Truck Town Thunder's 2014 Media and Technology Plan

Mission Statement

The promotion of the ideas and values of the FIRST organization are the foundation of Truck Town Thunder's mission. Truck Town Thunder's media mission is to brand Truck Town Thunder (T3) as a team that shows leadership, discovers information, and creates content that is relevant to the growth of students and the FIRST Organization. In order to succeed at our mission we have an evolving plan for the team's strategy, content, and engagement that is applied in the digital world.

Strategy

T3 has taken an interactive step in order to become a media and technology leader, such as consulting with the professional social media agency, Room 214 and Lyndon Johnson at Think Different[ly].CA. Their recommendation was to cross connect all the team's individual social media pages together, so that viewers could access each social media site that T3 has a presence on, quickly and efficiently. Making sure we address the viewers by demographics on each site and create relevant content not just the same content on every media outlet. The main digital media channels that T3 uses include: Facebook, YouTube, and our website; however, the team has been working to increase its presence on Twitter and Google+ Community.

Another main part of T3's strategy is to keep its viewers up to date with every event that the team is involved with by posting pertinent information before and after events. The team also uses Google Drive to create spreadsheets where each sub team receives an area that is open for the team members to plan and discuss what is to be done, as well as what is completed. Within the team, the media group uses it's Google Spreadsheet to make a log, referred to as the Back-Log, of the activities that need to be completed, labeling them according to what stage of completion these tasks are in.

Along with Google Spreadsheets the team communicates using remind101. This allows our team to communicate quickly and efficiently. Remind101 also helps to keep due dates and events on track as we continue to not only work on media updating, but team events throughout the whole year.

Content

Truck Town Thunder strives to produce entertaining, engaging, and educational information on each of our digital channels, and encourages new viewers to follow the FIRST Community, in order to expose our audience to its inspiring opportunities. One of the most significant changes that T3 has made can be viewed on its YouTube channel. On YouTube, content is re-organized by how things are labeled, arranged, and displayed. We have made the effort to 'tag' every video that the team creates and posts to allow better access to our videos. T3 also fills out the description box with information on what each video is about, and chooses a relevant category that the video falls under. We have featured each of the differing levels of FIRST YouTube channels and encourage relationships between FRC teams by subscribing to other teams. Our team has subscribed to multiple FRC teams, hoping to gain information to improve our FIRST experience. When it comes to the team's videos, we use Animoto to produce our build week videos and we use other video production softwares, such as iMovie and Windows Movie Maker.

Along with YouTube, Truck Town Thunder is striving to connect with the community, as well as other teams, through Facebook. On this social media trendsetter, our team updates our

‘likers’ on events that our team participates in. We also are trying to reach out to as many viewers as possible by broadcasting about science events, education related information, scholarship opportunities, and other STEAM(Science Technology Engineering Art Math) related information.. Examples of items that we have posted would be FIRST Robotics Competition, FIRST Lego League, Jr. FIRST Lego League, OCCRA and VEX competitions that our students have participated in. Also, while maintaining a professional atmosphere, the team releases posts that are fun and entertaining. The FIRST community has exploded on Facebook and this is a way that we can become engaged with and learn about other teams from around the globe. T3 also ‘likes’ other team’s pages in hopes to encourage onlookers to see what FIRST is about. This also introduces our ‘likers’ to other teams and may also inspire them to join a team near them.

Along with FaceBook and Youtube, the team has it’s own personal and improved website. As of last year, T3’s website has changed in looks, posts, and who contributes to the content for the pages. T3 chose to move it’s website to Weebly.com so that the student website group could have a more hands-on approach to handling and editing. This also allows us to cross-connect the content on our social media, to see through analytics, who was interested in our team and who was interested in the FIRST community itself. Recently, efforts have been focused on making navigation easy through the use of tabs and drop down menus. With the purpose of each page identified in category and title, the entire site is clear and easily understood by anyone. It’s very functional from links to USFIRST.org, media, videos, resources, outreach, and widgets that connect to our other digital media sites.

Engagement

The digital media world has created a place where people can track who, where, what, and why people are interested in the content provided. Analytics on YouTube showed that with a modest amount of work, we were able to increase views by substantial amount last year. This was accomplished through the use of tags, relevant descriptions, and more interesting content. Due to our organization, our subscriptions have increased by 43.75%. Analytics have showed us that our interested viewers were more male than female (68.9% v. 31.1%). The demographics for outreach shows the team that our most common age group is 13-17 year olds, with 45-64 year olds coming in second.

The analytics for the team FaceBook page is more limited. One can see how many ‘likes’, engagement and reach of viewers, and how many people have been reached with the posts/content. They give us an idea if the videos and posts will go viral, if they are organic, and if they have been shared and viewed. On FaceBook analytics, we have found that our expectations were met again with male viewers being larger than female (54% v. 46%). However, demographics did not reach our expectations. The highest percentage of viewers came from the 18-24 year old age group, with 45-54 year olds coming in second. We had expected that the 45-54 year olds would have again been our highest outreach due to the popularity of FaceBook with the parents of the team versus the members.

Along with the analytics from our two major channels, T3 uses Google Analytics to track who engages with our website. This tool allows us to see in real time who is on our website and where they are located in the world. The analytics available are extensive, with languages, countries, time-of-day, devices, browsers, and screen resolution all being different analytics given. Because Google doesn't require a profile, the exact demographics are unknown, but can be guessed by the posted information on what they would be. It is also generally known that when T3 posts to the Chief Delphi Forum we receive spikes on our website traffic. This allows us to know that male and the ages 15-35 are our leading demographics.

Social Media has also helped keep the team connected to our former members. Alumni share their experiences every once and a while to encourage current members to look forward to the great opportunities that FIRST opens up to them in the future.

Wrap-up

The experience of creating a media team is giving the students the chance to learn more about the world around them. This experience is teaching the entire team about the media profession, promotion, the importance of math in analyzing the data, and that FIRST has more opportunities to learn other than just engineering skills. We have decided to track our entire social media and promotion on our webpage under Media Analytics to help show that Truck Town Thunder's media plan is one that will be ever growing and changing as the digital world evolves. We will continue to create content that helps, inspires, and teaches others about FIRST, the students who participate in FIRST, but more importantly the students who will be our future innovators, problem solvers, and leaders.