

SOUTH BAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Social Media Working Group

Thursday, August 13, 2015 Minutes

Attendees: Selina Barajas (Inglewood), Joe Mendoza (Palos Verdes Estates), Jesse Reyes (Redondo Beach), Kit Fox (Rancho Palos Verdes), Jill Reed (Torrance), Nancy Casanova and Michael Padian (Southern California Edison), Medha Paliwal (West Basin Municipal Water District), Chandler Sheilds, Aaron Baum, Marilyn Lyon and Jacki Bacharach (SBCCOG)

I. Introductions

- *New attendees provide a brief overview of their services while returning attendees share something significant from their city's social media use since the last meeting.*
 - **Jill Reed** – City of Torrance just launched Instagram account – trying to make the platform fun and “light” (e.g. photos of city events, cultural landmarks and gatherings). Promoting it on the city's other social media platforms and through weekly e-newsletter.
 - **Medha Paliwal** – West Basin purchased its first ad on Facebook for an upcoming event (reached over 1,000 users). The ad is running for 2 weeks.
 - **Nancy Casanova** – Embed a questionnaire in the registration form that asks how they found out about it (e.g. through social media?).
 - **Kit Fox** – City of Rancho Palos Verdes just crossed 1,000 likes on Facebook.
 - **Joe Mendoza** – City of Palos Verdes Estates is just establishing a social media presence and looking to adopt a social media policy.

II. Guest Speaker:

- **Nancy Rodriguez Casanova** – *Southern California Edison (SCE)*
 - SCE is on Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, Tumblr...
 - Tumblr blog is a good storage platform for infographics that were not optimally compatible on SCE's website.
 - Initially Tumblr was used as a work-around for people who did not have access to mobile devices to view graphics.
 - Tumblr is more dynamic than website for getting content up to address user/customer questions/needs/concerns.
 - SCE tries to hyperlink phone numbers for users to access from a smartphone, in case they want to dial immediately.
 - SCE has multiple Twitter handles (e.g. Spanish-speakers, community group/non-profits focused, recruiting, etc.)
 - There are 22 branded SCE social media channels/platforms.
 - Infographics are among the most engaging content posted on social media— they perform better than just posting an image with accompanying text.
 - SCE uses subliminal messaging with graphics that relate to message (e.g. picture of blinds with a message about saving energy and reducing temperature in the home).
 - SCE uses Canva – free tool that creates graphics (e.g. memes, infographics).
 - Facebook has a rule that limits 20% text on graphics, so it is tough to compare the success of infographics on Twitter vs. Facebook.
 - Tagging Twitter handles in an attached photo saves text space, which is limited to 140 characters per tweet (max of 10 handles can be used with an attached photo).
 - Journalists and other media outlets use SCE's social media platforms (and actual posts in certain cases) to generate news stories and spread SCE messages.

- It is challenging to break free from the “noise” that surrounds the user in social media in order to create content that really “pops”.
- Twitter is most useful for emergency notifications and important, timely messages while Facebook is most useful for engaging users.
- Instagram helps to aggregate content (e.g. photos) from users.
 - “SCE” and “SoCal Edison” was already “hashtagging” on Instagram from users posting photos of SCE crews in their communities.
 - Nostalgic, “black and white” photos are popular—linking how things were done in the past to the present, good for engagement.
 - SCE does not always post photos; staff will hunt for relative hashtags and like accounts using those hashtags in future posts to bring new users back to SCE’s account (increasing followers).
 - Great way to expose yourself to others on Instagram.
 - Instagram moves chronologically (does not have an algorithm like Facebook that repopulates feed with engaging content regardless of when it was posted). SCE removes hashtags on an Instagram post and replaces them with new ones in order for the post to repopulate their followers’ feeds.
- Piktochart – tool SCE uses to generate infographics.
- SCE “hyper-targets” specific communities in SCE’s service area on Facebook via ads that cost around \$350 - \$500 on average for a month-long campaign.
- **Michael Padian** – *Southern California Edison (SCE)*
 - Social media advertising is cost effective and if you are committed to social media, you must have some budget behind it.
 - SCE restricts and deletes hazardous/malicious comments from customers on their platforms.
 - SCE’s social media, in-house marketing group is composed of 5 people.
 - Current social media strategy has taken SCE 3 years to bring up to present level.
 - Budgeting for social media campaigns tap into different department’s budgets where metrics are developed to create goals for each campaign, judging success individually.
 - Marketing budget is gradually being transferred from more traditional media (e.g. print, television) to social.
 - Social media allows SCE to push information back “up the chain” as effectively as it is designed to push information out to customers.
 - Social Media Pulse Reports help to process and push intel back up to superiors/executive leadership to let SCE know what is working, what is not and why in the social media realm. Additionally, the reports provide feedback for the success of SCE programs and policies.
 - Customers are targeted additionally by customer emails that various departments have access to.
 - Twitter is the safest platform for a city/municipal agency to start with in social media.
 - Only has 20% of the audience of Facebook, however.
 - A multitude of valuable entities (e.g. reporters, analysts, experts, other municipal agencies) are present on Twitter.
 - SCE has identified peak times to post – 11am and 7pm on Facebook; 5pm on Instagram; 9 tweets a day from 9am until 6pm.

III. LinkedIn Group

- *Report on usage*
 - **Chandler Sheilds** – Group members continue to post and share in the group
 - **Jesse Reyes** will post information regarding an upcoming “Gov Tech” convention taking place in downtown L.A.

V. Other Issues of Interest

- *Reflection on League of Cities’ legal insight into social media policy development*
 - *Did anyone update their City’s social media policy with some of the advice that was shared during our last meeting?*

- **Kit Fox** –Found legal resources from League of Cities helpful while developing a social media policy with other city staff after the meeting.
- *Social Media Checklist*
 - *Thoughts about Govdelivery's tips for success and how some of them conflict with our cities' social media strategies?*
 - **Jill Reed** – Transitioning from Nixle to EventBridge to alert citizens of emergency alerts, etc. Residents complain if emergency notifications do not make it onto social media platforms like Facebook.

VI. Next Meeting

- *October 8th at 3:00 P.M.*
 - **Suggested for Invitations:**
 - Mike Parker at the L.A. County Sheriff's Department
 - A smaller city (e.g. West Hollywood) with robust social media use and limited staff resources