How Telfer School of Management connects to what matters with Sprout Social

Telfer School of Management at the University of Ottawa, they know the world is changing and have adopted a marketing and communications strategy that will keep them agile and adaptable. Since the faculty of management's founding 50 years ago, social media has taken off and become a critical piece of any higher education marketing and communications strategy.

The Telfer Marketing team was implementing their strategy by integrating new digital marketing tactics. However, without the right tools in place, Telfer's marketing team struggled to dig into their community data and derive actionable insights.

With a fairly new team and new social suite in Sprout Social, Telfer has been able to focus on what matters most: growing their student body, enhancing programs, connecting with alumni and sharing their research.

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Jonathan Simon
Director of Marketing and Communications

One solution for many moving parts

Telfer is home to a very large undergraduate student body. It also has graduate programs, major faculty research initiatives, and executive leadership programs, which their marketing team has to factor into their social media strategy. Not only that, they also collaborate with other stakeholders like members of the administration, faculty, student clubs, and the alumni engagement office to incorporate their goals into the school's social strategy. And then there's the 7 channels in two official languages (French & English) they manage on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Google My Business. That's a lot to keep track of.

In late 2018, the school brought in an almost entirely new marketing team, many of whom had worked as marketers in the private sector. "The school was looking for a change and I was lucky enough to be a part of that change by building a new marketing and communications team," said Jonathan Simon, the Director of Marketing and Communications. "We put the team together and knew almost immediately that we needed to get the right tools in place in order to function efficiently. There was just so much to do. When we compared all the social media tools in the market and what we would get out of them, Sprout just kind of blew us away."

Activating a content strategy that considers all of those moving parts, surfaces useful data and engages the right people was their challenge. Sprout was the solution, and the Telfer School of Management has been a customer ever since.

Branching out with a tagging tree

Sprout's **Tag Report** has become a major asset for the Telfer team.

"In terms of how we were reporting our data to the school before Sprout, the short of it is that we weren't," said Content Strategist Carla DeCiccio. "Not because we didn't want to, but because we didn't have a sustainable way to do it. Manually sorting every post and recording results would have been a long, time-consuming process."

When Telfer began tagging messages, they focused on specific campaigns like the one promoting their Elevator Pitch Competition this past fall.

After the event, Telfer turned to the Tag Report. They found that together, posts in the **Elevator Pitch** campaign averaged a 1.29% engagement rate per post, which is a 357% increase over the higher ed industry average. Being able to actually see their success was a game-changer.

Telfer School of Management
@Telfer_uOttawa

Get involved at #GlobalEntrepreneurshipWeek @tecdeottawa's #ElevatorPitch Competition on Nov 19. 💼

Hear @uOttawa entrepreneurs pitch their businesses while enjoying food, drinks, networking & inspiring keynote speaker @oiqeli, CEO @mindbridge_ai.

Attend: tlfr.ca/epitch

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Now, Telfer tags everything. Remember all those moving parts? They're all accounted for in a sophisticated tagging tree that the team uses to categorize every post. The tree guides tagging decisions through eight steps:

1. Goal of the post
2. Type of post: These tags refer to what the team is promoting, e.g. conference, contest, workshop, networking, etc.
3. Stakeholder(s) (e.g. alumni engagement and community, undergrad office, research, career center, etc.)
4. Event name (if applicable)
5. Program/Service (e.g. Ph.D., MBA, Student Services, etc.)
6. Impact Category (e.g. Healthier, Wealthier, Happier, Greener)
7. Target Audience (e.g. prospective students, undergrad students, alumni, etc.)
8. Year

Not only does this tree provide a snapshot of Telfer's social strategy, when it comes time to dig into the Tag Report, the team can get a bird's eye view of content performance or zero in on granular details as much as they need to. And perhaps most importantly, the structure in place allows them to generate a report tailored for any given stakeholder, which fosters more transparent and rewarding relationships.

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Emily Short
Digital Marketing Coordinator

No comment left behind

Beyond campaign management and reporting, one-to-one engagement is among Telfer's top social goals. With social communities on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Youtube, Telfer needed a tool that would bring all their conversations into a single stream. **Sprout's Smart Inbox** helps ensure that no comment is left behind.

"With the Smart Inbox, we're also able to interact with every mention, comment or private message all in one spot," says Digital Marketing Coordinator, Emily Short.

Not only that, with a daily monitoring protocol in place and response rate metrics in the Engagement Report, their team is empowered to consistently evaluate their speed and effectiveness when replying to messages. In Q3 FY19, they posted 78% of their responses to their audience's messages within 24 hours.

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Going with the workflow

From stakeholder input to daily tasks, collaboration is key for Telfer's marketing team. Short manages all of Telfer's social accounts and digital channels which include website content for landing pages, lead magnets and email marketing. While she's working on those marketing efforts outside of Sprout, student coordinators join in to take on her additional social to-dos.

Fortunately, **Sprout's collaboration tools** make it seamless. If Short steps away from the Smart Inbox, the coordinators can easily see which messages are marked complete and which still require action. Users can also turn messages into actionable tasks assigned to other team members and add a note for context. Short's student coordinators also compose social posts in the editorial calendar.

"With Sprout's publishing and workflow tools, I get an overview of what's going on every day and can easily adjust if necessary," Short said. "I can double-check team members' work to ensure the posts are on-brand, include all the right hashtags and emojis and follow the tagging tree structure."

With these checks and balances in place, each user can be accountable and keep track of their work without getting wires crossed or jeopardizing the quality of the content.

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As other faculties within the University of Ottawa look to expand their social footprint, they've looked to the Telfer team to learn how they've been using Sprout.

"I've got colleagues from other parts of the University of Ottawa, like law and alumni relations, who have reached out to find out if Sprout is something they should be using," said Simon. "We always tell everyone who is looking for a social media tool to work with Sprout. It's an excellent tool and we've had a great experience working with the Sprout team."

Armed with all the tools, reports, insights and customer support Sprout offers, the Telfer team continues to find more ways to connect their audience to what matters.
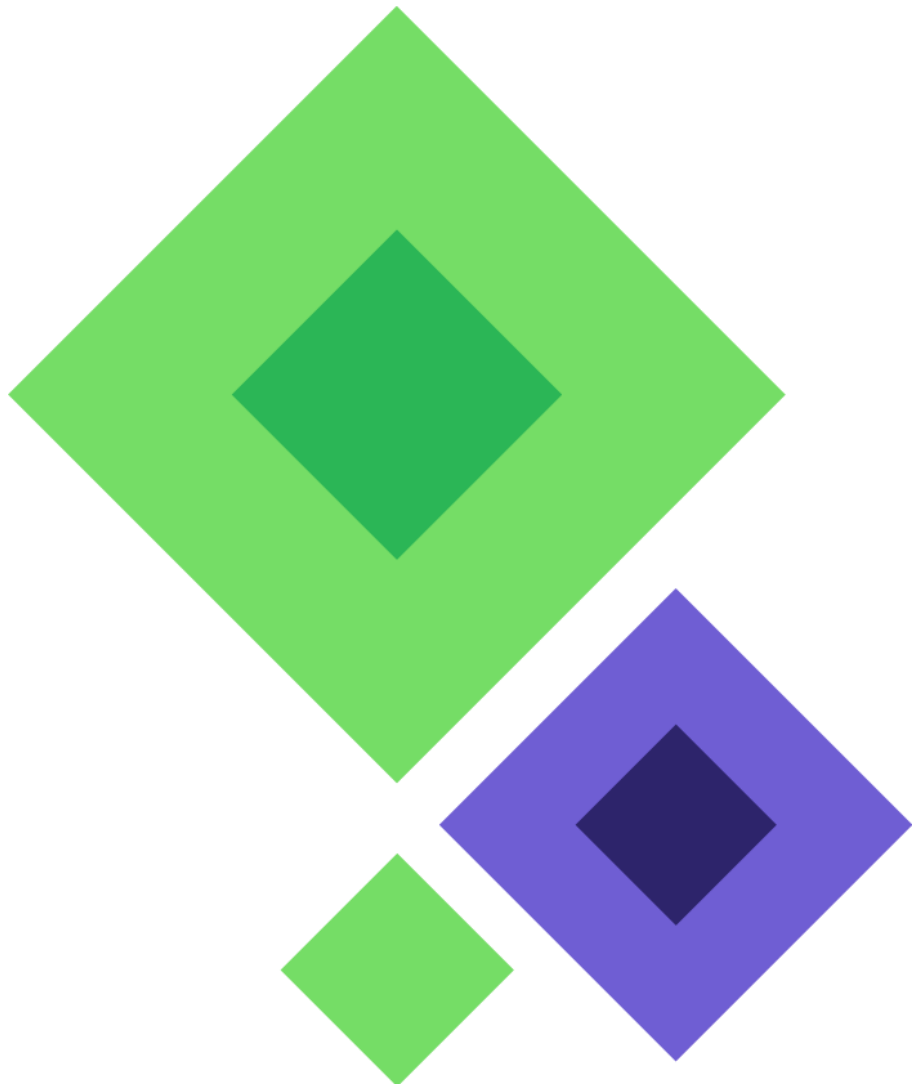
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