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FIRST STEPS

FOR A SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

1. Identify goals and objectives

Don't make the mistake of embarking on your social media efforts without a defined direction. Your social media strategy, just like the other facets of your marketing strategy, requires a defined and strategic purpose to be worth your time.

2. Research channels

Facebook and Twitter may be default choices, but there are hundreds of online communities accessible to online users. These communities have niche audiences and specific topics, so take time to discover what channels meet your goals and objectives.

3. Understand the conversation

Social media and online marketing revolves around an ongoing conversation. If you want to be well received, you need to make sure that what you're contributing to this conversation is relevant and appropriate. Take time to listen to what users are talking about and participating in on the channels you chose for your social media strategy.

4. Allocate resources

Social media is often assumed to be the least expensive tool in today's marketing tool box. In some ways this can be true, but a social media strategy is not free. Take time to understand the cost of your chosen tools as well as the time it will cost your social media team.

5. Assign ownership

Social media can take on a life of its own because of its focus on real-time communication. It should be a priority to designate one individual to manage and oversee the social media strategy so that your online presence and message stays consistent across social platforms.

6. Address regulations

Always take the time to ensure that your strategy aligns with the communication guidelines in your industry and company policies. Many times a company-wide Social Media Policy or the posting of an online disclaimer will be required.

7. Commit

Launching an online social media campaign requires dedication. It can easily do more harm to your company's online image by underperforming in your social media strategy than had you not launched the campaign at all. Following Step 5 and assigning ownership can also help ensure that your communities and profiles stay up to date and relevant.

8. Monitor & measure

Measuring the effectiveness of your online conversations ensures that you're spending time and effort where you are best received by your audience. Monitor the activity and outcomes of your strategy using built in social platform monitoring tools or purchase a service that will produce insights. Conversations change and your strategy might need to, as well.

9. Adapt

After taking time to monitor and measure, determine where you have been successful and what areas need attention. Online communities are not static and their dynamics are always changing. Use your metrics to determine when you need to adapt your messaging and strategy.

10. Innovate!

Your innovations don't need to go viral, but new and exciting communities or online interactivity could be just what your target audience needs. After monitoring, measuring and possibly adapting, it may be the time to reveal something different than what is out there already. Out with the old; in with the new!

BONUS TIP:

Static FBML is a free application that allows you to customize your own Facebook Page profile box or profile tab. Use this to leverage your online conversations and supplement offline campaigns with online interactivity and custom Facebook landing pages.

Static FBML

ABOUT APTERA

Aptera is a software development and web design firm specializing in helping companies use technology to become more efficient and competitive. Founded in 2003, Aptera employs IT professionals and an award-winning online marketing team that deliver create custom-tailored software, marketing and web solutions.

This unique combination of technical expertise and design savvy allows Aptera to solve tough business situations for clients throughout the United States. It has also led to the development of several commercially available applications and the honor of recognition as a Microsoft Managed Partner.

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