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IN
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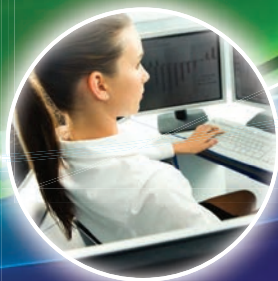
social media IN SPORT MARKETING

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Not surprisingly, companies of all sizes are using social media as part of their marketing and public relations efforts. The growth of the social media phenomenon and constant advances in technology obviously create unique and powerful opportunities for those able to capitalize on them. The question is how best to do so? *Social Media in Sport Marketing* has been created to help answer this question as it pertains to sport organizations. Our goal is to create one compact resource to address the needs of students learning about social media platforms and tools specifically for sport marketing and sport communication. It is written from the perspective of the sport professional, and the examples, case studies, and applications originate specifically from the world of sports.

Social Media in Sport Marketing explores sport marketing goals in relation to social media tools and concepts being used today. While the specific media platforms used may change over time, the marketing goals behind their use, and many of the foundational tools such as real time blogging, images, and videos, are here to stay. This book gives readers a thorough understanding of the key components of social media, teaches individuals how to use social media to develop professional as well as personal brands, and discusses the role of social media to increase an organization's reach and revenue.

Chapters 1 and 2 offer background regarding the rise of social media and the principles of sport communication and marketing as they relate to social media. Chapter 3 discusses social networks and real-time platforms. Chapters 4 and 5 cover blogging, livestreaming, podcasting, and related tools such as images and videos. Chapters 6 through 8 focus on mobile marketing, search marketing, and email marketing, all of which are all crucial to an organization's success in today's digital world. Throughout, the text covers the key challenges and issues sport marketers face while implementing social media campaigns. Finally, the text concludes with a chapter on planning a social

media program and the crucial step of measuring the effectiveness of social media efforts.

To reinforce key concepts, chapters contain specific examples, web resources, and case studies drawn from sport organizations and social media front-runners. The authors' collective personal and professional experiences allow readers to learn from the successes and failures of practitioners dealing with social media and sports in the real world. On this book's website, www.routledge.com/9781934432785, the sport-related case studies and review questions will be supplemented with online materials offering updates, specific examples, and timely illustrations that reinforce the book's content.

When a social media program is planned properly, integrated into an organization's business objectives, and aligned with other marketing efforts, an organization can expect increased customer loyalty and revenue. The goal of this book is to help readers use social media effectively to market to customers and build relationships that will ideally benefit both parties.

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Introduction to Social Media

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the world of social media. Changing media and technology have transformed the way we communicate with friends and family and how we consume information. Social media has also greatly affected the way organizations communicate and market to their audiences. As sport managers, it's important that we understand how social media is affecting the sport industry and what opportunities exist to reach fans.

In this chapter, we'll introduce you to some basic definitions and concepts of social media. We'll also cover the main types of social media platforms and technologies, to give you an idea of what to expect when we cover a few of them in more depth later in the book. We'll explore the history and rise of social media and examine its impact on individuals and organizations. While we believe the good far outweighs the bad, we would be remiss not to take a look at a few potential negative consequences of social media.

The goal of this book is to provide the background and guidance necessary to apply the best practices in the areas of the principles of marketing, communications, and social media to the field of sport. As

you read this book, probably the best method for learning about social media is to *participate* in the process by experiencing social networking as both a *producer* and a *consumer.*

We start this chapter by giving you a basic understanding of social media from a marketing perspective and have you start coming up with your own ideas about it. You most likely interact with social media in your daily life, but you may not have thought about how it functions as a marketing or public relations tool or how it relates to the sport industry. This overview ensures we are all on the same social media page and prepares you for the more in-depth material in the following chapters.

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?

According to Safko and Brake (2009), the term *social media* encompasses all of the interactions between people online—all the ways they participate in and share information, knowledge, and opinions while using web-based applications to communicate. David Griner (2009), director of digital content with Luckie & Company, defines social media as "digital tools that let you share information and network with others" (unpaged).

In today's society, the 24-hour news cycle, technological innovations, and the pervasiveness of instant communication (cell phones, texting, and wi-fi) have altered the traditional concept of media. The umbrella term *media* has generally referred to the group of organizations and their employees who are regarded as the legitimate couriers of information. "Mainstream" media typically includes television, radio, newspapers, magazines, communication conglomerates, government agencies, and even research institutions as well as television personalities, radio broadcasters, reporters, journalists, and so forth.

Long gone, however, are the days when the public had only the mainstream media to provide them with news and content. With today's technology, information now moves in both directions between content providers and audiences. Using social media, people outside the mainstream media can easily create, edit, and post information online. As Joseph Thornley, CEO of Thornley Fallis, stated, "individuals shift fluidly and flexibly between the role of audience and author" (Thornley, 2008). In effect, anyone can become a "citizen journalist" or "marketing maven" by disseminating information via the Internet (Safko & Brake, 2009, p. 4). As a result, Griner asserts the rise of social

media has in effect ended centuries of separation between mass media and the masses and removed barriers that separated businesses from their potential customers.

Social media enables us to watch and share videos and photos, read and write blogs, post on social networking sites, and have online conversations. As you can surmise from these activities, social media is a broad term for the various tools, platforms, and content that enable people to create, exchange, and consume information. Essentially, social media enables consumers to communicate in more efficient and effective ways than we were able to in the past. We asked a few professionals to describe social media in 140 characters or less. Exhibit 1.1 includes a few of their responses.

SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES, TOOLS, AND PLATFORMS

Social media is powered by a variety of platforms, tools, and technologies. These platforms and websites may have a single function, such as providing the means for people and organizations to share a specific type of content (e.g., videos). Or, they may have multiple purposes, such as bringing people together so they can share ideas and thoughts in a variety of content formats.

While there is definitely overlap among various types of social media, we identify three main categories of social media:

1. Publishing services
2. Media sharing services
3. Networking services

EXHIBIT 1.1 Social media in 140 characters: What the experts say.

"Social media is a tool that allows connection between humans with a reach never available before."

Stacey Alexander, Social Media Strategist at Media Two Interactive

"A digital form of communication that has the potential to be shared with others."

Jackie Adkins, Account Coordinator at GMR Marketing

"Social media is communication. Takes the many to the 1 to one dynamic and makes it a 2-way convo bt ppl, companies, orgs."

Chelsea Marti, Social Media Director at Automatic Data Processing

Here are brief definitions of each of these categories and examples of platforms that fall under each of them.

Publishing Services

Publishing services make it easy for people to publish information and ideas online. Examples of social media publishing services include blogs, forums, and wikis.

Blogs

Blogs are regularly updated websites (or sections of websites) where the content is presented in reverse-chronological order, with the newest stories at the top. Blogs usually allow people to leave comments on stories they've read. The tone and writing style of the blog may be formal or informal. There are no real rules; it's up to the blog owner or author to decide what to publish. *Example:* www.washingtonwizardsblog.com, the official blog of the Washington Wizards.

Forums

Forums, or message boards, are similar to blogs, but they differ in one major way. While blogs are usually only updated by one or a few authors, forums allow anyone who is a member to post content. *Example:* http://mbd.scout.com/mb.aspx?s=78&f=1408, a forum for University of North Carolina basketball fans.

Wikis

Wikis are websites built on a platform that enables individuals to easily create and edit multiple pages and link them together. Instead of a typical website, where the viewer has no ability to edit stories, wikis typically give readers the ability to edit stories and add to them. *Example:* http://armchairgm.wikia.com/Main_Page, the Armchair GM Wiki for all aspects of sports.

Media Sharing Services

Media sharing services enable people and organizations to share original content in a variety of formats online. They have also made it easier for people to save and share links to others' content. Examples of media sharing services include the following.

Social news websites

Social news websites enable people to submit links to news stories and vote on which ones they enjoy the most. Usually, the front pages of these sites will include the most popular news stories, as voted on by people. *Example:* http://www.reddit.com/r/sports.

Social bookmarking sites

Social bookmarking websites enable people to save and review links to stories, pictures, videos, and other content they find interesting. People can usually use tags, or descriptive keywords and phrases, to categorize various types of links. The social component of these sites is that people often can see what links their friends are tagging and bookmarking. *Example:* www.stumbleupon.com.

Video-sharing sites

Video-sharing sites are focused primarily on letting people upload and share videos they've created. Many of these sites also let people share their opinions on videos they watch by rating, starring, liking, or commenting on them. *Example:* www.youtube.com.

Photo-sharing sites

Photo-sharing sites allow people to post and organize pictures they've taken and leave feedback on others' pictures. *Example:* www.flickr.com.

Audio-sharing sites

Audio-sharing sites enable people to share music they create or enjoy. These sites often allow people to create playlists from songs they like and see what music their friends on the site are listening to and sharing. *Example:* www.spotify.com.

Presentation and document-sharing sites

These websites enable people to share whitepapers, presentations, articles, or other content they've created. *Example:* www.scribd.com.

Live-streaming sites

Live-streaming platforms help individuals and companies share live video with the world. *Example:* www.livestream.com.

Networking Services

Networking services exist to help connect like-minded people. These sites make it possible for people to easily share thoughts or ideas, contribute to a cause, collaborate on projects, and learn about topics they're interested in. Here are examples of social media networking services.

Social networking sites

Social networking sites (also called social networks) bring people of similar interests together. While the terms *social media, social networking,* and *social networks* are often used interchangeably, they actually have different meanings. Boyd and Ellison (2007) define these social networks as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site" (unpaged). *Example:* The most popular example of these is, of course, www.Facebook.com.

Microblogging on real-time platforms

According to Mark Glaser (2007), Executive Editor of PBS Mediashift, microblogging enables people to "write brief text updates about your life on the go, and send them to friends and interested observers via text messaging, instant messaging, email or the web" (unpaged). *Example:* One popular real-time platform limits people to just 140 characters, www.twitter.com.

Opinion and review sites

These sites enable people to share their opinions or reviews of products and services. In many cases, companies incorporate this functionality into their own sites, so their customers can review products and people can see these authentic reviews directly on the company's website. *Example:* www.amazon.com.

Social shopping sites

Social shopping sites give members limited-time or exclusive group deals and discounts. Sometimes the offers are limited to a certain number of

buyers; other times, they are only activated if enough people commit to purchasing an item or service. *Example:* http://www.groupon.com.

Crowdsourcing sites

According to Jeff Howe (n.d.), a contributing editor for *Wired* magazine, crowdsourcing is "the act of taking a job traditionally performed by a designated agent (usually an employee) and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people in the form of an open call" (unpaged). Crowdsourcing websites and platforms bring people together to contribute ideas and actions and achieve a common goal. Some brands, such as Starbucks, have even built their own crowdsourcing sites to obtain ideas from their customers and improve their businesses. *Example:* http://mystarbucksidea.force.com.

As you can see, there is a lot of overlap with the various social media services. For example, Facebook is a platform that enables video- and photo-sharing, blogging, real-time updates, and other components of social media. YouTube is a video-sharing site but also a community and social networking site.

Many of these platforms have mobile components that allow consumers to access them easily via their smartphones and mobile devices. With technology changing so rapidly, platforms that further combine mobile and social technologies will continue to develop—for example, in the location-sharing category. These platforms, such as Foursquare and Banjo, utilize GPS functionality to allow users to "check in" at places and share their locations with their friends. Businesses may even reward people for sharing their location and checking in with them for exclusive discounts and coupons.

The key thing to remember is that social media tools and platforms have given the average person the ability to share his or her voice, opinions, and content with the world and for others to comment on and join in on conversations about this content. And, importantly, consumers have access to this online content at all times—it does not close at 5 p.m.

THE BACKGROUND AND RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

In order to understand the cultural and business significance of social media, it's important to examine how we arrived at this point.