

Dear social media

By  Bogosi Mbotsehegwa

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I'm not sure the way social media is being done is efficient, nor allows for the extraction of the full potential and true value of social media. The way brands are expressed on social media is counter-intuitive to that world and the different platforms that live in the digital universe.



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Content calendars

One of my biggest gripes has always been with content calendars. It just feels so counter-productive to mull over a content calendar. People (clients and agencies) go back and forth for weeks, trying to approve a content calendar, and for me, one would be better served spending that time thinking strategy and how to build for long-term.

The reason I'm not too excited about content calendars is because they are by nature, un-natural to social media. Imagine if normal people spent hours and days trying to figure out what they are going to post or share two weeks from now? That makes no sense, right? One would argue that brands are businesses and therefore need to plan ahead. Granted, but how do you plan what are you going to say in three weeks' time from now? Unless if you've got something to say like a brand launch. But, for day-to-day engagement, content calendars don't help anyone really.



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Content calendars are just a tool or process that should help us manage better, but what I've found is that they end up being the thinking in and of themselves, meaning, people aren't thinking anymore, they are relying on the content calendars to be the thinking. These things are draining and lend one in a space where the focus is no longer on the job at hand, which is building brand, but rather getting them approved.

Digital teams are worried about getting content calendars approved, as opposed to doing proper brand work that's digitally appropriate. This means that the process now overrides the job at hand.

Lost opportunities

Brands need to behave like how people do on social media. They need to comment, share stuff, like people's posts, react and be engaged. No brand deserves to be followed unless if it actually adds real value in a meaningful way, that should it disappear, the world would stop. Truth is, no brand can claim that.

With content calendars comes a great loss, which is unplanned opportunities. What content calendars mean is that whatever is planned is set in stone, and therefore whatever creative opportunity that may come, may not be executed because it wasn't unplanned for.

Hire for the brand

The way social media and digital departments are run does not allow for efficiency. People get hired because they can do the job or they know more about the different social media platform and how they operate. That's cool, but social media is not like TV or radio where, once you've placed the content and its running, your job is done.



Social media can be an effective research tool but there are challenges

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One needs to get involved, be engaged with the brand, the topics, the comments, the backlash, and the compliments. You need someone who is really in it. The only way to find someone who is in it is to hire someone who knows more about the brand than social media tools. Tools are meant to help us be smarter and more efficient, not stifle us or get in the way.

There's only one humanly possible way to optimise brand presence on social media, and that is to hire for the brand. Meaning, if you are a make-up brand, you should hire someone (male or female) who is obsessed with make-up. Someone who knows make-up better than the manufactures of make-up, someone who loves putting on make-up, someone who loves giving advice, someone who knows all the brands across the category, someone who is a walking, talking and breathing 'make-up Google'.

Do not let the tools be the thinking, apply your thinking to the tools. Social media is a human interaction with intellect, an intertwined world of emotions. Forget the tools. Hire humans who love the subject matter that your brand is in, and then employ the tools to make the word even better.

Community managers should be rockstars

Don't run your brand on social media using content calendars. Hire people who would eat, sleep and talk your brand. Hire people who thrive in whatever world your brand lives in. I'd be surprised to find out Harley Davidson hires people who aren't

bikers. That would be weird, but unfortunately, that's normal – people are hired to tick boxes. What you need, is to hire the right fit, not just any fit, but people are brand fit.

You don't need people to manage social pages, you need people who will live the brand through the pages.

Also, why are social media managers working in offices? They should be out there, being immersed in the category, interacting with people who use the brand they manage, they too should be using the products and services offered by the brand they manage. They should know the brands more than everyday people.

Community management should be a dream job, not the job that makes you dream about finding a different job.

ABOUT BOGOSI MOTSHEGWA

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