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Gov 2.0: Is Social Media the new PR policy?

30th Dec,2019



When 'Government is by the people, for the people and of the people' and still the people themselves are unaware of the various processes and schemes government has devised in public interest, it's a sham. Worldwide web is the most powerful medium of reaching out. And the role of social media for improving government and public interaction cannot be ignored. This is the very reason government agencies are adopting social media tools, platforms and forums to communicate with citizens faster and better.

Social Media’s Role in Transforming Government–Citizen Interaction

Gov 2.0 is the very concept that merges social media with the worldwide web presence of government organizations. It helps them make the paradigm shift from static, unresponsive

structure of government websites to a more dynamic interactive service provisioning system that revolutionizes the very process government and citizens connect by transforming both the internal as well as external information flow.

Here is how social media provides the edge over other PR strategies to help government processes to be more transparent, accountable and efficient by improving citizen interaction, reducing response time and building stronger government and citizen relationship.

1. Transparency – Promotes Accountability

To promote "***government with the people***" instead of just "***government for the people***", we need simpler communication methods. Government organizations face increasing regulation issues and public demand to be informed has been taking a priority for officials handling important public offices. With the rise of social networking tools and sites, Gov 2.0 makes it easier to disseminate information in a timely and more accountable manner. Social media also opens an active communication channel for citizens to connect with Government organizations in a more interactive manner than ever.

2. Participation - Increase Public Outreach

In a busy world, where time is money, citizens want timely, easy access to public services how and when they want it. With Gov 2.0, citizens can participate in government initiatives from anywhere. It also makes citizens even more influential active participants increasing public contribution and makes it highly effective to disperse information and make policy enhancements easy. Eventually social networking sites connect government agencies and people to connect with their audience at a personal level and create ambient awareness increasing productivity of agencies in general.

3. Collaboration - Encourage Cooperation

One of the reasons of success for government initiatives is owing to better public collaboration. The latest social computing tools improve government organization ability t collaborate and harness it to provide better services. Features like blogs, wikis and Facebook handles not only enhance partnerships and cooperation of between private and government agencies but also improve internal collaboration leading to delivering quality services to public. The emergence of collaborative creative class who generate, publicize and propagate information are on the rise and the government can boost their public reach through them.

4. Proactive - Combat Negative Publicity

Social media has been used by private organizations to manage reputation and take proactive measures to avoid negative publicity. Government agencies can benefit from the

rise of social media as mostly they are free and are largely used by millions of users on a daily basis. The collaborative creative class is content generators and publishers, they also work as an important feedback mechanism. By improving access to quality of data and relevant information and helping organization understand and manage risks in a more effective manner, social media work as the best publicist one can get. So far, government agencies are seen as faceless autocratic organizations that are out of public reach, but with Gov 2.0, it's now possible to build enhanced public relations which work alongside citizens new and growing needs of a better and transparent government process.

5. Awareness - Expand Access to Information

Gov 2.0 as commonly hyped as the social media evolution in government sector employs a lot of handy and user-friendly tools to create public awareness. The list keeps growing and it highly essential to remain updated on the latest trends to reach out to the broadest possible audience with minimum time investment. So rather than focusing on any one medium, it I more beneficial to try out a number of mediums to see which one actually works for a specific organization.

Social media sites: Facebook, LinkedIn, Myspace, Twitter
Blogs: BlogSpot, WordPress etc.
Wiki: Wikipedia
Video Sharing: YouTube & Google+ etc.
Discussion Forums: Quora, Mashable etc.

Other than these tools, Gov 2.0 or web 2.0 allows for the following:

- Web widgets
- Real-time customer service
- SMS & RSS messaging
- GIS mapping
- Mobile portals that consolidate and package audio,
- Video and message feeds
- iPad, iPhone & smart phone apps
- Search engine optimization
- Wire service-fed media/press releases
- RSS feeds

Conclusion

Gov 2.0 is more than just a digital facelift for government websites—it’s a movement that transforms governance into a transparent, participatory, and collaborative process. By embracing social media, governments can bridge communication gaps, combat

misinformation, and build trust-based relationships with citizens.

As the world grows more connected, the ability of government agencies to engage dynamically and responsively will define the strength of democracy itself.

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