

SOUTH BAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Social Media Working Group

Minutes

Thursday, June 12, 2014

Attendees: Anthony Gonzalez (Gardena), Alexander Gurfinkel (Hawthorne), Michael DiVirgilio and Nico De Anda (Hermosa Beach), Tom Strickfaden (Lawndale), Alicia Velasco (Lomita), Leilani Emnace (Manhattan Beach), Ariana Kennedy (Redondo Beach), Hillary Theyer and Michael Smith (Torrance), Pamela Manning and Aleen Bedrosian (County of Los Angeles), and Chandler Sheilds and Jacki Bacharach (SBCCOG)

---- AGENDA ----

I. **Introductions**

- *New attendees provide a brief overview of their services*
 - **Anthony/Gardena** – maintains city website and social media platform. Currently, city has 5 Facebook (FB) pages and 5 Twitter handles
 - **Hillary/Torrance Library** – maintains library social media/website presence
 - **Aleen/LA County** – LA County Public Works department posts photos on Flickr and maintains Twitter handles
 - **Alex/Hawthorne** – City is in the “baby” phases of social media development – submitting social media policy to Board next meeting. Looking at Twitter, Instagram, FB, etc.
 - **Ariana/Redondo Beach** – looking to revamp Twitter and further FB development (with Police Dept.)
 - **Leilani/Manhattan Beach** – Maintains Nixel, Granicus as additional social media platforms.
 - **Michael DiVirgilio/Hermosa Beach** – City is behind some of the other SB cities in structured social media use/policy. Has worked with the SBCCOG to speak about social media use and direction.
 - **Alicia/Lomita** – Planning Dept. uses FB and Twitter (not as much as FB).

II. ***Specialist Showcase: social media success metrics**

- *Torrance: Michael Smith & Hillary Theyer*
 - **Michael** - City of Torrance manages on a flat basis – departments are encouraged to send out their messages through a medium that works best and is easiest to maintain. Social media is beginning to look like other resources – video postings, radio alert network, etc. Social media is just another component within that “toolbox” of interaction. Library is very aggressive and successful with communication.
 - **Michael** - Not pleased with Google Ad service – did not generate additional discussion/engagement. Test advertising service on an innocuous, low-key event/interest, not something high profile and particularly important. Do not get “married” to any particular social media platform – social media is a moving target.
 - **Hillary/Torrance Library**
 - Most important - Determine your vision and use social media to reinforce it. It's a tool to support your goals.
 - Library started with FB—not a huge learning curve for people to adopt and use. Looking to extend “GoodReads” use at the library – promotes online discussion and provides lists of publications. Monitors Yelp reviews – stay abreast of issues and legitimate problems (however, “don't feed the trolls”). Submit videos to City's YouTube account. Uses ConstantContact and cross-pollinates emails on social media platforms. Overall, Library's public outreach approach is to engage residents regarding their

- “larger mission”. Used an intern to analyze the Library’s use of FB – takeaways included posting in the morning to increase viewership, residents love reading about local teams and history (increased engagement).
- “Plan of Service” – Library’s mission and documentation of usefulness of various resources (more or less). “Match platform to need”. Positive feedback from community regarding Library app use. Low rating is 3.5 stars, high is 5 stars on Yelp. Powerful survey tool – unsolicited and generally honest. Social media is regarded as “virtual use” of the library—4,000 plus users for the app, 200,000 plus queries. Limit interaction via social media (in regards to negative feedback) is Library’s policy – no deleting of comments, but otherwise, “leave them alone”. Allow links and comments on FB, not photos or videos—linking to YouTube channels as opposed to linking to video URL on YouTube, where there are misc. adds and suggested videos that Library might not endorse. Trivia use on FB is also engaging – positive unsolicited feedback.
 - Social media time-use: varies, schedules posts when planning on being out of the office for a period of time. Answers only pertinent questions/issues on social media platforms when not in the office.
 - Reach out to someone immersed in a particular interest that you may not have expertise in, but are interested in learning about and sharing with followers.
 - Sesame Street is a good example of a Twitter handle to follow – the characters on the show each interact on the Twitter handle to serve the greater mission of the show. A good way to analyze the significance of Twitter use – are you tweeting to keep your followers up to date with something that they cannot see, attend, engage in or are you tweeting among those who are in attendance?
- *Guest speaker: Michael DiVirgilio (Hermosa Beach)*
 - One good example of company doing social media well: 50&5 – working well with their client, El Camino College (ECC). ECC engages very well with their student and stakeholder base.
 - Getting into social media can be intimidating, so many options and what is “our” strategy, what are “we” trying to accomplish? FB is a natural tool for a library to engage its audience, good closed and visual environment, for example. Those who are doing social media well are at least on FB or Twitter, and then supplement additional platforms as they see fit. Social media is like a “mixer”, an event - networking via interpersonal interaction. It’s a relationship-building tool. Pushing a message, mission on social media is key as well—then listening and watching what the reactions are. ECC is listening and talking to their base – relationship building on their social media platforms: engagement builds relationships. The more engagement you receive, the more others see it: increased visibility. Every community has their own strengths/focuses to engage their followers.
 - Evaluate the difference between mass metrics vs. quality in those metrics – i.e. possessing a lot of followers vs. followers who are interested and engage in posted content.
 - Social media management tool – sophisticated scheduling services. Scheduling too far ahead could lead to losing sight of what you are posting much later, possibly posting insensitive/inappropriate material based on current events, celebrated occasions, etc. Use these tools to target what you want to look for in your audience. Being able to measure return on investment is difficult, but social media management tools are great for such a purpose.
 - Advertising and promoting – social media use in this realm must be thoughtful. Advertising is a good way to drive a specific interest that an organization has (for example, economic drive to get more followers on FB, spending \$3-\$10 a day to get targeted resident likes). Promoting on FB allows for increased audience exposure (from 10% to 15-20% exposure to your audience).
 - Fear of negative comments, how to deal? Continue to engage your followers in a positive manner and ignore the minimal negative feedback. It’s important to control content – overwhelm the negative comments with increased posting of positive content is the best approach.
 - Leaders are on Twitter, but sometimes it is not always the premium platform for leaders to interact with their followers. Chancellor of USC has a Pinterest account to post images and

content that does not necessarily engage conversation and but allows his followers to see what he is up to in a visual sense on a newer and popular social media platform.

III. Recap of last meeting's action items

- County RFP scope to develop social media policy and timeline - it's posted on SBCCOG website
- Sharing goals and measures of success for social media use as well as target audiences – Torrance and Hermosa Beach were scheduled to speak about measuring social media success at June 12th meeting
- SB cities demographics posted on SBCCOG website
- League of California Cities expanded social media list of services – reflected on their website
- Post social media policy, security tips from County of Los Angeles newsletter, minutes and Joulbug App video to LinkedIn Group – posted on SBCCOG website
- Email LinkedIn Group monthly featuring new information and encourage use as a communication tool – ongoing

IV. LinkedIn group useful?

- Use of the LinkedIn site was encouraged.

V. Other Issues of Interest

- How can this group be of more use to everyone?
 - **Pamela** – today's guest speakers provided a "copious amount of notes" with valuable content.
 - **Jacki** – Would bringing individual projects/approaches to social media to this meeting be helpful (i.e. for critiquing and analyzing from the group)? Everyone bringing at least one thing to each meeting to share with everyone else is a good way to foster further engagement among the group.
 - **Jacki** – Mentioned recent experience of conferences encouraging tweeting and how the demographics (age) of the group related to the amount of tweets and interest. Can we use this group to generate ideas for social media engagement to before and during the SBCCOG's General Assembly to encourage interest, involvement and attendance?

VI. Next Meeting?

- Thursday, September 25th @ 10:00 A.M.
- Possible agenda items:
 - New guest speakers
 - Hillary – FB - log into Library's FB page and demonstrate backend use to the group
 - Alex – Log into LinkedIn page for City of Hawthorne and demonstrate how it is used.
 - Pamela – Log into personal Twitter account and demonstrate how it is used.
 - Discuss social media ideas for boosting interest and involvement in the SBCCOG General Assembly as a template for learning.
- Action Items for Next Meeting:
 - Reaching out to cities that have yet to attend.
 - Alex to bring approved social media policy for City of Hawthorne.
 - Chandler to coordinate with members to bring something to share from each social media platform.
 - Schedule for next meeting agenda demonstrations.