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5 People You Need on Your Social Media Team

Social media magic isn't going to happen on its own. Get these people involved, though, and it just might.

By Peter Shankman | Oct 30, 2012

How do you put together your social media team? Carefully. You don't want to wing this one. Team size, scope and primary function may vary by company size, but there are generally four key places where you'll find your social media team candidates.

1) Your Customer Service People. Customer service is your first (and best) line of offense, defense, and any other "ense." Few realize it, but the customer service people have to be the heart of your social media team. If your social media plan involves listening and reacting to the customer (and it better!) then not having customer service people on your social media team is a waste of your team and your customer service goals.

Customer service folks learn more about the customer in one day than most of your employees will learn in a month.

- Product have a specific problem? They know before anyone.
- A node down in Portsmouth, NH? They know before your IT people do.
- An agent bump them off a plane in Casper, WY without cause? They're going to hear about it first. More importantly, they're going to know the right way to react - it's all they do.

By putting one or more of your top customer service people on your social media team, you're ensuring social media will do what it's intended to do: Help you communicate better with your audience.

Remember this: Tech people are tech people for a reason. They love to communicate with inanimate objects. Same goes for marketers: They love to communicate with ads and rate cards and job bags. Customer service people communicate with the customers. Being able to communicate with your customers should always, always, always be the first rule of your social media strategy.

2) The public relations person The public relations (PR) person almost always gets asked to be a part of the social media team. The PR person is actually a useful mammal to have on the team. The PR person is the one who helps craft the company message. They make sure the company stays on point, and isn't giving two or three different messages each time they say something. So listen to the PR person, no doubt.

3) The High-Level Exec Ah, the high-level exec. This person is always a bit hard to get a read on. On one hand, he or she knows that a good social media plan can catapult the company into the stratosphere. Find one who understands the benefits of a social media plan, trusts the person you've chosen to run it, and will run interference between the social media team and the other higher-ups who constantly use the term, "that team with their Twitter and stuff." A high-level exec can help clear the way for the social media team - so you don't have to.

4) The marketing people The Marketing people aren't the same as the PR people. Marketing thinks of PR as an afterthought, and primarily focuses on advertising, getting the "brand message" out there, and to a degree, advertising, logos, and similar tactics. Work with these guys to make sure the social media team is on point in terms of how the logo of the company looks, that the social media backgrounds are similar to that of the company logo (but with a little more flair) and that key messaging statements are the same. Another good thing about marketing is that they usually have access to the best swag (Stuff We All Get). These are t-shirts, hats, and other freebies that can serve as great prizes when you're offering giveaways on your social sites.

5) Your personal assistant Everyone who's ever run a marketing or social media group knows that when you can get the CEO to sit down for an interview, or start blogging, or tweeting, or anything like that, you have a win. Unfortunately, the CEO is usually too busy. If you care about social media, put your assistant on the team. He or she will make sure you contribute when you're needed and, hopefully, shield you when you're not.

Your team might vary, depending on how big your company is and how many people want to get involved. But in general, that's your "go-to" group - the one that's going to work with you and create and implement the social media plan for your company.

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