

Spotlight on Social Media

We asked our panel of industry experts to share their advice on social media strategies, the most beneficial types of social media and best practices for positive engagement with customers to help drive traffic to their properties. Their responses, as always, were varied and insightful; and reflect the ever evolving landscape of social media. Here is what they had to say...

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Dave Abangan



Facebook is still reaching our target demographic which allows insightful conversation with our followers. We dabble in other social media channels but try to excel and primarily use one type versus being just 'good' in multiple areas. Budget is shifting directly out of print media towards this effort and advertising staff is trending towards spending additional time on this than their traditional responsibilities, up to and including evaluation of analytics.

As far as engagement, most important and appreciated by our followers is being responsive and honest. It is not social media if you aren't social. One way communication defeats the purpose, and there are a lot of organizations guilty of that. Followers are so in tune about our business and smart about what is posted. If you make a mistake, own it. Honesty is the best policy and attention spans are short. Move forward. Having a social media calendar is critical so you stay consistent and cover all areas of the property. Frequency of posts depends on various factors but a calendar keeps us relevant and focused.

We find open ended questions about promotions or trivia about our national entertainment creates great dialogue but also generates promotion registration and ticket sales. A challenge for us is to tie followers to our club database but we find that most are active members anyway. Customized casino, hotel or food offers available only to this audience is effective while providing a sense of privilege, and in turn, loyalty.

**Dee Baldwin, Marketing Media
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Black Oak Casino Resort in Tuolumne, CA
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Dee Baldwin



As every marketer knows the days of traditional marketing have drastically changed throughout the years, but hands down, using social media is always changing. Our most simple strategy when it comes to social media is make sure your content fits the platform you are using and keep the content fresh. Besides keeping content fresh, our strategy is simple, we "pay to play" – if you want to be seen you have to be willing to put some money behind it. This can be done using internal resources or outside agencies. We found that once we created a formal plan and brought in the right resources, our social media game changed. The best part is the laser focused targeting that companies like Facebook allow their customers to leverage. We also make sure what we are posting is engaging and authentic... we don't just post our next promotional poster, we create content around it, do a video (Facebook loves videos so they will tend to get more views) ask our followers questions, and always make sure to respond. Although we still do organic posts on our home page, we know that paid ads using Facebooks algorithms are the way to really get our content out in front of an audience.

In order to do this we hire experts who help us create those algorithms customizing specifically to our property, maximizing everything from a media buying standpoint (what are impression costs, how many engagements, video views, impressions, likes, shares, etc., we expect on our ROI). In the world of social media, companies like Facebook and Twitter make it very easy for just about anyone to place and buy media on their platform. In many cases this is a positive, but it also creates risk

in that one could easily be buying media that will just not move the media due to the lack of knowledge of how to buy. When utilizing tools and/or companies to assist in creating more of a professional service, we have found it leads to much greater success. We know that our ads are ending up in front of the right people, at the right time, and on-budget with the highest chance for success.

Rebecca Frisch, Social Media & Public Relations Manager
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Rebecca Frisch



The world of social media is ever-changing, but at its core, my primary strategy has always been engagement. The time for valuing so-called “vanity numbers” (i.e., total number of followers) has passed. The real value comes through delivering

engagement that is agile, authentic and relevant. Don't make ads. Tell stories. Create content that enriches, informs or compels. Instead of just posting about a sale or special event, look beyond it for the human aspect. Does your audience know the fudge they love so much is made fresh on-site? Do they know the items they adore in the gift shop are handcrafted by native artisans? Be committed to creative and personable messaging that is not only memorable, but will connect on an emotional level. Keep in regular contact with departments casino-wide so these stories won't escape notice.

It's also important to reach your audience where they are and not where you want them to be. If they're on Facebook, don't always make them go to your website for more details. And, don't assume the audience that follows you on one social platform wants the identical information you are providing on another. Different social platforms inherently call for different tactics. Listen to your audiences for clues – and carefully scrutinize data for insights – when defining strategies and optimizing campaigns.

The constantly changing landscape of social media also calls for a team that recognizes success is far more than pairing witty words with the right image. Effective social strategies also demand the ability to constantly anticipate, distill and adapt. Don't be afraid to experiment with something new or walk away from something old that is proving ineffective in community building.

Lastly, respond. And, not just to questions or praise. Tackle the hard comments or reviews, too. Don't miss the chance to show

fans who've expressed disappointment that their voice matters, too. It's amazing how the simple acts of recognition and listening can turn a negative start into a positive end for both sides.

Heather Hatton, Public Relations Manager
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Heather Hatton



Chinook Winds Casino Resort has been active on social media since 2009. We started slow with our Facebook account focusing on engaging our audience with interesting facts not only about the casino,

but the area in which we live. We are fortunate to live in a beautiful area on the West Coast with an oceanfront resort, golf course, showroom, gaming fun and multiple dining choices.

Once we established ourselves on Facebook by engaging our followers to answer questions, participate in contests and tell us about their day, we started engaging a new audience on Twitter and Instagram. These three (we are adding Snapchat soon) audiences allow us to engage on a personal basis with our guests who we may never see, but can now answer questions and concerns instantly. We didn't take on too many platforms too soon so we eased in by solidifying each platform before moving on to a new one.

Our Social Media strategy, which now includes Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, showcases our casino in a fun light that shares the story of the Siletz Tribe and the casino in relation to our community partnerships and guest relations. We introduce our team members in a way that makes them more than just an employee to our guests, but rather a part of their positive experience. We have the opportunity to attract not only the slot player, but the table game enthusiast, music lover and golfer on one single day.

We not only talk about our resort, but the entire community as well. Our platforms have become a must read daily to check on the happenings on the Oregon Coast and not just at Chinook Winds Casino Resort. By discussing activities throughout the surrounding communities we not only engage the casino enthusiast, but coastal traveler as well who might want to try their hand at blackjack in between beachcombing and clamming. We make our communication real and up to date, keeping our followers wanting more. They see us as a fun place to visit and create memories.

Kim Kinyon, Marketing Manager
Win-River Resort & Casino in Redding, CA
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Kim Kinyon



Social mMedia is not so scary if you have a plan. Here at Win-River Resort & Casino we base our social media plan on one thing – to drive every like, share, and comment in the direction of our business goals.

Without clear goals, we have no means of proving our social media return on investment.

We start our planning process by conducting an audit of our social media accounts, visiting our current goals and implementing future goals. We try to be concise with our goals, but with the ever-changing social media tools, we must always be open to change. We embrace change on a daily basis and see change as opportunities to better Win-River's social media footprint.

Our social media accounts each have a purpose. We use our Instagram account to show our business culture by including our team members in our photos. Some of these photos capture interactions with our guests. Our target goal for each Instagram post is 25 likes and 5-10 comments. We have recently introduced Snapchat geo-filters during events and use these to share the lighter side of Win-River and try to connect with a younger demographic. We also use Twitter in the same manner. We strive for at least 10 retweets and 10 likes. However, we do not put a lot of pressure on these retweets and likes – we would rather see an increase in web referral and conversion rate.

Our Facebook account is our most popular. With the Facebook changes for businesses, we ran into the challenge of reaching a large audience with our posts. With the help of Teuteberg Inc., we have been able to reach a much larger audience by using paid social media advertisements. Facebook offers an innovative targeting system that enables Teuteberg to direct our ads toward a specific demographic resulting in much better engagement and return on investment.

Social media is always changing and at times challenging. One of the biggest trends expected to explode in 2017 is the use of more live video. This trend allows us to engage with our guests immediately, unscripted and more authentic than a regular post. Win-River Resort & Casino Marketing is looking forward to learning and using livestreamed videos to engage with our target audience in 2017.

Jessica Maiers, Social Media Strategist
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Jessica Maiers



In this digital age, every business is competing for online consumer attention. While it may seem intuitive to set up a content calendar that is solely focused on a sell-sell-sell mentality, it can be a real turn-off

to most consumers, especially on social media. Many can easily see through your less-than-subtle marketing efforts and would instead prefer to be entertained, in lieu of being inundated with online advertisements. The core of the Northern Quest Resort & Casino social media strategy centers on guest engagement. In order to achieve coveted follows, retweets and shares, we strive to provide varied posts that are a healthy combination of experiential, user-generated, and informational content, while deliberately peppering promotional ads into the mix.

With engagement as the primary platform we build our strategy upon, it is necessary to understand that no two social networks are alike and neither are the people that use them. For example, our poker players are a unique class of gamers and capturing the attention of this niche audience is challenging. To combat this, we created a private poker Facebook group, which our players voluntarily subscribe to knowing they'll have the inside scoop on upcoming tournaments and free lessons. This is beneficial because subscribers receive notifications every time a post is created that may have otherwise gotten lost in their Facebook feed. Understanding your target demographic and the platform that appeals most to them, while maintaining a robust social media strategy, is the key to creating successful online marketing campaigns.

Gone are the days when creating a random post on social media may be the last item to be checked off of your marketing to-do list. Instead, social media should be viewed as an intentional, quick-time tool to connect with the people that choose to receive our messaging, either by liking, following or joining one of our groups. While it's vital to capture the attention of your audience with engaging posts, successful social media profiles should be amenable to two-way communication. We have found that one of our most important strategies is to be responsive to every post made

by our followers. Just as we value making every guest feel special at Northern Quest through providing outstanding Kalispel Hospitality, we strive to do the same with those engaging online. While it can take some extra time, the one-on-one interaction allows us the opportunity to show our guests that we care about them and, in turn, creates another dedicated follower of our brand.

Jarrold Simon, Marketing Director
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Jarrold Simon



Golden Eagle’s social media strategy is constantly evolving, changing and growing. We are lucky to have wonderful support by tribal leadership at the Kickapoo

Tribe in Kansas. They are fully supportive of us trying new avenues, and adding additional social media outlets as they emerge.

Although we spend time on a number of social channels, our biggest following has been on Facebook. Facebook has proved to be extremely beneficial in being able to share our promotions, events, messages and dining schedules with our guests. We keep the content fresh and post 5-7 days a week. Facebook has to be monitored at all times so that we can respond quickly to any post and message. Active engagement is important! Fans of our Facebook page need to know that we are here for them if they have a question, comment or issue. We have found that posting a video garners a lot of attention. We keep our videos short and sweet – under 20 seconds. Videos are a good way to mix things up. Also, adding a link on posts to our website has tremendously improved traffic to our site.

Golden Eagle also utilizes Facebook advertising. This is an inexpensive way to grow our followers and also share a specific message to a very targeted audience. We are able to reach new people who are not already followers of our page by targeting a location, hobby, age or other key demographics.

While we are able to convey longer messages on Facebook, Twitter has also proven to be an important way to share our message. We write short, concise sentences along with a powerful and engaging graphic. Twitter also has to be

closely monitored. If Golden Eagle Casino is mentioned and tagged we need to know about it and respond to it – good or bad. If applicable, we retweet the message!

We recently added Instagram to our family of social media outlets. We started to grow our followers organically by following individuals in our market in the hopes that they would in turn follow us. We share graphics and images that communicate promotions going on at the casino. Because Facebook and Instagram are linked, we are also able to take some of our advertising on Facebook and create ads on Instagram to build up our followers that way as well.

Golden Eagle Casino utilizes a number of tools to schedule future posts and for reporting and analytics. Running reports and analyzing which posts perform the best help us adjust our messaging each month. We also rely heavily on the expertise of our advertising agency, Cord Media. They are extremely well versed in social media and they have recommended unique advertising ideas and creative social calendars, resulting in successful campaigns. ♣

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