Promoting a Sustainable Campus Using Social Media

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WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Did you know the University of Arkansas has an office devoted to sustainable development?

Did you know the University of Arkansas has led the SEC for 3 non-consecutive years in RecycleMania for waste reduction & increased recycling?

Did you know you can opt-out of your physical junk mail from your residence at sustainability.uark.edu?

I did not know any of these facts until I became an intern at the Office for Campus Sustainability (OCS). This office organizes great events, coordinates important projects, & the university as a whole has been recognized several times for its achievements in sustainability. However, much of this goes unnoticed. This is why **I focused my project on helping the OCS leverage their social media to help effectively communicate all their efforts & the school's efforts to the campus.** This not only means furthering the reach of each message, but also building relationships with the members of this university & beyond. This would be represented by an increase in online presence overall.

WHY SOCIAL MEDIA?

Americans' spend 22.5% of their time on social networks & blogs, more than any other online site.

People no longer surf the web for information, but they surf Facebook, Twitter, & Blogger. These web brands are now the center for information. The OCS can take advantage of this popular medium to engage people in conversations about sustainability. This is where we can provide information about our efforts & involve the campus in sustainable development.

THE PROJECT

1. Amendments & Additions
Facebook, Twitter, & the blog had been established, but not used effectively. Google+ was added because of the growing amount of users on Google+. Then, an email campaign, or newsletter, was needed to help promote the office's growing number of events, projects, & more.

2. General Strategy
A general strategy had to be created to learn the foundation for using any type of social media. Online marketing is a new type of communication where traditional marketing methods usually do not apply.

3. Best Practices Guide & Detailed Plan
Each outlet is unique & requires its own set of rules, thus a detailed action plan was created for each of the five web brands.

GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

1 Listen

The ultimate surveying tool is social listening.

•Find out what your audience is talking about.
•Listen to their opinions, needs, & issues.
•Determine how to best contribute to the conversation.
•**Tools**: Google alerts, Twitter search, Facebook search

2 Identify Goals

Form goals around the organization's mission & what the audience wants.

•Define the organization's objectives
•Define success
  - Increased online presence
•Identify required resources, training required, & any barriers

3 Create Content

What would the audience find intriguing?

•After listening to the audience, find content that would spark their interest.
•Be innovative. For instance, a Google+ Hangout could be hosted about climate change attended by influential researchers.
•**Examples:** Share facts, tips, promotions, ask for an opinion

4 Content Delivery Plan

When is the best time to send content & how often?

•Develop a timeline months in advance to effectively promote events.
•Schedule out messages in advance using social media dashboards for efficient use of time & to consistently post content.
•Find out what time of the day & what days of the week is content most viewed.
•**Tools**: Google+ Timing, Hootsuite, Tweetdeck, Seesmic

5 Engage Users

Focus on genuine interaction, not just largest reach.

•Traditional marketing's main focused is broadcast media.
•Social media is better utilized as an 'engagement network.'
•It's not just about reaching the most people, but listening, engaging, & empowering the audience with the quality & transparency of the content.

6 Measure Effectiveness

How is success measured?

•Various tools for all social media is available to ensure efforts are moving towards achieving those previously set goals.
•Measurements allows you to assess progress, revise or eliminate content, change timing of posts, & more.
•**Tools**: Email campaign analysis on MailChimp or Constant Contact, Google Analytics, Facebook Insights, website traffic counter, Klout

BEST PRACTICES

Each social media tool has its own unique ability to engage an online user as long as it is used correctly & consistently.

Social media is also ever changing; therefore, preparation is key. For example, Facebook made a complete overhaul of their page layout on March 30, 2012 with the new Timeline. Users with a Facebook Page were notified in advance & provided an option to test it out. This gave the users time to learn about the new features and how to use them effectively before the official public launch.

The image on the right from social media expert Mari Smith attempts to explain every aspect of the new timeline.

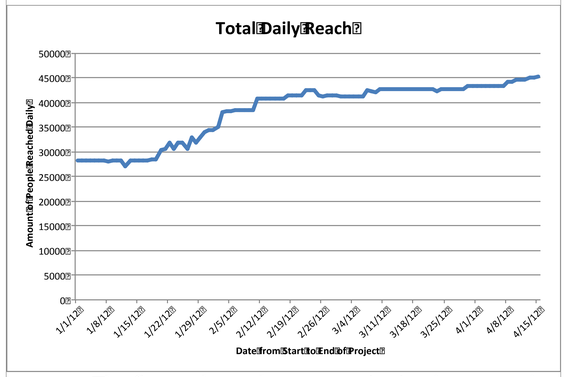
Examples included in the **OCS Social Media Best Practices**:

•Number of posts needed each day to actively engage readers on Twitter is much higher than Facebook
•Optimize blog & website to mobile theme for easy viewing on cell phones
•Consistently post blogs each week to keep reader's interested.
•Give people a reason to like the page, not demanding people to "Like now!"
•**Listen carefully, be transparent, be responsive, be authentic, & tell great stories**

RESULTS

The measurement period is between January & April when the strategy was put in place. This is only a portion of all the possible measurements & does not include all five social media outlets.

Facebook



- The figure above shows a continuing **increase in *Total Daily Reach*** (sum of *Lifetime Total Likes* & *Daily Friends of Fans*—every single person who could potentially see the pages' content).

Twitter

- **258% increase in followers** compared to amount at end of December 2011
- Due to increased amount of average posts/day, acknowledgement of new followers, & interactions with others

Blog

- **Avg 8.5% more viewers/month** totaling 1,867 views as of April 17, 2012.
- Due to consistent amount of blog posts per week, sharing new posts on other social media, & content pertains to current issue & campus events

SUSTAINABILITY

Social media is a free tool that can be used to promote the Office for Campus Sustainability & all the efforts of the university. By incorporating this guide into their program, there is potential to develop a greater online presence & campus presence. It is about shining a brighter light on what the students & faculty do here every year to help move towards a more socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable institution.

It is about using social media for social good.

Join the Conversation!

	FACEBOOK UAOCS	**TWITTER** UAOCS	
	GOOGLE +	**WORDPRESS. UARK.EDU/** UAOCS	
	SUSTAINABILITY .UARK.EDU	Text to *like* our Facebook Page! Text "**like uaocs**" to **32665**	

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