Preparing for Social Media Risk

By Rajkumar Dixit

The advent of social media has given all organizations a better chance of reaching their audience. Social media has flattened the communication spectrum. Every group, whether big or small, has the same tools to compete with the ‘big guys.’ Just a few short years ago, we were dependent on the giant media companies on Madison Avenue to help us project our message. Today, the giant brands are fighting for space using the same platforms as small startups.

Don’t Underestimate the Power

Many church organizations use their social media platform as a one-way communication delivery mechanism. Remember, your online presence operates under a completely different set of rules than traditional forms of communications like a press release. A report by the Altimeter Groups reports that only 10 percent of companies surveyed said that social media represented either slight or no risk to their organization. While many companies believe there is only a slight risk with social media, the truth is there is a growing risk. Church communicators should recognize how the power of social media can affect the reputation of the organization.

Kony 2012 video is a good example of a social media experiment gone wild. At first the power of social media seemed to be working in the best possible way. The creators, Invisible Children, a non-profit organization, were not prepared for the worldwide attention that the video would
gain—70 million views in under one week. This appeared to be a success story that others would try to emulate.

However, within a few short days the video began to backfire. Critics began to add their voices and ask questions regarding the funding and the integrity of the organization behind the Kony video, Invisible Children. The small not-for-profit was not prepared for the worldwide attention they were receiving. Every major media outlet was following this story. The focus had shifted from the ruthless Ugandan warlord, Joseph Kony, to the integrity and financial spending of Invisible Children. The tables had now flipped. The small organization could not keep ahead of the story, and Jason Russell, the organization’s leader, who had been catapulted to Internet worldwide fame, had a public mental breakdown along the streets of San Diego. All of the good will that had come from the Kony 2012 video, had now transferred to the downward spiral of the group’s leader. Social media can make or break you.

The proliferation of social media sites has given everybody in your organization a voice. Whether you like it or not, Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, and blogs are being created with ties to your organization’s name and brand. As a result, risk in social media is rising. How do communications professionals deal with these risks?

TIPS

Click the URL below to read the Forbes.com article with lessons on creating a successful video: http://www.forbes.com/sites/

The American Express social media team is on the cutting edge of the trends for customer engagement and brand awareness. Follow them on Facebook and Twitter and begin to study how they are implementing their strategy. Click on the links below to read more about their online marketing plans.

SocialMediaToday
http://socialmediatoday.com/

Mashable
http://mashable.com/2012/03/28/

Javelin Strategy
https://www.javelinstrategy.com/

Stick to the Plan

Your ministry team should have an integrated marketing plan that includes a social media strategy. What message are you trying to convey through your online posts? Every single question, picture, and poll should be directly related to your online presence and brand messaging. According to a Harvard Business Review poll [http://hbr.org/web/slideshows/social-media-what-most-companies-dont-know/3-slide], two-thirds of respondents said their organization didn’t have a social media strategy. If you don’t have a social media strategy, make it a priority to have one completed by your team in the first quarter.

Educate your organization’s leaders on the power of social media

Only 32% of respondents claim that social media has been designated as a high priority by the organization’s executives. For many church leaders, ‘social media’ is still a buzzword that they may have learned from their grandkids. While 79% of companies surveyed say that they plan to use social media, many do not know how to get started or engage with their audience. A large percentage of organizations are still hesitant to get serious about social media. Just 12% of companies have hired staff dedicated to social media activities.

While social media is in its infancy, we have already seen the power it has on nations, wars, brands, and capital. As this communication medium continues to grow, so too will the risk factors.

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TechTalk: Making the Vision Clear

Pick an audience—any audience, any crowd, or congregation—and 65% of them are visual, they learn by seeing; 30% are auditory, they learn by hearing; and 5% are kinesthetic/digital, they learn by feeling and doing. Many worship services only capture the attention of 5% of the congregation because many services are audio only—someone standing up front and speaking to convey the message. The challenge is to tap into the larger portion of the group by speaking their language. The immediate response is, “we do that, we use Powerpoint or Keynote.” Both of these are good presentation software packages, that with some tweaking and additional labor can accomplish the task.

We all have thought it would be great if scriptures and songs were natively a part of the software, and how much easier it would be. Well your wish has arrived: church presentation software. There many to choose from—Media Shout, ProPresenter, Easy Worship, and Proclaim, just to name a few. Their purpose is to assist in presenting the message visually.

MediaShout combines worship presentation tools with the ability to simultaneously edit and play your presentation without interrupting your audience. www.mediashout.com

ProPresenter is a cross-platform (Mac and Windows) lyric and media presentation package built specifically to make high-quality live productions easy—such productions include worship gatherings, sporting events, conferences, or even broadcast television. www.propresenter.com

With EasyWorship, create clean, media-rich presentations in minutes with quick access to your favorite Bibles, worship lyrics, and background videos. www.easyworship.com.

Each of these aforementioned presentation packages allows integration of songs, whether from its own library or linked to CCLI (Christian Copyright Licensing), scripture, still photos, and video from its own database or linked to one of the popular Christian image and video sites like graceway media. They also offer on-the-fly scripture to be placed on the screen as the speaker shares the text of the message, allowing the congregation to follow along. In addition they allow for on-screen messages; car lights, please report to nursery, etc. They each function similarly with their own unique features, and are comparatively priced. They also share the same shortcoming; they are computer-based, meaning if the praise team leader changes the songs the night before, or the clerk wakes up and remembers he left out an important announcement or the pastor receives a midnight revelation and changes the sermon, title, text and points, they all rush in on Sabbath with flash drives and need to technician to make immediate changes in the midst of everything else that is going on. Thankfully there is answer to those woes.

Proclaim is super simple. It’s the centralized solution to all your presentation needs. Proclaim lets you arrange lyrics, outlines, and images from anywhere, anytime. When you’re ready to present, just click ‘On Air.’ Proclaim is cloud- and multi-user-based. No more Sabbath morning thumbdrives! The other great feature of Proclaim is its use of what it calls signals—the ability to push information to the congregation via their mobile devices. When the member uses logo bible software on the device and the service is on air, any signal in the morning presentation is sent to the mobile device—scripture, offering appeal, events, Web sites, and registrations. Each signal is saved so the member can share the church service with a co-worker, family member, or friend. The presentation can be remotely run from a mobile device as well. Proclaim’s software is free, there is an on-air fee to use it without a watermark, which is based on church size.

By Bryant Taylor, pastor and communication director who lives at the intersection of ministry and technology.
The iChurch Method

By Jason Caston

Do you want to develop a global online presence for your ministry? The iChurch Method provides digital solutions that help ministries connect with people around the world. It’s a five-part approach to taking your ministry online:

Part 1: Web site—a great Web site that is easy to use
Part 2: Multimedia—interactive multimedia, online video and streaming
Part 3: Ecommerce—online stores/donations
Part 4: Social Media—engage and connect through Facebook and Twitter
Part 5: Mobile—the future of technology and ministry through mobile Web sites and apps

With these five parts, a ministry can reach and change the world. The iChurch Method is a must-read for every ministry leader who desires a global presence online.

Available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 402-486-8800. Catalog #250108

Communication Resource

Who are Seventh-day Adventists?
Created by the NAD Communication Department

This colorful 6-panel brochure briefly outlines Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and history, in addition to the Adventist Church’s perspective on the second coming, lifestyle, family, education, health, and community outreach. It also provides membership statistics, contact information, and resources for Bible studies. This brochure is ideal for placement in church literature racks and sharing with people who would like to know more about the Adventist Church.

Available in packages of 50 from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 402-486-8800. Catalog #250010

North American Division • www.nadadventist.org
Society of Adventist Communicators • www.adventistcommunicator.org

Each month, Practicing Communicating is put on the Society of Adventist Communicators’ Web site in PDF format. You can find it at www.adventistcommunicator.org. Click on the “News” tab at the top of the page. Past issues also are available in 8 1/2 x 11 or 11 x 17 PDF format.

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