Memorandum in Favor of Campus-wide Adoption of HootSuite and HootSuite Enterprise

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The Ask:

• Adopt HootSuite as the common tool for engagement and performance measurement for social media management (SMM) on the University of Arkansas campus by teaching social media communicators to utilize HootSuite functions for free accounts and, when needed, purchase enterprise abilities (about $1,250/annually per account).

• Create a pilot Social Media team that represents critical aspects of the institution’s efforts to bolster graduation rate, retention rate and the perception of the university as a top-tier research facility. This pilot team consists of a designee from admissions, university relations, student affairs, development and an academic college. Each of these organizational groups must purchase an annual HootSuite Enterprise account at about $1,250. This pilot group is easily scalable to include more partners and, as participation increases, the price per account drops.

The Need:

• Organize the best content from our decentralized social media model and expose it across the university’s social media channels

• Develop a common metrics blueprint across campus that evaluates return on investment for social media efforts
• Create a Social Media crisis response plan across campus and drill the Social Media team in its implementation

• Share strategic posts that further our institutional goals according to a cohesive strategy

• Engage with and manage social media chatter about our institution, alerting Social Media team members when false information or questions emerge on social media channels

The Research:

Between July and October 2013, I evaluated four paid SMM tools that could enhance the University of Arkansas’ social media strategy. These tools included HootSuite Enterprise, Sprout Social, Spiral 16 and Meltwater Buzz. All four of these tools seek to enhance the university’s ability to LISTEN to social media conversations, ENGAGE in putting out our own messages and MEASURE the performance of those efforts.

Upon review, HootSuite Enterprise best fits within our institution’s social media needs.

Sprout Social is geared toward startup businesses and did not appear to be influential in higher education. I did not evaluate their measuring abilities.

Spiral 16 is a listening and measurement tool that does not offer the robust engagement HootSuite provides.

Meltwater Buzz is the foremost listening and measurement tool I evaluated, but does not address engagement aspects in a campus-wide fashion. My concern with Meltwater Buzz is that the listening intelligence will not translate into data-based decision making or regular and intuitive reporting. It’s also more expensive at $1,250/month versus HootSuite’s $1,250 annual cost per user account.
The Evidence:

Here are the reasons I feel it is important to adopt HootSuite campus wide and assemble a pilot Social Media team.

A Common Tool

Communication is only useful in so far as it is understandable by more than one person. By encouraging and teaching employees to use HootSuite, we gain a common understanding of functions that helps us diminish the challenges of our decentralized social media model. In the past year, we’ve seen substantial organization of content under the hashtag banner of #YOUofA and this tool will also allow us to speak a common technical language on campus regarding messaging.

Ease of Use

HootSuite already enjoys widespread adoption on campus because of its prominence and easy interface. Among a poll of potential Social Media team members, each one had positive sentiments about using HootSuite on the free level and encouraged of its use on the enterprise level.

HootSuite features an entire ecosystem of videos and tutorials to bring a beginning user to social media fluency. This is branded under the HootSuite University name and includes a certification process for users. In Digital Design and Development, we intend to create a certificate process internally called Social Media Fluency, and HootSuite's existing tutorials will help us further this goal.

The Opposite of Silos

Adoption of HootSuite and development of a Social Media team through HootSuite Enterprise must be a campus-wide effort. The deep listening and huge data pool offered by Meltwater Press and News does not offer similar cross-intuitional engagement outside of University Relations.
**Actionable Intelligence**

HootSuite's reporting system is intuitive, automated actionable. This means Enterprise-level accounts will generate a common system of measurements that will direct social media strategy and can be used across campus to demonstrate return on investment for social media efforts.

**The Implementation:**

University Relations’ unique vantage of serving the entire campus allows this office to take a lead role implementing this new tool and identifying partners to form a core Social Media team. This implementation can begin in a team smaller than identified, but success of this effort will be less dramatic without these core group members.

Therefore, each of the participating core group members should purchase an account for the next year. At the end of that year, some return on investment must be produced sufficient to justify the annual $1,250 per account cost.

I recommend this happen as soon as possible.

Supporting playlist —
[http://www.youtube.com/playlist?feature=edit_ok&list=PLl0NATluFDpBz1WQkFQkSy_XzlYCCtHej](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?feature=edit_ok&list=PLl0NATluFDpBz1WQkFQkSy_XzlYCCtHej)