Email vs social media: a mixed method research about affecting crowd level

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Abstract

Our research is on the university at Albany and how it uses email to notify students of events when it should be using social media. Our research shows that while most students find out about events such as sporting events, food events, showcases, etc. via email, not that many attend. Those who do attend more events however tend to find out about these events over social media. Our literature review shows that social media is a great way for exposing events. We used mixed methods to find this information which is useful because it allowed us to find more information and information on a deeper level. The results of our research was that universities should be using social media more to bring in a crowd. Participants responded to the surveys and interviews saying that they often do not see events on social media until after the event is over.

Keywords

Introduction

Since 2012, the use of social media in the U.S. has increased from around 15% to 25% for most platforms while facebook alone has increased from 55% to 68%. With this much social media use, universities are getting on board by marketing events. Social media marketing in universities has been proven to improve attendance at university events. The University at Albany might see increases in event attendance if they start to promote more via social media.

There were, all time low, attendance levels that might be solved via social media.

The University at Albany can increase its attendance levels which can bring in more money from sponsors or ticket sales.

We are studying how Universities use social media platforms to bring in a crowd of people and we are specifically focusing on UAlbany students on campus. We want to know how Universities put in the work and effort on their social media brand and advertising and how due to that, more people can see all the events on their social media and be attracted.

Literature review

Since 2012, the use of social media in the U.S. has increased from around 15% to 25% for most platforms while Facebook alone has increased from 55% to 68%. With this much social media use, universities are getting on board by marketing events. Social media marketing in universities has been proven to improve attendance at university events. The University at Albany might see increases in event attendance if they start to promote more via social media

Universities are beginning to use social media to bring in new students throughout their college career and that social media use has been found to increase the students that have been attending the universities(Nevzat, R., et al. 2016).

Content was proven to be crucial in online settings (Dvir, 2018; Dvir & Gafni, 2018). This is especially true in online education settings (Dvir, 2015; Dvir, 2018). Social media includes online tools that enable Communication, co-operation and sharing among individuals, communities and businesses through internet and technological facilities (Kircova & Enginkaya, 2015, 4). Social media is a type of network system in which users can socialize, share, chat, join social platforms, exchange thoughts and interact online (Koksal & Ozdemir, 2013). Studies reveal that people spend more time on social media day by day and meet their needs by this way (Elbasi, 2015). The advantages of social media are fast spread of information, opportunity to get to know the audience, and reliability of information gathered through reference, etc (Eroz & Dogdubay, 2012).

Methodology

The use of a mixed-method has been proven to be effective because we can cover more ground by collecting data with two methods. We have been able to find out a lot of information with Quantitative data and being able to delve deeper with Qualitative data.

Quantitative:

For the quantitative research we created a survey to send out to a number of people to get enough results to have a good sample size with our n=120

Here   is   what   we   asked:

UAlbany Social Media Survey

All answers will be anonymous. Thank you for your time.

What is your gender? *

1. Male

2. Female

3. Other

4. Prefer not to answer

What is your year of birth? *

1. Before 1995

2. 1996

3. 1997

4. 1998

5. 1999

6. 2000

7. After 2000

What is your current class? *

1. Freshman

2. Sophomore

3. Junior

4. Senior

How do you hear about the events (such as sporting events, concerts, gatherings, etc) happening on campus? *

○ Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.)

○ Email

○ Other (Posters, from a friend, the UAlbany website, etc.)

Do you follow UAlbany on social media? *

○ Yes

○ No

How many on campus events (such as sporting events, concerts, gatherings, *
etc) have you attended in the past month that you found via social media?

○ 0

○ 1-2

○ 3-4

○ 5-6

○ 7+

How many on campus events (such as sporting events, concerts, gatherings, *
etc) have you attended in the past month that you found via email or other?

○ 0

○ 1-2

○ 3-4

○ 5-6

○ 7+

Qualitative:

      For the qualitative research we each interviewed a sample of students to get a more indepth look at how the news of UAlbany events reaches them with our n=30

Here is what we asked about:

1) Age
2) Gender
3) Occupation/ Major
4) Do you regularly/have you ever attended events at SUNY Albany?
    a) If yes, what kind of event(s)?
        i) Rate events
    b) If no, why not?
5) How do you hear about events happening on campus?
6) Why is this your method of finding out about events?
7) Would you be more inclined to use your email or social media to find events?

a) Why do you prefer that?
8) Would you say that you attend more events you hear about via social media or email?
    a) Why do you think it's like that?
9) Which social media platform do you prefer?
    a) Why?
10) Do you follow Albany on social media?
   a) Why? Why not?

Discussion and Findings

What we found from this was that more students found out about events via email, however those who heard about events via social media attended more events. If the university at Albany focused on using social media to bring in more attendees, then the outcome would be an increase in attendance rates.
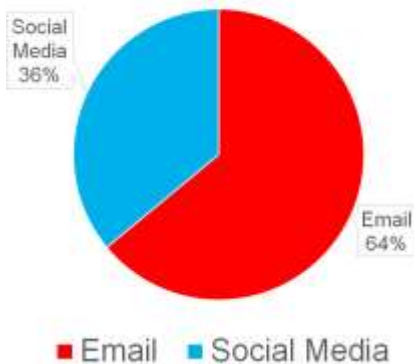
64% of the students that we interviewed found out about the events via Email and 36% of students found out about events via Social Media.
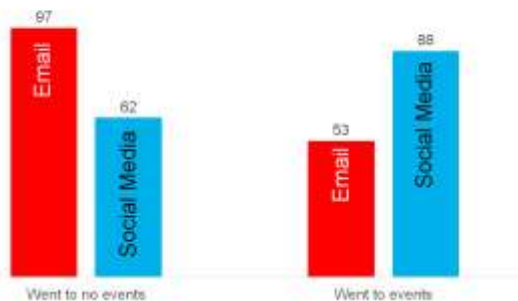
64.6% of students that found out about events via email didn't go to events while 35.3% of students that found out about events via email actually went to events.

41.3% of students that found out about events via social media did not attend events. Meanwhile 58.6% of students that found out about events via social media went to events.

Overall, the surveys and interviews that we conducted are pretty valid in terms of usability in which the survey and interview questions are pretty readable. As for the survey, it was mobile friendly since the participants only had to click on the link we sent out to them. As for the time for both, they both took around five minutes to answer and complete.

Conclusion

While more people hear about events through email, those who do use email still don't attend that many events. Further research could show that those who use social media to find events, attend more. A few ways we or others can expand on this research is to branch off to other Universities. Only having SUNY Albany makes our research too narrow. Also to see how this research can correlate with other Universities' way advertisement for their own students. Other ways are to test the use of social media marketing over email marketing for events and to analyze other college's event attendance and repeating the experiment for them.

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