Social Media Plan Proposal

Executive Summary
The Office for Sustainability (OfS) is in need of a formal Social Media Plan that guides social media usage by the Communication Team. Social media platforms are highly accessible to the Western Michigan University community and can boost reach and engagement, increase applicants to various programs and opportunities, and provide educational resources which are all broad goals of the OfS. Once discussing previous efforts and future desires for social media benefits with various members of the Office a multipart plan was developed and will be presented to the Leadership Team for approval and implementation, which will be carried out by the Communication Team.

Introduction
The Office for Sustainability works to improve quality of life for all through internships, fellowships, grants, student jobs, projects, events, research, and more. To boost these efforts, a revamping of social media use, as part of an all-encompassing external communications plan, is underway. The OfS is seeking to build its online presence through its social media platforms which are free and widely accessible to the Western Michigan University community. Maintaining an online presence through these platforms is free and requires little time for execution with a proper plan in place. No formal plan has ever been approved by the OfS Leadership Team, thus the Office has never fully benefitted from this tool with great potential. The process for developing the Social Media Plan and a fully developed proposal is presented along with next steps.

Methods and Results
The first step to developing a plan was to determine metrics of success and a target audience for our digital platforms that are consistent with our mission and vision. A list of the top three goals of our social media efforts were determined during a Communication Team meeting.

1. Increase reach, engagement, and awareness of the presence of the Office for Sustainability. Open lines of communication between us and our following
   - Create more accessible and inclusive image of OfS
2. Acquire more applications for the internships, fellowships, Student Sustainability Grant, and student research positions as a result of a more accessible and inclusive image of the OfS
3. Provide educational resources for sustainable living.

It was decided that our target audience, which we will be catering all of our content to, is Western Michigan University affiliates. This group includes students, staff, faculty, alumni, and Kalamazoo community members.
The next step in development was to evaluate and learn from recent strategies made by the OfS. The platforms used by the OfS in the past were Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. It was decided in 2016 to discontinue the Twitter account to focus on the two higher performing platforms. From that point until the beginning of the 2017 fall semester, the use of the Instagram and Facebook accounts had been sporadic. When the Communications Team for the 2017-18 academic year was established, a more deliberate social media usage was adopted and posting was more regular than it had been in the past. During the fall 2017 semester, a digital campaign to advertise the Wesustain Internship was launched by this team and consisted of a series of Instagram and Facebook videos (roughly a minute long) of past and present interns discussing their experiences, as well as posts with links to the internship website page. Each post was relatable, fun, visually appealing and posted at intentional times. One of the first posts with a link to the website page reached over 25,000 people according to Facebook Insights, and the six videos were watched roughly 4,300 times which equates to about 24.5 hours. This campaign resulted in a record number of intern applications (34), almost doubling the norm. Out of the 18 applicants who were interviewed, 8 of them had mentioned a social media post as a reason they applied.

The success from the internship campaign reaffirmed the belief that the Office for Sustainability can achieve the three outlined goals with a calculated social media presence. It also gave guidance to strategies that could work well within our plan, such as posting relatable content with OfS figures or posting more often as a deadline approaches. Information such as this, research of best practices reported on in a Forbes article, previous strategies, and personal experiences by the Communication Team all guided the components of the Social Media Plan.

The Office for Sustainability Social Media Plan Proposal (Fall 2017)

1. The most crucial part of the Social Media Plan is to designate a member of the Communication Team as the Social Media Coordinator. This person will be in charge of planning the posting schedule around the outline provided in this proposal and adhering to that schedule and ensuring all elements of this plan are implemented and maintained in office culture. This coordinator will have the ability to delegate responsibilities to other members of the Communication Team, but is still responsible for maintaining the regular posting schedule across all platforms.

2. Advertise social media accounts at every opportunity. This includes printing OfS handles on brochures, handouts, website pages, email signatures, email blasts, etc.
   - Both accounts should have the same handle for ease of the potential followers

3. Regular and strategic posting is the key element of successful social media. Below are the site-specific plans for the Office for Sustainability Facebook and Instagram pages.

4. Regularly check Facebook Insights data and Instagram data collection to evaluate the efficacy of this plan. Allow that data to guide further development and evolution of the plan. The Social Media Coordinator will report back on these evaluations to the Communication Team every month at a meeting. Feedback and
discussion regarding alterations to the plan will be had with subsequent alterations being implemented.
5. Encourage employees, students, friends, and family to repost, share, engage, and advertise social media accounts whenever possible. Affiliates of the OfS should be champions of our online platforms.

Facebook

Tactics

- Engage with followers regularly. Answer questions, reply or “like” comments, provide general direction to resources, and open dialogue with followers.
  - When replying to a comment use the “@ feature” for more direct communication
- Each post will have an engaging photo, video, or link to further content (most typically linked back to OfS website or WMU provided content).
  - Images and videos should be appropriate, bright, and positive. Videos should typically be no longer than one minute.
- Post more active during months when classes are in session. During summer and winter breaks only post once a week, refer to “Break Posting Ideas”
- Keep text concise and informative.
- Keep profile information updated. Put major event dates and deadlines in bio, along with links to more information.
- Provide occasional giveaways (tee-shirts, EcoJugs, EcoMugs) to sharply enhance active engagement before OfS events/deadlines
- Post during times of the day when our following is most likely to be online, according to Facebook Insights

Monthly Post Content Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who We Are</th>
<th></th>
<th>What We Do</th>
<th></th>
<th>Get Involved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Friday</td>
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<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community</td>
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<td>faculty champions</td>
<td>aquaponics</td>
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<td>events</td>
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<td>student profiles</td>
<td>permaculture</td>
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<td>opportunities</td>
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<td>alumni updates</td>
<td>solid waste</td>
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<td></td>
<td>news</td>
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<tr>
<td>community friends</td>
<td>internship/fellowship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>memes</td>
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Notes:
- Tuesday and Thursday are open for special projects/initiatives or reposts from Instagram.
- A monthly calendar of content deadlines to be presented at the beginning of each semester

Break Posting Ideas:
General OfS updates
- Local events/opportunities
- Eco Living Tips
- General well wishes
- Holiday celebrations
- Community profiles

Instagram @wesustainwmu

Tactics
- Use hashtags and location tags related to Western Michigan University (and Kalamazoo?) to reach our target audience.
  - Promote other WMU affiliates and community sustainability champions as brand cross-promotion
- Post 2-3 times per week during months when schools is in session, 1 time per week during break months to increase and maintain brand recognition.
  - Can increase number of posts when an event or deadline is approaching.
- Engage with following to build relationships and open accessible lines of communication. Follow back students and community members and like, repost, and comment on posts when they align with OfS values/mission.
- Post unique, positive, and informative content to promote OfS brand and enhance engagement from following.
- Provide occasional giveaways (tee-shirts, EcoJugs, EcoMugs) to sharply enhance active engagement before OfS events/deadlines

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repost from Facebook</td>
<td>Event Announcements</td>
<td>Sustainable Living Tips</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>News</td>
<td>EcoJugs</td>
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<td>Office Profiles</td>
<td>Dorm Living Tips</td>
<td>Sustainable Shopping</td>
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<td>DIY Ideas</td>
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Content Source:
Communications Specialist, Website, OfS Staff, Facebook posts

Notes:
- Monday, Wednesday, and Friday are open for special projects/initiatives or reposts from Instagram.
- A monthly calendar of content deadlines to be presented at the beginning of each semester
* It should be noted that the Office for Sustainability social media practices will comply with the University’s Social Media Policies, which was amended May 31, 2011.

**Next Steps**

The Social Media Plan works in conjunction with the greater Communications Plan; it is a piece of the puzzle and works to draw attention to our website, events, and opportunities. The next step is the gain approval and support from the OfS Leadership Team to fully implement the Social Media plan. Once that happens, a Social Media Coordinator will be selected from the Communication Team and they will begin planning the schedule with specific content and implementation. As stated previously, the plan will be dynamic and develop in reaction to data from both Facebook and Instagram. In the future this plan will be updated, adjusted, and modified continuously. Additional social media accounts can be added once the two initial platforms gain substantial traction. For example, a Snapchat account could be used for further advertising by taking advantage of the “stories” feature, or a Twitter account can be reintroduced.

**References**


**One Sentence and Three Sentence Summaries**

A Social Media Plan proposal for the Office for Sustainability was developed for Leadership approval by the Communication Team.

A formal Social Media Plan proposal was developed by the Communication Team. It addresses goals, a target audience, dynamic posting tactics for Facebook and Instagram accounts, and future evolution based on data collection. The plan is intended to be approved by the OfS Leadership Team and fully implemented by the Communications Team indefinitely.