

Healthy Seed's Digital Marketing Strategy

Background

Healthy Seed is a nongovernment organization established by the Lo Ying Shek Chi Wai Foundation in 2014.¹ Through developing a professional and comprehensive early childhood development program, Healthy Seed endeavors to fill up the service gap of early childhood care and development program. In response to community needs, Healthy Seed commits to providing family support service to assist parents in overcoming child-rearing challenges in Hong Kong and Mainland China.

Healthy Seed values and believes in the cultivation of positive psychology. The vision and mission of Healthy Seed is to nurture young children to develop their physical, cognitive, and social-emotional potential to its fullest. Healthy Seed's strategies and interventions are implemented in three levels, namely, community, institution, and family.

At the community level, Healthy Seed has been dedicated to raising public awareness of the importance of early childhood development. The importance of early childhood development is promoted through public media. For example, video and audio content about nurturing young children is produced and broadcast in media channels. Public seminars and parenting class are organized and held in schools and community centers. Healthy Seed also collaborates with universities in developing an evidence-based parenting program and encourages the government and nongovernment organizations to increase investment in parental training.

Apart from raising awareness, Healthy Seed also serves to educate the public on proper child nurturing concepts and knowledge through a web-based resource platform. A team of experts including obstetricians, pediatricians, social workers, and developmental psychologists are brought together to provide professional and trusted advice and guide in parenting.

¹ Healthy Seed Parenting, <http://healthyseed-parenting.org/>

At the institution level, Healthy Seed strives to strengthen institution capacities to improve the quality of young children development program. Healthy Seed proactively supports NGOs in promoting parenting and parent-child programs by encouraging NGOs and district groups to organize parent-child activities and incorporating parental training into their services. Meanwhile, large-scale training courses are also provided for parenting practitioners. Specifically, in-house training workshops are provided for social service personnel, and mentorship is provided for trained workers featuring on-site live observation and consultation.

At the family level, Healthy Seed aims at supporting families to care and nurture their young children to help them reach their greatest potential. Well-structured trainings with practical tips are provided to parents to improve their knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy and encourage sustained parental involvement in child development.

Together with parent empowerment mentioned above, a family support network is established to provide an opportunity and platform for parents to connect and share their experience for sustainable learning. Healthy Seed also built a resource center that delivers library service, learning toolkits, and referral services for families.



Using Social Media to Sow Seeds

To facilitate the mission and all the strategies mentioned above, Healthy Seed understood that support and involvement from local families is the key to success. After an in-depth analysis, Healthy Seed noticed that most of the targeted parents use social media in daily life and seek for parenting knowledge through web resources. Therefore, Healthy Seed adopted a web-based resource platform to deliver most of their contents to their targeted audience in this digital era. Mr. Sunny Lee, Program Manager of Healthy Seed, said,

We want to deliver our educational content effectively to our service targets. Traditional delivery of such kind of information is found boring and ineffective to reach young couples or arouse public awareness. Therefore, we would like to utilize online social media to spread messages to targeted audiences and the general public.

Implementation of Facebook Page and YouTube Channel

To increase the public awareness of early parenting and actively deliver newly created contents, Healthy Seed determined to open their own Facebook fan page. Whenever an update is posted on the main website, a post about the update would be published on Facebook so that every follower would receive a notification about the update. Mr. Lee said,

Through our updates on Facebook, parents could be notified and attracted to check the new contents through Facebook in-app notification, which provided links directing back to our main website for extra details.

The Facebook page was set up in May 2015. According to the traffic data collected up to December 2015, the implementation of the Facebook page could account for almost the entire growth of visitors of the organization's website. Mr. Lee said,

The application of Facebook is critical for us. It provides us a medium to spread our messages to the general public and push notifications to followers like parents, which is not accomplishable using traditional websites.



Together with the establishment of the Facebook page, Healthy Seed's YouTube channel was also launched. Videos produced to teach parenting knowledge and skills are published for public access. This strategy further increases public exposure.



Advantages Gained from Application of Social Media

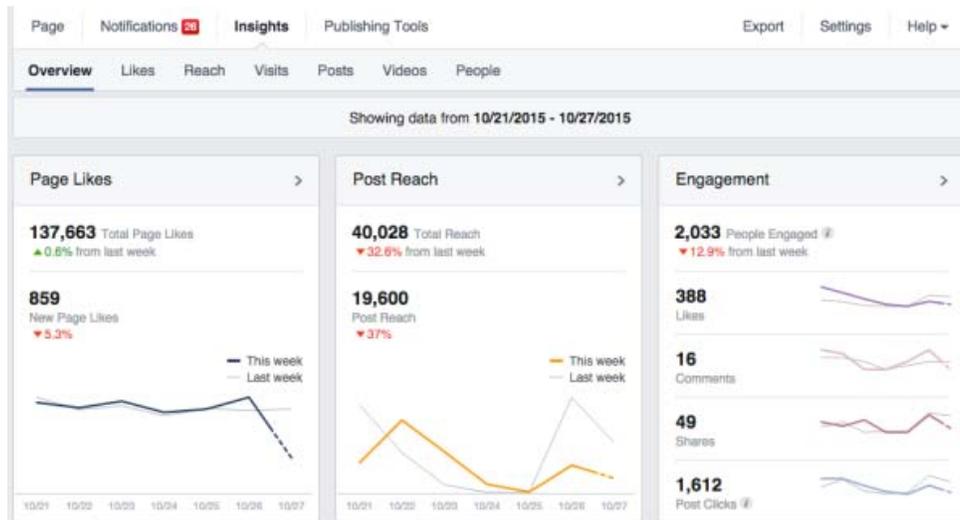
Mr. Lee shared some of his thoughts regarding the advantages of utilizing social media:

The management tools of social media provide user-friendly interfaces and readily available page promotion and performance analysis. That means the technical barrier is lowered and less resource is needed for training. Hence, NGOs could benefit from saving resources spent on marketing and monitoring performance. Enhanced convenience and accuracy of monitoring or measuring effectiveness of performance in social media like Facebook is critical for small-scale NGOs as they seldom possess the resources to hire related professional.

In fact, traffic statistics and real-time monitoring are offered in most of the common social media platforms. For instance, Pages Manager and Content Manager Tools are provided by Facebook and YouTube, respectively. A real-time dashboard is provided for administrators to monitor the latest performance. Monthly and weekly reports are also automatically generated. Therefore, NGOs could easily monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of their marketing campaigns and hence be able to determine their optimal and responsive marketing strategy. Mr. Lee explained,

Cost required in marketing through social media is relatively lower than traditional means such as television, radio, or publications. Benefit from

smaller-scale and flexible investment, social media marketing provides an environment for more optimization.



An example of Facebook Page Dashboard

For example, an A/B testing approach could be used in determining the optimum practices used in marketing. Administrators could use the statistics obtained from this evidence-based testing on an ongoing basis to dynamically adjust the marketing practices and resources spent. Keeping up with changing trends in social media is vital.

Evaluation of Current Performance of Digital Marketing

Content posted in social media is of high quality and updated frequently. Fresh and animated content could effectively attract young parents and the general public, which are exactly the target audiences. The feedback obtained from the readers is also overwhelming.

However, the fan base is in a relatively small scale when compared with existing similar service providers. According to the statistics obtained by Healthy Seed, the growth rate of the followers is unsatisfactory as well. Hence, the prepared content could not be widely spread.

Recommendation

In-depth marketing research could help Healthy Seed better understand their service targets. More systemic approaches in testing readers' response to media content should be deployed to streamline their marketing campaign. The statistics analyzed could be used to define optimum practices for social media marketing in two dimensions: content to be posted and how to efficiently allocate resources to promote the content.

Educational content could be blended with targets' favorable elements to further increase the attractiveness of content after studying audience habits and interest from the research result. For instance, if a large portion of the audience loves watching Korean drama and when a particular drama becomes trendy, themes related to Korean drama could be used in producing content to resonate with the audience. If most of the readers are employees, entertaining content could be posted on Friday evening. Increasing the attractiveness of content could in turn help in conveying the educational message to targets.

Through observing how the audience use social media, Healthy Seed could allocate the right amount of resources to promote the content in effective ways. First, by analyzing which social media the audience use the most, a larger portion of resources should be spent on boosting the marketing performance of that particular social media, instead of overinvesting in other media that probably influences less. Second, marketing campaigns should be designed to match the usage pattern of service targets. If they are more likely to read social media in the evening, content should be delivered in the evening to boost the view count.

Summary

With thorough considerations and planning, Healthy Seed has effectively delivered their educational content to service targets and channeled the attention of their audience to their official website through social media marketing. Their Facebook page is building up their image and acquiring an increasing number of followers and is now approaching its objective a step at a time. To go one step further, more thorough marketing research and systemic approaches could be deployed to align the design



of marketing campaigns with readers' interest and hence achieve an even better performance.

In summary, real-time monitoring is the key to running a successful Facebook page. The page should stay active to keep readers engaged. The content should also be attractive and align with the readers' interests. Timing and allocation of resources to promote the content created is another focus to effectively convey the message to the target audience.