

**A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION
OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SFU BUSINESS**

by

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Abstract

Universities and other educational institutions are increasingly looking to leverage the power of social media to recruit new student, communicate with student, improve student services and collect feedback. Understanding social media is an important first step to ensure a successful implementation of social media as a communication strategy. This paper introduces social media and provides social media implementation strategies for SFU Business by focusing on the communication objectives of the business school and the needs of its potential audiences. The analysis identifies that social media technologies are suitable to achieve the School's objectives and concludes that most of its audience are ready to accept social media as a communication platform. The paper recommends the School to proceed by presenting strategies to implement different social media platforms base on the identified objectives.

Keywords: Social Media; Social Network; Web 2.0; Online Networking on Campus; Social Media Implementation; Internet Marketing

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Glossary

Audiences

Blog An online journal that is updated on a regular basis. Entries usually appear in reverse chronological order

Blogger Blogger is the author of a blog

Feed A Web feed or RSS feed is a format that provides users with frequently updated content. Content distributors syndicate a Web feed, enabling users to subscribe to a site's latest content

Followers Followers are users who subscribe to receive text messages from social media platforms

Hashtag A community-driven convention for adding context to Twitter messages. It is used to organize and discover related posts. Example of a hashtag is #vancouver

Microblogging The act of broadcasting short messages on a social media platform. The most popular microblogging platform is Twitter

RSS RSS is the short form of Really Simple Syndication. It is the web standard for delivery of content. It enable users to subscribe and receive update on a site's latest content

Social Media Internet based tools that allow end-users to engage in conversations and to share and generate content

SEO SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization. It is the process of optimization the content of a website to give it the best chance to appear top in search engine rankings. It involve identify and embedding keywords to the title and content

Tags Tags are keywords that are added to blog posts to assist users finding related topics and content

Tweets Tweets are postings on Twitter. Each message is limited to 140 characters

RT RT stands for retweet. It is the act of forwarding a tweet that you have received to your followers

Web 2.0

Interactive web applications that focus on sharing of information and user generated content

1: Introduction

The explosion of new online technologies and online businesses has changed the relationship between content providers and their audiences. Audiences not only consume content, they can also participate in the content creation process. This phenomenon is called the “Web 2.0”.

Social media are online communities that build on the idea of “Web 2.0”. The popularity of social media means that it is now necessary for many businesses and organizations to create presences in these online communities to communicate with their customers. This is especially true for educational institutions, because most of their audiences rely heavily on social media and the Internet. It is very important for them to recognize the value of employing these communication tools to listen and talk to their potential students, current students and alumni.

Social media has transformed the way people communicate and collaborate, and the way they create and consume content. This project aims to explore the immense potential of these social media technologies and provide SFU Business multiple ways to deploy these technologies more effectively. For instance, through social media, SFU Business can recruit potential students, listen and communicate with current students, and maintain and extend the relationship with alumni.

This project first studies the importance of social media for education institutions and introduces a number of different social media platforms and technologies. After that, it provides an analysis of SFU Business and its audiences and assesses the communication needs of the business school. This project concludes with strategies that SFU Business can employ to use as a communication platform and provides ways to measure the effectiveness of the strategies.

2: Overview of Social Media

Social media has become increasingly popular within the student demographic. It is important for education institutions to understand social media and to recognize the benefits of employing social media as a communication tool.

This chapter provides definitions, an overview and the history of social media, and illustrates the importance of these communication technologies for post-secondary institutions. After that, it introduces the different categories of social media that are relevant to SFU Business and provides an overview, as well as the pros and cons of platforms and technologies for each social media category.

2.1 What is Social Media?

Until recently, the term “media” usually refers to newspaper, television or radio as an instrument of communication. The advance of technology and the development of online communities have lowered the cost of entry for the media. Distributing content and information is something that everybody can afford to do and can be done easily. A new media category has emerged that employs a social instrument of communication, called social media. In short, social media are technologies that facilitate dialogue among individuals and groups. They are technologies that allow participants to publish content easily, engage in conversations and connect with others with similar interest.

2.1.1 Participants are Content Creators

“Technology is shifting the power away from the editors, the publishers, the establishments, the media elite. Now it’s the people who are in control.”(Wired Magazine, 2006) Social media outlets are not the creator of content -- audiences create content. Social media outlets merely provide software platforms and services using the latest technologies to help users easily distribute information. These services provide ways for users to interact and participate in conversations without knowing how to code a website. Through connectedness and ease of use, community is created and information is distributed.

2.1.2 A Platform for Dialogue, not Monologue

While traditional media usually only provide one-way communication to its audience, social media support two-way communication that is so flexible that the roles of author and audience shifts frequently. For example, a person posts an article on a social media platform. At the moment, the person is the author because he or she is presenting an idea. However, because of the connectedness and the ease of use of the social media community, other members of the community can quickly link and reply to that article with new information, ideas or comments. Since content is linked in the social media community, the original author now becomes an audience of the added information and idea.

2.1.3 Ability to Connect and Collaborate

Technologies in social media allow people to connect with each other which might otherwise be impossible because of the lack of personal network connection or the separation of physical location. Most social media platforms allow users to present their interests to other users. Base on common interests, users who do not already know each other can start to connect virtually to engage in conversations, comment on each other's work, or collaborate on projects.

An example is the photo-sharing platform known as Flickr. Photographers from around the world post photos on Flickr so other photographers can comment and critique on their work. They can also join common interest groups that talk about specific techniques, or even participate in projects to gather photos from all over the world on a certain subject.

2.1.4 History of Social Media

Social media is not entirely new, but has only gained popularity as technology advanced to a point that it is very easy for anybody to use it. The first social media platforms started in the early 1980's. They were the Bulletin Board Systems (BBS), a standalone server that computer users could connect to, via a telephone modem one at a time, to post and review messages. They were slow and required special equipment and technical knowledge to setup and connect, but it was still a good way to connect and share information with people from every corner of the earth. It was especially popular for university scholars to share information with their peers.

With the availability of the Internet in the late 1990's, home users could finally be connected. Online forums and Usenet allowed Internet users to participate in common discussions. However, the number of users connected to the Internet at that time was very limited, and topics were limited. The early 2000's saw the introduction of social networking sites where

users could create profiles and connect with friends. They gained popularity and momentum because of the ease of use and the ability to engage in a more personal conversation with the author. As mobile Internet became widely available and affordable, social media became more popular and useful as users could connect from anywhere and contribute to the social media community in real time.

2.2 Different Types of Social Media Platforms

There are many different types of social media platforms available on the Internet. The term “social media” can cover a wide range of technologies and communities. Although social media can come in many different forms, they are identified as services, which allow users to interact and to collaborate with another user for information sharing purposes.

The following sections take a close look at four types of social media, which are the most relevant to educational institutions in general. They include blogs, micro-blogs, social networks and professional networks. The sections below provide overviews of the media, explain the benefits to individual users and organizations, and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each.

2.2.1 Blog

Blogs are online journals published by a single person or a small group of authors. Bloggers, those who write blogs, are free to pick any topic they want to focus on and share their views to their audience. Topics of blogs vary greatly from one blogger to another. They can range from personal blogs to blogs that document the latest fashion trends in New York. Companies can also write blogs to promote new products, to increase brand awareness, or to offer customer support.

2.2.1.1 Benefits of Blogging

Bloggging provides a number of benefits to individuals and organizations. First of all, it is easy to setup a blog. Bloggers can sign up for free blogging services like Google Blogger or WordPress.com. These blogging platforms provide easy to use interface for users with no previous experience in online programming. Ease of use and low barrier of entry make it simple and affordable for any individuals or organizations to broadcast their messages to the Internet.

Secondly, blogs connect authors and their audiences by allowing audiences to comment on articles. Commenting is a key functionality of a blog. It allows readers to present their point of

view on the topic and potentially add vital information or updated information to a posted article. The comment section enables topic-specified conversation, between the blogger and the readers and among readers.

Thirdly, links embedded within blog articles can provide readers with more information about a keyword, event or topic. Because blogs are written to be published on the Internet, links can be added within the article to connect readers who wish to learn more about certain topics or to link to another article or website. This functionality allows bloggers to share their work and to direct visitors across sites. Moreover, many blogging platforms allow authors, who inserted links in their article, to provide automatic “trackback” feedback to notify the author of the original article that his or her article has been linked on another site. Trackback is an acknowledgment of another’s work. It is not only an indication of the worthiness of the work of the original author, but also a way for bloggers to connect and collaborate.

Fourthly, blogs are searchable through search engines like Google and Yahoo. Anyone interested in a topic can conduct a search to look for a blog that meet his or her search criteria. This brings in a variety of visitors to the blog far beyond the ties of the author or their connections who would spread the blog location virally to their connections. Potential audience of a blog can virtually be everybody using the Internet.

Lastly, blogs are highly customizable. Unlike other social media platforms, users can apply their own design and layout to customize their blogs. Customizable themes and templates are available for bloggers to download and apply to their blogs. Bloggers with technical expertise can also create their very own design by modifying the source code. The availability for customization is extremely valuable for organizations because they can apply their corporate branding and colours to their blogs. This has enhanced the adoption of blogs at the corporate level.

2.2.1.2 Blogging at the Corporate Level

Blogging allows Internet users to easily participate in sharing information and opinions while providing a platform to comment on each other’s idea, and create a community by collaborating. Companies have realized the importance of blogs as a vehicle to connect to their customers. For example, Sun Microsystems posts prototypes of software user-interface on their corporate blog to reach out to its customers by collecting responses in the comment section (Sun Microsystem, 2009). This allows the company to reduce development cost by effectively testing an idea before the product is finalized. Dell used their corporate blog to support their customers

during their battery recall incident (Dell Computers, 2006). The company posted important information on their corporate blog to provide safety instructions and directions on how to have the battery replaced. Their action allowed customers to easily locate the support information, which improved customer satisfaction and reduced the number of calls to the telephone support hotline (Li & Bernoff, 2008).

2.2.1.3 Problems with Blogs

Although blogs are simply an easy way to publish articles, there are some problems associated with them. First of all, with over 133 million blogs on the Internet with a tremendous variety of content and topics (Singer, 2009), it is difficult for Internet users to find the right blog to read. Bloggers need to optimize their blogs for search engines so that it is more likely to reach their potential target readers. They also need to collaborate with other bloggers to exchange links between blogs. Secondly, it can be hard work to come up with new and interesting content. Many blogs die a slow death due to inactivity or boredom. Bloggers often run out of ideas, so they need to listen to readers' comment to identify what kinds of content and style element are more likely to be read. Outdated blogs that show inactivity send a negative message that the author or the organization does not have the interest or competence to keep the blog up-to-date or take it down.

Blogging can be fun for individuals and useful for organizations, but it takes a lot of time and effort. For those who do not want to spend too much time designing and writing a blog, micro-blogs might be a better fit.

2.2.2 Micro-blogs

Micro-blogging is the latest addition to the social media family by combining elements of blogs with elements of mobile instant messages. A micro-blog differs from a traditional blog because the length of each message is shorter, often limited to less than 140 characters. The idea is to encourage people to blog more often and more quickly, and to allow users to send and receive messages on portable devices like cellular phones.

2.2.2.1 Benefits of Micro-blogs

These messages, similar to the status update function on social and professional networks, is mainly about what one is doing, reading, writing, or seeing, etc. It is usually open and informal as with social networks; it encourages interaction between users. Users can post

questions to the whole micro-blogging community and can expect multiple answers within seconds.

The advantage of short messages is to provide users the ability to broadcast messages in real time about what is happening around them. Users no longer need to wait until they have access to a computer to start typing out what happened. Messages can be sent instantaneously using a cellular phone or smart phones as the event rolls out. For example, during the Winter Olympic in Vancouver, micro-blog users used their mobile phones to update the crowd on the wait time of the pavilions (Twitter, 2010).

The leader of the micro-blogging platform is unquestionably Twitter. The next section provides a brief overview of this micro-blogging service.

2.2.2.2 Overview of Twitter

Twitter is a free service that allows users to “tweet” about “what they are doing right now” in 140 characters or less (Twitter, 2010). It was intentionally designed for users to provide quick status updates to their friends. However, shortly after the debut of this micro-blogging service, users discovered many new ways to use it. Some researchers are even deeming Twitter the next breaking news platform (Catone, 2009) because of its speed, openness, ease of use and two-way communication capability.

It is easy to setup a Twitter account. Unlike social networks, users do not need to build or provide a full profile of their information. Twitter only asks for their name and email address. Users can upload a profile photo to identify themselves and write a short bio description in less than 160 characters. After they have setup their account, they can start “following” other users to receive updates from them. When users send out messages, they are often referred to as “tweeting”.

Tweets are open to all users on the network. Other than following a group of users to receive their tweets, users can also search for tweets by typing in keywords or “hashtags”. Hashtag is similar to news feed, a group of tweets around a certain topic. One can create a hashtag by putting a pound sign “#” in front of a word. It makes the tweet more searchable and helps others to keep track of the popular topics on the network. For example, a twitter user can easily search on all recent tweets on the latest election by searching under “#election.” As another example, students can read news articles that are related to their class by following one of the many hashtags available on Twitter.

Unlike other social media platforms, Twitter is a free and open system. At the time of this research Twitter does not display advertisements on their site and it also allows developers to build customized applications to interact with the network. The openness of the platform made it possible to rapidly expand the service by sourcing software development expertise to develop software for different mobile devices and desktop operating systems. Users do not need to log on to the Twitter website to send and receive message.

2.2.2.3 Real-World use of Micro-blogs

Micro-blogging is very popular among freelancers and people who work from home (Mayfield, 2008). It provides a way for them to ask quick questions and network with their peers while working alone. Businesses use micro-blogs to communicate with their customers by running contests, highlighting products and providing customer support, while professionals use micro-blogs to share articles and thoughts to their peers.

Educational institutions also can employ micro-blogs (JISC, 2009). Researchers use micro-blogs to not only connect with other researchers around the world, but also to engage in debates and link to journal articles that are of interest to them. Administrators can use micro-blogs to connect to their colleagues, while instructors employ micro-blogs as a tool to facilitate questions during lecture. Instructors can use Twitter to make announcements to the class, create a poll, share interesting websites, or facilitate a brainstorm session.

Micro-blogs also make a significant impact on conferences and events. Audiences can use micro-blogs to summarize, in real time, what is going on at the stage to others who cannot attend in person. They also use micro-blogs to add their own thoughts or ask further questions to create conversations both on the stage and off the stage.

2.2.2.4 Problems with Micro-blogs

Micro-blogs allow users to send simple messages quickly and easily, but there are flaws with this new technology. First of all, because of the openness of the service, there is no regulation on what one can tweet about. The usefulness of content on the network varies greatly. While some users are tweeting about breaking news or brilliant ideas, others are just tweeting about their daily routines. Moreover, users are limited to 140 characters. While this limits the complexity of the communication, users have to be creative and simplify their ideas into 140 characters; this forces the authors to write concise messages with good choice of words.

2.2.3 Social Networks

Everybody has their own network of personal connections, and they utilize their personal network to meet new people, to get answers to their problems or to find a job. The problem with real-world connections is that they are mostly hidden; that is, one cannot physically see that a friend actually knows the person you are looking for. Even if one has a potentially huge personal network, it is only as useful as those connections that he or she can see or know about. Social networks are websites that connect real-world friends in the virtual community by mapping out personal network connections and helping users to seek connections that are hidden in the real world (CommonCraft.com, 2007).

Social networking platforms allow users to join the virtual community by constructing a profile. After creating the profile, users create a personal network that consists of other users in the virtual community. Using the social networking platform, users can search for and be friends with other users with similar interests. They can join virtual groups that can potentially pursue real-world activities, communicate with other users, and invite real-world friends to join the virtual community.

Social networks allow people to connect and collaborate even though they are geographically separated. They allow users to exchange messages, photos and videos, play games, post updates to keep others informed, invite others to events, and collaborate with others in groups.

Social networks rely on the concept of “degrees of separation”. Users of the network are able to connect with their friends, but also meet and connect with other people your friends know. This concept allows users to rapidly expand their network and increase their trust and confidence in relationship building. Moreover, by presenting an authentic self-profile, the level of trusts increases, making it easier for users to create a firm connection to collaborate as a community.

2.2.3.1 History of Social Networks

The first popular platform under the social networking concept was Classmates.com. It started in 1995 and focused on connecting users who attended the same school. After that, SixDegrees.com started in 1997 and it mainly focused on finding indirect links among people. However, these early social network emphasized mainly the connection between people but lacked the ability to allow users to collaborate. It was not until 2002 when Friendster allowed users to connect to a wider network to create groups and to collaborate on activities. Facebook

and MySpace were introduced a year later with the latest technology to increase usability and interactivity, and that was when social network reached the mass-market. Of the two, Facebook is the most popular to users of post secondary institutions.

2.2.3.2 Overview of Facebook

With more than 400 million active users, Facebook is the most popular social network in the world (Facebook, 2010). Facebook allows users to “keep up with friends, upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos, and learn more about the people they meet” (Facebook, 2010). This social network revolutionized how people keep in touch over the Internet. Friends and family can now connect to each other virtually to play games, view photos, or generally update each other on their own daily activities (Whelan, 2008).

As of September 2006, instead of limiting registration to users with a valid university or college email address, Facebook opened registration to the public (TechCrunch, 2006). Any Internet user can register on Facebook by providing information necessary to start a profile. After they have signed up for an account, they have an option to join a “network”. The network can be their city, educational institution, or place of employment. Users can adjust their privacy setting to allow any person or specific group or individuals to view their profiles. To connect with friends, users would submit a “friend request” to the other party. After their friends confirm the relationship, they are connected. Once friends are connected on Facebook, they can exchange messages, share photos and videos, organize events, update each other on their activities, and even play online games together.

One of the ways Facebook connects users together is to encourage them to join “groups”. Groups are mostly interest groups set up by different users, topics range from dog lovers groups to groups that discuss a particular political point of view. Users can freely create groups and other users, not necessary “friends”, can freely join and leave groups. Groups allow users with the same interest to communicate with each other, thereby creating sub-communities within the social network. Many grassroots protests have been planned and organized on Facebook (Canwest News Service, 2010), so it is important for organizations to monitor certain Facebook groups to listen to what their customers are talking about their products or brand.

Corporations, companies and educational institutions can also utilize Facebook to communicate with their customers and stakeholders. Companies can create a Facebook “page” which represents the company or the product’s presence on the social network. Facebook users can choose to “like” the company or product in order to subscribe to the updates by the company.

When users “like” a company or product, a newsfeed could also be posted to their friends to notify them about the users’ preference. Therefore, a corporate Facebook page is an effective way to increase product awareness and is an important feature for companies to expand their brand recognition through viral marketing. For example, Ernst & Young created a Facebook page to target recent college graduates as a recruitment tool. The company uses the page to introduce the company’s mission and values to their fans and to answer questions about employment at the company (Ernst & Young, 2010). Gartner uses their Facebook page to promote their research findings and to promote their events and seminars.

2.2.3.3 Benefits of Social Networks

Social networks are currently the most popular social media and they have the broadest demographic. Although Facebook was originally designed for connecting university and college students, at the time of this research, the fastest growing demographic on Facebook was users over the age of 35 (Inside Facebook, 2009). Therefore, Facebook is not just for teens and young adults, but also other age groups. Companies utilizing social networks are not only able to reach across the demographic if they wish to, they can also engage different users by creating different messages to target a specific age group based on the availability of user profiles.

2.2.3.4 Problems with Social Networks

With the popularity of social network, the openness of the Internet, and the availability of authentic user profiles, issues of privacy becomes a concern. While social network service providers encourage users to provide as much information as possible, users and the media have raised the concern about the availability of information posing a threat to minors and attracting identity theft (Mills, 2010). Users have started to protest the privacy control within social networking platforms (Bobbie Johnson, 2009), and even threaten to leave the network (QuitFacebookDay.com, 2010). Social network platform providers have to respond by improving privacy controls and hiding personal information from search engines (Cnet News, 2010).

Moreover, the casual nature of social network might also be a concern for organizations. Social networks were designed as a virtual platform for friends to meet and chat. Conversation tends to be relaxed and sometime might be unprofessional. Companies who want to engage with customer on social network need to be aware of the tone of conversation.

While social networking services can be a useful tool for businesses to communicate with consumers, they are still focused on casual networking and conversations. Professional

networking services that are designed for businesses and professionals to interact with other businesses or other professionals alike will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.4 Professional Networks

A professional networking community works very similarly to the social networking model. Relationships and activities in professional networks are built around business relationships rather than social interaction. A professional networking service provides a platform for business professionals to network and connect with other professionals, seek for help on business problems, collaborate and work together to build the professional community.

2.2.4.1 Content on Professional Networks

The content and communication style within a professional network is very different from a social network. While users tend to be very concerned about providing information in their profile in a social network, professional network users usually like to present as much professional information as possible. They want themselves to be found and to let other users learn more about them in order to build business relationships. Content is mainly around career paths, business advice, and current business issues. Users do not share photos or plan leisure activities on the professional network.

2.2.4.2 History of Professional Networks

The first professional network, Ryze.com, was launched in 2001 (Nations, 2008). The site claimed to have “over 500,000 members in more than 200 countries” (Ryze Ltd., 2008), and features basic message boards and classified advertisement sections for job seekers and freelancers. Over the years, similar professional network link XING and CompanyLoop emerged (Nations, 2008), but the most prominent professional network is LinkedIn.

2.2.4.3 Overview and Benefits of LinkedIn

LinkedIn has over 70 million members in over 200 countries with a new member joining almost every second (LinkedIn, 2008). LinkedIn is a professional networking service that provides users the ability to network with trusted contacts that provide career benefits and become one of their most valuable assets (LinkedIn, 2008). The service was launched in 2003 and their mission is to “connect the world’s professionals to make them more productive and successful” (LinkedIn, 2008). LinkedIn believes that people pick up professional relationships as

they move around during work, therefore, professionals value a service for them to manage their professional relationships (Rajan, 2010).

Similar to Facebook, members sign up and create a profile on LinkedIn. The profile summarizes their professional working experience, expertise and education. After that, members are invited to connect with current and previous classmates and business colleagues to create a network of connections. Members are encouraged to provide status updates on what they are currently working on so that members can stay connected and informed.

Other than allowing members to build and maintain their network of professional contacts, LinkedIn provides a number of other free services that are extremely useful for businesses and professionals.

First of all, members can join and create LinkedIn Groups. In contrast to groups on social networks, groups on LinkedIn are business oriented. While groups can be alumni, industry or profession, some groups are very specialized, such as those dealing with a special domain of knowledge. These groups allow experts to connect and collaborate. They are also a popular place for recruiters to find their next candidate. Companies and recruiter can also post job vacancies to their network or search for potential candidates by doing a profile search. Because members usually include an extensive profile of their professional experience, recruiters find it easy to search for targeted candidates. In addition, recruiters can leverage their own network of connections to ask for referrals, while companies can create recruitment pages to promote their working environment and communicate with future employees.

Lastly, LinkedIn is seen as an effective platform for providing business support and maintaining business-to-business relationships. Arvind Rajan, VP of International at LinkedIn, says that 80-90% of all “Fortune 100” companies are on LinkedIn, and they are “ready to answer questions and are waiting to have a chance to talk to real customers” (Rajan, 2010). For example, when members experience technical difficulties with a product, they can use the search function on LinkedIn to easily send a message to the person responsible at the product vendor, without going through the delay of regular customer support. In another case, when potential customers are evaluating a product, they can connect with other users of the product and ask them questions, or even talk directly to the person who created the product, instead of talking to a sales person or through marketing. This is all made possible because of the trust built upon the availability of the professional profile.

2.2.4.4 Limitations of Professional Networks

Unlike social networks, professional networks like LinkedIn have a limited demographic, which is both an advantage and a disadvantage. Over 95% of the users on LinkedIn are over 25 years old (LinkedIn, 2008). For educational institutions, that means most of their potential and current undergraduate students are not on professional networks. Although Professional networks can be useful as a recruitment tool for the graduate programs, and as a communication and networking tool for alumni relations, they are not ideal for recruiting undergraduate students or communicating with current undergraduate students.

2.2.5 Summary of the Different Types of Social Media

After a detail discussion of the four different types of social media, this section summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of each platform and provides the ideal usage of each platform for educational institutions.

Table 2.1 Comparison of the Four Major Social Media Platforms

<i>Social Media Platform</i>	<i>Advantage</i>	<i>Disadvantage</i>	<i>Ideal for...</i>
Blogs	Two way conversations, searchable	Time Commitment	Research Articles, Press Releases
Micro-blogs	Mobile, Live, Easy to Use	Length Limitation	Student Support
Social Networks	Huge Demographical Reach	Privacy Concern, Casual Nature of Topics	Brand Awareness, Promotion
Professional Networks	Ability to Connect in a Professional Manner	Limited Demographical Reach	Career Centres, Alumni Relations, Graduate student recruitment

2.3 How is Social Media Different from Traditional Media as a Communication Tool?

The popularity and the connectedness of social media pose threats to the traditional media industry. This section explains why social media is a superior communication tool for businesses compared to traditional media like print, radio and television for achieving communication objectives.

2.3.1 Voice of Customer

Unlike traditional media, social media is a two-way communication channel. Instead of pushing messages through the channel, organizations have the opportunity to listen to the needs and concerns of their customers. In addition, instead of relying only on traditional marketing research, organizations can reach out directly to actual customers to collect authentic data.

2.3.2 Higher Credibility

Social media also allows companies to communicate to customers with higher credibility. Through the use of social networks, customers no longer need to send their questions through the corporate hierarchy, with the risk of having the message lost or distorted on its way. Instead of hearing only from the marketing department or the sales team, customers can talk directly to developers, engineers or executives through social networks like LinkedIn. With the availability of personal or professional profiles on social networks, customers place higher credibility on the personal message they receive from social networks than generic message they receive from traditional media. This is also the reason why companies, like BestBuy, go to great lengths to “humanize themselves on the social web” (Li & Bernoff, 2008) by encouraging employees to create a professional presence on micro-blogs and social networks like Twitter and LinkedIn.

Also, where there is two-way communication between companies and customers and others, product claims can be refuted by users or critics – forcing companies to “keep it real,” enhancing the credibility of corporate blog discussions.

2.3.3 Real Time Response

With social media, companies can also get feedback on their messages much quickly than traditional media. Brands can use social media to test the response of their new or unreleased product by publishing bits of information on Twitter or social networks to “create interest and anticipation” (Perel, 2009). By creating interest around a new product launch for example, people on social media will quickly start chatting about the unreleased product. These conversations then turn into valuable feedback that companies can use to alter their product to ensure a successful release. Because of the connectedness nature of social media, feedback can be collected considerably faster than traditional method of employing surveys or focus groups.

2.3.4 Low Barrier of Entry for Small Companies

Compared to advertising or press releases on traditional media, there is a relatively lower cost to communicate using social media. Most social media platforms are free to join and very easy to setup. Companies, instead, need to spend time and resources to build an audience base on social media. Nurturing well-established organization cultures to adopt social media can be challenging and resource intensive, because they are used to the existing business process and afraid to change, or have existing contracts with traditional media that limit their options for social media (Livingston, 2007). However, this can be a great opportunity for start-up companies with limited resources, because they are usually flexible to learn and ready to accept new ideas.

2.4 Relevance of Social Media for SFU Business

Social media are important strategic communication platforms for educational institutions like SFU Business. This section explains why SFU Business should consider adopting the use of social media as one of their communication tools by providing relevant demographic information on the use of social media by its stakeholders, key strengths of social media that can benefit the School, and key communication objectives that can be achieved through social media.

2.4.1 Demographics

Students, one of the primary target audiences of the School, are on social media publishing articles and sharing information with their peers. Undergraduate students at SFU are on average 21 years of age (Simon Fraser University, 2009). A survey by Forrester Research in 2009 found that 42% of the population between the ages of 18 to 24 in Canada contribute to online forums, post product reviews or comment on blogs; 31% develop and upload original content to social media platforms; and 85% read social media content (Forrester Research, 2009). In addition, the same research also shows that 22% of teenagers logon their social network accounts daily.

Social media provide an additional, and potentially essential communication channel for the School to listen to students' needs. Although students mainly use social media to engage in casual conversations, they also discuss topics around education. For example, potential students might chat among themselves about post secondary institutions they are applying to, and they might post questions about application processes on social networks. SFU Business can leverage its presence on social networks to not only provide official answers to these questions, but also make these answers available to other users on the social network and start engaging in a

relationship with the applicants. Moreover, current students might discuss the problems or concerns about certain academic programs on social media before elevating the discussion to administrators. SFU Business can listen to these channels to quickly address these problems and concerns before they begin to damage reputations of the School.

2.4.2 Key Strengths of Social Media

Social media is not just a marketing and communication channel. It can also be a student service, loyalty building, collaboration, networking, and thought-leadership channel.

SFU Business's presence on social networks can offer an additional channel to continue to provide outstanding academic advising and student services to current and potential students. One advantage of using social networks to provide student services is that students are already using the networks and they are very comfortable to speak up and ask questions in these channels. For those that do not like to ask questions, they also have the option to find the answers by searching and following discussions on the existing social networks.

The School can also leverage social media to build loyalty by creating a community and engaging current students and alumni. Social media allow students and alumni to connect to the School. SFU Business' presence on Facebook and LinkedIn allow student and alumni to "opt-in" to join the social media community. It is a non-intrusive way to allow students and alumni to connect to the School compared to sending email or directly mailing campaigns to try to connect students and alumni. In contrast to email campaigns or newsletters, social media is more than outgoing messages to keep in touch. SFU Business can use social media to provide its students and alumni with information they want by listening to their needs as they arise.

By creating communities on social networks, the School can allow stakeholders like potential students, current students, alumni and professors to network and collaborate. Potential students can connect with current students to ask for information about program requirements; students and professors can collaborate on research and projects. And, finally students can network with alumni for potential career opportunities.

Lastly, thought leaders at SFU Business can employ blogs as a platform to present their innovative ideas and research findings to the academic community and business community. These blogs can not only connect and engage researchers from around the world, but also provide useful business administration topics that can benefit the business community. Both of these can significantly increase the School's reputation and increase brand recognition.

2.4.3 Communication Objectives

Social media can allow SFU Business to enable or enhance many of its communication strategies to reach some objectives, which may be otherwise difficult to achieve. According to the book, *Groundswell* by Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff, social media allows businesses to pursue five major business communication objectives. They include the ability to listen to customers, talk to customers, energize customers, support customer and embrace customer (Li & Bernoff, 2008). These objectives allow the School to engage more with its stakeholders by improving its communication.

Social media allows the School to **listen** to its stakeholders by providing ways to monitor stakeholders' conversations instead of relying on slower methods like surveys or course evaluations. For example, SFU Business can monitor conversations on Twitter to read all messages that mention it, even if the tweets did not tagged with the school's name. This objective assists as marketing research to provide a better understanding of the needs of students.

The objective of **talking** to customers allows the School to participate in conversations between two students, for example, while stimulating the conversation with more information. This objective can be observed in the case where potential students are discussing SFU Business and the School joins the discussion by providing more information and inviting the potential students to attend information sessions or campus tours. This goal is similar to posting online banner advertisements, but in a more interactive and personal way.

Using social media to **energize** customers is an objective that can be achieved by using the existing "enthusiastic customers to help sell each other" (Li & Bernoff, 2008). For example, students in student clubs or students who have participated in competitions are usually those who are very familiar with the School and also enthusiastic about the school programs. SFU Business can employ those students as brand ambassadors and use social media to recruit students. These messages from the brand ambassadors will be seen as more authentic because they are associated with profiles that show that the ambassadors actually love SFU and enjoy participating in extra-curricular activities.

Supporting customers involves providing tools to help customers supporting each other. According to *Groundswell*, this objective is effective for "companies with significant support costs and customers who have a natural affinity for each other" (Li & Bernoff, 2008). The objective fits very well with the currently resource intensive academic advising service as seen in the School's undergraduate program. For example, the School can create a community on

existing social network where students can ask and answer questions regarding the program. Students who have been through the program or had the same question can help their subordinates, and they are more likely to provide a genuine answer with first hand experience.

According to *Groundswell*, the last objective of **embracing** customers is the most challenging objective. For SFU Business, embracing customers is like integrating students into the development of courses and programs. The goal is for the School to help students to have a better experience in the program by allowing them to work with each other to improve the program and courses. An example of this objective would be to invite students to itemize their ideas on a social media portal where other students can rate the items and prioritize them. This does not only allow students to participate by telling the School what they want, but also allow the School to direct resources to follow-up with items that matter the most. More importantly, the School can be confident that the new program or course they offer is exactly what the students are looking for.

The table below summarize the five communication objectives from *Groundswell*:

Table 2.2 The Five Communication Objectives

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Advantage</i>
Listening	Learn from what the audiences are saying	Allow information to flow back to the company
Talking	Participate in two-way conversation between the audiences	Allow advertisements to be more interactive and personal
Energizing	Encourage enthusiastic audiences to help recruit other people	Potential customers can read authentic messages from people outside the company
Supporting	Help audience to solve each other's problems	Reduce customer support cost
Embracing	Involve audience in the new product development process	Concentrate resources on the most important new product features; Minimize the market uncertainty on new product offerings

2.4.4 Summary

In summary, social media provide Internet users to share information and create a community by collaborating and working together. For businesses, social media provides them with the opportunity to reach out to their customers, listen to their needs and engage them to create a better product. Different types of social media services and platforms offer their own specialized features and functions. It is not recommended to start a social media campaign by

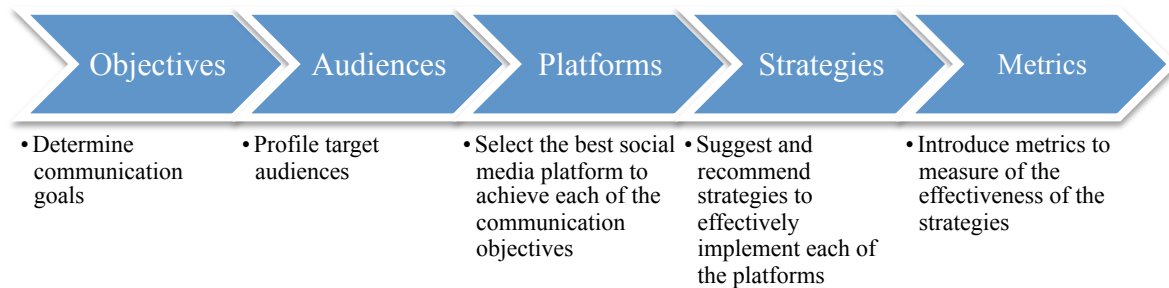
blindly picking a technology. The next chapter presents the methodology used in this research to come up with the best strategy for SFU Business to implement a communication strategy using social media.

3: Strategic Framework for Implementing Social Media

Implementing social media as a communication tool presents a potentially significant strategic opportunity for SFU Business. Since technology shifts frequently as new platforms and new products emerge, it is not ideal to blindly pick the most popular social media platform and start building a presence on it. A strategic framework is needed to assemble a master plan to pursue this opportunity by picking a platform that matches the needs and objectives to ensure measurable success.

The remainder of this paper will follow the steps in the framework to evaluate the strategic opportunity and to suggest and recommend ways for SFU Business to implement social media to its different groups of stakeholders. This framework is adopted from the four-step framework presented in the book, *Groundswell*, but is modified to fit SFU Business (Li & Bernoff, 2008). The following figure summarizes the steps of the strategic analysis.

Figure 3.1 Strategic Framework for Implementation of Social Media at SFU Business.



The first step in this strategic framework is to determine the **objectives** SFU Business wants to achieve with its communication strategy. The objectives can be based on marketing, providing advice, or improving internal communication. The school might have multiple objectives, because each functional group might have different goals in servicing their audiences.

After defining the communication objectives, the next step is to understand the **audiences** of the business school. This step in the strategic framework profiles the target audiences and assesses their preferred methods to engage with the business school.

Platforms are the social media technologies that SFU Business will select to satisfy each of the communication objectives. Appropriate technologies, as discussed in chapter 2, include blogs, micro-blogs, social network and professional network. The school might need to pick all of the platforms discussed, as each one of them can satisfy different objectives.

After matching objectives with platforms, the last step is to define the implementation **strategies** for each of the platforms. These strategies determine the work and resources required for successful implementation. Critical success factors for each of the strategies are also defined to ensure overall success. Lastly, case scenarios and examples are provided to illustrate the use of the technology after implementation.

Metrics are important to measure the overall success of the strategies. The last step in this framework introduces metrics that can be used to measure the effectiveness of social media.

4: SFU Business and Its Communication Objectives

The first step to implementing a robust social media strategy is to analyse the organization and determine its objectives. Chapter 2 provides reasons why SFU Business needs to have its presences in social media, and includes five major communication objectives that enable social media the ability to listen, to talk, to energize, to support and to embrace. This chapter builds on the idea presented in chapter 2 to develop a social media strategy by first providing an overview of the School and its various functional groups. After that, this chapter determines the different communication objectives for each functional groups base on the five major objectives listed above.

4.1 An Overview of SFU Business

As the Faculty of Business Administration at Simon Fraser University, SFU Business is a business school that prides itself as an innovator by offering “new programs and new structures that responds and adapts to changes in knowledge, the academic and the broader environment (SFU Business, 2009).” The Faculty’s ability to innovate was proved by offering the first Executive MBA program in Canada back in 1968, while providing flexibility to students by offering a Specialist MBA in 1984 and later adapting to the market conditions by offering one of the few Management of Technology MBA programs in 2000 and then the innovative generalist MBA program in 2007 that is designed for younger graduates with non-business undergraduate degrees and are in the early stages of their careers.

SFU Business offer programs and services, both online and in person, from three different campuses located throughout Metro Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. In addition to the popular undergraduate business program and graduate business programs, the School offers non-credit programs at the director, executive and management levels. It also operates research centres to offer innovative ideas to the business community, and provides extensive career services to SFU students.

4.2 Functional Groups at SFU Business and Their Communication Objectives

4.2.1 The Undergraduate Program

SFU Business offers a Bachelor of Business Administration program with eight different concentrations. Admission to this program is highly competitive due to high demand and limited enrolment spaces. Despite of that, the program serves over 3000 full time and part time students at a given time and it represents 10% of the total student population at the University (Simon Fraser University, 2009).

The undergraduate program offers many different services for students. The Academic Advising Office answers questions about academic options, assists students in course selections and supports those with academic difficulties. The Student Affairs Office provides support for case competitions, oversees the applications of scholarships and awards, and offers support and funding for student clubs. The International Exchange Office organizes international learning opportunities to better prepare students for the global business environment. Lastly, the Business Co-operative Education Office coordinates work terms for students and prepares them to have a head start on their careers.

Based on information collected from staff at the undergraduate program, they are facing two communication problems. First of all, the program needs to increase their capability to engage in two-way conversations in *talking* to potential students. Although the undergraduate program is currently not short of applicants, the program can benefit by recruiting more of the brightest students out of the applicant pool. The increase in two-way communication creates a closer relationship between applicants and the program. By providing a more personalized service, applicants would not only have all of the questions answered, but they will also feel that they are more welcomed. Secondly, the program needs to increase their capacity in *supporting* their current students. There is always a line up for academic advising at the undergraduate program office, and, sometimes, advisors are spending their precious time answering questions that can be found on the website. Creating a platform that allows students to support each other while moderated by advisors would be able to effectively lower the workload of the academic advising office. Moreover, the platform can allow *energized students* to share their experience and provide testimonials on international exchanges and case competitions. All of these activities would help to promote school activities, and attract new members.

In summary, social media can benefit the undergraduate program in 3 ways: 1) to talk and listen to potential students, 2) to support current students and 3) to energize students.

4.2.2 Graduate Programs

The market for graduate level business education is highly competitive. SFU Business currently provides four different Master programs and an online Diploma program to meet the needs of different students. The School recognizes the highly dynamic nature of the market and is always ready to adjust its program offerings in response to shifting markets. For example, in 2007, SFU Business replaced the Specialist MBA program with an innovative general MBA program to respond to the market demand for an intensive business program for younger students who do not have a business undergraduate degree (SFU Business, 2009).

Apart from responding to market needs, the School also excels in *listening* and *talking* to students and responding to the needs and suggestions provided by students. Because of the smaller student size at the graduate level, the School is able to create a closer relationship with students. Communication with students often happens in a first person, face-to-face level instead of through electronic means. Although face-to-face communication is more effective than communication assisted by social media, SFU Business still can explore different objectives to further enhance its recognition in the competitive marketplace.

The first objective is to *energize* students by encouraging current students to promote the programs within their personal network. This objective of using social media can be very valuable because viral or “word of mouth” marketing generates higher conversion rates in comparison to traditional advertising or even targeted communication campaigns (Lake, 2010).

The second communication objective for SFU Business is to *embrace* students in program development and course development through the use of social media. Although the School has already done an excellent job in face-to-face communication, it is not convenient to organize a group of students from their busy class schedule to listen to their suggestions on future development of the program. Social media can achieve this objective by providing a platform where students can share their suggestions at a time that is convenient for them.

4.2.3 Career Management Centre

The Career Management Centre (CMC) at SFU Business prepares students for the real business world by providing career coaching services, resume building workshops, mock

interviews and general career advising to all business students and alumni. In addition, the centre also connects employers with potential candidates for their companies.

Social media allows the Career Management Centre to closely *listen* to employers. By tapping into the world of social media, the centre can actively research and find out exactly what the different industries are looking for. Obtaining the information first hand, the centre can provide better coaching services to help students pick the right career path. Moreover, by listening to the social media community, the centre can also monitor what employers are saying about graduates from SFU Business.

Another communication objective is the ability to *talk* to students through social media. The Career Management Centre can broadcast career tips, job postings and industry overviews by means of social media. By encouraging student and staff to talk, social media can become another platform where they can have discussions and share their experiences. This is especially useful for part-time students who are not usually on campus during business hours and students on internships. In addition, since most students are already familiar with social media and many of them are frequent users, communication through these media lowers the cost of operation while increases its reach.

4.2.4 Learning Strategies Group

Apart from formal degrees and diploma programs, SFU Business also offers non-degree programs, executive education programs and customized business education programs through the Learning Strategies Group (LSG). LSG provides open enrolment programs for business executives, fully customized and tailored programs for corporations, and business consulting services for companies. The Group leverages SFU Business' expertise in academic research to provide business leaders with innovative business skills to solve the increasingly complicated problems in the business community.

The objectives for LSG are to leverage social media to *listen* to the business community, while working with clients through the objective of *embracing* customers. Similar to the Career Management Centre, LSG can use the tools provided by social media to monitor current topics to put the Group at the leading edge of the industry, while increasing its responsiveness towards market shifts to provide applicable courses and programs for its clients. At the same time, LSG can leverage the power of social networks to connect with current and past clients all over the world, and to work with them in program development, and to maintain their relationship for business development purposes.

4.2.5 Alumni Relations

With over 16,000 alumni to date, SFU Business values the ability to connect with alumni and leverage their personal and professional network to continue to develop and promote the Business School.

SFU Business can use social media as a tool to *listen* and to *talk* to alumni. Listening can be a part of brand monitoring that focuses on searching for testimonial and finding out student experience of the programs as well as brand perceptions that develop after graduation. Listening can also help the School to understand career progression of alumni and to identify which part of the program helped them the most. At the same time, talking is about tightening the connection with alumni. The School can leverage social media to provide alumni with latest news, research and business industry news and resources and invite them to alumni events. There is also value in connecting alumni with each other to enhance their personal and professional relationships. In addition, by *embracing* the audience, SFU Business can use social media to collect feedback from alumni to help develop new programs and courses. Alumni all over the world can use the social media platform to submit feedback at their own convenience.

4.2.6 Research Centres

SFU Business has four research centres that generate new knowledge and information related to the latest business practices. These centres focus on various business topics including change and performance measurement, corporate governance and risk management, asset and wealth management, and global workforce strategies. These centres are supported directly by the business community with the goal of assisting the business community through conducting and disseminating world-class research.

With that goal in mind, the primary objective for the research centres is to *talk* and to engage with the business community. Research centres can use social media to publish the latest research and commentaries to the world, and to engage in conversation on current topics that can aid researchers.

4.3 Summary of Communication Objectives

This table shows the summary of the different communication objectives from the different functional groups of SFU Business.

Table 4.1 Summary of Communication Objectives

<i>Objectives / Groups</i>	<i>Listening</i>	<i>Talking</i>	<i>Supporting</i>	<i>Energizing</i>	<i>Embracing</i>
Undergraduate Program		✓	✓	✓	
Graduate Programs				✓	✓
Career Management Centre	✓	✓			
Learning Strategies Group	✓				✓
Alumni Relations	✓	✓			✓
Research Centres		✓			

5: Audiences of SFU Business

Participation in social media varies for different groups of people. Groups are distinctive because of their differences in technological capabilities, demographic and peer influence. It is impossible to achieve the best result by treating everyone alike and deploying a single strategy. Therefore, it is important to identify and understand the different groups of stakeholders at SFU Business to determine their social media technological capabilities and understand what they are ready for. It is also important to determine how they spend their time, assess how they would prefer to engage with the School, and finally, develop targeted messages that connect with their needs.

Forrester Research determined a way to group individuals based on their involvement on social media activities by classifying them into six overlapping groups: creators, critics, collectors, joiners, spectators and nonparticipants (Forrester Research, 2009). This classification is called the Social Technographical Profile.

- *Creators* are those that actively publish original content on social media platforms. For example, they might be bloggers who publish original thoughts or Twitter users who provide first-person traffic updates.
- *Critics* react to content published by others. This includes posting comments on blogs, or rating and reviewing products.
- *Collectors* are users who aggregate information and present it to other users. They might be forwarding tweets on Twitter or posting links of interesting articles on their social network pages.
- *Joiners* are those who have an account on social media platforms. They maintain profiles on these social media platforms but do not actively participate in them.
- *Spectators* are just regular Internet users that consume information on social media. They do not maintain account or profile on any social media platforms.
- *Non-participants* are online population that do not visit any social media site.

The Social Technographical Profile allows SFU Business to understand how its targeted audiences and stakeholders are adopting social media technologies. These data are valuable for the School to tailor customized messages to the different groups in order to better engage its audiences. The following sections will identify their needs and frustrations, their demographics, their fit within Forrester's audience profile, and the value that SFU Business can bring in to satisfy them.

5.1 Undergraduate Students

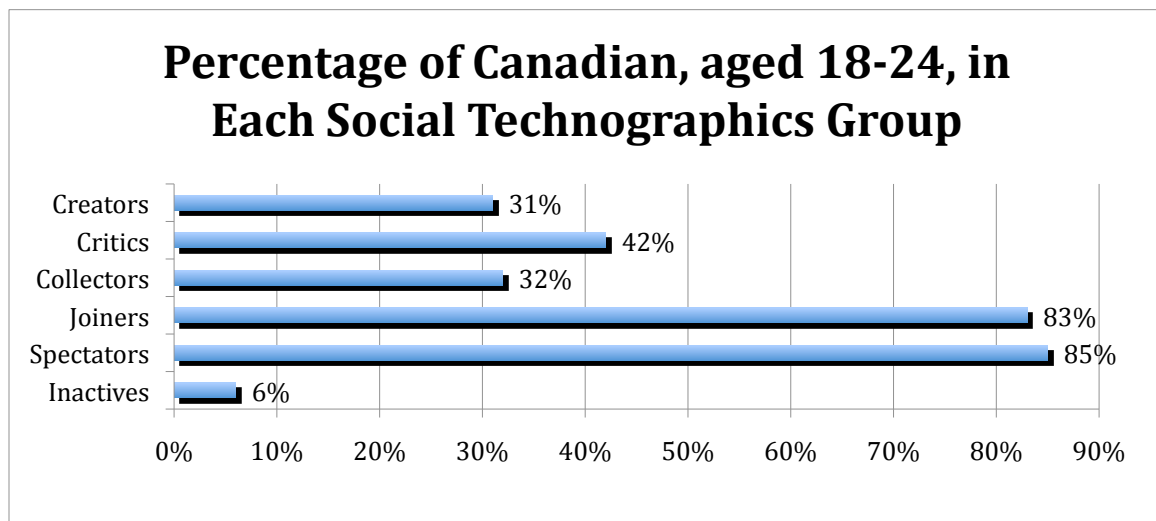
SFU Business has over 3000 undergraduate students and receives over 1000 admission applications per year. Although these two groups of stakeholders, applicants and current students, share similar demographics, they have different needs that the program has to satisfy.

Applicants are interested and excited to learn more about university life and wish to connect with current students who can share their experience or be their mentor during the first year. On the other hand, they are often frustrated about the complicated application process and confused about the required courses and grades. They wish they could have more convenient access to program recruiters or have access to a central portal where they can read all the information and ask for help.

For current students, some are confused with the program requirements and course prerequisites. They hope the program can satisfy their needs by providing easier and faster academic advising services. In addition, they want to connect with more senior students to seek their recommendations on course planning or on picking a professor that best matches their study style. They also wish to connect with each other about club events, international exchanges or competitions. Students need a place to ask questions, share experiences, debrief after events, and recruit team members. The faculty should be listening to these discussions to answer questions and learn from the discussions.

Demographically, both the applicant and current student groups fall under the same age category. The chart below shows the social media participation data collected by Forrester Research.

Figure 5.1 Percentage of Canadian aged 18-24 in each Social Technographic groups.



Source: Forrester Research's Consumer Technographics Data, 2009

The data shows that potentially 83% of the undergraduate audience are “Joiners” that visit and maintain a profile on popular social networking website such as Facebook. They are also “Spectators” that read online forums and blogs. Moreover, there are also a high percentage of “Creators” and “Critics” that are willing to publish new content and provide comments on existing articles. Therefore, the data demonstrates that social media, and particularly social networks, can be effective as a communication platform to connect and serve the undergraduate applicants and students.

5.2 Graduate Students

Similarly, graduate students at SFU Business can also be separated as two groups: prospective students and current students. The two groups have different needs and belong to different demographics.

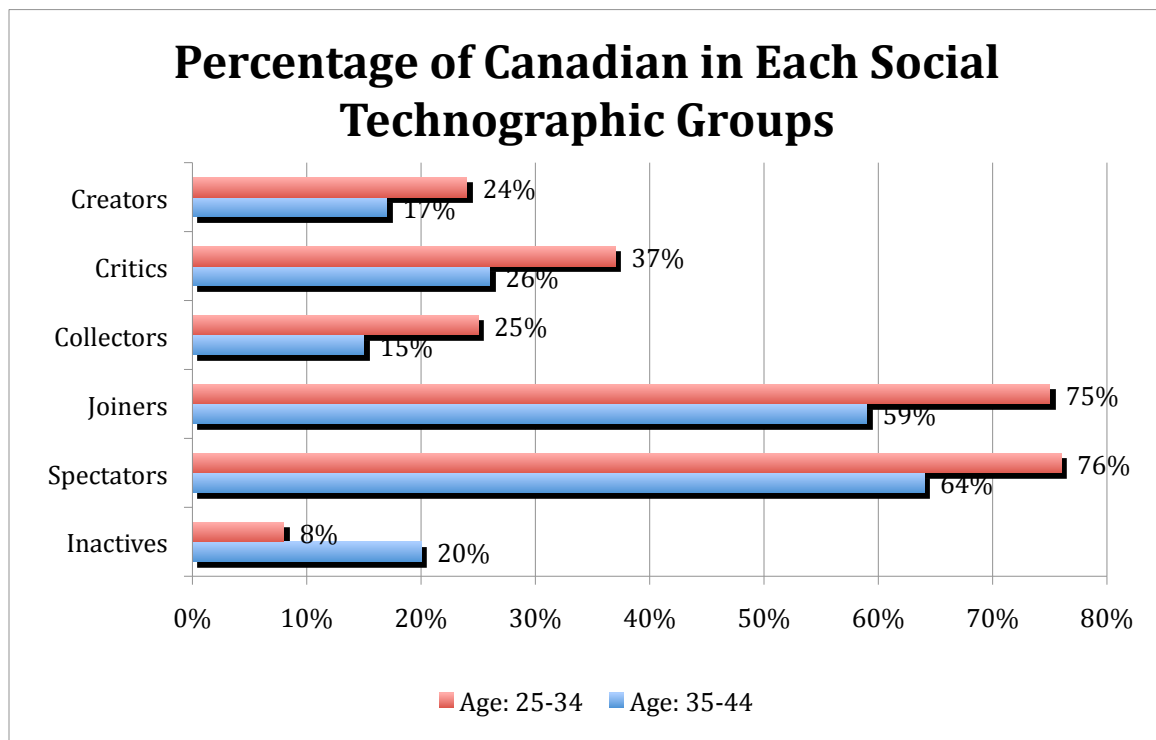
Because of the competitive nature of the graduate business program market, prospective students explore many different programs to find one that fits their requirements and provides the best return on investment. They have many questions on their minds, including admission tests and admission requirements. Moreover, they often face many tough decisions such as finding the right work-family-study balance and finding a program that fits their study style and career path. In addition to talking to program recruiters, they also look for testimonials and make requests to talk to current students and recent graduates to listen to their experience.

Current students often like to provide feedback on improving the program; they suggest changes that can improve current courses or make recommendations to consider for future offerings. Moreover, they also want to network with alumni or industry professionals that can help with their studies or future career.

International prospective students and students from the online diploma program would also appreciate the increased online presence of SFU Business. International prospective students wish to learn more about the School and the city, and they seek for connections with local students before their arrival so they can receive assistance on housing or accommodation. Online students want to extend their interaction with their classmates outside the online learning platform and to connect with those in the regular program.

In terms of age group, graduate students and prospective students are more mature with the average age of 32 (Simon Fraser University, 2009). Depending on the program, their age ranges from about 25 to 34 for most of the master programs to about 35 to 44 for the more senior, Executive MBA program. The following data from Forrester Research show the Social Technographic Profile for the two age groups.

Figure 5.2 Percentage of Canadian aged 25-44 in each Social Technographic groups.



Source: Forrester Research's Consumer Technographics Data, 2009

The chart shows that social media might not be an effective communication platform for those currently in or interested in the Executive MBA program, because of the high percentages of students that are rendered “Inactive” in online activities. However, social media can be effective for the rest of the graduate programs because of the high amount of “Joiners” and “Spectators”, who will consumer the content, and a relatively high number of “Creators” and “Critics”, who provide new content or add value to existing content. Despite that, the graduate program has to maintain the current level of in-person services for those who appreciate customer services and those who do not want to communicate online.

5.3 Alumni

As of 2010, over 13000 students have graduated from SFU Business. These alumni have moved on with their career but they also wish to connect with their classmates and to be notified on alumni networking events. Some of them also wish to give back to the School by sponsoring events, coaching students or hiring students. Many of the alumni are on professional networks like LinkedIn, but SFU Business currently has a minimal and passive presence on them, and it does not effectively leverage the power of the platform.

Alumni demographics are very widespread. It is not possible to profile the alumni according to the Social Technographics data. However, the previous two sections prove that as current students become alumni, they will be more familiar with and become more active on social media. Therefore, it is recommended for SFU Business to start building a presence on social media to service any current alumni that are active on social media and to prepare for servicing those who will soon graduate.

5.4 Faculty & Staff

SFU Business operates on three separate campuses with around 80 faculty and 70 staff members. While staff members are spread over the different campuses, many faculty members work from home and are only present at campus for meetings and classes. This creates a problem in internal communication and in meeting each other. Faculty and staff will appreciate a platform to share knowledge, to get to know each other, to understand what others are working on, and to socialize causally.

Although a social media platform like social network seems to be the solution to this problem, the ages of the respective parties must be taken into consideration. With the average

age of staff members being 41 years old and that of faculty members being 47 years old (Simon Fraser University, 2009), many of them are not active in online activities or social media platforms. If SFU Business chooses to build an internal social media platform, it will need to find ways to encourage staff and faculty members to participate in.

5.5 Academic & Research Communities

Academic and research communities are researchers outside of SFU Business that are interested in the work of the School. They want to read about the latest on-going research from SFU Business and they are willing to share their insights. Researchers who are active in the field are mostly “Critics” that will provide comments. However, they are only active in specialized and scattered online communities or email groups. They can benefit if there is a platform where all on-going research activities are published by categories and where conversations and comments are welcomed.

5.6 Business Community

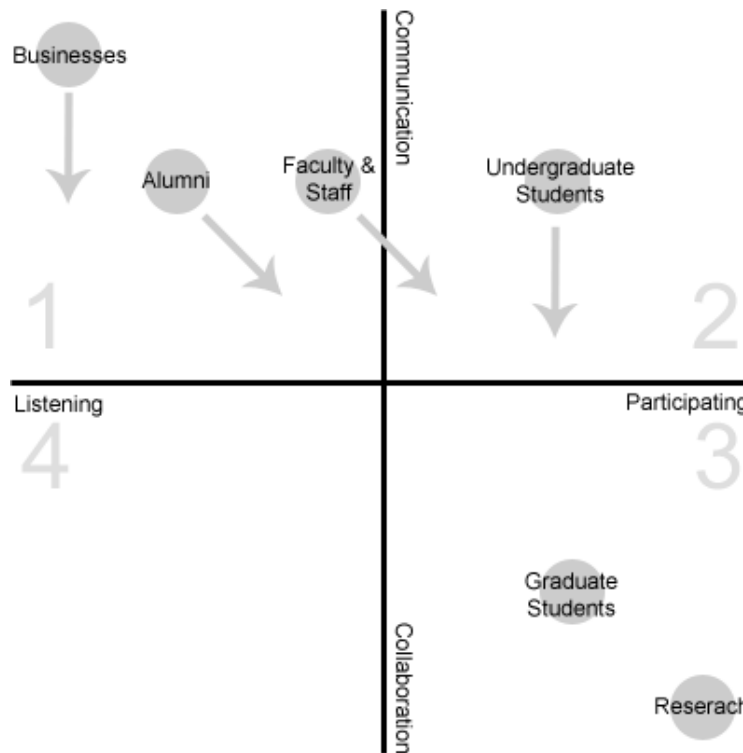
Lastly, the business community consists of companies and organizations that are looking for ways to improve their businesses or experts that can solve their business problems. They are mostly “Spectators” who are looking for information and they desire information that is easy to understand and immediately applicable to their businesses.

Businesses are more likely to look for information through search engines. Therefore, SFU Business can serve the business community by rewriting some of the research articles in a shorter format that concisely summarizes the findings and make the articles easily searchable on search engines. Not only does this allow the School to improve its recognition within the business community, it also benefits programs such as the LSG. Businesses would relate the School not only as an institution that focuses on academic researches, but also as a consultant that can solve real business problems.

5.7 Summary of Audience Types

Communication needs and participation in social media varies between the different groups of audiences. This chapter profiled six major groups of audience within SFU Business. The level of engagement in social media and communication needs can be summarized in the matrix below:

Figure 5.3 Social Media Engagement and Conversation Matrix for SFU Business



The matrix lays out the audience by their level of engagement and the type of conversation. A low level of engagement means the audience group mostly listen. In another words, they are mostly “Spectators.” On the other hand, a high level of engagement suggests that there are a lot of participating “Creators” and “Critics.” On the other axis, the basic type of conversation is “Communication,” in which the conversation is around basic questions and answers, while the more advanced type of conversation is “Collaboration” in which audiences work together as a community.

Audiences in the first quadrant mostly consume information. Business community is located at the top left corner of the matrix because they mostly search for useful information without any participation. As they start treating SFU Business as a business consultant, conversations can become collaborations between SFU Business and the organization.

Faculty, staff and alumni are also located in the first quadrant because of low participation. As more students graduate with familiarity of social media and as faculty and staff are trained to use social media, they will contribute more, and conversation will upgrade to become more collaborative in nature. The goal is to move them from information seekers to collaborators – providing content to share with colleagues. Academics seldom lack ideas —

sharing ideas is the problem. There may be a cultural problem in that faculty may be “shy” about offering up their solutions to problems or teaching innovations. Technology that enables sharing will not be enough.

Undergraduate students are located in the second quadrant because they have higher participation but they are still mainly using social media as a communication platform to ask for help from staff. Once the School has created its presence in social media, it should encourage students to support themselves by being more collaborative.

The fourth quadrant contains the graduate students and the research communities. They have high participation and are highly collaborative. They like to help each other, and to share knowledge and experience. Groups in this quadrant are more likely a self-serving community. It is recommended to maintain a presence on the social media platform and to interfere only as needed.

6: Implementation Strategies and Technologies

This chapter combines the objectives and goals determined in chapter 4 with the stakeholder information gathered in the previous chapter to determine strategies and resources needed to launch the social media communication campaign for SFU Business on each of the four popular social media platforms.

6.1 Blogs

SFU Business can employ blogs to talk to its audiences by publishing useful information and engaging in conversation through comments. The graduate programs can utilize blogs to allow energized students to share their experience with potential applicants. The undergraduate program can use blogs to promote its International Exchange program, while research centres can publish research articles for the academic and business communities.

6.1.1 Graduate Student Blog

A blog run by graduate students not only satisfies the need of applicants seeking genuine information, it can also allow the School to provide a platform to allow energized student to help promote the programs.

Topics of the blog can include student experience of the program and courses, their experience about the Graduate Management Admission Test, tips on time management, and coverage of events organized by the School or student clubs. For international students, they can also write about their experience in Vancouver, advice on finding accommodations and places to go around the School and the city. Comments should be encouraged to allow visitors to connect with the bloggers to create conversations.

The blog should run entirely by current graduate students and recent alumni with minimal control and interference from the School. The Marketing department should prepare rules and style guide for students participating in writing the blog, and should provide technical support for new bloggers joining the editorial team. To minimize the risk of not having enough bloggers, the School should also consider mandatory blog postings from students who attended school-

sponsored events. Not only does this measure ensure frequent content update, it also allows knowledge and advice to be passed onto future participants.

6.1.2 International Exchange Students Blog

A mandatory report can make for pleasurable reading if it was delivered in a blog setting. The undergraduate program encourages students to join the International Exchange program by sponsoring them to study abroad. When students come back for the exchange term, they are required to submit a report that shares the international exchange experience. These reports are long and tedious to write, and they are currently not easily accessible by other students who are planning to study abroad.

A more engaging and effective way is to ask students to write a short blog posting every other week to share their experience instead of a single report at the end of the term. The blog should be placed prominently on the undergraduate student portal to allow other students to track their friends' exchange experience. This blog can help promote the International Exchange program, and, through comments provide by other students, can provide feedback and support to those studying abroad.

The International Exchange office will have to provide a thorough instruction manual and blogging guideline to students studying abroad as providing technical support will be difficult when students are away.

6.1.3 Research Blogs

Faculty and research centres require ways to promote their research to the business community and to talk to other researchers all over the world. Blogs are the ideal solution to achieving this objective and satisfying the needs of the audiences.

Each research centre should run their own blog, while a central blog should be built to capture all articles from all faculty members and research centres. Two types of blog postings are needed. The first type contains details and technical data to aid discussions with other academic researchers. The second type should be a summary of the findings written in a concise manner for the business community.

To encourage participation, a formal program and procedure should be developed to formalize the type of content, the length of each post, and the writing style for each of the two groups of audiences.

6.1.4 Promoting the Blogs

Ideally, an effective social networking platform should be able to promote itself virally on the Internet through word-of-mouth, it is still necessary to actively promote them until they have enough recognition to catch on with the viral effect. There are steps SFU Business can take to attract traffic to the blogs.

First, the School needs to ensure that the blog articles are search engine optimized. Search engines, like Google, are very sensitive to the title of articles and keywords within. Bloggers should be instructed to pay special attention in putting descriptive titles for their postings and making sure keywords are embedded within the article. Secondly, marketing brochures and websites should contain links to the blogs to refer audiences to read more about the related content. Lastly, the School should promote the blogs through other social media channels like Twitter.

6.2 Twitter

Twitter can be used as a brand monitoring tool by listening to what other users are saying about the School, and also be used as a tool to expand the brand by publishing information of interest to current students, alumni and the academic and business community.

6.2.1 Preparing the School for Twitter

Instead of creating different strategies for each functional group, it is advantageous to focus on developing a coherent tweeting strategy from the core of the School. To do that, the Dean and the senior administration will have to act as the leaders to establish a culture of tweeting within the School. They will use Twitter as a communication platform to broadcast information of interest to the faculty members, students, alumni and the business community. The content can be as simple as personal thoughts or news about the School or the business community. The purpose is to provide content that would be of interest to all audiences of SFU Business.

The rest of SFU Business can be divided into three groups, with each providing different focuses on the topic of their tweets.

6.2.1.1 Faculty Members / Researchers

Each faculty member can have their own account that tweets about their research interest and business news on their respective areas. Potential audiences will include researchers from other universities and the business community. With the proper use of hashtags to assist Twitter searching, tweets on research findings and general commentaries can gain a lot of attention from other researchers or even the media. These allow researchers to connect with others who are working on the same field, and, at the same time, gain publicity for the School and their work.

Faculty members can also employ Twitter within classes and lectures, especially for those who teach larger classes. Purdue University experimented the use of Twitter to encourage and track class participation (Dybwad, 2009). The experiment concluded that the advantages of employing Twitter in class are to allow students to comment, highlight important learning points, or add relevant information during class without slowing down the classroom dynamic. It can also encourage students who are usually too shy to talk in front of the class to participate. A teaching assistant can be employed to monitor the tweets and answer them as needed.

6.2.1.2 Students

The student group consists mainly of student associations from the undergraduate and the graduate programs. Each group will have their own account and will post activities, news and events about their respective area. Potential audiences will mainly be current students, but potential students will find it informative to know what to expect when they arrive at SFU Business. Example of student group includes all the BBA student clubs, the BBA Portal team, and the Graduate Business Student Association.

6.2.1.3 Staff / Functional Groups

The staff group consists of departments that provide services to students and the business community. The Marketing department can tweet about recent news about the School. Tweets can contain results of research, student achievements, events invitations, and news around the School. On top of that, the Marketing department can also re-tweet news from the business community, but should keep those to a minimal to ensure a focus on the School. Career Management Centre can post about their latest job postings and networking events, and the BBA advising office can even use Twitter to provide update on advising wait times.

In addition to broadcasting messages, the School can use Twitter as a brand monitoring tool and a topic-searching tool. The Marketing department can do searches to listen to

conversations about the School, while the Career Management Centre and the Learning Strategies Group can monitor industry trends by searching for relevant tweets.

6.2.2 The Twitting Strategy

Instead of sending all tweets from a single SFU Business Twitter account, each student group and department will create their own account but with a unified branding, including Twitter account design (background and colour), unique but branded profile picture and username convention. For example: “sfubus_USERNAME”. Faculty members and administrators will each create their own SFU Business branded Twitter account.

The reason behind the multiple-account concept is to create a number of different, but focused, channels for different groups of audiences, instead of blindly broadcasting irrelevant message to all followers using a single account.

Although having multiple user accounts means potentially scatter posts to different accounts, but the posts in each account became very focused. For example, faculties will focus on their research area, and student group will concentrate on current and potential students. Moreover, all posts will share the same mission – to tell the world about SFU Business.

To encourage followers and to bring all the accounts together, a webpage should be created within the SFU Business website to act as the guide for the different Twitter “channels”. A description and preview of recent messages will be displayed for each account. Audiences will be able to follow the accounts of their choice from this webpage. For those who tweet regularly, they should also include a message and link in their email signature to encourage people to follow their Twitter feed.

6.2.3 Supporting the Tweeting Concept

In order to ensure a smooth rollout of this program, different departments will have to provide support for the Twitter users. Firstly, the Marketing department should provide the branding material necessary for customizing the Twitter accounts, assist the setup of Twitter accounts, and develop a guideline to ensure all postings follow the best practice and align with the mission. Secondly, computer technicians should assist Twitter users to setup desktop Twitter client software to allow easy posting and enhanced user experience.

6.3 Facebook

Facebook is the ideal social networking platform for communicating with undergraduate students and most potential graduate students because of the number of existing students that are already on the network. Facebook can act as a tool for SFU Business to *listen, talk* and *support* its stakeholders. SFU Business can create Facebook pages to act as the communication portal for these groups of stakeholders.

6.3.1 The Opportunity

The Facebook page presents a massive opportunity for SFU Business to engage with its future and current students. First, the Facebook page is the profile for SFU Business on the social network. It provides description and news about the School. Secondly, updates on the SFU Business Facebook page shows up on the Facebook users' personal news feed, which means that users are automatically updated on the latest news and events without logging on to the SFU Business Facebook page. With its presence on Facebook, the School can join conversations with its students on this popular social media platform.

6.3.2 Setting Up the Facebook Page

Setting up a Facebook page is very straightforward. A dedicated staff will act as the SFU Business Facebook champion and be responsible for setting up the Facebook page with their Facebook account. They can start creating a SFU Business page by adding a description and logo of the School. After that, the staff can also setup customized tabs on the Facebook page for special events, pages that target different audiences, or even develop custom Facebook application for different purposes.

The Facebook champion should also setup a number of discussion boards for different audiences. Initially, the SFU Business page should be setup with three discussion boards, an undergraduate applicants forum, an undergraduate student forum and a graduate applicants form. The purpose is to direct audience to a relevant discussion board to start a focused conversation.

Once the page is setup, it is important to publish interesting and relevant content for the audiences. Content can be news and program updates or any business-related content. By regularly referencing related content, users will revisit the page more often to get more information.

6.3.3 Promoting the Facebook Page

The most effective way to promote a corporate Facebook page is allow it to grow organically within the audiences themselves from their Facebook account. When a user signs up on the SFU Business Facebook page by clicking on the “Like” button, a message will be display on the user’s news feed telling his or her friends that this person has just signed up to follow SFU Business. The other way to promote the Facebook page is to include a Facebook button on relevant pages and email newsletters.

6.3.4 Engaging Audiences with the Facebook Page

With the page setup and with a significant number of users signed up to follow the profile page, it is important to monitor the page regularly for new conversations and questions that users are having about the School or the programs. For example, advisors should set aside time to answer course-planning questions on Facebook, while recruiters should monitor conversations from applicants.

It is also very important to spark conversation by posting questions to students or creating new discussion topics to create new dialogue. The concept is similar to the one mentioned above for blogs. For example, advisors or course planners can ask a question to test for interest on course offerings to determine demand, or ask a question to seek feedback on new policies.

The School should also leverage the power of Facebook Events. The Facebook Events RSVP functions can benefit workshops, information sessions and student club events. Events invitation will appear on users newsfeed to allow them to signup. Events signed up for will also be noted on the attendees’ friends page. Therefore, friends of your audiences will be notified who is going, increasing the odds of more sign ups and driving more traffic to the School’s profile page.

It takes time and effort to build up a presence on Facebook, but with the existing amount of audience who are already active on the social network, the extra effort will be rewarded by the improvement in student services and lower costs of student support.

6.4 LinkedIn

SFU Business can utilize LinkedIn as the professional networking platform to connect with its audiences who are already familiar with this social networking platform. These audiences include prospective Executive MBA students, current graduate students, alumni, employers and

business executives. LinkedIn is also a more preferable platform compare to Facebook because users on the network are more focused on career and professional development instead of social interaction. SFU Business should setup LinkedIn Groups for its different student groups and encourage faculty and staff to provide professional advices through LinkedIn Answers.

6.4.1 Getting Faculty, Staff and Students on LinkedIn

Since LinkedIn refers all communication and messages to personal accounts, the first step for successful implementation is to get faculty members and staff accounts on LinkedIn if they do not already have an account on the network. Technical support staff should provide basic instructions on setting up LinkedIn accounts and the Marketing department should provide guidance on populating their profiles. Staff can also join free “LinkedIn On Campus” webinar to learn more about the platform and to learn how to assist student in building a professional profiles on the platform (LinkedIn, 2010).

It is also important for SFU Business to promote the usefulness of LinkedIn and encourage students to start building their profiles and contact network early. The School can setup workshops to promote the relevance of LinkedIn for their career, and illustrate how the School’s presence on the platform can assist them to build a wider network.

6.4.2 Connecting and Collaborating with Students and Alumni through LinkedIn Groups

SFU Business should setup LinkedIn Groups to connect current students with alumni and industry professionals. Not only can LinkedIn Groups be used for collaborating and connecting students, it can also be used to assist graduating students in finding jobs.

At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, LinkedIn groups encourage current students to join and network with alumni before they graduate (M.I.T., 2010). The advantage of joining this kind of group is to smooth out the transition from student to alumni, allowing for a more fluid transition into the job market.

Although SFU Business’ Career Management Centre already operates Career Networks for job postings, the School should find it useful to employ LinkedIn as a tool to provide students and alumni with career resources. In fact, operating LinkedIn groups as career resources does not require a lot of staff attention. Groups often form among itself, with alumni sharing job opportunities by posting job information to the group while graduating students introduce themselves as candidates. The Career Management Centre can also directly participate in

LinkedIn Groups to provide career-coaching service, while encouraging students and alumni to share ideas, tools and career resources.

6.4.3 Providing Knowledge through LinkedIn Answers

LinkedIn Answers make use of the extensive network of user base to create a knowledge central consisting of experts from different industries. The School can take this opportunity to encourage faculty members and researchers to join LinkedIn to collaborate with other experts on the professional network and to enhance the image and brand reputation of the School in general in the professional community.

6.5 Summary of Implementation Strategies

The following table summarizes each implementation strategy in terms of its impacts and resources required.

Table 6.1 Summary of Impacts of Implementation Strategies

<i>Social Media Strategies</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Risks</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>
Graduate Student Blog	Alumni / Current Students Recruit New Students, low cost marketing	Most students will not have time to participate; limited control of message	A formalized style guide; technical support; formal recognition for participants and champions
International Exchange Blog	Promote International Exchange Program	Limited technical support can be provide when students are aboard	A formalized program; instruction manual
Research Blogs	Promote researches globally, collaborate with others	Researcher might not want to spend time writing blogs	Incentives to write blogs; instruction manual and tech support
Twitter (Broadcasting)	Promote news / events / general message to audiences	Danger of appearing just relaying or re-tweeting messages	Formal guidelines on what to be send through the channels
Twitter (In-class)	Encourage participation without disrupting class activities	Technical / computer requirement; Instructors need to be interested in social media	Volunteer based pilot program; teaching assistant available to monitor tweets; tech support for students
Twitter (Listening)	Keep up-to-date on industry trends and	Risk of becoming a privacy concern	Training on social media data mining

	sentiments about the School		
Facebook Page (Academic Advising)	Allow students to help each other, cut advising cost	Risk of inappropriate / incorrect information being relayed to students from other students	Advisor to monitor social networking platform; Social media champion to setup the page
LinkedIn Groups (Networking, Career Advising)	Smooth the transition from student to alumnus; satisfy alumni desire to interact with current students; connect student with alumni for career referrals	Risk of overwhelming career services staff with additional platform to monitor	Staff to monitor; Social media champion to setup the groups
LinkedIn Answers	Promote the School's knowledge capabilities, collaborate on researches	Faculty members might not want to share knowledge	Guidelines on setting up LinkedIn accounts; Instruction / Recommendation on presenting oneself on LinkedIn to represent the School

7: Evaluating the Success

Before investing time, resources and effort into these social media strategies, it is important to determine ways to allow the School to measure and evaluate the return on these investments. This chapter provides a simple framework to measure social media successes and discusses approaches to measuring successes against the objectives described in chapter 4.

7.1 Measuring Social Media Success

According to Peter Kim, director of Dachis Group, a leading social media consulting firm, most success factors of social media can be measured quantitatively. He focuses on measuring user activities that can be easily quantified and identifies the following four factors (Kim, 2008):

1. **Attention.** This is the amount of web traffic that visits a given social media platform. It can be measured through web analytic tools that measure page views and site visits.
2. **Participation.** This is the amount of engagement with the content within the social media platform. It can be measured by counting the number of blog comments, Facebook messages or Twitter comments and replies.
3. **Authority.** This is the number of links from external website or media linking to content on the social media platform. It can be counted from the number of “trackbacks” for blogs, and for other platforms, one will have to rely on web analytic tools.
4. **Influence.** This is the size of the subscriber population. It can be measured by the number of subscribers to the blog RSS feed, Twitter followers, fans on the Facebook page and members in the LinkedIn Groups.

Other than quantitative measurements, there are qualitative factors like brand reputation that Kim defined as the **sentiment** factor. It is more difficult to measure, but he argues that the sentiment factor will drive up the overall participation, which can eventually be measured.

7.2 Measuring Against the Objectives

After introducing factors and metrics for measuring social media successes, it is necessary to match the metrics against the objectives stated in chapter 4. The overall process, according to Chris Murdough from the Journal of Interactive Advertising, should work as follows (Murdough, 2009):

1. *Determine communication objectives* that map to business goals as done in chapter 4.
2. *Identify metrics and factors* that align with the communication objectives
3. *Establish benchmarks and targets* for each measurable factors

These activities should be done before implementing the social media strategy. The tools that will be used to measure and record those metrics should be installed and tested before implementation to ensure accurate data collection.

The following table provides a sample of metrics that SFU Business can use to measure the success of social media implementation according to the objectives stated in chapter 4:

Table 7.1 Metrics for Social Media Communication Objectives

<i>Objectives / Goals</i>	<i>Metrics</i>
Listening: Learn from the Audience	# of tweets about the School # of positive and negative comments on blogs
Talking: Enhance Relationships	# of followers, fans, subscribers # of comments from blog posts # of replies from tweets
Supporting: Cut Cost by Allowing Audience to Support Each Other	# of advising related questions solved on social networking sites # of career advises shared on LinkedIn Groups # of advising drop-ins after the implementation of social media
Energizing: Promotion & Recruitment through Viral Marketing	Conversion rate of information session RSVP referred by student blog
Embracing: Enhance Program Offering by Working with Students	# of student responses / comments and program related surveys

A thorough pre-launch process to determine goals and targets is critical to ensure a focused and successful social media implementation. It is also important to note that social media is a project that requires commitment for long-term benefit to the organization.

8: Conclusion

In conclusion, social media is a new marketing and communication channel that is rapidly changing and expanding. In order to be in the forefront of the industry, organizations like SFU Business need to embrace the social media mindset.

Firstly, it is important to be mindful that social media is all about inter-personal communications. The School must be ready to develop a close and personal relationship with its audiences, whether it is connecting with each other through blog comments or networking on LinkedIn.

Secondly, SFU Business must be a good listener and collaborator. Audiences do not appreciate one-way communication. The School will need to leverage social media to listen and to understand its audiences and collaborate with them in developing programs and services that meet their needs.

Lastly, the School needs to be flexible enough to adapt to changes and development in the social media landscape. Because of the rapid development in the social media community, SFU Business should continue experimenting new ideas in the social space by following the strategic framework presented. The framework can be applied to any new social media platforms by following these simple steps:

1. Decide on the communication objectives that match business goals,
2. Identify the target audiences and determine their needs and abilities by consulting the audience group,
3. Understand the benefits and limitations of the new social media platforms,
4. Select the best social media tools that can deliver the objective while satisfying the needs of the audiences,
5. Evaluate the resource requirement for implementation,
6. Develop a cohesive implementation plan, and,
7. Determine targets and measurement metrics to ensure a successful launch.

By having the right attitude toward social media and following this framework of social media implementation, SFU Business can fully leverage the power of social media to increase the level of engagement and interaction with its audiences and successfully implement the next major platform in the social media community.

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