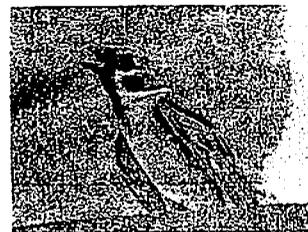


MARKETING YOUR ARTS ORGANIZATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA: 7 THOUGHT-STARTERS FOR CREATING AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY

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As the president of a digital marketing company and a long-time arts marketing lecturer, I often get asked questions about social media and how it can play into an organization's overall marketing plan. The truth is, there's no one simple answer and it really varies based on the organization's goals and resources.



With new platforms popping up on a regular basis, establishing an effective social media marketing plan can be overwhelming to say the least. And while these platforms might be "free" it is important to remember the time that goes into them which ultimately equates to dollars.

In this post, I'd like to share some of the thought-starters that I give to organizations who are looking to start, or even refresh, their social media strategy.

1. Establish social media objectives for your organization:

Common objectives often include, 1.) Building awareness around the organization, 2.) Increasing ticket sales and attendance, and 3.) Increasing engagement with current and future patrons. By setting social media objectives, you establish the framework of your social media plan.

2. Determine where your audience (and future audience) is most likely to interact with you:

For this one, be sure to think beyond what is trendy! It's easy to get caught up with new sites, updates, and case studies. But at the end of the day, it's important that your organization is in the right place, rather than the "right now" place. For example, if your target audience is Women 35+, Tumblr might not be the best place, whereas if your target is Women 18-24, it might be a better match.

3. Think about what type of content you'll promote through your social media channels:

Are you an organization that always has something new happening, or are you only active just a few times per year? Many organizations have breaks in activity, so they have to consider what types of content gets posted during those lulls. Is it upcoming events? Or is it an opportunity to post about partner organizations?

4. Decide where you'll get your content from:

Once you've decided which platforms you'll be on and how often you'll post, you'll need to think about where your content sources will come from. For many organizations, the automatic answer is "our website." And while that will be part of it, it's important to determine additional content sources that relate to your organization without necessarily being direct properties. I recommend making a list of potential sources. For example, if you're a ballet company, you might include Dance Magazine and the New York Times Arts section as two of your sources.

5. Map out your resources:

Determine who will implement your plan. Will different people share responsibilities, or will it fall to a single person? For example, if someone is in charge of content development, will someone else be in charge of approving? These are all important things to consider.

6. Establish how much time will be allotted for social media efforts:

Before you begin your social media plan, designate how much time will be spent on it in relation to your other marketing initiatives. In addition, consider testing out some timesaving tools like Hootsuite that allow you to upload content ahead of time. The key is to make the process seamless.

7. Put a measurement plan in place to track your success:

Once you've figured out how you will execute your social media strategy, you'll want to determine how you'll measure it. Will it be the number of likes/followers you've gained, the amount of people who engage on each post, or maybe total increase in sales? This will depend on your objectives set at the beginning of the process.

As the social media landscape continues to evolve, these thought-starters will serve as a helpful checklist to refer back to as you refine and refresh your strategy. And remember, while it's tempting to join the newest and most popular sites, it's more important to create a unique plan that works best for your organization.
