

Digital Essentials Individual Report

Research & Planning

When planning this assignment and thinking deeply about what the question is asking of us, I thought of the idea to focus our team's efforts into one industry (our team collectively decided to focus on the travel industry) and how that industry, across nine different company examples, uses social media to their advantage. By pinpointing a focus, our team could effectively delegate roles to each other, for example, I chose to focus on airlines, Richard decided to focus on hotels and Katie focused on travel agents. This allowed our team to plan, write and present a cohesive presentation that intertwines with each chosen sector of the travel industry, yet still follows the requirements of the question. Also, by focusing on one industry, I could think about the unique routes in which the travel industry can use social media, in such a way that no other industry can, thus distinguishing both myself and my team.

On both Tuesday 22nd November and Thursday 24th November, our group met up to further discuss our plans for the presentation and how best to display our PowerPoint. As well as this, we decided which members of the team would compile the PowerPoint, choose a suitable theme and add transitions to the slides to make the presentation more professional. Finally, during this meeting, we also tested the Adobe Connect software in order to ensure we understand how to use it and how best to utilise its tools. In order to enhance my planning and research academically, I went to the library and asked for help with finding a range of up to date textbook materials that cover the topics relevant to the assignment. This use of academic resourcing to invigorate and supplement my research gives my overall work more credibility and proves that in-depth thought and discussion has gone into the research and planning.

Finally, in order to understand the correlation between social media utilisation and financial performance, I needed to research each company's annual reports for the previous few years in order to establish an insight into how a company's finances have been impacted upon since a company has begun its social media usage. Discovering this will lead to the conclusion of whether social media has had a beneficial impact upon the company's operations or not.

Digital Channels & Digital Literacies

The utilisation of digital channels is important to reach consumers in today's online culture, but it is the various methods of digital channel utilisation that should be explored to completely understand the advantages of digital channels. One of the main points that I

discovered throughout this assignment is the emphasis on utilising multiple digital channels in business such as maintaining multiple social media platforms, a blog, a website and mobile app in multiple languages. This expansion of digital channels leads companies to extend their marketing departments due to the continued evolution of digital channels and their capabilities for businesses (Fill & Roper, 2012)¹.

After studying three airlines, Emirates, British Airways and Ryanair, it is clear that they are continuously investing in digital channels to improve the engagement in their business operations. Digital channels and social media can be used effectively to promote products, expand brand presence, create commerce platforms to sell products on websites and mobile applications as well as using social platforms like Twitter as public relations tools to answer customer queries (Guth & Marsh, 2012)².

In this assignment, I utilised the digital literacies of Media Literacy, ICT Literacy, Learning Skills, Digital Scholarship and Information Literacy. I utilised Media Literacy in a range of media when producing the group PowerPoint as well as when reading academic journals and textbooks. I utilised ICT Literacy during the production of the presentation by using Microsoft PowerPoint application and when presenting my PowerPoint during which I used Adobe Connect software. I utilised Learning Skills during my group's meetings at the library during which time we utilised laptops to get work done and used iPhones to communicate and organise ourselves. Finally, I utilised Digital Scholarship and Information Literacy by using Adobe Connect software which is reliant on digital systems and I both found, interpreted and managed digital information to better equip, prepare and present my presentation.

Blogging

My presentation dedicates an entire slide to the benefits of blogging to companies as well as the future of blogging as a whole and whether blogging will last much long as a powerful technique for companies to promote their brand and products (Walker Rettberg, 2012)³. Companies can use the platform of blogging in order to promote their products and latest news in a more detailed format, something platforms like Twitter cannot achieve (Walker Rettberg, 2012)⁴.

Marketing

With regards to marketing, its clear that British Airways, Emirates and Ryanair are continually expanding their marketing departments and expertise in order to best position their operations to suit emerging platforms. There is, however, an issue for companies that

cannot sustain momentum in their social media marketing strategies by keeping up with the latest emerging platforms, thus leading them to miss out on beneficial techniques for raising more awareness about their brand and their products (Fill, 2009)⁵. Ethical issues is also another factor that companies must recognise, understand and be coherent of with regards to keeping their reputations in good standing and establishing themselves as responsible companies via their marketing in both social and corporate environments (Ellis-Chadwick & Jobber, 2016)⁶.

Conclusion

To conclude, the communication and collaboration between my team and I has resulted in an insightful presentation, delivered in the most professional and cohesive manner. As well as this, thorough research, planning and discussion on each member's part has lead to a strong team with a clear focus on one industry, thus leading to more in-depth discussions, insights and analysis of how the chosen industry uses social media. Throughout this assignment, I have learnt that social media and digital channels are actively used by companies in different ways in order to best position their business operations.

In reflection, the main thing that I would do differently if I was to do this assignment again would be to suggest doing just one company each, rather than three because our presentation could be criticised as being too long and perhaps more could have been said about each individual company if we had focused on one rather than three each. Overall, due to the communication, collaborations and discussions throughout this assignment, our team and myself personally, have learnt how to manage a team, construct a focused and cohesive presentation, utilise new software and present in a professional manner.

Reference List

¹Fill, C & Roper, S (2012). *Corporate Reputation: Brand and Communication*. Harlow: Pearson Education. p284-285.

²W. Guth, D & Marsh, C (2012). *Public Relations: A Values-Driven Approach*. 5th ed. Boston: Pearson. P9.

³Walker Rettberg, J (2008). *Blogging: Digital Media and Society Series* . Cambridge: Polity Press. p127-154.

⁴Walker Rettberg, J (2008). *Blogging: Digital Media and Society Series* . Cambridge: Polity Press. P155-160.

⁵Fill, C (2009). *Marketing Communications*. Harlow: Pearson Education. P798.

⁶Ellis-Chadwick, F & Jobber, D (2016). *Principles and Practice of Marketing*. 8th ed. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education. p138-139.