Social media: best practice, insight and strategy

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1. Social media strategy
Guiding principles

- Social needs to work primarily at the brand level - marketing 'proof points'
- Everything should be rooted in data, not assumption
- Audience-centred: you need to meet your supporters where they are
- Your supporters have expectations of what they want to see from you on social - and sometimes they're different
- What's your overall narrative beyond turning on and shutting off your own campaign moments?
- How to use the channel mix effectively
Social media strategy

Your strategy goes here

Things social media can do

What your organisation does (online)

Things other people think social media can do
Social media can surface issues you didn't even know you had

- Issues with your tone of voice?
- Confusion in your comms planning?
- Trying to say too many things at once?
- Don't know what customers really think of you?
- Brand personality undefined?
- Not sure who you're talking to?
Which channels to be active on

- Almost everyone should be – and is – on Facebook & Twitter, but what of the others?
- Capacity is crucial: each needs unique content & maintenance
- Low setup cost, but prepare an exit strategy
- Avoid at all costs: dead spaces with no posts; reusing the same content in 6 or 7 spaces.

Oxford Uni spaces on:
- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Instagram
- Google+
- LinkedIn
The importance of Facebook

- Only YouTube adds a significant chunk - about 10% - of users to Facebook.

- Most people keep the number of platforms they use to a minimum. While on average users log in to 2.3 platforms per month, VERY few will not be using Facebook.
Generally speaking, the more personal the space, the less favourable people’s attitudes are to asks:

- On your doorstep: 49% annoyed, 3% happy
- On the telephone: 47% annoyed, 2% happy
- Approached face-to-face on the street by a fundraiser: 29% annoyed, 13% happy
- Via text message through mobile phone: 26% annoyed, 4% happy
- Via an appeal mailing/letter: 24% annoyed, 11% happy
- Via email: 21% annoyed, 8% happy
- Through a television advert with a telephone number to call to donate: 13% annoyed, 17% happy
- Online advertising: 13% annoyed, 11% happy
- Adverts/leaflets in newspapers/magazines: 12% annoyed, 16% happy
- Via a cash collection/collecting tin: 9% annoyed, 38% happy
- Through the radio: 9% annoyed, 14% happy
Elements of your strategy

- Overall purpose for social media
- How SM fits with your other comms
- In-depth audience information
- Which channels to be active on
- Tone of voice / response guidelines
- Channel insight & strategies
- How will you benchmark? What does success look like?
- Policies on sub-brands and multiple accounts
- Content planning - calendar
Being audience-focused

- Single most important facet of strategy
- Who are your users on SM? How are they different from your regular supporters?
- Are your current SM users the same as your target SM audience? This will define your content strategy.
- Poll your SM supporters, either directly or using incentivised survey – regular, direct feedback is key.
Audience composition...

- How engaged is the audience on X?
- How big is it?
- Are they the right audience?
- How resource-intensive is XX?
...vs. resource allocated
Your social media strategy needs to live

- Accurate future planning is impossible in social media
- Placeholder strategy quickly > nothing at all
- Landscape moves so fast you’ll want to refresh every six months
- And your channel strategy might need to change overnight!
- Define and agree the direction first
  - plan tactics and channels later as this moves faster
- How your fans use your spaces may define your strategy
So what does this mean?

- Social needs to work primarily at the brand level - marketing 'proof points'

- You need to meet your supporters where they are

- Your supporters have expectations of what they want to see from you on social - and sometimes they're different

- What's your overall narrative beyond turning on and shutting off your own campaign moments?
Oxford University: social media strategy headlines

1. Encourage strong association with and affection for the Oxford brand

2. Tell Oxford University’s stories more effectively to key audiences

3. Ensure social media channels are being used optimally to maximise reach, engagement and impact

4. Increase audience size & participation in most relevant audience segments

5. Become more of a social media-focused and skilled organisation.
Oxford University social: some new(ish) approaches

- Themed content by weeks
- Each channel has its own purpose
- Actively engaging with supporters
- Celebrate user-generated content
- Focus down on subject areas
- Capitalise on external events & news
- Place visual content at the centre
2. Social media content:
A few notes on best practice
The social context

Who are you competing against on social media?
What doesn't work (generally speaking)

1. "Give us your money now!"
2. "Sign this now!"
3. "Buy this thing from us!"
4. "Sign up to XXXX event."
5. "Check out our new partnership with XXXX."
6. "Watch this ten-minute video."
7. "Read this blog about XXXX."
The self-serving social media fan - "why should I share this?"

- **Self-expression - emotional:** 'sharing this says something about me as a person.'

- **Self-expression - intellectual:** 'Look at this amazing new fact I discovered.'

- **Usefulness:** 'sharing this will be useful for my friends.'

- **News** - this is about a current trend or event.

- **Social good:** 'I share the same social values as XXX'/'I believe that sharing this will do some good'.
The 'half a second test'

I have to understand, be moved by and want to share your post within half a second...

...or it's lost forever.

Put yourself in the position of the user

Check all your posts on a mobile first (set up a sandbox page)
How it looks is more crucial than ever

- Importance of the visual can't be overstated

- Be platform-specific: one size does not fit all

- Aim for content mix playing to the strength of each channel

- Video assuming huge importance - with corresponding resource implications

- New developments on Twitter & Facebook

- Be creative with your images - Creative Commons etc.
Some golden rules

1. You should be able to take the logo off all your posts and still tell that they're yours
2. Take yourself out of your organisational bubble and see the post in the news feed as a 'normal person'
3. Be honest & ask yourself: "Would I share this?" "What benefit does this bring to ME as a social media user?"
4. Where's the emotional connection?
5. Is this really jargon-free?
6. Is there just one simple message? Is it clear what you want me to do?
A good social media post should do at LEAST one of:

1. Tell them something they don't already know
2. Reinforce the user's values and beliefs (inspire them)
3. An emotional reaction (positive reactions & anger are good)
4. Connect people with people - directly
5. And, from time to time, make them smile, even if you're making a serious point.
Tips you can use today: if you remember one slide

1. **Make it visual**: Twitter posts now up to 4 pics
2. **Facebook**: use **native video** posts
3. Have a **call to action** (like, share, RT, comment)
4. Facebook: keep the CTA **within Facebook**
5. Instagram: use it to **inspire**
6. **Be social**: RT and share liberally and have conversations!
7. Remember the **social context** at all times
8. Social media is **not just 'one thing'**!
What's going on in the real world?

- Look for ‘external world’ date hooks you can plan content for
- Scenario planning: line your content & messages up in advance
- Systems in place for responding to fast-breaking news/opportunism
- Monitoring the SM world – especially on Twitter
- Be careful about trendjacking – what's your legitimacy?
Thanks! Any questions?