MASTERING
SOCIAL MEDIA
in Government & Public Sector

**Success told through
real-life case studies**

JOANNE SWEENEY

Contents

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Introduction

When I work with marketing professionals in Government and public sector bodies, they always ask me to relay a case study as a way of demonstrating the potential results of a tactic or strategy I recommend.

When I brought leaders from Ireland, the UK, mainland Europe and the US together for the Public Sector Digital Marketing Summit, the stage became a beacon of social media and digital excellence.

My aim was simply to give voice to their work, showcase their truth and give them a stage to share their expertise. Mostly, the narrative of public sector is told through the lens of media and/or citizen journalists.

I would like to pay tribute to the public sector marketing pros profiled in this collection of essays and say a big thank you to them for sharing their work with us all.

Peer-to-peer learning is invaluable in this sector, and I am honoured to be the facilitator of such rich conversations and knowledge-transfer.

If you have a case study or experience you would like to share, please get in touch. Email info@publicsectormarketingpros.com.

I use case studies for my podcast, *JSB Talks Digital*, my blog and YouTube Channel. Your experience will define another's. Be part of my community of public sector marketing pros, changing the world one digital message at a time.

Yours in digital,
Joanne.

The value of a **social media strategy**

Andrew McLindon
Director of Communications
An Garda Síochána

"For us it's about building as big an audience as possible, so we can send out major public alert messages. But if your organisation only needs to build an audience of 2,000, that's fine too. As long as it's the right audience."

Andrew McLindon,
Communications Director,
An Garda Síochána

"With the right strategy direction, social media will deliver on your organisation's objectives. Without one you'll just end up swimming in waters where you just don't know where you're going"

Andrew McLindon, Communications Director, An Garda Síochána

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 # Social Media Challenge

An Garda Síochána would not be able to operate without clear and strong communication with its communities, whether that's in fighting or preventing crime, keeping the public safe, or relaying important information.

Social media has opened up new channels for this communication, allowing them to reach people instantly, clarify their role and develop an ongoing conversation.

The challenge for the Gardaí was how to use these channels effectively, especially in the following areas:
1 ▶ Child safety in local communities;
2 ▶ General public safety during major weather events;
3 ▶ Averting negative perceptions of their role in communities.

Social Media Strategy

The objective for An Garda Síochána was to protect and support communities by having the largest and most engaged social media audience as possible to ensure they can receive important public safety information.

They set about doing this by ensuring all their communication would meet three important touch points:

▶ Inform
Educate the public about important information they need to know

▶ Reassure
Demonstrate to the public that they are looking after their safety

▶ Appeal
Seek out the public's help in keeping their community safe

This checklist allowed them to approach all their communications in the same way but gave them the flexibility to engage differently depending on the subject matter.

Social Media Tactics

An Garda Síochána utilised various techniques to inform, reassure and appeal to their audience.

These included engaging communities through humour where appropriate, while always choosing the correct tone where necessary.
Sometimes this involved taking some risks but they saw this as a necessary way to build their audience numbers.
They also had sufficient resources on hand to keep the brand top of mind and accurately deliver serious public safety messages.
Plus, they regularly measured and the effectiveness of their posts so they could build up an audience quickly.

Examples of some of the tactics used in campaigns in the last year included:

1	A Child Rescue Ireland (CRI) alert which:
Informed	widest possible audience about risk to life
Reassured	the public the Gardaí were doing all they can to protect life
Appealed	to the public for their help in this emergency

The tactics involved included immediately sending out images of the child, car and parent on social channels and asking their community to share. With the alert going out at 3am – a time when the mainstream media was shut down, this allowed the alert to spread fast.

2	Public safety alert around Storm Ophelia which:
Informed	the public about the serious danger of the storm
Reassured	them that the Gardaí were present to help them if needed
Appealed	for them to stay indoors and off the roads

The tactics involved in this campaign included video appeals from the Assistant Commissioner to take precaution and stay off the roads if necessary, live images of closed and hazardous conditions and humorous post which encourage shares and retweets.

> "Our Child Rescue Ireland alert went out at 3am. Remember, this was a time when all the mainstream media was closed. But through Facebook and Twitter, we already had 7,000 people engaged at that time."
>
> Andrew McLindon, Communications Director, An Garda Síochána

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Results

The methods used by An Garda Síochána were very impressive and effective over the last year with their total **social audience increasing by 20% from May 2017 to June 2018.**

This audience of 770,000 regularly allows them to reach much of the country thanks to the virality of their posts and tweets.

Specifically, with the Child Rescue Alert they were **able to reach 7,000 people before 5am and 200,000 by 10am.** This was crucial in a situation where a fast response means everything. It gave the Gardaí the confidence that their community would respond when needed.

And when Storm Ophelia struck they were able to keep the country updated regularly through platforms like Twitter about road closures, and safety advice. So much so, that their **average impression per tweet was 130,000 for the day long storm.**

These updates coupled with broadcast media and Met Éireann posts, probably went a considerable way to mitigating loss of life or injuries on the day of the storm.

+20% 770,000

CRI

5 am — 7,000

10 am — 200,000

Garda Info
@gardainfo

A tree on top of a car at Dungourney Road Midleton occupant was very lucky and uninjured. #Ophelia

"We sometime use humour to get across a serious message. One such post during Storm Ophelia was engaged with by over 250,000 people."

Andrew McLindon
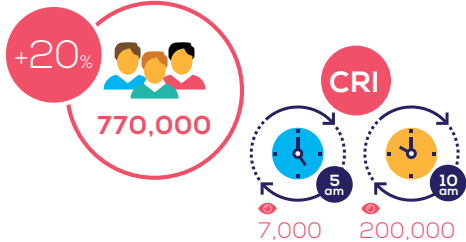
Learnings

From doing campaigns such as those specified above, the organisation has learned a lot about building and engaging a social audience.

While mistakes have been made they now recognise the following strategic and tactical learnings:

STRATEGIC	TACTICAL
Having a fully worked out strategy which commits to meeting your objectives is key.	Have sufficient resources for long term plans instead of just next couple of months.
Having a consistent investment in delivering a service that engages with your customers.	Good training, guidance and oversight – support and protect your people and your organisation.
Build a sustainable conversation - don't rely on luck or gimmicks - but meaningful conversations.	Get you know your audience, and potential audience – what makes them tick, what do they respond to.
Create a virtuous circle - good content leads to an engaged audience, which lead to better content and so on.	Apologise if you make a mistake, and don't make the same one twice.
Get buy in from all levels of your organisation, from the top to bottom.	Spell out clearly the hours that social media will be manned and what behaviour you won't tolerate from your community.
	Is your information relevant and timely?

Key Takeaways

1

For An Garda Síochána, they see the value of social media as an indispensable tool in their efforts to keep their communities safe and informed.

2

It also helps them increase the impact of any initiatives or activities and deliver on their organisation's objectives.

3

Through its posts and alerts, it reduces risks for individual employees and helps provide a service which is hugely beneficial to its audience.

The role of **social media** in **recruitment**

Aidan McGrath
Head of Recruitment
Beaumont Hospital, Dublin

"Using social media has enabled us to have the lowest nurse vacancy rate in the country, which means we can bring trolley numbers down and expand on services."

Aidan McGrath,
Head of Recruitment,
Beaumont Hospital

"86% of HR professionals feel like recruitment is becoming more like marketing and I absolutely agree with that."

Aidan McGrath, Head of Recruitment, Beaumont Hospital

Social Media Challenge

Beaumont Hospital is one of Ireland's largest hospitals employing over 4,000 staff.

They are the National Centre of Excellence for Neurosurgery amongst others, and their Emergency Department covers a population of over 250,000 and sees up to 60 patients per day.

It's an extremely busy organisation and the challenge of keeping employment levels filled with the best quality candidates is a constant challenge for their recruitment department.

The method of recruitment has changed dramatically since the days of posting an ad in a newspaper.

With a new breed of millennials who are digital savvy joining the healthcare system, a new approach was not only necessary, but highly advantageous giving the hospital a competitive edge in the marketplace.

Beaumont Hospital looked that their data and discovered that over 66% of jobs being applied for came through social media sites or click throughs to their website.

They sought to attract and retain high quality staff which would address pressures in their hospital and address a specialised skill shortages along with an overall nursing shortage.

This was also difficult given pay-scale pressure imposed by the HSE (Ireland's national health service) but despite this, Beaumont Hospital was determined to meet recruitment targets.

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Social Media Strategy

Beaumont Hospitals' recruitment strategy centred around some strong pillars.

1	**Current vacancies** were promoted using paid social particularly at crucial times of the year, such as over the winter (peaks in in-patients). This gave the hospital more reach and coverage, ensuring any potential employee was aware of all current and specialised vacancies.
2	**Content** promoting the hard work and ethos of the staff. These posts were to show the heroic, selfless nature of all the staff who contribute to the hospital and the culture of the working environment.
3	**Promoting the strength of the brand** and the other great work done by Beaumont Hospital. This helps highlight the sense of purpose and mission of the hospital and show it in a positive light, so prospective employees will feel like they will be become part of a great place to work.
4	**Making the application process easier** by developing mobile-responsive online forms. Because of increased submission of applications from mobile (over 67%), Beaumont looked for ways to make it easier for applicants to apply by removing text based downloadable application forms and using a smarter 'one click application' process.

"By using social media to recruit we wanted to reduce nurse vacancy numbers by between 100 to 150, as we knew the impact it would have on services would be significant."

Aidan McGrath, Head of Recruitment, Beaumont Hospital

Social Media Tactics

By employing these tactics in their recruitment process, Beaumont Hospital's recruitment drive got into full swing.

They used the following methods to get a larger presence and began attracting their ideal staff member:
Innovative employer branded advertising
Snappy graphics to accompany social media posts
Targeted advertising for passive and active candidates
Leveraging popular online and social networks and online sites especially Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Jobalert, search engine optimisation and Google +.
Email alerts and talent pools
Sponsored advertising and bespoke direct hiring campaigns
Search engine optimisation (especially for job postings)

Throughout their promotion period there was a direct impact on the Beaumont Hospital brand. This had a hospital-wide impact.

Results

All this resulted in the winter of 2017/2018 having the lowest nurse vacancy rate in 15 years. Higher staff numbers also empowered the hospital to open additional capacity on wards, reducing trolley numbers, while allowing them to roll out new specialist services or expand on additional ones.

The brand promotion campaigns via social posts **succeeded in driving up recruitment by 300% in 2017 and 350% to date** (June 2018).

On top of that their strategy **earned them two national HR awards** for their recruitment and retention strategy.

Learnings

Beaumont Hospital made the most of their data and undertook valuable research to understand their audiences better. Armed with this information they launched a new digital recruitment strategy focusing on where and how millennials were applying for jobs.

They knew that an increase of 55% in application rates was possible by removing clunky application forms along with the fact that 94% of candidates are likely to apply to a job if an organisation actively manages its employer brand.

The number one obstacle to candidates in the application process is not knowing what it's like to work at an organisation so this was an integral part of their online marketing.

They also took into consideration these stats:	
Over 72%	of candidates spend more than one hour researching a job before applying.
86%	of HR professionals agree that recruitment is becoming more like marketing.
69%	of candidates wouldn't take a job at a badly reviewed organisation, even if they were unemployed.

This gave the recruitment team at Beaumont Hospital new knowledge which they took on board when designing and delivering their award-winning recruitment and retention strategy.

Key Takeaways

Beaumont Hospital have shared the following 10 tips in help recruiters deliver a successful social media campaign:

1

Become best friends with hashtags – research what hashtags your audience like to use and get your job noticed.

2

Promote and encourage ambassadors – user-generated content is authentic and staff promoting your workplace to their peers makes it credible as a place to work.

3

Invest in social media advertising – reach your bullseye audience easier by using the right targeting options.

4

Stay active – ensure a regular and up-to-date schedule to stay front and centre of your audience's mind.

5

Drive social media traffic to your job posts – embed relevant SEO keywords and promote the posts in communities, groups and tag relevant social media profiles.

6

Optimise social media job posts for mobile – don't think in desktop anymore.

7

Highlight thought leaders in your organisation - impress prospective employees with the expertise of your current ones.

8

Celebrate success – share any awards, breakthroughs or individual staff member's private successes in any field.

9

Think global – The world is too small nowadays to think any other way, so don't feel limited to who you can attract.

10

Follow your competitors – keep abreast of what rival institutions are doing and learn as much from their successes and indeed failures.

Social Customer Service in the
Eye of a Storm

Barry Kenny
Corporate Communications
Manager, Irish Rail / Iarnród Éireann

"Delivering new kinds of content like video really helps us give our customers a great sense of what's going on around the network and helps us develop a more positive relationship with our customers."

Barry Kenny, Corporate Communications Manager, Irish Rail / Iarnród Éireann

"We are a mobile service. People want live up-to-the-minute information and for us, the channel that works best is Twitter. So, we give customers what they want to know and in real-time."

Barry Kenny, Corporate Communications Manager, Irish Rail / Iarnród Éireann

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Irish Rail operate 4,300 weekly services which carry an average of 875,000 passengers.

Being a semi-state body with limited resources and trying to maintain a trusted reputation as a professional and reliable transport service is a considerable challenge, particularly in an age where the public expects everything now.

Before the digital age, a major event would have been a communications nightmare for the organisation, as commuters and intercity travellers would have been left in the dark about postponements, cancellations, or interruptions to service.

This in turn would have hamstrung its ability to maintain or enhance its brand image.

But when Storm Emma was forecast in February/March of 2018 with projected record snowfalls, Irish Rail saw the use of social media, particularly Twitter, as a way to build up trust and affinity for the company.

So rather than seeing potential disaster, they saw opportunity.

Iarnród Éireann
@IrishRail

Inspecting line between Athlone and Roscommon on the Dublin to Westport/Ballina - John is standing on the rail! #BeastFromTheEast

8:51 PM - 2 Mar 2018

Iarnród Éireann
@IrishRail

Reminder: no trains today. Our Central Traffic Control reporting drifts at many stations, here's Adamstown via CCTV #BeastFromTheEast No trains running but our #OrangeArmy out to address issues so we can resume tomorrow incl overhead power fault DART, level crossings etc

8:00 AM - 2 Mar 2018

Iarnród Éireann
@IrishRail

Rail service outlook: services now winding down, with final departures before 14.00hrs. No trains for rest of today, and no trains will operate tomorrow Fri 2nd March. We expect to resume Sat 3rd March, details will be confirmed tomorrow. #BeastFromTheEast

12:36 PM - 1 Mar 2018

Social Media Strategy

From starting their social media conversations back in 2010, Irish Rail had learned a lot about content strategy and how social media engagement works.

They also got a better sense of how they could use social media to improve corporate communications which they sum up as:

Find out what information our customers want to know;

How to communicate with impact;

Listening to establish what we haven't made clear.

By researching and listening, they discovered that 91% of the time customers simply wanted up-to-the-minute service updates.

This helped Irish Rail measure their effectiveness and pick the right social channels to suit their audience which turned out to be Twitter.

However, even with something as mundane as service updates, Irish Rail knew they could still build up affinity with their customers by:

1	Taking risks in how they conveyed this information – using humour, or quirky posts.
2	Bringing more personality to their posts – making it more conversational.
3	Getting buy-in internally from everyone who works at the organisation and right throughout the country.
4	Designing a coherent content calendar with different types of engaging content i.e. text-based, imagery and video.

So, when approaching Storm Emma, Irish Rail already had a good sense of how they could inform and engage their customers through a potentially difficult and confusing period.

Social Media Tactics

Irish Rail took a clever approach to showing how committed they were to their customers.

They know that basic information on services would be their key communications driver but on top of this they developed posts which fed into people's sense of fun around snow taking full advantage of this major weather event.

They also called on all their maintenance crews to show just how hard they were working to keep lines open and keep their customers on the move.

This showed the company's staff as being heroes and gave a sense of everyone being *'in it together'.*

They also kept an eye on user-generated content and found nuggets of gold such as a student offering to get a tattoo of their logo if they could get her from Galway to Kilkenny at the height of the storm (they did get her to her destination, although confirmation of the tattoo was never verified).

They also visually displayed to customers just what the conditions were like across the rail tracks of Ireland, so if any cancellations did happen it would mitigate any frustrations.

"We have access to so much behind-the-scenes content that we know audiences love today. These are stories that make the public sit up and think, 'gosh I never knew what was involved in delivering my rail service to me.' So you could say we maximised that customer attention with stories and photos that we might not share on a day-to-day basis."

— Barry Kenny, Corporate Communications Manager, Irish Rail / Iarnród Éireann

Results

The results of Twitter impressions over the week of Storm Emma show the incredible value of the social media channel as a public information tool, while also showing the benefit of adopting a clear and clever strategy.

The week before Storm Emma (with average weather conditions) impressions peaked at 240,000, compared to 2,675,000 on the week of the storm.

They also increased their following and affinity levels through other social, and indeed traditional, media outlets.

They also scored an unprecedented positive public sentiment of 97% following the storm.

Their 'Orange Army' of line maintenance engineers were praised as heroes in keeping the railways open right up until the heaviest snowfalls forced them closed.

"Our busiest day during Storm Emma saw almost 2.7 million Twitter impressions, just before our shutdowns. And it shows that service uncertainty is what most drives our engagement and interaction."

Barry Kenny, Corporate Communications Manager, Irish Rail / Iarnród Éireann

Week Before Storm Emma

240,000

During Week of Storm Emma

2,675,000
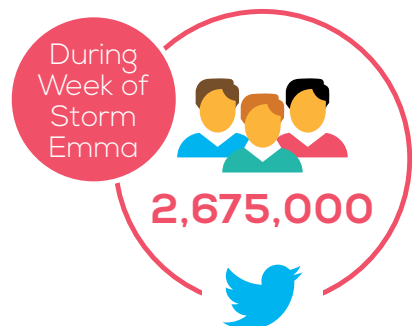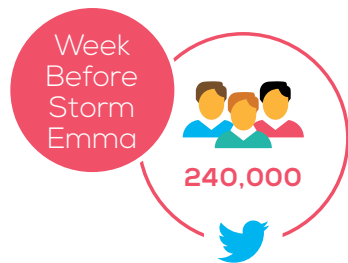
Learnings

Irish Rail learned a lot from their initial experiments with social media which was all about just being visible across many channels.

When Storm Emma approached they had a measured and clear strategy in place.

They had the confidence to use the right channels to deliver the messages they knew their audiences wanted to hear.

And in delivering these messages in compelling, engaging and even entertaining ways, they could build their brand reputation, trust and affinity in the process.

So much so, that far from being apprehensive about the affect adverse weather conditions could have on their brand, they looked forward to demonstrating the brand at its finest.

Key Takeaways

1
The commitment to putting their customers first was central to Irish Rail's communications strategy.

2
By getting them involved and then requesting photos of their staff on the coal face, or in this case the snow face, they could then show them just how much that commitment meant to them.

3
Customers could see the company was doing their best and being genuine heroes in ensuring families and loved ones weren't left stranded, or trying to help people get to work.

4
This led to a growth in followers and proved to the brand that their way of working was correct in increasing positive sentiment and engagement and getting their brand seen.

How a **bot saved** Christmas

Dr Aileen McGloin
Director of Marketing & Communications, safefood

"We wanted to support Christmas cooks in preparing safe and healthy food over the festive period, but this year we also wanted to use an AI bot to help provide customer service over the peak three-day period."

Dr Aileen McGloin, Director of Marketing and Communications, safefood

safefood
An implementation body set up under the British-Irish Agreement with a general remit to promote awareness and knowledge of food safety and nutrition issues on the island of Ireland.

Social Media Challenge

While lots of other organisations look forward to kicking off their shoes at Christmas, safefood eyes it with a sense of cautious trepidation. Why? Because on the 24 and 25 December each year, one million people in Ireland attempt to cook something they don't normally cook - a turkey.

With a high risk of bacterial contamination (if not cooked properly) coupled with a complex meal and a large number of people, the whole occasion can easily become, quite literally, a recipe for disaster.

But safefood also realised that they are perfectly placed to help.

When they examined web traffic stats over the previous years, they could clearly see the volume spiking around Christmas. This historically had led them to use social media to push out relevant content, such as Facebook Live cooking demonstrations, amongst graphic and text posts around Christmas food safety. While these were received well, it did put their organisation's resources under strain at a time that should be a holiday period for their staff too.

So they began to investigate how AI (artificial intelligence) could help them.

Social Media Strategy

For the period close to Christmas (22 -25 December) safefood decided to launch a Chatbot, which they affectionately named Chefbot, to take over a lot of their customer service workload.

Knowing that most of their audience was on Facebook they wanted to feature it there with the objectives of:

1 **Driving increased traffic towards the Christmas hub on safefood.eu where people could find more relevant and useful information; and >**

2 **Increased usage of their Turkey Cooking Time Calculator, also hosted on the website.**

This meant the safefood team could work more efficiently and let the information readily available do the hard yards for them, instead of putting pressure on their own resources.

Social Media Tactics

safefood set about developing their multi-media campaign by leveraging the following channels:

Website	**they wanted to re-purpose existing resources, so that they could create a cohesive and consistent look and feel to the campaign.**
Radio Ad	**this would increase awareness of the bot and drive traffic towards the website.**
Social Media	**where the content around the bot appeared along with Facebook advertising and re-targeting to drive people through to the site landing page.**
Chatbot	**their customer service solution supported by social advertising.**

They also wanted to adopt a data driven approach by developing a character or mind map for Chefbot, so that he could handle the top queries people had historically asked about when cooking Christmas dinner.

They could also schedule Facebook posts from him which matched up with all the key milestones around the Christmas dinner occasion, like defrosting reminders on 23 December, getting the turkey to the fridge two hours after cooking on Christmas Day or recipe suggestions for the 26 December.

They then used Facebook ads to create awareness of the bot and had a call to action to launch him in Facebook Messenger.

Of course as well as having handy tips and advice ready to go, it was also important to give Chefbot a personality so that he could respond to friendly and humorous conversation. One example being Facebook users telling him, *'I love you.'*

> "The mind map developed for our bot was based on the questions and information most searched for on our website over the last few years around safely cooking Christmas dinner. So that valuable data was available to us. We just had to use it."
>
> — Dr Aileen McGloin

Results

Chefbot cooked up a treat for safefood, by serving the Irish public lots of helpful and important cooking and food safety suggestions in the days leading up to and following Christmas.
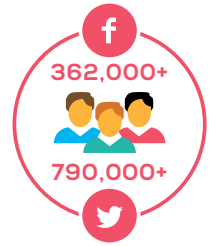
362,000+

790,000+

The statistics from campaign speak for themselves:
Social, organic search and referral drove a high volume of website traffic
362,000+ reach on Facebook
Over 1 million impressions on Facebook
790,000+ impressions on Twitter
40,331 engagements (including video views) on Facebook
45,000+ engagements on Twitter
11% engagement rate on Facebook
4.6% engagement rate on Twitter

Season's greetings, Joanne! I'm the safefood Chefbot and I'm here to help you make sure your Christmas menu goes to plan! What can I help you with?

Chefbot

As of January 1 2018, Chefbot had reached 356 users, and while that might not seem particularly high, it was still 356 people who needed to be reassured of key food safety messages. Without Chefbot those people would have required customer service from the safefood team.

Other interesting findings

New users peaked on December 23	The most clicked button was 'defrosting'	Recipe link was clicked 37 times	The Turkey Cooking Time Calculator was used 109 times	Most users came from Facebook Ads

Most importantly they had **the highest peak ever on their website between 23 and 26 December,** demonstrating that Chefbot was the perfect recipe for the Christmas rush!

"The data driven approach was absolutely key to Chefbot's success. We knew what people wanted to know and we constructed the bot based on their needs. It was a very personalised digital tactic and we would definitely employ it again"

Learnings

The success of Chefbot and their overall campaign was based around their data driven approach. By looking over the trend data over the previous few years they gave themselves a smart way to deliver all the important information without needing to have staff at hand to advise in real-time over the Christmas period.

They also knew when to time their messaging effectively through scheduled posts, and they thought about the context of their audience in terms of their needs on each day over the Christmas period.

Also important was getting buy-in from all departments to be brave enough to trust that an AI solution could deliver a positive approach.

Working well with experience advertising partners such as McCann Blue also ensured success.

Dr Aileen McGloin says:

"We had buy-in for our AI tech from all our departments from the start. You don't always get that, and it was key to delivering a successful campaign."

Key Takeaways

1

safefood looked at that their challenge with an outside-the-box mentality. Knowing that a great Christmas should be enjoyed by everyone, they wanted both their audience and staff to do just that.

2

They recognised the value of data and had the confidence to trust in some of the latest technology to deliver fantastic results for their campaign and deliver a more enjoyable Christmas for their team.

#TrinityIsSocial -
Engaging staff, students and prospective students

Sharon Campbell
Deputy Head of Communications
Trinity College Dublin

"At Trinity College Dublin there are so many great things going on that impact society in Ireland and around the world. And, we want to further develop our social engagement to reflect these."

Sharon Campbell,
Deputy Head of
Communications,
Trinity College Dublin

"We wanted the success of our social media strategy to be based more around engagement than the number of followers we had. We believe meaningful conversation is the true metric that matters online."

Sharon Campbell, Deputy Head of Communications, Trinity College Dublin

Social Media Challenge

With over 16,000 students and 1,600 staff spread across many different faculties, services and departments, Trinity College Dublin is a whole system of moving parts, each with their own communication objectives and challenges.

With so many great things to say, and so many ways to say it, the challenge for their communications department is to form a coherent platform that allows them to consistently promote their college and put their best face forward.

They also wanted to develop a conversation the staff could easily buy into, the students could engage with and prospective students would be attracted to. As such with so many outlets and departments, the challenge was to be coherent and consistent both operationally and in execution.

Social Media Strategy

The approach Trinity College Dublin took centred around the ideas of engagement and integration. It wasn't enough for them to just have a lot of followers, they wanted to create a regular, meaningful conversation with their online community.

They also wanted to capitalise on all their various touch points by creating a cohesive content calendar, based on their easy to remember hashtag #TrinityIsSocial.

They integrated everything by bringing together:	
Social Campaigns	particularly aimed at prospective students and fresher students
Media	for general news and ground-breaking research stories
Events	scheduled events or one-off events
Publications	promoting annual reviews or provost's e-zine
Internal Communications	sharing staff and student awards or internal news
Imagery	requesting and sharing user-generated content and hiring professional photographers at key events

All these strategic touchpoints allowed for an integrated campaign which could reach their target audiences effectively while creating a sense of real engagement with them.

Social Media Tactics

To ensure all these touchpoints integrated successfully, the communication teams set up weekly support meetings with staff.

This ensured they stayed in line with their objectives, took advantage of any innovations, and negotiated any potential roadblocks the university may have faced.

They also invested in training programmes like their 'Lunch and Learn' sessions, so their staff could learn how to execute their social content in the most effective way – whether it was through Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat or other platforms.

To target existing and prospective students, Trinity College Dublin recruited student ambassadors to share their experience of the university and create peer-to-peer engagement.

This included video diaries of their impressions of campus life, showcasing the benefits of joining clubs and societies, and content developed from student-focused events such as the Trinity Ball or university open days.

Not only did these activities encourage students to share and engage, it also encouraged them to create their own content. A good social media manager realises the value of user-generated content (UGC) which acts as social proof across the Internet.

This content illustrated valuable slices of real life from the point of view of current students. The voice of the students resonated with prospective students whose eyeballs watched on.

"We support all the many faces of Trinity College Dublin through our policy, guidelines, 'Lunch and Learn' social media training sessions and weekly meetings with a number of departments."

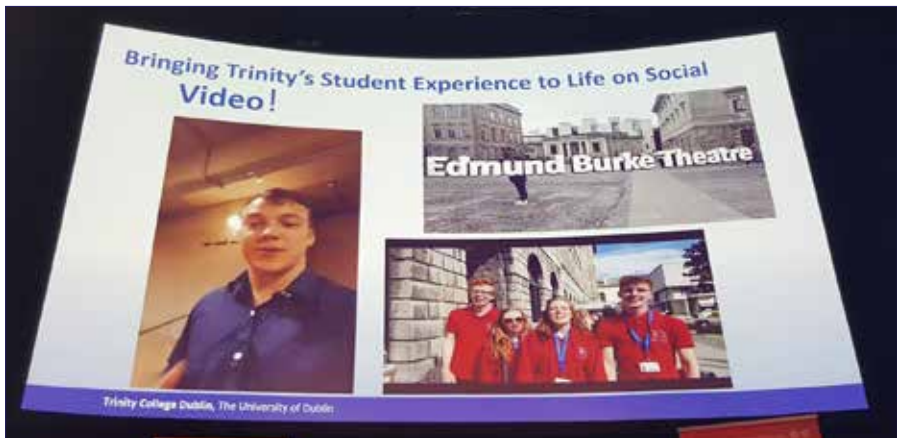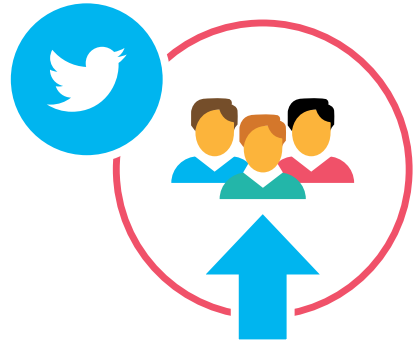Sharon Campbell, Deputy Head of Communications, Trinity College Dublin

✔ Results

Trinity College Dublin's engagement levels were already high, but in the past year (2017/2018) **they have catapulted from 103 to 68 in the World 100 Twitter Engagement ranking**, which ranks the top 252 universities around the globe.

To feature so highly in a list of prestigious universities (including one where Facebook was invented) is testament to their integrated approach, which encouraged buy-in from all corners of their social community.

> "The students are the biggest part of our community and partnering with them to create content played a big part in increasing our engagement as well as delivering more user-generated content."
>
> Sharon Campbell, Deputy Head of Communications, Trinity College Dublin

Learnings

Trinity College Dublin is looking to capitalise on their engagement ratings by further strengthening their social community's channels and conversations.

They plan on doing this by:

Continuing to offer support, training and guidance to empower their staff to develop their skills;

Building on their student ambassador programmes, so more authentic perspectives of the undergraduates and postgraduates can be shared;

Continuing to learn and improve by adopting the latest social media tactics and techniques;

Expanding on how they showcase their research activity.

Key Takeaways

The success of Trinity College Dublin's increased social engagement can be put down to the following:

1
Adopting an integrated approach to all their many communications touch points, so they could establish a coherent and consistent content calendar.

2
Investing time and training into supporting staff members, so that they could more effectively execute their social media strategies.

3
Investing in students to create their own stories, which will better showcase what the university offers to their peers and prospective students.

4
Being prepared to take a risk and show a modern, human side to a long-respected age-old institution.

It's all about
engagement

Paul O'Kane
Chief Communications Officer,
Dublin Airport Authority

'Posting behind the scenes content during storm Emma meant the conversation switched from people asking why we were closed, to concern for our staff who were still outside working.'

Paul O'Kane,
Chief Communications
Officer, DAA

'Many people consider us a necessary evil. As an airport, we get in the way. So, we wanted to engage differently and get them to think about us in another way.'

Paul O'Kane, Chief Communications Officer, DAA

Social Media Challenge

Everyone loves going on holidays, but how many of them enjoy their time at the airport?

While there are some enthusiastic plane-spotters out there, for most people having to check in, negotiate security and wait patiently to catch your flight is more of a necessary evil.

Airports are also global places, so while the DAA is obviously more relevant to an Irish audience the DAA looks to locations like JFK or Heathrow as a yardstick for what makes a good customer experience.

This means that DAA must communicate in a way that engages locally but still impresses globally.

So, the challenge for the DAA lay in how to do this effectively to become one of the best-in-class airports for social in the world.

Social Media Strategy

The strength of DAA's social strategy is based on its independence and learnings over the eight years since they first had a presence.

Firstly, by trial and error, their communications team were able to develop and analyse which channels, content and tactics worked best for them.

This meant that they had editorial control from day one, which gave them the freedom to make mistakes and ask for forgiveness instead of permission.

However, it wasn't long before the DAA realised that what people wanted was service information and news told in an engaging way.

They also sought to promote new or key routes and build-up their brand affinity by showing the committed, behind-the-scenes work done by staff to get people to their destinations.

Social Media Tactics

The DAA developed their social tactics until they established their own distinct tone of voice.

This voice adopted a personality that was open, warm and engaging.

They wanted it to be a voice which wasn't too po-faced or corporate but that also wasn't too flippant.

They wanted the DAA to be seen like a trusted friend with a distinct, Irish voice.

They also recognised that Twitter was their most effective channel for delivering a lot of their messages such as airport closures.

This meant that the DAA could build up a rapport with customers and mitigate any negative reactions when, for instance, adverse weather conditions caused cancellations or delays.
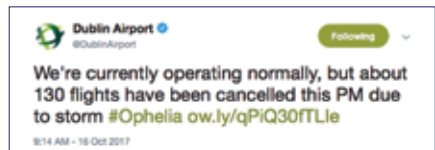
'Social media is way of talking to people, it's really important. If you're boring they'll walk away, so you've got to make it interesting.'
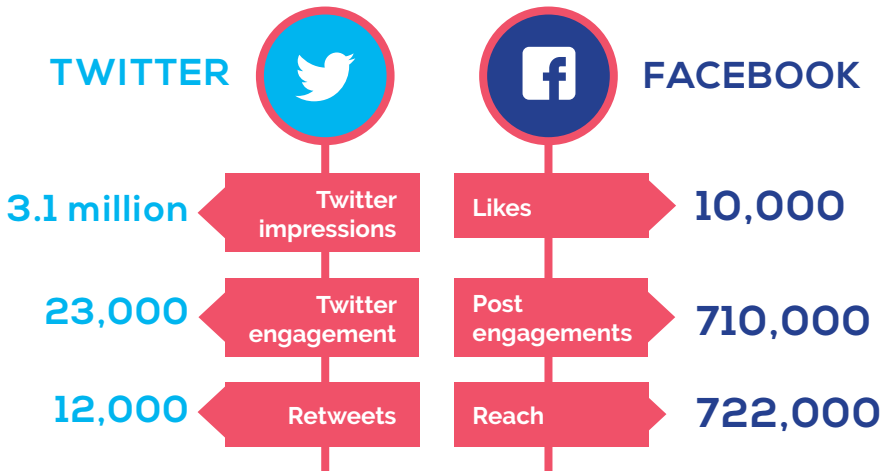
Paul O'Kane, Chief Communications Officer, DAA

Results

The results of DAA's social strategy speaks for itself. With a high emphasis on getting their engagement right **they have won 3 Moodies** (world airport awards) for having **the best Twitter feed.** They have also **won 6 more awards and 42 nominations.**

From a metrics perspective a typical 28-day period looks like this:

TWITTER

FACEBOOK

3.1 million	Twitter impressions	Likes	10,000
23,000	Twitter engagement	Post engagements	710,000
12,000	Retweets	Reach	722,000

This high level of engagement is the fruit of developing content which works for both their local and global audiences.

As one judge described their Twitter feed: "Dublin Airport has a strong sense of place, with its own unique voice… it's in a league of its own."

'We've won awards for our social media against airports like Heathrow, Dubai, and Hong Kong. Places with huge budgets compared to us. It's all about being engaging.'

Paul O'Kane, Chief Communications Officer, DAA

DAA have identified a checklist of 6 rules for powerful engagement with their customers:

1. **Don't miss the point of your posts** – sure, there are different ways to communicate but make sure your core message stands out.

2. **It's all about the story** – try and find an angle with the most interesting story, and draw people in.

3. **Do it in house** – this allows you to be more authentic with brand content, and adapt quickly as circumstances change.

4. **Use your audience** – user generated content works brilliantly to build brand affinity and credibility with your followers.

5. **Schedule carefully** – always double check your planned posts and have someone on hand to respond if something goes wrong.

6. **Use imagery as much as possible** – a picture is worth a thousand words, so it's much more powerful for emotional engagement and impact.

Key Takeaways

1
DAA learned how to build their social content into a global award winner over time.

2
They knew where they wanted to go and had the freedom to get it wrong as well as right.

3
This helped them learn and allowed them to tweak their strategy until they found a sweet spot they could use to their advantage.

4
They also made use of what goes on behind the scenes to build up an empathy with their customers, who could see all the work and effort that goes into keeping the airport running on schedule.

Emergency response
on social media

Ray McMonagle
Firefighter/Paramedic and Communications,
Dublin Fire Brigade

'There was recognition within Dublin Fire Brigade that we didn't really do anything to promote ourselves. So, we decided to use social media to change that.'

Ray McMonagle,
Firefighter/Paramedic,
Dublin Fire Brigade

'Because we work behind cordons we're sometimes seen as unapproachable, so our social media allows us to engage with the public in a more personable way, whether it's a fun, light post or a serious safety message'

Ray McMonagle, Firefighter/Paramedic, Dublin Fire Brigade

⌗ Social Media Challenge

For the Dublin Fire Brigade a perfect day would mean not needing to be deployed at all.

After all, it's not simply their job to put out fires or rescue people from dangerous situations, it's also about educating people on the best ways to stay safe.

This means that communication is one of their most important tools in helping to keep the city safer.

So, they set up a Twitter account @DublinFireBrigade during Fire Health & Safety Week 2014 to kick-start a social media presence where they could do this.

However, they had no clear aims until a plan was put in place by two paramedic firefighters. They wanted to give their followers a better sense of what the Fire Brigade do on a daily basis, as well as alert them of any incidents in the city.

Social Media Strategy

The perception of the Dublin Fire Brigade was one of putting out fires, attending car accidents and rescuing cats stuck up trees.

However, Dublin Fire Brigade does a lot more than this including:	
Fires	Eastern Regional Control Centre
Ambulance Service	Major Emergency Management
River Rescue	Community Fire Safety
Road Traffic Collisions	Fire Safety Certificates and Inspections
Flooding	Fire Safety Enforcement
HazChem	Pre-incident Planning
Hi-Line Rescue	Fleet Maintenance
Marine Emergency Response	Equipment and Logistics
Tunnel Firefighting	

So, the Dublin Fire Brigade knew they needed a more comprehensive content calendar to develop more engagement and increase their number of followers.

They decided on a strategy based around three pillars:	
Prevent	Educate their community on ways to prevent fires from starting, electrical safety, water safety, road safety, chemical safety;
Inform	Alert the public to fires, accidents, invite their followers to inform them;
Promote	Show all the valuable ways the Fire Brigade help its community on a daily basis.

Social Media Tactics

The Dublin Fire Brigade useTwitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat to post their stories and feeds around their **Prevent, Inform and Promote strategy.**

For Prevent they posted around the danger of overcharging your phone, dangerous electrical sockets and wires, staying safe near water, driving safely, Christmas lights safety, late-night cooking watch outs, and more.

For Inform they were able to show incidents around the city and alert people to accidents which they could avoid, while repeating messages around safety. They could also clarify any false reports or fake news about fires in the city.

For Promote they showed things like their open days, engaging with charities, local schools, new cadets completing training etc.

"The perception is that we simply put out fires, attend accidents and rescue cats. But we do a lot more than that and we wanted the public to see that"

— Ray McMonagle, Firefighter/Paramedic, Dublin Fire Brigade

Results

The results of all this content were remarkable.

Dublin Fire Brigade can now quickly appeal to the public and tell them to stay safe, take a different route home from work, collect their kids from school (or not) during a major incident, or even get their washing in before they get smoke damaged.

But not only does their social content benefit the public, it also add operational value to the fire service. This is done by keeping the public away from incidents, keeping them safe (indoors) and getting the public to help them by sending photos around incidents for intelligence purposes.

Also, because the Dublin Fire Brigade can show the breadth of their services and give people access to what happens behind the scenes, it allows them to be even more embedded and respected in their community.

'Our reactive messages, showing incidents where there was a lucky escape like a mobile phone singeing a carpet are much more effective than a proactive safety post. People see the reality.'

Ray McMonagle,
Firefighter/Paramedic,
Dublin Fire Brigade

Dublin Fire Brigade @
@DubFireBrigade

Close one for this #ElfOnAShelf after she ended up on a lamp. The householder had done the right thing & purchased one with a CE mark. The Elf resisted heat for 40 minutes. Keep all decorations away from heat

6:21 PM - 12 Dec 2017

Dublin Fire Brigade @
@DubFireBrigade

@DCCTraffic @LiveDrive RTA jct of Macken St, car vs bicycle. 3 units on scene

6:22 AM - 2 Mar 2016

Dublin Fire Brigade @
@DubFireBrigade

The fire in #Shankill is now out and was prevented from spreading to adjoining properties. 3 pumps and an aerial appliance. No injuries.

8:10 PM - 28 Mar 2017

Learnings

Dublin Fire Brigade learned the lesson of needing a coherent content plan to make the most of their social media channels.

By starting with trial and error they soon recognised the three pillars which would allow them to operate more effectively and build more trust within their communities.

They also knew that by engaging with the public in the right way they could earn new followers, which could in turn help them to educate people on how to stay safe and prevent any future tragedies.

Key Takeaways

1
Dublin Fire Brigade have developed the right balance between what they post, which channels they use and how they talk to their audiences.

2
They like Twitter the best because it's live. They use Facebook for less immediate content and Instagram and Snapchat for visual storytelling.

3
Their core pillars of Prevent, Inform and Promote has helped them develop a large base of followers and allows for better collaboration in limiting tragic incidents.

4
They also use the following approach to talk to their audiences on a daily basis:

- ✔ **Be personable**
- ✔ **Be friendly**
- ✔ **Be honest/ transparent**
- ✔ **Listen to feedback**
- ✔ **Don't be defensive**
- ✔ **Revert to queries or concerns promptly**

The Digital Voice of **Local Government**

Laura Ryan
Head of Marketing and Communications,
Limerick City & County Council

> "We didn't see why people would go to 20 different sites for things like where to buy a dog licence to the best pint of Guinness, when one site should do it. That site became Limerick.ie."
>
> Laura Ryan,
> Head of Marketing and Communications, Limerick City & County Council

> "Limerick was a big story nationally for all the wrong reasons. Recession had taken a deep hold. We wanted to use content to address that and change the perceptions of a nation."
>
> Laura Ryan, Head of Marketing and Communications, Limerick City & County Council

The Challenge

The recession in Ireland in 2008 hit the country hard, but perhaps nowhere harder than Limerick City and its surrounds.

With heavy job losses, Ireland's highest unemployment rate and a notorious reputation for crime and social problems, the area had become in the words of the media; *'Ireland's whipping boy.'*

The challenge for Limerick therefore was, how to turn around the public perception and promote all the many great things about the city and county.

The Council knew what the area could offer tourists, businesses and locals in terms of services.

But it needed to find a better way to promote this, and change people's opinions for the better.

Strategy

The digital strategy focused on developing a central repository which could take all the disparate pieces of information about Limerick and showcase it in one accessible platform.

In today's busy and mobile world that mainly meant one thing, a new website.

But with over 800 council services, a host of tourist attractions and lots of different audiences to cater for, it appeared to be a mammoth and daunting task.

However, Limerick City and County Council knew that if they could execute it right, it would go a long way to showcasing all the many good things about the location, making the investment worth it.

Tactics

The Council started with planning.

They wanted to launch a website that would be an industry leader. They were crystal clear on this objective, the user had to be at the centre of their design and build.

They considered content carefully and carried out extensive research before launching Limerick.ie.

The website was split into three main sections:

Discover
for tourists/ curious locals

Business
for commercial services

Council
for Council services such as making a planning application

They also included a hub where you could open cases and communicate with the Council on various issues such as planning or customer service.

This provided users with a seamless navigation and a more transparent way to converse with Council staff.

They were able to further promote what the city had to offer by targeting key groups like students and developing landing pages and engaging content, such as, the best places to find accommodation or indeed, the best places to find curry chips.

They did this for many other sections of society by undertaking keyword research and surveying groups like families, or women looking for girl-only getaway ideas.

Limerick.ie was becoming highly relevant and this resulted in high ranking content on Google search.

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✓ Results

Limerick.ie holds many top search results for all things Limerick and these results had a positive impact on the new perception of the city and county among the wider population.

The media also changed its narrative - from that of whipping boy to poster boy of the recovery - as a raft of new jobs also filtered into the county.

The website was a massive success from a user experience perspective. **Limerick.ie was named one of the best 25 tourism sites in the world by US company Skift.com,** while it also won **Local Government Excellence awards and EirSpider (web) awards** for its top-class user experience.

"We wanted to be a leader in digital communications and that's what we became. It was this clear sense of vision, that shot us to award fame for Limerick.ie."

Laura Ryan, Head of Marketing and Communications, Limerick City & County Council

Learnings

The main learning from this campaign is to commit to the investment of a website and to commit to the research and planning phases.

The City and County Councils recognised that it would take some time to get Limerick.ie set up and working at its best.

But they invested that time and budget into understanding what their audience wanted.

This allowed the team to build a site which had lots of relevant information and was easy to navigate.

The content marketing efforts were rewarded with top ranking results for Limerick-related search terms.

> "We recognised that SEO was key. If we could use content to show the best sides of Limerick, it would help turn us from Ireland's whipping boys to their poster boys."
>
> Laura Ryan, Head of Marketing and Communications, Limerick City & County Council

Key Takeaways

The two key takeaways for Limerick City and County Council are:

1
Planning is key:
they knew what they wanted to do, and they figured out the level of resources required to manage the content and get Limerick.ie performing to award-winning levels.

2
They changed their mindset:
They changed as a group to adopt digital marketing practices and transform how they worked. They bought into the benefits of what a top-quality website could bring both as a resource, and as a way to change the perception of Limerick in the minds of the media and indeed, the Irish nation.

Creating an uncontested market **through content**

Simon Swan
Head of Digital Marketing
The Met Office

"We noticed an uncontested market based on the story behind the weather, like how the jet stream works. We wanted to shift our strategic focus which in turn would help us monetise our reach."

Simon Swan,
Head of Digital Marketing,
The Met Office

"We wanted to build our own content on our own channel, then syndicate it out. Our approach at the time was: we mustn't build our brand on rented land."

Simon Swan, Head of Digital Marketing, The Met Office

Social Media Challenge

The Met Office has been a highly respected institution in the UK since the 1800s and currently employs over 2,000 people.

Although it sits within the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, it does so as a trading fund, which means it must generate its own revenue and operate like a business.

While other government departments often operate as sole authorities in their fields, since the introduction of Google Weather in 2004, The Met Office finds itself competing with more and more sites and channels. This makes it more difficult for them to keep their authority, stay relevant with their audience while also generating income.

The challenge for The Met Office was how to bring revenue through advertising, while still being regarded as a respected scientific authority.

Social Media Strategy

The Met Office set out with clear objectives to:		They would do this through the following channels:	
1	Increase **reach**	1	**Search**
2	Increase **engagement**	2	**Social media**
3	Increase **revenue**	3	**Syndicate their content to other channels**

They realised that the weather market was becoming highly competitive due to emerging digital channels that could all deliver what The Met Office was famous for - the weather forecast.

By doing some keyword research they were able to figure out what the public was curious about when it came to the weather.

So, while the weather forecast had become a contested market they looked at new and engaging ways to create content about other aspects of the weather (the who, what, where and why of weather).

From this they identified opportunities where they could use the depth of expert knowledge within the Met Office, while creating compelling content for their website and syndicating to other social media and news channels.

Because the Met Office was creating content around searches that their competition failed to, they were able to claim a prominent position in Google and Bing rankings.

This was a key step in allowing them to create a competitive edge.

Social Media Tactics

The digital marketing team at The Met Office sought buy-in from the entire organisation. They wanted digital to be everyone's responsibility, realising that it impacted every department and not just marketing.

This involved encouraging them to work closer together to generate content that would be relevant, yet different to anything else out there. This would increase their reach and allow them to monetise it by selling advertising space on their website or syndicating it elsewhere.

They produced content on trending topics such as Glastonbury, where they could focus on a high-interest events where the weather played a big role.

Or, when they noticed weather terms like 'freezing rain' were being searched, they could quickly put together an informative story about the topic by getting the meteorologist, digital and production teams to work closely together.

To scale digital knowledge in the organisation, The Met Office set up a Digital Academy where they trained the entire organisation to be proficient in basic digital practices and concepts, while getting them to see the marketable and digital value of their work.

✓ Results

The results of digital transformation speak for themselves. The Met Office is now a more competitive and a more informative institution. It better serves the general public and is more relevant in a difficult and rapidly changing market.

By monetising the value of all its expertise and knowledge, and providing content they know the public is searching for, they have transformed their way of working and the way people see the weather.

They achieved their goals of increasing revenue, reach and engagement by creating stories that resonated with the public.

They leveraged this reach to sell advertising and syndicating the content to third party channels.

By **investing in digital training** they were arming their staff to think and work differently, which allowed them to collaborate in new ways and create great content.

> "We didn't view our content as a campaign, we viewed it as a bought-in effort from every department working closely together to succeed."
>
> Simon Swan,
> Head of Digital Marketing,
> The Met Office

💡 Learnings

The broad approach utilised by The Met Office helped transform them from a typical public sector model, to one that was able to compete with private companies the size of Google.

They knew that they had set out with a clear strategy and put their customer front and centre before they put any tactics into place.

They found Digital Age consumers simply don't want to know what the weather will be like tomorrow, they also want to know everything about how it works.

The Met Office knew they had the expertise to deliver the most insightful and informative content on the topic of weather.

They were able to differentiate themselves from their competition, and in the process, make themselves more attractive to brands who were looking for fresh and engaging content.

Key Takeaways

The key takeaways from The Met Office case study proves that a well-thought-out, process-driven approach can pay off.

1
Establish a purpose for your content marketing plan

2
Get full buy-in across the organisation

3
Map out your current situation to create a benchmark:
- Who's the audience?
- Perform customer research
- Undertake competitor analysis
- Audit all digital channels

4
Create and define a USP – (unique selling point) - what differentiates you, what do you stand for, what story can you tell that your audience wants to hear? What new audiences could you be reaching through content?

5
Set some key objectives i.e. what you are looking to deliver/achieve that supports your organisation

6
Build authority and add a narrative to your sector

7
Help and support - what role could you play, how can you engage your audience better?

8
Educate your organisation – involve, inform and train your wider teams in supporting your mission

By ensuring all these were met, the public now enjoy a more rounded relationship with the organisation, and are happy to go to them for more information about the weather.

Using Snapchat Stories to reach younger audiences about Brexit

Cliona Connolly
Irish Press Officer
EPP Group, EU Parliament

"Whether you want to provide your own insights, promote your brand, give people news or information, you can use social media in so many creative ways. You've just got to find your own niche."

Cliona Connolly,
Irish Press Officer,
EPP Group, EU Parliament

"Snapchat Stories gave our younger audiences a more in-depth, fly on the wall look at political life, allowing them to see a more 'real' picture of events."

Cliona Connolly, Irish Press Officer, EPP Group, EU Parliament

Social Media Challenge

The EPP Group represent 217 MEPs in 27 countries. They are the centre-right voice of European politics and share common goals and policies in the European Parliament.

Like all public sector institutions the EPP Group have revolutionised how they communicate with their audiences to remain relevant.

Seeking to address the communications needs of younger audiences, they looked to social media. They wanted to share factual information in an accessible way.

This particular case study looks at how they used Snapchat to do just that.

Social Media Strategy

The EPP recognised the power of Snapchat to reach a youthful, more digitally native audience.

Unlike older generations this audience was used to getting all its news online and grew up in a world where video content was becoming increasingly important.

This audience like to share and consume short video content like Snapchat stories, and brands and organisations soon realised they had to adapt to remain relevant.

The EPP Group started sharing news and explaining policies through bite-sized Snapchat Stories. They use the channel to explain events, clarify facts, talk about issues, or discuss future policies.

"Most political agencies aren't using social media channels to their maximum, or engaging in exciting new ways with their audiences."

Cliona Connolly, Irish Press Officer, EPP Group, EU Parliament

PUBLIC SECTOR
Marketing
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Social Media Tactics

One particular campaign where their Snapchat Stories proved invaluable was around Brexit.

The EPP Group was able to provide real-time reaction, and explanation around the tumultuous events of the day and were able to share the whole story in a more human way through the relatable approach of their press officer.

Each and every milestone from the polls to the referendum result, to the reaction and fallout across the UK, Europe and the world kept the ravenous public drip feed on information from all over the globe.

Results

The result of using Snapchat Stories was **being able to engage with a new generation of politically curious audiences** who wanted to know more than just the bare facts.

By using video storytelling, Snapchat brings to life what the EPP Group stands for, their policies and their take on local and global events.

This means that anyone from the streets of Dublin to the suburbs of New York and beyond, can get a more rounded experience of world events.

"The amazing response I got from people, not just in Ireland but around the world showed that people are hungry for factual information on events such as Brexit."

Cliona Connolly

Learnings

The EPP Group learned about the power of social channels to reach audiences instantly and engage with them in a more intimate and human way.

They also were able to educate an information hungry youthful audience, who were curious to properly understand what's happening politically, so they can filter out all the fake news they are being bombarded with.

By getting to know how to use Snapchat Stories to full effect, they became a go-to, respected authority on current affairs while still appearing as an approachable, personable voice.

Great work, your snaps are always so informative - feels like one of the few places you can get facts in this situation

Key Takeaways

These are the takeaways which the EPP Group discovered from their social campaigns:

1
People, including young audiences, are hungry for factual information.

2
Telling stories over social doesn't need to be polished – raw video footage can make it feel more real and credible.

3
No matter how serious the subject matter, you can still use social media in creative ways by offering your own insights.

4
Try and find your niche, so that you can stand apart from your competitors.

5
There should always be room in your daily schedule for social – so plan it into your to do list.

Online crisis management -

Bringing a vaccine back from the brink

Kirsten Connolly
Former Assistant National Director of Communications, HSE

"We know we needed to be very accountable and rightly so, but it's also about knowing we're making a difference and impacting people's lives that keeps us focused on delivering the best possible campaign."

Kirsten Connolly, Former Assistant National Director of Communications, HSE

"Stories about our health deal in emotion, and facts alone are no longer enough to sway that emotion in the post-truth era."

Kirsten Connolly, Former Assistant National Director of Communications, HSE

The HSE operates as the authority in Ireland when it comes to your health.

In simple terms this should equate to them having the final word when it comes to recommending health practices or in attempting to prevent unnecessary illness in the public.

So when they were part of a campaign to give young girls the HPV vaccine, which helps prevent cervical cancer for them later in life, it appeared that they had done their job with up to 87% of girls getting the vaccine in the first couple of years since it was launched.

But then disaster struck, as some families complained of their daughter's side effects, and the downside of social media took over with the spread of fake news.

The HSE was aware that while trust can be broken quickly, it can take years to build it back up. They tried to push back on the misinformation by communicating the facts, but it was an uphill battle such was the extent of misinformation online, causing panic among the public.

They also realised that when it comes to your health, emotions can take over, so they knew that cold hard facts was not going to be enough.

Social Media Strategy

A change of tack was required and the HSE decided to re-look at the problem.

Due to the spread of fake news around the topic, vaccinations had fallen from 87% to under 50% by 2016.

Despite their counter attack of presenting the facts, the HSE felt they were almost whispering into a tornado with their communications.

They wanted to get to the bottom of the emotional anxiety around the topic and so carried out research to find the main source of fears.

They discovered that they needed to target both the girls themselves but more importantly their mums, as they were largely the decision-makers when it came to consent.

By targeting young and old, they also decided on a digital-first approach.
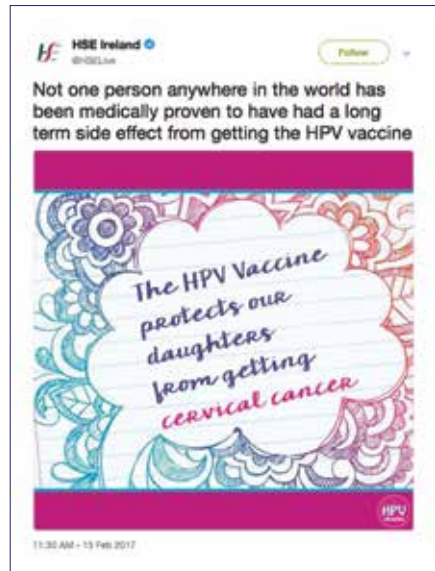
Social Media Tactics

The results of the research indicated that the HSE should take a peer-to-peer approach, by including the voices of young girls in their digital storytelling and asking them what they wanted.

The emotional pull of them knowing they would grow up without the threat of cervical cancer proved a powerful retort to those concerned about the effects of the vaccine.

The HSE played these stories out organically through social, but they also dialled up their paid ads as well to serve the ads to the right target audience.

They found Facebook and Twitter to be key channels, particularly as Facebook could be used to target both mums and teenage girls through the Facebook advertising platform.

They developed a campaign hashtag #ProtectOurFuture which was then adopted into the wider conversation.

The HSE produced a TV ad featuring a young woman who talked about contracting cervical cancer and wishing she had the opportunity to get the vaccine when she was younger.

As their campaign grew in momentum, they also started to get support from mainstream media, through several respected print and broadcast journalists. This was particularly useful as there were several people, with no medical expertise, using their public profile to speak out against using it.

"The use of our hashtag #ProtectOurFuture along with organic online conversations being generated helped us reinforce our position as a trusted authoritative voice."

Kirsten Connolly

✓ Results

The results of this campaign weren't just important from a marketing perspective, they were vital to the HSE in trying to control cancer rates in women.

Post-campaign there was evidence of the public's perceptions changing, and **vaccine rates had gone back up to 60%** by the first half of 2018.

They also say that **50% of conversations around the topic on platforms they used was from their campaign content.**

Their hashtags and campaign mentions increased six-fold on Twitter.

Facebook, a key channel for this campaign, showed **8.7 million impressions** for the duration of the campaign.

8,700,00
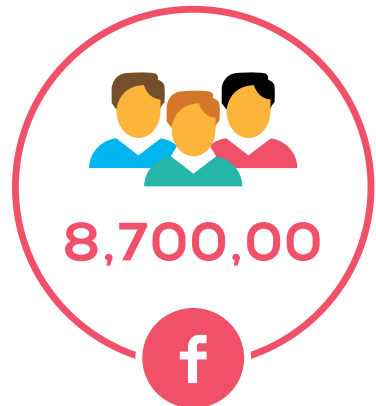
"By running with a peer-to-peer campaign, it allowed us to open the conversation up from a more emotional angle. It gave mums a new way at looking at the issue and made them re-evaluate what was best for their daughters."

Kirsten Connolly, Former Assistant National Director of Communications, HSE

Learnings

The HSE learned a lot about the power of emotion when it comes to health, particularly the health of children.

They also felt the full negative impact of the democratisation of information, and how 'fake news' can impact on their communications.

They were in a battle for the hearts and minds of families around the best thing to do for their children.

When they noticed that a fact-led response wasn't working, they showed a sense of humility to start again and see where the problems actually lay.

By doing intensive qualitative research with families they realised the best way to talk to them, and the best channels to use too.

By recognising that digital was now a prime channel to reach both teenagers and adults, they could accountably measure performance and build a wider conversation around it.

Key Takeaways

The HSE shared the following key takeaways from this campaign.

1 Social media can be a powerful way to tell peer-to-peer stories.

2 Social channels are a key driver for ongoing public conversations and shaping public opinion.

3 Public sector agencies should leverage their expertise over less authoritative sources online, and in a sustained manner.

4 You need to talk to your audiences and get their feedback online.

5 You can build trust back up by providing consistent and fact-led information and approaching emotionally charged messages by using voices and faces of real people who have a story to share.

100,000 reasons to embrace digital - SeaFest 2017

Sinead Coyne
Head of Communications
SeaFest

"Social buy-in from our 20 stakeholders was vital. We provided a toolkit to help them share suggested posts and visual content, as well as invest in our own sponsored ads."

Sinead Coyne,
Head of Communications,
SeaFest

"Traditional marketing was vital to the success of SeaFest, but it was by amplifying this campaign through social media that we were able to draw a record crowd."

Sinead Coyne, Head of Communications, SeaFest

⌗ Social Media Challenge

As a key part of the Marine Institute's *'Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth (HOOW)'* programme, they co-ordinate the large-scale SeaFest festival in the Port of Galway each year.

This four-day award-winning event celebrates Ireland's proud maritime heritage and offers people of all ages culture with a capital 'sea'.

The purpose of the event is to increase awareness of the value and opportunities provided by the sea.

It also wants to encourage participation and generate conversations around making this precious habitat sustainable and environmentally safe.

So, the more families and people they could attract to the event the easier it would be to spread the message.

Their challenge then, was in drawing a big crowd to engage with all the fun and educational events that were taking place over the weekend and get people interested in our oceans.

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Marketing
PROS.com

Social Media Strategy

A key part of the social media strategy for SeaFest was looking at where it could easily integrate with traditional media.

For an event which wanted to draw such a big crowd, traditional media aimed at a mass audience was essential in raising awareness about it.

But SeaFest organisers also recognised that traditional channels alone wouldn't be enough. They knew that people live their lives on their smartphones and saw the opportunity to amplify the message through social channels.

They saw the storytelling and educational potential of social media in promoting the sea as a precious and sustainable resource.

So, they knew if they could get buy in from all stakeholders via a visible traditional presence, they could have more leeway to drive their social campaign in the way that worked best.

Social Media Tactics

SeaFest's traditional promotional campaign made the front page of the Irish Times, while RTE's Nationwide programme also featured the event, which brought awareness to a national level.

But the Marine Institute also doubled their digital media spend in 2017 to create stories around the brand and drive traffic to their website.

They recognised the best way to tell stories around festival activities or helping our oceans was to create video content, which can then be edited for social channels and pushed out through ads (and all their stakeholders) to create more interest.

Results

SeaFest **attracted 101,113 visitors in 2017,** delivering on their aim of making it an event of national significance.

This represented **a massive increase of 68% on 2016 and brought in €6.3m to Galway's economy** (even though all events were free).

Their **media campaign had a value of €766,000** while their dedicated Nationwide **TV programme on RTE reached 213,000 viewers** and was also promoted on RTE's social media channels.

SeaFest.ie had 29,450 visitors from the beginning of May up to the event's close in early July.

There was also lots of noise created through social media:
5,700 social mentions
10,300 Twitter engagements
19.8 million reach
3.5% engagement rate
500K+ reach

SeaFest
@Seafest_ie

Official launch of SeaFest, Ireland's national maritime festival - just over a month to go! bit.ly/2rl7uU0 #celebratingourseas 😃

10:48 AM - 18 May 2017

Plus, content published by media and news websites resulted in an extra 5,688 shares on their social networks.

> "SeaFest 2017 exceeded all expectations in terms of attendance and in public awareness around our oceans. Our social media campaign played a massive role in that."
>
> Sinead Coyne, Head of Communications, SeaFest

Learnings

For a large-scale event, raising awareness with a traditional media campaign is a tried and trusted way to increase footfall.

But SeaFest knew that wasn't going to be enough. They were aware modern people live their lives on phones and wanted to have conversations about our surrounding seas before, during and after the festival.

This meant that visitors could arrive with a clearer sense of what to expect and their interest was piqued to learn more about what they can do to help.

The overall combination of traditional and digital media proved that they shouldn't be considered as separate approaches but as one powerful team, which delivered a captive record crowd to Galway's shores.

> "Traditional and digital together helped us draw a record crowd. We're living our lives through our smartphones and we wouldn't have had 101,000 people there without social."
>
> Sinead Coyne, Head of Communications, SeaFest

Key Takeaways

1

Using both traditional and digital media as an integrated campaign worked wonders for raising awareness of SeaFest and setting the scene for what to expect.

2

Having buy-in from up to 20 different groups and stakeholders was essential in the smooth running of the event and execution of their media strategy.

3

The positive use of digital inspired the Marine Institute to create a festival app for 2018 to replace brochures (and save some trees), showcase all the events and partners in more detail, and educate people of all ages about our oceans.

Promoting the
#PeaceDividend

Vicky Newman
Campaigns Manager, UK Cabinet
Office and Northern Ireland Office

"We had three weeks to deliver this campaign so keeping the message simple, using only stats with a reliable source and knowing how to best use tools such as Canva were key."

Vicky Newman, Campaigns Manager, UK Cabinet Office and Northern Ireland Office

"We weren't afraid to engage the public in a conversation around the benefits of the Good Friday Agreement and took risks with our content in order to do so."

Vicky Newman, Campaigns Manager, UK Cabinet Office and Northern Ireland Office

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The Challenge

Political communications in Northern Ireland can be a delicate process especially with the current situation where the Northern Ireland Executive is in suspension.

The UK Cabinet Office was mindful of this, but also wanted to find to a way to celebrate all the achievements and benefits of peace in the province for the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement.

To prove the delicacy of the situation, even calling it The Good Friday Agreement was contentious (it's officially the Belfast Agreement).

So, the challenge for this campaign was to promote an agreed set of benefits and allow the public to see the progress of 20 years of peace in Northern Ireland. All done, of course without upsetting sensibilities or creating further tension.

Put more succinctly their objectives were to:
1   Emphasise UK Government commitment to the Good Friday Agreement.
2   Create a public conversation around the benefits of peace and how prosperity can continue for another 20 years.
3   Build a groundswell of public opinion in favour of restoring the Northern Ireland Executive.
4   Promote Northern Ireland as a destination for tourism and investment.

Social Media Strategy

The Cabinet Office set about targeting 3 main audience groups:

1 ▶ 24-year-olds - least awareness of the 1998 Agreement, most likely to identify as Northern Irish rather than British or Irish.

2 ▶ Politically-engaged voters over 40 – those who remember the Troubles.

3 ▶ UK and key international audiences with strong Irish diaspora - potential tourists and investors to Northern Ireland.

While they decided to focus on traditional media for people over 40, they set about establishing a Twitter campaign for the younger age groups and international audiences.

They decided to create a series of tweetable infographics, using statistics to show the positive effects of peace.

They would post these out themselves as well as leveraging other public sector offices. They would also encourage UK embassies to push the content out in countries with a strong Irish diaspora, like the USA and Australia.

They also invited 25 foreign journalists to see the benefits of peace for themselves, which they could filter out through news and PR stories.

"The political situation here makes it difficult to disseminate information or find messages that are safe enough to share, so we focused carefully on statistics which could only be seen positively."

Vicky Newman, Campaigns Manager, UK Cabinet Office and Northern Ireland Office

✅ Results

The campaign was delivered at practically no cost. There just wasn't a budget to support it, however creativity on social media won over the public.

It prompted a public conversation around the benefits enjoyed in Northern Ireland since the signing of the Belfast Agreement, generating **163,020 impressions (views), 377 retweets and 34 replies from followers, key influencers and members of public.**

There was also **a lot of media coverage** linked to the 20th Anniversary of the Belfast Agreement, over the course of the six-day period that the campaign was delivered.

Positive messages promoted by the Northern Ireland Office were reinforced by a number of partners and featured in the extensive media coverage.

On the 10th April 2018, there was also a joint media conference, hosted by the Secretary of State and the Tánaiste. This had more than 50 local, national and international news organisations in attendance.

Learnings

With just 3 weeks to plan and execute, the Cabinet Office had very little time to launch their campaign. As such, they knew they had to keep things simple.

So, they put a lot of their work into their strategy around who to target and how to target them.

They committed to only use statistics which would capture the spirit of the peace dividend and steered clear of any one which might court controversy.

They ensured they got buy-in from various public sector departments, foreign office embassies, and worked with the Irish Government to ensure their messages got out there.

They also had to take a risk with some of the material, knowing that it would take very little for potential negative feedback to come about with the campaign.

But by only using reliably sourced statistics showing immensely positive outcomes they were able to show all the benefits of the #PeaceDividend while steering clear of any problematic realities.

IT'S 20 YEARS SINCE THE BELFAST AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED. LOOK HOW FAR WE'VE COME.

#PeaceDividend

2018 will be a record cruise season for NI, with 117 ships set to dock in Belfast Harbour bringing over **200,000** visitors here
Source: NISRA

944,000 visited the Giant's Causeway, NI's No.1 tourist attraction, last year
Source: NISRA

In 2017, NI welcomed a record number of tourists who spent **£586m** on their trip

Locally produced food & drink contribute **£4.8bn** to the NI economy
Source: NIFDA

CELEBRATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BELFAST AGREEMENT

Northern Ireland Office

"Using imagery with your Tweet is much better than without. For instance, we were able to tag 10 handles by doing so, which helped give our messages more reach."

Vicky Newman, Campaigns Manager, UK Cabinet Office and Northern Ireland Office

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Marketing
PROS.com

Key Takeaways

With so little time to pull a campaign together, knowing how to use a creative tool like Canva was invaluable. As was making sure your messages were fully credible.

By using an image in Twitter they also knew they could tag 10 other Twitter handles which automatically created more reach for each message.

Here are the takeaways they specifically had around creating their tweets:

1
Spend some time learning to use Canva.

2
Be inspired by the templates but be creative!

3
Use specific imagery, wherever you can.

4
ALWAYS quote a source on infographics.

5
Make sure your tweet balances the message in your graphic - they shouldn't be fighting with each other.

How social media saves lives
in emergency response management

Chris Adamczyk
Social Media Intelligence Analyst
Arizona Police Department

"It's now socially acceptable to tweet before calling emergency services, my management team found that hard to believe, but we showed them the facts."

Chris Adamczyk,
Social Media Intelligence
Analyst, Arizona Police Dept.

"In a crisis situation, you can't rely on luck alone. You've got to be fully prepared and ready to respond at any moment."

Chris Adamczyk, Social Media Intelligence Analyst, Arizona Police Department

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Hashtags before phone calls

Chris reveals that people are increasingly using official event hashtags to tweet for help, before they'd think to contact the emergency services.

So, in this case it's up to emergency analysts to find out who needs most help by sifting through all the many posts, comments and shares surrounding the crisis.

He used the example of both Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma where #HarveyRescue or #IrmaSOS were used in the first real shift to social media as a distress call from the public during large-scale events.

This means that emergency response teams need to put new strategies in place to deal with the changing trends.

While effective response seems obvious, Chris sees preparation as being more key, as getting this right means a much better response.

Being prepared

Here are the basic tactics Chris suggests at planning stage:

1 ▶ **Know the lexicon of any event** - like the hashtags or keywords

2 ▶ **Pull together the workflow plan** – this should be broken down in the following stages:

Discover	finding the emergency
Verify	establishing its authenticity
Attribute	categorise the type of response needed
Isolate	clarify that action that needs to be specifically taken
Record	register the response with the responders
Act	ensure the response is carried out

3 ▶ **Prepare your means of communication**

Analyst phase	have people searching for legitimate requests for help
Checkpoint phase	verify and categorise the help that's required
End user	communicate with the responders to act – fire-brigade, ambulance etc.

4 ▶ **Prepare your communications team** – ideally a three-person team:

Finder phase	this will be the person who will look after the analyst phase to sift through and find responses using event lexicon
Researcher	this will be the person who establishes the authenticity and proximity of the request for help
Manager	this is the overseer who will be in charge of getting the response teams to act and listen to their feedback

✓ How to respond effectively

Chris describes social media in a crisis situation as "looking like digital hell in a hand basket".

With such potential for heightened emotion and confusion, he says it's your team's job to stick to the plan and recommends the following approach.
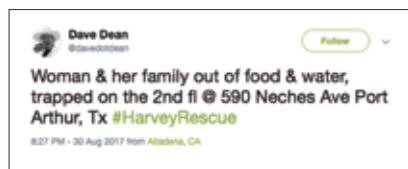
Keep calm – people may get animated, but it's your role to calmly execute the plan, and this is where good preparation will serve you well.

Stick to your workflow – the plan is there because it works, so stick to it.

The plan is task orientated not people orientated – so don't get side-tracked by emotions or people who want you to veer away from it.

> "A crisis on social media can look like digital hell in a hand-basket. But you have to be the calmest person in the room, if you want to respond effectively."
>
> Chris Adamczyk, Social Media Intelligence Analyst, Arizona Police Department

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Papi D. @ntkzavome *Follow*

#PortArthur we have an elderly woman that needs help and is stuck inside her apartment #HarveyRescue

AG Brady @AC_Brady
My grandmother is stuck in her apartment ... Can you please Retweet she's 82 .
1080 Central Mall drive #215 Port Arthur , TX #PortArthur

2:46 AM - 1 Sep 2017 from Port Arthur, TX

Dave Dean @davedotdean *Follow*

Woman & her family out of food & water, trapped on the 2nd fl @ 590 Neches Ave Port Arthur, Tx #HarveyRescue

8:27 PM - 30 Aug 2017 from Altadena, CA

Precious Tweets @Princessluna11 *Follow*

URGENT MEDICAL EMERGENCY #HarveyRescue Boat needed I10 610 Child in distress family of 5 needs medical attention ASAP. #HarveySOS #Harveymed

7:39 AM - 29 Aug 2017

Stephanie @real_Stephanie *Follow*

Please RT
#Harvey #Texas #PortArthur
9th & Lake Arthur
This lady still can't find her dad Hector Ineguez
#HarveySOS #HarveyRescue

Dayanelli @Dayanelli_
PLS RETWEET I NEED TO KNOW HE IS OKAY 😢
Show this thread

4:07 PM - 31 Aug 2017

"These days, even a marketing expert can save lives, by providing and promoting hashtags which people can use if they get into distress at major events."

Chris Adamczyk, Social Media Intelligence Analyst, Arizona Police Department

Key Takeaways

Chris, a social media intelligence analyst for the Arizona Police department and a crisis response expert, shared insights into how you can effectively manage a crisis in the social media arena.

1

People in a crisis situation are just as likely to tweet a request for help than call the emergency services.

2

For Chris it's all about putting a robust communications plan in place prior to events, so that even event marketers can feed into it.

Chris says a solid plan is important because the potential for danger is everywhere:

> **Any large event can become a disaster**

> **Any location can come under attack**

> **Any storm can turn into a flood**

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Marketing in the
Age of Assistance

Marie Davis
Head of Google Marketing Solutions
Ireland

"You need to think beyond what the obvious searches will be, people are getting more and more curious about what your brand can offer."

Marie Davis, Head of Google Marketing Solutions, Ireland

"People don't want to wait anymore. So, if you don't get and keep their attention span, they'll simply go somewhere else."

Marie Davis, Head of Google Marketing Solutions, Ireland

Be there, be valuable and be quick!

Marie Davis presented Google's latest research along with invaluable insights on how to be more assistive to demanding digital audiences.

Her message was based on the context that we now live in an Age of Assistance, when the words 'Just Google it' are a common occurrence every day of the week.

So, for marketers and communications officers in all sectors this simple strategy is essential for keeping your brand visible and relevant today.

An even more connected world

It's pretty obvious to the world that people are reliant on smartphones in their day to day lives.

This revolution just over 11 years ago changed the way society communicates, shops, learns and as our sense of connection builds up Google estimate that we have only seen 1% of the potential that digital technologies currently has.

Google points to the fact that we use our phone up to 5 hours a day and check it up to a remarkable 200 times a day.

Not only that but the Internet of Things also means that we will be moving from 8 billion connected devices in the world today to 20 billion by 2020.

It means that we can get assistance more instantly and easily than ever before.

Very soon we will be able to book a restaurant table or a complex hair appointment just by asking Google. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

This is why they use the term the Age of Assistance, as all the help and information we need is on tap.

> "Almost three-quarters of consumers in Ireland now identify themselves as an online shopper and this will only increase."
>
> Marie Davis, Head of Google Marketing Solutions, Ireland

A more curious, more demanding, more impatient audience

But these developments have also changed the way we behave and how we interact.

Google's philosophy is to 'focus on the user and all else will follow'.

So, when putting this into practice Google has discovered that we are more curious, more demanding and more impatient than ever before.

Here are some of the insights they discovered:

1 ▶ More curious

People's curiosity and reliance on searching is also shown by the increase in many simple things being searched for now, like the 'best toothbrush' and 'best umbrella' which are items people would not have troubled themselves to search about before.

Increased curiosity is also evident in the following:

▶ In the past 2 years over 50,000 years of worth of video with 'review' in the title have been created on YouTube

▶ Every year 15% of searches on Google have never been searched before

▶ 45% percent of purchases are prompted by something seen online

People also ask	
What is the best travel umbrella?	⌄
What is the best golf umbrella?	⌄
Which umbrella brand is the best in India?	⌄
Which Colour umbrella is good for summer?	⌄

People also ask	
Is hard or soft toothbrush better?	⌄
Are electric toothbrushes really better?	⌄
Which power toothbrush is the best?	⌄
What is the best manual toothbrush?	⌄

"These days you need to think beyond what the obvious searches will be, people are getting more and more curious about what your brand can offer."

— Marie Davis, Head of Google Marketing Solutions, Ireland

A more curious, more demanding, more impatient audience

2 ▶ More demanding

Google discovered a sea change from media's reach being scarce while their audience's attention was plentiful, to reach being plentiful and audience's attention scarce.

This means that people want to be engaged then re-engaged with and across many different channels

So, it follows that if your brand doesn't get your audience's attention then they will go somewhere else.

Google also points to specific research to show just how savvy and self-focused we have become:

▶ Mobile searches for 'something near me' have increased 60% over the past 2 years

▶ 58% of shoppers now expect to receive promotions/deals specific to their past purchases

3 ▶ More impatient

One of the behaviours which becomes symptomatic to shorter attention spans is of course a decreased ability to wait, or read in depth to find more information.

A very revealing and potentially damaging statistic is the fact that you can lose 53% of your search audience if your website does not load within 3 seconds of them tapping the link.

Their research also found:

▶ 120% increase in shoppers searching for next day delivery before buying

▶ 81% of shoppers checking if a product was in stock before buying

Being there, being valuable and being quick

So what this means is that to be best placed to meet these common emerging behaviours of mobile users is to be there, be valuable and be quick.

Rather than thinking of online campaigns or sales as a linear process, best practice is now to take a more of a circular approach.

It's not just about being top of Google's ranking, as your customer could be on YouTube finding out a bit more about what your company does, or they could be on Google Maps trying to see where you are located, or they could be on social media pages to see what promotions you have on today.

1 ▶ How to be there

Google offers examples of ways to be there through their high ranking on search, search ads, YouTube and Google My Business.

2 ▶ How to be valuable

Google offers tools in this regard, so you can research the kind of searches your audience are looking for. This means you can then address it by creating engaging compelling content for them to interact with.

Plus, they also have Audience Solutions which help you identify your best customers or how to re-engage with lapsed ones.

3 ▶ How to be quick

Google suggest ensuring your site is an AMP – Accelerate Mobile Page which can greatly condense your site's load speed to a fraction of the time.

Plus as technology is now also giving us quicker ways to pay, they recommend tools such as Google Pay to help facilitate ease of purchase.

"By using an Accelerated Mobile Page, Smithwicks brought their mobile page load time down from 22 to 0.5 seconds. 53% of people will leave your site if it doesn't load in 3 seconds."

Marie Davis

Marketing to
Millennials

Lisa Smith
Founder and Director
of EngageSmith

"You might laugh at how a millennial will interview you, instead of you interviewing them, but it shows they value what you have to offer as much what they will offer you."

Lisa Smith, Founder and Director of EngageSmith

"With so many new channels, we're over-complicating the way we talk to our younger generations. We need to find a simpler approach."

Lisa Smith, Founder and Director of EngageSmith

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7 in 10 millennials will quit their jobs if they don't find them engaging

That was one of the main insights from Lisa Smith, of EngageSmith, an Irish-based startup which aims to help companies retain this age group in the workplace.

Lisa feels that cultural globalisation has created a more complicated, and less linear world.

More than just a lazy stereotype

As a millennial herself, Lisa was quick to point out that some of the more generic phrases in popular use like *spoiled, entitled and self-absorbed,* was an unfair, and often inaccurate way, to describe this population cohort.

Instead she pointed to the so-called clash of generations being attributed to them growing up in completely different worlds.

Lisa said that what millennials take for granted or see as normal can just simply be in juxtaposition to what their Baby Boomer parents would have believed.

To show there's no uniformity amongst that generation, Lisa can point to there actually being four different life stages for millennials.

Moreover, she also points out that there are similar cultural differences between millennials and the even more digitally-native Gen X coming behind them.

> "Everyone has an idea of what a millennial is, but it turns out we've been looking at them through the wrong lens these past few years."
>
> Lisa Smith, Founder and Director of EngageSmith

Why millennials matter

Lisa points to **millennials consisting of 75% of the global workplace by 2025**, but amazingly **in Ireland they already represent 80%**. A statistic which perhaps points towards our high-tech work base.

This generation have also grown up dealing with many more ways to communicate or consume information that their more linear-consuming predecessors.

This means that trying to reach them can be difficult or confusing for all concerned.

A quick search of 'What does a millennial want' throws up a massive 40 million results.

Lisa advocates a more simplified approach.

Research on millennials at work

EngageSmith's research about millennials in the workplace throws up some telling reasons why this often-overwhelmed generation will quit their job:

72%
are disengaged at work

64%
leave a company due to poor relationship with their manager

41%
leave due to salary

76%
leave if no clear career path

46%
leave if no vision of development

70%
leave if no training provided

🌐 Globalisation

The explanation of this high figure, Lisa believes, is not because of this generation conforming to stereotype, but rather the forces of globalisation.

This has led to a much more fragmented, non-linear world where instead of the generations being more united, their cultural perspectives and behaviours are tearing them further apart.

An example she used was the phraseology of the term culture in the workplace.

She explained that as this was an American term, it often confused new recruits more than the word 'atmosphere' which they could buy into more as a concept in Ireland.

> "Instead of pulling us all together, globalisation is breaking us all apart, not only the generations from each other, but also the generations themselves."
>
> Lisa Smith, Founder and Director of EngageSmith

✓ Reaching out with blueprints instead of stereotypes

Instead of jumping to unflattering conclusions about millennials, Lisa encourages us to be mindful of the context or world-view each generation has been born into.

And to do this she provides a loose blueprint of how to communicate with the various age-groups so that we all can work better together.

The generations compared

Baby Boomers	**Messaging should be optimistic and contain rich content.** They can be reached through Facebook and LinkedIn through posts which show intrinsic value.
Gen X	**Messaging should be authentic and concise.** They can be reached through Facebook and LinkedIn – but keep it short and keep it real.
Millennials	**Messaging should contain imagery and be short.** They are better reached through Facebook and Twitter with relevant and informative content.
Gen Z	**Messaging should be entertaining and almost solely through social media.** Keep it light, full of imagery and when in doubt use Snapchat, Snapchat, Snapchat.

Key Takeaways

To recap Lisa says the forces of globalisation and the digital revolution have caused the generation known as millennials to be markedly different from the generations before them.

1

In our rush to understand this generation, we've confused the issue by negatively and unfairly stereotyping them.

2

Millennials don't fit neatly into one group, with 5 types/4 life stages to be identified and more predicted to be discovered.

3

When it comes to their career paths, they often become easily overwhelmed and need to be educated in terms of creating a vision or personal development.

4

If companies fail to provide this education or leave them with an unclear path, they'll become disengaged and want to leave.

The Changing Face of News
in the Digital Age

Fake news adversely affects public sector and political organisations most of all.

44% of these organisations across Europe have been affected by fake news in the last 12 months.

That's according to one of the findings from the European Communications Monitor 2018.

This powerful insight was presented by Dr Martina Byrne, CEO, PRII as part of panel discussion - **'The Changing Face of News, how to Engage Journalists in the Digital Age' at The Public Sector Digital Marketing Summit 2018.**

Chaired by Juliette Gash, Journalist

Dr Martina Byrne   Chief Executive, Public Relations Institute of Ireland
Laura Byrne   Journalist and Podcaster with Storyful
Doug Keatinge   Director, Murray Consultants
Michelle Hennessy   Senior Reporter, The Journal.ie
Colm Hayes   Programme Director, Radio Nova.

Defeating fake news by staying true to your journalistic integrity

Dr Martina Byrne, also delved into our society's past when talking about the philosophy behind powerful communications.

She quoted Aristotle's three pillars of rhetoric as holding as true today than any other time in history.

They are:

Logos	the logic or facts behind the communication.
Pathos	the emotional connection, which involves getting the right tone with your audience.
Ethos	the character of the person or entity delivering the communications.

She highlights how fake news often plays on the pathos angle by delivering emotional content without the logos or ethos to back it up.

Therefore, she calls on the public to focus on all the good things that official news sources have in common than what makes them different, and for news agencies to promote their ethos.

She also thinks the fake news phenomenon is a real test of the public sector's mettle, as fake news can only be defeated in the channels its appearing in – and only by communications experts who are the guardians of the facts.

> "Fake news can only be defeated in the channels it was created in and it's up to us, as journalists, public sector marketers and communications experts to take them on, and that is an opportunity for us."
>
> Martina Byrne, Chief Executive, Public Relations Institute of Ireland.

Lots more debate

All panellists offered telling insights into the role of news in social media and the value/future of journalism in delivering factual, accurate content.

The evolution of news intelligence as a verification tool

Laura Byrne works for the first fully online news syndicated business, Storyful. This company spotted the value of authentic, newsworthy stories which came through user generated content, which could then be sold onto news or entertainment shows as trusted, verifiable content.

They produce two types of news – the hard hitting more serious news, and the lighter viral videos – like the funny cute cat ones we all love so much.

Laura points to an evolution in tech and their approach in ensuring what they send out can be trusted.

Storyful have gone to great lengths to make sure all their user generated content has integrity by setting up a dedicated News Intelligence team.

She sees this approach as perhaps the new 'investigative journalism' where getting to the truth could be a series of unravelling misinformation.

> "Our brains are set up for fake news, a lot of these stories deeply connect with us, so news intelligence is needed to get to the bottom of them. It's almost like the new investigative journalism."
>
> Laura Byrne, Journalist and Podcaster with Storyful

New role for journalism is to filter through the noise

Doug Keatinge of Murray Consultants talked about how his agency set up a model to rank the top 100 Irish journalists on Twitter in terms of their credibility and engagement.

He says the public need to know who they can trust and highlighted the example of Matt Cooper, current number one on that list who Tweets 10-15 times a day and is happy to engage the public on the facts.

He recognises that due to smartphones everyone and anyone can now be a journalist, and the field has become murkier as a result.

But he also thinks that the public are also aware of this murkiness and are seeking out more integrity from their news sources online.

He therefore sees the new role of journalism to filter through all the noise of fake news and get into the real story.

He also calls on marketers to be more responsible and seek out more trusted ambassadors when promoting themselves, than more easily-bought social influencers when considering the marketing mix.

"You can't go wrong with a bona fide journalist or spokesperson to be a true ambassador of what you're promoting, as opposed to a paid social influencer. I think it's worth considering in your marketing mix."

Doug Keatinge, Director, Murray Consultants

A wised-up public now expects more depth to news stories

Michelle Hennessy of TheJournal.ie was keen to point out that people are taking online news more seriously now, even though they are aware of the potential of fakery.

She quoted that **while 50% of people now get their news solely through social media, only 19% trust it as a primary news source.**

For TheJournal.ie however, their internal protocol is to fact-check and get to the bottom of a story. She pointed to the Department of Justice claim that it was illegal for Gardaí to strike. This was fact-checked by the news site and found to be not quite true, as what they discovered was that stipulations in contracts made it essentially legal to strike.

While she didn't regard something like that to be the worst offender, it did show how easily misinformation can happen or how things can get taken out of context.

She also thinks that, ironically, we can thank President Trump for making fake news a more ubiquitous term. This has turned verifiable news into a strength, as the public have become more sceptical since the term has been widely used.

Now she says, the public are looking for both the bite-sized story and the more in-depth verifiable background to it too. And she feels it's now up to journalists or communications departments to provide both.

> "I think we can almost thank President Trump for making fake news famous, because now the public are lot more sceptical, and want to get to the bottom of every news story."
>
> Michelle Hennessy, Senior Reporter, TheJournal.ie.

There's nothing new about fake news

For **Colm Hayes**, fake news is nothing new and he pointed to several times in human history when the truth wasn't allowed to get in the way of a good story.

He shared the story of CNN getting embedded in the First Gulf War by striking a deal with Saddam Hussein's Government to share some of their propaganda. This transformed the station as they offset this fake news with their own high-ratings heart of the action stories.

He also talked about the weapon of mass destruction document which caused the Second Gulf War, as one that was essentially fake news.

As a radio broadcaster Colm talked about the challenges in getting to the source of stories and really getting into the human side, or the colour of the story.

He saw a new breed of journalist coming through and thought that this was one of the lessons they needed to learn.

For him, like it or not, news is a form of entertainment. And the story only improves when its verified at the source, both in a factual and in an emotional way.

In the end it all came back to logos, pathos and ethos.

"For us, everything's changed, like the equipment, the people, the technology etc, but the goal hasn't changed. We need to create entertaining content that engages listeners. Listeners want to listen,"

Colm Hayes, Programme Director, Radio Nova.

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