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I've always had a personal interest in social media, but it wasn't until I started my Marketing degree that I realised I could turn my interest into a career. I undertook a Social Media internship at a PR firm, Seren Global Media, during my studies, which was my first taste of the industry.

6 years on from my first social media internship, I've continued to work in social media and still love it!

I've spent the last 3 years specializing in higher education social media at Swansea University. I started as a Marketing Assistant, and was soon promoted to a Marketing Officer. So, along with content creation, I am also responsible for creating effective and highly tailored paid social media adverts with a strong focus on social media analytics.



What is a typical day like for you in your role?

Every day is different, which is what I love about my job but a typical day will always start with a strong coffee and quick morning catch up with my team.

The first thing I do each day is refer to my social media calendar. I try to schedule as much content as possible via Hootsuite so I can organize my workload, but always like to post organic ad hoc content relating to current news/topics and engage with posts from the public.

Recently I've been investing in my videography skills, so I've been spending a lot of my working day either filming content or editing via Premiere Pro. I use Adobe Creative Cloud daily to enhance my social media posts. If I'm not creating video content, I'll be using InDesign to create graphics, infographics or posters and Photoshop to enhance images.

Another one of my daily tasks is to check any social media adverts that I'm running. I'll use analytical tools to see how they are performing and will edit the advert if it's not performing as well as I would like.

I also provide a lot of 'live' content for socials, so a big part of my job is attending events to post live content to the University social channels. This definitely isn't a 9-5 job - I have to attend events on the weekends and evenings. However, I love the excitement of an event and meeting new people - it's one of my favourite parts of the job.

What are the different challenges you've faced in your roles? How have these changed over time? And how do you overcome them?

I like to be organized and plan my social media campaigns well in advance but my role requires a lot of reactive social media marketing. For example, working for a University, the 2020 A Level results day was very stressful. The government did a U turn on A-Level results, which saw a massive influx of worried and stressed parents and students contacting us on social media platforms. I also had to create a reactive social media campaign with limited resources and time to send out a clear message to reassure the public. I made a short Powtoon with all the key facts and FAQ's with a friendly 'you are not your grades' message. This received a lot of positive engagement, despite the stress it caused!

What do you see as essential to achieve success in social media?

An essential part of achieving success in social media is implementing and understanding analytics. You could have the most creative, aesthetically pleasing campaign the world has ever seen, but if you're targeting the wrong audience with the wrong message, your time and money will be wasted.

It's so important you analyse your data to understand who your audience is, what they want and how to reach them. When you have this information, you can then produce an effective, highly tailored social media campaign. Analytics are also a great way to measure how successful your campaign has been and will help you identify areas you can improve on for future campaigns. I use analytics as the rationale behind all my social media actions.

What is the greatest barrier or challenge facing the development of social media?

I think the greatest challenge for the development of social media is the ethical implications on how data is currently being handled via social media. News such as the Cambridge Analytica Facebook scandal has meant that the public have very little faith in how their data is being handled on social media. After Mark Zuckerberg went to court in 2019 over yet another Facebook data scandal, this had a detrimental impact on how the public viewed the platform. How many data scandals can the public tolerate before they come off it all together?

"My whole social media plan had to go out the window as I addressed all the issues that were being flagged publicly on our social channels."

What are the main changes in social media you've noticed since the start of your career?

Social media has changed so much since I started my career in 2015. A lot of clients from the PR firm I worked in thought they didn't need a social media presence and wanted to focus on traditional marketing instead. Fast forward to 2021 and I haven't had a business or client question the importance of social media since!

I also think the penny has finally dropped that businesses now understand how important it is to invest in social media marketing. Each year I've worked in social media, companies are setting aside more of their marketing budget for social media. Back in 2015 my clients would never have given me a budget for social media - it was hard enough setting them up with a free account!

"One of the biggest changes in social media is the shift in how businesses perceive social media marketing."

Another big change in social media is the complexity of analytics now available. As technology has evolved, we've been able to use analytical tools to understand our target audiences better than ever before. This advance has allowed us to make more tailored and effective social media campaigns, compared to the early days of social media marketing where it was very much trial and error. It's also a great way to monitor engagement and performance of social media campaigns, which means marketing budgets are being utilized more effectively than when I started back in 2015.

Which part of your role do you enjoy the most?

I enjoy the creative element of my role the most. I love how a career in social media allows you to write, photograph, video and design. Every day is different; one day you could be working on a photoshoot, the next you could be creating a digital magazine. I'm constantly learning new creative skills in my role. I recently went on a videography course and it was great to keep adding to my creative skillset.

Another part of my role that I really enjoy is attending events to create 'live' social content. The Facebook and Instagram live and stories features mean that it's important I go along to events to generate content as it's happening. I find events a fun way to meet new people and engage with our stakeholders.

If you had to choose just one social media channel to use, which one would you choose and why?

This is a hard question as I love them all for different reasons!

Professionally, I would say Instagram. Our data shows that the target demographic engages with Instagram more than any other social media platform. This has also been proven in our social media analytics, with Instagram outperforming all our Facebook and Twitter posts. However, with Tik Tok becoming increasingly popular with our target market I would be interested to see if there is a shift over the next few months.

Personally, I would choose Tik Tok. The more you use the app, the more it understands the type of content you enjoy. I love to scroll through to unwind, I particularly enjoy any animal related videos, which I seem to get a lot of! I like how varied the content is and shows me videos of topics I would have never searched for.

What would be the most important piece of advice you'd give to someone starting their career in social media?

Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. It's easy to become complacent when creating content, especially if you're getting a steady amount of engagement. However, social media evolves so quickly and trends come and go, so it's really important to keep developing your social media skills. If you're experienced in writing copy, but you've not had any photography experience, see if your manager can recommend any photography or editing courses. If not, there's a wealth of free resources available online, especially on YouTube.

What tools do you rely on to fulfil your role?

I couldn't fulfill my job without Adobe Creative Cloud. From Premiere Pro to edit videos, InDesign to create graphics and Photoshop to improve the quality of images; these programs are essential to my role. They allow me to create a range of high-quality and creative multimedia content which ensures my social media campaigns stand out from competitors and appeal to our target audience. I also have a soft spot for Canva which is a simpler version of InDesign – it's really good if you've never used Adobe Creative Cloud and you want to create quick graphics.

I also rely on:

- Hootsuite to schedule content
- Facebook Ad manager and Analytics for Facebook campaigns
- Google Analytics to track UTM's and Google Ad's
- Bitly to condense URL links
- Envato elements for a range of creative assets. Envato also offer tutorials and courses to help you upskill your social media marketing skills; I used this to teach myself how to use Premiere Pro!

"I'm old school when it comes to a calendar and to-do list.

I use a nice notebook, desk calendar and white board that I would be lost without."

Do you have a favourite podcast that you'd recommend?

Elizabeth Day 'How to Fail' podcast. Everyone's so quick to announce their successes on social media but very rarely do we know their failures. That is why I love this podcast, which normalizes the fact we will all fail at some point in our lives and teaches us how we can learn and grow from them.

What is your favourite quote?

"Always stay true to yourself and never let what somebody else says distract you from your goals." – Michelle Obama

Anything Michelle Obama says could be my favourite quote! However, I particularly like this one. I've been in jobs where I've felt like I should change my personality to fit in and this makes you feel really unhappy at work. However, as Michelle says, 'Always stay true to yourself'.

Who would you miss the most on LinkedIn if they left the platform?

Sophia Amoruso. I've loved Sophia ever since I read her book 'Girl boss' about her life and how she came to start her clothing company 'Nasty Gal'. Her no nonsense, humorous posts about business and life are exactly what I want to fill my LinkedIn feed.

I also like following Whitney Wolfe Herd, the founder of Bumble. She doesn't post much, but Whitney's posts are inspiring and have a strong 'Girl Power' message.



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