

Notes from W&M Social Media Strategy, Part 2 SMUG July 2011

SLIDE 1

Let's start with a bit of housekeeping:

- I'm Susan Evans and I'm the Director of Creative Services.
- If this is your first time at SMUG, please raise your hand. Welcome to all.
- We used the WMDigest to do some promotion of this group and we now have 130 members of SMUG.
- To celebrate the cruel, cruel summer, Ashleigh has organized a Summer Tweet Up for tonight. Ashleigh do you want to remind us about the details?
- We don't have a date yet for our August meeting but there is a proposed topic. Jim Ducibella and Megan Shearin from University Relations have agreed to do a session on the role of the University Relations Office at W&M. Their session will also include some tips for writing releases for the media.

So all we need is a date and a space ... would anyone be willing to coordinate that, get a message out to the SMUG list and facilitate the August meeting.

So, let's get to today's topic. I appreciate the chance to talk with you all about social media strategy.

SLIDE 2

This is actually part 2 of a SMUG discussion about social media strategy.

In May, I presented some thoughts about social media at W&M. You'll recall I spoke about our early use of social media, the five years of experimentation and success that we've all had with platforms like blogs and facebook.

I also mentioned that the Creative Services team was going to spend some time this summer, rethinking it all. We've learned a lot about social media over the past five years and if we were starting all over, we might do it differently.

So my presentation today will highlight what we've been nailing down during those long hot days of summer.

But first, a key point about social media strategy.

SLIDE 3

If you leave with one thing today, I hope it is this:

Your social media strategy is a communication strategy.

Now I realize that this is a deceptively simple assertion. Still, I think we move ahead by leaps and bounds when we ground our thinking about social media in a strategy that also works for communication.

In my view, the best way to think about social media is to think about it in a very personal way.

Think about what it's like when you first meet someone that you're interested in getting to know. You want to hear what they think. You want to understand what they're about and you want them to talk back when you make a comment or ask a question.

SLIDE 4

So a few of us in Creative Services spent a full day and then some follow up meetings talking about social media strategy. We locked ourselves in a conference room and are ready to propose that these 7 elements belong in a social media strategy.

For those of you who like it in outline format, we have a draft social media strategy that fleshes out these seven elements. I posted this draft to our blog this morning and I'll send a note to the SMUG listserv with a link to it.

If you decide to download and review it, we'd love your feedback.

For my presentation today, I decided not to pass this out and read it to you. Instead, I'll highlight some of it using three themes.

SLIDE 5

The first theme is I can be spontaneous if I can plan for it.

Yes, social media is conversational and on the fly; Still if you

figure out what your purpose is and what you value, your use of any social media platform will be more effective.

Here are a couple of examples of what we have decided for purpose. The purpose of our social media channels is to:

- Offer an authentic voice

- Have a different sort of conversation with our audiences

In the area of values, we want our audience to talk back.

We also think that W&M does not control what's said out there; we are not the only legitimate voice to describe the W&M experience; we value you the contributions of others in the conversation.

SLIDE 6

The second theme is Don't spend your time managing exceptions.

Most of the time, people use social media in a very productive and useful and polite way. We do have a few policies that guide our use of social media. But we don't want to spend too much time developing policies to address things that will rarely happen. Creative Services does provide oversight for the use of social media on campus and we are available to consult with departments on strategy.

So here are a few examples related to oversight and also some policies that we think are necessary:

- We do not use or allow comments that contain hate language.
- We do not use profanity, or placeholders for profanity, in our posts.
- We are cautious about posts related to condolences, tragedies, and private matters.
- We will monitor the activity of social media channels that are highlighted in Social Stream. We'll be periodically reviewing all the links there to be sure that they are still active and useful. So for example, if we find a twitter feed with no posts within a four month period, we're planning to remove it from Social Stream and contact the owner to suggest that they close out the Twitter stream.
- We are not spokespersons for W&M. That last one is a little tricky and I think deserves it's own slide.

SLIDE 7

What Creative Services strongly recommends until the Emergency Management Team issues a policy:

Emergency communication is the purview of the W&M Emergency Management Team (EMT) and the following applies to the use of social media for emergency communication:

- The EMT is drafting a policy that will address the use of social media for emergency communication. SMUG was consulted for ideas and suggestions about the policy in June 2011.
- It is likely that the EMT will use @W&MNews to deploy emergency messages.
- Until the EMT announces an official policy, Creative Services strongly recommends that, in the case of an emergency, managers of W&M social media channels only copy verbatim what is posted by W&M News. We also strongly recommend that a verbatim copy of what is posted by W&M News be followed with the statement, “The most reliable source for emergency communication and updates is @WMNews.”
- Managers of W&M social media channels should not:
 - post their own emergency updates or versions that differ from what is posted by @WMNews
 - reinterpret, add to or delete from language used by @WMNews

General communication guidelines already in place also apply to social media:

- Members of the W&M community who manage social media channels on behalf of the university are not official spokespersons. Brian Whitson, director of university relations, is the official spokesperson at W&M.
- If you are unsure about whether or not a social media post will be mistakenly viewed as an official announcement from W&M, check first with University Relations.

The policy you have in place about how sensitive topics are communicated should also cover social media. Be cautious about posts related to condolences, tragedies, personal and private concerns, etc.

SLIDE 8

The third theme is Let’s get this done W&M!

In my opinion, brand management, techniques and content are the most critical elements of a social media strategy. All of the great work that all of you are doing on social media channels reinforces the W&M brand.

We do recommend that you keep in mind issues of editorial quality – like typos and grammatical errors, and more importantly subpar content. Everything you post on a social media channel that represents W&M either positively or negatively affects our brand. So if you know that you only have enough time to effectively manage a Facebook page and a Twitter feed, so do it. Not every office needs a YouTube channel especially if you can’t produce video quickly enough to make it relevant.

In terms of techniques, we’ll be experimenting in the coming year with things like Facebook ads and quizzes. We’ll be investigating Google+ and we’ve already submitted William & Mary as a beta institution for the business platform that will soon be available.

So what do I mean by content?

I mean what you post:

- Links
- Photos
- Words
- Polls
- Retweets and more

In Creative Services, we are regularly looking for ways to improve our content. So over the next year, you'll see us encourage the use of W&M hashtags and post almost daily to the W&M Flickr site.

We are also brainstorming about new ways to use social media – we are thinking about things like live tweets on the W&M home page, more personas like wmsquirrel and lordbot.

SLIDE 9

Q&A ended the presentation.

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