

Social Media: Business School Examples and Opportunities

Social media platforms have become much more than communication channels for today's teenagers. They have become dynamic tools for advocating causes, connecting businesses with their customers, networking, and sharing information on an infinite number of topics. There are huge advantages to launching a social media campaign for your business school. Here are a few of the social media channels that you may want to consider:

Promoting Your Business School with Video

Video has become one of the most popular vehicles for communicating via the Web. Although, video is many times not considered true "social media," it is shared throughout social networking platforms at rapid rates. For example, according to the popular social media network Facebook, "more than 10 million videos are uploaded each month."¹ On YouTube, the video sharing platform that initiated the online craze, "every minute ten hours of video is uploaded."²

The great thing about video is that you do not need a professional videographer or to be a wealthy organization to create an effective message. In a recent article by Beta Gamma Sigma International, Paul Paetz (CEO of Innovative Disruption, a marketing consulting firm, and vice president of marketing for Ethoca Limited, an online community for Internet retailers who are committed to fighting online fraud) stated, "A top ten online retailer videotaped himself talking about why Ethoca is the answer. That is phenomenal when you think that he is the CEO of a 4 billion USD company, putting a video on YouTube to promote a vendor." Paetz continued, "Ten years ago you couldn't have imagined doing something like this. You'd have a slick corporate video and spend 30,000 USD on it and it wouldn't even have as much impact as that five-minute clip."³

Business schools also can find great value in creating Internet videos, especially right now as marketing budgets are dwindling. Some business schools already are utilizing this cost-effective method for communicating with their audiences. At HEC, Thunderbird, Oxford, INSEAD, and Carnegie Mellon, business schools are using video to provide information about their MBA and Executive MBA programs.

Schools are not just communicating information about their programs. They are developing messages from their deans, educating the public on topics, sharing lectures and words from guest speakers, and proudly showing class graduations. Schools that develop multiple videos often utilize video-sharing sites such as YouTube to share content on personalized channels. For example, the Harvard Business School's YouTube channel has videos on their case method style of teaching, faculty research, degree programs, and student initiatives. This channel alone has had over 2,000 views. Some of the videos within Harvard's channel, such as the Inside the HBS Case Method video have had over 2,000 views and have received five-star ratings.

Connecting with Your Business School's Audiences through Social Networks

Facebook

Facebook, the most popular form of social networking, currently reports it has more than “250 million active users.” It also reports:

- More than 120 million users log on to Facebook at least once each day
- More than two-thirds of Facebook users are outside of college
- The fastest growing demographic is those 35 years old and older
- More than 8 million users become fans of pages each day
- More than 1 billion pieces of content (Web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photos, etc.) are shared each week
- More than 50 translations are available on the site, with more than 40 in development¹



So, how can this giant help your school recruit students and communicate itself to the public? Facebook seems to be the most popular place to start social networking efforts. Business schools are rapidly creating groups, fan pages, and advertisements within the network. For example, the London Business School's Facebook page has over 3,000 fans. The EDHEC Business School in France has almost 3,000 members on its group page. The University of Tampa in the United States advertises in Facebook to inform prospective students of their flexible evening business programs.

MySpace

MySpace had a major role in starting the entire social networking movement. Although, being a first-mover is not always beneficial in the online world. Other social networks have taken significantly from MySpace's market share by capitalizing on certain features that were the most popular within the site and creating entirely new networks. To compete with emerging social networking sites, MySpace completely redesigned its homepage and features in 2008—but by June of 2009, the network laid off 30% of its employees due to a continued decline⁶.

However, there is still room for business schools on MySpace. After the launch of Facebook and Twitter, the network began to target younger and more dynamic users. Promoting your business school to this audience is not in the form of creating a page, but in advertising. Because of the network's young audience, it is worth your while to consider giving your undergraduate degree programs some spotlight.

Other Social Networking Platforms

- [Bebo](#)
- [Elgg](#)
- [Hi5](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Ning](#)
- [Orkut](#)
- [Skyrock](#)

What About Privacy and Controlling What Visitors Post on Your Page?

One of the largest concerns surrounding social networks is the lack of control that is associated with visitors posting on your pages. Although the whole concept behind social media is to be completely transparent, no one wants negative or offensive comments posted on their sites. Most, if not all, social networking platforms allow you the opportunity to approve visitor/user comments before they are posted to your site. But, be careful not to keep all of the controversial comments from becoming public. In most cases, if an organization does an excellent job addressing a complaint or concern, it reflects well in the social media world.

Educating and Communicating with Micro-Blogs and Traditional Blogs

Twitter

Twitter, developed in 2006, is what is called a micro-blog. Basically, Twitter took one of the most popular features found on both Facebook and MySpace and created an entire new network. Users can create a profile and post micro-blogs on topics of their choice. Each post or "tweet" must be 140 characters or less and can contain only text. The network has become a method for communicating news, weather, events, retail sales, and conversations between friends.

Twitter can be very valuable to your business school. Many business schools are using the network to answer questions from prospective students, announce admission deadlines, and more. For instance, the Mays Business School at Texas A&M University recently posted a reminder that its Real Estate Center was relocating to a new office. The school has nearly 1,500 followers.



One thing to keep in mind with Twitter, and any other social networking platform, is that over-posting can drive away your visitors. Because of this, some business schools have created multiple Twitter accounts, for their MBA program, clubs, alumni, and doctoral students. This allows your visitors to follow topics they are interested in versus becoming flooded with everything your school has to offer.

Other Micro-Blogging Networks

- [Plurk](#)
- [Pownce](#)
- [Jaiku](#)

Traditional Blogs: Blogger, Typepad, and Others

The term "blog" was derived from the word "weblog" or a Web log containing conversations, such as discussion board entries. A blog can be a stand-alone Web site that is dedicated to a specific topic or a section within a larger site. Business schools can see great benefit in developing and maintaining a blog. At the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business, there is a blog specifically for the school's MBA program. A recent post, was entitled, "Meet an Admissions Officer and Local Alumni in Your City."⁴ⁿ The topics continue with panel discussion announcements and a preview of the program's new application essay questions. Inside Higher Ed, a popular online source for news in higher education, offers the "Mama PhD" blog, which can be interpreted as "Mothers Attempting to Balance Parenthood and Academics."⁵ⁿ



With a blog, you can either allow or not allow comments. This really depends on the topic on which you are blogging.

Popular Blogging Platforms

- [Blogger](#)
 - [ExpressionEngine](#)
 - [LiveJournal](#)
 - [Open Diary](#)
 - [TypePad](#)
 - [Vox](#)
 - [WordPress](#)
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Article References

¹ Facebook (2009). [Press Room Statistics](#).

² YouTube, LLC. (2009). [YouTube Fact Sheet](#).

³ Beta Gamma Sigma International. (2009, Summer). [Virtual Networking: The Business Side of Online Social Media](#). *Beta Gamma Sigma International Exchange*. 4-11.

⁴ The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. (2009, July 20). [MBA Admissions Blog](#).

⁵ Inside Higher Ed. (2009). [Mama PhD](#).

⁶ Nakashima, R. (2009, June 16). [MySpace Layoffs: Slashing Workforce 30%](#). *Huffington Post*: Los Angeles, California.