

| 2011

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HeBS Best Practices: 2011 Social Media Resolutions

| by Margaret Mastrogiacomo and Allison Sena

As we welcome 2011, it is safe to say that a presence on Facebook and Twitter with a well-developed social media strategy in place can no longer be ignored. With the beginning of a new year, it is important to outline metrics and goals for your social media strategy in 2011. Understanding where your social media strategy has been in 2010 is one of the first steps in determining how your strategy needs to evolve in 2011 to build a stronger connection with fans and followers.

Before developing your strategy for the New Year, reflect on what has been successful and what has failed to make an impact in 2010. What was your most successful social media campaign and how many fans or followers participated? What is your main demographic of fans and followers and what posts in 2010 engaged them the most? Like any good New Year's resolution, it is important to understand the current story your social media strategy is telling to properly set goals and metrics of success that will take your social media to the next level in 2011.

Get a head start. HeBS social media specialists Senior Account Executive Margaret Mastrogiacomo and Account Executive Allison Sena have assessed the Facebook and Twitter strategies of HeBS' client portfolio keeping in mind industry trends and predictions for 2011 to offer key initiatives, recommendations, and creative ideas to help your social media strategy soar. We've even uncovered the top ten social media mistakes in 2010, so you can start fresh in the New Year and put your best foot forward.

What does the path to social media success in 2011 look like? It starts with a social media strategy and action plan. Outline specific goals and objectives you wish to accomplish through your social media strategy and develop a set timeframe for completion. Prioritize your goals and specify metrics that will be used to measure performance and gauge growth. Analyzing determined metrics of success and benchmarking with competitors will provide insight into performance. Don't forget to consider industry standards and typical results when deciding on measures for success. Organize your action plan into one central, easy to access checklist with main social media goals to prioritize, assign responsibility, and specify metrics and goals for tracking.

[Click here to download our full article with Social Media tips for 2011: HeBS Best Practices - 2011 Social Media Resolutions](#). Here is a snapshot of what you'll find in the article:

Resolution #1: Write interesting and engaging content.

There is no better time than 2011 to engage your customer segments and build a customer relationship. There are a million ways to ask a question, so get creative. Make posts interesting and incorporate engaging content to elicit a response and increase interaction. Social media content should not be a one-way source of information. Lead off posts with an open-ended question, utilize creative fill-in-the-blank, post relevant trivia, or simply prompt fans and followers to "like" or @reply. Additionally, including content that speaks to specific customer segments (such as business or leisure) better resonates with your fans and followers to increase engagement. Give your customers a voice and encourage users to interact, post pictures, and provide insight on the features and amenities that they look for in your brand.

Resolution #2: Incorporate unique offers into your social media strategy.

Your social media presence should have a unique value from your website presence. Avoid solely posting packages that are available on your website. Be sure to provide unique offers to fans and followers or create an exclusive deal available to the first ten fans or followers who book. Offering exclusive extras to fans and followers creates a unique value and increases page visits. Considering developing a “mystery special offer” where the promo code can only be found on your Facebook or Twitter, or post “Facebook Friday” or “Twitter Tuesday” deals every week exclusively on your social media presence.

Resolution #3: Give fans and followers a reason to keep coming back for more.

On Facebook, users have the option to keep you in their newsfeed or click “hide”. Analyze your posts and put yourself in the consumer’s shoes. Do you make interesting and valuable posts? Or is your information boring and non-engaging? Thinking outside of the box will not only avoid the dreaded “hide” button and make your tweets stand out in the stream, but will encourage more page visits and build brand loyalty. Consider posting printable coupons or provide exclusive deals or hotel packages on a private landing page that only fans or followers can access.

Also consider utilizing your social media presence to further develop your own branding by giving details about a new hotel amenity, dish at your restaurant, or cocktail at your bar and prompt website visitors, fans, and followers to post a suggested name for this new addition to your hotel or brand.

Resolution #4: Regularly post fresh content.

Leave outdated content behind in 2010. According to Best Practices, posts should be made at least three to five times per week. If you are unable to commit to your page, then it is important that you hire an employee or agency that can. According to the Social Media Examiner, there’s a direct correlation between frequency of posts and the number of fans a page acquires.

It is also important to monitor the time of day that fans and followers are most active. This usually occurs between mid-morning and late afternoon. Be sure to post during these times to maximize visibility of your marketing messages. Determine which content your fans and followers value most by monitoring which posts elicit the most engagement. Use this information to effectively reach your customer segments, maximize user engagement, and build a deeper connection. On Facebook, viewing your fan page analytics (particularly page views by date) is a great way to measure the success of your posts and monitor the activity of your page.

Resolution #5: Brand your social media presence.

Has your brand come to life on social media? Branding your social media presence is a vital component in making a stronger impact on fans and followers. On Facebook, you can create a customized tab to showcase your amenities and include rich imagery of your property to highlight your selling points and gain an edge over competitors. Since multi-channel initiatives are vital in any successful online strategy, include a reservation widget, email capture, and mobile capture on the custom tab to build your lists and increase conversions. Your custom Facebook tab can be used to draw

attention to special offers, increase awareness of a major upcoming event, or include information about a contest or promotion. You can even consider rewarding fans with a free cocktail at your bar or exclusive promo code to receive a discount off their next stay. Utilize the reveal tab technology, where a certain portion of the tab is only exposed once a user becomes a fan of your page. This elicits interest and grows your fan base.

A customized Twitter background highlighting the most important hotel information is also vital in creating an official, branded presence on social media.

What's next in 2011?

From measuring social media ROI to integrating mobile into your social media strategy, there's a lot to conquer in 2011. Explore our social media guide to 2011, and determine which New Year resolutions work best for your social media presence. We've even uncovered the top 10 social media mistakes in 2010 as well as offer case studies and key examples to give your 2011 social media strategy the boost that it needs to make a stronger impact into 2012.

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About HeBS

Margaret Mastrogiacomo is Senior Account Manager, and Allison Sena is Account Manager at Hospitality eBusiness Strategies (HeBS), the industry's leading Internet marketing and distribution strategy consulting firm for the hospitality and travel verticals. Based in New York City, HeBS has pioneered many of the "best practices" in hotel Internet marketing and direct online distribution. HeBS specializes in helping hoteliers build and enhance their direct Internet marketing and distribution strategy, boost the hotel Internet marketing presence, establish interactive relationships with their customers, and significantly increase direct online bookings and ROIs. The firm brings a unique perspective to the industry, gained through working with over 500 hospitality companies including major brands, independent hotels, casinos, convention bureaus and hotel management companies worldwide. Find out more about HeBS at www.hospitalityebusiness.com, or contact HeBS at (212)752-8186 or info@hospitalityebusiness.com