

Saint Germaine Paper Social Media Strategy and Policy

Executive Summary

Origami is the Japanese art of folding that has an increasing number of practitioners working in varying degrees of complexity and in different specializations (Elran, 2019). These origamists and paper folders have specific paper needs as they push the boundaries of their craft. A papermaking company is formed to create origami papers and products that are highly sought after. Market research is done to develop the initial product offerings and a social media strategy is developed to follow those products through the customer lifecycle. The strategy deals directly with the type of content that should be created and includes a plan for incorporating measurement. An initial social media policy is presented to guide the company in establishing its online presence that will also serve it when it eventually grows to take on employees. It is argued that social media marketing can result in sales and profits for a small, resource-poor start-up by directly accessing and engaging with the customer base.

Keywords: origami, start-up, social media strategy, social media metrics, social media marketing

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Discussion | 4 |
| The Business Proposition | 4 |
| Origami Artist Need and Customer Profile | 4 |
| Business Profile and Meeting the Customer Need | 5 |
| Choosing Social Media For the Marketing Strategy | 5 |
| Social Media Strategy Across the Customer Lifecycle | 7 |
| The Build-up (Awareness and Engagement) | 7 |
| The Launch (Purchase) | 9 |
| The Follow-up (Retention and Loyalty, Growth and Advocacy) | 10 |
| Measuring Methodology | 11 |
| Social Media Policy | 13 |
| Looking toward the future | 14 |
| Conclusion | 14 |
| Appendix | 16 |
| Saint Germaine Paper Social Media Policy | 16 |
| References | 17 |

Introduction

Saint Germaine Paper Social Media Strategy and Policy

A small paper company is forming to manufacture specialty paper. Its first product line will be handmade origami papers designed for a highly discerning paper artist customer. The paper company will be using social media to launch and market their new products as a cost-saving measure but also because their target customer is highly active in communities on Instagram and Facebook. We are a consultant group hired to develop a social media strategy and initial social media policy for the paper company, hereon referred to as Saint Germaine Paper. Tafesse & Wien define social media strategy as ‘a goal-directed planning process for creating user generated content, driven by a group of Internet applications, to create a unique and valuable competitive position’ (Tafesse & Wien, 2018). Developing a social media strategy to directly access and engage with the global origami community will drive profits and grow the Saint Germaine Paper business in a cost-effective way. In addition, communicating and doing business on social media platforms while adhering to a developed social media policy will develop authenticity and trust and engage the customer to share their expertise, needs, and advertise for the business via word-of-mouth marketing (Candi et al., 2018).

Discussion

The Business Proposition

Origami Artist Need and Customer Profile

When developing a social media strategy a clear understanding should form of who the intended customer or audience is (Marketo, 2019). The first customer for the Saint Germaine Paper business will be the advanced origami artist. Origami is a Japanese craft often referred to as folding. Origami was originally a ceremonial craft and then became a way to make toys and decorations out of an inexpensive material, paper. In the 20th century, a man named Akira Yoshizawa created thousands of new figures and ways of folding and also invented a folding language with dashed and dotted lines and arrows. This allowed the craft to grow and spread. New designs led to new requirements of the paper used for the folding. The paper needed to be strong and not rip, but also very thin. It also needed to accept a crease (Foer, 2014). For the Saint Germaine Paper company, market research was conducted with thirty advanced origami artists answering a set of survey questions. As a result, it was established that there is a need in the community for large, affordable sheets of quality handmade paper. A 30-inch by 30-inch square sheet in a variety of colors and thicknesses would be ideal, with a cost no more than \$20 a sheet. The majority of respondents voiced the need for a duo colored handmade sheet (i.e. two colors, one on each side). They are willing to pay more for handmade paper due to its strength, versatility, and photogenic characteristics (G. Lapp, personal communication, June 26, 2020).

Business Profile and Meeting the Customer Need

According to the survey conducted by G. Lapp, there is an unmet need for an affordable, readily available, high-quality handmade paper of sufficient size (personal communication, June 26, 2020). There are companies making handmade paper that can be used for origami but they are often cost prohibitive or not big enough. There is one establishment that manufactures handmade paper for origami artists specifically but the selection is limited and therefore the applications are limited to a handful of origami styles. The cost of these sheets is also cost prohibitive for many. There have been complaints about the consistency of the paper properties like thickness, which is imperative for origami.

Saint Germaine Paper was formed as a specialty paper mill, with the mission to design papers for niche applications like the one at hand. The mill operates on a project-by-project basis, working directly with customers to create the paper of their dreams. Once the papers are created and the regular customers established and prioritized, the papers are launched into the general marketplace and become a regular offering of the company. The founder of Saint Germaine Paper is in the position to offer this service as a graduate of the Paper and Bioprocess Engineering department at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry. She worked for two years at an industrial specialty paper mill and also apprenticed with master handmade papermakers in Minnesota and Argentina (G. Lapp, personal communication, June 26, 2020).

Choosing Social Media For the Marketing Strategy

Social media will be the primary marketing strategy for the business because the knowledge and user base for the origami product have strong communities online. While a knowledgeable papermaker founded the business, she is not an origami artist. This knowledge is outside of the business expertise. Accessing it through social media will open up innovation and

also give direct access to the consumer. In addition to this, the paper company is a start-up with limited resources. Social media can provide the social interaction the company seeks with the end-user and generate word-of-mouth marketing for little capital investment (Candi et al., 2018).

Instagram and Facebook are the main social platforms of origami artists, who like to discuss the craft and also share images of their creations (G. Lapp, personal communication, June 26, 2020). These two platforms rely heavily on images, particularly Instagram. When making purchasing decisions, consumers demand visual content. Participating in social media with images responds to this demand from the public for visual content and contributes to increased intent to purchase and also increased brand reputation (Valentini et al., 2018).

Images allow us to engage, create intimacy and appeal to emotions. Sharing images on social media makes content 40x more shareable and facilitates a connection with potential customers. Through these connections relationships are formed that can be nurtured and converted to sales. On social media the company can develop offers, promotions, contests, and content that directly engages the customer. It is a very personal way to connect with the customer and is often referred to as social selling. People are also more likely to believe their peers when making purchase decisions. Creating content and a product that people can get excited about and want to share with their friends through social media is imperative to sales. It is also important that the social media strategy aligns with the customer lifecycle. A company needs to be there with the customer, not just for the sale, but also from awareness and engagement through the purchase, and on to retention, loyalty, growth and advocacy (Marketo, 2019).

Social Media Strategy Across the Customer Lifecycle

The Build-up (Awareness and Engagement)

At the start of the customer lifecycle is awareness. These customers are knowledgeable of the company as a result of effective branding, search engine rankings, and/or a strong

social media presence. During the build-up to a product launch, the company wants to increase potential customers' awareness of and interest in the activity of the company. The channels of communication must be identified and early-stage customers should be nurtured through personalized communication (Marketo, 2019).

Through the market research conducted, several origami artists have come forward to volunteer as paper testers during product development (G. Lapp, personal communication, June 26, 2020). These individuals are aware of the brand and are interested in becoming engaged. The next step should be creating profiles of these individual artists, learning their interests and behaviors, and developing relationships and trust throughout the paper testing. Hopefully, some of these initial relationships will evolve into the artists signing on as influencers. Some of the participants are well known in the origami world and have large social media followings of other origami artists. If they create origami using the paper and promote the paper in their feed to their peers, their credibility will be conferred to the business. Social media influencers are a popular way for companies to advertise online, with 86% of companies saying they used the strategy in 2017. Instagram is the most used social platform for influencer marketing followed by Facebook (Breves et al., 2019). Paid influencers will strategically increase word-of-mouth marketing for the company. Word-of-mouth marketing cuts through the noise of other social media postings and is the primary factor behind 20 to 50 percent of all purchasing decisions. This is because individuals value opinions expressed directly to them by people they know and trust (Bughin, Doogan, & Vetvik, 2010).

After a customer becomes aware of the brand the personalized messaging can nurture the new relationship and encourage them to become more engaged. This is where content creation is vital. Efforts must be made to maintain the connection made with an audience with fun, educational, and entertaining content. Blog posts, tip sheets, infographics, photos, memes, videos, slideshows, podcasts, and long-form content like ebooks are all possibilities. In the early stage of the customer lifecycle it is helpful to share content that helps people get to know the company (Marketo, 2019). Now is when the opportunity to fascinate your audience really presents itself.

Branding expert Sally Hogshead explains that in competitive markets the most fascinating option always wins. She defines seven different fascination advantages, categories through which a company can fascinate the customer. The advantage is always focused on highlighting what the company already excels at. Saint Germaine Paper tested out as a Passion brand. Passion brands attract others through excitement to their ideas and often excel in building relationships, especially through social media where the messaging should focus on emotions. Knowing this is how the brand communicates can help craft the voice of the brand. All content put out by Saint Germaine Paper should be expressive, optimistic, sensory, warm, and social. It also is fitting that Passion brands focus on lust before logic, since handmade paper is a luxury not a necessity for origami. Posts should create strong and immediate emotional responses from visuals and emotive language in messaging. Before posting, ask if the content is warm and engaging, colorful and expressive. Using this methodology, the business will develop content that taps into things the consumer is already passionate about. The content will be shareable. The company can thereby build relationships and also help people make new connections of their own. The passion will be contagious and customers might even start offering up new ideas for innovative products (Hogshead, 2016).

The Launch (Purchase)

The mid-stage of the customer lifecycle is the act of the purchase. This coordinates with the launch of the product that customers will already be anticipating through the build-up. Well-planned and executed new product launches lead to greater success in sales and profits. The customer will be ready to buy and it must be convenient for them to do so. For this, Instagram has a feature that allows a person to purchase a product inside the app, just by clicking the image. There are fewer steps involved, which increases customer purchases. Facebook Marketplace is also an in-app purchasing possibility. A shop will also be set up on the company website (Marketo, 2019).

In this stage of the customer lifecycle it is important that the content put out by the company continues to be engaging. Social media is very time consuming if done well, and it must be done well to keep the content dynamic (Gruner et al., 2019). Direct advertising now becomes part of the media mix. The advertising should make customers curious to know more. (Hogshead, 2016). It is good to position the company as a resource to its followers and to follow the 4-1-1 rule. This rule states that a company should share four educational or entertaining content pieces per one soft and one hard promotional piece. An example of a soft promotion is a customer testimonial. An example of a hard promotion is announcing a sale or sharing content directly featuring a product (Marketo, 2019).

It is also important to remember that messages should not read like directives (e.g. 'buy this!') because this will seem authoritarian and will not encourage engagement. Since a goal is to have the content shared widely it is important to ask before posting, 'what about this content makes it shareable.' People are more likely to share content that has images of people looking directly at the camera with the product in the foreground. The second highest shared image involves people looking at the product in the background and/or engaging with the product in some way (Ordenes et al., 2019). At this stage, create and share content to align with the following

company objectives: showing off the brand's personality and culture, promoting events, establishing thought leadership, staying on top of industry trends, announcing new products, gathering new names for the marketing database, acquiring new customers, building/nurturing relationships with buyers, and increasing traffic to the company blog (Marketo, 2019).

The Follow-up (Retention and Loyalty, Growth and Advocacy)

The final stages of the customer lifecycle are retention and loyalty, growth, and advocacy. After a potential buyer has become a customer, it is important to keep the relationship going. Creating loyal customers who return to buy more product is imperative to growth and Repeat customers spend up to 67% more than first time customers. One way to remain connected with the customer is to continue providing quality content through social media platforms. Social media can also be the first line of defense when customers are dissatisfied. Now is the time to make sure customers receive excellent service and a rapid response to any issues that arise (Marketo, 2019). Customer feedback should be encouraged, with rewards for errors found on the website or in the product (Hogshead, 2016). This is the time for cross selling and upselling, special perks and incentives. Customers can and will advocate for brands they like, expanding the reach of the brand. These active and engaged customers should be rewarded with special offers and promotions (Marketo, 2019). Content needs to continue engaging the community. This is the time to find origami experts to contribute to the brand's blog and to have favorite clients give testimonials (Hogshead, 2016).

Only 1% of an online community creates content while 9% contribute by synthesizing or curating content, and the remaining 90% are passive users (Kwon, 2020). These categories have also been described as consumers, contributors, and creators (Valentini et al., 2018). It should be an objective of every brand to increase participation. To do this, a brand needs to work to increase psychological ownership. A feeling of ownership exists when someone creates, or is part of

creating, something themselves, or if they have intimate knowledge of or control over something (Kwon, 2020). The original origami artists from the survey are already part of creating the paper and that relationship will be nurtured throughout the process. New artists can be asked through social media how the paper is working for them and if they have suggestions for improvement, thus creating a feeling of ownership. Content can also provide opportunities for artists to share their expertise. Also, this is the stage where a ‘design your own duo-layer’ will be debuted. This promotion will allow an artist to choose exactly what two colors they want on each side of their duo-colored paper. Having control like this will increase the psychological ownership and participation of the customer. It was also a user-generated idea (G. Lapp, personal communication, June 26, 2020).

It is important to make a product the customer wants but you must also be a partner the customer wants to buy from. To be this partner it will be important to become and be accepted as a member of the community. One strategy will be to table at origami conventions to interact face-to-face with the customer and establish relationships. At the core of this strategy will be improvised marketing interventions (IMI). These are interactions posted on social media in real-time, usually around an event. Besides attending events and being part of the online conversation around them, it will be important to stay abreast of interesting current news in the origami and allied fields so that posts can be timely and relevant (Borah et al., 2020).

Measuring Methodology

There is no way to know if social media marketing efforts are effective without a measurement methodology. Jeffrey’s eight-step social media measurement process includes identifying organizational goals, researching stakeholders, setting specific objectives for each stakeholder group, setting social media Key Performance Indicators against each objective, choosing tools and benchmarks, analyzing the results, presenting to management, and measuring

continuously to improve (Jeffrey, 2013). The main goal of the Saint Germaine Paper social media campaign is to increase positive brand awareness and engagement. Based on the survey, the original 30 origami artists and their social circles will be the initial stakeholders. The SMART objective is specific, measurable, attainable, results orientated, and time bound (Jeffrey, 2013).

There will be three objectives, one each for the build-up, launch, and follow-up. The number of followers will be tracked over time to gauge interest. The build-up objective is to gain 500 followers on Instagram and Facebook over the two months it will take to develop the paper. The launch objective will be to increase the followers by 20% during the month after the launch. The follow-up objective will be to increase the followers again by 20% in the month after tabling at an origami conference. Key Performance Indicators will focus on followers and follower engagement, measured by tracking the ratio of posts to comments, tracking the percentage of followers talking about the brand via hashtags, and tracking increase in followers around significant events like a product launch, promotion, or influencer posts. The company is new and it is appropriate for the tools and benchmarks to be measured around the company and its own activity for the first campaign. For this purpose, sales will also be recorded to compare to the increasing number of followers at different points of the campaign. The total impact of a social media campaign is determined by hard metrics like conversion and cost per acquisition. To analyze the results, conversions can be measured by new names brought into the database during a social media campaign. Cost per acquisition will be measured, by taking the cost of an influencer post divided by the number of new names generated directly after the post (Marketo, 2019). ROI of the total campaign can be calculated by taking the total money earned minus the total money invested, divided by the total money invested, multiplied by 100. The results are reported as a percentage. The results will be reported to Saint Germaine Paper, two months after the company's attendance at an origami conference, which will mark the end of the initial social media campaign.

The social media team will continue to measure and improve social media performance to keep the Saint Germaine Paper social media platforms growing, popular, and lively (Jeffrey, 2013).

Social Media Policy

Companies do what they can to project positive images of themselves through tailored content creation and careful communication and action. The perception of the company by the public will be based on this but also on individuals' communicated experience with the brand (word-of-mouth marketing), and also other companies and news outlets talking about the brand. Social media allows users to communicate about experiences with the brand with influence even without perceived authority. It is therefore important to have a policy of how the brand will relate to consumers, communicate about the brand, and also do damage control when negativity arises (Etter, Ravasi, & Colleoni, 2019). A social media policy can also be used to help content adhere to a brand voice (Marketo, 2019), develop authenticity and trust, and craft communications consistent with the company mission, vision, values, core business, and business communication goals (Mazza & Palermo, 2018). Policies can include guidelines on protecting proprietary information, posting derogatory or inflammatory content, and posts that imply illegal conduct. It should clarify who speaks for the company and how on social media. This includes etiquette in responding to customers, what things can and cannot be shared and the consequence for mishandling social media. Privacy and disclosure policies and a plan for dealing with conflict can be given and security issues can be addressed, depending on the size and nature of the company (Carter, 2018).

Saint Germaine Paper is a small, new company with currently only one person running every component of the business. This does not mean that a social media policy is inappropriate. Creating rudimentary guidelines will build a foundation to grow the company on and a date can be set to revisit the policy, as it should be a dynamic, not static document. A preliminary social media policy was developed and is included in the appendix.

Looking toward the future

Social media marketing can result in sales and profits for a small, resource-poor start-up by directly accessing and engaging with the customer base. After the initial campaign concludes the opportunity for a new campaign will arise and strategic leadership will be needed. The brand will need to form an understanding of where it belongs in the larger paper industry and anticipate threats and challenges if it intends to grow. Quantitative data will grow over time and patterns will emerge that will need interpreting. It's possible that the paper company will chose to focus solely on origami paper needs but it is also possible that it will continue on its intended trajectory of being a mill that makes many specialty papers. In this decision, the leaders should make small, staged commitments, formulating short and long-term goals for the company. There will be successes and failures and there will be lessons to learn from both experiences (Shoemaker et al., 2013). There is already transformational leadership happening in this business-of-one. The founder is looking to the experience and expertise of the origami community to design the paper that is needed. She knows she doesn't know it all. When she eventually hires employees to grow the business and add skills she does not possess, she will inspire them with her passion for paper and work to develop their strengths as she's worked to develop her own. In terms of the social media strategy, inspirational motivation will be the prime mode of transformational leadership. The followers of Saint Germaine Paper will catch the enthusiasm and a team spirit will be created where everyone can feel personal ownership in the paper being created (Module 2, n.d.).

Conclusion

A transformational leader knows that they don't know everything and that they must look to the expertise of others to stimulate innovation (Reavis, 2010). Saint Germaine Paper internalized this and began their transformation into business by engaging in and learning from the

online global origami community. We created a social media strategy to further cement their role as community advocate, creating loyal followers who will actively engage with and promote Saint Germaine Paper products, launching the business with strong profits at minimal upfront marketing cost. While the social media strategy deals specifically with short-term goals, the social media policy presents a future-orientated guidebook for Saint Germaine Paper, positioning them as a strategic leader to their social media followers.

Appendix

Saint Germaine Paper Social Media Policy

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Roles and Responsibilities

- The sole speaker for Saint Germaine Paper on social media is the sole employee of the company, Genevieve Lapp. Her role is to communicate on behalf of the company. To this end, the pronoun used will be “we.” The voice of the company is approachable, considerate, supportive, and detail-oriented.
- The responsibilities involved in running Saint Germaine Paper’s social media include posting content regularly to participate in the origami community, monitoring for mentions of the company to interact with, promoting the company and the work of artists using the product of the company, handling negative feedback with a customer-centered approach. This includes considering varying cultural styles of communication.

Legal Compliance

- No image of an origami artist’s work should be posted without consent, credit, and compensation. This means the artist was in agreement that the image should be shared, that the image was linked back to their account and the copyright information given, and that the artist is contacted directly to thank them for the image and offer a 10% discount code for a future purchase.

Security Considerations

- Passwords for email and social media platforms should include a lower and uppercase letter, a number, a symbol, be longer than eight characters, not match any other password previously/currently used by the business owner, and not spell any words from the English language. Passwords should be changed every 90 days. Two-factor authentication is desirable.
- In the beginning stages of the business an online shop service should be researched and chosen based on its track record handling malicious threats. All online transactions involving exchange of credit card numbers and personal information should occur through the encryption of the third-party site and never through email or over chat.

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