

Social Media Marketing

PPMA House of Delegates 2017

Thank you Dr. Hartzell. Hello everyone, my name is Alaina Pacella, I was hired this summer primarily as a marketing intern tasked to develop this “push technology” or social media strategy that will show current members of PPMA the value of their membership, and make potential members want to join.

Introduction

I’ll start with a little bit about myself; I am a senior Tourism and Hospitality Management student at Temple University. In my coursework last semester I took my Senior Seminar class where students were assignment to put on a networking event for other students within the program, and donate money to a scholarship fund through fundraising events. This class was unique in that we were given little to no direction on how to complete this assignment or reach our goals. I was assigned the role of the Marketing Committee Chair, putting me in charge of promoting the brand and attracting attendees within our target market to our various events. With no marketing experience I had to lead my committee through creating a marketing plan, managing various social media accounts, creating and scheduling presentations, and much more. I have used the knowledge and experience I gained from that course, in addition to a lot of research that I won’t bore you with, to create a social media marketing plan for PPMA that can be used as a set of guidelines for the following interns.

As you can assume, a big part of my job is to get members and potential members to follow all of our social media pages to help shift PPMA towards that “push technology” approach. So, if you could all do my job for me and take out your smart phones, these are the usernames for our newly created social media pages that you can all be the first to follow. Feel free to share and retweet any of our upcoming posts to all of your followers and encourage them to follow and like our pages as well. As you will all see I have already started “live tweeting” the meeting

Student Membership

During my interview, it was mentioned that one of my jobs would be to attract newly graduated members to increase the number of resident members in addition to new podiatrists that were entering the field. I suggested adding a membership option to podiatry students, which could also be extended to pre-med undergraduate students who are considering applying to podiatry school. While PPMA does have a student representative at Temple’s School of Podiatric Medicine, our presence is not as strong as it could be. By seeking out students and positioning ourselves as a student organization within the school, PPMA can increase its awareness and expand its membership demographics.

If I learned anything trying to get students to attend our events during my senior seminar course, it’s how difficult it is to get student participation in anything. Students, especially medical students, are incredibly busy, and need to see the value in membership before they would be willing to devote their time to the association. A few suggestions to do this would be shadowing and mentorship programs,

offering materials to prepare for board exams, networking events, panel discussions, possible scholarships, and more. Working with Temple's School of Podiatry and APMA's existing student organization will help PPMA to reach out to students and show them the benefits of a free or discounted membership. These new initiatives would not only be beneficial to students, but to PPMA's existing members as well. They would be able to interact with the newest members of the podiatry field and build professional relationships that could span across the country.

Another great thing about setting up a student membership option is that all these events and programs I mentioned can be run, for the most part, solely by the student members. If PPMA follows the structure of other student organizations, a student executive board would be chosen and be put in charge of scheduling meetings, helping to plan the networking events, informing student members of updates and deadlines, and helping them to connect with other members to further their future careers. Being a part of this student run executive board will show dedication and leadership skills, not to mention the extra opportunities they will have to build their network while working with professional members in preparation for these events.

Social media is a great way to get in contact with these students and show them the benefits of membership. Each class at Temple School of Podiatric Medicine has a class Facebook page, we could request that information about membership be shared to the page and include our usernames so students can follow us to see what PPMA is all about.

Social Media

Utilizing social media and all it has to offer is how PPMA can become that "push" technology participant Dr. Hartzell mentioned earlier. There are many different platforms that can be used to communicate with potential and already existing members, the most important being Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram. While much of the content being posted will overlap across each platform, these sites and the way content is presented should be tailored to reach a specific group of members within the association. It is also important to remember that social media is just that, social; it is meant to be a fun and casual way to reach out to members while remaining relevant and supplying them with pertinent information.

Instagram and Twitter are best suited to reach out to student and resident members, and were even suggested by current students at Temple's School of Podiatric Medicine. Content posted to LinkedIn should be focused towards members in their residency and the professional stages of their career, while Facebook could be used to reach any member with an account. It is important to constantly promote PPMA's social media pages to gain a strong following; this will be done through links provided at the bottom of the PPMA webpage, usernames provided in publications by the association, email signatures, and promotion through the different social media accounts. Social media accounts can also be used to increase PPMA's website traffic by sharing links to pages and blogs written on a volunteer basis by students, resident, and professional members.

Different social media sites accommodate different posting schedules. Posts to Facebook and Instagram can be used a few times a week, while Twitter should be used at least once daily if not more. Posts need

to be spread out throughout the week and should be posted at varying times of day to allow for the most views from members. These pages must be monitored for comments and any information that could be shared with followers and the page administrator should interact with members who reply to posts or mention PPMA. Social media marketing takes place 24/7 since these platforms can be used at any time, usually during non-business hours. Although I may have just made this sound like a full time job with a lot of overtime, it actually isn't. By using a social media managing program we would be able to draft posts and schedule them to be posted automatically throughout the upcoming weeks across all of the current platforms. These programs also provide the user with analytics regarding their impact, when their posts get the most exposure, and more.

You will see a lot of hashtags being used across the different social media platforms, and while many of you may know what they are and use them yourselves, it is important to understand how powerful they can be when it comes to social media marketing. For those who aren't familiar with the term, a hashtag is a word or phrase beginning with the pound sign symbol that sums up the subject of a post, for example #PPMA. When a user clicks on a hashtag it shows them every post where it was included, this is a great way to get exposure for an event or topic. Each event or meeting can be assigned its own hashtag making it easy for followers to find posts from that event specifically, for example #PPMAHOD17, the hashtag assigned to PPMA's 2017 House of Delegates.

Social media is an effective and low cost way to increase awareness and gain new membership. Through an active social media presence PPMA will be able to show the value in membership and remain relevant in the day to day lives of their members. Thank you for your time, here are our social media accounts one last time in case you missed them. Please use the hashtag #PPMAHOD17 in any posts you may be making this weekend and keep an eye on our accounts for live updates.