (what are they doing?)
- Assess the performance of community managers (are they responsive?)
- Assess stakeholder's participation and their opinions (what message is the most important to them?)
- Assess marketing strategies on social media networks where metrics are adaptable (Can you use something similar on the platform you choose?)
- Assess communication strategies (Is it informative, Persuasive, Instructional or Entertaining communication?) (Enjoyment is the most powerful factor affecting continued intention to use SNS for both men and women (Kuan-Yu lin, 2011)).
- Assess the online reputation of the company or products and services (How long have they been in business and online? Do they have good reviews from consumers?)