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Prepared by:
Allison Heathcock



2021 Social Media Trends and Industry Forecasts

NASHVILLE SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTER

For use and distribution by:
Diana Perez and Lorraine McGuire

Nashville Sexual Assault Center
101 French Landing Dr, Nashville, TN 37228



Introduction

This research document has been created by Allison Heathcock as a senior capstone project for the Social Entrepreneurship program at Belmont University. The project is a comprehensive consulting document designed to provide insight and education into current market trends around Social Media Marketing. This project has been created for the use of the Nashville Sexual Assault Center social media team.

Initial Needs

Currently, Nashville SAC is focused on its social media impact across Instagram and Tiktok. They are posting content biweekly with a focus on information around prevention, education, and support.

The primary goals for the research project are determining current market trends and macro forces, how to maintain engagement, and how to develop a more recognizable brand identity.

Executive Summary

Identifying a Brand Identity

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Establishing a recognizable brand is the first step toward continued engagement and online communication.

Emphasizing Passive Engagement

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Likes and shares are no longer the most important metric for measuring social media success. Passive engagement plays a massive role in social media success.

The Value of New Social Media Platforms

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With the rise of Tiktok, social media marketing has taken on a new form. Engagement is changing and brand identity requires a new focus on new social platforms.

Utilizing Influencer Connections

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Connecting with established social media influencers could be the key to connecting with new audiences.

Continued Interest in Video Content

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Through Tiktok, Instagram reels, livestreams, and new video-focused social media platforms, there is an ongoing push toward video-focused content across social media platforms.

General Takeaways

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Identifying a Brand Identity

In 2021, brand identity and awareness are crucial to audience retention and ROI. Individual transactions do not have the power to create memorable brands or long-term growth. Now is the time to take big steps toward connecting with your audience and building a recognizable brand identity.

1. Use what you have

Insights are your friend. Recognize patterns in audience behavior and play to these strengths. What types of posts are performing well? Where are people engaging the most with your content?

2. Create a recognizable brand personality

When a social media user lands on your page, they should immediately know what your brand is about. In the nonprofit sphere, this means prioritizing the most valuable aspects of your organization. Use specific colors, fonts, and types of content to curate a distinct branding for your organization.

3. Don't overdo it

Use hashtags and posts strategically, focusing on posting content that is mission and vision-oriented, rather than simply posting for the heck of it.

Emphasizing Passive Engagement

Awareness metrics (mentions, shares, links, impressions, etc.) remain beneficial but applause rate (likes or favorites as a percentage of your total followers), engagement rate, and amplification rate are becoming more applicable as passive engagement grows in importance.

With social media usage seeing a dramatic uptake in the last year, new opportunities are presenting themselves for brands to prioritize their audience without devoting too much attention toward direct engagement in the form of likes, shares, and mentions.

Mass reaction is proving to be more valuable than individual engagement as these numbers demonstrate continued audience interest and brand recognition.

The Value of New Social Media Platforms

Tiktok's rise to the top offers a distinct example of staying relevant with new and innovative social media platforms. The short-term video app has broken records across the last few years, growing into a platform that is globally recognized as one of the most powerful apps for businesses looking to gain exposure.

Businesses should be encouraged not to shy away from lasting trends around new social media platforms. In an age where trends can change overnight, it is essential to stay relevant in regards to which apps are retaining consistent interest.

Utilizing Influencer Connections

Influencer partnerships can be a great way to grow your audience and engagement. By utilizing influencer connections, you are opening your brand up to thousands of followers that may have never heard of your organization. Find influencers that connect to your mission and vision and use shared interests to support influencer partnerships.

Here are some questions you should ask when researching influencers to work with:

- Does the influencer work with brands that are similar to mine?
- Does the influencer's brand align with your brand's value?
- How quality is the influencer's content?
- Do their followers engage with their content? (Some influencers have thousands of followers but get little or no engagement. If this happens often, it's very likely that the influencer has fake followers)
- How often do they post, and is their photography style suitable for your brand?

Continued Interest in Video Content

Video content is quickly becoming the main focal point of many social media platforms. With the rise of Tiktok and Instagram Reels, video content has continued to remain favorable as an excellent tool for growing engagement with your current audience and reaching new users to grow your audience.

Trends in social media demonstrate a continued interest in video content, making Tiktok, Instagram reels, live streams, and in-feed videos more and more conducive to growth and audience retention.

General Takeaways

Social Media Marketing is a constantly changing field that demands that your organization remain privy to current trends in order to maintain relevancy.

Overall, SAC is doing a great job producing content that is interesting and engaging but there are a few key things that you could do to further emphasize the important mission of your organization.

Establish a more recognizable brand

Whether through narrowing in on content focus, highlighting specific brand colors and fonts, or catering to a more specific audience, creating a unique brand personality will create recognition in users' minds when they see a post from SAC.

Keep prioritizing Tiktok

This platform is here to stay. Engaging with this audience more will create a new space for your content to dwell. Pay attention to trends and have fun with content on this platform!

Consider influencer partnerships

SAC is a great cause to push and influencer relationships may connect your content and work to a whole new audience.

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