CTSI Career Development Seminar

Using Social Media to Recruit and Retain Study Participants – the PI’s perspective

Presented by:
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Researchers’ Perceptions and Use of Social Media

Sarah Gollust, PhD
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CTSI Career Development Seminar
Mixed methods survey
Random sample of 325 university faculty at the 2013 Academy Health Annual Research Meeting

Grande et al., Health Affairs, 33, no.7 (2014):1278-1285
Randomized to 1 of 3 vignettes describing research dissemination

University researcher publishes a study comparing the impact of various policies on childhood obesity

- Traditional Media
- Social Media
- Direct Outreach
# Experimental results - participant attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Traditional Media</th>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>Direct Outreach</th>
<th>P-value(^3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived efficacy(^1)</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence(^1)</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer respect(^1)</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic promotion(^1)</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall impression(^2)</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) 1-10 scale where 1=not at all and 10=very

\(^2\) 0-100 scale where 0 = “cold” feeling about researcher and 100 = “warm” feeling toward researcher

\(^3\) P-values calculated using ANOVA and test for a difference between experimental groups.
Efficacy by Rank

- Traditional Media
- Social Media
- Direct Outreach

Assistant Professor
Associate Professor
Full Professor

p = 0.03
Perceived Efficacy of Methods to Communicate with Policymakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Efficacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact Policymaker</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper Articles</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Briefs</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Editorials</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Articles</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Blogs</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents were asked to directly rate the efficacy of each dissemination channel to communicate research to “policymakers and other decision makers” on a 1-10 scale (1 = not at all effective, 10 = very effective).
Self-Reported Dissemination Activities in Prior Year

- Directly Contacted Policymaker: 74.4%
- Interviewed by Reporter: 69.7%
- News Media Covered Your Study: 65.1%
- Contacted Interest Group: 63.2%
- Published Policy Brief: 33.5%
- Published Editorial with Policy: 30.7%
- Blogged about Research/Policy: 20.9%
- Updated Facebook Friends about: 19.1%
- Tweeted about Research: 14.4%

Note: Respondents were asked to self-report whether they had used any of the above communication methods in the past year.
When we asked researchers to talk about using social media...

Culture

Professional Risk

Low Confidence

Uncertainty of Efficacy
Acknowledgements

- Contact me at: sgollust@umn.edu
- David Grande, PI of study
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- Zachary Meisel, Austin Kilaru, Jane Seymour, Adeline Gross
- LDI SUMR Scholars of 2013
FACEBOOK RECRUITMENT: GRANT CONSIDERATIONS & LESSONS LEARNED
My Research Interests

- Men who have sex with men
  - 2-10% of the US adult population
- People with HIV
  - 1.1 million
Should I recruit using social media? (or: Can I convince reviewers that this recruitment approach will work?)

- Who are you trying to reach?
  - Representative or convenience sample?
- How many participants do you want to recruit?
- Is your target population online & using social media?
- Does the social media platform(s) that your target population uses allow advertising & work with researchers?
87% of US Adults use the Internet in 2014 (http://www.pewinternet.org)
For Aim 3, we will recruit MSM from across the US via online, targeted ads placed on key social media websites, such as Facebook. Members of the study team have used a similar recruitment strategy to enroll MSM in prior (e.g., SILAS) and ongoing studies (e.g., HIV Prevention Toolkit for HIV-negative Male Couples), and therefore we do not anticipate difficulty in reaching recruitment targets.
Example description in grant:

We will use targeted Facebook advertisements to recruit participants for the online focus groups. The 2013 Pew Research Social Media Report confirms that Facebook remains the dominant social media platform; 84% of young adults who go online report using Facebook (Duggan & Smith, 2014). Secondary recruitment methods, if needed, will be paid advertising in the xx sections of local media and online classified advertisements with Craigslist.
Facebook Ad Placements
Competing Interests

- Your Goal → Recruit your targeted sample
- Facebook → Make money from clicks on ads
  - Facebook will kill ads that aren’t performing (i.e., ads where X% of the potential pool is not clicking on your ad)

Implication:
- Use tested principles to create an effective ad
- Understand the ad lifecycle
Effective ads:

- Are directive
  - “Get involved”
  - “Take our survey”
- Have the right picture
  - One, smiling person
- Use punctuation
  - Exclamation point, question mark
- Limits the sample with the “Precise interests” tool
Ad Lifecycle

1. Create Many Ads
2. Facebook Approval
3. Release A Few
4. Pause & Monitor
5. Rotate
Thank You

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General Tips/Considerations

- Engagement versus advertisement
- Does social media make sense for your study?
- Relevancy: what does this look like and do you have the resources to achieve it?
- Budget considerations: do you need staff, student worker, paid promotion, etc?
- Use an existing platform
- Consider disease specific versus study specific
Resources

• U of MN Social Networking Guidelines, Basics of social networking, What to know before using social networking, Tool comparison chart: https://www.ur.umn.edu/brand/requirements-and-guidelines/social-networking/


• Social Media for Researchers: Tips for #Success:
  • http://www.ctsi.umn.edu/news-and-events/events/past-events
  • Penn Social Media and Health Innovation Lab: http://www.med.upenn.edu/socialmedialab/