



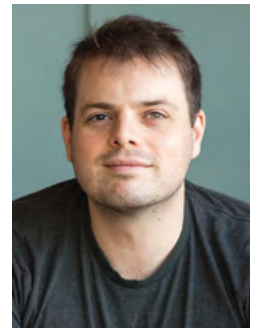
As platforms like Snapchat and Instagram become increasingly popular, how can brands adapt existing social media strategies to exploit these new opportunities?

Helen Dunne reviews a lively morning discussion

KANTAR MEDIA

ALEX PEARMAIN, CO-FOUNDER, ONEFIFTY

Everyone gets quite focused on which platforms are new, but what's more important are the underlying behaviours people are repeatedly using. The biggest expansion in social behaviours through media in the last few years has been messaging, and apps like iMessage and WhatsApp *et cetera*, that are inherently social in terms of the way we're sharing information. Yet actually it's pretty difficult for brands to use a messaging app that is about what I'm having for dinner when I'm communicating with my wife. Or what the score is in the football with my mates.



Alex Pearmain

In 2012, according to Global Web Index, the average Facebook user was using two and a half other social media platforms. This year, they're using 4.6 other platforms. More platforms don't necessarily mean that existing platforms are suffering. It's simply that we are becoming ever more promiscuous in our social media behaviours in terms of which platforms we do it on.

[There may be some issues with Twitter], but you should take a step back and go *It is 320 million users registered on a communications platform*. That is probably the defining communications platform of the last five to ten years. That's a pretty significant achievement and business to build on.

The Internet is about what you're actually interested in. So you'll tell Google things that you do not tell your partner, friends, colleagues *et cetera*. If you went on Google trends for the last decade, there's only a single day in the last decade when more people searched for David Cameron than cats in the UK. It was the day he won the Coalition Government election [in 2010]. There's a serious point there: what are you going to quantify something with? Quantify it with something everyone is interested in.

Using employees to represent a brand can be really useful. It operates really well if it's a B2B environment around something very specific and technical where that person has

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KANTAR MEDIA EXCHANGE

a depth of knowledge and frankly it just speeds things up compared to the brand doing it. But in the early days of Twitter, Orange (as was) had a guy called Connor, known as 'Connor from Orange'. He was a phenomenon at the time; he was social media best practice for telcos in the early days. But Connor became too popular. So then Orange wanted to launch some corporate channels, but people wanted to talk to Connor, because Connor was a very engaging Irish man who clearly was going to get you a quicker response than Orange. And that presented long-term problems.

There are quite a few platforms now that work beautifully for getting mass employees online, but, again, it's about giving them the material. Dynamic Signals is the platform that most brands use for this. What it does that is very interesting is make people compete internally. You're ranked on who gets the most shares onwards for the content. It levels things up between the guy in the call centre who never gets listened to in the business and the senior executive who it turns out no one listens to externally. That drives a human dynamic within the business. The brand needs to focus on being engaging. If they are going to fail on that, it's not going to succeed just because you've found someone more interesting than the brand. Learn the lessons from that person and try and evolve the brand a bit.

On a really practical level, stop doing annual planning cycles, start doing six month planning cycles or even a quarter. Shortening [planning cycles] means that you're not on a platform 11 months after it's flopped, but also if you start with the data, you don't miss the channels where it's happening. One of my favourite data points is always Tumblr. If you read the press, Tumblr is over, Yahoo! is failing. If you look at the user numbers, Tumblr is not that big a deal. If you look at where *Buzzfeed* sources most of its content, it's Tumblr: nine per cent, more than any other source. Tumblr is what's driving pop culture across the Internet and onwards into media. And yet how many people even think about putting Tumblr onto a strategy? Snapchat gets the attention because the kids do it. I think Snapchat's got value, but it should start with the data.

We were doing work with a blue-chip recently and they saw that Tumblr had driven about 900 retumbles for a piece of content. It had then exploded on Twitter and then that drove onwards into media. It's a very closed cycle and no one knew about it. If you pick it up, you'd think that media outlet started it. Two weeks earlier, it's Tumblr. People miss that because they don't start with data.

People who can write beautiful long-form prose are not necessarily good at writing when it comes to social. I would always prioritise emotional intelligence as the key skillset for anyone who is going to be manning front-line social media channels.

The numbers give you a good guide as to which channels to use, but also think about the cultural behaviours that are present in markets. Due to its privacy to the end user, one could feel slightly more confident either politically or on a personal-cultural level on Snapchat as it has clear benefits compared to Twitter which is inherently public. If I had concerns about who is going to knock on my door or what my father was going to say about something I've tweeted, I'm probably going to Snap it instead.

We all take for granted that pretty much we can say what we want in the UK. The worst thing that happens is a bit of a Twitter storm if it's viewed as being offensive, but there

are markets in which that privacy starts to matter and therefore people can control it. In the same way, LinkedIn has clear benefits in a regulated environment, through that ability to control what you might get back from someone, as opposed to Twitter.

The reason *Buzzfeed* has decimated consumer fun news content is because they distribute through social. So I'd query a little bit, for consumer brand activation stuff, how relevant traditional media outlets are. In either regulated or technical sectors, I think the journalist has huge value still.



Sharon O'Dea

SHARON O'DEA, FORMER HEAD OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS AT STANDARD CHARTERED, AND FOUNDER OF 300 SECONDS

I think the big innovation over the last year or so has been how those platforms themselves have changed. Instagram has changed its format. It's created a lot of those add-on things like Boomerang or Hyperlapse and Layout, which enables you to play with the format a bit more. So instead of just switching around from format to format, they've done things like multi-picture ads which have been used to great effect by a lot of brands.

Really it's about sweating the assets on the channels you already have. And while we're looking at how things are evolving in Instant Messaging, actually a lot of it is exactly the same practices as we've always done which is to listen, understand your audience and go where they are in a way that resonates with what you need to do as a brand or firm. What is it that we are trying to do? What is our audience using? Listening, learning and iterating from there, it's inevitably a practice of trial and error. There are no hard and fast rules. It has to be about the audience you're trying to speak to and the behaviours that they are practising.

[People] are definitely still on Facebook, and it's an important tool in the armoury. It's just understanding what it is your audience are using. The kids aren't using it as much as they used to, but if you're trying to attract an older audience, that's kind of irrelevant.

[Corporate news on social media can be difficult as it's quite dry.] You do have to think about *What does this actually mean for our customers?* In the context of Standard Chartered, it's often about what is happening in emerging markets. We can always link that back to long-form content or videos or something. There has to be a value exchange there. Ultimately when you offer content on social, you want people to consume it. You are taking their time up, so you have to give them something that is valuable to them.



'Being on social is always a process of iteration, of testing, of listening, of understanding what's happening and then evolving your offer'

Being on social is always a process of iteration, of testing, of listening, of understanding what's happening and then evolving your offer. Take an agile approach and constantly review it in the face of evidence.

It ultimately comes down to what your objectives are in the first place. When I was at Standard Chartered, we had KPIs around things like customer acquisition, getting customers to spend more on their credit cards — they are measurable things. It's worthwhile setting the KPIs at the beginning and understanding what it is you're trying to achieve as an outcome. It's not simply a numbers game

When you do have limited resource, it is best not to spread it too thinly. You do find a lot of brands are guilty of diving into a channel and then leaving it unresourced. You have to ensure that you are there to have a conversation; that you're listening and responding. Otherwise you end up with lazy behaviours that customers can see straight through, such as robo-posting across multiple channels. It looks inauthentic and turns people off. Think about things you might want to stop doing if you have limited resource, rather than spreading yourself really thinly and not servicing those channels properly.

Journalists are huge influencers online and often have enormous followings, so even your traditional relationship-building activity with journalists is important in the social space. As well as that, the actual press release as it goes out sparks the conversation online. But I think it's changing. We need to think about how [journalist relationships] will evolve as long-form is growing enormously online, with things like Medium and corporate blogs to some extent.

Ultimately, social is a great way to humanise your business. If you look at Reddit's Ask Me Anything, it's a great way of giving people a proper insight into asking those questions and introducing a degree of transparency into a business that can help to rebuild trust, particularly in industries like banking where that's been eroded over recent years.



Steve Shepperson-Smith

STEVE SHEPPERSON-SMITH, SENIOR MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER, VODAFONE

We need to start from where the audience is. For my particular team, our focus is still on media and media is still predominantly on Twitter. It's really important not to dismiss Twitter because of all the negative headlines and say *There's all these bright, new shiny channels, let's move onto them.*

The other channel we're seeing really good interaction from is LinkedIn, which is another one of the social 1.0 channels but it does seem to be the new Facebook for professionals. It's really evolved with the newsfeeds and various apps to become more

social over time so people are now posting more general stuff, but what you don't see is the abusive behaviour because they've got their professional hat on when they are interacting through LinkedIn. There are lots of chances to interact with blogs and to see people interacting with us, which is really positive.

Snapchat became a really relevant platform when it launched the Geofilters tool. It went from a platform where we could engage directly with our audience to one where we can actually activate our audience. We used Snapchat to launch an anti-bullying Geofilter during National Anti-Bullying Week last year and that actually got 80 million interactions across the world. It was really good across our multiple operating markets as well. For a global company like us, you're looking for tools that can give you that



global platform and really allow you to engage with a big audience in an active way.

Financial results are incredibly dull. Why tweet about results at all? We started doing it because the first communications on social in the morning would be from the wires, saying *This is our view of the world*. We recognised that there were a lot of journalists at home, reading that bleary-eyed, and this third party is telling our story. We thought we've got to communicate our own view, so we did our own summary tweets of what we felt were the key stats and put this stuff into context. But then you think, *How do I engage people with that meta-narrative?*

Last quarter we wanted to communicate that our customers had used more than 400 petabytes for the first time. 400 petabytes is meaningless as a number, unless you're an engineer, so we thought *Let's try and do this in a fun and engaging way*. We created this infographic saying *What is 400 petabytes? It allows you to watch a video about every single cat in the world on the Internet 13 times*. Because everyone loves cat videos on the Internet, right? We're going to try and continue that quirky style. It's really about grabbing attention for the audience and, even with a dry subject like financial results, creating something that people actually start talking about and say *That's what the narrative is* as opposed to just the straight facts.

We did a Thunderclap for National Bullying Day. I sit next to a guy at work who holds the record for the biggest Thunderclap; this was for Hacked Off when he was comms manager. He's my unavowed expert on Thunderclap; he says it's very worthwhile. Do it at the beginning of the day and the value is really getting something trending very early on, getting lots of celebrities involved and then grabbing attention, using it as a way to kickstart the narrative and then build the conversation from there.

The real challenge on social is the amount of noise. It's increasingly hard to get a message out there and to get real lift off unless you're paying for it, using a celebrity or getting a major news outlet to share it on your behalf. There's this almost untapped channel at the moment which is staff. But it needs to be a genuine authentic engagement. They need to believe that it's an important message to share, and then you have got that chance of creating some virality. Vodafone's got 100,000 staff; if we can persuade a large majority to share a particular message then we can certainly get some interest trending.

It depends on the message, and the individual [employee]. They need to share it because they want to share it, not because this is the corporate message you've got

'You've got to really understand who has the expertise within the group'

to get out. It should be about people internally, who've got that same sense of cynicism that journalists have. These people won't just get fed the corporate line. If they're then sharing the message, then you think *Perhaps there's something behind this. Perhaps the company really genuinely believes in that*. I think that's a helpful thing.

An awful lot of emphasis is given to getting 500 'likes' from people, each of whom have got about 23 followers, and there's a certain amount of *So what?* about that. If the *Daily Mail* or *Metro* or *The Times* pick up your story, you can get a huge number of shares and awareness off the back of that so there's still an incredibly important role for traditional media relations.

More departments within Vodafone want to use social and the challenge for us is putting a governance process around that. So more people are doing it, but not necessarily in the comms department. Do we have experts in this stuff? Yes, some people are good at writing, some people aren't; you've got to really understand who has got the expertise within the group. What we tend to do is just crowdsource it. We talk about stuff, we're a constantly communicating group in the external affairs team and we'll look at a particular campaign and we'll all throw ideas in and then we'll work together on an output, rather than having someone that's dedicated to a particular channel.



'It goes down to how brands are adding value to their online audience'

SAMA AL-NAIB, SENIOR DIGITAL AND SOCIAL STRATEGIST, COHN&WOLFE

What's important to note is that people are consuming content very differently now and they're expecting very different things from social media. Before it was purely a social tool; now they're turning to it as a source of news and insight, so there's talk about keeping content contextually relevant and timely, which is where these platforms are moving towards. Not only are audiences consuming content differently, people consume content differently across each platform, so they are expecting something very different from, say, Facebook versus Snapchat or LinkedIn. There is a benefit to brands. They can use that to their advantage by segmenting consumer groups and engaging very differently on LinkedIn than they would on Snapchat or Facebook.



Sama Al-Naib

It goes back to thinking about where your audience is and also what you are looking to achieve. Is this an awareness-raising campaign or are you looking for a highly engaged discussion? If you're looking for truly engaged industry or niche-specific discussions, then maybe a LinkedIn showcase page is the best way to do that. LinkedIn is actually a really good way of segmenting your users because if you activate showcase pages or group pages, then you can even further segment based on product or solutions or different audience groups. It's a great advantage that brands can use in terms of how they use this omni-channel approach to communication online.

There are lots of really good B2B examples of Instagram activity, such as [shipping company] Maersk and GE. GE posts pictures of turbines and factories in very visually compelling ways. Maersk posts really amazing maritime pictures of shipping containers. They're getting amazing engagement. It's just about engaging with different people in different ways.

It is very easy to use Twitter as a very corporate and dry platform, but some brands

are using it very interestingly. GE now sometimes uses emojis to communicate, so basically speaking the audience's language. And they're doing a really great thing with an influencer called Bill Nye the Science Guy. He's a really quirky scientist and expert, with his own really strong influential social presence, but it's a really innovative partnership because it's cross-collaboration and GE is getting that cross-reference of audience. He produces quirky insightful and educational videos in collaboration with GE. It goes down to how brands are adding value to their online audience. Is it insightful? Is it educational? Is it humorous?

It's good to test different types of content. It takes the guesswork out of trying to understand what resonates with your audience. Put out feelers. If an animated infographic is the best way and that's what they're responding to, then build on that. Maersk send out surveys regularly asking *How do you want to hear from us?* They found that their customers wanted to hear from them via LinkedIn. They have very highly engaged industry-specific conversations that are happening there.

Pure text-based tweets and posts are a thing of the past; they don't even work anymore. It's an added challenge in terms of getting that visual right.

Humanise the brand so it's not just numbers. Alongside its corporate channels, Experian has another dedicated channel to someone whose name is James. He's an average fellow, but he's an expert credit rating specialist. He has a Twitter handle, @AskJames, and he speaks to everyone who asks him any questions related to credit ratings. James doesn't exclusively tweet about credit ratings. He tweets about his daily life too. It's quite bold and obviously opens him up to the firing line, because you're actually treating it as a separate channel. 