

Social Media Strategy



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Social media has changed the world - the way we get our news and communicate with our friends has vastly altered. Technology allows us to interact through mobile devices - phones, computers, ipads and the like - sharing information through virtual communities and networks. Whatever channel is used - Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram - it allows information to be shared quickly and directly. News is often broken live on them - and often not by qualified journalists but by members of the public, with the reporters using that information as content for their own posts. And unlike traditional media - newspaper, tv, radio - it is not a one way medium, it is interactive, with instant debate across the airwaves through the sharing and following of posts.

Recent statistics show that worldwide there are 2.3 billion active social media users - a rise of 176 million in the last year, and they are members of a range of channels:

- 1.71 billion facebook members - and adding six new profiles every second; 40million active small business pages.
- 320 million active twitter accounts - 500 million people visiting each month without logging in; 6,000 tweets posted every second.
- 400 million Instagram followers - 80 million photos are uploaded every day; 90% of users are under 35.
- 1 billion YouTube users - 300 hours of video are uploaded every minute.

Social media is here to stay and Hambleton District Council must embrace it as an important way to communicate with local people and stakeholders. But it is vital that social media is not used in isolation - but complements our other communication channels. In that way we will not isolate/disenfranchise those residents that do not - or are unable to - use social media.

It is not a 'quick win' - it takes time to build up followers and customers. This a long term commitment that needs resources to build up a Hambleton social media community.

We will use social media to:

- provide a direct flow of council news and information through both corporate accounts and individual departmental accounts - including leisure, waste, business
- raise awareness of specific campaigns and issues
- build credibility with key audiences
- engage local people in consultations
- correct rumours or false information
- clarify or expand on issues raised by the local media or local people
- provide information in cases of emergency - flooding, snow, travel conditions
- save time and money through channel shift.

It will lead to:

- better informed residents - targeting specific information to specific groups
- an improved reputation with customers
- engagement with residents encouraging them to work with us
- ability to tailor services to demands.

Hambleton District Council already runs social media accounts through the leisure, business, waste and recycling teams - but with a joined up approach it will open up its corporate accounts too. They will all be overall managed by the social media team - with individual service account holders for each area.

Evaluation and Metrics

The benefits of social media are clear to see but sometimes it can be difficult to identify the return on resources. There are some ways to provide measurable results on these channels:

<p>Barcelona Principle The Chartered Institute of Public Relations concluded that you cannot measure success by the audience but by what the audience do</p>	<p>The measure is not that 2000 people following a twitter account saw a message about a litter pick but that 40 of them turned up to the event</p>
<p>Channel Shift and Saving Money</p>	<p>If someone asks a question through social media and gets their reply that way we have saved money and time on a phone call. If we promote money saving campaigns - leisure discounts - we can reduce advertising costs elsewhere</p>
<p>Engagement</p>	<p>Watching the sites to see what people are talking or are concerned about can be used to influence future decisions and consultation exercises. In all future consultations we can include social media and ask where people got their information</p>
<p>Viral Content</p>	<p>We should not neglect the social side of social media - when Wolverhampton posted a clip of flooding in the cathedral almost 20,000 people viewed it and 6000 liked or shared the content. They all stuck around afterwards building up the followers for other important news</p>
<p>Numbers</p>	<p>We can evaluate accounts through the number of followers - and analyse when we have spikes and what posts that equates to; number of clicks on links; number of retweets; number of mentions - hashtags</p>
<p>Platform</p>	<p>This will give us data on the number of hits, likes, followers for any given post or account; age, gender and area dynamics; information on the times people view and use our sites.</p>



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