2016

Social Media Immersion Experience

Judi Crenshaw
Virginia Commonwealth University, jwcrenshaw@vcu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/bike_faculty

Part of the Higher Education Commons

© The Author

Downloaded from http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/bike_faculty/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great VCU Bike Race Book at VCU Scholars Compass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great VCU Bike Race Book Faculty Reflections by an authorized administrator of VCU Scholars Compass. For more information, please contact libcompass@vcu.edu.
Reflection

#theworldsatvcu Course Reflection
by instructor Judi Crenshaw

I could see that look of confusion and recognized the not-so-subtle “Wuuuuut?” washing over students’ faces about five minutes into our pre-race meeting. They think they know everything about social media. They’re all over twitter and masters of Insta (and they think I don’t know about Snapchat and YikYak). But they’ve never given much thought about using those platforms in an organizational setting, much less considered that it might be harder than it seems.

In outlining our goals for this course to effectively promote a world-class sporting event, to represent the university and promote a prestigious list of sponsors, the numbers start to sink in. They’ll be using their personal accounts — their face, their personal brand — to give voice to an event and reach thousands of people all over the world.

Students in this course were not PR majors, so the blank looks continued throughout our first meeting. I found they learned by doing. And they did well!
Students' initial resistance to using their personal twitter and Instagram accounts quickly gave way to elevating their professionalism and recognizing the appropriate promotional “players” in the event. They consistently used VCU’s specified race hashtag in order to group all posts, be part of VCU’s conversation on social, and track engagement. They also did an excellent job of tagging sponsors and featuring them in photos and videos.
Holding a post-race meeting enabled students to learn about measuring engagement on social media, an area none of the students had considered in a purposeful way before. They were introduced to the organic analytical tools within twitter and explored the measurement and engagement analysis available on Iconosquare for Instagram.
They also examined data measurement tools such as NodeXL twitter graphs and Tags Explorer hashtag graphs (thanks to Tom Woodward and ALTLab!) in which they were able to find themselves within the metrics of ‘Top Tweeters’ and ‘Top Conversationalists’ for #theworldsatvcu hashtag.

As a final step, students were urged to document their work. This course created a very real role for each student in #theworldsatvcu social media campaign. They played a vital role in getting the word out to the entire world about the UCI Road World Championships and in making sure that VCU, race sponsors, and the city of Richmond received appropriate credit for their efforts. The course helped students realize that this is a marketable skill that can be leveraged in their future careers!