Welcome to the PDE Marketing Newsletter!

The charge of the Program Development and Evaluation Unit is to provide the necessary resources for Extension professionals to develop effective educational programs, and program evaluations that are useful, feasible, and conducted with propriety. The PDE team is committed to motivating Extension professionals to achieve their maximum potential as educators through the enhancement of their program development and evaluation skills. Part of the program development process includes developing marketing strategies to promote various programs and services offered throughout the state of Ohio. It is our hope that the marketing newsletters provide valuable tips, tools and resources on how to market your programs and services more efficiently. –Written by Kennetha Peebles, Program Development and Evaluation. Contact: peebles.20@osu.edu

Key Topics

Social Media Best Practices
- What is social media?
- What are the different platforms?
- Best practices for each platform
- General best practices

Photo source: www.occupystream.com
Examples of social media platforms:

- **Social Networks**: Allows users to build and maintain relationships with others. Ex: Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn™

- **Blogs**: Allows users to easily publish and share content, similar to a personal journal. Ex: Blogger, WordPress, TypePad

- **Microblogs**: Allows users to post short messages that are typically 140 characters or less. Ex: Twitter, Tumblr, Plurk

- **Video Sharing**: Allows users to post video content for others to watch and share. Ex: YouTube, Vimeo, Blip.tv

- **Photo Sharing**: Allows users to publicly share photos. Ex: Flickr, Picasa, PhotoBucket, Instagram

- **Bookmarking**: Allows users to share sites of interest with others. Ex: Pinterest, Digg, Delicious, StumbleUpon

- **Location Services**: Allows users to share their whereabouts with others. Ex: Foursquare, Gowalla, Whrrl

- **Online Communities**: Social networks focused on a specific audience or topic. Ex: Google+, Ning, BuddyPres, Jive, Chatter

- **Chat/Instant Messaging**: Allows users to communicate with one another in real time using typed text. Ex: Kik, WhatsApp, Skype, SnapChat

**What is social media?**

Social media is a tool used to combine technology with social interaction through the use of words. Social media is also used to keep clients engaged and informed on issues affecting their communities. There are various social media platforms that allows marketers an opportunity to communicate with current and potential clients and to spread their brand messaging in a low-cost and relaxed environment.

**What is the best platform for your marketing strategy?**

Not all social media platforms are appropriate for your specific marketing strategy. Here are a few best practices to the most popular platforms to help you when making the decision on which route to take:

**Social Networking: Facebook**

Facebook is the largest social network that connects users with friends and family through posting of interactive content. Users create profiles to upload and share status updates, photos, links and videos with their ‘friends.’ The goal of Facebook is about retain customers and build relationships.

**Best Practices**

- Create a Page and not a Profile for programs
- Avoid duplication of posts on Facebook ad Twitter
- Pay attention to insights as they tell who is watching
- Create a visually appealing page
- Allow followers to post comments
- The best times to post on Facebook are weekdays between 6-8am and 2-5pm.

**Video Sharing: YouTube/Vimeo**

YouTube and Vimeo are social networks in which users create, post, share and view originally created videos. Videos can be posted for both personal and professional use.

**Best Practices**

- Don’t use copyrighted material; use royalty-free music
- Use proper credits at the end of videos; include the year and any copyright indicators
- Include OSU Extension in your file names
- Make content accessible to all including captions and subtitles.

**Online Communities: Google+**

Google+ is the second largest platform offering similar features as Facebook such as personal profiles, status updates and image sharing. Additional features include Communities and Circles to increase social interaction as well as video chatting capabilities with individuals or groups.

**Best Practices**

- Take advantage of Google+’s useful “circles” feature putting your friends into “circles”.
- Post more specifically to appeal to their interests and personalities.
- The best time to post on Google+ are between the hours of 9am-11am.
Photo Sharing: Instagram/Flickr
Instagram/Flickr are online photo and video sharing platforms that allow users to share their photos/videos with other users and apply digital filters to tweak the image.

Best Practices:
- Use @ and # to reach more people
- Share action; show participants engaged in your programs.
- Interact with others by liking and commenting on images that are relevant to your program.
- The best times to post on Instagram are between 3-5pm on weekdays and weekends.

Blogs
Blogs are virtual journals that include chronological entries made by individuals that focus on specific topics and provide community forums for users.

Best Practices:
- Create conversations by posing questions, introduce new ideas to get people talking
- Encourage readers to share posts to increase traffic
- Make connections with similar bloggers to share thoughts and ideas.

Bookmarking: Pinterest
Pinterest is a pin board-style photo sharing website that allows users to create and manage themed-based images such as events, interests, and hobbies. The purpose is collect content, not create it.

Best Practices:
- Use keywords in each of your pins
- Always include a link when pinning
- Complete your Pinterest profile to avoid the spamming title.
- Keep your pin word count to 100-200 and use a shortened URL.
- The best times to pin are between 2-4pm and 8-11pm on weekdays and on Saturday mornings.

Microblogs: Twitter
Twitter is an information network that delivers real-time updates of the latest stories, opinions, news and ideas in 140-character format. Organizations can quickly ‘tweet’ information and build relationships with their followers.

Best Practices:
- Listen and respond or retweet
- Follow other University departments and retweet relevant information demonstrating the “one university” mantra
- Follow back for greater relationship building
- The best time to tweet is between 1-3pm and on the weekends.

Instant Messaging: Skype
Skype is a comprehensive messaging client that allows you to chat with others via text, voice, or video. You can add friends from the skype community and instant message any friends you are connected to.

Best Practices:
- Stay engaged in the conversation and avoid leaving in the middle of the conversation.
- Always use the unavailable option when you are not available to take messages or calls.
- When conducting a video chat, be aware of your surroundings before you begin.
- Consider work schedules and times zones when setting up a meeting.
Social Networking: LinkedIn
LinkedIn is the world's largest professional social network connects colleagues with each other and businesses with current and potential employees, all while enabling community development and content sharing.

Best Practices:
- Keep your information up-to-date.
- Be sure to respond to your posts, reviews, and questions.
- Complete your personal profile thoroughly and honestly.
- Participate in groups to make new connections, which may lead to new opportunities.
- Link your profile to your other social media sites.
- The best time to publish content is between 5-6pm and on the weekends.

General Best Practices
Here are a few general best practices when using social media platforms to engage customers as described by Trisha Forant of the Salesforce Blog:

Follow back and interact-
This two-way interaction will allow you to gain insight into community needs.

Keep the social in social media-
Don’t be afraid to reach out and build relationships.

Keep it short-
The longer the message, the less engaged your clients may be with the information you are trying to convey.

Create brand awareness-
Be sure to include relevant content in your campaigns that will influence decision makers to refer others to OSU Extension.

Be proactive, versus reactive-
Stay on top of new and emerging issues concerning your intended audience.

Respond to all feedback-
Instead of deleting negative comments, respond to the negative and think of it as an opportunity to improve and thank clients for positive feedback and encourage them to share more positive stories.

“Why use social media?
Marketing is no longer about the stuff that you make, but about the stories you tell.”
- Seth Godin