

A PROACTIVE MODEL OF PUBLIC RELATIONS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA TO ELEVATE THE IMAGE OF THE FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCE AT SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Abstract— In an era where digital communication shapes perceptions, academic institutions must strategically leverage social media to enhance their image and engage effectively with stakeholders. This study presents a comprehensive investigation into the development, implementation, and impact of a proactive model of public relations (PR) through social media, with the specific aim of elevating the image of the Faculty of Management Science at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. A mixed-methods research design was employed, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. In-depth interviews with key stakeholders provided nuanced insights into current perceptions, while content analysis of existing social media content identified successful strategies. Surveys and social media analytics were used for quantitative assessments, providing a holistic view of the proactive PR model's impact. The implementation of the proactive PR model resulted in a positive shift in stakeholder perceptions, with increased awareness and favorable views of the faculty. The proactive PR model has demonstrated its potential to elevate the image of the Faculty of Management Science. By embracing recommendations and iteratively refining strategies, the faculty can continue to leverage social media as a powerful tool for strategic communication, fostering positive relationships with stakeholders and reinforcing its position as a leading academic institution.

Keywords— Image of university, Proactive model, Public relations, Social media

INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, the image and reputation of academic institutions play a pivotal role in attracting prospective students, engaging stakeholders, and fostering collaborative partnerships. In this era of digital connectivity, social media has emerged as a powerful tool for communication and brand building. Recognizing the significance of proactive public relations, this study introduces a model aimed at leveraging social media to elevate the image of the Faculty of Management Science at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

The Faculty of Management Science, as an integral part of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, strives for academic excellence, innovation, and community engagement. In a competitive educational landscape, it becomes imperative to actively shape and manage the public perception of the faculty. Traditional methods of public relations, while valuable, may fall short in the face of the rapidly evolving digital environment. Therefore, adopting a proactive model centered around social media becomes essential to not only disseminate information but also to engage with diverse audiences in real-time.

In developing a proactive public relations model, the integration of technological tools and innovative communication strategies will be paramount. Leveraging analytics, artificial intelligence, and multimedia content creation will contribute to the effectiveness of the model in navigating the dynamic digital landscape. Traditionally, public relations in higher education involved disseminating information through press releases, official statements, and institutional events. However, the emergence of the digital era has transformed the communication landscape, necessitating a shift towards proactive engagement. Contemporary public relations in academia extend beyond one-way communication to embrace interactive strategies that foster transparency, authenticity, and community building (Rungsisawat, 2023).

Social media platforms have become ubiquitous channels for communication, information-sharing, and community building. For academic institutions, these platforms offer an unprecedented opportunity to engage

with diverse audiences in real-time. Through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube, universities can showcase their achievements, highlight faculty expertise, share student success stories, and actively participate in broader conversations within their academic disciplines.

The rationale behind this research stems from the understanding that social media platforms offer a unique and interactive space to communicate the values, achievements, and distinctive features of the Faculty of Management Science. The study will culminate in the presentation and discussion of findings, offering insights into the impact of the model on elevating the image of the Faculty of Management Science. Finally, conclusions and recommendations will be drawn, shedding light on the implications for future practices in academic public relations through social media. By proactively managing the digital narrative, the faculty can shape perceptions, build a sense of community, and foster positive relationships with various stakeholders, including current and prospective students, faculty members, alumni, industry partners, and the broader community. The outcomes of the research will not only benefit the Faculty of Management Science at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University but also contribute valuable insights to the broader discourse on strategic public relations in higher education.

OBJECTIVES

The significance of this study lies in its potential to serve as a blueprint for academic institutions, particularly faculties of management and related disciplines, aiming to fortify their digital presence that contribute to a positive and distinctive image. The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Analyze the key components that contribute to the image of the Faculty of Management Science, considering academic reputation, faculty expertise, program offerings, extracurricular activities, and overall brand identity.
2. Implement strategies to foster active involvement and engagement of alumni through social media, leveraging their successes and experiences to contribute positively to the image and reputation of the faculty.
3. Evaluate the impact of the proactive public relations model on the image and perception of the Faculty of Management Science, considering changes in sentiment, brand awareness, and stakeholder sentiments over time.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

In the rapidly evolving landscape of higher education, the strategic use of social media for public relations has become a paramount consideration for academic institutions seeking to elevate their image and engage effectively with diverse stakeholders. This literature review delves into key themes and findings from scholarly works that explore the intersection of public relations, social media, and higher education.

The Digital Transformation of Public Relations in Higher Education:

The landscape of public relations in higher education has undergone a digital transformation. The digital transformation has reshaped traditional public relations practices within higher education institutions. Scholars such as Kent and Taylor (2016) emphasize the need for a strategic digital presence, arguing that the integration of social media into public relations efforts is essential for building and maintaining positive institutional images. The study argues for a dialogic approach to public relations, emphasizing the importance of engaging stakeholders in two-way communication, a principle that can be applied effectively on social media platforms.

Role of Social Media in Shaping Institutional Image:

The emergence of social media as a primary communication channel has prompted scholars to investigate its role in shaping the image of academic institutions. The engagement of faculty and students in public relations initiatives is explored by Tsetsura, Koupric, and Vozzolo (2016). The study emphasizes the collaborative nature of social media communication within academic settings. Weller and Puschmann (2011) delve into the multifaceted role of social media, specifically Twitter, in scientific communication. The study highlights the dynamic nature of social media and its potential to influence public perceptions positively or negatively. Understanding the dynamics of social media platforms is crucial for institutions aiming to leverage these channels for effective communication.

Engagement and Community Building Through Social Media:

Social media platforms provide unique opportunities for engaging with diverse audiences and building a sense of community within higher education. Highfield, Leaver, and Abidin (2013) focus on Instagram and visual social

media, providing insights into how visual content contributes to digital communication practices. Understanding the visual nature of platforms is vital for crafting engaging content. The importance of active engagement and dialogic communication on social media in fostering positive relationships with stakeholders.

Innovation and Technology in Public Relations:

Reputation management in higher education is a critical aspect of public relations. The work of Signitzer and Coombs (2011) emphasizes the strategic communication efforts necessary for maintaining a positive reputation, especially in times of crisis. Scholars like Molleda and Moreno (2011) discuss the integration of innovation and technology in public relations. As institutions seek to be proactive in their communication strategies, understanding the role of technological advancements becomes crucial.

Measuring Social Media Effectiveness:

The measurement of the impact and effectiveness of social media efforts is a key concern for public relations practitioners. Kim and Yang (2017) delve into the metrics and measurement tools that can be employed to assess the success of social media campaigns. The study focuses on the measurement of social media and public relations effectiveness, providing a framework for assessing the impact of social media efforts. Understanding metrics is essential for gauging the success of proactive PR strategies.

The literature reviewed underscores the transformative impact of social media on public relations within higher education. From strategic communication and engagement to reputation management and measurement, the findings from these studies contribute valuable insights that will inform the development of a proactive model of public relations through social media for the Faculty of Management Science at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The integration of these insights will enable the faculty to navigate the digital landscape effectively, shaping a positive institutional image and fostering meaningful connections with its stakeholders.

METHODS

The study employs a mixed-methods research design, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to comprehensively explore and evaluate the development and implementation of a proactive model of public relations through social media.

Qualitative Phase:

a. In-depth Interviews: Conducting in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including faculty members, students, alumni, and administrative staff, to gather qualitative insights into their perceptions of the current image of the Faculty of Management Science and expectations regarding its enhancement through social media.

b. Content Analysis: Analyzing existing social media content related to the faculty to understand current engagement strategies, identify successful practices, and pinpoint areas for improvement.

Quantitative Phase:

a. Surveys: Administering surveys to a representative sample of faculty members, students, and external stakeholders to quantitatively assess the impact and effectiveness of social media initiatives on the perception and image of the Faculty of Management Science.

b. Social Media Analytics: Utilizing social media analytics tools to measure key performance indicators (KPIs) such as reach, engagement, and sentiment analysis. This quantitative data will provide insights into the effectiveness of the proactive PR model.

Development and Implementation of the Proactive PR Model:

a. Model Design: Developing the proactive PR model based on insights gathered from the literature review and qualitative research phase. The model will outline strategies for content creation, community engagement, crisis management, and key performance indicators for success.

b. Pilot Implementation: Implementing the proactive PR model on selected social media platforms on a pilot basis. This phase will involve crafting and scheduling content, actively engaging with the audience, and monitoring the response.

Evaluation:

a. Comparative Analysis: Comparing pre-implementation and post-implementation data from surveys and social media analytics to assess the model's impact on key perception metrics.

b. Stakeholder Feedback: Gathering feedback from stakeholders through follow-up interviews and surveys to understand their experiences and perceptions after the implementation of the proactive PR model.

Data Analysis:

Employing both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques. Qualitative data will be analyzed thematically, identifying patterns and themes from interviews and content analysis. Quantitative data will be subjected to statistical analysis to determine significant changes in perception and engagement.

This research methodology aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the proactive PR model's impact on elevating the image of the Faculty of Management Science at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, aligning with contemporary practices and insights from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives.

RESULTS

The analysis of the proactive model of public relations (PR) through social media aimed to assess its impact on elevating the image of the Faculty of Management Science at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating qualitative and quantitative data from interviews, surveys, social media analytics, and content analysis.

1. Qualitative Analysis:

a. In-depth Interviews: Thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with key stakeholders revealed nuanced insights into their perceptions of the faculty's image. Positive themes included increased awareness, improved communication, and enhanced engagement. Constructive feedback highlighted areas for refinement in content strategy and community interaction.

b. Content Analysis: Examination of existing social media content unveiled key themes resonating with the audience. Content related to faculty achievements, student success stories, and community involvement garnered higher engagement. Analysis also identified opportunities for diversifying content to address broader stakeholder interests.

2. Quantitative Analysis:

a. Surveys: Survey responses were analyzed quantitatively to assess changes in perceptions before and after the implementation of the proactive PR model. Key metrics included perceived image improvement, satisfaction with communication, and the impact of social media on decision-making. Comparative analysis provided statistical significance to the findings.

b. Social Media Analytics: Social media analytics tools were employed to measure performance indicators. Metrics such as reach, engagement rates, follower growth, and sentiment analysis were assessed. Comparative analytics were conducted to understand the impact of the proactive PR model on social media platforms.

3. Comparative Analysis:

Comparative analysis was conducted to evaluate changes in perception and engagement levels before and after the implementation of the proactive PR model. Both qualitative and quantitative data were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the model's effectiveness.

4. Key Findings:

Positive Shift in Perception: The proactive PR model contributed to a positive shift in stakeholder perceptions, with a significant percentage expressing improved awareness and favorable views of the Faculty of Management Science.

Enhanced Engagement on Social Media: Social media analytics indicated increased engagement rates, higher reach, and improved sentiment scores. Successful content themes were identified and used to refine the ongoing social media strategy.

Identified Areas for Improvement: Stakeholder feedback and analytics highlighted areas for improvement, including the need for more diverse content, targeted outreach to specific demographics, and consistent monitoring of online conversations.

The analysis results provide valuable insights for the Faculty of Management Science to iteratively enhance its proactive PR model, leveraging social media as a strategic tool to elevate its image and engage effectively with stakeholders.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The implementation and analysis of the proactive model of public relations (PR) through social media have yielded valuable insights into its impact on elevating the image of the Faculty of Management Science at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The study, employing a mixed-methods approach, combined qualitative and quantitative data to comprehensively evaluate the model's effectiveness. Key findings include:

1. **Positive Shift in Stakeholder Perceptions:** The proactive PR model contributed to a positive shift in stakeholder perceptions, with a notable increase in awareness and favorable views of the Faculty of Management Science.

2. **Enhanced Social Media Engagement:** Social media analytics revealed increased engagement rates, expanded reach, and improved sentiment scores. Successful content themes were identified, providing a foundation for refining the ongoing social media strategy.

3. **Identified Areas for Improvement:** Stakeholder feedback and analytics pinpointed areas for refinement, including the need for more diverse content, targeted outreach to specific demographics, and continuous monitoring of online conversations.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are proposed to further strengthen the proactive PR model and sustain its positive impact:

1. **Content Diversification:** Expand the range of content themes to encompass a wider array of topics, including industry insights, faculty research highlights, and alumni achievements. Diversification ensures a more comprehensive representation of the faculty's accomplishments and contributions.

2. **Targeted Outreach Strategies:** Implement targeted outreach strategies to specific stakeholder groups, tailoring content to address their unique interests and needs. This approach fosters deeper engagement and resonance with diverse audiences.

3. **Continuous Monitoring and Adaptation:** Establish a systematic approach for continuous monitoring of social media conversations. Proactively respond to emerging trends, concerns, or feedback, adapting the PR model to reflect the evolving dynamics of online communication.

4. **Collaborative Content Creation:** Encourage collaborative content creation involving faculty members, students, and alumni. Featuring diverse voices and perspectives adds authenticity and richness to the narrative, enhancing the overall image of the faculty.

5. **Strategic Partnerships:** Explore opportunities for strategic partnerships with industry influencers, organizations, and alumni networks. Collaborative initiatives can amplify the reach of the faculty's message and foster mutually beneficial relationships.

The positive shifts observed in stakeholder perceptions and engagement underscore the strategic importance of social media in shaping the image of academic institutions. The findings have broader implications for leveraging digital communication channels to enhance visibility, credibility, and community engagement.

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