

Case Study 3—Strategic Social Media Plan: A University Business School

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In efforts to build a central voice in the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech, a 12-week plan evolved. This plan found a meeting place at a crossroads between education, social media placement and experimentation, and content marketing. A set of social media channels was developed as the source for those seeking academic news, trends in social media marketing, and engagement within the college and across campus. In this initiative, the goal was to reach an audience that consisted of current and prospective students, alumni, and leaders in academia.

With the intent to develop a robust community of influencers on all platforms within a specific timeframe, many steps had to be taken and dynamic metrics had to be followed and maintained. At the end of the project, the college would ideally have an all-knowing tone among the student and professional body as well as an exciting attitude with a passion for the business world. The college sought fewer casual conversations and more thought-provoking, share-worthy discussions. The students' words would eventually inspire action within the college and social networks, while allowing those with a passion for business to have fun among fellow enthusiasts.

With all of that in mind, how would success be measured and reached? Basics had to be set—in a case like this, with so many intricacies and so many potential critics, it's the little things that would matter the most. It began with a three-tiered system in regards to the social tone, voice, and personality, which would aim to encompass the following criteria:

- *Knowledgeable*—always current with what is happening in the college and business worlds.
- *Progressive*—inspiring and broadening ideas with a fresh business perspective.
- *Engaged*—starting, sharing, and continuing the conversation.

The next step in the evolution of this strategic plan was building a process to work by. By combining curation, facilitation, monitoring, and management, the team would continuously reach goals.

After coming full circle on the process, measurement was again questioned. What metrics would be appropriate to analyze action items in this plan? In what ways would measurable goals be attained? The scale of success was broken down into four major goals, each harboring a quantifiable KPI, as well as a tool that would harness those numbers.

Finally, creativity had to be addressed. Social media is of course an art, a marketing tool, and so much more than just a means to communicate. Using periodical themes, the 12-week plan would become a four-part plan. Timely elements of each period, such as national holidays, university events, and trending topics would be helpful in focusing on and creating conversation. Between each period, goals and metrics and engagement could be analyzed, and within each period, new ideas would be brainstormed and implemented.