

AMEC Communication Effectiveness Awards 2012

Best Use of Social Media Measurement (Page 1)

Company Name: The Gorkana Group **Client/Campaign:** Simplyhealth, Framing a Social Strategy

Objective/Brief:

Simplyhealth provides health plans, medical and dental insurance to UK corporate and consumer audiences. The company prides itself on being passionate about health, living by the strapline, “we *can* be bothered”. Simplyhealth was historically a series of acquired businesses, known as HSA, BCWA, HealthSure, LHF and Totally Active. In September 2009 the family of organisations merged under the name Simplyhealth. Since coming together under one brand name the business has been focused on the challenge of establishing and growing brand awareness to support sales growth.

Good progress has been made in brand recognition since the rebrand. To accelerate this in 2011 Simplyhealth made the decision to invest in social media. The newly appointed Social Media Manager faced a number of internal and external challenges, including lack of clarity about the social discussions relevant to health insurers and the need to prove the value of investing further in social activity. The Gorkana Group worked with Simplyhealth to devise a deep dive research piece to inform and frame a sound social media strategy. The insight project had the following objectives:

- To prove that social media conversations had the potential to **influence stakeholder purchase decisions** within the health insurance sector
- To map the **competitive landscape** and identify areas of ownership, and opportunity gaps, within social media
- To understand where **target audiences** gather online, what they are interested in and the content they like to share

Strategy:

To meet the brief, Gorkana Group embarked on a consultancy process to understand the social objectives, strategy and tactics, focusing on how these linked to business needs and outcomes. Simplyhealth was at the beginning of its social media adoption curve, with 2011 considered year one of this strategy. Like many companies it was represented in the usual channels—Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr and YouTube—with little dedicated resource, or budget. For year one, social objectives were around awareness and consideration.

The challenge with using social media research to create a strategy comes from the ocean of data that must be distilled into reliable recommendations. Human input is required to increase accuracy, but it is cost prohibitive to apply analysts to the volumes of social content generated. Gorkana recommended a combination of technology and human intelligence for a yearlong deep dive of social media on two levels:

- Simplyhealth and its **primary competitors**
- **Health conversations** where none of the organisations were mentioned to better understand target audience behaviours

Execution/Implementation:

Content was sourced from micro-blogs, blogs, video sites, social networks, discussion forums and image sites. The right streams of data were identified for each organisation using complex search string methodology to remove false positives, spam and splogs. Through a process of iterative sample-based feedback, technology and human analysis worked together to get the purity of content streams within tolerated error margins. Once the universe of content had been defined (circa. 30,000 pieces), the hard work began on translating Simplyhealth’s social strategy into accurate and reliable metrics.

Sentiment was assigned across the content using cutting-edge NLP techniques, updated to tolerated error margins by continuous human analyst feedback. The Gorkana team defined categories to frame insights required and created complex search strings to isolate content surrounding areas such as customer service, products, discussion subjects, brand attributes etc. This matrix of categories took the social content to the next level of insight, enabling Gorkana to draw solid conclusions and make impactful recommendations.

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Execution/Implementation (cont'd):

The Gorkana Group used end user primary research (sample: 10,000 UK adults) to identify online target audience behaviours. The omnibus survey of the UK population accurately modeled Simplyhealth's key target audiences e.g. 'Target Audience A'. Once identified, the team could report on their social media attitudes and behaviours to inform Simplyhealth's social strategy and tactics.

The insights were delivered in a visual, engaging report that was presented back to Simplyhealth's team and could be easily shared to the rest of the business. Key findings included:

- 13% of all conversations during the year concerned switching, recommending or detracting from the different providers, showing that social media was not "just about chatting" but had the potential to **actively influence purchase decisions**.
- The primary research found that 10% of 'Target Audience B' **use the internet to get advice on products and services**, supporting use of social media to reach this key audience.
- While Simplyhealth conversations focused on products, target audiences were discussing subject areas. The **opportunity to shift focus away from product-centric social content** was identified to better engage audiences socially with the brand.
- Relevant conversations that were happening without mentioning any of the brands occurred in a very different channel profile than was matched by the insurance providers. 30% of Simplyhealth content featured on Twitter, but this channel only accounted for 5% of non-brand conversations. Forums and blogs was where most relevant conversations took place (accounting for 60% of content), but only contributed to 30% of Simplyhealth's social media throughout the year. A **change in targeting and resource attributed to these channels** was recommended.
- Within the competitive set the main drivers of social conversation were mainstream launches, indicating no successful social centric strategies and a **greenfield opportunity for Simplyhealth**.
- Bupa was identified to be **successfully integrating customer service requests** within social media channels, but not dedicating any more time to resourcing this service than Simplyhealth was using to maintain its presence. The recommendation was made for Simplyhealth to follow suit.
- Of all content shared, much originated from mainstream sites and was rarely original social content. Of all the news sites that URLs pointed back to, the *Publication X* was the main driver of shared content, accounting for 33% of links. This suggests that a **well integrated and targeted social and mainstream communications strategy** would create cumulative results.

Conclusions:

The research has affected change within Simplyhealth right from perception to investment, resourcing, strategy and tactics. The change started with the internal communication that 13% of conversations had the potential to influence stakeholder purchase decisions. Consequently the business has committed to developing the Simplyhealth social campaign, with the aim of owning the social media space internally and externally and achieving longevity.

Dedicated resource has been committed to integrate customer service completely in social media channels. The research identified where audiences gather online, what they are interested in and the content they like to share. The PR team is actively monitoring identified relevant forums and engaging where appropriate. The Simplyhealth blog has been created generating subject based content that audiences enjoy sharing.

The insights delivered by the Gorkana Group have influenced Simplyhealth's social media strategy and affected positive change within the organisation. Simplyhealth has already started to benefit from their effective engagement with the social channels following the insight delivered by Gorkana.
