



Communications Audit

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April 7, 2018

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Situation Analysis

Hillcroft Services provides residential, employment and community support services to individuals with disabilities in several counties within East Central Indiana. Hillcroft Services has partnered with Cardinal Communications to assess their current communication tactics and develop recommendations for ways to improve engagement and reach.

Objective

The objective of this audit is to assess the communication strategies and tactics currently used by Hillcroft Services. This audit will also examine best practices used by competitors. This audit will determine how successful Hillcroft is in reaching and interacting with their current audiences, including volunteers, donors and families. This will allow Cardinal Communications to create a comprehensive recommendation for Hillcroft Services' future communication efforts.

Methodology

Observations were gathered for this audit by analyzing Hillcroft Services' official social media accounts and website to see what information is available as a public resource.

Content Analysis

Website

Content type: There are various different media channels for content that are beneficial to visitors. There is a lot of informative content to interest donors, future DSP Hillcroft employees, board members and caregivers. There is also a variety of informative videos from which visitors of all types can benefit. There are external links that would be helpful for website visitors to evaluate for further help.

Observations and Opportunities:

- The website is very informative. Information is above and beyond rather than too little.
- Pages are not currently tailored to the audiences Hillcroft Services is trying to reach.
- There are many tabs and two menus that make it difficult to navigate.
- Youtube videos are embedded in the site pages.

Missed Opportunities:

- Adding a section solely for volunteers could increase the amount of volunteer interaction and interest for website visitors.
- There is not a lot of visual stimulation for visitors. Each page is content and text heavy. Visuals will keep visitors engaged and will convey important information quickly.
- Concise and targeted content will allow visitors to find information more easily and be more engaged with it.
- Social media links should be better emphasized on the website to increase social reach and engagement.
- Keeping pages updated more regularly, specifically the blog and news pages, will give visitors the most up to date information about locations, services, etc.
- Condensing navigation points and number of total pages will increase website accessibility by reducing click-through.
- Failure to clarify specific locations can confuse visitors as to where resources are.
- Presenting the sign-ups for the Masters Golf Outing in a way that makes it more accessible.
- Presenting pages in a way that is tailored to their target audiences. Pages could be named "For Volunteers," "For Families," "For Donors," etc.

Social Media Platforms

Facebook

Page likes: 1,157

Page follows: 1,152

Post frequency: About 2-4 posts per month

Content type: Giving Tuesday/I Heart Hillcroft Services campaign; photos and galleries; informational; community events; internal events

Observations and Opportunities:

- “About page content” is concise but lacking description. Hillcroft Services is a vast organization; however, “about” information is only a few sentences.
- Visuals used with majority of posts.
- Rated 4.2 out of 5 stars. Few reviews in the past 5 years. Most reviews are from employees.
- Facebook Events were utilized in the past, but currently have not been used as consistently.
- Lack of consistency in post frequency.

Missed Opportunities:

- “About page content” should be reflective of the content on the website. Sending consistent messages is a key aspect of branding.
- Hillcroft Services could encourage people who benefit from their services to leave reviews. Reviews from non-employees are usually viewed as more credible and less biased.
- Responding to reviews will acknowledge that people’s voices are being heard, whether negative or positive.
- Creating Facebook events is a good way to make people aware of things going on within the organization.
- Photos often do not have captions. Adding captions engages and educates viewers.
- Photo posts serve the purpose of documentation of past events. Include more types of posts with calls to action to increase awareness and engagement in upcoming events.
- Hillcroft Services can drive people to the website through social media posts.
- Hillcroft Services must target donors, caregivers, family and friends.

Twitter

Followers: 329

Following: 232

Tweets: 228

Post frequency: 4-6 posts per month, skipping some months. Twitter hiatus from July of 2013 to July of 2017.

Content type: Tweets are mainly focused on events at Hillcroft Services and awareness months (e.g. Disability Awareness Month, #GivingTuesday, Trunk or Treat, PossAbility breakfast, etc.). Other tweets ask for donations for Hillcroft Services to afford specific tools. Their YouTube account has quality and personable videos, which are also posted on their Twitter.

Observations and Opportunities:

- There are large gaps in between posts as evidenced by the account's existence for 10 years, however it only has 228 tweets. Tweets are posted sporadically with the largest gap of time being four years.
- YouTube is linked to Twitter and it posts automatically when a new video is added from various accounts as well as Hillcroft Services' new instagram.
- Old content is mostly links and no pictures.

Missed Opportunities:

- Tweets focusing on volunteers. Hillcroft could utilize BSU student and organization followers to increase volunteer network.
- Retweeting news and tweets about Hillcroft to increase engagement.
- Overall lack of engagement with all audiences.
- Give more context to tweets such as times, dates and locations to posts.
- Be more consistent in posting. Twitter makes it easy to schedule tweets and make for more consistent posts.
- When asking for donations, provide a link to donations page.

LinkedIn

Followers: 13

Connected Employees: 9

Post frequency: N/A

Content type: N/A

Observations and Opportunities:

- Two different LinkedIn pages; one is Hillcroft Services branded and the other has more connections and followers.
- “About Us” section is informative.
- No posting activity.
- No engagement with followers, connections, or employees.

Missed Opportunities:

- Engaging with followers and other industry leaders.
- Using the blog function on LinkedIn to share the story of Hillcroft Services with followers, including professional employees, caregivers, and other industry leaders.
- Connecting with other businesses to share industry news.
- Connecting with other nonprofits in local community to form partnerships.

YouTube

Subscribers: 11

Videos: 12

Post Frequency: Varies, very sporadic (twice a year tops, some years there are no videos posted)

Content type: Testimonial videos

Observations & Opportunities:

- Incredibly informative videos.
- Videos could use more energy and flare.

Missed Opportunities:

- Link or embed videos on website and social media posts/bio.
- In an average month, 8 out of 10 18-49-year-olds watch YouTube.
- By linking YouTube with social media, Hillcroft Services would have the best advantage to reaching the largest amount of people throughout a wide age group.
- YouTube is the world's second largest search engine and third most visited site after Google and Facebook.
 - One type of content that still is underutilized in the world of SEO is online video. Although a lot of brands are incorporating video content into their overall online marketing strategies.

Instagram

Followers: 21

Following: 0

Posts: 3 starting March 9, 2018

Post frequency: Never (only three posts)

Content Type: Few posts. Posts are good visually but not consistent.

Observations and Opportunities:

- Only three posts.
- Weak biography.
- Posts are clear and interesting.
- Little variety in posts: All posts are for the same event.
- Link included in biography is effective.
- Captions do not follow AP style, thus there is less consistency.
- Informative, energetic captions.
- Great use of hashtags.
- Intriguing first post incorporating

Missed Opportunities:

- Include other social media platforms in biography.
- Focus on the people at Hillcroft Services; this employs the pathos effect which is much more effective than any other graphic.
- Instagram is an excellent platform to inform the younger demographic in an intriguing way; implement as many high quality, clear photographs as possible to gain likes and followers.
- Take advantage of Instagram's editing tools to make pictures clearer. Use effects, the "sharpen" tool, tilt shift and contrast.
- Since Instagram account was just recently created, start off with a social media campaign to increase followers.
- Create a full profile by posting about ten more pictures. Viewers are more inclined to
- Follow other organizations, students and people to gain followers back.
- Change profile picture to better fit the circle; use a picture of employees smiling together.
- Post videos; videos add variety.
- Take advantage of additional features of Instagram such as boomerang and stop-motion.

Best Practice Analysis

Down Syndrome Indiana

- The website home page has slideshow of children with down syndrome which includes their name and photo. Having visual testimonials like this on the Hillcroft website would make it easier for visitors to immediately tell what Hillcroft is and what it exists for.
- Calls to action are another focus of the homepage.
- The website has tabs for their different audiences: parents, medical professionals and educators. Website visitors know exactly where to look for the information they need.

New York Cares' Volunteer Lifecycle Communications Program

- Roll out more frequent, targeted communications to build engagement and motivate volunteers to act.
- The use of storytelling, imagery and emotional language does more to engage volunteers.
- Establish an active volunteer feedback loop. Encourage volunteers to leave reviews and then respond to those reviews.

Recommendations

Website

For website design, according to a Hubspot article titled “17 Website and UX Design Statistics That Make the Case for Smarter Web Design,” 38 percent of people will stop engaging with a website if the content/layout is unattractive. Adding visuals and graphics can help add flavor to a website and increase the amount of people who stay on a website’s page. Also according to this article, 47 percent of website visitors check out a company’s products/services page before looking at any other sections of the site. Additionally, once on a company’s homepage, 86 percent of visitors want to see information about the company’s products or services. Working to have a clean website design that outlines services clearly and concisely will please these website visitors and help them find the information they needed quickly.

Facebook

For videos, according to a 2017 article “Short Video Vs. Long Video: What Will Work Best In Your Marketing Strategy” from greenbuzzagency.com, says that 5 percent of viewers will stop watching videos after one minute, and 60 percent of viewers stop watching after two minutes. Short videos that range from one minute to two minutes are more likely to be watched to completion compared to long videos. Because social media users are scrolling quickly through their timelines, their time and attention are at a premium. These short videos will increase the likeliness that people will watch them to completion.

Using Facebook events can help organize, advertise and expand events across Facebook. According to AdEspresso by Hootsuite’s article “How to Market Your Event on Facebook,” 41 percent of Facebook users participate and interact with public event every month and, worldwide, 550 million people are using Facebook events every month.

According to WordStream’s article “75 Super-Useful Facebook Statistics for 2018,” 88 percent of Facebook users are 18-29-year-olds, 84 percent are 30-49-year-olds, 72 percent are 50-64-year-olds and 60 percent are 65-years-old and older. With such high user rates from each range of ages, Facebook will be a great way to target each of your publics. Creating messaging that will cater to each audience’s call to action you want to elicit will be effective on Facebook.

Twitter

According to sproutsocial.com, a social media management and analytics website, the largest age demographic on Twitter is the 18-29 age range with 36 percent of users and the gender

demographic is split down the middle. Also, 25 percent of users have some college experience. When looking at Hillcroft Services' Twitter following, there are a lot of Ball State student organizations and Muncie businesses that could help reach this younger demographic who make up a large portion of Twitter. Reaching the young, local demographic can help gain more volunteers and generate more engagement for Hillcroft Services.

Another article called "25 Ways to Get the Most Out of Twitter" on edudemic.com, a technology and education focused website, encourages not just following global users, but also engaging with local users. Engaging with local audiences by retweeting, responding and mentioning local Twitter users helps establish a recognizable brand and involves your organization in the community. Local users can understand context and identify with challenges that an organization may face and provide useful insight to an organization to help them grow. Hillcroft Services has tapped into this idea already by following Muncie businesses and Ball State organizations, but it is not engaging with these audiences.

One key to branding is to keep everything consistent. From social media handles/usernames to consistency in posting times, a business with social media must retain consistency so they maintain their relevance to their audience. For example, in an article on Forbes called "The Surprising Data Behind How Often Brands Should Post," they talk about the importance of posting consistently to retain your followers. In the article, it gave an example of a TV show that stopped posting after the end of a season. The TV show lost 7% of their followers on their social media in a matter of two weeks. This demonstrates the importance of consistent posting to remain relevant online. In order to have a strong presence on Twitter (or any social media platform) Hillcroft Services must post consistently.

Responding to Facebook Reviews

According to Chatmeter, 88% of consumers use Facebook reviews as a determinant when deciding whether or not to purchase a product or service. Though many companies overlook comments- both negative and positive- research proves not responding to reviews runs the risk of increasing your customer churn by 15%. It's paramount to respond to Facebook reviews as an increasing amount of potential customers turn to social media for their peers' comments and companies' responses when determining the quality of a company.

Bad reviews are especially important in which to respond: Up to 30 potential customers can be lost by receiving one bad review; however, if the company responds to that review, statistics show that of the customers who received a response from a company after posting negative feedback about their experience, 33% turned around and posted a positive review, and 34% deleted the original negative review.

Responding to reviews also guarantees a higher search ranking when googled. Online reviews make up more than 13% of how Google and other search engines decide to rank local search

results. Google encourages businesses to respond to reviews in order to improve their local SEO. Higher search ranking leads to higher engagement and awareness.

YouTube

One type of social media content that still is underutilized in the world of search engine optimization is online video. While Hillcroft Services' YouTube account has been active since 2010, quality content is lost without fresh, relevant and consistent content. According to socialmediatoday.com, the rise of Facebook, Twitter and other social networks has accelerated the growth of YouTube as it enables discovery and sharing of online video. Many brands are jumping on the trend by incorporating video content into their overall online marketing strategies.

YouTube could also be an easier solution for Hillcroft Services' content heavy and crowded website. A lot of information on Hillcroft Services' YouTube such as specific services, employment culture, funding and history are not only written on multiple tabs, but also stated in various videos scattered throughout the website. 45% of people watch more than an hour of Facebook or YouTube videos a week. With more time and media consumption spent on videos, it would be beneficial to integrate the content with the visuals of YouTube to better keep the audience's attention.

LinkedIn

According to [DemandMetric](#), 82% of consumers feel more positive about a company after reading custom content, and 90% of consumers find custom content useful and makes consumers more likely to take action. With these statistics in mind, it will be important to use LinkedIn to tell stories through blogs and industry news.

Instagram

Last year, Instagram eclipsed Twitter in the number of monthly active users, and the social media platform continues to grow. It encompasses the best elements of other social media channels into one user-friendly app, and has new components that are extremely attractive to any business.

For example, Instagram now allows for business accounts, complete with the backend benefit of insights for account holders. This valuable data make it easier to achieve increased engagement, as posts can be scheduled for the most effective times.

Followers or those interested in a business can directly contact a company through phone number or email address, and can even access directions to a business- another new feature to Instagram.

Instagram has also become a platform for advertising; Instagram stories deliver better advertising results to companies as ads are seamlessly incorporated into a users' feed to feel organic and novel- not annoying and overwhelming like other ads. Instagram ads are collecting about four times the number of likes as their counterpart ads on Facebook, and a dramatically increased amount of followers and impressions.

According to business insider, over 90% of the 150 million people on Instagram are under the age of 35.