Communications/Social Media

Introduction

As part of the Office for Sustainability (OfS) front desk team, my responsibilities during the Fall 2015 semester included training new front desk staff on administrative receptionist duties, assisting the Administrative Assistant with projects, administration of the OfS email marketing program Constant Contact and the main focus of my project, which is using and coordinating social media platforms to further OfS programs and initiatives.

The purpose of social media communications is to tell a story with a few sentences, and an image, in order to gain and interest people in what we do. Telling the story of what the OfS does, who we are, describing projects, and inviting others to events we produce, can be a challenge. We write social media posts for a variety of audiences and tailor messages accordingly. The 3 main sources of social media that we use are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Social media, due to the increase in use of technologies globally, is now one of the main ways to communicate, market to people, and spread ideas and information. Communicating with others, especially those who do not yet have an understanding of sustainability, is imperative to the success of the OfS, and its’ projects. In order to share our ideas with others, and get others involved in what we do, we use social media regularly.

Working with the EcoMug participant program is large source of community outreach for the OfS. Each year new sponsors and participants are sought out and recruited to support the program with either financial support (via sponsorship) or in-kind support (via partnership). EcoMug partners offer discounts or special items to customers who bring their EcoMug with them to their business, and in turn, the OfS will promote/market for them by posting on their behalf via social media and our website. As one of my projects, in order to maintain this business relationship, I would visit each of these participants, speak with people who work at the business, and take photos, with the last step being to post about their business on social media.

Methods and Results/Graphics, Charts, and Pictures

The tools utilized to organize social media are, the OfS share drive, where we would post documents for each of the front desk staff, a social media private calendar on Webmail, where we made a schedule of what to post on social media on which day, and the OfS camera. To keep organized, we planned out what we would post about on social media, either weekly or monthly. We used Facebook as our main source of posting our announcements because we get the most
reach, and then would base Twitter and Instagram from Facebook content. To measure our reach, we used Facebook analytics and made graphs on Excel. Below is a graph of the average reach of people, for specific types of posts.

### Average Reach by Post Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Type</th>
<th>Reach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RECOG</td>
<td>642.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVOLVE</td>
<td>667.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXTERNAL</td>
<td>467.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVENT</td>
<td>229.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The graph to the left shows what types of posts get the most reach. As you can see, recognition and involvement posts get the most recognition, whereas external and event information get less recognition, with events being the least.

Instagram and Facebook were used as a main source for posting pictures of participants and events, while Twitter was used for quick announcements, or awards. Twitter was very effective in connecting with other on-campus departments, and sustainability related and non-sustainability related businesses. Because of “re-tweets” on Twitter, we can connect with more people than just those who follow us, or those whom we follow. Below, are pictures from Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook showing how effective our results from our social media are in connecting with people, and how Twitter connects us with other departments.

To the left, is an example of an OfS post that got picked up by the WMU Health Center page, which in turn means more people have access to our post than just those who follow us.
Illustrated to the left, is an Instagram post advertising for one of our EcoMug participants that received 25 likes, office Instagram page.

To the left, is a Facebook post of an award office staff won, that received 81 likes, and reached almost 900 people, an extremely large outreach for our office.
The benefits, and results of the EcoMug participant program are two-fold. The program allows the OfS to build relationships in the community, increasing awareness of its’ brand and projects, while it gets participants involved with WMU, allows them to obtain more student customers due to discounts through the program, and lastly a social media post from the OfS that advertises for them.

Commentary, Reflection and Next Steps

Social media has shown to be a successful way of communicating our message, projects, and events to others. Although it has shown to be effective, there are still unanswered questions about what percent of people attend our events, or get involved in our office, due to social media. To measure social media effectiveness, I would like to gather data via a survey of people who get involved in our office, asking how they heard about us. Also in the future, I would like the OfS to be more involved in writing about the projects we do here, for example: an OfS newsletter, or through articles that we write about staff projects. For next semester, the front desk team has a plan and goal to create an orientation presentation for new staff members. This presentation will be given to each new staff member, and will hopefully be an effective way of introducing new staff members to what each individual works on at the OfS, and an overview of how we conduct what we do.