

Cal Poly Athletics Social Media Look and Feel

Link to finished project: [Look Book](#)

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Abstract

For my senior project I will be revamping the Cal Poly Athletics Social Media Look and Feel with a new social media specific branding guide and mock ups of posts specified to the Cal Poly Football team. The goal of my project is to create a social media look for Instagram and Twitter that will drive more engagement and interest with followers and fans on campus. I will be using the Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT) to describe the importance of humanizing players and creating connections through social media. I will also be defining the three most important elements of branding to create a branding guideline that will keep the audience engaged in the events offered by the teams. The final product will include a summary of the importance of social media marketing, posting ideas, and a mockup of the social media graphics. The deliverables will be available as links to my BeHance page digitally.

Keywords: Social Information Processing Theory, branding guideline, social media

Social Information Processing Theory

The Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT) is the way that people develop relationships and process social situations. This theory has become more prevalent in online situations as technology and social media use increase in society, it is called computer mediated communication (CMC). Humans are programmed to naturally create relationships, no matter the basis of how they make them, but CMC lacks face to face interaction. This void is filled by the sharing of text and photos through online media – social media.

Connections

The SIPT identifies how connections are formed in a virtual format, this connection is enhanced with social media, also called Computer Mediated Communications (CMC). CMC bypasses the connections that were previously formed through face to face interaction, allowing humans to interpret interactions textually to determine the relationship. Social queues that were previously based on face to face reactions have been replaced with pictures, emojis, and the use of certain language in texts. That being said, the internet has allowed interactions that would otherwise not happen in real life from anywhere in the world, creating a social bond that is defined by the SIPT.

Humanizing

By giving the fans a more personal look into players' lives through social media, it has brought fans to have a more humanized view of their favorite players. A lot of the time athletes are seen as heroic figures because of the way they are portrayed in the media. They are praised by incredible plays and advanced physical performances, but this also makes the athlete have to live to a standard that is not always attainable, that is why it is important to use social media to show a more personal side to these athletes. Fans are able to process these personal social

interactions to relate more to these players, they form genuine and human connections, benefiting the players' support system. Along with humanizing, fans are able to form connections with the players through social media that they would not develop through face to face engagement.

Social Media

Social media is the forefront of marketing as it is one of the most successful tactics to spread brand awareness to an audience, it has also become the best place to be a fan of sports. By using the SIPT, it proves that these mediated connections between the players and their fans over social media is creating a virtual bond– one that develops as the player or team posts more about their values and day to day activities. Over the past 5 years, social media has served as the number one liaison between loyal fans and their favorite sports teams, making it the perfect place to see the SIPT in action. Creating a human connection has proven to sky rocket game attendance, sales, and engagement with teams, this personal connection can all be formed through social media.

Branding

Branding in sports is the key to creating an identity to your team and sharing core values with their fans and followers. By being able to display these values, it creates a place for fans to find commonalities and ways to trust their favorite teams and players. In turn, this communicates good messages that will make a team stand out against their competitors and gain fans and sponsors loyalty when making decisions. To create a brand, there are branding guidelines that are important to follow, they create a consistency that reinforces and establishes the brand's image – ultimately making it identifiable against competitors. In sports, branding is essential because it

will gain fans' support against other teams based on how consistent and recognizable they are as a brand.

Consistency

Consistency is a vital part to creating a popular brand, it makes the brand even more recognizable for supporters. To help create consistency, branding guidelines must be set in place and followed, this allows colors, logos, and fonts to be used throughout digital marketing materials creating recognition of a brand across platforms to further establish its look. On a social media platform, branding must be followed across all platforms, this makes it so that all targeted audiences are engaged with the content that is being produced. Unifying visual elements such as colors and graphics help make the teams stand out against each other because it creates a contrast towards others. Making sure that all elements are being consistently shared across platforms further establishes the brand.

Relevancy

A good brand always keeps their fans engaged, this can be done by making sure that it is always relevant and up to date on trends. Brands must be able to be adaptable while also sticking to the guidelines set in place for that brand. Fans will stay loyal to brands that can be receptive to change and what is trending online. Trends are important because they keep brands like sports teams relevant with the large audience that they are trying to keep involved. When a brand is able to keep up relevance it is building credibility and maintaining its fan base.

Audience

Brands must understand their target audience, that way they can effectively communicate with their fans. The first step to managing this audience is to define it and with sports this group can start to get very large, which is why it is important to constantly do market research on your

targeted fans. By being able to understand your audience, the brand can tailor the information and ads to their fans. Sports teams need to be able to communicate and relate to all their fans, as a lot of pro teams have huge followings, they need to make sure to continue to spark the interest of all of their fans.

Synthesis

In the sports world, the Social Information Processing Theory and branding is used through social media to successfully make strong connections with their fans – especially in the college atmosphere. Loyal fans are key to a successful team, so if the Cal Poly Athletics program is able to use the SIPT and branding to their advantage they can create a more supportive fan base for sports teams on campus.

In order to use the SIPT effectively, CP Athletics needs to create more personalized content surrounding each player and their day to day activities. To do this, I have implemented a lot of player highlight posts in the proposed calendar that will help fans learn more about the players on their school team. Individual highlights will allow information about the players to be processed with fans create deeper connections with the players outside of the game. With more personalized posts, players can utilize these CMC and gain more loyal fans.

Branding keeps the teams recognizable, in my project, I have created a social media branding guideline that will keep fans loyal throughout the season. This branding guideline is special because it will hit all the important elements of branding; it will keep consistent across platforms, it will follow trends in social media, and it will be catered to the Cal Poly sports fan. The current CP Athletics branding guideline lacks the mobility that the social media world needs. It only follows a strict layout leaving no room for what is trending and what is working for other popular teams. With the new guideline, it will have an editorial page that describes how

you can implement specialized typefaces or colors, while still encapsulating the values that athletics stands by. The branding guide will also implement the element of consistency, making sure that the brand is still identifiable throughout different artistic approaches. This new branding guide will help with boosting loyalty and attendance to the Cal Poly Athletics teams.

Link to finished project: [BeHance Link](#)

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