Under Armour Social Media Plan

IMC 641

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Under Armour is a company with a mission to improve all athletes through passion, design, and relentless innovation. Since its commencement in 1995, the brand has grown rapidly. It is a very well known company that has a solid grasp on its social media marketing efforts, however there is undoubtedly room for improvement. Social Media for business is a trend that has boomed in recent years. As a result of its quick development, many companies have a difficult time fully understanding the best ways to use it as a marketing tool, and Under Armour is one of these companies.

Currently, Nike and Adidas, Under Armour’s biggest competitors, both have over triple the amount of ‘likes’ on Facebook and over four times the amount of followers on Twitter. In addition, Nike has over triple the amount of followers on Pinterest. As a result of having more followers on various social media platforms, Under Armour’s competitors also drive more interaction and conversation with their customers. It is important for Under Armour to keep up with its competitors through all aspects of marketing, and with social media playing such a big role in the industry today, it is even more critical for the company to enhance their current plan.

Current Plan

Currently, Under Armour has a presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest. The company is keeping up-to-date on the current trends, however they need help on developing
strategies. To start, most of Under Armour’s Facebook posts are all about promoting the brand through advertisements. This is a good strategy to use every once in a while, however the primary goal of social media marketing is to connect with consumers and build a more personal relationship with them. Under Armour needs to generate posts on Facebook that will motivate more conversation. In other words, simply posting an advertisement is not going to drive as much interaction. Additionally, Under Armour is using hash tags on Facebook. Using hash tags on Facebook is essentially pointless. Although it may encourage people to use that same hash tag while communicating on Twitter, it often confuses consumers because it is the wrong social platform.

On Twitter, Under Armour currently has close to 200,000 followers. Their existing Twitter strategy is pretty strong. They have a good mix of promotional tweets as well as motivational quotes and a good use of hash tags. One weakness that I noticed regarding the Under Armour Twitter is that they do not engage with their consumers. It is important to acknowledge the tweets from customers, both positive and negative. All social networking sites serve a purpose of building upon relationships with consumers and creating a more powerful bond between the consumer and the business. People often begin to feel frustrated if they feel that they have been reaching out without any response. On the contrary, consumers tend to feel a stronger attachment to a brand when they receive feedback and feel that their thoughts are being replied to.

In addition to Facebook and Twitter, Under Armour has stayed on top of the most recent trends and created a presence on Pinterest. Their Pinterest is called Under Armour Girls and it caters primarily to females since they are the demographic that Pinterest appeals to most. While the pins that their page publishes are very visually appealing and they fit right in with the
Pinterest world, they do not use their Pinterest account consistently enough for it to make a statement. There is a lot more that they could do to appeal to these women on Pinterest. Furthermore, although males are not on Pinterest nearly as often as females, there are still males that are active on Pinterest. The demographic should still be given some attention, so it could be beneficial to create a Pinterest account that caters to male users as well.

**Objectives**

Increase the number of followers on Under Armour’s Facebook and Twitter accounts by 30 percent by 2014.

Increase the amount of consumer engagement on Under Armour’s Facebook and Twitter accounts by 30 percent by 2014.

Increase the number of ‘repins’ on the Under Armour Pinterest page by 30 percent by 2014.

**Demographic Description**

The target audience for the Under Armour Social Media Plan consists of Caucasian females between the ages of 18 and 24. These females typically fall into the middle to upper-middle class categories and live in urban or suburban areas. They have a desire to stay fit because they care about their bodies and their health. In addition, they generally have fairly active social lives.

**Social Participation**
The social participation of this demographic group is, without a doubt, one of the most active. It is also a very important group to reach out to on social media. One reason being is because it has the highest percentage of creators. Creators are the people who produce the content. They are the ones publishing blogs, uploading videos, and writing articles. Gaining the attention of these people is pertinent because other people are influenced by what they have to say (Bernoff & Anderson, 2010). This demographic also includes a pretty high percentage of critics, which are the people post ratings and post comments on the other people’s social activity (Bernoff & Anderson, 2010). The critics are another helpful category when it comes to generating buzz. Having a great deal of spectators and joiners is convenient as well because they are the ones who are reading, watching, listening, and being influenced by what others around them are talking about and doing. In addition to all of this, the 18 to 24 year old female
demographic has the lowest percentage of inactives (Bernoff & Anderson, 2010). Inactives are the people who are not social on the Internet in any way. Social media marketing would not even reach these people, so such a low percentage of them is extremely advantageous.

**Tools and Technologies**

The great thing about the demographic being targeted in this plan is that these young women have grown up using technology. They are all over the social media trends and they swarm every site. Recent research shows that Females, in general, are five times as likely to use Pinterest. In addition, the younger age group is one of the most active on the site (Bennett, 2013). The same research shows that Urban and Suburban residents than rural residents on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram (Bennett, 2013). Another great statistic that this research shows is that the younger age group of 18 to 29 is the most prominent on Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, and Tumblr (Bennett, 2013). It is difficult to pinpoint which technologies are being used the most by this target audience when they have completely taken over the social media world. These people are creating, watching, conversing, and contributing on nearly every site, and they are shaping what social media is becoming in the future. The fact that this demographic is highly active on social media is very valuable. They make up a majority of the social networking world, and even more importantly, they make up the majority of the three sites that this plan will focus on: Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest. Facebook is still the most used social media site. Twitter is the third largest, and has grown 13 percent since last year. The most surprising of all is Pinterest, which grew 1,047 percent and is now used more than both Google+ and MySpace (Jaume, 2012). It is evident that the target audience is available and ready to be approached using social media marketing. Now, it is all about grabbing their attention and spreading Under Armour’s message.
Facebook

Facebook is the most obvious choice for any social media plan. When people think of social media, it is the site that instantly comes to mind. This is because Facebook is the world’s most popular social networking site. It has around 750 million unique visitors every month ("Top 15 Most", 2013). Under Armour is already using Facebook as a part of their marketing plan, but in this plan, the way the company is using it will be enhanced with more variety in posts and increased engagement with consumers.

Aside from the obvious reasons of increased exposure online, low-cost marketing, and another channel for reaching out to the target audience, there are also many other reasons that Under Armour should include Facebook in their social media plan. Another major reason Facebook can be beneficial to an athletic company is through sharing. People love to use social media to motivate themselves to get in shape. Facebook allows its users to share the content of other’s. If Under Armour comes up with a post that is interesting enough then consumers have the ability to share it. Since people are constantly using the Internet as a way to get motivated to stay healthy, it is rather easy to find content that people will share and interact with. One downside to using Facebook is that there is always the risk of receiving negative comments. It is well known that people love to use Facebook to vent. If someone has a bad experience with Under Armour, they will not hesitate to share this with everyone on the site.

One of Under Armour’s competitors, Nike, regularly posts inspirational quotes and sayings by well-known celebrity athletes that endorse their brand. This is the type of post that consumers get excited about and share with their friends. It is also the post that generates a lot of
interaction, which in turn draws more people to the company Facebook page. Just a few days ago the Nike posted the following image:

![Image](image.jpg)

This image generated close to 3,000 shares and over 500 comments. That is a lot of attention to be drawing towards the Nike Facebook page.

**Twitter**

Twitter is another popular social media site that many businesses use. However, it serves a different purpose than Facebook. While Facebook is a great place to build relationships and share content with consumers, Twitter is the site that is best for raising awareness and sharing information. It is the site that is short, sweet, and to the point. It is about grabbing people’s full attention in 140 characters or less. Under Armour already uses Twitter, however, the company could do a lot to improve their current Twitter plan.

One of the critical reasons that any company needs to be active on Twitter is because of how easy the use of hash tags make it to look up what people are saying about a brand and its products. Twitter is a great way to “monitor real-time conversations about your brand” (Schaefer, 2011). It also makes responding to these people extremely easy. Many businesses use
Twitter as a very convenient customer service tool. This makes it easy for other people to watch the company thoroughly handle any issue right in front of their eyes. In addition, hash tags make it extremely easy for others to find your company and to catch the attention of consumers who do not already follow the company on Twitter. One downside to using Twitter for business is that streams move extremely fast on Twitter. So many people post so many things in such a short time span that “it’s not uncommon for your message to get lost in the shuffle” (Colaiacovo, 2011). Unlike Facebook, it is hard to tell how many people actually saw a post and how effective it really was.

Columbia Sportswear, unlike most of the other athletic wear companies, actually “retweets” some of the tweets from its fans. Although it is important for all of the companies to be responding to consumer tweets, both positive and negative, Columbia has at least started to grasp the idea of interacting directly with its customers through Twitter. These “retweets” will ultimately promote the positive opinions customers have toward the company and they will cause the customer to feel a stronger bond with the brand, which will likely create some sort of loyalty.

**Pinterest**

Pinterest has exploded with popularity recently. Although it has not quite reached the popularity of Facebook and Twitter, it is a great channel for Under Armour to incorporate into their marketing efforts. Since Under Armour is already trying to reach out more to females, Pinterest is a very convenient way to do this since its number of female users far exceeds the number of males.
The main reason that Pinterest is such a beneficial tool for Under Armour to use is because fitness is one of the most popular categories on the site. Pinterest “has attracted a strong health/fitness user base who are fanatical about sharing great content” (McColgan, 2012). People love to use this social media site to find fitness tips, motivation, and more. Additionally, style and clothing is another very popular Pinterest category. It is hard to find a more convenient audience for a fitness attire company to be reaching out to. One disadvantage to Pinterest is that it only reaches a limited audience. The demographics and psychographics of Pinterest users fall into a much more specified category than other social media sites, which puts limitations on the reach.

Currently, Nike is using Pinterest in all the right ways. It is specifically targeting its female target audience with a variety of content including inspirational photos and quotes as well as sample workout schedules and much more. Nike’s pins all link back to something different that promotes the brand. Some link directly to the women’s fitness attire section of the website, while others link back to the Nike Facebook page. Here are two examples of the Pins that Nike has been using to engage on Pinterest:
How the New Plan Supports Current Marketing Efforts

Under Armour has been increasingly reaching out to women and younger generations. Although, like most fitness brands, the company started out mainly targeting men, it has
broadened its reach. Since fitness has become so huge for women nowadays, Under Armour has been trying to attract this demographic more and more. In addition, if you check out the company website, they have begun to cater to the youth. Having a prominent and dependable social presence is definitely a big step to drawing in these audiences. This is evidenced by the statistic that have show that the younger demographic and females are both two very big groups that are socially active online (Bennett, 20130).

**Tactic 1 - More Consistency**

The first tactic that will be used for this Social Media plan will be to increase the amount of posts published on Under Armour’s Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest pages. Instead of updating each page only a few times a week, each social media channel will be more frequently updating their followers. Under Armour will post at least once a day to Pinterest, at least twice a
day to Facebook, and at least three times a day to Twitter. The posts on each site will all be different to match the language of each site. In addition, the type of content that is published on each site will vary to keep followers interested.

This tactic will help reach two of the three objectives of this social media plan. Posting more regularly will help to draw more attention to each page, and in turn it will help to increase the amount of followers on Facebook and Twitter. It will also raise the likelihood that Pinterest users will ‘repin’ one of Under Armour’s images. This will result in more attention for the company’s Pinterest page.

Under Armour’s current plan keeps up-to-date with trends, but this tactic will help the brand with its consistency. Posting multiple times on a daily basis is more likely to be a focus for the online world full of people browsing social media platforms just waiting to be intrigued. It will stop the regular customers from becoming bored with the company’s lack of social interaction and it will help to pique the interest of potential new fans and followers.

**Tactic 2- More Conversation**

Another tactic that is important to this social media plan is to increase the number of people who will be responded to directly on both Facebook and Twitter. On Facebook at least five people who comment on each post should receive a response. On Twitter there should be at least ten tweets back to people who reached out to Under Armor via Twitter. The person who is in charge of social media should decide which posts are best to respond too. However, typically it would be best to respond to people who have questions or who have complimented the brand on something. Another thing to note is that most of these responses should end with another
question that would encourage the consumer to respond again, and each conversation should be followed through with until the end.

Responding to consumers and stimulating conversation between the brand and consumers is one of the most critical aspects of social media. Social networking is all about connecting. Consumers comment and engage with company social pages because they want to feel like they are being listened to. When a company responds it deepens the connection between a consumer and a brand, and this makes this consumer more likely to become loyal. This tactic specifically helps with objective number two, which is to increase consumer engagement on Facebook and Twitter.

Currently, Under Armour hardly responds to consumers on Facebook and Twitter. This can be problematic because many times people feel that their thoughts are not being listened to, which ultimately defeats the purpose of being present on social media sites. Increasing this consumer interaction will be very helpful for Under Armour. Additionally, it will result in a lot of success for the company and really help hold this social media plan together.

**Tactic 3- More Variety**

The third tactic involves including more of a variety of posts on each social media site. There will be a specific plan for what type of content comes out through each channel in a given week. Out of the seven pins that Under Armour will publish weekly two must be inspirational fitness images with a relatable quote, two must describe some type of workout, two must be images of new or popular Under Armour products, and one must be an image of one of the company’s endorsers. From the fourteen weekly Facebook posts three must be fitness related, three must promote an Under Armour product, three must ask a question to stimulate
conversation, three must be inspirational, and two must be links to videos or articles related to the brand. Finally, of the twenty-one tweets that will be sent out from Under Armour each week four must be fitness related, four must be inspirational quotes, three must be developed based off of current trending topics, four must promote a company product, three must be questions to motivate consumers to engage, and three must be some type of image or video that is related to the company somehow. Additionally, there should be a creative and appropriate hash tag in at least 15 of the 21 weekly tweets.

Increasing the variety of the content that is posted to each site keeps followers interested and wanting more. It also prevents a business social media page from becoming just one big advertisement. Consumers don’t follow pages just to see more ads. They get enough every day. They like to see what other types of engaging content these businesses will share with them. Using Under Armour as an example, people do not want to just see their products every day. They want to interact, learn fitness advice, feel inspired to exercise, etc. This tactic will help fulfill all of the objectives. Some of the variety is encouraging interaction, which work specifically towards objective two. Keeping consumers absorbed and exciting will help to enhance the chances of accomplishing objectives one and three.

In Under Armour’s current social media plan they post a lot of the same type of posts on each social media site. Enhancing the company’s variety will help to spice up their current marketing efforts. It will also help to get followers more involved. This will ultimately be more exciting for followers and will help to develop deeper connections with them.

Tactic 4- Less Negativity
The fourth and final tactic will be to address any negativity focused toward Under Armour’s social media sites. All negative comments directed toward the brand on each social media site should be addressed. Unless it is cruel and considered harassment of some sort toward the brand, no negative comment should be deleted. Usually, people who feel strongly about something, whether it is positive or negative, are the ones that have the most to say. If someone feels passionately heated or angry with Under Armour, it needs to be replied to in order to try to alleviate the issue and change the experience to make it more positive.

This tactic will also be helpful with the success of objectives one and two. Obviously it will be helpful while increasing the overall consumer engagement. It will also help to keep current followers by fixing any issues that they have with the brand or its products. In addition, it might change what was initially a negative experience with a product and make it positive, attracting a new follower.

At the moment, Under Armour has not been replying to any negative attention on their social media sites. For example, the company’s Facebook page recently posted an image of three of their shoes asking which consumers thought looked best. One person commented on it saying, “I think all of them look terrible”. There was no response to this from Under Armour, but they should have responded asking what type of shoe this person would like to see instead or asking what the consumer didn’t like about them. Responding to negativity shows that the company cares about the experience people are having with the brand and that they welcome and appreciate their insights.

Quantitative Metrics
Followers: The first quantitative measurement that will be used for Under Armour’s Social Media Plan is the number of followers. This one is obvious and many companies believe it to be pointless since there are many ways that this number can be cheated. However, since the objectives of this social media plan are to gain fans on Facebook, followers on Twitter, and repins on Pinterest, this is a very important metric. This measurement alone, of course, would not be reflective of success. Nonetheless, when combined with the other metrics that will be used to measure the plan it will be a valuable piece of information. It is information that is essential due to the chief goal of this social media plan, which is to increase awareness, activity, and engagement on the company social platforms through posting more creative content and conversing more frequently with fans.

Engagement: Another quantitative metric that is fundamental to this social media plan’s goals is engagement with consumers. Another huge part of the Under Armour Social Media Plan is for the company to more actively connect with their customers by answering questions, offering customer service, and thanking them for their feedback on a regular basis. The number of comments or conversations that are had on the company’s social platforms can measure engagement. The quantitative metrics that are being used for this plan are straightforward, but that’s because this plan in itself is straightforward. Under Armour is a lucrative company with a strong brand image, but its social media presence and activity needs to be revamped in order to reinforce the brand by keeping up with digital marketing trends.

Qualitative Metrics

Sentiment: Qualitative metrics are important because the balance out the flaws in the many of the quantitative metrics. For example, if there were a high number of comments on a post on
Facebook, this would appear to be a good thing from a quantitative perspective. However, this is not necessarily the case. If the comments are mostly negative complaints, then this could actually be very damaging to the company. That is why first qualitative metric being used for this plan is sentiment. It is important to know not just how many conversations are being had on social media, but whether or not these conversations are positive or negative. The sentiment of the consumers is essential for a company to understand. This is true because it not only reflects the success of the social media plan, but it also provides insight on how the target market feels about a brand or product, which is useful for improving the company in the future.

Influence: Another important qualitative metric is influence. If a certain post on one of Under Armour’s social media sites was very influential driving a lot of traffic, stimulating conversation, etc. then it is important to understand why. While the numbers behind this are what show influence, the company needs to understand what was the motivating factor behind this so that they can repeat it in the future. Knowing what made an impact says a lot, but knowing the reason that it did speaks volumes. In addition, it helps the company grow in the future and gives them better knowledge of what exactly their target market is looking for. Comprehending the influence of a social media marketing plan is “key to determining if your efforts are driving action or falling on deaf ears” (Whalley, 2011).

ROI Metrics

New Customers: Another important factor to understand when it comes to social media metrics is return on investment, or ROI. One metric that will be used to determine this for Under Armour’s social media plan will be the amount of consumers that were converted to customers. This can be tracked through surveys sent out to consumers on all of the social media platforms throughout
the year. These surveys can ask consumers questions about their purchase history with the brand, what influenced their choices, and if social media had any impact on their decisions. It can be very difficult to track ROI when it comes to social media marketing. This is because it is hard to directly correlate social media efforts to the action taken on purchases that are made. However, learning if social media has drawn in any new customers can be evidence of some money made through a company’s social efforts.

*Loyal Customers:* Loyal customers are another way of measuring the ROI for a company’s social media plan. It is not only about attracting new customers to a brand, but it is also about converting customers into loyal and dedicated brand advocates. These are the people who continue to come back for more and the people who buzz about the company and tell their friends. This can also be tracked through surveys. Additionally, it can be tracked by determining the fans that most frequently communicate, share, and connect with a brand’s social pages. It is one thing to reel new people in, but keeping them around for more is even more valuable. This is specifically applicable to Under Armour’s social media plan because it will show if their social media efforts can be directly tied to drawing in loyal customers and strengthening their fan base and online social presence.
References


