

Social Media Strategy

Prepared for
Green Product Design Network



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Social Media Overview:

Although the Green Product Design Network (GPDN) is already engaged in social media with its Twitter, Facebook and Ning accounts, the organization should improve and grow these social media outlets, as well as develop a presence using new tools. GPDN is a University of Oregon interdisciplinary campus organization made up of professors, students and community members. Its efforts are multifaceted, but the group primarily focuses on inventing sustainable products that can be readily adopted and marketed to the larger society. The goal is to take ideas from invention to the marketplace in a way that is expedient and has a lasting impact on society.

There are many dangerous and non-biodegradable products filling up our landfills and contaminating our lives. Our health, and the planet's health, depends on forward thinking innovators that can provide solutions to the markets biggest challenges in creating sustainable "green" products to replace the toxic materials currently used. This is where GPDN comes in.

The focus of GPDN is to build networks to make real change in the movement of sustainable green design. Social Media is a fantastic tool to not only spread GPDN messages, but also invite and encourage individuals to participate in the sustainable product's future. Since communicating, collaborating and brainstorming is a focus of GPDN, social media outlets will provide an excellent platform for spurring such communications. Ideas can easily be shared on blogs, Twitter accounts and Facebook pages.

It is imperative for GPDN to network with leaders in the areas of green chemistry, sustainable business, engineers, etc. to brainstorm, develop, and design green products. In addition, it will be important for members to network directly with marketing and businesses so that the public can adopt the new products. Finally, reaching potential consumers of the green products will essentially close the loop. Social media can have a direct impact on all these different facets.

Since a future of green designed consumer products is essential for the health of our entire planet, this is truly a global conversation and effort. The web is a wonderful tool for generating worldwide conversation and collaboration, and social media is a convenient way to utilize that tool.

GPDN is still in its infancy as an organization, but is in a great position to be a regional and national leader in green product design ideas and implementation. Social media will greatly improve GPDN networking capabilities as well as garner support and momentum for future ideas, seminars, projects, grants, and sponsorships.

Target Audience #1:

Key innovative thinkers and leaders in the nation (world): scientists, engineers and professors

For a sustainable green design movement to truly take shape in this nation, and around the world, innovators from every discipline will be required to participate. Green design is not only a new way of making consumer goods, it is a new way of thinking about consumerism and social ideas surrounding consumption. Anytime a movement or project requires social change, true innovators and passionate individuals must help to see the change come to fruition. These individuals are truly the key for making GPDN successful in its mission. Currently there is very little networking in the field of green design. There are many amazing individual projects being pursued, but the collaboration process across disciplines and regions is only just beginning. Social media could expedite this process.

Objective:

In nine months, GPDN will increase traffic at its Ning site, Facebook site and Twitter followers by 20 percent, and have a blog started with 15 posts, 15 comments, two guest authors, and 30 regular visitors.

Strategy #1:

Blogger Relations

As previously stated, there are many individuals already involved in green product design. GPDN needs to capitalize on the work already being done and network with individuals who are already writing on the subject. There are hundreds of “green” blogs, many of them written by well-known authors in the fields of sustainability and green technology. Not only is it crucial to reach out to these bloggers as they have a large following, but building blogging relationships will be a fabulous way to network with the readers of these blogs, many of them the very innovators and leaders GPDN is looking to collaborate with.

Tactics:

1. Setup

- Building blogging relationships will ultimately take some time in the initial setup. Hiring a part time social media assistant or student intern will be necessary.
- Make a list (team collaboration) of goals and objectives GPDN is seeking from blogging relationships.
- Find and research blogs that GPDN is interested in participating in.
 - Green Technology Blogs
 - Green Building Blogs
 - Environmental Awareness Blogs
 - Sustainable Businesses Blogs
 - Environmental Journalists Blogs
 - Green Chemistry Blogs
 - Sustainable Products Blogs
 - Environmental Organization Blogs
- Research innovators and leaders (make a list) that GPDN is interested in networking with. Find out if they are currently writing a blog.
- Begin a blog roll to keep track of blogs.

2. Networking /Outreach

- Comment on other blogs offering productive insights- be a part of the conversation.
 - Prepare for any foreseeable negative buzz from comments offered by making a list of factual “comebacks” for common challenges to sustainable design.
- Monitor what creators are talking about and inventing.
 - Offer a way to connect individuals working on similar projects.
 - Monitor what questions are being asked so that GPDN can address those questions.
- Invite guest bloggers to write on GPDN blog (see details below for GPDN blog).

Strategy #2:

Blog Development and Implementation

I recommend GPDN begin writing a green product design blog. The blog will include posts from authors within the GPDN, as well as guest bloggers such as green design inventors, professors and students working on related green design projects, relevant businesspersons, and mover’s and shakers in the green design movement. This is a great way to have deeper levels of discussion surrounding ideas and topics, as well as network and brainstorm, share ideas, and motivate various leaders in the movement.

Tactics:

1. Setup

- Designate a person in charge of maintaining the blog (intern, GPDN leader)
- Start the blog: select design, title, layout, URL, server
- Write a code of ethics (See Appendix B)

2. Maintaining Blog

- Write a minimum of one blog a week on various topics
 - New Green Design Products
 - Green Chemistry
 - Marketing techniques
 - Sustainable business practices
 - Events, seminars, lectures
 - Highlight individuals involved in the movement
 - Communication techniques
 - Highlight sponsors
 - Post multi-media (videos, pictures, audio)
 - Create a blog roll
 - Respond promptly to comments and inquiries (within two days)
 - Be prepared for negative buzz or comments (see above suggestion on negative buzz)
- ## 3. Communication relations
- Link frequently to other pertinent blogs and individuals (increase community traffic)

Target Audience #2:

Sustainable/Eco-Focused Businesses and Organizations

One of the key components of GPDN's mission is the "invention to the market place" segment. Innovation in green design will be nearly pointless if the designs are not adopted by the market and available to consumers and businesses. Networking with key players in the sustainable business movement will be crucial for the success of GPDN. Beginning regionally and working outward to national and global scales will be key to seeing true environmental change.

A big challenge that businesses and green product industries face is the lack of communication and knowledge about already existing green products. For example, a business may want to switch from using Styrofoam for packaging material, but assume there is no other option. In reality, a few options other than Styrofoam are available made from recycled or even compostable materials far better for the environment. GPDN would like to bridge this communication gap so that businesses can easily find greener options.

Objective:

In six months, GPDN will have a list of 25 businesses interested in collaborating on marketing and selling green products as well as increase “business” traffic at its Ning site, Facebook site, and Twitter followers by 20 percent.

Strategy #1:

Blogger Relations

As environmental awareness continues to grow, businesses all over the world are answering consumer requests for green and sustainable products that won’t hurt the planet or consumers health. GPDN needs to network with these eco-conscious businesses and collaborate on moving products from the design phase to the selling phase. Many businesses maintain their own blogs, and building blogging relationships are a great way to learn about these businesses as well as their customer base. Not only is it crucial to reach out to these businesses as they often have consumer loyalty, but creating blogging relations will be a fabulous way to network with the readers of these blogs.

Tactics:

3. Setup

- Building blogging relationships will ultimately take a lot of time in the initial setup. Hiring a part time social media assistant or student intern will be necessary.

- Make a list (team collaboration) of goals and objectives GPDN is seeking from blogging relationships.
- Find and research blogs that GPDN is interested in participating in. As Green products spans every consumer category from cleaning supplies to clothes, the list could be extremely long. Below are just a handful of ideas.
 - Green Businesses
 - Eco products
 - Environmental blogs
 - Harvesting sustainable products
 - Organic industries (bedding, clothes, toys etc.)
 - Recycle/refurbished centers
 - Renewable energies
 - Green building firms
 - Waste free businesses
 - Eco-tourism sites
- Research business leaders (make a list) that GPDN is interested in networking with. Find out if they are currently writing a blog.
- Begin a blog roll to keep track of blogs.

4. Networking /Outreach

- Comment on other blogs offering productive insights on design materials, new green products, businesses that offer green design ideas that organizations are looking for etc., and be a part of the conversation.
 - Prepare for any foreseeable negative buzz from comments offered, by making a list of factual “comebacks” for common challenges to sustainable design.
- Monitor what businesses are asking for as far as sustainable products
 - Offer a way to connect businesses with individuals working on the products wanted.

- Monitor what questions are being asked so that GPDN can address those questions.
- Invite guest bloggers to write on GPDN blog (see details above for GPDN blog).

Strategy #2:

Social Networking: Increase Use of Twitter, Facebook, and Ning Sites

As mentioned above, GPDN has begun using social networking sites, but since the organization is in its infancy, the following on these sites is small. These sites offer a great opportunity to network quickly with a wide array of individuals and businesses from small-scale entrepreneurs to large-scale corporate businesses.

Tactics:

1. Setup
 - Appoint a social networking individual. This can be a time consuming task, especially during setup. Consider hiring journalism student as a paid position or internship, or social networking “specialist” in the private market.
2. Facebook
 - Post daily updates
 - Post links from other sites (share content)
 - Invite friends, colleagues, friends of friends etc. to join
 - Respond to comments and other links promptly (within two days, preferably one)
 - Utilize event invites
 - Post Facebook tab on other sites (Ning, Twitter etc.)
3. Twitter
 - Begin searching for people, organizations, and businesses to follow.
 - Set a specific goal of how many new accounts to follow (200 in 3 months).

- Post regular updates (at least one a day).
- Link other articles and comments (re-tweet) often (daily) to share content.
- Post Twitter Feed on Blog
- Post Twitter tab on other sites (Ning and Facebook)

4. Ning

- Update site regularly
- Encourage all the members to participate regularly and fully.
 - Update profile, encourage individuals to upload photo, contact information, and answers to the short “why you are interested” questions
 - Participate in forums
 - Utilize the “invite friends” feature [who exactly will you invite?]

Evaluation:

Blogger Relations for Audience #1 and #2

If GPDN sees an increase in social media use (increased Twitter followers, increased traffic on Ning and Facebook) by the goal of 20 percent (A tracking mechanism has already been set up and currently used), GPDN will consider the blogger relations strategy a success.

Create GPDN Blog

If GPDN successfully completes the above steps in starting and maintaining a blog with 15 posts, 15 comments, two guest authors, and 30 visitors, GPDN will consider the blog strategy a success.

Improve Social Media Use (Twitter, Facebook, Ning)

If GPDN sees an increase in social media use (increased Twitter followers, increased traffic on Ning and Facebook) by the goal of 20 percent (A tracking mechanism has already been set up and currently used) GPDN will consider the social media strategy a success.

Appendices

(A) Influencers:

1. Oregon Daily Emerald DailyEmerald.com www.dailyemerald.com
2. Cascade CAScade: University of Oregon College of Arts and Sciences
www.cascade.uoregon.edu
3. The Register-Guard The Register-Guard www.registerguard.com
4. Pop Tech Pop Tech- World Changing People, Projects and Ideas
www.poptech.org
5. Greenversations The Official Blog of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
www.blog.epa.gov/blog
6. Michael M. Haley University of Oregon Department of Chemistry Head
www.chemistry.uoregon.edu/fac
7. Green Home Green Home, the Environmental Store www.greenhome.com
8. Green Guide Green Guide for everyday living www.thegreenguide.com
9. Green Design Green Design, an Aggregation of News About Green Living
www.greendesign.com
10. Green By Design Green By Design www.greenbydesign.com

(B) Code of Ethics for the Blog

The Green Product Design Network has posted the following Code of Ethics to advocate accountability, accuracy and honesty in this blog. The Code is not intended to limit anyone's freedom of speech nor discourage anyone from participating in the blog.

Accountability:

- This blog will always be written with the care of a professional in a respectful and civil manner. We will practice good journalism by posting the most accurate information we can find, always researching our topics, and fact checking.
- We will not plagiarize and will respect copyright on photos and other work.
- All of the opinions and ideas posted here will be supported by sources, and attributes will always be given to individual contributions.
- We will be mindful of various positions on issues, and no matter how passionate we are surrounding a topic, we will present information in a respectful manner.
- If we are writing about something or someone we are emotionally, or financially connected to, we will be up front about it.

Interactivity:

- We will post to the blog on a regular basis.
- We will visit and post on other appropriate blogs to encourage the sharing of ideas and networking.
- Links back to other sources will be provided whenever possible so readers can find additional information on research and projects.
- We will not restrict access to our blog by specific individuals or groups.

- We encourage comments on our blog posts.
- We will not remove any posts or comments once they are published, but we do reserve the right to monitor posts to ensure they are respectful for all viewers.
- We will put emphasis on building relationships and networking by responding to e-mails and comments promptly.