



Social Media Marketing Plan

Communications and Advertising for the City of Van Meter

This plan is to be followed in conjunction with the over-arching marketing plan as a tool to reach the goals of resident and business growth.

Strategies

1. Establish a following on social media that nears approximately 60% of the population
Just under 45% of the total US population is on social media. If this statistic is consistent in Van Meter, it would be appropriate to set a goal of 500 to 600 followers on Facebook. Van Meter has a higher-than-average population of social media users and already maintains a following of this range.
2. Reach non-Van Meter residents, growing to approximately 10% of our following.
Residents of neighboring communities and prospective residents should make up this demographic. This should translate into a number of posts that also relate to this population

Tactics

1. Frequency: The right balance increases value in content and overall city brand

Each department should post once a week.

Staggering these posts so that there is only one a day is ideal. Having a social presence is important in building relationships with followers and keeping people informed.

Over-posting lowers the value of all present posts.

When important information competes with other important or irrelevant information, it becomes easy for followers to miss or ignore what they need to know. Department heads must use discretion when posting; only having one post a week or so will demand individuals to use their post wisely. If there is nothing important to post about on a particular week, then use that opportunity to champion a cause or advertise a positive attribute for the department. Train the public on what we have to brag about. If the public knows of bragging points about their community, they will be more likely to positively advertise Van Meter to their connections. Word-of-mouth advertising and referrals are major ways in which Van Meter has successfully attracted new residents already, and can continue to use in order to do so.

There are exceptions for emergencies and unusual events.

With this said, posting should still be kept to one or two posts in these scenarios. It is confusing to know what is going on when there are many different posts on the same thing. You are taking on the role of journalist, reporting on important things, but journalists do not write repetitive stories on the same thing without something new and important for their audience to be informed about. Try to maintain the value of a post by not over-posting. This confuses and divides your reach and makes it hard to track progress when people are "liking" and "sharing" and commenting on too many different threads.

2. Content: Type of content matters.

Keep posts between 100 and 250 characters long.

This is less than 3 lines of text. Posts between these size specifications on average perform 60% better, receiving more activity, than those that are longer.

Try to include relevant, quality imagery whenever possible.

Posts that include photos, photo albums, and videos get 120%, 180%, and 100% more engagement than links and text-only posts. Imagery must be professional and relevant, though. Images that do not meet these requirements only devalue the post and the Facebook page as a whole.

Refer followers to other sources with posts.

Demand more millage out of posts. Refer followers to city website pages, city blog posts, and related articles and websites that support Van Meter. Instead of having one hit on a page related to the city, have 2 or more. Not only does this build traffic, but it trains followers to refer to the website more and trains them in how to find information on the website.

Use your posts to encourage interaction with your followers.

Tell your fans what you want them to do or ask what they have to say about something. Posts that ask you to: comment=3.3x more comments, share=7x more shares, Like=3x more likes, and Caption this Photo=5.5x more comments. Fill-in-the-blank posts generate 90% more engagement than the average post.

3. One Voice: Consistency is key

We are the "city."

Refer to ourselves as the city of Van Meter, not ourselves as individuals, when we are posting or commenting on behalf of the city. We are one united team working together as the face of a community or business in essence. A good analogy to keep in mind when thinking about this is any sort of athletic team. When the whole team is not working cohesively and makes this known to the opposing team, they have allowed for a wedge to form and a certain vulnerability to be made known. This can be targeted and grown to the point of detriment. If a team is ever going to be successful, they need to work together, protect each other, and present themselves to others with one, strong image. If you want to call attention to your particular department, it is acceptable refer to yourself as the "Library" or "Department of..." but not to sign off with individual names.

Use community words.

Use words like "we," "us," etc. to promote the idea of unity. This is not only important because we are a "team," but because we are representing a united community to those that are not current residents.

Track and Adjust:

Know what people are saying, and what is and isn't working.

SocialMention.com will be the primary site to track feedback in social media. All departments should be held responsible to keep an eye on how followers are responding to their content. Know what is and isn't receiving positive feedback and what isn't receiving feedback at all.

Cater to what is working.

Use this information to your advantage. If people greatly respond to one idea or cause in a positive way, this gives us an idea of what values the community supports and a direction to work toward in building more engagement.