

# DEVELOPING A SMART PROGRAM

The need to know what your customers are thinking is a key and constituent part of any digital transformation (DX) and received wisdom is that the best way to gather this feedback is via a social media plan. Here, Charlotte Quartly, Digital Marketing Co-ordinator at VanillaIP, shares her views on how to get organised.

**A**s the old adage goes, 'If you fail to prepare then you are preparing to fail', and this includes every aspect of the social world. Preparing a social media strategy can seem like a huge task, not only creating it but also implementing the strategy you have put in place as well as tracking results and knowing what to change in future plans to get the best return on investment. But planning all of this will result in a successful social campaign.

A social media strategy in particular will enable you to react to social media campaigns that are not meeting your expectations, without a plan or goals you will have no means of gauging your success. So to start with you need to have a clear objective when it comes to making the media plan. All objectives need to be SMART.

Objectives are there to set out what a business is trying to achieve, your objectives need to be achievable and they also need to have a time limit. These objectives need to relate to your wider marketing strategy so that your social media plan will drive business growth. When thinking of your goals you need to go beyond the general social activity such as retweets, likes, shares and follows, look deeper into leads generated, conversion rates and web referrals.

Social media is fast moving so your media plan needs to be in depth and also you need to make sure you give yourself enough time

S	M	A	R	T
Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Realistic	Timely

to create the content. A great way of keeping on top of your social objective is to create a content plan and an editorial calendar. Having great content to share is so important when it comes to succeeding in the social space as well

as planning a schedule to avoid breaks in your social activity. Your editorial calendar should list the dates and the times you plan to publish your tweets, blog posts, news articles and any other content you wish to use throughout

your campaigns. It is advised to have your content ready in advance to avoid any disappointment in not hitting your planned schedule. Here at VanillaIP we have edited our calendar to include initial design stages, this means we have enough time to make sure all edits are made in advance giving the marketing team enough time to make our content perfect.

One of the key things to understand when creating a social media strategy is that you need to know what audience you are targeting, what social sites they use and also what content they would be interested in. As technology develops and changes you will want to adapt your plan but make sure you are always keeping your objectives and goals in mind. Social media is about being creative and engaging with customers, creating a plan will enable your company to be consistent, inspiring and a company that your potential customers want to engage with.



You need to know where your messages are going to be most effective. For example, Charlotte Quartly makes extensive use of YouTube for VanillaIP