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EXPERT VIEW on Social Media: Greg Fry

Greg Fry, social media consultant and co-founder of Content Plan

IN THIS EDITION OF 'EXPERT VIEW,' WE SPEAK WITH GREG FRY, SOCIAL MEDIA CONSULTANT, TRAINER AND CO-FOUNDER OF CONTENT PLAN.

With social distancing measures still in place, maximising your potential online has never been more important - and Greg Fry, social media consultant and trainer with Content Plan, knows only too well the need for companies to be aware of their online presence and how to utilise the internet to promote their business.

“Due to the current economic climate and the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s very important for small businesses in particular to realise that it isn’t business as usual.

“But there are many tools which can be a vital means of communication while we are not able to hold face-to-face

meetings. And I would encourage companies to embrace this new method of doing business as it’s going to change the way we work forever. And even when we are out of this, I believe more Irish SMEs will be using video conferencing than ever before.”

The social media expert says there are a variety of communication options available depending on the audience you are trying to target and the sort of business you are running.

“We’re changing the way we do business and are now having to use digital tools in the same way we communicate in the off-line world,” he says.

“But there are lots of options on social media - Facebook Live Broadcasting can be great for businesses to connect with their community online and video conferencing tools can be used to get in touch with perspective and existing clients.

“We should be hanging out online where our customers are, rather than the social media channels we are most comfortable in. So, if selling to the public then Facebook and Instagram are the most effective option. Whereas if you are communicating business-to-business then LinkedIn is by far the biggest professional network and most Irish businesses are hanging out there.”

As well as choosing the correct channel, Greg says it’s also important to know what you are going to say.

“Structure can be confusing on social media as it’s often difficult to know what to say and how often,” he says. “There are no strict rules, but I would advise three to five times a week on Facebook and LinkedIn and once a day on Instagram. One thing we ensure our clients have is a content calendar which gives some structure on what to put out, where and when. As knowing what days we are going to post allows us to plan content and build an element of consistency so our audience will engage.

“Make sure to create valuable consistent content and don’t write in a monologue fashion as posts need to be conversational rather than statement driven. This will help to increase likes and shares and raise your profile. Also, always acknowledge when people leave a comment and most importantly be aware of tone, particularly during the current crisis.

“This should be one of empathy as people are emotionally charged right now so we shouldn’t be aggressively pushing a product or service. Use the 80-20 format – so 80% of the time [eight out of ten posts] should create value, show that you care and show your brand personality, while the remaining posts can be about selling your product – it’s very important to get the balance right.”

Greg says advertising through social media can also be beneficial, particularly on Facebook as it’s inexpensive. But business owners should also be using other methods to keep in touch with customers as communication, by whatever means, is hugely important.

“It’s never been easier to reach out to clients – and prospective clients – remotely, by video conference, email shots with little snippets of information about what is going on and also by phone.

“We didn’t have time in the past, but now we do, so it’s the perfect time to pick up the phone and check that people are ok.”

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Key Advice:

- Social media platforms and video conferencing are hugely beneficial to business during the COVID-19 crisis.
- There are different platforms to suit different businesses and target audiences, so make sure to choose the right one for your company.
- Plan your content and have a schedule for posting.
- Make sure to set the right tone as aggressive selling is not appropriate during the global pandemic.

To find out more about Greg Fry and his business, please visit ContentPlan.co

Visit LocalEnterprise.ie/Response for details on supports, such as social media mentoring, that can help your business respond to COVID-19