

Appendix L

Case Study: [Web-based] Social Media and the Community Engagement Hub - Challenges and Opportunities



For the uninitiated, the world of social media (this includes personal blogs, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) may seem both confusing and irrelevant. For First Nations organizations that host Community Engagement Hubs, social media is often viewed as a problem, when in fact, it is a potential solution.



Community Engagement Hubs are tasked with communicating, collaborating and creating community driven health plans. These tasks often need to include people and communities that are geographically distanced from one another. In addition to this, there is a growing awareness that youth must be included in this process. Social media can help with both of these challenges.

There is an old saying, "If you want to hunt ducks, go where the ducks are". 16 million of the 34 million people in Canada use Facebook and most are between the ages 15 and 35. So, if you want to let a group of young to middle-aged adults know what's going on, Facebook might be your best bet.



Sto:lo Nation created their Facebook page in June of 2010. Within a few weeks they had 140 fans. The weekly stats show a range of 57 to 209 visits per week and as of December 10th they had 199 active users. That's 199 Sto:lo Nation community members who regularly view that page to get information about what's going on at Sto:lo Nation Health.

So if social media helps First Nations organizations connect with and get information to and from their community members, what's the problem? Why aren't more organizations embracing social media for the great opportunity it presents? Perhaps part of the problem is that there is a lot of misinformation and there is an equal amount of legitimate concerns.



One of the legitimate concerns is that if staff are using social media in conjunction with work, what happens to the control over images and information that management is traditionally responsible for? What happens when every staff member is a potential communicator? The answer to that is clear and simple. Give staff the tools and guidelines to work within and then let them help get information out into the community. Use social media as a tool to allow staff to share their passion, their knowledge and their connections.

This doesn't have to be complicated nor does it have to take lots of time in re-writing policy manuals. Below is an excerpt from one well known non-profit social media policy document:



"... Encourages all staff members to use new and social media responsibly to communicate about topics within their areas of expertise, as long as this doesn't interfere with their primary duties or the security of the IT systems. While communication on behalf of the organization is the primary responsibility of the communications department, the senior management team recognizes that other staff members can also further the organization's goals by using social media networks."

-International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

<http://sm4good.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Red-Cross-Red-Crescent-SocialMedia-Guidelines.pdf>



More great and free resources to help inform social media policy:

<http://sm4good.com/2010/12/07/case-study-social-media-guidelines-red-cross-red-crescent/>

<http://www.commoncraft.com/social-media-workplace-video>



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