

X-perienced Files: Five Keys to Conducting Your Social Media Health Check

By Cyrus Mavalwala, ABC

Conducting a systematic, analytical based assessment designed to add value to your current social media initiatives should be a no brainer. It will not only mitigate corporate risk by highlighting new best-practices but also keep your social media team aligned to the business strategy. If you can be totally impartial about the work you do and have free time to conduct your own Social Media Health Check then follow these five steps. In our years of experience, audits actually get done, and are most effective, when conducted by a strategic, analytical partner.

From conducting social media audits with public and private organizations, we've developed five critical phases to help any organization maximize the ROI of their social media efforts.



Phase 1: Assess the Foundation

Forget about social media. In phase 1, focus solely on the organization. Revisit your strategy and objectives for investing in social because over time, sales goals, target audiences and business directions evolve. Are your social media objectives as relevant today as when they were first developed? If you've already achieved them, have new objectives been established? Focus on developing S.M.A.R.T. objectives that have a clear benchmark so you can accurately measure your social media performance.

Phase 2: Review the Landscape

It's easy to open new social media accounts, that's why it's so important to review the landscape and take inventory. This process can be as simple as developing a chart with all your social media accounts, citing which ones are active and non-active, owned and not owned. Tracking account admins and passwords ensures disgruntled employees or former employees can't retaliate using corporate communication channels.

Phase 3: Optimize the Platforms

Setting up a social media account is quick and easy and is usually done by junior staff,



*This article originally appeared in the January 2017 issue of Communicator.
The full issue is available at toronto.iabc.com/resources/communicator*

who may not follow corporate brand standards. The content posted to each account needs to be optimized to drive qualified traffic to a relevant destination on your website.

Phase 4: Analyze the Content

Trying to pick that one magic metric will only lead to false conclusions. Think like a data scientist and use the free, powerful Google Analytics in addition to built-in analytics within each social media platform. For more robust insights, there are several paid offerings such as SproutSocial, Salesforce Marketing Cloud Social Studio and others.

Phase 5: Verify Community Building

Let's not forget that the "social" in social media should remind all content creators to focus on building community and producing nourishing editorial content. Successful content producers ask "How can I be of service to my audience and deliver a valuable experience?". As author Michael Port said, "consumption is king, not content."

Ask yourself if your organization is:

- Commenting or replying to others or just broadcasting content?
- Leveraging the best practices of the particular social platform?
- Using visual content to enhance understanding and increase sharing?

Let the Insights Inform Strategy

If the research and assessment are done correctly, a Social Media Health Check will provide deep insights and recommendations that will lead to more informed decisions about maximizing your current investment in social media. It's a great opportunity to improve your performance while mitigating risk for your organization.



International Association
of Business Communicators
Toronto

*This article originally appeared in the January 2017 issue of Communicator.
The full issue is available at toronto.iabc.com/resources/communicator*