NationalJournalCommunicationsCouncil

Media University

AMU 411

# Social Media Fundamentals-Part 1



### **Our Time Together**

Mapping today's (changing) channel landscape

Linking social objectives to business objectives

→ Writing on social: finding your voice, increasing engagement

# Revisiting the Distinctive Advantages and Shortfalls of Social

The More Things Change, the More They (Mostly?) Stay the Same for Advocacy on Social



### Many Questions Remain the Same

Most Organizations Have Progressed Past the Sense-Making Phase Into Engagement—But Not Into Action, Yet



# **Evolution of Social Media Emphasizes Depth Over Breadth**

Online Platforms Now More Concerned with Maximum User Engagement and Niche Audiences



1980-2000

- Era emblematized a proliferation in content producers and literal "channels"
- Consumers had new and compelling choices as they adopted to the digital age, but content lacked depth and issues were approached from a 10,000 foot view
- Most organizations glossed over nuance in favor of eye-grabbing visuals or simple messages
- ✓ Few players in social media were one-stop shops for content and they divided engagement channels into broadest possible categories

#### 2000-2010

- Period signaled almost bewildering depth in content and information, leaving organizations inundated with significant access to data
- Individuals were given more power to curate their own content
- To survive in this new world, content creators simply compiled and shared as much information as possible
- ✓ Time of rapid expansion of social space; users and organizations alike felt the pressure to be everywhere, despite not fully understanding the returns

#### The "Drowners"



The "Surfers"





- With more data than one could feasibly digest, organizations have begun to move away from "capturing everything" toward "exploring something" as deeply as possible
- Archives have been deprioritized in lieu of immersive media landscapes, giving users the ability to break down content as they wish
- ✓ To best engage niche communities, social media platforms have begun to
   1) splinter into discrete platforms
   (such as messaging services) or 2)
   devote their entire platform to filling a very specific need (e.g., photo aggregation)

#### The "Divers"



Source: Rex Sorgatz article, "Surfing, Drowning, Diving," images from the Noun Project, National Journal Communications Council research and analysis.

# Setting the Current Social Media Landscape

Across the Spectrum, Key Players Capture Vast Swath of User Appetites and Desires

#### #1

#### The "All-in-One" Approach



- Seeks to capture broadest possible audience with a diverse array of rich content
- More liable to make investments in risky or unproven product offerings that could enhance engagement (e.g., publishing, online retail)
- Reflects diverse user interests and needs while providing a barometer for macro trends and hot-button issues
- Most useful for: breaking news, ongoing dialogue, building networks, keeping tabs on issues, items and influentials, creating archives
- ✓ Examples include: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn

The "Video Chasers"



- Principally attracts users interested in watching, creating or saving online videos
- ✓ Offerings range from short clips (~5 to 10 seconds) to full length videos depending on audience focus
- Provides content with high potential for virality, attracting significant user discussion and commentary
- Most useful for: eyecatching material, building emotional connections, breaking news, deep engagement on a particular issue (for longer videos)
- ✓ Examples include: YouTube, Vine, Vimeo

The "Photo-Savvy Socialites"



- Emphasizes capturing or curating a particular moment in time and enhancing images with text, filters or other tools
- ✓ Organizations and influentials seek to amass followers who receive updates on new posts and can often access previous posts
- ✓ May present the greatest potential for virality given increased media attention to these platforms
- Most useful for: cultivating niche communities, forging human connections, fun and entertainment, keeping tabs on issues, items and influentials
- ✓ Examples include: Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat

<sup>#</sup>4

The "Social Messaging Scions"

202 202 202



- Primarily used to communicate privately with friends, colleagues and other networks
- ✓ Takes advantage of user interest in "dark social" content to easily share photos, videos and other information with individuals or groups
- Least apt for taking messages viral, but future may lie in ability to turn privately-shared content into publicly-posted information at will
- ✓ Most useful for: Ongoing dialogue, building networks, keeping in touch
- ✓ Examples include: Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Viber, Kik

### From P2P Engagement to Brand Incorporation

Pinpoint the Ideal Time to Insert Your Association Into New Social Media Platforms

#### Remember the 5 As Before Breaking Ground in Social

#### **Case Study: Snapchat**

- $\checkmark$ **Adoption:** Currently a hit with youngest Millennials, but has not yet permeated key older demographics (e.g., Gen Xers)
- Value-Added Features: Endowed with  $\checkmark$ heightened messaging functionality, customizable videos and photos, storytelling ability, etc.
- **Acumen:** Not yet fully understood by most ? Comms professionals, particularly as product offerings continue to grow
- ? Analytics: Lacking advanced back-end analytical features to keep track of and measure organic organization-run campaign success
- Advertising Platform: Remains quite ? nascent and tied to "Stories" but will hopefully improve with advent of "Discover" platform

**Base Social** 



### Professional Applications of Social Distinguish Use in Washington

LinkedIn, Twitter More Widely Adopted Inside the Beltway Than Among Online U.S. Adults

#### Comparison of Social Media Platform Usage

Percentage of Washington Insiders Who Have Used Platform vs. All Online U.S. Adults



# Washington Still Hasn't Fully Embraced Social Media

Traditional Forms of Communication Remain More Potent in the Capital



Source: National Journal Communications Council research and analysis.

### Washington Still Hasn't Fully Embraced Social Media

Traditional Forms of Communication Remain More Potent in the Capital

Forms of Content Sought from Advocacy Groups, Last 12 Months Percentage of Respondents, WIA



### **Current Demographics Bode Well for Future Social Media Growth**

Key Platforms Gaining Traction in Washington, Becoming a Tool for Sharing Opinions



Utilization of Social Media During Three Phases of Preparing for a Critical Vote

### **Sharing Patterns Diverge Across Generational Lines**

After Information-Sharing, Various Reasons Provided for Sharing on Social Media in Washington



# "Big 3" Quickly Changing to Fill Needs and Create Wants

Ongoing Evolution of Major Platforms Intended to Keep Audience Engagement High

	January 2015 "Rules of Engagement"	June 2015 "Rules of Engagement"
<b>facebook</b> From Algorithmic Changes to Additional Features	<ul> <li>Video views on News Feed outpaced photo views by a factor of 2:1</li> <li>Facebook algorithm favored native uploads over external video posts</li> <li>General interest posts more likely to be seen than promotional posts</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>✓ Native video posts supersede external video for maximum organic reach</li> <li>✓ Search function outfitted with the ability to find links, thus improving mobile sharing</li> <li>✓ With "Instant Articles," Facebook now a player in native publishing</li> <li>✓ Growth strongest among older demographics</li> </ul>
From Video Enhancements to Increased Functionality Overall	<ul> <li>Users able to post native 30-second videos with in-app editing functionality</li> <li>"Tweets While You Were Away" feature made timing of tweets less important</li> <li>Group direct messaging (up to 20 users) and ability to share tweets in messages expanded engagement opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>✓ Improved DM platform makes Twitter more formidable player in social messaging game</li> <li>✓ Users can search for hashtags more effectively than before</li> <li>✓ Website redesign improves user experience and aesthetics of interface</li> <li>✓ Direct buying feature has considerable potential</li> <li>✓ Youngest user base of the Big 3 (mostly Millennials)</li> </ul>
<b>Linked in</b> From Thought Leadership Promotion to Enhanced Usability	<ul> <li>Blogging interface much more streamlined with added tools for maximum engagement (e.g., create entries from main LinkedIn feed)</li> <li>Option to share Slideshare material via LinkedIn became a prominent feature</li> <li>Slideshare material now featured on</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Permaedit feature gives users ability to change just about every aspect of their LinkedIn profiles (from section order to section headers)</li> <li>Enhanced thumbnails under connections who have recently viewed a user's profile tell users how their profile was found</li> <li>Search engine now scours entire website for connections</li> </ul>

- Slideshare material now featured on LinkedIn today (first source of content not provided by publisher)
  - ✓ Homepage provides feedback on status updates and profile views

connections

✓ Most adoption among 30-64 year olds (lowest at ends of demographic spectrum)

and Access to Data



Understand Primary Uses of Key Social Platforms to Create Optimal Engagement Strategy

Facebook's Optimal Use: Building an Engaged Community Current Approach: A Necessary Place to Be in Social





Understand Primary Uses of Key Social Platforms to Create Optimal Engagement Strategy

Twitter's Optimal Use: Providing Direct Access, Immediacy

Current Approach: A Tool in the Perception Game

Organization presents itself as an accessible, low-key and approachable community (debunking possible stereotypes to the contrary)



Case in Brief



**Profiled Organization:** National Confectioners Association **Organization Type:** Association



Understand Primary Uses of Key Social Platforms to Create Optimal Engagement Strategy

#### LinkedIn's Optimal Use: Showcasing Industry Expertise Current Approach: A Professional Placeholder





Case in Brief

**Profiled Organization:** American Medical Association **Organization Type:** Association

Understand Primary Uses of Key Social Platforms to Create Optimal Engagement Strategy



**Case in Brief** 

CARNEGIE Profiled Organization: Carnegie Council Organization Type: Association The Voice for Ethics in International Affairs

COUNCIL

## **Our Time Together**

Mapping today's (changing) channel landscape

Linking social objectives to business objectives

→ Writing on social: finding your voice, increasing engagement

# Passive Approaches Establish Presence But Lack Potency

Avoid Defaulting to Less Active Modes of Social Engagement Unless Explicitly Part of Strategy

#### Photo-Heavy Engagement

Increases Visibility At Expense of Context



#### AMVETS Twitter Feed

- Strategy promotes as many organizationrelated photos and clips as possible, presumably to humanize association
- **Caveat**: However, posting a slew of images loses impact if no clear message is communicated to tie photos together or accentuate utility

#### **General Information-Sharing**

Promotes Organizational Knowledge At Expense of True Organizational Voice



#### AARP Facebook Page

- Strategy seeks to communicate broad knowledge or ideas to reach widest possible audience (particularly useful for organizations with diverse membership)
- **Caveat:** At the same time, if social media feed is always used to push high-level ideas, approach leaves little room for adopting a coherent, human voice on specific key issues

#### **Retweeting and Reposting**

Illustrates Attentiveness to Relevant Information At Expense of Creativity



#### Aerospace Industry Association Facebook Page and Twitter Feed

- Strategy takes advantage of substantial information around particular hot-button issues and leverages material for the association's benefit (default for most associations)
- **Caveat:** Nonetheless, associations lose opportunity to establish their own bonafides if they are always communicating through the fully-formed responses of others; also gives off impression of being uninterested in active engagement

# When Content is Not the King

Confusion Over the Full Scope of a Social Strategy Limits Strategic Intents



# **Reasons for "Liking" on Social Differ Between Generations**

Rationale for Following Brands in Washington Reveals Unique User Interests By Age



I want to stay up-to- I want others to know I followed as part of a I followed to keep date on the latest that I support or am promotional tabs on an news and updates connected with the campaign (e.g., to get organization or a discount or other campaign that I don't from the organization organization reward) like





Over 65 42% Percentage of Respondents, WIA 21% 18% 13% A friend, family I want others to know I followed to keep I want to stay up-todate on the latest member or colleague that I support or am tabs on an in my network also news and updates connected with the organization or

organization

followed the

organization

21

from the organization

campaign that I don't

like

# **1. Increase Access and Credibility**

Demystify Association Work by Presenting Influentials to Target Audiences

1 Promote Discussions Offering Access to Influentials...

- Show off organizational knowledge on the association's own terms
- Increases goodwill felt toward the organization which can prove beneficial during more contentious periods
- If promoted aggressively, can inspire broad engagement and attract audiences beyond traditional membership
- 2 3 ...And Amplify Related Twitter Discussions
  - Builds a constellation of related organizations and influentials who can add value to followers of the organizational Twitter account
  - Draws from broad range of experts whose knowledge fills gaps in the association's institutional knowledge (or who have carved out a particular niche expertise)
  - Creates future partners who will likely be willing to vouch for the association's activities in the future on their own accounts and through other networks







Case in Brief

**Profiled Organization:** American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy **Organization Type:** Association

Source: National Journal Communications Council research and analysis.

# 2. Promote Thought Leadership and Core Messaging

**Consider Elevating Influential, Respected Internal Voices via Public Platforms** 

**Thought Leadership Should Take on Different** Forms Depending on the Social Media Outlet



- ✓ LinkedIn page geared primarily towards advancing AFPM's blog and advertising on behalf of other opportunities for thought leadership (e.g., academic paper submissions, hosted conferences, etc.)
- ✓ Consistent with a strategy of establishing the association as a "go-to" source on particular policy and industry issues, in all likelihood with an eye to influencing direct advocacy
- ✓ Appropriate and well-selected photos effectively tease content within the blog post and encourages followers to engage with the material, thus creating the potential for catalyzing broad interest (via sharing) and further information-gathering

✓ Invitations to Twitter Chats by related associations bolster legitimacy and signal influence of CompTIA's view

17

\*



✓ Links to blog posts (offset by brackets) promote organizational thought leadership in a more visible and systematic way

Like

# 3. Amplify Member and External Voices

Leverage Platforms to Promote Organizational Friendlies In Their Own Words

#### 1. Promote Actions of Members Consistent with Organizational Values (While Retaining Message Control)



Instead of simply retweeting, account conveys compelling aspects of work in its own words

Offers image consistent with message of the campaign (seeks to illustrate the wonder of architectural accomplishments)

#### 2. Galvanize Member Participation in Ongoing **Campaigns with Creative Approaches**



campaign center with

#### 3. Highlight Member Success Stories and Accomplishments to Build Goodwill



#### **Case in Brief**



Profiled Organizations: American Institute of Architects and National Beer Wholesalers Association Organization Type: Associations

Source: National Journal Communications Council research and analysis.

# 4. Embrace a "Full-Throated" Approach to Advocacy

Take a Vocal Stand on Issues of Fundamental Importance



#### The "Multimedia Plan of Attack"

- Blends pithy slogans and testimonials with vibrant images, videos and infographics
- Intended to leave a lasting impression on the viewer and spring audiences into action (particularly relevant on the association's Facebook page)



#### The "Call and Response" Approach

- Tweets directly at prominent Capitol Hill representatives to push its own institutional agenda in Washington
- Aims to make its Twitter page the staging ground for voicing its views on key influentials and policies (promotes the initiatives it likes and decries the ones it doesn't)
- No room to hide if an organization or Hill representative runs afoul of NPGA's expressed platform



#### The "Bullhorn" Method

- Akin to a megaphone, IBEW's tweets amplify organizational perspectives on issues ranging from union rights to policy changes impacting its membership
- Seeks to use Twitter as a sounding board for its many views and illustrates how much skin in the game IBEW has on key issues

#### Strategic Benefits of Full-Throated Advocacy

- Stay Out Ahead of the Issues: Establishes organizations as legitimate players in their space, willing to take a stand if needed and capable of grassroots engagement
- Present a Vested Interest in Outcomes: Influentials must necessarily pay attention to these more vocal organizations if they wish to land on solutions to policy issues or industry developments with broad appeal (or that will hold up to significant challenges/scrutiny)
- Galvanize Broad Support: Use potential emotional appeal of campaigns to win friendlies beyond typical member reach

# 5. Provide Helpful Services to Members

Engaging Customer Service Campaigns Bring Associations Down to Earth

#### "Explainers" Present Associations At Their Most Valuable

Strong like count

for easy

consumption

Longform Explainers Present Deep Exposition of Key Issues and Actionable Recommendations

Timely subject matter addresses issues which may not have received adequate attention at the time of posting	National Association of Realtors - Government          Affairs Division       Yesterday at 10:00am · @         Network Neutrality rules went into effect on June 12       The regulations providers from blocking, slowing or selling faster delivery of legal content flowing through their networks to consumers. http://bit.ly/1liECJa		
	Network Neutrality Rules Go Into Effect           On June 11, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit denied petitions for a temporary stay of the Network Neutrality Rules made in separate lawsuits by           WWW.REALTOR.ORG		
	<ul> <li>♪ 2 people like this.</li> <li>⇒ 2 shares</li> </ul>		

- ✓ Demystifies complicated ruling in a printable guide that could accompany core source material on the relevant topic
- ✓ Establishes goodwill and demonstrates organizational willingness to devote resources and capital to solving member problems
- $\checkmark$  May prove useful in a policy setting as well (as an artifact that symbolizes thought leadership and captures the needs/wants of its members)

#### Shortform Explainers Offer "Bulletin Board" Material for Easy Sharing

U.S. Chamber of Commerce June 12 at 10:29am 🖉 A House vote on TPA is close at hand. Are you caught up on all the trade jargon? TPA /tee-pee-ä/ e idea that Congress and the White Hor a Members of Cong ery President sins to share count (3to-1) demonstrates Trade Acronyms and the Need for TPA: Let's Spell It utility of shortform Out content designed Pending and vital trade issues provide an a phabet soup to sort through: TPA, TPP, TTP, AGCA, GSP, WTO, Here's a handy cheat sheet. USCHAMBER.COM Like Comment - Share 72 people like this Mos: Relevant \* ⇐> 24 shares

- $\checkmark$  Takes the complexity out of understanding a piece of legislation by focusing on its most confusing element (e.g., the acronyms)
- ✓ One-page document liable to be printed and posted to a user's wall for easy reference, becoming a useful tool at work or in relevant policy dialogues

Byline

reinforces

instructive

nature of

content

### Aligning Social and Business Interests

Ground Social Media Activity in Shared Goals and Approaches

Key Process Consideration		No
1. Does the organization understand how its overarching goals tie can be supported by social media engagement?		
2. Has the organization established a roadmap for implementing its social media strategy?		
3. As part of a social media roadmap, are there specific demographic targets and calls-to-action?		
4. Does the roadmap involve a mix of platforms and methods for tailoring engagement on each platform?		
5. Have each of the approaches outlined in the roadmap been tested for quality assurance, effectiveness and potential pitfalls?		
6. Are there metrics in place to measure the success of the organization's social media strategy and achievement of broader goals?		
7. Once a campaign ends, does the relevant team meet to qualitatively and quantitatively assess the campaign as a whole to discern key takeaways for future work?		

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Writing on social: finding your voice, increasing engagement

### A Refresher on Being a Well-Written Social Citizen





Especially important for being heard by policymakers; topics where congressional staff apply stringent "hacks and flaks" filters when listening online

# Distinguish the Individual from the Association

Imbue Work-Related Social Media Posts with Personal Character

#### Attributes of An Organizational Voice

#### #1 - Prescriptive and Authoritative



 $\checkmark$  Give audiences their money's worth by showcasing knowledge

#### #2 – Informational and "Out in Front"



 $\checkmark$  Establish credibility with useful facts and tidbits

#### #3 - Straightforward and Accessible



 $\checkmark$  Limit use of jargon when trying to reach wide network

#### Attributes of An Individual Perspective

#### #1 – Personalized and Direct



 $\checkmark$  Offer unique take on subject matter and spark food for thought

#### #2 - Pithy, Snackable and Grounded in Expert Analysis



 $\checkmark$  Leverage thought leadership but optimize for social sharing

#### #3 - Lighthearted and Unpretentious



So much homework gathered from Washington in the Information Age report. Video strategy. Check. White papers. Whaaat? #dcinfoage

✓ Win followers and friendlies with down-to-earth takes



#### Case in Brief

Profiled Organization: National JournalOrganization Type: Media CompanyCampaign: "Washington in the Information Age" Launch

# **Finding Your Social Copy Sweet Spot**

Individual Post Style Dictated by Sliding Scale of Key Factors



### Just Because You Can Doesn't Mean You Should

What Research Tells Us About Optimal Character and Word Limits When Sharing on Social



Functional Limits of Major Platforms

Most Engaging Post Lengths

# **Channel Choice Should Dictate Writing Choice**

Pushing Content in the Same Way to Multiple Platforms Reduces Engagement, Limits Features

Minor Modifications to Language, Format Play to Platform Strengths and Use Cases

### How Walmart Persuades Its Workers Not to Unionize

America's largest private employer cares a lot about preventing its workers from organizing, a leaked training video reveals.



Walmart is by far the nation's largest private-sector employer. It's also one of the nation's most aggressive anti-union companies.



How America's Largest Employer Persuades Its Workers Not to Unionize Leaked PowerPoints and training videos shed light on how Walmart talks to its employees. THEATLN.TC





America's largest private employer cares a lot about preventing its workers from organizing.



How America's Largest Employer Persuades Its Workers Not to Unionize Leaked PowerPoints and training videos shed light on how Walmart talks to its employees. THEATLNTC

Shared on Facebook

Original



Shared on Twitter

Shared on Facebook

### Write Headlines that Inspire Engagement

Create the Coveted "Curiosity Gap" to Inspire Interest in Key Organizational Narratives



# A Word on #InternetSlang

#### Some Online Trends Present Great Engagement Opportunities While Others Fall Flat



• #mancrushmonday (#mcm)

#### Don't Get Caught at the Wrong End of the Slang Spectrum

Appropriate



Tweet: "ICYMI: #Obamacare turns 5 today! Check out our interactive timeline to see how the landmark ruling changed medicine..."

Instagram post: "#fbf to the original iPhone keynote address, a day which changed the course of mobile technology worldwide. #innovation #thefuture #apple



Facebook post: Happy birthday to David Swensen, whose pioneering investment strategy broadened the scope of possible investment opportunities for institutions #mcm



Tweet: We're making it rain brews at the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Beer Hops Summit! #pilsnerswag #bevsonfleek #beerisbae #comms

Source: National Journal Communications Council research and analysis.

Inappropriate

# Learn from the Mistakes of Others

Knowing What To Avoid May Be As Helpful As Knowing What To Do

	Elements of Failed Campaign	Strategies for Avoiding Future Errors
Lesson #1: Strike the Right <b>Tone</b> (and Avoid Offending)	<ul> <li>Premise: Super Bowl ad meant to promote positive qualities of Budweiser at expense of popular "artisan" brews</li> <li>Result: Target audiences were insulted by insinuations made in advertisement and displeasure went viral on social media</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Troubleshoot campaigns with target audiences to capture full range of possible reactions</li> <li>Consider whether it is necessary to severely attack competitor at the expense of alienating potential audiences</li> <li>Determine if ad could reflect negatively on product</li> </ul>
Lesson #2: Steer Clear of Questionable Subject Matter	<ul> <li>Premise: Slogan around beer can alluded to advocating for a lack of consent in intimate situations</li> <li>Result: Offending slogan went viral and activists berated Budweiser for its lack of sensitivity and foresight</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Assess how implications of slogan could backfire not just with target audiences but with general observers</li> <li>Apply the Justice Stewart "eyeball test" to any potential campaign (does it clearly raise a red flag)</li> <li>Remember that pushing the envelope may just be shocking and offensive rather than illuminating or thought-provoking (there is a fine line)</li> </ul>
Lesson #3: Stay in Your Organizational Lane (All in the <b>Approach</b> )	<ul> <li>Premise: St. Patrick's Day campaign encouraging pinching viewed as an organizational endorsement of harassing women</li> <li>Result: As a repeat offender, company forced to make public apology for its failure to recognize damaging implications of slogan</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Recognize that "newsjacking" notable holidays or national events isn't always the best approach (e.g., September 11<sup>th</sup>)</li> <li>Don't force your organization's way into a conversation that it isn't well-suited to take part in</li> <li>Map potential outcomes based on method of delivery (e.g., tweet vs. Facebook post, TV ad versus print)</li> </ul>

Case in Brief



Profiled Company: Budweiser Organization Type: Beverage Producer Campaign: Various

# A Look Ahead

Charting the Course for Future AMU 411 Sessions







✓ Also conducted in person and archived online!

✓ Part II (July 24): Monitoring on social, driving conversations, curating and sharing user-generated content

#### **Course Completion**



- ✓ Certificate to be conferred upon completion of next session
- ✓ Distributed in person
- ✓ If you can't attend, complete the course online and your certificate will be emailed to you