

# CASE STUDY

# **GROW SOCIALLY HELPS THE SHERIDAN GROUP**BECOME MORE SOCIAL



# Grow Socially Helps The Sheridan Group Become More Social

## GROW SOCIALLY | GROWSOCIALLY.COM

"One of the first things I knew we needed to do when I joined Sheridan back in 2011 was to increase our social media presence," says Susan Wiercinski at The Sheridan Group, a printing and emerging technologies provider headquartered in Maryland. "The problem was, with four separate business segments we weren't quite sure how to successfully go about it."

Sheridan is made up of four business segments: Journals, books, catalogs, and magazines. Their customers overlap very little between segments, creating a unique challenge when it comes to effectively marketing the company.

"We're a little conservative when it comes to trying new marketing tools," Wiercinski says." But we knew we had to adopt more social media marketing into our mix."

#### **Social Confusion**

When Wiercinski joined Sheridan, the company had separate pages for each segment set up on the major social networking sites, but they had almost no followers or engagement. No one at the company was posting regularly on the pages, and no one understood the basics, like what kinds of posts to place on each site and how often to post.

They also didn't have solid branding in place across the various channels, creating confusion for potential followers and customers. While everyone at the company knew that social media was becoming an important marketing tool, nobody really understood how to make it work or how to craft messages that would appeal to their diverse customer base.

They started looking for help. Sheridan group President Joan Davidson was serving on the board of NAPL at the time, along with Grow Socially CEO John Foley. Grow Socially was on the shortlist to help the company give its social media presence a makeover.

"Grow Socially's approach and personality felt very comfortable to us," recalls Wiercinski. She says hiring them was an easy decision.

## **Teaching By Example**

"Grow Socially set an example with their own social media presence," says Wiercinski.



And not just with their own social networking profiles, she notes. Grow Socially's staff also used examples of how other companies were using social media, giving Sheridan's employees ideas they could adapt to their own messaging.

Grow Socially came up with a strategy and posting schedule, publishing at least one post per day to Facebook and six or more tweets on behalf of Sheridan. This increased and consistent posting schedule helped boost engagement across all of the channels, helping Sheridan gain traction and establish themselves as thought leaders.

The team then helped Sheridan implement unified branding and a recognizable voice across all of their social channels. After a period of collaboration, Grow Socially now manages the company's social presence, creating and posting content to Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Sheridan learned how to create social media strategies around events they attended and new products (such as eBooks and apps to go along with their clients' printed journals). Grow Socially's staff also tutored sales reps in setting up and using social media to engage with prospects and customers, and how to use social media to drive sales.

The company meets with Grow Socially monthly to talk about what's happened over the prior month and what's coming up. During this meeting, Wiercinski and Sheridan's two marketing managers feed Grow Socially's staff the news and other content they'll use for social media posts for the coming month.

"We've really learned what works," notes Wiercinski. "Through Grow Socially's guidance, we're at a point where we come up with content ideas on our own that they help us develop."

### **Quality Over Quantity**

Wiercinski says their results have been tangible -- but their measure of success isn't necessarily the number of followers they attract.

"We really look for quality over quantity when it comes to followers," she says. The company, with Grow Socially's help, regularly assesses their follower lists to see who is following them (customers, prospects, competitors, etc.) and how they can tailor their messaging to keep those followers engaged.

The company doesn't set large benchmarks for increasing follower counts, focusing instead on reaching the right people with the right messages.

They also keep track of their engagement. Grow Socially helps them track which posts spark the most conversation and interaction with followers, so they can create



more of those posts. For example, they've had great success with photos and videos from conferences.

"Not every opportunity in social media marketing is right for us," says Wiercinski. With Grow Socially's help, Sheridan is able to keep up with social media trends and decide which will work to reach their customers.

There's plenty of anecdotal evidence that the strategy is working for them. Wiercinski says, "Sometimes at a conference or trade show, people will approach us and say they loved one of our recent tweets, or learned about one of our products thanks to a LinkedIn or Facebook post."

Grow Socially has helped prepare Sheridan to come up with social strategies on their own, and has increased their knowledge about what works on different channels.

Wiercinski cites Grow Socially's expertise and professionalism as their major assets. She says that, by following Grow Socially's lead, other companies can replicate Sheridan's success.

By creating a strategic online marketing plan, then helping to maintain and enhance the approach, Grow Socially made themselves a partner in Sheridan's success. This attitude of partnership, notes Wiercinski, is what makes Grow Socially such a great choice for any company facing similar challenges.

It also ensures that Grow Socially can take you where you want to go with your online marketing efforts.

