cultart
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CULTART Training programme

Training Module 10:
Social Media Content and Communication

Image 1, source https://www.simplilearn.com/importance-of-social-media-in-todays-world-article

Declaration on copyright:

Disclaimer

The CULTART training program has been developed as a blended training program, combining e-learning (independent study relying on online learning resources) and in- person classroom activities facilitated by a qualified trainer.

The units of this module are designed to provide learners with the most important insights regarding the subject matter of the module, in accordance with the findings of the analyses conducted in the framework of Intellectual Output 1 of the CULTART project.

The learning content provided here is intended to serve for independent learning and does not pretend to cover all possible aspects and related issues in terms of the subject matter covered.

Users are solely responsible for ensuring that they have sufficient and compatible hardware, software, telecommunications equipment, and Internet service necessary for the use of the online campus and modules

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Training description

This module is designed to help you develop valuable content for your business in social media and content marketing. You will explore different good practice examples on social media design tools and how they could suit best to your needs. Case studies of successful online marketing campaigns across platforms will help you to develop your own social media marketing strategies. In this module, you will also learn what is the matter of the social media content and how it could be utilized for business purposes. You will obtain valuable insights in terms of how to establish an effective social media communication between your brand and your customers. Furthermore, you will become familiar with the basic "ingredients" of the social media content as well as being provided with an example of how an appropriate balance between those components could be achieved in a way that effectively promote your product through social networking sites.

Objectives of this training module

This module aims helping start-up companies and entrepreneurs to understand how to create valuable social media content in order to promote or event sell their products and services. You will become familiar with the main types of social media content that could be successfully developed in order to engage and influence your target audience. We will consider what a social media quiz is, its related features and how this type of interactive content could significantly reinforce your customer loyalty. Furthermore, you will become aware of the main specifics of the content management systems (CMS) what basic functionalities it features and how you can customize them in order to reinforce your social media communication.

- Why social media are important
- Learning what is social media content
- Understanding the main principles of creating engaging social media content.
- Learning the matter of the hashtags – how to create a cohesive target audience by using the correct hashtag.
- Explaining the most popular CMS platforms in order to enable you to take the right decision, which one suits you best.

Target groups

- Members and stakeholders which operates into CCI* sector and fintech industry.
- CCI freelancers.
- Startups in CCI sector.
- Entrepreneurs that want to use creativity in their marketing and dissemination activities.
- Regional multipliers.

Competencies and skills after finishing this module

- You will obtain valuable skills of how to establish an effective communication with your target audience.
- You will be able to establish a visual hierarchy regarding the design of your post.
- You get familiar with the basic functionalities of the hashtags and therefore to unleash your creativity in order to establish powerful social media communication.
- You will get to know which Content Management System (CMS) suits best to your needs.

Training method

CULTART learning philosophy promotes a unique engaging training method, based on the following aspects:

- Short-burst learning sessions which feature very well-structured learning content.
- A deep sense of involvement and merging of action and awareness.
- A sense of control and dealing with the task that you will find at the end of the module.
- Enjoyment and provoking further interest.

CULTART focuses on an interactive training approach:

- The modules as a training material for self-learning.
- Using the interactive CULTART online training platform: http://cultart.dyndns.org/login/index.php for facilitated training sessions in a group with a professional trainer.

Unlike the lecturers into the face-to-face classroom that provide their students with guidance and some additional directions, you have to take the responsibilities for the time management and for the control of your learning progress.

Training content

Unit 1 Why Social media are important and What is Social Media Content?

Tags:

Social media; Social media content; social media campaign; branding; entrepreneurs; brand associations; Starbucks; Instagram; brand health;

Unit 1 - Introduction

In this unit, you will learn what social media content is and how it could be utilized for business purposes. You will obtain valuable insights in terms of how to establish an effective social media communication between your brand and your customers. Furthermore, you will become familiar with the basic "ingredients" of the social media content as well as being provided with an example of how an appropriate balance between those components could be achieved in a way that effectively promote your product through social networking sites.

Definition of Social Media Content

Social media is a part from nowadays communication, and many of us cannot imagine their everyday life without it. That is because, social media is a powerful communication network enabling people to create own media channel, to inform the others and to learn new information, to share ideas, easy to communicate with people or to support them. Social media is fast, real-time, two-way communication covering practically the whole world.

Image 1. Social media network
Source: https://www.cmbell.com/blog/2021/7-social-media-content-ideas

Everyone today is on some social media platform. Teenagers on TikTok, influencers and small businesses on Instagram and Facebook, or professionals on LinkedIn - social media is the first option that comes to mind when looking for expanding connections in any field.

Social media - if used intelligently - can bring in loads of success. Since it is the best form of direct contact with the target audience, these platforms have what it takes to make anyone's life better. To understand this better, here are a few aspects that reflect the importance of social media in today's world.

As a networking tool, social media is of particular interest to business owners, artists, and to everyone who want to make popular his/her activity, products, services, or artwork. Social media is a powerful tool to make popular your brand by social media complains as part of a social media marketing. More information you can find in CULTART Training programme module Business & Entrepreneurship for CCI freelancers and start-ups, and particularly in this module. Therefore, it is very important this communication to provide valuable content to the users, to engage them, to grab their attention with text, photos or videos.

According to TextBroker.de social media definition: "Social media content is content created by individuals or businesses on social networks such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. For companies, they are particularly interesting because they allow a much more direct interaction with users than traditional marketing measures. But they also have to be geared more towards the target group and must not degenerate into a mere advertising measure in order to develop their full effect."

Image 2. Reading news
Source: https://finchannel.com/usage-of-social-media-as-news-source/75588/world-2/americas/2018/09/

When the social media content is part of some coordinated marketing efforts and is designed to reinforce the information about a product/service/brand, through at least one social media platform, then we have a social media campaign/branded social campaign. Branded social campaigns provide additional aspects to encourage ongoing interaction between the consumer and the brand story throughout the day, which can deepen consumer–brand relationships, help marketers uncover common themes in consumer feedback, and persuade consumers to engage with online content (Murdough 2009). As being young entrepreneurs, our goal is to transform those aspects into memorable experience and certain associations with the brand in the client mind. The social content developers have several options within the social media landscape for branding including placing paid display advertising, participating in social networks as a brand persona, developing branded engagement opportunities for customer participation within social networks, and publishing branded content.

Example for a visually appealing social media content is the Starbuck's Instagram post bellow:
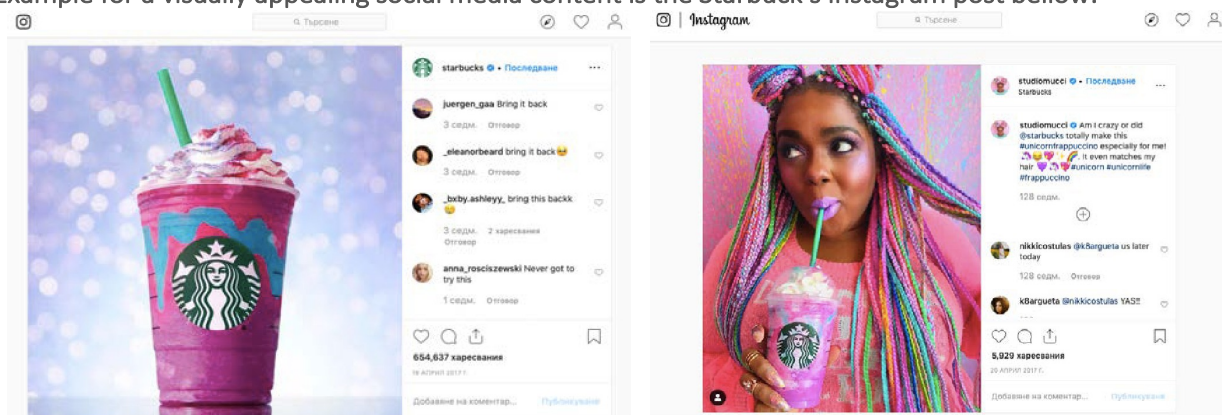

Image 3: Starbucks: Unicorn Frappuccino,
Source:https://www.instagram.com/p/BTEWcNHjACU/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=dlfix
https://www.instagram.com/p/BTFZBbHjdjJ/?utm_source=ig_embed
Screenshots

The text reflects a very clear message:
Starbucks 🦄 **As majestic as it is magenta... #UnicornFrappuccino. Color-changing, flavor- changing, potentially** life changing**.
#** 📷 **Available for a limited time at participating stores in the US, Canada & Mexico.**
However, the great copy, mixed with a catching photo could make the social media content meaningful and effective. This social media content is part of a campaign, which means there is a coherence and consistence between all posts.
The Unicorn Frappuccino, and its hashtag generated nearly 155,000 Instagram posts during that time (later on in Unit 3 Social Media Design, you will learn more about the nature of the hashtag and its application). It was a very successful social media campaign, because "the global same-store sales and same-store sales in the Americas were up three percent for the second quarter.", according to the According to MarketWatch.

The impact of the social content upon the "Brand Health"

Brand Health is very important to determine the performance of the enterprises in terms of sales and demand from the consumers (Ahmad N. at al 2015). Brand health is something relatively new in business achievement measurement, and not all the companies monitor this benchmark. Besides that, brand health level is such an indicator for the companies to measure their brand awareness among the consumers instead of showing the successfulness of the companies itself. Social media content plays an important role in brand health, as it is the medium for the consumers to gain the information about the brands. Image 5 illustrates social media content that affect the brand health.
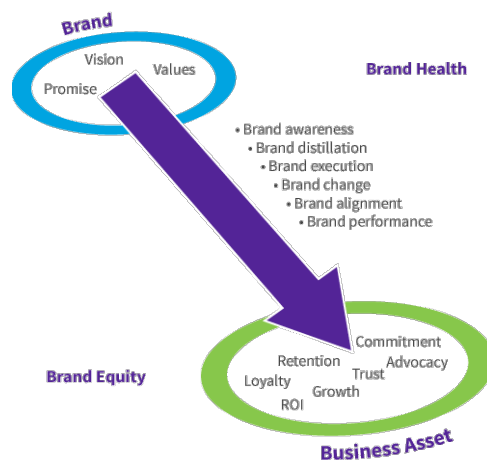

Image 5. The impact of social media content on brand health.
Source: https://medium.com/@preetykaneez18/the-impact-of-social-media-marketing-on-brand-awareness-b2fdc34834ab

A good social media content can boost the brand health performance. In the present, the experienced business developers tend to use social media marketing to create the awareness about their brands to the consumers. Through the social media platforms, they engage with their consumers and built active interaction among them. Therefore, it is essential for the entrepreneurs to develop an appropriate content marketing to attract more customers to visit their page, follow the update news and finally repeat the purchase.

Recommendations for Further Reading

In order to create a well-performing and engaging social media content, it is advisable to take Blended Training Module 6: Problem solving and critical thinking, Unit 1 Brand Awareness where you can learn how to define your Unique Selling Point (USP) and Emotional Selling Point (ESP) of your company. These USP/ESP can be conveyed through the design of your social media post.

References for Unit 1

1. Ahmad N. at al. (2015) The Impact of Social Media Content Marketing (SMCM) towards Brand Health. © 2016 The Authors. Published by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/). Garcia T. Starbucks says social-media success of Unicorn Frappuccino sets stage for Frappuccino Happy Hour. Published on: Published: Apr 29, 2017 11:27 a.m. ET. Retrieved from: https://www.marketwatch.com/story/starbucks-says-social-media-success-of-unicorn- frappuccino-sets-stage-for-frappuccino-happy-hour-2017-04-28
2. Murdough C., (2009). Social media measurement: It's not impossible. Journal of Interactive Advertising, 10, 94–99.
3. Textbroker.de Retrieved from: https://www.textbroker.de

Unit 2. Types of Social Media Content

Tags:

Unit 2 - Introduction

In this unit, you will become familiar with the main types of social media content that could be successfully developed in order to engage and influence your target audience. We will consider what a social networking online quiz is, its related features and how this type of interactive content could significantly reinforce your customer loyalty. Examples would be given that shed more light on using online quizzes in order to deepen the interest of your clients and make them learn more about the attributes and benefits your product/service features. In addition, you will be introduced with the matter of the eBooks and how their content could be used as powerful social media tool. Furthermore, a few practice-proven tips would be given in terms of how to induce positive emotions among your target audience, which lead them for action.

There are a few types of social media content that could be successfully developed in order to engage and influence your target audience.

Interactive Content. It enables the users to respond with more than just simple likes and comments. It refers to *online quizzes* and *surveys*. A lesser-known fact is that The New York Time's most popular piece of content was not an article; rather it was a dialect quiz. By using this type of social media content, you could significantly boost your target audience engagement – enjoy your clients by making them familiar with a large number of benefits your brand offers. It enables you to gain more brand awareness, accumulate new and highly interactive sales opportunities, and boost the traffic on your web channel as well as improving the sharing on your social media. By creating an appropriate quiz, you will significantly boost your consumer loyalty. For example, Airbnb is Trip Matcher quiz asks questions that help define a person's travel personality and then offers a trip itinerary that fits their interests.
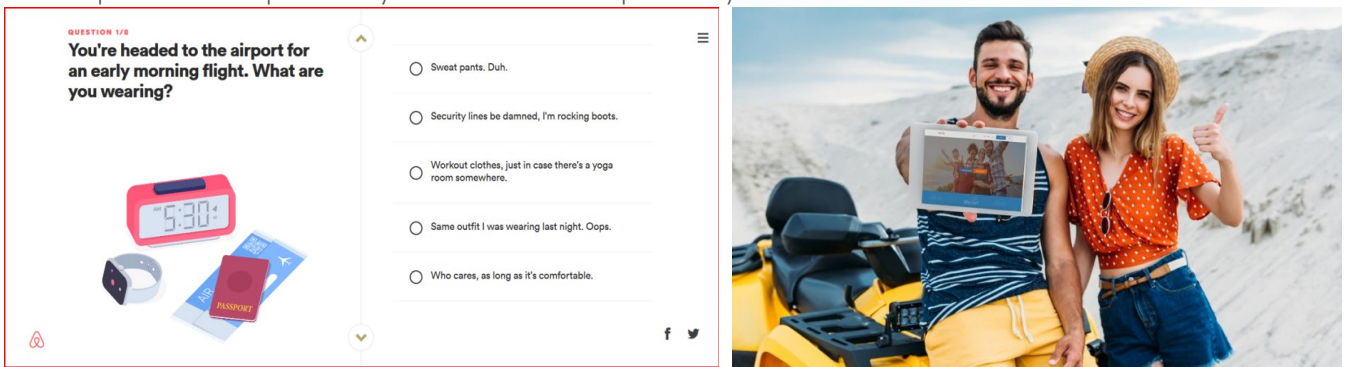

Image 1. Airbnb's Trip Matcher quiz Source: https://press.airbnb.com/tripmatcher

However, based on the answers, the users would be able to get familiar with their travel personality.

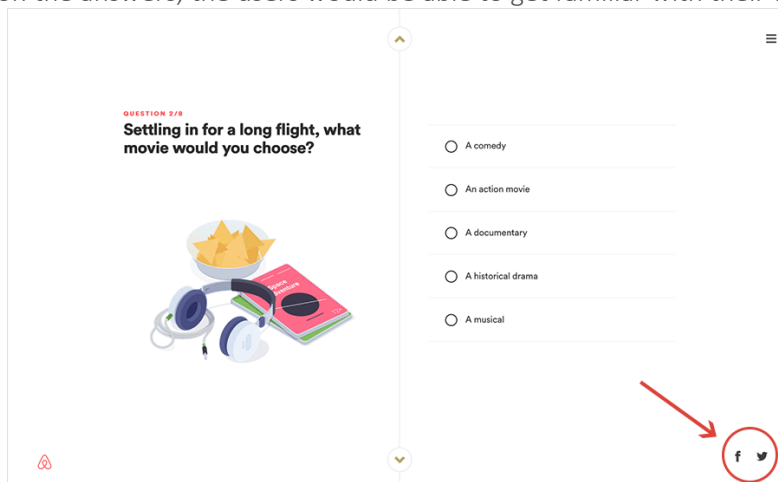*Image 2. Travel Personality, Source: https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/how-to-create-online-quiz-social-media/*

According to Marcus Ho (Ho 2018), the outcomes should be positive, and should reinforce feelings or characteristics that a person might already have.
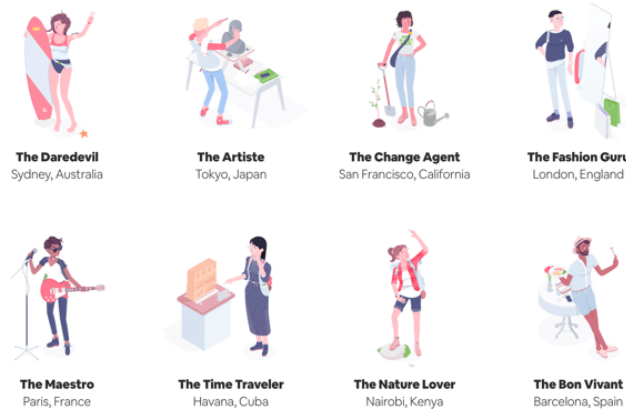
Explore all travel personalities

The Daredevil
Sydney, Australia

The Artiste
Tokyo, Japan

The Change Agent
San Francisco, California

The Fashion Guru
London, England

The Maestro
Paris, France

The Time Traveler
Havana, Cuba

The Nature Lover
Nairobi, Kenya

The Bon Vivant
Barcelona, Spain

Image 3. Explore all travel personalities.
Source: https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/how-to-create-online-quiz-social-media/

eBooks. Do not underestimate how effectively the eBooks could be in terms of promoting your brand. The trickiest job here is to come up with some mind-blowing facts as teasers. Another fact is that the eBooks are becoming more and more popular marketing strategy. They enable businesses to convey complex information, e.g. product attributes and its related benefits into a digestible and understandable format. **eBooks** offer a truly creative way to explain your background, goals and values in a particular industry. It is advisable to keep the balance of being visually appealing on one hand and serious and informative on the other. Another great advantage here is that eBooks enables you to set up fruitful collaboration with other industry leaders in order to develop a really engaging content. Whatever eBook you are planning to develop, make sure all pages are easy to share on social media by providing embedded social media friendly links.

Social Content that provokes positive emotions. Such kind of social content is quite successful because people are more likely to share positive emotions like amusement and laughter. For example, Chipotle uses humoristic content in order to capture the users' interest via Twitter.

Image 4. Chipotle uses humoristic content in order to capture the users' interest via Twitter.
Source: https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/5-types-of-social-media-content-that-convert/539584/

Social content that reflects inspirational quotes are also powerful way that could be cleverly used in order to reinforce your brand awareness. An example is given bellow:

Rent the Runway (an online service that provides designer dress and accessory rentals) posted a quote from Gloria Steinem that is motivating and inspiring. It provoked a lot of engagement in the following comments. Users commented their love and support for the quote and for Rent the Runway.

Image 5. Rent the Runway inspirational quote.
Source: https://blog.marketveep.com/insta-inspiration-for-when-youre-lacking- content-ideas-for-your-instagram-marketing

Visually appealing social media content.

Recently conducted research states that our brain process visual information 60 000 x faster than text. Therefore, in the last few years we enjoy a dramatic rise in visual-based social media content. According to Ulrike Gretzel (Gretzel 2016), the importance of visual content in the social media realm can be demonstrated easily through social media statistics. Social Media Today (2015) reports that in 2014, 1.8 billion images were shared every day on social media globally. YouTube has over a billion users who watch hundreds of millions of hours of YouTube videos, the number of hours that people spend watching videos on YouTube has increased by 60% compared to the previous year, and the number of people watching YouTube each day has increased by 40% since March 2014 (YouTube, 2016). Therefore, using photography, videography and other wearable technologies could significantly increase the quality of your social media post. The role of the smartphone in facilitating the digital representation of your brand experience is getting more important than ever before and specifically the quick uploading of visual materials by using some easy-editing apps or integrated filters (like those provided by Instagram), make the visual content fancy and engaging. For example, Volkswagen claims that all people and all things have a story to tell, and you see this evidenced in each of their social media posts. There is an abundance of visual stories about VW cars and their clients. VW's Facebook page is the place where you could learn more about the Volkswagen history understand the heritage of the Beetle or choose your next car (Radice 2018).

Image 6. Volkswagen social media post.
Source: https://www.postplanner.com/blog/25-brands-visual-content-marketing/

To sum up, whatever content you are developing, make sure you are planning a consistent and cohesive campaign which would be able to promote your event/s or it could be a series of posts conveying a consistent clear message or hashtag.

References for Unit 2:

1. Gretzel, Ulrike. (2016). The Visual Turn in Social Media Marketing. Tourismos. 12. Ho M., (2018), How to Create an Online Quiz for Social Media. Retrieved from: https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/how-to-create-online-quiz-social-media/ Published on: 04.12.2018
2. Radice R., *25 Brands to Follow for Visual Content Marketing Inspiration,* PostPlanner. Retrieved from: https://www.postplanner.com/blog/25-brands-visual-content-marketing/ Social Media Today (2015). Forget Text-Based Data: Here Comes Image-Based Data. Accessed online (October 27, 2015) at: http://www.socialmediatoday.com/technology- data/

Unit 3. Social Media Design

Tags:

Post design; social media; interactive content; hashtag; graphic design; visual hierarchy; digital campaign; Facebook game;

Unit 3 - Introduction

In this unit, you will obtain valuable knowledge about one of the most important and widely popular social media tool – the hashtag. In order to develop a creative post that drives engagement, it is really important to use the correct hashtags which is a powerful way to capture like-minded people's attention and reinforce the interest toward your product. The correct usage of hashtags can lead to the formation of cohesive target audience – something that would boost your brand awareness and sales. You will be advised to check your hashtag preference into specialized websites such as best-hashtags.com. In addition, we will expose several social media campaigns in order to provide you with valuable tips that you can implement into your own campaign.

#The Hashtag

In the last few years, social media launched new forms of communication and interaction with the public. One of the most innovative and highly powerful tools is the hashtag. Since the Twitter employee – Chris Messina, sent the first hashtag in 2007, the hashtag popularity is getting more and more popular and even spread to other social networks.
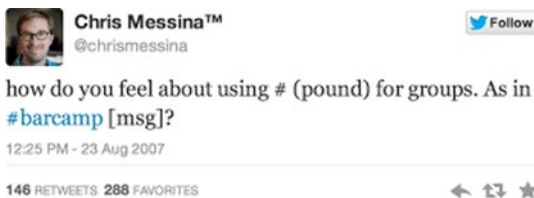

Image 1. The very first hashtag.
Source: https://images.app.goo.gl/8ipq4K55MPFWWUcRA

Hashtags indicate topics or themes, and they play an important role in social media communication. (Saxton et al. 2015). First, the use of hashtags is powerful because it is participatory. A common practice is that the hashtags are not decided in advance by a pre- determined set of users. The hashtag system constitutes a decentralized, user-generated tagging, organizing, and classification system. The hashtag classifies messages, improves search ability, and allows the organization to link messages to existing knowledge and action communities. Simply put, hashtags can lead to the formation of cohesive target audience (Bruns & Burgess, 2011). In brief, this audience consists of like-minded people, whose interests are gravitating close to the hashtag topic. A hashtag typically consists of group of characters, preceded by the pound symbol # (also known as hash). This combination serves as a label for the message itself and is "linked to a search for those characters" (Sagolla 2009: 167), which allows the retrieval of all posts dealing with the labeled topic. Paola-Maria Caleffi argued, that because hashtags were originally spread in Twitter, according to the Twitter convention, a hashtag can contain numbers but cannot be made up entirely of numerical digits (Caleffi 2015) (e.g. #123), neither can it start with a number (e.g. #123yo). Special characters are not allowed either (e.g. !, %, *, $ etc), except for the underscore (_). Finally, according to Twitter experts' recommendations, the best hashtags are those made up of a maximum of six characters, and three hashtags in one tweet should be the highest number of occurrences.

For example, you can check the hashtag popularity by browsing: http://best-hashtags.com

What you need to do is to enter a single word into the search field and the algorithm calculates the best hashtags for you based on historical data, that leads to receive more "Likes", based on the correct hashtags as well as boosting the user engagements. For instance, for the "creativity", the following suggestions are provided by best-hashtags.com:

#painting, #fashion, #drawing, #illustration, #instagood, #graphicdesign, #create, #branding, #instagram, #innovation, #style, #designer, #artistsoninstagram, #fun, #life, #photooftheday, #nature, #follo, #marketing, #advertising

TOP 10 CREATIVITY HASHTAGS

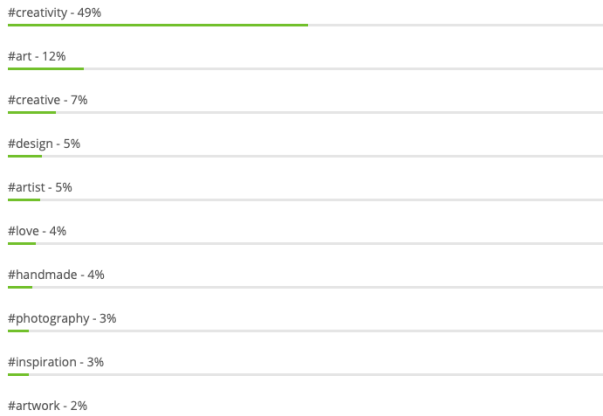Best creativity hashtags popular on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr:

#creativity - 49%

#art - 12%

#creative - 7%

#design - 5%

#artist - 5%

#love - 4%

#handmade - 4%

#photography - 3%

#inspiration - 3%

#artwork - 2%

Image 2. Hashtag report by best-hashtags.com
Source: http://best-hashtags.com/hashtag/creativity/
Screenshot

Design of Social Media Post

Great example is the social media campaign powered by one of the best German multinational engineering and Electronics Company, branched in Bulgaria – Bosch Bulgaria (#boschbulgaria). Designed by Keti Tserovska, posts reflect pure design and a powerful mix of copy and photos/illustrations.

Image 5. Bosch Bulgaria social media posts.
Translated from Bulgarian language, the left post says,
"Obviously is getting cold!" In the right image, it is written:
"European day of healthy food and cooking"

Designed by: Keti Tserovska

There are several ways to present a social media strategy. The two perspectives in which they could differ in are:
1. Preparing a Social Media Strategy for your own brand.
2. Preparing a strategy for a client.

Marketers often approach social media without having a clear plan. You need to have a strategy in place that ensures clarity and sells well with internal and external stakeholders. Both of the above approaches require a concept direction that answers the following questions.

Image 6: Social media Strategy,   Source: https://www.amuratech.com/blog/7-steps-to-creating-the-perfect-social-media-strategy

11

How to Document your social media strategy in 7 steps:

1. Understand Goals and Objectives
Social media goals can range from improving your share of voice to increasing and improving engagement, increasing followers and even improving sales & conversions and driving website traffic, to name a few. Although these are different objectives, they can be achieved well by studying the market and your competitors. Eg: Improving your share of voice and awareness may mean you are aiming at improving your brand mentions by 60 to 70%.

2. Know what your competitors are doing
Being aware of your competition is necessary. Taking into account as to what does well and what does not work for them gives you cues in order to cut through the noise and establish your unique brand picture in the social space. Following and engagement metrics, themes they use and their acceptance by the audience, having an understanding of their social referral traffic to websites and paid/organic mix of posts is something that can help you justify your approach.

3. Have a clear communication route
Work on a unique strategy or choose to ride with the tide – Now that you are clear with your goals and know what your competitors are doing, you need to define your approach with a selection of content buckets, tone of voice, themes/hashtags that you will want to use for social media positioning. These will be derived from your brand/product or seasonal time of the year.

Measuring the resonance of your approach can be derived by bouncing ideas with your team or brainstorming with other marketing teams. This will help you strike a balance of unique communication for your social media as well as applying some industry best practices that have worked for your competitors. The key while defining your communication strategy is to know your target group age and interests. It can be further simplified by defining brand personas. What is their ideal day, how do they spend their weekends, what is their cultural and family social and consumer behaviour, etc.

4. Ensure your mood board is self-explanatory
Images and creatives give a realistic understanding of how your plan will actually look. Your audience will have a strong call to action when your Images draw enough attention and further curiosity to your content. As a social media manager this mood board is a tangible direction to both your content writer and more importantly to your designers or creative agency. Your mood board could have cues of Rich media content like animated formats and video as well.

5. Choose the right platforms
You need to know where you want to be, know where your target audience interacts, and know what they are looking for depending on the platforms of choice. Your cross-platform strategy will include differentiation of content buckets or consistency in content themes for Facebook, Instagram, Linkedin, Twitter etc.

Tip: Do not feed content on platforms which make your message irrelevant. Relevance is key to have your social media engagement engine working at optimal levels on all platforms.

6. Calibrate your Listening
Social listening is often missed while creating a strategy. Understanding your users' behaviour and knowing how to treat comments and messages via spontaneous replies, automated replies, or templates for expected positive/neutral/negative comments is necessary. Using of listening tools and creating alerts for keywords will help you track mentions in real time, measure online brand sentiment as well as check your share of voice versus competitors. A good listening tool improves turnaround response time as well.

7. Monitor Metrics
Remember to measure your impact of social media efforts and state the estimates you would like to achieve with regards to Following, Engagement, Reach, Demographics, Share of Voice, Sentiment and Actions in terms of clicks and referral visits.

To sum up, in order to launch a successful post that could drive engagement, it is really important to use the correct hashtags. The hashtag is a powerful way that capture like- minded people and reinforce the interest toward your product. Before using it, check their relevance into specialized websites such as www.best-hashtags.com
However, another important issue is to come up with a fresh design, which stick to your brand identity and clearly convey your message. It is advisable to do the following:
- The first think first is to think about the visual hierarchy.
- Hashtag the campaign.

- Come up with an engaging copy.
- Use the brand logo, typeface and assigned colour palette consistently;
- Align of visual elements together. Keep an appropriate balance make sure you prioritise images over text.

Social Media Marketing for Businesses

Social media marketing is a powerful way for businesses of all sizes to reach prospects and customers. People discover, learn about, follow, and shop from brands on social media, so if you're not on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, you're missing out! Great marketing on social media can bring remarkable success to your business, creating devoted brand advocates and even driving leads and sales.

In this complete guide to social media marketing, you're going to learn:
- What social media marketing is, with benefits, stats, and tips.
- How to build a social media marketing strategy and a plan to carry it out.
- The seven best social media marketing platforms and how to use them

Image 7 : Social Media Marketing Platforms, Source: https://www.wordstream.com/social-media-marketing

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2. Bruns, A., & Burgess, J. E. (2011, August). *The use of Twitter hashtags in the formation of ad hoc publics.* Paper presented at the 6th European Consortium for Political Research General Conference, University of Iceland, Reykjavik.
3. Sagolla D., (2009). 140 Characters: A Style Guide for the Short Form. Hoboken: John Wiley & Son. Saxton et al. (2015) #AdvocatingForChange: The Strategic Use of Hashtags in Social Media Advocacy. Copyright © 2015 Advances in Social Work Vol. 16 No. 1 (Spring 2015), 154-169
4. https://www.kontentino.com/blog/social-media-strategy-make-the-most-of-a-social-media-plan/

Unit 4. Content Management Systems

Tags:
Content management system; cms; social media; functionality; features; php; joomla; wix; wordpress; drupal; authoring; storage; publishing; blog;

Unit 4 - Introduction

In this unit, you will obtain fundamental knowledge of the matter of the Content Management System (CMS), what basic functionalities it features and how you can customize them in order to reinforce your social media communication. You will be introduced with valuable insights in terms of the most popular CMS platforms that would enable you to choose the one that suits you best. In addition, you will learn interesting facts about how the first CMS was developed and track its progress over the time. At the end of this lecture, you will be introduced with useful tips in terms of how to set up your own blog. After taking this unit, you will feel much more confident into establishing an effective digital communication with your clients.

With the intensifying completion around the world, companies and start-ups need to implement new and effective communication tools in order to reach effectively their target audience. One of the most popular tools is called Content Management System (CMS) – it is a flexible software applications, which may be adaptable to dynamic changes of the modern business environment (Lăzărică & Dediu 2013).

Image 1. Example of the CMS functionalities.
Source: https://images.app.goo.gl/x4aBvY4CUSK7AHtg9

A content management system is a database which organises and provides access to all types of digital content. Without a content management system, you won't be able to make easy updates, rather you have to write a static HTML file and upload it to your server – something that requires efforts and takes time. However, we can distinguish three main aspects of the CMS:

Authoring
The process of content creation. The mechanism of placing and styling the digital content into the database. The author can create the digital content within a controlled web environment. It could be the addition of a news item, an event or a special promotion. In addition, you must consider if there are any requirements to upload data, which is stored externally to the CMS. This might include importing an existing database file during development, re-using a previous site or re-organising existing electronic documents within the business (Continuum Technologies). When authoring digital content, besides the originality of the copy, it is advisable to set up your own layout template, which also consists of spell checkers.

Storage
The way the data is stored within the system and the ability to reference it. Many Content Management Systems allow version control meaning content can be backed up to the last or a previous state if needed.

Publishing
The mechanism and options of illustrating the digital content from the database. This is the process in which the stored content is delivered. It is advisable to work in a close conjunction with graphic designers with web skills. It is important to consider if you may publish your content through various social media channels.

History
The first content management system was announced in the late 90s. The first CMS-like technologies consisted of using server-side scripting to generate content sent from a server to the web browser. Some web development programming languages like PHP and ASP came into play in 1995–1997, later on accompanied by Java Server Pages (JSP) in 1999.

Types of Content Management Systems

Content Management Systems (CMS) could vary dramatically in both aspects: features and price. There is a large number of providers which offers different price and functionality. The important decision of which solution you choose will need careful consideration.

- **WordPress** according to Knista.com, it is the simplest, most popular way to develop your own website or blog. A recently conducted survey states that, WordPress powers over 34% of all the websites on the Internet. WordPress is the best for static content, like About Us, Contact, and Pricing pages. "Static" doesn't mean it can never change. Instead, static content is content that is "less time- dependent than Posts". However, by using WordPress, you can create business websites e-Commerce stores, blogs, portfolios, resumes, forums, social networks, membership sites and etc.
- **Drupal** is more of a pure CMS rather than focusing on blogging as a platform. A plain installation comes with numerous of interesting features like forums, user blogs, OpenID, profiles and etc. It is easy to create a website with social features with a simple installation of Drupal.
- **Joomla** is a very advanced CMS in terms of its functionality. Installing Joomla on your host server is relatively easy due to the Joomla's installer. It is designed to work on common shared hosting packages, and is a very straightforward considering how configurable the software is. Joomla features an attractive administration interface, complete with user-friendly drop-down menus.
- **Wix.com** offers an easy drag-and-drop site builder to create small websites. There are hundreds of free templates available. Another advantage is that you can get your own web hosting as well as domain names (free and paid), provided by Wix. The Wix App Market makes it easy to add extra functionality such as photo galleries, ecommerce and etc. It features unique third party application add-ons, which means that you can extend the functionality in a single click of a button (Brandon 2019).

However, choosing the right platform could be tremendously difficult task, therefore CULTART suggests to take into account the following aspects:
1. How often you are planning to change or create a new text content?
2. Do you have any design expertise?
3. How quickly you want to scale up your CMS?
4. What time you are planning to invest into customizing and adapting the visual content?

To sum up, CMS is a very appropriate marketing tool and in our consumer-driven world, its usage is quite important in order to establish a quick and reliable communication with your customers. There is a variety of CMS platforms and it is up to you choose those which suits your needs best. Whatever is your preference, developing your blog page could be a valuable addition to your website.

How social media has redefined the communications role

Interview with Kirk Wilson By Jon Minnick, Aug. 4, 2022,
Source: https://www.ragan.com/how-social-media-has-redefined-the-role-of-communications-across-organizations/

We caught up with Kirk Wilson of Lincoln Financial Group to learn his tips for smarter social media communications.

Ragan: Why did you get into social media communications?

Kirk Wilson

Kirk Wilson: I graduated with a degree in Strategic Communication and Public Relations and had internships across the communications spectrum from PR agencies to radio, and after graduation, I was at an ad agency in Philly where I started taking on projects that were heavily social based. I then landed at Lincoln about a year later and have really enjoyed taking on a few different hats here, but social and content is really the bulk of what I've been doing here. I've had some other incredible opportunities with other clients in the entertainment industry, where I've managed their social channels and really saw the power of social in such a different industry. While I'm still pretty early on in my career, I do think social is going to only get bigger and be something I always want to have my hand in, when it comes to communications and brand.

Ragan: What do you think is the most important part of a social media communicator's role in an organization?

KW: Social media has completely redefined the role of communications in any organization. The social media communicator's role is that of a mix of so many other roles from PR/communication to brand reputation, to advertising. I think the most important part of their role is understanding the customer and giving them content they want and need to see — to keep building that relationship.

Ragan: Why should communicators embrace social media to build their brand and an audience?

KW: For starters, it's free. You create an account and just start building. Even if you don't have a budget to support paid content, an organization — especially a new one — should be on all the social platforms that your audiences are on. You can learn so much about your potential audience/customer through your social channels as well — which will directly affect your business.

Ragan: What tips or advice can you share so that organizations can make the most of their social media communications?

KW: If you are in an organization that has a media budget, and your audience is on social, then you should put some of your dollars toward paid content on social. At Lincoln, our social team falls under our Corporate Advertising and Brand Strategy — which is why we have the budget to take an "always on" approach to promoting our content directly to the right targets. We are always trying to educate our potential customers on why they should talk to their financial professional and purchase a specific product from Lincoln — and those people aren't always following us, so paid allows us to get our best content in front of them to inspire them.

Ragan: What do you see as the next thing for social media communications? What should organizations be doing now to stay ahead of the trends?

KW: I think organizations need to stop sleeping on the newer platforms, like TikTok. Everyone was saying just a year or so ago that TikTok was for their teenage kids to make dancing videos on, but now it really is the fastest growing and best way to garner an audience. Organizations need to test the waters there because I think it is only going to get bigger. There is a space for everyone on that platform.

Ragan: At this year's Ragan and PR Daily's Social Media Conference, you're on a panel discussing social media campaigns and success stories. Can you give our readers a sneak peek at what they can expect to hear from you?

KW: I'll be talking about a campaign we had lots of success with last year that may not be exactly that type of content you'd expect to see from a financial services company. Those in the Philadelphia area may know Lincoln as the naming rights partner of the Philadelphia Eagles' stadium, Lincoln Financial Field. So, to bring more national awareness to what we do as an organization to the millions of Eagles fans across the country, we created a social campaign. That's all I'll say on that now!

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