

Susan Halligan, Social Media Consultant

Susan Halligan is a Social Media Consultant based in New York. As the former Marketing Director of The New York Public Library, she established the first-ever marketing department for the 100-year-old institution helping it to make the transition from traditional communication to new media platforms. Susan built the library's social media footprint, using training, staffing and analytics tools such as HootSuite, Socialflow and Radian6, to make @nypl the #1 public library in the world on Twitter, Facebook and Foursquare.

The library's *Don't Close the Book* advocacy campaign was nominated by MarketingSherpa to the 2010 Viral and Social Media Hall of Fame and the library was awarded the 2010 PR News Non-Profit PR Award: Use of Twitter, Success through a Coordinated Staffing Model. Susan was Executive Producer of *Treasures of The New York Public Library* video series (www.nypl.org/news/treasures). She also has a background in sponsorship, event and talent management, having worked for IMG on sponsorship programs for the Smithsonian Institution, the United States Olympic Committee and the Nobel Institute. Prior to IMG, Susan held marketing positions at Simon & Schuster, William Morrow and Princeton University Press.

In this keynote, Susan showed how the library transformed its marketing to incorporate digital media at the centre of its operation.

Who you gonna call?

Let's talk about the New York Public Library. Does anyone happen to know the names of the two lions sitting in front of the 5th Avenue building? [there were no responses from the audience]. They are called Patience and Fortitude. These are two key attributes needed to succeed in social media.



The 5th Avenue building is one of four research libraries in Manhattan. The others are *Science and Business*, *Performing Arts* and *Black Culture*. Amongst its 50 million items are a fair hand copy of Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence*, a Guttenberg Bible and AA Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*. There are also 87 neighbourhood branches in Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten Island. It has 18 million users who come to the library not just for books and video games and materials but for thousands of programmes and classes, all of which are free.

Several years ago, the library started to think about the 21st Century and think about those particular areas that needed to be re-positioned, especially its services. This included a state-of-the-art book sorter which cut the time by two days of delivering



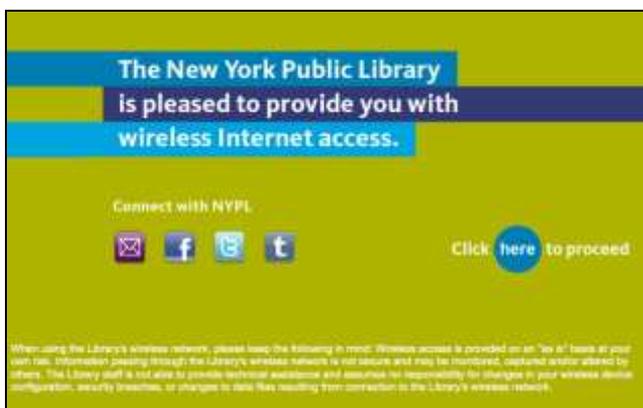
books and materials to users. It has also, in partnerships with Google and Microsoft, been gradually digitising all its books, materials and photos. putting them online for everyone in the world to discover and use.

However, this investment did not extend to the marketing department. There were two of us and what little funding we had was targeted for more traditional communication platforms such as print advertising.

Nevertheless the marketing world was changing and our marketing needed to adapt as well and so I decided to take a leap. You need to take a risk in social media, as well as having patience and fortitude to succeed in social media.

The world we are leaping into is the 'Sharepocalypse' – this is my favourite expression at the moment. It's an expression coined by Nova Spivack who is a Web Futurist. It's a scary world but these social media platforms are the most important in the history of the world and they are changing everything on an hourly basis from governments to industries.

The people who engage and join are uniformly young. 50% of the world's population is under the age of 30. I recently saw something which said that 89% of young women who are 18-29, use social media several times a day. Twitter is incredibly diverse: 55% White but also 22% Black 15% Latino and 3% Asian.



Let's talk about the library and its channels: Facebook, Foursquare, YouTube, Twitter. The library also provides free wi-fi to anyone and the page (left) is the library's splash page. The social share buttons are also up there inviting people to connect with us. 55,000 people went through that splash page a month.

The social media platforms were launched in 2008 – and by 'launched' I mean I set up a Facebook page one afternoon. I didn't really know what I was doing. A couple of weeks later we set up a Twitter feed – again I didn't really know what I was doing. It was slow at first – there were only two of us, social media is labour intensive and we had other responsibilities.

2010 was the year when we gained traction: 1200 % increase in Twitter followers; Facebook became the number one referral for the library's website; attendance at the library also increased by 16% during the year. With this came more management support, investment and recognition.

One of the myths of about social media is that it replaces traditional marketing and pr. It doesn't, it's another bucket. The sweet spot comes when you can integrate social media with existing communication platforms such as signage, splash screens, publications, advertising, pr, e-communications.

How it worked

To begin with, it was important to build and educate our internal communities – like our staff and the people who will help to make it work. There need to be policies – the things that advise people what they can and can't do in social media. There need to be best practices – the ways that they can do things.

Once you've started to educate your staff it's good to integrate goals: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely. In other words scalable. What are the things you can manage to do as you are starting out in social media? For the library it was important to attract new audiences and also to answer questions for people. There was an online unit called *Ask NYPL* which answered questions on Facebook and Twitter. By the end of 2010 40% of the entire customer service unit's enquiries had migrated to online.

You also need a bit of surprise and brand awareness. People need to discover you and be delighted about discovering you online.

As you educate staff you need a governance model. By this I mean a work flow and a process. We used a 'Hub and Spoke' model. There is a central unit that sets the policy and practices. For the library this was marketing and communications and then other parts of the library supported this.

The library won awards and recognition for the way it handled team work. For example, the flagship @NYPL Twitter feed used Tootsuite and we had 11 or 12 staff members contributing content on a daily basis. You need people to make this succeed and you need them to contribute content from a variety of areas of expertise. We set up a monthly meeting in which we discussed and planned this out. This is how you break down the silos and everyone works as one.

Not everybody is good at this. You need to find people who have some personal experience. I spent a lot of time personally checking out social media before I set up the accounts. Also, others are better at one thing rather than another; so some are good with short form (Tweeting) and some with long form (Blogging). Some like to take pictures, some to take video. All of this needs to be guided by someone with strong strategic skills and multi-disciplinary marketing experience. They need to evangelise to the decision makers how important social media is and also to educate people and rally them internally.

The more people you have in social media the more you need a crisis plan. Two young people working in communications developed a model and did a fantastic job

so that if there was a problem core people could be communicated with – the donors, customer services, human resources and the managers of the 87 branches.



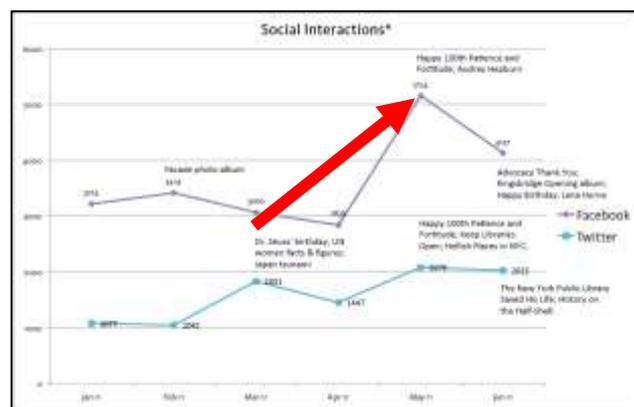
Another key tool is a calendar. We used an excel spreadsheet as a Google Doc. This is where we put in our major initiatives, content opportunities and on a monthly basis what needed to be done. This cuts out the ‘Oh my God it’s 2.15pm what am I going to put on Facebook’ moment. The single biggest reason that social media stalls is because people have no idea what to post; this helps you without eliminating the opportunity for spontaneity.

Technology is crucial. As Neil has shown, there is a huge data revolution going on. ‘Big data’ will be the next big phase in social media but if you are a small to medium sized organisation it’s hard to wrap your arms around all that data. We started to track analytics in October 2009. Social media is very trackable but there is no uniform platform and no cookie cutter ROI. There is constant change and it’s difficult to keep up. Look at the recent changes to Facebook, Twitter and Google+ have made. The recent ICM survey that Neil mentioned, 71% of CEOs from companies across 64 countries said they were unprepared for the data revolution.

At the library we created a ‘monthly marketing dashboard’. There are a series of KPIs you can follow. It’s really crucial to mine that data. What are people responding to?

We use seven tools:

- Google Analytics
- Convio
- Provider
- HootSuite
- Twitter
- Facebook Insights
- Social Flow



The arrow on the right shows an interesting point. Someone had the idea of posting a picture of Audrey Hepburn which we had in the library to coincide with her 100th birthday and the 100th birthday of Patience and Fortitude; a million impressions.

Our KPIs were: Community growth, Brand mentions, Brand Sentiment, Interactions, Shares, Referrals to nypl.org , Click behavior, Email Open/CTR If you don't know how you people are responding to your content you aren't going to be able to respond to content.

The library had a number of major initiatives over 18 months from January 2010. This included: a new website, a new logo, a series of online exhibits which built on the library's digital assets, an advocacy campaign called 'Don't Close the Book', a centennial which was celebrated on the cover of the New Yorker, a partnership with social media week and a partnership with Foursquare. These were all major opportunities to create content, use social media as part of the overall communication mix and e-communications. Our goals were: public awareness, new audiences and public engagement.

For social media week – which is held twice a year in 24 countries – we offered the NYPL as a partner which meant providing space (in the 5th Avenue building) and staff expertise. 36% of people who play in the social media week sandpit are between 21 and 35, 88% of them communicate via Twitter which produces 42 million impressions in a week.

There were four live panels such as one about the 'Future Library: socializing history with maps' which included our geo-spatial librarian with participants from Google and Foursquare. It was immensely popular, with 170 tweets in an hour. Another panel looked at using teams to make social media successful. It included representatives from a financial institution, a book publishing company and a music company: a few 20th century institutions desperately trying to reinvent themselves for the 21st Century!

Our partnership with foursquare worked really well. It was built around the library's centennial and we were the first library in the world to be given a foursquare badge. The platform has 10 million registered users. In the first six months of 2011 there were 750 million check-ins [at the foursquare check-in points]. If you check-in you get badges, points, rewards, mayorships if you check-in enough. We used this as an opportunity to promote the centennial and also the development group gave the participants various benefits at the library depending on their check-ins. We attracted 27,000 Foursquare followers with 14,000 check ins, 12,000 Centennial Badge unlocks and 130 Foursquare Friends Memberships.



We used Socialflow to draw attention to the 100 plus blogs being written by the staff at the library. 44% of all Tweets were auto-tweeted by Socialflow, generating 84% of all clicks and referrals to the blogs on the library's website increased by 174%.

New Audiences

The 'Find the Future App' was a game designed by Jane McGonagle based on the library's collections. 500 people came to the library, using smart phones, QR codes and were taken to different places to discover things in the library. This also gave the library lots of good online mentions and pr.



We had a crowd sourcing project which invited people to transcribe some of the 40,000 menus held at the library dating back to 1840. It was a great opportunity for historians, chefs etc.

Public Engagement

Every year, the library, police, fire fighters, teachers go to the City Council to plead not to have their funding cut. Normally, people would be invited to come to the library and write a letter to the Mayor. In 2010 for the first time we used social media to support this advocacy effort.



We used signage, e-communications, video, newspaper advertising etc but also you could go online and write a letter which automatically would be

sent to the mayor and the city councillor (and you could also make a donation). 33% of all actions during that campaign came as a result of social. Online letter submissions went up 66% on the previous year.

100 million people every week take some kind of social action on YouTube. Seven hours take time watching video and they tend to be older (35-54) who are also a good donor group.

So we went to a performance art outfit called *Improv Everywhere* and asked them to do a video for us – and told them we had aspirations to go viral. They agreed and did it for free.

[Susan Halligan then played the YouTube video:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKB7zfopiUA>]



The result was a spoof 'Ghostbusters' video which had over 2 million views on YouTube within 10 days. Now it has over 4 million views so it has indeed gone viral.

So if you take the leap the parachute will open.

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