

Using Hootsuite to Analyze

Holland Board of Public Works Social Media Use

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Introduction

Holland Board of Public Works (HBPW) is a municipal utility that provides the greater Holland, Michigan area with electric, water, wastewater, and broadband services. The company uses social media to educate and engage with customers about the value HBPW brings to the community. HBPW has a communications plan that is tied to the strategic priorities of the organization. The 2020 Strategic Plan states “Communication, Education, and Branding initiate and embraces proactive messaging and marketing. An elevated marketing function focusing on our value proposition to our customers and the community will be implemented. More communication and branding will position us to “Our truth.” Other activities include raising literacy across all utilities and maximizing the use of various social media channels” (*Strategic Plan, 2020*).

Social Media Management

HBPW engages on a variety of social media platforms targeted to reach the broader breath of its audiences. The channels used are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Nextdoor (Nextdoor is not available on Hootsuite). Managing multiple social media platforms individually is challenging, so HBPW uses Hootsuite to streamline its social media processes. Hootsuite is beneficial in all stages of the process, including social listening, posting and analytics. Within Hootsuite, HBPW uses different dashboards to monitor activity: streams, inbox, and analytics.

Streams

Streams are useful for seeing a lot of information in one place. HBPW organizes streams by posts, activities and mentions, scheduled posts, hashtags, and competitors. From the posts stream, it is easy to see current activity and performance of recent posts. Activities and mentions show audience interactions on HBPW's content as well as user generated content that mentions the organization. Scheduled posts are a straightforward way to see what content is planned and ready to post. Hashtags are useful for keeping up with industry trends and news. HBPW follows topics of interest like #publicpower and 'fiber + broadband,' that are beneficial for understanding what other people say about such topics that are important to the organization. Tracking competitors helps inform HBPW about hot topics that might be important to cover.

Posts

The posting tool in Hootsuite allows HBPW to set up campaigns that can be posted immediately or scheduled in advance on one or more platform at a time. Accessing all the platforms in one place saves a lot of time. Time is of the essence, especially since HBPW's communications department consists of only one person.

Inbox

Hootsuite's inbox is a valuable tool for monitoring comments and messages that come from customers through social media. The inbox is a catch-all place that makes social listening and responding quite simple.

Analytics

HBPW analyzes the monthly results of its communications campaigns. Tracked measures include audience growth, reach, engagement, engagement rate, average engagement rate, each platform's share of reach. HBPW also looks at which post performs the best and worst.

Hootsuite Analytics is a valuable tool that offers a one stop shop for most of this information.

HBPW refers to Hootsuite Analytics for audience size, engagement on each platform, and the performance of posts. HBPW relies on the insights available within the individual platforms to determine reach.

Hootsuite lacks the ability to display a comprehensive dataset that compares the monthly results across all platforms. HBPW tracks metrics in a spreadsheet to resolve this gap. A comprehensive analysis of the data is necessary to inform performance of the communications plan over time. Without any comparison, it would be hard to know what metrics indicated positive or negative performance. Figure 1 shows how HBPW tracks metrics.

The analytics program was implemented in December of 2020. Engagement goals were set based on research of each platform's average, then doubled, because HBPW strives to be better than average. After a period of six full months, those goals will be reevaluated to reflect HBPW's actual performance.

Figure 1: Tracking Metrics

Dec-20							
Platform	Audience	Reach	Engagement	Engagement Rate	Average	Goal	Share of Reach
Facebook	1175	1416	84	6%	6%	4%	14%
Twitter	824	3251	64	1.969%	1.97%	1%	33%
Instagram	783	161	12	7.45%	7.45%	2%	2%
Linked In	698	825	59	7.15%	7.15%	1%	8%
Nextdoor	9746	4170	64	1.53%	1.53%	2%	42%
TOTAL	13226	9823	283	2.88%	3%	2%	100%

Jan-21							
Platform	Audience	Reach	Engagement	Engagement Rate	Average	Goal	Share of Reach
Facebook	1179	2279	326	14%	10%	4%	23%
Twitter	817	3770	104	2.759%	2%	1%	38%
Instagram	796	292	20	6.85%	7%	2%	3%
Linked In	704	2803	229	8.17%	8%	1%	28%
Nextdoor	10216	836	43	5.14%	3%	2%	8%
TOTAL	13712	9980	722	7%	6%	2%	100%

Feb-21							
Platform	Audience	Reach	Engagement	Engagement Rate	Average	Goal	Share of Reach
Facebook	1178	3589	414	12%	11%	4%	36%
Twitter	818	4363	72	1.650%	2%	1%	43%
Instagram	804	361	84	23.27%	13%	2%	4%
Linked In	726	182	17	9.34%	8%	1%	2%
Nextdoor	10279	1596	3	0.19%	2%	2%	16%
TOTAL	13805	10091	590	6%	7%	2%	100%

Holland Board of Public Works, Metrics Tracking Spreadsheet

Benefits to HBPW as an Advertiser

Hootsuite is beneficial to HBPW as an advertiser in a multitude of ways. “It helps you ascertain what kind of content is working for you, increase the reach of your posts, improve the effectiveness of your ads, and get your whole social media team working in tandem” (Lee, 2020). Hootsuite saves time, which is in short supply, considering that HBPW’s communications department is run by one person. Being able to create, post, and schedule campaigns for most of HBPW’s social media sites in one place offers a huge time savings. Having an all-

encompassing analytics dashboard for four out of five social media networks utilized by HBPW is also a wonderful time-saver.

Hootsuite makes it possible to analyze individual campaign performance while comparing the various campaigns. Viewing an ordered list of campaigns makes it easy to identify which ones were the most engaging. From there, you can analyze why a campaign performed well or poorly. The information is organized in a way that can be easily digested, making it possible to draw conclusions about each campaign.

Audience data is beneficial because a growing audience shows that people are interested in what HBPW has to say. Engagement data serves the purpose of showing whether the content was digested by the audience.

References

Holland Board of Public Works. (2020). *Strategic Plan 2020*.

<https://hollandbpw.com/en/strategic-plan>

Lee, K. (2020, June 30). *27 Free and Paid Social Media Analytics for Marketers*. Buffer Library.

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