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COVID – 19

Social Media Recommendations

Overview

Globally – and here in Canada – concern about COVID-19 continues to grow. Global medical authorities are escalating warnings and response protocols, and as such, organizations have been taking action to support employees, customers and other stakeholders. This deck provides a series of considerations and recommendations to help organizations plan accordingly for social media.

Top-Line Recommendations

This is a fluid situation with information changing multiple times each day. Your social media imperatives need to be grounded in principles that protect, and even build, your reputation during this time.

Companies should:

- Take a stakeholder-centric approach.
- Defer to global health authorities because this situation is bigger than any one organization or institution.
- Use values, empathy and accountability as decision-making guides.
- Accept imperfect information. Decide quickly and communicate clearly.
- Recognize the potential for complications and opposition.

As it relates to social, we believe it's important to do the following:

- Develop clear escalation protocols for your digital and/or social teams.
- Listen and understand what people, executives, and other brands are saying & doing during this time. At minimum, in your day-to-day operation, monitor industry-related hashtags, competitor feeds including top executives, and conversations on your own channels.
- Where you can help your social communities, help.

Community Management

When managing your social media channels, be sure to:

- Listen to your community's needs and concerns. Where you can help, help. i.e. What kinds of resources, products, services, and/or assistance are you able to provide during this time? Is there anything your organization is empowered to do that can provide helpful support and/or relief to your customers?
- Adhere to the escalation protocols that your digital and/or social teams have established.
- Be hyper-sensitive about anything you "like."
- Define and stick to the tone you want to take with any responses you deem necessary.
- Avoid engaging with content that uses humour, sarcasm, criticism of policymakers or other countries, or any other content that may polarize your audience.
- Avoid responses that could be considered opportunistic.
- Be empathetic.

Organic & Paid Social Content/Campaigns

Organic Content

If you're managing a social media content calendar, now is the time to pause and proactively look at all content planned. Continuously re-visit your content plans to evaluate if they are still fit to post given the evolving situation.

You don't want to add to the noise, but business is still moving on, so it's appropriate and necessary to publish content.

The very best thing you can do is listen – understand what people, executives, and other brands are saying & doing during this time.

- Understand the sensitivities, polarizing topics/themes, and where a void of sufficient response might be.
- At minimum, in your day-to-day operation, monitor industry-related hashtags, competitor feeds including top executives, and conversations on your own channels.

Your focus should be squarely on the audience, not you as a brand. This is a great opportunity to deliver on the value you are uniquely positioned to deliver. Value can be delivered via:

- **Help** – what kinds of resources, products, services, and/or assistance are you providing during this time?
- **Information** – what kinds of useful, reliable education, tips, practices, and/or information are you uniquely able to provide during this time?
- **Leadership** – with an understanding of the disruption in people's lives, what confidence, advice, and/or inspiration can you give them?
- **Celebration** – how can you celebrate people in your community, your employees, or others during this time?

The behaviors you should express are:

- Humility
- Understanding
- Empathy

Here is some additional guidance to help you plan your social media content during the pandemic:

- Don't make all your posts about COVID-19. Share stories about people within the organization that are doing great work or are giving back to the community. Continue to celebrate major milestones and moments (for individuals, product teams, divisions, and company-wide).
- Communicate about anything externally relevant/appropriate that the company is doing to help employees, its customers and/or the community.
- Have a forward-looking focus on the business and the ways it is continuing to innovate to help people.
- Instill confidence by letting audiences know that while this is a very serious issue, the business will persevere, and the company is taking every step necessary to safeguard the company and its stakeholders for the future.
- Simply look back at content you've previously published and pick 3-5 pieces from the past that can be re-published.

Here are some social media pitfalls to avoid:

- Do not use this crisis as an opportunity to promote something that doesn't help your communities in some way.
 - ◊ Tips from Twitter: <https://www.prweek.com/article/1676826/advice-twitter-to-not-to-tweet-during-coronavirus>
- Be hyper-sensitive about anything you share or even "like" on social media. Avoid sharing/engaging with content that uses humor, sarcasm, criticism of policymakers or other countries or any other content that may polarize your audience.
- Given the social distancing movement, it's advisable to not post photos or videos of large groups of people.

Paid Social

With paid media budgets already allocated and ads running, proceed with caution. This may not be the right time for sales opportunities but it will be a time to offer value to your audience if you're uniquely qualified to do so and it's coming from a genuine place.

Here is some additional guidance to help you plan your paid social media content during the pandemic:

- Be thoughtful about tone of voice and check your current paid ads. Ensure the voice is empathetic, not overtly sales-focused. Your call to action should not appear opportunistic.
- Re-evaluate your content. More people remote working and social distancing means more screen time, which provides an opportunity, but it's essential to not be tone-deaf to what is happening. Ensure your content is still relevant to what you want to promote and is tailored to your audiences. Be wary of content that could be misinterpreted in the new social landscape.
- Become a resource. Your ads can be the easiest way to get information out to the right audiences.
- Understand company closures and if they impact any running ads (driving audiences into stores, locations, etc.)
- Create positivity, community, and hope. Most social media users now are plagued with statistics and fear while being cooped up in their homes. Where possible, share positive and uplifting stories that captivate your audience's attention.
- Stay connected about business performance. For example, should you pause campaigns for a later date? Should you pull targeting from high risk areas or do you perhaps need to increase in those areas?
- Pay attention to the industry and competitors. Is the messaging changing?
- Be mindful of shifting objective. If moving away from event or location ads, is there opportunity to focus on drumbeat content or other business angles (human interest, ecommerce, gift cards, driving to site for content consumption)?
- Pay attention to your platform. Does the change in messaging and content mean you should shift platforms? Would looking at search, native or display better serve the new communication and consumer needs?
- Evaluate frequently.

Platform Resources

Twitter: [Brand communications in time of crisis](#)

Facebook: [Business Resource Hub: Managing through and building resilience during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)

LinkedIn: [Staying Informed and Connected: Resources to Help Navigate Work and Coronavirus](#)

Social Media Livestreaming And Video Content

Livestream vs Video

Consider the following when determining whether to livestream an announcement or event, or use video posts across your social media channels. Overall, the decision should be based on your communication objective (what do you want to say, which leads to how best to do it).

When to use livestream

- Use livestream for breaking, real-time news or when you want to create a big impact around one moment in time.
- You can also use livestream when you want to encourage active conversation around your topic and/or engagement with the subjects of the livestream you're producing.
- Livestream content can be significantly longer than most recorded videos on social channels and still see successful reach and engagement, though it runs the risk of viewer drop-off if you don't sustain interest.

When to use recorded videos:

- Use recorded videos when your messages are shorter, when you want to have more control over the message or when you want to maintain sustained visibility and engagement.
- Through production and planning, recorded videos can offer specificity and focus.
- Recorded videos can also be directly promoted via paid on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

Questions to ask before choosing a livestream/video platform:

- What do you want to communicate?
- What audience are we trying reach and where are they consuming content?
- Which platform aligns best with the content or message you're trying to get out?
- Where are you likely to see the highest reach or engagement?
- Are you looking to create a breakthrough moment or looking for sustained engagement over time?
- Which channel is most conducive to cross-platform promotion, whether in social or elsewhere (newsletters, email blasts, digital, etc.)?
- What length of video suits your message and how will that play on different platforms/across livestream or recorded video posts?

Social Channel Considerations

While your tone should remain consistent on each social platform, your content should be channel specific. Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn all have their own quirks and requirements, and each platform's audience has different expectations.

In the following pages, we've provided key considerations for livestream and video content on each channel.

Facebook

Key Considerations	Livestream	Video Post
Benefits + Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a conversation in real time Allows friends to watch together in a 'party' Is accessible after the stream is over Offers more in-depth content There is an icon on video to denote live content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very shareable and promotes engagements Good for short and concise content Facebook saves and organizes videos in a page tab Auto-play feature allows content to play while scrolling the news feed
Where you can post/use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Facebook feed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Facebook feed As promoted content (paid) Within groups In the banner of your page
When you should use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q&A sessions or content from events Announcements, breaking news Conversations with thought leaders that will encourage viewer participation in the comments/ message boards in real-time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any sales and marketing promotions To drive awareness For shorter videos Drive traffic or create a conversation with promoted "cards" If you need to support with paid social ads
Considerations + potential risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot promote the actual livestream with paid People don't always view all content; may jump in/ leave halfway Unrehearsed/unplanned streams can lead to errors No chance to edit/take back Live commentary can open the brand up to negative commentary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content can be shared with reactions outside of your control Strong creative (visuals, branding) can capture audience and stand out in newsfeed. Lacking the creative can impact views and engagement negatively Most users don't watch past six seconds With planned posts, you can maximize your use of branding through production
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to be long enough for people to be able to join throughout the stream but if they are too long, people may lose interest Cannot be directly promoted with paid social ads (although we can promote lead-in, registration pushes, content post-event, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People don't always have sound on – be sure to use captions Length plays big role in reach (sweet spot is 6-15 sec.)
Ideal length	<p>In an analysis of 100 million Facebook videos, it was discovered that the engagement rates of live videos on Facebook increased 15 minutes into the video. After videos passed the 15-minute mark, there were small fluctuations, but no significant shifts in user engagement. To get the most out of this video format, try to adjust their length to between 15 to 20 minutes. Limit is 8 hours on desktop, 4 for mobile.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Videos get shown organically to more people via the Facebook algorithm when they're at least 3 minutes long, however, you should prioritize your message vs. the length. Not all videos need to be 3 minutes long if it's not a fit with your message. Facebook has advised that 47% of a video's value is delivered in the first 3 seconds and has advised that even 15-second videos can be effective from an organic perspective. Ads should be as short as possible

Twitter

Key Considerations	Livestream	Video Post
Benefits + Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates conversation in real-time Can link relevant conversations in a 'Moment' Accessible after the stream is over Offers more in-depth content Twitter notifies frequent visitors of page when you are live There is an icon on video to denote live content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post is shareable and promotes engagements Best for short and concise content Promoted opportunities can offer a 'First View' in a user's timeline. Guarantees you are top of the feed when they first log in on a given day Can be pinned at the top of your owned channel Archived into media tab
Where you can post/use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within user's Twitter feed For paid social promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within user's Twitter feed For paid social promotion including boosted/promoted content, a first view, and/or a promoted trend
When you should use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q&A sessions or content from events Announcements, breaking news Conversations with thought leaders that will encourage viewer participation in the comments/message boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For any sales and marketing promotions To drive awareness To drive traffic or create a conversation with "cards"
Considerations + potential risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People don't always view all content; may jump in/leave halfway Shorter life in online presence as people feel it is less relevant with time Unrehearsed/unplanned streams can lead to errors No chance to edit/take back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content can be shared with reactions outside of your control Strong creative (visuals, branding) can capture audience and stand out in newsfeed. Lacking the creative can impact views and engagement negatively Most users don't watch past six seconds With planned posts, you can maximize your use of branding through production
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to be long enough for people to be able to join throughout the stream but if they are too long, people may lose interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People don't always have sound on – be sure to use captions
Ideal length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live streams should last a minimum of 10 minutes to capture and engage a large audience. Can be leveraged by promoting event prior to broadcast. Replays can be crucial with Twitter as majority of users will watch the video on their own time, so if the best moment happened 5 minutes in, it's important to timestamp that moment as a custom start time after the broadcast to capture viewers in their feed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video posts should be quick and concise. Audiences typically scroll past content in 3 seconds, with optimal length being 6-15 seconds.

LinkedIn

Key Considerations	Livestream	Video Post
Benefits + Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely and interactive • Great tool to facilitate conversations with thought leaders and professionals • Makes viewers feel included while also providing a sense of exclusivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good way to break up a text-heavy content stream • Can offer snackable content that users will stop to watch quickly • Able to edit video before posting
Where you can post/use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within LinkedIn user feeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-feed • Promoted (paid campaigns) • Embedded videos linked from other platforms • Archived to users/companies' 'activity' section
When you should use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great for Q&As, fireside chats, interviews, product launches and commenting on industry news • For timely content aimed at professionals and/or pertaining to industry • When you want to encourage real-time engagement and comments/conversation with your audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For less time-sensitive needs such as event recaps and promoting products
Considerations + potential risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sure to write a great description to accompany the livestream feed and include a CTA • People may join throughout the broadcast, so consider reintroducing the subject multiple times • People may think that "the moment has passed" and not go back to watch a stream once it has ended and been archived on your profile • Creates potential risk as there's no chance for editing or taking back what's broadcasted live • Test livestream capabilities before the real thing to ensure no technical difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people do not watch videos with sound, especially when scrolling through feeds (design videos with that in mind) – include closed captions • Be sure to write a great description to accompany the livestream feed and include a CTA • To be successful, you must hook viewers within the first few seconds to keep them engaged
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You currently must apply to be a LinkedIn Live broadcaster • In order to become a broadcaster, you must have access to a third-party broadcasting tool (StreamYard, Socialive, Vimeo, Switcher) • Cannot be directly promoted with paid social ads (although we can promote lead-in, registration pushes, content post-event, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum video length is 10 minutes
Ideal length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10–15 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most successful video ads are less than 15 seconds long. For LinkedIn native video, consider your objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ For brand awareness and brand consideration videos keep length under 30 seconds. ◊ Videos that meet upper-funnel marketing goals should stick to a 30–90 second video length ◊ Longer-form video can effectively tell a brand or product story, but don't exceed 10 minutes

FHR is Here to Support

FHR's Social & Innovation team can help clients with:

- Counsel on and help developing social escalation processes, documentation, and scenario planning workshops.
- Social listening for your organization and competitors as related to COVID-19 conversation.
- Daily reporting on COVID-19 and how organizations are responding on social media.
- Contingency planning for events, conferences or launches (content strategy planning).
- Content creation and amplification support (including paid social programs targeted to your key target audiences).
- Influencer engagement, management and activation.
- Social executive support (strategy and content creation).

Questions? Please reach out to:

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