

#mStoner Webinar for swissnex: Speaker Notes December 2013

Connect Your Own Dots: Social Media Integration as a Best Practice for Marketing and Communications Professionals (Susan T. Evans)

Introductions

Hello, everyone. Thank you for joining me. And, thank you, Florencia for the introduction.

As I was preparing to be here with you today, I started to think about my own background using social media. I first used social media about seven years ago when I was the director of web services at the College of William & Mary, a small public university in the US in the state of Virginia. In 2006, I started a blog to chronicle a website redesign project that I was leading on my campus. Later, my team also started the Facebook, Twitter and YouTube channels for William & Mary and these social platforms were an official way that we engaged with many audiences like prospective students and alumni and current students.

So like many of you, I added social media as one of many platforms I use for marketing and communications. Of course, social media has matured a lot since those early days. It is certainly mainstream now. But one thing that has remained true is that is more powerful when it is integrated with other aspects of your marketing and communications programs. It works best when it is not siloed from everything else you're doing.

So, today, we'll be talking about social media integration as a best practice. I'm sure you know that your audiences experience your brand and hear from you through a long list of social and non-social channels.

And, in my view, you shouldn't expect them to connect the dots. You need to connect the dots for your audiences, and help them understand your messages through an institutional plan that allows you to stay on message across multiple communication channels.

Not about us

And, in case you decide to tweet during this presentation, here's a sponsored tweet from me to you. If you are tweeting, tweet this. Because, for me, this is one of the ultimate truths of communication, "It's not about us, it's about the audience we want to reach."

Thinking like your target audience is important whether you're doing marketing or communication or recruitment or fundraising or public relations. And, get this, a focus on audience works for any platform - print, social, photography...

Inbound marketing

And actually, because of the way communication platforms have changed, focusing on your audience has never been more important and never more challenging. Back in the day, we

thought about audiences, but marketing meant blasting consumers with images and messages. Back in the day, our marketing techniques were outbound, they were B to C. They were from the business to the consumer.

We are seeing some evidence that these outbound techniques are much less effective than they once were.

For example, we know that in the U.S.:

- 44% of direct mail is never opened.
- 86% of television viewers skip commercials.
- And 200 million Americans have registered their phone numbers on the federal "Do Not Call" list.

We also know that people are using the social web to get information when they want it and from the source they prefer. In the U.S., 72% of online adults use social media.

What we've got now is a fundamental shift toward Inbound Marketing. What do I mean by Inbound Marketing? I'm talking about marketing techniques where you earn the attention of your audiences by

- Making your brand easy to find and
- Producing content that your audiences value.

And I think there's no better way to earn the attention of your audiences than social media.

Agenda

Here's what we're going to talk about in the next 45 minutes or so. These are the four big ideas:

1. It's a web presence, people.
2. Run a campaign!
3. Make a smashup for them? And
4. Coordination not desperation.

Everything is connected.

So I first heard this statement as it relates to communication in 2010 when Michael Stoner wrote a blog post called mStoner's first rule of branding: Everything is connected to everything else. In an ideal world, connecting everything to everything else is the foundation of brand strategy, and social media should support your brand. The best marketing and communication strategies connect everything in a systematic way, across multiple channels. Although I think we generally know that everything is connected to everything else ... still, here's what we often have instead...**CLICK**

Web

Oh what a tangled web we weave, right? You've got a plethora of digital channels plus print; and don't forget the mobile delivery of all of your content. It's complicated to integrate all of this and it's hard to do multi channel communication.

Integrate multiple channels

Still, as professional communicators, I think it is our job to connect the dots for our audiences.

So let me make this a bit more concrete: If I read your print and visit your website and follow your social media properties, I shouldn't get conflicting messages. In fact, the various platforms you use should offer a consistent story, and be mutually reinforcing to support your brand and earn the attention of your target audience in a meaningful and more powerful way.

Ma'ayan

Now please don't say, we already have a social media coordinator who takes care of all that for us. In this photo, you are looking at an expert and talented social strategist that I know. This is Ma'ayan Plaut from Oberlin College in Ohio. If your university has a dedicated social media strategist, count yourself lucky. But people like Ma'ayan can't do social in isolation. We can't separate social media from our brand strategy. Unless you develop an institutional communication plan that will allow you to stay on message across multiple channels like print, web and social, there is a missed opportunity to effectively engage your audiences. And, frankly, your content strategy should also be consistent with a multi-channel approach. Strong content works for every platform.

Play Nice

All right. Let's try to untangle some of the web we've woven and talk first about the integration of social media with your university website. At a minimum, your social channels and websites need to play nice.

It's a web presence people.

This is the first big idea of the presentation today: actually, you need to start thinking of your website and social media properties as a web presence. These should be integrated and play nicely together.

Authenticity.

Think of all of your content as a footprint that explains your brand across multiple channels. There are a range of ways to integrate authentic content from people within your community using social channels and your university website ... I'll run through a few examples of what I mean.

Vanderbilt

Integration is more than a set of social media icons on your homepage or within the footer of your website. Although icons on your webpages are standard and expected, and it's important to help people find your social channels, icons alone don't take full advantage of the social media integration that is possible on your website. Placing icons like the ones at the top of this slide on your site is completely mainstream now but it isn't true integration between social and your website.

Consider the big fat footer on this slide: This is the web page footer of Vanderbilt University's News site and bringing in social content feeds like these into a news site is a pretty popular approach these days. You see here that Vanderbilt is pulling in feeds from Twitter, Flickr and Facebook.

Elizabethtown College

Another example of integration in the footer of a website is this one from Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania. With this persistent footer, every E-town College web page includes dynamic content from the College's primary Flickr, Facebook and YouTube channels.

Webster U

Another example of integration within a website is placing feeds in other locations on a web page; so not just in the footer. This is the Webster University homepage. Webster is bringing in photos from their Flickr site. I'll **click** and show you the Images at Webster section which is a strip of content from Flickr on the homepage; it is located just above the footer. This is a great way to integrate authentic content from social and add a crowdsourced element to your homepage.

AUP

Another example is this one from The American University of Paris. I'm showing the top of the homepage here, but I'll **click** and show you the social media strip that appears at the bottom of the homepage. It includes a feed from Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

Lead them home!

One easy way to integrate web content with social is to consistently tie back to your official web presence. You can use Twitter and other social channels to tee up a theme or message and link back to a web page on your university site. Remember that people have to be reminded and invited to visit and come back to your website. We are all bombarded with messages so using social is a way to get the attention of target audiences. Many schools are doing what Tufts University in Boston is doing - they are promoting and linking to news releases from Twitter. And links to posts from your Facebook page are a way to feature student blogs like the ones I show here from Ball State University. As an added bonus: links to your website content from social channels increase the search engine rankings of your web pages.

Regular Features

Many schools include regular features on their social channels. George School is a Quaker boarding school near Philadelphia and they offer a very popular Week in Pictures feature on their website. Every week, they use Twitter and Facebook to drive students and families to that Week in Pictures page. Again, social media is a great way to drive people to content on your university website.

Print + Web + Social

Let's not forget print. There is a real opportunity for integrating print and web and social ... and the College of William & Mary's Ampersandbox is an example. This print piece replaced the traditional viewbook that is mailed to prospective students. Ampersandbox is a box of cards with word pairs about the W&M experience. Each card contains a custom URL **CLICK** that ties the content to the ampersandbox.wm.edu website. (I'll **click** and show you the microsite.) Prospective students are encouraged to visit the microsite and submit their own word pairs. And, W&M is using **(CLICK)** Facebook and **CLICK** Twitter to promote the site to current students, faculty and alumni giving them the opportunity to create their own word pairs about the William & Mary Experience.

I think mobile is social media-ish.

Remember also that your web presence includes the mobile content you are delivering and there is a strong tie between mobile and social. A few years ago, I started writing about the tight connection between social content and mobile delivery.

Think about these two facts: 1) people are always on their smartphones - even at home when they're not mobile. In fact, U.S. numbers indicate that about 68% of smartphone usage happens at home.

And 2) more often than not, our audiences are using social apps on mobile devices. Facebook announced recently that 71% of its traffic comes from mobile devices.

So what does the connection between social and mobile mean for those of us responsible for marketing and communications? Knowing that our audiences are on mobile devices using social media apps, we should continue to explore ways to enhance content on our social properties, making them more engaging and more useful.

Why? Because your followers will instantaneously notice your Tweet with an athletic score, even if they are miles from campus. And, while standing in line at the movie theatre, they might click through from your post to read news about your latest rankings or watch a video. It's never been more convenient for your audience to experience your content. So make it count!

Amplify your message...

I've already mentioned that your audience, the people you are trying to communicate with or influence, are bombarded. There are a lot of messages they can listen to. I think you can use social media to amplify your message.

Run a campaign

This brings me to the 2nd big idea of today's presentation. Run a campaign. Now by campaign, I mean social media campaigns, not fundraising campaigns. How do these campaigns work?

Get results

First, a definition: A social media campaign is a focused effort to achieve goals using a variety of channels appropriate to the results sought. So the idea is that you use the power of social media combined with other channels to get the word out or to get people jazzed up and taking action. In the U.S., the 2008 Obama for President campaign was a classic example of a social media campaign. Let's take a look at some examples of effective social media campaigns within higher education.

OSU Powered by Orange

First, let's talk about the Oregon State University, Powered by Orange campaign.

OSU Powered by Orange

The Oregon State University Powered by Orange campaign was originally launched about four years ago in 2009. The Powered by Orange campaign originally focused on building awareness about the university in the Portland area. Powered by Orange was started to take advantage of the network of alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends connected to Oregon State. In 2010, this campaign was a Gold winner in the CASE Circle of Excellence Awards for best in social media. Four years later, PBO is still going strong.

PBO

The PBO campaign used a WordPress blog as the hub, a custom Google map, a [Facebook page](#); the @poweredbyorange Twitter feed, [YouTube](#); [LinkedIn](#); and [Flickr](#). It was a grassroots effort that started because the university did not have the large budget needed for traditional advertising to increase awareness.

Map yourself.

PBO Map Yourself gives alumni the chance to place an orange dot on a Google map to mark their location. The idea is that alums are proud to be connected to OSU, that OSU played a part in making them who they are, and that OSU alumni are making an impact on the world every day. The PBO map is a visual representation of that impact.

Everywhere

Now, the PBO campaign is pervasive - The PBO graphics were added to t-shirts and buses and light rail in the Portland area. And, you know your brand is strong when faculty start using it as a meme. You'll see here that the PBO theme was even altered by the internal community when budget cuts required furloughs on campus.

Nazareth College

Let's talk next about another incredible campaign; this time one conducted by Nazareth College in Rochester, NY.

Nazareth Flight of the Flyers

Nazareth College produced the Flight of the Flyers campaign and won a 2009 CASE Gold award.

The point of this campaign was to connect alumni to Nazareth and to each other. The campaign started in 2007 with a goal of increasing the number of people who attended reunions in 2008. Nazareth sent stuffed Golden Flyer mascots to alumni in the reunion classes and invited them to forward the birds to other reunion alumni. And, they kept track of the miles the stuffed Flyers traveled.

Even those who helped plan the campaign were surprised at how much people liked it.

Find your flyer.

During year two of the campaign, Nazareth alums had the option to take photos of their Golden Flyers in a location and check in on a Google map. Nazareth used Facebook Groups for their reunion classes and the numbers at reunion events have been steadily increasing because of the Flight of the Flier campaign.

Get a Golden Flyer

Later in the campaign, alumni could use this web form to request a mascot or they could print one out to photograph and send it on to another alum.

Apparently, when planning this campaign, there were some early concerns that older alumni wouldn't participate, wouldn't want to be part of Flight of the Fliers. Remember, social media is mainstream now but this campaign started 6 years ago! Actually the results didn't bear out the concerns that older alumni wouldn't participate. In fact, the top three classes for flyer miles were classes of '59, '64 and '74; so people ranging in age from 57 to 72.

This campaign is continuing, just a few months ago, I found a Pinterest site with photos of Golden Flyers and alumni all over the US and the world.

William & Mary

The final social media campaign I'd like to talk about is one I'm very familiar with. During the time I was at W&M, the College of William & Mary conducted a search for a new athletic mascot and I directed the communication. The President of W&M wanted to engage alumni and current students and he wanted the search for a new mascot to be fun.

William & Mary Mascot Search

I persuaded the administration to run a social campaign because we had excellent results using social media when relaunching and redesigning the W&M website. We decided to run the mascot search in an open and transparent way; and we used social to involve thousands in the search and it was so successful that it resulted in a lot of earned media for W&M. This campaign was a 2010 CASE Gold award winner.

More mascot channels

W&M used Facebook and Twitter and Flickr and YouTube to engage and inform the community about the search for a new mascot. There was broad engagement and a lot of participation from the community in the search. Initially, we used social to create a buzz about a new mascot and later, people could suggest a mascot and offer feedback and comments about the 5 mascot finalists W&M was considering. More than 800 mascot suggestions came in during this campaign and, in a 30 day period, more than 11,000 people gave feedback about the five mascots finalists.

Picture of the Griffin

W&M even used social media to do an internet launch of the new mascot. There was an on campus event, where the new mascot appeared for the first time. But alumni, parents, students, & fans not in Williamsburg, Va could take part because the announcement of the mascot was simultaneously announced on YouTube and many other social channels.

On Launch day alone: the mascot search site had more than 21,000 hits; and about 7,500 unique visitors. There were about 12,000 views of the YouTube announcement and The #wmmascot hashtag trended in the Washington, DC area for about 24 hours.

Tee up

So let's assume you have some great content on social channels; and that you've even done a social campaign or two. What's the next step? How can you present your social and web content in yet another way?

Make a smashup

One option is to create a place where you bring lots of different content types together. Anyone remember smashups? sometimes called mashups? The idea was that you would bring in feeds from lots of social channels into one place...

Content Hub

Now, what we're seeing on many .edu websites are content hubs. These are destination pages where content is carefully curated from multiple sources to present a new service or thematic content. Let me show you some examples of content hubs.

University of Texas Austin

Now sometimes, these content hubs are magazine-like. This is Know from University of Texas-Austin. Know is a very sophisticated content hub that brings in great information and assets from lots of other webpages and the team at UT Austin has developed the technology to automatically feed in content that has been evaluated and then endorsed as valuable by the marketing team.

The site also includes content bits that are hand selected for the site. I'll **CLICK** to show you the bottom of the Know page ... you can get to videos on YouTube or Vimeo and you'll see that the UT Austin team has included a Giving option in a very tasteful way.

Tufts Now

And this is another news magazine destination site from Tufts University in Boston. This is Tufts Now. This content hub was launched about three years ago, and it is the university's one-stop site for news, events, social media, blogs, videos, photography and more. The purpose of Tufts Now is to make it easier to find what you want and share what you like, all in one place.

What's really cool about the Tufts Now content hub is that it is fully integrated with the Tufts homepage. So, you note the story here about the Field Hockey win, well here's the Tufts home page... **CLICK**

Tufts Home

So you have a clean, compelling homepage with a wow factor and when you **CLICK THRU** from the story, you see the rich detail from Tufts Now. I think this site is Genius.

Boston University

You can't talk about integration of social with websites without talking about this site from Boston University.

This is BUiverse and it is a hub for video. The featured video is from BU Today but below the feature, the site is filled with video from BU faculty and BU students. **CLICK** Here's the page below the main video well...There is a sophisticated tagging structure, so you can filter videos by categories like "food" or "nanomedicine"

CLICK This site allows visitors to like and to comment on the videos too. I really think BU is breaking the mold on "news" content on university sites.

Social Directory

Another type of destination page that integrates social with your website is a directory of your social channels.

Carnegie Mellon

This is the social media directory for Carnegie Mellon University. This page offers a clean, easy to view directory that features the central, university level social channels up front, and then a list of channels of schools and colleges within the university. And, if you go to this page, and scroll down a bit further, you'll see that this directory also includes social icons for the departments, centers and institutes at Carnegie Mellon.

Notre Dame

Here's another great example of a social media directory. This nd.edu/social - the social directory for Notre Dame University. The directory is a clean way to present a lot of social channels in a way that is very easy to parse visually.

Stay on message

Let's switch gears a bit and talk about how you can stay on message across multiple channels...

Campus Coordination

Assuming you already have a brand platform and visual identity program in place, I think one of the most important things you can do is make sure that the communicators across campus are communicating! So the 4th big idea of this presentation is campus coordination.

No Silos

This requires breaking down silos and it means those with the word communications in their title are coordinating with others about messaging and content.

Focus on content

Here's what works:

Story or message first, platform or channel second.

You want content that is flexible; flexible enough to be used in different ways across different channels.

Just think COPE - create once, publish everywhere.

Let me say this again, because I feel strongly about content strategy. Exceptional content works for all platforms.

Editorial Calendar

On the next few slides, I'll be showing you the approach used at UT Austin for web and social content. They are using an editorial calendar to coordinate (and plan ahead) for web features and social posts; being sure that they are on message. This editorial calendar is particularly important in large universities with a decentralized approach to communications.

You've probably realized this but as you're looking at these slides think about the number of conversations and meetings that might be needed to put something like this together. Getting the communicators to communicate about communications plans is ... a good thing.

Social Media collaborative

Another lesson we can learn from UT Austin is from their Social Media Collaborative. This is the Facebook page for a group of more than 400 people who manage social channels for the University. They meet regularly, exchange ideas, and share best practices for social. The central communications office at UT Austin even offers a social media bootcamp for people who manage campus social channels.

Colorado State Social Tips

UT Austin is not alone in their goal of supporting a campus wide approach to social. Another thing many campuses are doing to encourage social integration and break down silos, is to offer sites that share tips and best practices for social channels. Here is a screen shot of a site at Colorado State University. The team there has combined a site with info about social media policies and suggestions for using social effectively.

Recommended

- Create partnerships with other campus units
- Focus on your web presence (website, social)
- Produce great, flexible content (it always makes things easier)
- Determine the purpose, relevance and importance of each platform
- Integrate social content within your website and print collateral
- *Think of social as only one element of your marketing and communications strategy*

Testing, Testing 123

So here's some a bonus piece of advice. Social platforms like Flickr and Instagram let you see stats that show you what types of photos are popular with your target audiences, right? And, knowing what your audience likes helps you select future photography for your social channels. Another plus: since social helps you determine the most popular photography, why not also use those preferences when you are selecting photos for your website or print pieces? Why not "test" themes, and stories, and ideas on Facebook first? See what kind of reactions and responses you get and then use that feedback as you develop content for print and your website.

Bottom Line?

So let's start to wrap up...

Scary?

It's a big scary communication world out there but it IS possible to achieve your communication goals. AND, you are not alone ... I'd like to highlight a few great ways to keep up to date about social media.

CASE Blog

The CASE Social Media Blog is an excellent resource. The posts are written by many people who work in higher education institutions. CASE is also hosting social media chats on Twitter, you'll note the blog post here is about a chat on content curation. And if you are planning to attend a conference in 2014, I recommend the CASE social media conference to be held in March 2014 in Marina Del Ray.

EDUniverse

Another way to get ideas for social content is to visit EDUniverse. EDUniverse is network sponsored by mStoner. We launched this site a couple of years ago as a free resource for the education community.

Anyone can visit the site - it's filled with ideas, best practices, new ways of thinking about marketing and communication in education. If you want you can create a profile and submit content on EDUniverse - there are currently profiles from almost 900 people who work in education. And there are now 2,500 posts on the site and a whole lot of them focus on social media. So check it out.

Higher Ed Live

Another suggestion is Higher Ed Live. Higher Ed Live offers weekly live show that cover many topics of interest to communicators in higher ed. So tune into those.

Social Works

So, here's one final way to increase your own knowledge about social ... this is the cover for Social Works, it a book of case studies that was published by mStoner early in 2013. Social media is pervasive and we know that people are seeking models of social media campaigns to inspire their own initiatives. But examples are hard to find — they're scattered across websites, blogs, in white papers, and in magazines and journals like CASE Currents.

We thought there was a need for a collection of case studies that illustrated how colleges and universities developed and conducted campaigns built around social media. So, the book Social Works includes case studies written by 25 people who work in higher education.

Thank you.