Promoting a Department Through a Live Social Media Event

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Hypothesis

Social media can be used to effectively promote departmental initiatives.

Introduction

The use of social media as a component of departmental promotion is becoming increasingly prevalent. While traditional forms of advertising are still heavily used, several institutions have found social media to be a venue for increased engagement with different audiences (1). Many different social media networks exist, each with their own inherent advantages and disadvantages as well as target audiences. The purpose of this project is to describe how we leveraged Figure 1 (Toronto, Ontario, Canada) and Twitter (San Francisco, CA) to deliver a grand rounds presentation for the International Day of Radiology 2015 (IDoR) and in the process educate others and promote our department expertise.

Methods

A two-part event was scheduled to coincide with the IDoR 2015. The first portion of the event was held on Figure 1 and was a virtual Grand Rounds. This event was scheduled over 1 hour and consisted of a presentation of 6 unique cases typical of pediatric radiology. Members from our team were online to answer questions posed by users during the event. The second event followed the Grand Rounds and was held on Twitter. This event was a Tweet chat where we answered preselected questions from the Figure 1 user base pertinent to pediatric radiology. The discussion was organized around the hashtags #IDoR2015 and #AskCKR.
Results

Both events were promoted ahead of time on multiple social media channels (Figure 1). Figure 1 placed a special event image link at the top of every user’s feed for the IDoR event (Figure 2). Clicking on this image brought users to the special event feed where all of the content was posted (Figure 3). During the Grand Rounds event on Figure 1, we posted 6 cases that included 24 images and 20 captions. These cases received 11,028 impressions, 77 comments, and 69 favorites during the first hour of the Grand Rounds event. Over 24 hours, we received 44,338 impressions. The special event feed remained active for 24 hours.
The Tweet chat followed the Grand Rounds event. During this event we answered 8 preselected questions organized by the topic #AskCKR. We sent 91 tweets during the event. These tweets generated 58,054 impressions. A total of 13 tweets contained a link. During the tweet chat, these links were clicked 71 times.
Following the event, a blog post (2) was created by Figure 1 highlighting five key lessons from the Grand Rounds event to their user base.

Discussion

The emergence of social media as a major platform is one of the most significant developments in information delivery and communications in recent history. The combination of mass delivery of content with potential for direct interaction with individuals sets it apart from other forms of media (3). With the detailed analytics now available on Facebook and Twitter, it is possibly to quantify the success of a social media campaign and its cost effectiveness in comparison to other more traditional forms of media. Social media has found many different applications in medicine including use for education (4-12). Many institutions are now exploring the use of social media for practice/departmental promotion (1,13).

The theme of IDoR 2015 was pediatric radiology and thus, our department was well-suited to host an event for the occasion. Our goals for the event dictated the format we employed and the platforms we used to run the event. There were several considerations in this process: 1) Who is our audience? 2) How can we best reach that audience? 3) How can we leverage each platform most effectively for each audience? 4) How can we best streamline the involved process? and 5) How can we best promote our practice using this event?

We determined that our target audience was healthcare practitioners, particularly physicians and especially radiologists given the event context. Knowing that our department’s strengths lie in our clinical work and research, we agreed upon a 2 part event that could best highlight these strengths.

Our expertise in clinical education has been grounded in our case-based curriculum on Instagram and Figure 1. For this event, we decided to take advantage of the medical demographics of the Figure 1 community for delivery of clinical educational case-based content. We felt that Figure 1’s image centered experience and dedicated medical audience was perfectly suited for a mix of classic and advanced pediatric radiology cases. In addition, we felt that because Figure1 has an engaged audience that our cases would help promote a discussion on the benefits of pediatric radiology.

While we thought Figure 1 was well-suited to a case discussion, we did not think it was the appropriate channel to discuss the special issues related to pediatric radiology. Instead, we thought that this information could be better distributed on Twitter. Twitter is an established forum for these types of discussions called “Tweet chats” in which Twitter users participate in a discussion organized around a specific hashtag.

In order to streamline this process, we worked with representatives from Figure 1 to combine both a virtual Grand Rounds and a Tweet chat. Representatives from Figure 1 helped by creating a special stream for the event. In addition, they hosted the Tweet chat and solicited questions from their user base. Representatives from our department worked to select appropriate cases for the Grand Rounds event, screen the questions as they were submitted, and build content. Both Figure 1 and our department worked to create the hashtags for the Tweet chat and promote each event.

The Grand Rounds portion of the event on Figure 1 occurred over the course of an hour in which time 6 cases were presented. Each case unfolded slowly with multiple images and multiple questions per cases. During the event, members from our team were online to answer questions posed by users.

The Twitter portion of the event was then scheduled for the following hour during which we were posed with a series of questions pertinent to radiology.
In order to present a polished message, the majority of content was prepared prior to the event. For the Grand Rounds, we chose cases with key representative images and wrote associated captions. Cases with clinical images or multiple modalities were favored. As we were selecting cases we made an effort to pick a mix of modalities, body parts, and pathologies. Each case was uploaded prior to the event. We provided Figure 1 with instructions on when to release each image. For the tweet chat, multiple responses were prepared in reply to each question. We made an effort to include links to prior blog posts and department research in answers to each question. The prepared tweets were sent out manually rather than being scheduled. This allowed us to shift the content based on the online discussion. In addition to prepared tweets, spontaneous tweets were also sent. Some of these proved to be the most popular.

While education was one of our main goals in this event, we were also interested in promoting our department using this event. This goal was met in a few ways. First, by virtue of hosting the event and being featured by Figure 1 globally, we were being recognized as a respected medical and radiology resource. Second, the quality of our content, whether in cases or answers to questions, would reflect on our image. Third, tailoring the content to highlight some of the expertise our institution offers, further differentiates us from other competing institutions.

Our analytics for the event demonstrated engagement and interaction with users who not only seemed eager to learn clinical radiology but also what our department specifically had to offer. Overall, our content was seen more than 100,000 times. This audience is several orders of magnitude larger than the audience we can reach over the same period via any other method. Even at the largest national or international meetings, attendance for lectures or other educational events rarely is larger than several hundred people.

**Conclusion**

The use of social media in the promotion of a practice is still a new concept. While many industries have moved significant marketing resources to social media, medicine has been relatively slow to adapt. Our department has tried to remain on the leading edge of this movement. By taking part in special events such as those centered around the IDoR we have increased recognition for our department. As analytics become increasingly robust, they will further allow us to quantify the multifactorial effects social media can have. Given social media’s increasing prominence in our everyday lives, we believe that other organizations should begin to focus on social media as a viable marketing platform.

**References**

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Keywords

Social Media, Twitter, Instagram, Analytics, Marketing