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MKTG 669-01 Social Media Marketing

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MKTG MBA – Social Media Marketing 669-01
FALL 2015

Instructor: Matt Tripepi, MBA
Classroom: Smith Hall 251
Class Day/Time: Wednesday evenings; 6:00 – 8:30PM
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Office Hours: 15 minutes before and after class in Smith 251

Williams College of Business Mission Statement: “We educate students of business, enabling them to improve organizations and society, consistent with the Jesuit tradition.”

Course Description:
Social media is a broad term used to describe a host of online tools that propel information sharing and social interaction. While Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn are used and discussed most frequently, the world of social media encompasses so much more. Through readings, guest speakers, case presentations and first-hand exposure to social media technologies, this interactive course will provide a unique opportunity to understand how social media is fundamentally changing the way companies operate. More specifically, students will learn how people - as individuals or organizations - can strategically use social media tools to engage their audience in new and exciting ways.

Course Objectives:
• To educate you on social media best (and worst) practices
• To inform you about the issues and opportunities facing businesses in the area of social media
• To emerge from this course with a better understanding of the role of social media to build and support brands

At the end of the program, students should be able to:
• Identify and analyze the impacts of current social media technologies on businesses
• Understand how to develop, improve and execute an organization’s social media strategy
• Be able to analyze and communicate the risks and benefits of social media adoption and execution
• Cross-apply social media best practices for the benefit of any organization
• Develop a comprehensive social media program from scratch
• Understand the essential word of mouth concepts and how they relate to and impact social media
• Thrive in the rapidly changing world of social technologies

Required Text:
1. Sernovitz, Andy, Word of Mouth Marketing: How Smart Companies Get People Talking
**There are not many copies in the bookstore but you can download a digital version for $10 on Amazon or buy it online

Course Breakout:
15% Take-home Exam (comprehensive) and Quizzes
20% Research Report and Presentation
15% Social Media Audit Report (individual)
30% Social Media Strategy Report and Presentation (groups of 3-4)
20% Participation (in-class and online via Canvas)

100% Total
Breakdown of Points:

100 points Exam and Quizzes
100 points Research Report (groups of 2)
100 points Research Presentation (individual)
100 points Audit Report (individual)
300 points Strategy Report and Presentation
50 points Participation (in-class)
50 points Participation (online)

800 points Total

Extra credit – up to 25 points. Five points for each post after you reach your 100 point requirement.

Final grades will be based on the University plus/minus grading scale as follows…

A  93 – 100
A- 90 – 92.9%
B+ 87 – 89.9%
B  83 – 86.9%
B- 80 – 82.9%
C+ 77 – 79.9%
C  70 – 76.9%
D  60 – 69.9%
F Below 60

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Student handbook policies will be applied.

Attendance:
Students are expected to attend all classes and are responsible for completing all course material on
deadline. An attendance sheet will be distributed for each class as a record of attendance. You must e-
mail or call me if you miss class because of illness or emergency. Moreover, rather than ask me what
happened while you were away, you should also check the course’s Canvas page as well as talk to your
classmates to “see what you missed.” Missed quizzes cannot be made up but you won’t be docked any
points. Unless for legitimate, pre-approved reasons, missing two classes will allow you to receive only
75% of your in-class participation grade. If you miss three classes, this drops to 50%. If you miss more
than three, you will not pass this course.

Projects
All projects must be typed and turned in at the beginning of class on the date they are due. Please print
and hand in your project, and send me an email attachment as a backup.

Late work will result in a 5% grade reduction for each day (not class period) it is late. If you are absent
from class on a day a project is due, you are still expected to submit it that day, either by asking a peer to
turn it in for you or by sending it via email by the beginning of class. I will use the timestamp on email to
determine whether the project was handed in on time. Please note that you are responsible for uploading
the correct file and making sure the message was sent successfully. Should you turn in a project via email
because of an emergency, it is your responsibility to provide me with a hard copy of the project the next
class period. Hard copies must be stapled and ready at the beginning of the period. As a general rule,
better late than never.

Regarding reports and presentations (except for the Audit report), due dates and company/topic
selections are first come, first serve. Also, those who sign up earlier will receive more (subjectively)
lenient grading.
Assignments
On certain weeks, there will be assignments related to the reading material. In addition to discussing your responses during class, I may ask that you write up the assignment on Canvas so that we can all discuss it. If you are posting something related to class via social media, please use the hashtag #socialmuskies

Classroom Environment
My goal is for this course to be as laid back, interactive and fun as possible. I may be biased, but social media is an interesting topic and certainly the focus of conversation for many individuals and organizations today. As you can tell from the grading breakdown, a good portion of your success in this class is predicated on participation. In order to do well, I expect each student to be prepared to start and add to discussions (in-class and online). Of course, I expect you to respect other people’s opinions. Finally, make sure to ask questions of me and guest speakers, share news with the class (e.g. via Canvas), and comment on discussions underway.

Specific uses of “computing technology” will be announced in advance with instructions. Students may use laptops or other portable devices for taking notes. However, these portable devices should not be used to engage in non-classroom activities, such as surfing the web, checking e-mail, playing games or listening to music. These activities would certainly divert your attention away from class and could distract other students as well, thus corrupting the learning environment. During class breaks, students may use portable computing devices or computers for personal use as long as they respect other class members. Material visible on the computing device should not be offensive or incendiary.

Additional Expectations:
• Each student must establish an account for LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest (by 9/2). Afterwards, an Excel doc will be sent out as a way to capture and share the accounts.
• As Xavier students, I expect you to write/present coherently and clearly and to complete assignments on time and as directed. Yes, you will be docked points if you have grammatical errors.
• Because class periods are weekly, you should not miss more than one class a semester, unless due to extreme circumstances. I have been in your shoes though and am open to discussion compromises if you will be traveling for work.
• This is a very interactive course, so you should get comfortable with engaging as much as possible – with peers, guest speakers and me.
• Social media is constantly changing and evolving, so you must stay current with the latest developments – e.g. staying on top of weekly reading assignments, posting relevant news and discussion items, interacting via your social media accounts, and paying attention during class.
• If we are covering a company, brand or entity that is a competitor of your employer, I ask that you do NOT share sensitive information with them so that we can have an open discourse.

COURSE OUTLINE
All scheduled activities and assignments will be published at least 1 week in advance via Canvas. If you want to be any further ahead, just send me an email.

Important Dates:
9/2 – Select a Strategy Project company & partner by the end of class. Jointly select date for presentation and project delivery- post on Canvas. Social media accounts created/due.
9/9 - Select a topic & presentation date for Research Report – post on Canvas.
9/16 – Select Brand Audit topic and post to Canvas
9/23- Research Report presentations begin
9/30– Abstract reports for Strategy project are due
10/21 – Brand Audit report is due
11/18 – Strategy Project presentations begin
11/25– Thanksgiving week, NO CLASS!
12/16 – Take-home exam is due
COURSE EXAMS/PROJECTS

Final Exam:
One take-home exam will be given. Exam may consist of multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay questions. The exam will cover lectures (instructor and guest), book readings, in-class discussions/activities and assigned articles. Because it is comprehensive, make sure to take good notes at all times. Do that, and you’ll have no problem with it. My plan is to hand this out in early December.

Research Report and Presentation
Choose one of the topics listed on Canvas – only one topic per person. By 9/9, you must post your chosen topic and the date you’d like to present (9/23-11/11) as a comment to the appropriate post in the class Canvas page.

By the date you choose to present, you need to turn in a written summary of your findings, an appendix that contains all cited work, and a copy of your PowerPoint presentation. Please also post your summary to Canvas. The written report should be 4 pages long, 12 point font and double-spaced. The paper should be grammatically perfect.

Each presentation will last 10 minutes (max), which means you should highlight the salient points in your research report. Points will be deducted if you exceed this. At the beginning of your presentation, you must pass out a one-page summary of your findings to each class member. A brief question and answer period will follow each presentation.

Tips:
- Gather opinions from relevant experts, class members and me
- Narrow your research by using online sources such as Mashable.com, socialmedia.org, wordofmouth.org, and enewsletters like eMarketer.
- Pick a topic/area that you don’t already master. Although it would be a way to an easy project and grade, you would simply be cheating yourself and your education.

All of the topics are to be considered primarily from a business perspective, which means your analysis should primarily cover companies and/or customers (not solely your own personal or professional use). It is your responsibility to update the class on the current thinking in each area with specific information and examples. You will become the expert in your chosen area. Please use class assignments – readings, discussions, projects – to build knowledge of your chosen topic. Note that the descriptions are purposefully vague and are meant to get you started – let me or the class know when you have questions.

Social Media Audit Report
The purpose of this is to expand your knowledge of how social media best practices are applied by an organization. You are to pick a brand or app and analyze their social media “footprint.” You’ll find it much easier if you pick a company/app that is higher-profile; meaning there is a lot of public news and information available. Please pick a company that’s different from others in the class – post your selection as a comment to the appropriate post in the class Canvas page.

The written report should be 5 pages long, 12 point font and double-spaced.
Tips:
- Gather opinions from relevant experts, class members and me
- Narrow your research by using Mashable.com and sign up for enewsletters
- Use class assignments – readings, discussions, projects – to help with the content.

Organize your report with the following sections…

Cover Page:
Provide a summary of your findings, including…
- An introduction of your chosen organization/brand and any additional, pertinent facts about it.
- Summary details of what you found
- A brief list of recommendations

Methodology:
The methodology section describes how you conducted your research. What sites (social media or otherwise) did you visit? How did you locate these sites? What other tools/methods did you use to learn more? How much time did you spend researching? Where did you focus this time?

Results:
The results section is the most important section of the report and therefore, should be the longest. In this section, you will summarize what you learned about the organization/brand after researching their social media activities. In this section, you’ll want to include answers to these types of questions…
- What is the company’s purpose for participating in social media? What goals do they hope to achieve?
- Which social media sites does the company use?
- Who are they targeting? How is their audience responding?
- How does their social media initiative relate to their overall company strategy?
- What types of content do they develop? Do they have a good mix of style and substance?
- What are some major past and upcoming campaigns?
- Who are some of their competitors and how do they stack up?
- How would you evaluate their reach and engagement with their audience?
- What have they done well, and what have they done not so well?
- How have they integrated with other channels for successful word of mouth marketing?

Conclusion:
In this section, you will briefly interpret the results. Summarize your results and make suggestions for improvement.

Social Media Strategy Project
The purpose of this project is to gain real-world experience with how companies/brands/non-profits develop and execute their social media strategies.

I’ve been communicating with a number of companies/groups who are interested in partnering up for this project. While you can certainly pick another company that might be closer to home, your group will be able to work intimately and hit the ground running with the ones I provide. For this project, you are to work closely with your chosen company to develop or improve their social media strategy using the principles taught throughout the semester. Where there is an opportunity, help them further refine and/or execute some of their plan and build a winning strategy for social.
You must form your group (maximum of 2 students) by the end of the first class on 9/2 and jointly select a date to hand in the report and present your findings. Your group must also pick a company on 9/2. Please make your selections as a comment on the appropriate post in the class Canvas page. Each group is required to select one team member as the main liaison with the company.

An abstract of your company and intended course of action is due by 9/30. A 100-word paragraph will suffice. Please post this as a comment on the appropriate post in the class Canvas page.

Your final written report should include a cover page with the report title, the names of group members in alphabetical order, and the date. As validation of full participation, each group member will sign his/her name on the cover as a “sign off” on the report and its contents.

The next page will be titled “Executive Summary” and will include:
1. A clear statement of your group company/topic (maximum 3 sentences)
2. A section “highlights of findings” which will be in bullet format, highlighting 4 -8 major findings
3. A section “Key Recommendations” followed by bullets which clearly state your recommendations

The body of the report will follow: (Typically a maximum of 10 pages, 12 point font and double spaced). Here you present the meat of your project findings. The paper should be grammatically perfect and spell-checked, punctuated, and proofed, etc.

Next will follow Appendix A, in which you list all the people, visits, books, resources etc. that you used to complete this project. Give dates where appropriate, who from the group attended meetings etc. You may have additional appendices that are appropriate for your report.

Turn in one printed copy of the report, and email another copy as backup.

Your group will share its findings with the rest of the class in a 20 minute max presentation. This should not be a rehash of your paper, but should focus on the most interesting aspects of your findings. If your presentation does not do this, it will affect your final grade. At the beginning of your presentation, hand out copies of your executive summary to the rest of the class. A question and answer period will follow each presentation.

Deliverables:
Each group project will vary depending on the company’s situation and needs, but here is an outline of what your report and presentation should cover…

1. Critical evaluation. This is the meat of your written report. Reference the questions from the Audit report, and consider these additional questions.

   - How does the brand currently use social media to support the brand promise?
   - Does the company have a strategy in place?
   - Are the company’s social media tactics consistent with their goals?
Based on your analysis, what are the current social media program’s strengths and weaknesses? Opportunities and threats?

How are they using content strategy and content marketing as valuable currency to attract and retain customers and prospects?

What are specific ways they can leverage the 5 Ts of word of mouth marketing?

How do they organize themselves to integrate social with their overall marketing, communications and customer service platforms?

Consider ideas or questions that come out of the social media strategic framework handout and discussions.

2. Assist in any execution, where appropriate. Describe what you did and learned.

3. Measure and present the results. Help the company determine real value wherever possible from its social media efforts.

4. Develop recommendations. Make them clear and actionable for the company to more easily implement. It often helps if you rank order the recommendations according to three attributes: time to implement, ease of execution, estimated cost and overall effectiveness.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES
Throughout the semester, there will be opportunities to gain extra credit…

Questions to guest speakers
It is important that we properly welcome and engage each speaker, so I expect some good dialogue. If you ask questions and engage in a good dialogue, you can earn some bonus points.

In-class and online participation
You can earn up to 25 additional extra points for starting/posting and commenting on discussions after you have reached your participation max of 100 total points (50 points for online and 50 points for in-class together), participating with questions or comments in class or going above and beyond with activities and assignments.

MISCELLANEOUS
I’ve been in your shoes, so please don’t hesitate to talk with me if you have questions, conflicts or issues arise. It’s much better to talk it through before, rather than after the fact.