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Assignment 1

Initial Twitter Impression

Twitter had never really sparked my interest before this assignment. Due to the entire ‘Hollywood buzz’ associated with this particular social media, I did not fully understand that it could be used to help businesses and organizations. After following these ten organizations for a month, my opinion of Twitter has changed for the positive. Learning that Twitter is not just the Kardashian sisters and Ryan Seacrest Tweeting about their hour by hour activities, I really learned it is a useful tool for businesses and PR practitioners to use. Twitter is a quick and easy way for an organization to promote itself and make available useful information to their most active publics. Twitter allows organizations to give general information about the company to those who may not know anything about it. It also allows companies to give their most active publics knowledge of deals, events, employment opportunities, store hours, and a great deal more that can truly benefit both the company and the public. Twitter is one of the most popular social media phenomena’s available this day in age and through this assignment it became clear as to why.

Organizations Commuting Through Twitter

Each of the ten Organizations being followed communicated in different ways and with different motives. Some organizations focused on sharing information about the company such as important dates in their history and interesting facts about the company. One such company is The Food Bank of NC. A tweet posted on September 28, 2010 read “@FoodBankCENE: The Wilmington Branch opened in 2002 and distributed over 26 million pounds since inception <http://bit.ly/aw5YSx> [#30thYear](http://twitter.com/search?q=%2330thYear) [#ILM](http://twitter.com/search?q=%23ILM)” (Food Bank of NC). The Food Bank of NC is a non-profit organization and this type of Tweet provides an emotional connection between the organization and its active publics. Another organization is called Center'd in Raleigh. They are an online organization that discovers and shares cool places and things to do in the Raleigh area and one of their main forms of communication is through Twitter. They get together with businesses in Raleigh and have them Tweet them deals, places and events, and they retweet the specials for their active publics to receive and benefit from. It can almost be said that their entire business stems off of the social media of Twitter.

Tweets representative of the Four Models of Public Relations

Following SAS has revealed to me that they like to use the ‘Public Information’ model of Public Relations. Most of their information Tweeted is one-way communication and very factual. A Tweet posted by SAS on September 15, 2010 read “[#SAS](http://twitter.com/search?q=%23SAS) on InfoWeek 500 list (no. 56) of most innovative IT users <http://bit.ly/9cy8YG;> also lauded for cloud computing innovtn ٨MN” (SAS). This tweet is not a conversation; it is simply a one-way communicated fact that is informative to SAS’s publics. The Cupcake Shoppe in downtown Raleigh is a great little business that sells delicious cupcakes and other baked goods. Their Twitter focuses on the ‘Press Agentry’ model of Public Relations. A Tweet posted September 28, 2010 reads “#bakeshopgirl: In honor of the fall we bring you Caramel Apple....yummy apple cake topped with delectable Caramel buttercream!” (The Cupcake Shoppe). These types of Tweets play on people’s emotions by enticing us with delicious flavors that coincide with our good feelings associated with fall.

Siemens Communication Enterprises is another Twitter account that I am following. Siemens uses the ‘Two-Way Symmetrical’ model of Public Relations. Their entire Twitter account is set up for conversation between different employees, owners and stakeholders. They achieve genuine dialogues with their Tweets, although the Tweets may not be understandable to those of us not in the company. Siemens Tweets are all relevant to their company and provide great information to their publics, however you do have to have some form of knowledge of the company and it’s on goings to understand the Tweets they post. Another company that uses the ‘Two-Way Symmetrical’ model of Public Relations is Cisco Systems. Cisco posts several retweets posted by their active publics as well as allows their stakeholders and employees to tweet under the Cisco name, very much like Siemens. There are conversations going on within the tweets, as well as information about the business getting out to their followers. All in all, Twitter has seemed to benefit each of these businesses in different ways, and each has a significant number of followers.

Differences and Similarities in Tweets

There were more differences than similarities observed among Tweets comparing the communication practices of government agencies, for-profit corporations, and non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations seemed to use facts and information about the organization in their Tweets. Non-profit organizations such as The Food Bank of NC and Triangle gives are more interested in informing their public of the work they are doing and the good that the organization does. A Tweet posted on September 28, 2010 reads “Support the Orange County Rape Crisis Center while finding early holiday gifts! 23rd Annual Holiday Auction, Dec 5th <http://bit.ly/bSj3bK>” (Triangle Gives). Non-Profits use Twitter as a way to reach out to the public and hopefully play into their emotions to help out their causes. For –Profit Organizations are different. They want to advertise their company and attract their public to use their organization. Target posted on September 23, 2010:”SHOES! Buy one pair, get another half off. It’s only online, and it’s happening right now. <http://bit.ly/cjktyk>” (Target). The boutique Fab’rik in Raleigh also uses Twitter to attract people to their store and inform them of new shipments, store hours and the new styles of the season. It comes down to the motives of the organization as to what they will use Twitter for. It benefits a profitable organization to post deals, events, and positives of their company because they want your business. A non-profit organization does not need business; they need volunteers, donations, and participation in their events to help others. Depending on the needs of the organization this creates the differences in the types of Tweets the public will receive from them.

‘Top 10’ Twitter Suggestions

Twitter is a wonderful social media for any business or organization to use. Before considering using Twitter, there is a ‘Top 10’ suggestions list for organizations that I would suggest. First, make sure that someone is willing to keep up with the account daily or weekly. Second, for-profit organizations should consider using Twitter to promote their business with coupons or discounts. Third, write as little as possible and as clear as possible. Keeping tweets short and simple makes them easier to understand and more likely that they will get read. Fourth, send out friendly tweets that engage the public. It is a great idea to build relationships with the people following you.

This list would continue with a fifth suggestion; be sure to retweet positive comments from the public about your business/organization. Sixth, post pictures! Pictures are worth a thousand words. Pictures can help the public connect to the business on an emotional level. Seventh, never let the Twitter account sit longer than a week. People will lose interest in following your organization if you do not tweet on a regular basis. Eighth, be ready for the public to ask questions and make comments on your twitter, someone must respond to these questions or comments. Ninth, learn all of Twitter’s terms, for example: Hashtag (#), Retweet (RT), and Reply (@). There are several more terms that you will need to be familiar with in order to stay on top of your Twitter account. Lastly, tenth, when you like a post of someone else’s, retweet it. These are just a few suggestions to help a business get started in the world of Twitter.

Conclusion

Twitter has proven to be a useful tool in the business world and a great way for any PR practitioner to promote an organization. Just like most social media outlets, Twitter does have positive and negative aspects, but due to its tremendous popularity it can be said that the positive greatly outweighs the negative. Even though you only get 140 characters to tweet what you are trying to say, it provides for an easy and efficient method of getting information to one’s most active publics wherever they may be. All in all, Twitter has a lot to offer any business trying to better its public reach and given that the company follows the ‘Top Ten’ list provided, they should benefit greatly from this social media.