



Using social media to expand market share at Bliss

Prepared by
Joe Bloggs
Project Leader

Prepared for
Lara Giles
Chief Executive Officer
Bliss

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Zonta
Metropolis Tower
1 Courthouse Lane
Auckland 1010
Phone: 09 3008800
Email: king.a@zonta.com

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Mrs Lara Giles
Chief Executive Officer
Bliss
501 Gloucester Street
Taradale
NAPIER 4142

Dear Mrs Giles

SOCIAL MEDIA TARGETS

Enclosed is the report you commissioned on 7 October, 2015 outlining three social media platforms that you should target to enhance your business.

There is a discussion of aspects of LinkedIn, Pinterest and Facebook that I believe are most relevant to Bliss and that are useful starting point for the social media campaign. The report is based on secondary research of current social media trends specific to these platforms.

I have included recommendations that will assist with an initial social media presence and that have consistently produced positive results when implemented.

Please contact me if you require any further information or have questions about the report.

Yours sincerely

JBloggs

Joe Bloggs
Project Leader

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to identify three social media channels and to consider how they could each be used by Bliss to gain market share and increase brand profile.

LinkedIn requires a professional approach and a quality profile that will build on existing relationships and generate new ones, whereas Pinterest is content specific and benefits from creative input to boost user numbers. The strengths of a well-developed and regularly maintained Facebook community overcome any perceived weaknesses.

It is concluded that Bliss should develop specific social media policies and procedures. It is argued that empowerment of creative staff would allow high quality brand development. There is also a need for a new role that assumes responsibility for creating, maintaining and developing social media relationships.

This report recommends a management meeting to discuss the implementation at Bliss of social media platforms. This includes the development of documented social media policies and procedures, employee inspired content creation, and the new role to be established to manage the social media campaign.

1.0 Introduction

Lara Giles, Chief Executive Officer of Bliss, requested this report on 7 October, 2015 to be submitted by 15 October, 2015. The report investigates the specific social media platforms that the organisation should target to increase its customer base and enhance its reputation. Recommendations regarding the implementation of a social media campaign are provided.

Bliss is aiming to expand its market share and become the “number one” brand of chocolate in the New Zealand market. A social media campaign is considered to be an integral part of these expansion plans.

The report will discuss the social media platforms of LinkedIn, Pinterest and Facebook, and how these can be used in marketing. A limitation of the report is that there are many other social media platforms that could be used at Bliss, but the three outlined in this report were considered to be the best starting point. It is assumed that use of the chosen platforms in business is not well known so the information provided is at an introductory level.

2.0 Using social media to expand market share at Bliss

2.1 LinkedIn and Pinterest

An organisation should clearly communicate professional standards and a professional image when interacting on social media networks (Lundy, 2010). LinkedIn has built a reputation around professionalism and “has been called Facebook with a suit and tie” (Bodnar & Cohen, 2011, p. 97). More than one third of internet users place value in an organisation’s social media image (Tham, 2012). In communicating this image it is important to remember that an organisation’s LinkedIn presence should reflect the values and beliefs of that organisation (Agresta, Bough, & Miletsky, 2010; Evans & Bratton, 2008).

A LinkedIn profile is considered to have the potential to increase sales by the majority of small business owners for a number of reasons (Maltby & Ovide, 2013). LinkedIn’s design produces outcomes that assist organisations to develop prospective customers (Miletsky & Callander, 2009). An effective association with LinkedIn can enhance the existing relationships that an organisation already has and can be used to further sales (“Firms That Use,” 2012). In addition, good design and execution of a LinkedIn profile can deliver customer transactions that are measurable and significant (“LoyaltyOne Report,” 2012).

Organisations can also expand their niche marketing by allowing users to create a range of Pinterest virtual boards with uploaded videos and images (Hoerbelt, 2012; Waldram, 2012). The boards are able to reflect complimentary ideas that can, for example, connect an organisation’s brand with a particular lifestyle choice (Dyck, 2012; Stodder, 2012). Online shopping audiences are attracted to these boards, creating an opportunity to turn browsers into customers (Tossell, 2012).

A successful example of this involved a clothing company that created a wildlife themed board that at one time was the most popular Pinterest board (Russell, 2013). Such quality content is a top priority and Pinterest allows consumers to interact and share with others (Adam, 2012; Odden, 2012). Organisations need to understand the specific content that is popular with their target audience, and which may be completely unrelated to the organisation’s product, as in the example given (Oreskovic, 2013).

2.2 Facebook

Organisations should strive to build a community around their Facebook page to develop their brand identity (Schmidt, 2011). A commitment of time and energy is required to create this community; however, this effort can eventually pay off with increased sales (Gillin, 2007). It is important to have one point of contact in the organisation to build customer trust through reliability and consistency. The time taken to build an online community can potentially yield a group of supportive people who are interested in an organisation's product or service and their "word of mouth" advertising will help to expand the community (Safko, 2012). The community can also provide a channel for customers to interact more quickly with the organisation (Fluss & Rodgers, 2010).

However, the sheer size of Facebook ensures it is overloaded with information, often making it difficult for an organisation to stand out (Pearce, 2012). Therefore, a Facebook presence can also be a disadvantage to an organisation looking to connect with a specific market (Lacho & Marinello, 2010). The numerous invitations and constant updates from friends can detract from the focus on an organisation (Watson & Haag, 2010; Hooper & Kalidas, 2012; Lacho & Marinello, 2010).

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1** Professionalism will be vital to Bliss to build its brand reputation. The use of LinkedIn will require a commitment to design a quality profile and identify and document the attributes of professionalism that the company wants to be known for. Bliss will also need to create high quality Pinterest boards that are brand relevant in order to attract customers.
- 3.2** The benefits of building a strong Facebook community outweigh potential disadvantages. Bliss should focus on building a Facebook presence by ensuring a suitable representative of the organisation is available, as having one point of contact will build customer trust through reliability and consistency.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1** That a planning meeting is held in the Bliss company board room at 9.30am on 25 October, 2015 to discuss the social media campaign.
- 4.2** That technology equipment is upgraded to serve the social media presence. Zonta can assist with the purchase and installation of the necessary equipment.
- 4.3** That a position is created within Bliss for a Social Media Manager. Zonta can provide assistance to identify the skills necessary for this role.
- 4.4** That Bliss employees are offered the opportunity to contribute to Pinterest boards and are provided with appropriate training where required. Zonta can offer suitable training programmes.

JBloggs

Joe Bloggs
Project Leader
Zonta
14 October 2013

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