Like, Comment, and Share: Boosting Engagement for Transit Justice

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Background

- Transit justice has become an increasing concern with the transit sector producing 60% of Seattle's total GHG emissions.
- Social media has become an increasingly important tool in online nonprofit communication.
- However, nonprofits typically struggle with communication strategy, especially with the rise of newer platforms.
- Transit-centered nonprofits must assess and reconstruct their social media communication methods.

Research Question

What features of an online account can transit-centered nonprofits implement to improve communication and engagement on social media?

Internship and Methods

- Interned with Seattle Subway Foundation.
- Developed content for the newly established Seattle Subway TikTok account (See Fig. 1).
- Developed and administered an online survey to current Seattle Subway supporters.
- Conducted a literature review on social media communication.

Results: Key Features

In order to develop an effective communication strategy, a transit-centered nonprofit should:

Establish organizational identity by stating core values and goals, otherwise known as “the mission” on account bio and in the content.

Prioritize transparency

- Implement two-way communication
  - Be accessible to audience for questions concerning the organization’s identity, posts, and actions

“Asked me to sign, made signing petition seem thoughtless.”
- Seattle Subway Survey Respondent

I use TikTok with the expectation of entertainment.

Number of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Survey responses on Likert scale resulting describing the high agreeance of using TikTok for entertainment purposes.

Important Attributes of an Organization’s Social Media Account

Number of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmentally Sustainable</th>
<th>Accessible with a mission</th>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Survey responses from 115 Seattle Subway supporters on the attributes of an organization’s social media account they deem most important.

Key Takeaways

- Prospective supporters need to understand who and what the organization supports in order to lend their support.
- Implement two-way communication to establish a connection with the audience that is not solely transactional.
- Creating dialogue with the audience before demanding action on behalf of the organization.
- Comedic trends often can make the distribution of information more accessible.
- Storytelling can be most effective when providing a face to common statistics surrounding transit issues.

Broader Implications

- Using comedic trends are effective ways of engaging audiences and can expand the audience to include youth.
- Continuing surveys on audience satisfaction to assess effectiveness of implementing these features.
- Future research should analyze content and compare the platform’s built-in engagement analytics concerning the implementation of these features.
- Effective online communication can inform constituents about their proximity to transit justice issues.
- With Seattle Subway often promoting opportunities for public participation, informed constituents can make a positive socioenvironmental impact.

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