Tox Talks

Using social media to increase public awareness on environmental toxins

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Abstract:
The Institute of Neurotoxicity and Neurological Disorders is composed of three major programs, Healthy World Press, Toxipedia, and BMPopedia (Integrated Pest Management). The goal of these programs is to utilize up to date research on environmental toxins to help people make more conscientious decisions about toxic exposures. As the research and outreach intern my job is to utilize multiple communicative platforms, such as using Facebook to connect to similar organizations and creating a following of interested individuals. Also creating a blogs to provide a user friendly news feed up to date information concerning environmental toxins, and digitizing hard copy toxin related literature, uploading it on an easy to use website and making the information more interactive. By creating multiple options for people to access toxin related pertinent information, we aim to increase the amount of people who are interested in toxin related research, which will be monitored by the numbers of people who follow our facebook page, twitter account, Toxipedia blog, newsletter and visit the main website.

Methods:

- Began by contacting subscribers of our weekly newsletter to invite them to become one of our "friend or partners".
- As a friend or partner we agree to mention their product or service to large groups of people.
- As the research and outreach intern for the Institute of Neurotoxicity and Neurological disease (INND) my job is to not only research current breakthroughs in the world of toxicology, but to figure out how to make this information accessible to those who would be interested. Therefore we have decided to utilize social networking as a means to increase our community and gain additional support.

Results:

**Calculation of active users**

- **Active Users Daily**
  - The number of people who have interacted with your Page or its posts. This includes interactions from Fans and non-Fans (Unique Users).
  - **Weekly Active Users**
    - The number of people who have interacted with your Page or its posts. This includes interactions from Fans and non-Fans (Unique Users).

Graph illustrates the number of readers who regularly check the site, according to graph we have an average of 42 readers who check site daily, 149 readers who check the site weekly and 226 readers who check the site monthly.

**Number and age group of female subscribers**

Graph shows the number of female subscribers between the ages of 25 - 55+ based on the information they provided in their user profiles.

**Average interest by males**

Graph shows the number of male subscribers between the ages of 25 - 55+ based on the information they provided in their user profiles.

**Effectiveness of different social media outlets, and the difference in actual results vs. expected results**

As a result of using social media to extend our support base we have already begun to see progress. According to our data we gain an average of one new subscriber each day. Also we have more female subscribers versus male subscribers overall, and our most active age group is the 25-34 age bracket. According to the trends, our readership increases with every additional day that our pages are accessible via the web. Based on the information we can now consider additional marketing efforts to target those communities.

Similar studies have been done which reinforce the findings that social media allows for participants to join a worthy cause. Creating a social media platform such as a facebook page, helps to deepen relationships by allowing everyone who subscribes to the page to take part in discussions and share their personal experiences. As our community continues to grow, we intend to utilize the space to host more fund raising activities.

Acknowledgements:

Nick Thorp- useful outreach suggestions, and affiliate group recommendations
Maria Williams – completing all necessary editing work, and overseeing all outreach projects