

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING EXERCISES: DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL PROFILES

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Abstract

Inspired by successful uses of Twitter and YouTube in marketing classes (Lowe & Laffey, 2011; Payne et. al, 2011; Rinaldo, Tapp & Laverie, 2011), the author designed and tested a battery of social media assignments in three sections of a marketing core course to provide students hands-on learning experiences, as an introduction to the topic of social media marketing. This is a response to an initiative to integrate social media technology into the marketing curriculum (Wymbs, 2011.) Not all marketing majors will take a class in digital marketing, social media marketing, or internet marketing, even if these classes are offered. Yet social media technologies are making sweeping changes in all aspects of marketing, from promotions to customer services, from product development to distribution, from consumer behaviors to sales management, from branding to strategy, from analytics to metrics, from marketing research to customer community management. The learning module described in this article may serve as an interesting hook, at the introductory level, to engage students to continue learning marketing or to pursue further on their own. Alternatively, the module may serve as a starting point to a marketing elective related to advertising and promotion, or digital marketing.

This paper describes the learning objectives, references of reading materials, and instructions to complete seven assignments on various social media platforms:

1. Creating a Facebook Ad
2. Conducting a Google Hangout with Team
3. Creating a LinkedIn Profile with Recommendations
4. Conducting Research of a Brand on Twitter
5. Creating a YouTube Video Promoting Self
6. Creating a Mobile Profile and QR Codes
7. Creating a LinkedIn Ad

At the end, the deliverable of these interconnected assignments is an online professional profile anchored on a mobile and search friendly personal web page. Through the readings materials and hands-on applications, students learned some industry practices and applied various social media technologies to create useful professional profiles for self-marketing (Young, 2012.)

Assessment survey shows that even though most students are active members of various social media platforms, they do not have experience on the production aspects of advertising on these platforms until they performed the above assignments. Statistical analyses of their survey responses show that the learning module contributes to 24 transferable professional and personal skills of students. In addition, all assignments are positively rated for usefulness to career, enhancing marketing knowledge, enjoyable learning experience, and contributions to overall satisfaction with class.

Student responses generally do not differ across class sections, age groups, or gender. No difference found among responses from full-time, part-time, or not-working groups. In general, responses among students of various ethnic or racial backgrounds do not differ. When there are differences, there is a consistent pattern that the Hispanic students agreed more positively than the Asian students who in turn, agreed more positively than the Caucasian students (i.e., Hispanics > Asian > Caucasian.) Interestingly, the first-generation college students agreed more positively, than the non-first-generation group, that they have been helped in enhancing many of their professional and personal skills.

Some student comments and suggestions are reviewed. This paper also addresses barriers to adopting the learning module, such as privacy issues, learning management system, grading and assessment, faculty time, and project modifications. An advance social media module focusing on strategies and analytics is proposed.

References Available upon Request