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Social Media Skills Every Aspiring Strategist Needs



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Most Americans today are familiar with the term "social media," and recognize it as an online tool that people use to share content and facilitate conversations with others.

With over three billion people using social networks every day, companies are eager to find a professional to help them market their online content and products.

If you're thinking about a career in this field, read further to see if you have the top social media skills you'll need to succeed

What Is a Social Media Manager?

A social media manager directs the presence of a brand or company on Facebook, Twitter, and other online platforms.

Think of them as a company's "public relations rep" who aims to engage customers and promote the organization on social networks.

What They Do

Social media managers design and carry out digital marketing campaigns, and evaluate the results of those campaigns.

In this role, they create and post shareable images or videos too.

Social Media Skills: Hard vs. Soft Skills

Rick Stephens, former Vice President of HR at the Boeing Corporation, once said "We hire for hard skills. We fire for soft skills."

His point was clear: "hard" skills are what you learned in the classroom - and prove that you can do the job. Your "soft" skills are how you relate to and interact with others.

Here's a breakdown of the hard and soft skills every social media skills resume should have.

Hard Skills

As social media continues to be a top priority for brands and businesses, certain digital marketing skills are more important than ever.

Strategic

Social media strategists must know how to establish goals and identify target markets. They create and implement social media strategies to reach these markets and choose the best platforms to launch their campaigns.

These professionals also need to understand how different media formats (video, infographics, etc.) resonate with particular demographics on social media.

Copywriting

Copywriting can be found in many forms ranging from emails and online ads to blog posts. Social media managers need to know how to write captivating headlines and text that's easy to read online.

Copywriting helps the strategist strike a conversational tone or authoritative voice. This skill can facilitate the overall impression they want viewers to have while they browsing a site.

SEO Skills

A social media manager also needs to have a command of search engine optimization (SEO).

SEO involves a number of practices to grow website traffic and gain exposure online. An effective social media strategist needs to know how to improve a site's search engine rankings through link building, content creation, guest blogging, and more.

Analytical Skills

Social media strategists need to know how to analyze business metrics (traffic, conversions, and more) and social media metrics (likes, shares, etc.) to see if they're helping the company meet its business goals.

These experts measure the return on investment (ROI) for their social channels to ensure they are performing well. They also provide recommendations to improve the company's social media strategy.

Public Speaking and Presentation

Companies often try to humanize their sites with videos that showcase their employees "behind the scenes." The social media manager is often that first human point of contact with a brand - and needs to have an engaging public speaking style and presence.

These skills include clear enunciation and a logical flow to their presentation. Social media professionals need to have a confident style with appealing body language and facial expressions.

Soft Skills

The following are the "soft skills" a successful social media manager should have:

Social

"Social" means building and maintaining digital relationships. A social media manager who appears warm and inviting will be able to engage customers more effectively. This quality is helpful when it comes time to converting site visitors into loyal buyers.

Attentive

Social media management involves watching and responding to discussions that affect your brand. The social media manager should regularly monitor tweets and respond to questions or posts from fans and followers. Customers expect brands to respond to messages in less than four hours.

Creative

Creativity is a helpful trait for the social media manager to have. A skilled social media professional will be able to develop compelling visual campaigns that set a brand apart from its competitors.

Efficient

Social media managers need to identify specific objectives they wish to meet and have a plan to make it happen. Otherwise, it's easy to get lost reading and responding to the constant wave of messages on social networks. Not managing your time can lead you away from other important tasks like creating new campaigns or promoting existing brands.

Customer Service-Oriented

More and more consumers are turning to social media not only to show their interest in products but share their complaints as well. The social media manager has to find these complaints and repair the damage. Social media managers need to spell out solutions for customers and provide the empathetic attention that shows customers they are important.

Next steps

Social media marketing spending is projected to increase to over \$17 billion by 2019. With so much money at stake, now is the time to polish off those social media skills and launch your dream career.

Some may start with a Communications or Marketing degree. Others may choose a less-formal path and freelance as a social media manager. What matters is to adapt to the ever-changing world of social media.

If you are a business looking for these professionals, don't forget to advertise in the Washington Post. Jump into the world of social media marketing and watch your bottom line improve dramatically!

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