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Social Media Planner

There is great deal of hype and misinformation about social media today and how it might be used to enhance your business marketing.

Borrowing an important phrase coined by Social Media Consultant Jay Baer,

“Social media isn’t a conversation; it’s where the conversation takes place.”

In the early stages of discovery and planning, do not get hung up on which social media websites or channels to use, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or LinkedIn. Those are tactical decisions that Hallaron Media will evaluate with you before crafting a social media plan that compliments your other marketing efforts. The most important to ask and explore is “Why should our company pursue a social media strategy?”

Use this planner to help you help you think strategically and decide whether or not social media marketing is right for your company.

1. **What are we trying to accomplish?** Understanding what you're trying to actually achieve with your social media presence should be the first step in developing a social media strategy. Choose your primary marketing goal.

- generate more prospects/leads
- increase direct sales
- improve customer relations and support
- build greater brand awareness
- shape public relations, brand image, company perception
- other _____

2. **Why social media?**

Is your audience already there?

Using Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc...?

Do your competitors use social media?

Do you want to build stronger relationships with customers and prospects?

Tap into online word-of-mouth channels?

You have a niche audience that's difficult to reach otherwise?

The best way to avoid recklessly jumping on the bandwagon is to examine why the wagon is the best way to get where you're going in the first place.

3. **What kind of social media will help us best achieve our goals?** Do you need to utilize social networking sites, blogs, real-time updates (e.g., Twitter), social news sites, media-sharing sites, review/directory sites, or display ads on social media sites?

In some respects, talking about a social media presence is like talking about having an advertising presence: you must specify what you're doing and where you're going to place it. Examine the characteristics of the type of social media you want to have a

presence on and how those characteristics fit what you're trying to accomplish to help choose the ones that will work best for you.

4. **Are we prepared to let go of control of our brand, at least a little?** You can't participate in social media without being... well... social. And that means engaging in a conversation with customers. Once you engage in a conversation, you have to give up some control. Is your company willing to do that?

Social networking implies your willingness to accept criticism of your company and brand as well as complimentary views.

5. **What will we do to encourage participation?** There's nothing more embarrassing than going to a corporate YouTube channel and seeing that the viral video that the company spent thousands making has just 44 views. Ditto for going to a company's Twitter feed and seeing that it has all of 11 followers. What are you planning to do to drive people to your social media presence? And do you have the money to do it?
6. **Who will maintain our social media presence?** Participating in social media takes a lot of work. You must have something to say and you must have someone (or a team of people) to say it on a regular basis. Hallaron Media provides professional social media management services. The failure rate among small businesses employing social marketing without time, resources, or expertise is very high.
7. **Do we have the resources to keep this up, or will this be a short campaign?** Similarly, unless you specify that what you're doing has a limited duration (such as a Twitter feed based on a particular conference or news event); people will expect you to keep it up. Have you budgeted resources to continue your social media presence beyond the fiscal year?

8. **How does engaging users via social media integrate into your overall marketing/communications strategy?** None of this stuff exists in a vacuum. It has to be part of a larger marketing or communications strategy. How do social media fit into your other marketing/advertising/internal communications programs, and how will they be used to support each other?
9. **How do we measure success? What constitutes failure?** Are you measuring views, followers, sales, comments, or subscribers? What's the threshold for your success metrics that takes them into success territory? What happens if you don't get there?
10. **What will we do less of if we're spending resources on social media?** We all have limited marketing dollars. If you spend more money on social media you have to spend less on something else. How will your overall goals be impacted by taking money away from other forms of advertising/marketing and moving it into social media?

Summary:

This planner is not intended to scare you away from including social media into your overall marketing strategy. However, our hope is that it gives you some realistic information about what is involved before you launch a poorly-planned, ill-informed foray into this dynamic Internet marketing channel.

Please call Hallaron Media for an initial discovery meeting to learn how social media can enhance your marketing plan.

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