

Social Media Marketing Plan

BUS 118-Electronic Marketing

ASSIGNMENT OUTLINE:

I. Creating an Informative and Eye-Catching Title Page

A title page of the plan should begin with a descriptive name for the document, followed by the company name, address, contact information, and the authors who prepared it. Do not forget to include the publication date of the document.

II. Table of Contents

Modern word processors, such as Microsoft Word®, provide the ability to automatically generate a table of contents from formatted section headings in the document. The most efficient and safest method is to designate the section heading levels during composition, thus minimizing the chances of missing important items and simultaneously creating the initial organization of the document. Introduce students to the Styles feature of Microsoft Word which enables the designation of section heading levels during composition.

III. Writing a Compelling Executive Summary

A persuasive executive summary highlights the main benefits and components of a social media marketing plan. The following tips offer direction in preparing an executive summary that makes the best possible first impression.

- **Lead with Why the Plan Should Be Adopted** - The executive summary should begin with a justification for management to make the investment necessary to take the actions proposed by the plan.
- **Keep the Audience in Mind** - Use the language appropriate for the readership.
- **Organize the Summary to Reflect the Structure of the Plan** - The executive summary should be written in the same sequence as that plan's components were introduced.
- **Provide a General Overview of the Main Components** - Provide a synopsis of the primary elements in the plan, such as a brief overview, the organization's current social media presence, a complete analysis, goals, strategies, target market, tools, implementation, monitoring, tuning, and budget.
- **Limit the Length** - Keep the executive summary to a page, two at the most.
- **Include the Names of the Plan's Authors** - This list should include the team leaders who prepared the plan, along with their respective titles.
- **Compose the Executive Summary Last** - Once the plan is done, a comprehensive overview of the most significant components is available, making it not only simpler but faster to summarize the highlights in the executive summary.

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IV. Composing a Brief Overview

The following tips provide suggestions for constructing an effective overview section:

- Describe the industry and company in order to set the stage for the decision makers by providing a quick look at the past, present, and likely future of the industry and the company's track record within that industry.
- Explain the competitive advantage in order to show how the company can realize significant gains by using social media marketing.
- Describe how social media marketing can contribute by concisely listing the social media actions that will be required to secure the competitive advantage.

V. Observing Social Media Presence

The holistic approach looks at brand health, a collective measure of a company's social media presence from many different sources. If the sweeping pronouncement of social media brand health is bad, then it is necessary to zero in on specific social media platforms and look at each site's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to identify the sources, nature, and extent of the problem.

Even when the overall news about the social media health of a brand is good, it is still useful to look at the metrics for individual social media platforms as a means of determining where social media marketing efforts are performing well and where there is room for improvement.

The following are five key metrics for auditing a company's social media presence on individual social media platforms:

- **Sentiment Analysis** - Shows the number of positive, neutral, or negative mentions on each social media platform where the company has a sizable presence.
- **Reach** - Indicates the number of Twitter followers, Facebook fans, LinkedIn group members, Flickr view count, and so on.
- **Company Posts** - Measure how often the company posts on each social media platform.
- **Feedback** - Shows the number of comments, likes, or replies to company-generated content.
- **Average Response Time** - Assesses response time to user comments on the company's social media properties.

VI. Conducting a Competitive Analysis

A Social Media SWOT Analysis identifies a company's strengths and weaknesses on social media platforms as well as the opportunities and threats on the social web.

Once all the factors for a company have been profiled, it is possible to determine the appropriate strategy in the SWOT Matrix. The SWOT options are:

- **S-O Strategy** - Follow social media platform opportunities that match the organization's strengths on the social web.
- **W-O Strategy** - Overcome weaknesses in social media platform performance to follow opportunities on the social web.
- **S-T Strategy** - Identify ways the organization can use its platform strengths to reduce its vulnerability to external threats from competitors or new technologies on the social web.
- **W-T Strategy** - Create a protective strategy that reduces the chances the organization's social media weaknesses will make it vulnerable to external threats.

VII. Setting Goals

Chapter 2 introduced a set of general social media goals, which provide a good starting point for crafting organization-specific goals. They include brand building, increasing customer satisfaction, driving word-of-mouth recommendations, producing new product ideas, generating leads, crisis reputation management, integrating social media with PR and advertising, and search engine optimization (SEO).

VIII. Determining Strategies

Once the social media goals have been set, the next step is to identify the strategies best suited for helping the organization reach them. Chapter 2 also introduced the Eight C's of Strategy Development (see the sidebar), which are guidelines for constructing social media marketing strategies for a particular organization.

IX. Identifying the Target Market

A variety of characteristics can be used to group a target audience into personas, including demographics (such as age range, gender, income range, occupations, and education); needs, interests, and tastes (such as a desire for a friendly atmosphere, enjoying coffee drinking, an interest in sports, or the preference for exotic blends of coffee); and behavior (such as spending habits).

X. Selecting Platforms

Once the demographic and behavioral characteristics of the personas have been used to define a company's target market, the social media platforms with the highest concentration of the target audience should be chosen.

XI. Implementing

Implementation is the process whereby the goals, strategies, target market, and tools are taken into consideration in creating actionable social media platform-specific tactics.

Each social media platform requires unique and customized tactics to successfully execute the company's overall strategies for reaching its marketing goals. (The text contains detailed tactics for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, and Swarm, a part of Foursquare.)

Although each social media platform will require specific types of content, some general guidelines for generating and using content across most platforms are as follows:

- **Developing or Acquiring Content** - A thorough analysis of the content needs for each social media platform should be conducted, identifying the specific needs of each community, finding the gaps in content, and either creating or acquiring the content.
- **Managing Content** - Regardless of whether platform content is prepared in-house or outsourced, it will still require editing.
- **Cross-utilizing Content** - A great way to leverage content across platforms is to restructure it for cross-platform utilization.
- **Breaking Apart Content** - Making content into smaller chunks and reformatting it will stretch the utilization of the material, allowing it to appear in various forms on multiple platforms, such as article directories, blogs, microblogs, podcasts, webinars, and discussion boards.

NOTE: In order to execute platform-specific tactics and generate content, specific roles and responsibilities must be assigned based on expertise and availability of staff. The most successful social media marketing efforts result from having nontraditional roles lead the conversation.

XII. Monitoring

Social media monitoring is the process of tracking, measuring, and evaluating an organization's social media marketing activities. The selection of monitoring tools includes free and paid tools.

A tracking plan should choose optimal topics of focus, select platforms with the greatest concentration of the target audience, identify optimal keywords and phrases by studying how people actually describe brands or other topics, use Boolean operators to zero in on the desired data, and adjust searches when they do not produce the desired results.

No social media marketing plan would be complete without well-defined quantitative and qualitative Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to assess the headway being made in reaching the organization's marketing goals.

The aim of an appropriately focused evaluation is to produce a thorough description of the progress of social media marketing activities over time to reveal where strategies have succeeded or nose-dived, along with how things went right or wrong and why.

Well-defined marketing goals should drive the decision regarding which social media metrics to measure and, consequently, the selection of the most appropriate monitoring tools.

Reevaluating the goals, strategies, and execution of the plan is necessary because of the ever-changing nature of consumer tastes, countermoves by competitors, and the continual introduction of new social media technologies.

A company should prioritize its social media spending based on its maturity level.

Whenever it becomes unrealistic or infeasible to calculate financial ROIs for a social media marketing plan, estimates of proxy ROIs should be considered as a means to explain the expected rewards for investing in the plan.

XIII. Getting C-Suite Buy-In

The following are few tips to help gain the buy-in of these top level decision makers:

- **Identify with the Mindset of These Executives** - These are busy big-picture people who want to hear the broad brushstrokes of the plan, not the minute details of how the company will gain followers on Facebook.
- **Show Them the Payoff** - With social media marketing efforts, the return on investment will likely have to be couched as proxy results, such as improved sentiment analysis scores showing brand strengthening or improved customer relationship metrics.
- **Present a Detailed Budget Request** - Be as specific as possible as to what social media initiative will cost, and link the expenditures to desired outcomes.
- **Show Them the Timetable for Reaching Milestones** - These milestones are often best given in conjunction with the Key Performance Indicators so that executives can quickly see the projected time it will take to reach each milestone.
- **Close the Deal** - Summarize the key benefits of the implementing of the plan while being transparent about potential downsides and the preparations that will be taken to mitigate them if they occur.