PROGRAMMERS

The following recommendations are designed to help facilitate interaction between listener and programmer through social media. These will not solve your problems, but may assist in creating a connection with better efficiency and effectiveness.

Determining what platform to use

- Evaluate your target demographic to determine if they would use social media;
- If so, make sure the platforms you use, are the ones that best suit your show and listener type and location;
- One platform is probably not enough, but more than three will result in too much work.

Preparation

- Develop a checklist which includes social media in pre-show preparations.

Follow-up

- Follow trend by using Twitter hashtags and keywords, as well as Google Alerts, Facebook Insights, YouTube Analytics and/or Klout.com.

Inter-platform communications

- Include links and handles in e-mail signatures;
- From time to time, mention additional platforms the show or station may be using (i.e “check out the twitter page for more frequent updates”);
- Ask for help from others to promote the show or station, for advice on topics of discussion and to contribute directly on-air;
- Give permission to let others share your content;
- Use social media “buttons” on your website;
- Stager announcements that have the same content, on different platforms to increase the number of eyes that may see the post;
- Website traffic typically comes from three areas: links from other websites (blogs), search engines and traditional marketing efforts. As a result, using link exchanges, optimizing search engines and fliers/posters/word or mouth are still very important to generating hits to a website.

Facebook

- Post in groups or on the wall of those with similar interests to the show;
- Keep content fresh and new, update material two to three times a week (but not more than twice a day);
- Use multimedia, such as photos and video, as it increases interaction on a post by upwards of 50%;
- Always include links in posts (if possible) to external material;
- Use humour (when appropriate), as it created entertainment value and enhances recollection;
- Use E-vites and ask others to share;
- Keep posts short, use notes or blogs for longer posts.
Twitter

- When a post asks a question, it invokes a response which creates discussion;
- A carefully designed background for Twitter page that looks professional and represents the show or station creates consistency in branding;
- Using hashtags and providing links generate action by the reader to explore more in detail;
- Commenting on other posts or retweeting increases exposure, not only by those who the content is passed on to, but it also can make the original poster of the message aware that you actively engaged with them;
- By using a story in a post, it provides interest, education and a reason to come back to the platform;
- Using the “element of surprise” can grab interest from a reader, but the use of “shock” content could turn people away from an account;
- The hashtag “#communityradio” is the industry tag that denotes those who support and follow campus/community radio.

Blogs

- Be cautious of comments left; deletion or failure to respond can alienate or start conflict on a blog;
- Be generous in praise and attribution, as typically the post will be archived for others to view;
- Using a list to generate discussion works well;
- Stay away from profanity, as it alienates audiences and is unprofessional;
- Keep the title of a post short and easy to remember so reference can be made back to that post;
- respond quickly, be human and follow up to ensure resolution if required.

YouTube

- To brand a channel to match that of the show;
- Keep clips short (under 60 seconds if possible);
- Cross promote on multiple channels.
STAFF

The following recommendations are designed to help facilitate interaction between staff and volunteers, as well as provide support for programmers to achieve their social media goals. These will not solve your problems, but may assist in creating a connection with better efficiency and effectiveness.

Funding

- Use Paypal.

Information resources

- Maintaining an online platform for information, such as a Wiki, forum or website allows programmers the ability to access information without the need to engage staff.

Providing platforms

- Provide programmers with a centralized method of creating network and communication, allowing programmers to either directly, or through the support of staff, post on a station run platform.
- Don’t implement all platforms at once, use a phased approach.

Policy

- Some sort of Policy or Recommended Guidelines should be implemented in all stations;
- Use of a “social media” or “policy” committee is recommended to solicit information from staff, programmers and board member to generate a social media policy or recommended guidelines;
- Using a support website, such as policytool.net;
- Include examples of preferred and inappropriate use, which platforms it applies to, how programmers and staff may or may not relate to it in a personal setting, provide awareness of copyright content issues, and who to go to for help/support.

Process

1. Get intelligence (decide if social media is the correct method to meet the goals of the users);
2. Clarify objectives (the social media efforts should serve the station/programmers mission and strategic plan);
3. Design strategies (Identify who to get involved, what training is needed, where are opportunities to get off to a good star, how to track progress?, and how can to communicate success);
4. Implement the plan (while providing support and resources to those who ask for it);
5. Measure outcomes (including if the initial plan is in place, if social media is helping to achieve goals, if changes to be made);
6. Leverage learning (which allows everyone to pause, reflect, learn and reapply efforts to move forward).

Leadership

- Designated leaders (such as a station manager or program manager) should use a blog to facilitate information distribution, idea generation and foster interaction throughout the station;
- Blog daily; and requiring those they lead read the blog daily;
- Allow for open dialogue and conversation on their blog;
- Posts do not always have to be original material, but can be re-posts from outside sources or additional posts from those that read the blog to help grow community.