Twitter Takeover
An examination of the United States Women's National Soccer Team Twitter during the
2011 World Cup and recommendations for the 2012 Olympics

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ABSTRACT

STEPHANIE JILL SILVERMAN: Twitter Takeover: An examination of the United States Women's National Soccer Team Twitter during the 2011 World Cup and recommendations for the 2012 Olympics
(Under the direction of Dr. Dulcie Straughan)

This project looks at how social media can be beneficial to women's sports through examining the context of tweets from the United States Women's National Soccer Team's (USWNT) tweets during the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup. By creating best practices lists for social media, this project also proposes a Twitter campaign for the 2012 London Olympics for the USWNT.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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List of Abbreviations

USWNT- United States Women's National Soccer Team

FIFA- Fédération Internationale de Football Association

HBO- Home Box Office

NFL- National Football League

NBA- National Basketball Association

ESPN- Entertainment and Sports Programming Network

NASCAR- National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing

Ph.D.- Doctor of Philosophy

Introduction

In just a short time, our world has gone from just listening to news on the radio, watching it on television or reading it on the Internet, to having the ability to get the news in 140 character messages. Over the past year it has become quite common for news to "break" on Twitter or other social media forms. Social media bring a shift in focus for the field of public relations. In fact, one could say it is changing the game of public relations advantageously. Instead of hoping that your message will get to your intended audience, you can send it directly to your audience members. Instead of hoping that a press release can get to the fans of your retail store, you can upload the press release to your website, link it to your Facebook and Twitter accounts, and not worry about your message getting lost in all the messages that are trying to reach people on a daily basis.

Yet, with these new media come new and unforeseen responsibilities and challenges. Some organizations have been more successful than others at incorporating social media into their communication plan and currently, there is a multitude of best practice lists floating around the Internet, including Mashable.com, Twitter, and J Morgan Marketing. Yet, some of the top organizations that have been quite successful using Twitter are various sports teams, professional sports leagues and even athletes. During the summer of 2011, one sports team in particular set itself far above the rest in its successful use of Twitter as a major communication tool.

In 2011, the United States Women's National Soccer team (USWNT) traveled to Germany to compete for the FIFA 2011 World Cup. While in Germany, the USWNT used its Twitter account to keep fans updated with what was going on. And, consequently, as the team won game after game, with overtime shoot-outs and big time plays, the number of their followers grew and grew. In fact, while the World Cup was going on, many of the players' Twitter accounts were just being verified (Twitter does not verify all athletes or celebrities, only ones where the company feels there is a chance for fraud. A person cannot request verification and it shows your followers that you are the real person). While the verification of players' Twitter accounts may seem insignificant, for women's sports the popularity in social media can be seen as a huge victory. It was an incredible opportunity and a huge resource for a women's sports team to break into the public's agenda. Women's sports, previously underrepresented in traditional media, now have a resource to speak directly to the public through social media.

As the World Cup unfolded during the summer, many stories were written about the Twitter frenzy that was created around the USWNT and its players. This provided an opportunity to look at how a women's sports team used social media, particularly Twitter, to increase their popularity and presence in the United States, even though the team did not end up winning the World Cup. Furthermore, it was an opportunity to see if their social media practices matched the current trends that people are citing in best practices lists across the Internet. In public relations, for every major event there are different aspects of the campaign and incorporation of social media channels is one of them. Because the London 2012 Olympics is less than a year after the World Cup, it

presents an opportunity to create a Twitter campaign (a sub-set of an entire public relations campaign) that could try out various strategies using a world-wide competition without having to wait four years for the next World Cup.

This project's goal is to create a campaign for the 2012 London Olympics for US Soccer's women's national team (USWNT). First, it will review the history of the USWNT; then it will examine popular and scholarly literature on topics ranging from social media and women to social media and sports. Chapter three will outline the methods that will be used to analyze the 2011 World Cup campaign by US Soccer staff for the USWNT Twitter account and for creating a best practices list of Twitter. Chapter four will consist of creating a best practices list based on both scholarly and popular literature. It will also analyze the tweets from the USWNT account before and during the 2011 World Cup. Finally, this chapter will provide insight from US Soccer about their approach to Twitter during the World Cup. In chapter five, I will construct a Twitter campaign plan, based on data and research from chapter four, for the 2012 London Olympic Games.

The next section will look at the background of the United States Women's National Soccer Team (USWNT). It will begin by examining the origin of the USWNT, and its victory at the first FIFA Women's World Cup in 1991. Next, it will look at the USWNT over the past two decades. Finally, it will examine the current situation of the team, and its role in the Women's World Cup in 2011.

Background Information on USWNT

The past can often be an indication for where an organization or brand is headed in the future. By looking at the history of the United States Women's National Soccer team, we can see what has worked for the team and what has not. The foundation of the United States Women's National Soccer team originated from a growing movement of women's soccer players. In the late 1970s, the college game had begun to spread across the country and amateur leagues began to form. By 1985, it was a natural progression to form a national women's soccer team. The first team was coached by Mike Ryan, who at the time, was the head coach of the men's soccer team at the University of Washington, and had helped form an intermural/amateur league in Washington (MacDonald, 2008). The first team lacked a feel of professionalism and Anson Dorrance, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's head women's soccer coach, took over the team a year later (Lavine, 2005). Dorrance had already won four national titles at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. During his first year as head coach, the team played Canada, Japan, Brazil and Italy and had a successful 3-1 record (Crothers, 2006). As talk began to grow about an inaugural Women's World Cup, Dorrance began to look at the under-19-year-old national team for more recruits. This is when three of the greatest women's soccer stars would begin their tour with the national team. Julie Foudy, Mia Hamm and Kristine Lily all played for the team during the summer of 1987 and Hamm and Lily were starters. Soon after, Brandi Chastain and Joy Fawcett joined the team as well (Crothers, 2006). These five women played together for more than 15 years on the national team and have had some of the greatest influences on the game (Lavine, 2005).

In the inaugural FIFA Women's World Cup in 1991, the games were played in China and 12 teams competed. Michelle Akers, a member of the USWNT in 1991 and 1999, said that she was stunned by the excitement in China during the tournament and was surprised by the large number of people who came out to see the games. Captain April Heinrich said that the Chinese people helped the team feel like it was indeed a world event. Not only that, it was the first time anyone tried to get their autographs. The United States won the FIFA World Cup by beating Norway in the finals. When the team came back to the United States, its members were astonished about the lack of excitement from the American people. In an HBO movie, "Dare to Dream," that spotlighted Chastain's, Fawcett's, Hamm's, Foudy's and Lily's 15 years on the national team, the assistant coach and players talked about how there were only three people waiting for them when they arrived back in the United States (Lavine, 2005). Things began to change in the mid-to-late 1990s.

Even though the team lost the FIFA World Cup in 1995, the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta was a great opportunity for the women to showcase their talent. The team won the first gold medal in the sport and played in front of more than 70,000 fans in Athens, Georgia. Yet, none of the games were broadcast live and therefore, were not played during key television time slots. But as the team's momentum grew, so did Mia Hamm's celebrity status. She appeared in Pantene commercials and even a Gatorade commercial with Michael Jordan. In "Dare to Dream," the movie showed how the 1996 Olympics brought Mia Hamm to mainstream America and helped give a face to women's soccer (Lavine, 2005).

By the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup, the sport was not only growing, the World Cup was going to be played in the United States. Marla Messing, president and CEO of the 1999 Women's World Cup, believed there was a core audience that the World Cup could tap into; consequently the World Cup was played in some of the biggest stadiums across the United States. The team used grassroots marketing to sell tickets for the World Cup including selling them on children's soccer fields across the country (Lavine, 2005).

The final game on July 10, 1999, was played between the United States and China at the Rose Bowl in California with the largest attendance ever for a woman's sporting event. More than 90,000 fans attended the game (Peters, 2004). After a scoreless game, China and the United States had a shootout and American team member Brandi Chastain scored the final penalty kick. After Chastain scored, she instantly ripped off her jersey in celebration. That moment was captured and put on the cover of Sports Illustrated (Lavine, 2005). The 1999 Women's United States National Soccer Team was named, "Sportspeople of the year" by Sports Illustrated magazine, an honor that is traditionally given to one individual (Sandoz, 2000).

Over the next few years, the team lost the gold medal in the 2000 Olympics to its rival, Norway, and also lost the 2003 FIFA World Cup in the semi-finals to Germany. The five women from the 1991 team - Chastain, Foudy, Fawcett, Lily and Hamm - did not want to leave on this note (Lavine, 2005). The United States beat Brazil in the gold medal game in the Athens Olympics in 2004; their victory marked the beginning of the retirement tour for Chastain, Foudy, Fawcett and Hamm. The women ended their careers in December 2004 with a 5-0 victory over Mexico (Peters, 2004). After their retirement,

no team member rose to become a real superstar. While there were excellent players, there was no Mia Hamm.

As the 2007 World Cup approached-- the first international competition without Hamm, Fawcett, Foudy and Chastain-- there was a glimpse at the next possible mainstream female superstar. Hope Solo, the goalie for the team, played great-- but what made her famous was her outburst after being benched in the semi-finals of the 2007 World Cup. The United States had three straight shutouts in the World Cup with Solo as the goalie, but she was pulled for the veteran, Briana Scurry, in the semi-final game. The United States lost 4-0, and Solo was quoted after the game: "There's no doubt in my mind I would have made those saves. You have to live in the present. And you can't live by big names. You can't live in the past" (ESPNsoccernet, 2007). This statement was uncharacteristic of the normal team-first mentality that the United States women's team had always put first (ESPNsoccernet, 2007). Whether this was a factor or not, women's soccer was not in the forefront of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Five sports received 90 percent of the prime-time coverage: gymnastics, swimming, diving, track and field, and beach volleyball (Angelini & Billings, 2010). Also, during the summer 2008 Olympics, Michael Phelps was making his quest to win the most gold medals in history. The US women's team won the gold medal in 2008 with Hope Solo as the goalie and a new coach, Pia Sundhage.

Before the 2011 World Cup, there were numerous articles written about Hope Solo, the goalie, and her return to the national team. In 2010, Solo had a 360-degree tear of her labrum in her right shoulder and it took her 10 months to recover. Her return to the 2011 World Cup was put in question, but with rehabilitation and determination she came

back to the national team. When she returned to the team in May 2011, she had a shutout against Japan. According to Nike's YouTube channel, the most popular YouTube video by Nike for the campaign in 2011 featured Hope Solo leading the team onto the field (Pressure Makes Us, 2011). As previously stated, the USWNT embraced social media and the Nike soccer YouTube channel (Nikesoccer) had a variety of videos featuring Megan Rapinoe, Tobin Heath, Carli Lloyd and the entire team (Pressure Makes Us, 2011). The two most popular videos featured the entire team with large amounts of face time for Abby Wambach and Hope Solo (Pressure Makes Us, 2011).

As the next international event approached, women's soccer entered a time of opportunity. The final member of the 1991 team retired (Lily), the Women's Professional Soccer league began in 2009 and the United States Men's Soccer team had experienced some success and popularity during its run in the 2010 World Cup. But most importantly, social media had pushed itself into people's everyday lives with access on cellphones and Twitter was born. Another factor that influenced sports coverage during summer 2011 was that the NFL and the NBA were on strike. In many ways, all of these events played a small piece in what unfolded in the summer of 2011 for the women's soccer team. It also helped to have a handful of fresh faces in Hope Solo, Abby Wambach, Tobin Heath and Megan Rapinoe, who were all very marketable.

All of these factors had a positive impact on the popularity of the 2011 Women's World Cup and the USWNT, but ESPN played a role as well. ESPN decided to cover the entire Women's World Cup. At the games, ESPN had 22 different camera angles for the final game and spent the entire tournament making sure that they got interviews with players immediately after the games (Deitsch, 2011). This was the best traditional media

coverage for women's soccer since the retirement of the five stars in 2004. Richard Deitsch from Sports Illustrated and Haley Thaxton from worldcupbuzz.com both discussed how the announcers and analysts were excellent in their coverage, especially former USWNT members Julie Foudy and Brandi Chastain (Deitsch, 2011; Thaxton, 2011). While traditional media had covered the Women's World Cup before, there had not been as much coverage as the 1999 team received (Deitsch, 2011). Through the semifinals, ESPN had seen average viewer rating increase by 200% from the 2007 World Cup (although most of those games were shown in the middle of the night) and the average number of viewers increased by 217% (Deitsch, 2011).

Since 1986, the United States Women's National soccer team has evolved into one of the most prominent teams and sports for women. During the past two decades soccer has gone from one million youth participants in the early nineties to more than 3.2 million youth participants today (USYouthSoccer.org, 2007). Since 1999-2000, women's soccer has been the number-two sport in college athletics for participation. In the 1981-1982 academic year, there were roughly 1,855 women participating in women's soccer on the collegiate level: in 2010-2011 there were 24, 671 women participating (NCCA.org, 2010). This is due in large part to women like Brandi Chastain, Mia Hamm, Julie Foudy, Joy Fawcett and Kristine Lily, who used grassroots campaigning and winning to make the sport so popular in the United States. The current stars were created in the 2011 World Cup, even though they lost. These women used a different form of grassroots campaigning: they used a social media campaign. Twitter was the primary channel.

The history of the USWNT represents many grassroots campaigns to increase the popularity of the sport and the number of fans. In 1999, more than 90,000 fans watched the United States Women's National soccer team win the World Cup and most of the tickets were purchased on soccer fields across America. Twelve years later, more than 7,000 tweets per second were recorded during the 2011 World Cup. Social media is today's version of a grassroots campaign because follower by follower, you build a fan base. That is why the 2012 Olympics are a great platform for the next grassroots campaign.

Literature Review

To truly understand the process of writing a Twitter campaign for the USWNT, there are many layers that need to be peeled off this onion. This section will first look at social media and then, social media's role in sports. Next, it will also examine women and sports and the coverage of women's sports in traditional media. Then, it will look at women's use of social media and the role that social media can play in women's sports. Finally, this chapter will contain an analysis of best practices in social media from scholarly and popular literature. The final result will be a combined best practices list.

The Power of Social Media

Social media such as MySpace, Facebook and Twitter have been a part of our society for almost a decade. Recently, the power of social media has been able to be measured and its strengths are beginning to show. In 2009, only 35% of Fortune 500 companies had Twitter accounts; now 60% of them are using it (Madhava, 2011). The New York Times reports that one blog helped grow annual sales of a company from $100,000 to $4 million (Collander & Dahlen, 2011). Erik Qualman (2011) sums it up by stating, "We don't have a choice on whether or not we do social media, the question is how well we do it."

As social media continue to grow, the effort that is being put into social media marketing is growing exponentially as well. For example, Collander and Dahlen (2011)

found in their study that bloggers were more effective publicity than an online magazine. In Qualman's Socialnomics (2011) video, he states that only 14% of people trust traditional advertising, while 90% of consumers say they trust peer recommendations. This lack of trust in traditional advertising is also mirrored in traditional media outlets. A recent study by the Pew Research Center showed that 80% of people thought that news media were often influenced by powerful people and special interest groups (Stelter, 2011). The findings also showed that 77% of people stated that traditional media favor one side over another and another 72% believe that reporters try to cover up any mistakes that they make (Stelter, 2011). These data show the importance and power that social media have in our society. Social media allow people to follow and find news that they trust, and seek out information and make consumer decisions based on more than advertisements. Sometimes, however, the people who dislike a product or who are negative have the loudest voices. This is why it's extremely important to monitor what is being said about your business or organization on social media.

The current trends in marketing practices are representative of the shift to using social media by public relations. Currently, 53% of marketers are incorporating social media tactics into their campaigns (Unica, 2011). The annual Unica marketing survey also showed that the focus of marketers in the upcoming year will be on three key areas: social content created and owned by the company; content created by customers (earned by the organization); and content that the company has spent money on (advertisements, hiring agencies, and others). This is important because word of mouth-- such as text messages or Twitter posts --are the second-most common means of news distribution on local levels (Stelter, 2011). Yet, the Unica marketing survey also points out that the most

important aspect is taking the data, then turning that data into action. Therefore, if people are using Twitter, then Twitter should be an integral part of any marking effort (Unica, 2011).

The world of social media content is more than just what someone posts on Twitter or Facebook in status updates. Social media may include copies of power point presentations and PDF files that you upload on those sites as well. By 2013, social media content for different organizations will be required to be provided as public information (Madhava, 2011). Basically, social media "products" are becoming relevant business content-- and more than just what a person is doing at a particular moment.

Social media have become relevant in the business world, whether it's through updating consumers on the news or discussing reviews of consumer products. Therefore, as stated previously it is not about whether a company uses social media, but how well they use it (Qualman, 2011).

Social Media and Sports

Over the summer Twitter celebrated its fifth anniversary and some believe that it has cemented itself in the sports world (Klemko, 2011a; Ryan, 2011; Wertheim, 2011). Although some people or teams in the sports world have struggled with social media, a few athletes see their positive side. Jimmy Johnson, five-time defending NASCAR Sprint Cup champion, stated that, "During race weekend, I'm focused and predictable in some respects as to what I'm going to say. But Twitter is a place to say whatever and have fun" (Ryan, 2011). Johnson used Twitter to state his opinions on the debt crisis, the Amanda

Knox verdict and even his personal life. He even has used it to go after his detractors by retweeting their remarks and adding "sharp-tongued insults" (Ryan, 2011).

The positive side also appeals to sponsors of NASCAR, which was discussed by Jeff Gordon, Johnson's teammate. Gordon stated that if he had joined Twitter earlier it could have helped him sign new sponsors during the previous year. He also believes that sponsors are pleased to see drivers with social media presence (Ryan, 2011). Arizona Cardinals kicker Jay Feeley, also has positive views on Twitter (Klemko, 2011b). Feeley states that Twitter has allowed him to reach fans on a different level and it gives him the opportunity, not only write his own story, but to reach his fans directly (Klemko, 2011b).

Others see the positives as non-negotiable topics. In Klemko's USA Today article (2011a), he said that he thought social media would play a bigger role in the 2011 Super Bowl than in 2010 and it would be similar to the shift to the Internet in 2000. Most of the 11 car-related advertisers for the 2010 Super Bowl released videos on social media and 37 million people watched the VW Darth Vadar commercial on YouTube alone (Klemko, 2011a; Qualman, 2011). Reggie Bradford, CEO of Virtue, a social media management and software company, said that companies that advertise their products and services must have a social media presence. He claims that Super Bowl advertising campaigns now must be built around social media first. Furthermore, after a satire Shaquille O'Neal Twitter account was created and generated quite a buzz, O'Neal himself created a Twitter account and was hooked. Currently he has more than four million followers. After the executive office of the Phoenix Suns saw O'Neal's success on Twitter (his team at the time) they created a team account on Twitter as well. The Suns also encouraged players

to set up accounts and now every team or franchise in the NBA, NFL, NHL and MLB has a Twitter account (Klemko, 2011a).

While more than half of all pro athletes have Twitter accounts, not all of them have had positive outcomes (Klemko, 2011a). Twitter has been the cause of many athletes' fines and even suspensions since 2008 (Klemko, 2011b). According to Robert Thompson, a professor of popular culture at Syracuse University, "Twitter was especially designed to be the world's most promiscuous communication medium" (Klemko, 2011b). Thompson went on to state: "Forget the editorial process, forget a second draft, and forget simply a second thought. It just comes out," (Klemko, 2011b). That has been the downfall of Twitter use for many athletes. It seems as though many athletes do not realize that once you post something on the Internet it lives there forever. According to Professor Gil de Zuniga at the University of Texas School of Journalism, athletes often forget and do not realize that when they are posting a tweet or Facebook status that it is going out to more than two million people (Klemko, 2011b).

He also discusses how the misuse of Twitter can be connected to the lack of understanding of the power of social media. "If you were in the middle of a public square, you wouldn't yell something you might post on Twitter" (Klemko, 2011b). Many leagues have tried to monitor the Twitter use of their athletes, including a policy that the NBA instituted. The NFL quickly followed suit and the NHL is not far behind. The policy states that players are prohibited from posting to social media 45 minutes before a game and until the media have left the locker room after the game (Klemko, 2011b).

Coaches and college athletics are having a hard time dealing with Twitter as well. Boise State, University of North Carolina and the University of Kansas football programs

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have banned Twitter use for all players, not just during games but anytime. Rick

Stansbury, Mississippi State men's basketball head coach, stated that Twitter brings the

outside room into your locker room and can make it difficult to build team unity. Last

season, Stansbury also banned Twitter for his team (Klemko, 2011b).

Not all venues of the sports world have understood the purpose of social media;

and some have used it as a broadcast tool instead of a way to open up two-way

communication (Thomaselli, 2009). The Bowl Championship Series (BCS) created a

Twitter and Facebook page in 2009 and made some classic mistakes, according to

Thomaselli (2009). In the beginning, the BCS treated Facebook and Twitter as

"propaganda broadcast tools" and the only thing posted on its Facebook page was content

about the BCS (Thomaselli, 2009).

Overall, sports and social media have an interesting relationship. While some in

sports are embracing it, other teams and individuals are banning it. Eric Qualman stated

that social media, particularly Twitter, allows athletes to let their guard down, unlike the

way they act when a reporter is actually in front of them (Klemko, 2011b). Therefore,

there is no perfect method for using social media, just best practices and guidelines to

follow.

Social media and women

While men may be the early users of new forms of technology, it is women who

have been at the forefront of accepting new forms of social media (Hoftman, 2008). In

an article for Mashable.com, author Jessica Carter stated: "For women social media

presents abundant opportunities to lead, effect change, innovate, and build relationships

across sectors, locally, nationally, and globally" (2010). This has been very evident in sports lawyer Carla Varriale's career (Filisko, 2011). Varriale states that in her specialty of sports law, an area practiced primarily by men, she would never have been able to build a national presence without social media. In Filikso's article for the American Bar Association, the author describes how social media have leveled the playing field for women and that it requires skills that women excel in: communication and relationship building (2011).

Ruth Page, a lecturer in the English department at the University of Leicester, England, believes that women are setting the tone for social media use and it has to do with their dominant presence in the social media world. The expressive style that a young woman has on social media, Page states, focuses on humor and playfulness and emphasizes emotion. Page explains that this expressive style helps project connections with other people (Bristol, 2011). Social media is all about making connections.

Bristol (2011) also discusses how older women and teenage boys have begun to adopt this expressive style on social media sites, while older men have not. Furthermore, as social media are seen as more in-tune with women and a media shift continues from traditional media use to more use of social media, there will be a shift in advertising that focuses on women (BlogHer, iVillage & Compass Partners, 2009; Hoftman, 2008). In recent years women have begun to have more control and influence over the family money; also, women are more likely to tell their friends about great purchases they've made –most likely through some form of social media (Hoftman, 2008).

A recent survey completed by BlogHer, iVillage and Compass Partners (2009) showed that roughly 42 million women are using social media on a weekly basis and

roughly 6.7 million are using Twitter. Their study also showed that women are spending less time reading newspapers, watching television and reading magazines. A Rapleaf (2008) study showed that men and women in their twenties were equal in their social media use. Yet, women between the ages of 35-50 are part of the fastest growing age group for social media use; men in the same age group are not nearly as active on social media. The only social media site where men dominate at the moment is LinkedIn (Hoftman, 2008). Yet, Varriale states that social media are giving women a platform that they never had (Filisko, 2011).

Overall, women have taken to social media quite quickly and they are using these channels successfully. Carter sums this up best in her Mashable.com article: "For women in business, this is especially good news, as they often confront difficulties in securing capital, gaining access to key decision-makers, and finding opportunities to demonstrate their expertise" (2010). Social media empowers women to reach out and build relationships with people who have normally been out of reach (Carter, 2010). Blogs, webinars and other social technology options allow women to showcase their expertise in a variety of business areas (Carter, 2010).

Women and Sports

This section will examine the development of women's participation in sports. At the beginning of the 20th century, women and young girls were kept from participating in sports because it was seen as unladylike; women were supposed to spend their time having children and homemaking. In 1924, the Conference of College Directors of Physical Education officially denounced women's participation in collegiate athletic

competitions. But not every association adopted its beliefs and the Amateur Athletic

Union (AAU) opened its doors to women in swimming (1916), track and field (1924),

basketball (1926) and gymnastics (1931). Over the next few decades, there were many

short-lived women's leagues including softball and baseball, but the promoters of the

league made sure that the "girls" had proper etiquette and posture. Furthermore, it was

not widely acceptable for women to participate in these leagues (Motley & Lavine,

2001). In a survey in 1961 by J.S. Coleman, he asked high school students what they

would like to be remembered for. Nearly 45% of boys chose athletics while 71% of girls

chose either leadership or popularity (Ross & Shinew, 2007). As the civil rights

movement began to gain steam in the 1960s, it also marked the beginning of the

movement for women's participation in sports- of all ages- to be more socially acceptable

as well as the beginning of the movement for equal funding and participation (Motley &

Lavine, 2001).

Before Title IX passed in 1972, there were roughly 300,000 high school girls

participating in school-based sports and 32,000 collegiate women playing sports. A year

before the passage of Title IX, a New Haven State court ruled that a female could not try

out for her school's cross country and track team because athletic competition builds

character in boys; however, it wasn't seen as a desirable trait in girls (Ross & Shinew,

2007). Just a year later, that ruling was reversed and Title IX was introduced. In 1972,

Title IX of the Education Amendment was passed by Congress to amend Title IX of the

Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Motley & Lavine, 2005). Title IX states that,

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from

participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any

education program or activity receiving financial assistance…" (Motley & Lavine,

2005, p. 58).

There are three prongs that are used to test whether an educational institution is in

compliance with Title IX: 1. Are participation opportunities substantially proportionate to

enrollment? 2. Is there a history and continuing practice of program expansion for the

underrepresented sex? 3. Is the institution fully and effectively accommodating the

interests of the abilities of the underrepresented sex? In 2010, it was estimated that now

more than three million girls participate in high school sports and close to 200,000

women compete in college athletics (Kennedy, 2010).

Although women have made great strides in sports over the past few decades, it

has mostly been in individual sports. Women's soccer did not have a national team until

the 1980s while women had been competing on the professional level in golf for more

than 30 years in the Ladies Players Golf Association (Spencer & McClung, 2001).

Spencer and McClung (2001) cited a previous article that had examined the 1980s and

the difficulty women would have in breaking into the advertising world of the long-

established men's sports. The 1990s did see a large increase in sponsorship of women's

team sports that for the three previous decades had only been reserved for golf and tennis.

A few scholars believe that this has to do to with the notion of selling "sexuality" (Ross

& Shinew, 2007; Spencer & McClung, 2001).

While women have made great strides in team sports over the past few decades,

there is still a large gap between men's and women's participation in team sports. When

ESPN put together their Sports Century Top 100 Athletes, the only women who made the

list had competed in individual sports such as golf, tennis and track (Billings, 2000). The

women's golf professional association has been around since 1950, but women's professional basketball and soccer leagues are constantly struggling.

The struggle that women have had in being able to play sports is very similar to the struggle that women have found in gaining media coverage of their sport. The next section will look at women's sports and their coverage in traditional media outlets.

Women and Sports- Traditional Media

While women have found success in their fight for equal opportunity on the field, women are not seeing that success in the world of traditional media. There are two main issues when discussing the coverage of women by traditional media: first, whether or not they are covered at all by the media, and second, the tone or talk surrounding the coverage of women. This section will focus primarily on the first topic: women's sports coverage in traditional media.

Scholars have published a variety of studies that have examined coverage of women athletes in the media. In Tuggle's and Adam's 2004 study, the authors cited 12 different studies that examined women in sports and concluded that while there is documented fan interest in women athletes and growing participation in women's sports, women are still coming up short in media coverage. In a 2004 thesis that examined three key newspapers on their gender differences in sports coverage, the findings showed that women were only being covered more than men in situations where the women's teams were outperforming the men's teams in local areas (Harden, 2005). In Tuggle's 1997 analysis of ESPN's *SportsCenter* and CNN's Sports Tonight, he found that women were given only 5% of the allotted time on the show (Adams & Tuggle, 2004). Yet, both

scholars hoped that by surveying the interest and audience of the current time, they would find a difference.

Harden (2005) found that 84% of editors agreed or strongly agreed that coverage of women's sports was important, but 44% of editors surveyed also believed that the average reader was not interested or only slightly interested in women's sports. Many of the editors said they believed that they were giving readers what they were interested in and therefore, that was the reason for the lack of coverage. This is flawed, though, because the only people who comment or take the time to contact the newspaper may not be representative of the newspaper's readership (Harden, 2005).

After Tuggle's initial 1997 study about the coverage of women in sports, there was discussion that the two leagues-- the WNBA and the WUSA-- would increase the coverage of women on *SportsCenter* (Adams & Tuggle, 2004). However, the only time that there was a spike in coverage of women's sports was during the U.S. Women's Open Golf Tournament and Wimbledon (women's tennis), not team sports (Adams & Tuggle, 2004). Despite the formation of two new professional women's sports leagues, the authors found that there was actually less coverage of women's sports in 2002 than in 1997 (Adams & Tuggle, 2004).

Women, Sports and Social Media

While the tools for social media are emerging, sports and social media have a very new relationship. Although many sports teams have social media accounts, there have been only a few articles written about successful women's sports teams or athletes' social media pages. For example, the articles reviewed for the social media and sports

section did not even mention a female athlete's social media account or a women's sports team/league. It is hoped that this thesis will shed some light on the success and importance of women's sports and their relationships with social media. By examining a successful campaign and making recommendations for the future, this project could help women find other avenues to promote their sport and possibly increase traditional media coverage. If it is seen as important by social media, how can traditional media stay away from it? Social media allow public relations practitioners to frame a message that is being presented to the public and could help create more traditional media coverage by showing that there is a fan base for women's team sports.

Best Practices

Best practice lists often can contain useful information to help guide public relations practitioners in using social media and other realms of public relations. An example of an item on a public relations "best practice" list might state, "Spotlight different events in the community." These best practices can also be referred to as frames; for example, the item above could be referred to as a community frame.

The next two sections will examine current scholarly and popular literature in order to make one "best practices list," or list of frames that will be used to evaluate the Women's World Cup campaign.

Literature

While social media are relatively new tools in public relations practice few studies have examined what best practices are for using them. The literature analyzed in this

section identifies six best practices for social media use that will help ensure success for a public relations campaign:

1. Use social media as a two-way communication tool for building relationships by embracing off-line relationships and joining current conversations

2. Investigate what is really being said about your business/brand by looking at the broader conversations

3. Use social media to influence and build relationships with traditional media

4. Spotlight and talk about your business/brand's involvement in the community and corporate social responsibility

5. Have a structure and a strategy for use of social media, including guidelines for your employees, message plans and formal campaigns

6. Examine the impact that social media have on your brand

In Tina McCorkindale's (2010) content analysis of Facebook and Fortune 500 companies, she found that companies and individuals were not capitalizing enough on offline relationships. McCorkindale (2010), along with Tim O'Reilly and Sarah Milstein (2009), authors of Twitter Book, assert that Twitter should be used as a two-way communication tool for building relationships. Twitter Book discusses not only how to start a Twitter account, but also describes the process for how to build a following; two-way communication is the basis of this process.

In Harvard Business Review, Berinato (2009) asserts that we must look beyond our product to the larger issue of optimizing the value of Twitter. He noted that some of the most valuable insights about what is being said about a company on Twitter goes beyond the general discussion of the product or brand. For example, when the iPad was

launched there were several conversations about a variety of topics surrounding it

(Berinato, 2009). One of these conversations was about iPad covers; several people noted

that this was an opportunity for Apple to see that once customers purchased an iPad many

consumers would want to purchase a cover for it. As Apple examined these

conversations, the company had the opportunity to optimize its social media by tweeting

about where to find the best iPad cover or even talking about the benefits of their iPad

cover. By looking at the larger conversation and not just mentions or re-tweets, a

company or brand can optimize its use of social media to benefit its larger goals.

Twitter and social media are great tools to influence and build relationships with

traditional media. This was one of the more prevalent themes in Wright and Hinson's

(2009, 2010) studies on public relations and social media use. By engaging with

traditional media outlets such as newspapers or television stations on social media, public

relations can create positive relationships with members of traditional media. Tindall and

Morton (2010) also found similar patterns in their study of Help-A-Reporter-Out

(HARO). This system allows public relations officials or others to help reporters out with

different information that they are seeking for a story. Waters, et al. (2010), found that

conversations that began in the blogosphere about different brands and businesses were

showing up later in traditional media outlets.

McCorkindale (2010) asserts that companies should use social media to spotlight

their corporate social responsibility initiatives and involvement in the community. Her

study found that only 22% of Fortune 500 companies used social media to talk about

their CSR efforts and those businesses just referenced their efforts by having a post on

their website (2010). This is one area that businesses and brands can grow within their

use of social media. They can do this by simply incorporating a few simple Twitter practices, including joining other conversations, building on off-line relationships and being a part of the broader conversation on social media.

Zerfass, Fink and Linke (2011) examined German companies' ability to govern social media with their employees and how businesses and brands approach social media structure. Social media structure refers to how brands and businesses execute social media. In their conclusion, the authors found that social media needs to have some aspect of structure. While social media should be a form of communication that is moment by moment, there should be some type of structure to it. The authors explained that only 47% of the companies surveyed stated that they had some presence of strategies in place for execution of social media. Furthermore, 84% of companies classified their social media structures as weak (2011). This shows that companies are aware that structure is needed; they just need a more defined strategy.

Finally, a company or brand's ability to measure the impact of social media on its brand is extremely important for social media practitioners. Wright and Hinson (2009, 2010) predict that measurement of social media's impact will be the focus of the next phase of social media studies. In PR Weekly, Tai Foster from Under Armour stated that the company had seen a direct impact on sales from their social media efforts (2011). Foster explained that social media has the ability to be tracked. Therefore, he can track how many people click on the Under Armour store from their Facebook page and how many of those clicks that turn into purchases. Overall, businesses and brands are beginning to see an impact from social media, but now companies are taking the time to measure and track the data.

Popular

By looking at Twitter and Mashable's best practice lists for Twitter, there is a general best practice list for Twitter that can be produced. Over the years, many bloggers, members of the media or public relations specialists have published best practice lists for Twitter and those lists are often repetitive. For instance, J MorganMarketing created a top 20 list with items such as not worrying about how many people you decide to follow and not to spam people with different tweets. This study examines more strategic suggestions and not "to-do" lists. Therefore, by looking at Twitter and Mashable.com's lists a broader "best practices" list can be developed. The original lists have been combined and pared down for items that apply to this project. Twitter's list had eight different items and Mashable.com's list had 10 different items. The two lists were compared, and then six concepts were created:

1. Know your goals for using Twitter and then track and measure the data

2. Establish the right voice for your business and be authentic with it

3. Reference articles and links about the bigger picture as it relates to your business in order to demonstrate leadership in the field

4. Be the source of information on your brand/business by sharing information, photos, videos and behind the scenes of your business

5. Engage with your stakeholders by listening, observing and responding to the conversations and by asking questions

6. Have a structure and a strategy for use of social media, including guidelines for your employees, message plans and formal campaigns

Combination of Best Practice Lists

By putting the lists from scholarly and popular literature side by side, there is a lot of overlap. For example, both lists call for some type of structure and for two-way communication in the use of social media. Items from the scholarly literature have an S at the end while those from the popular literature have a P. Those that were combined have a P/S. Therefore, the master list of best practices for Twitter includes:

1. Know your goals for using Twitter, track and measure the data and examine the impact that social media have on your brand (P/S)

2. Have a structure and a strategy but make sure it is not too restrictive (P/S)

3. Establish the right voice for your business and be authentic with it (P)

4. Reference articles and links (traditional media) about the bigger picture as it relates to your business in order to demonstrate leadership in the field and influence/build relationships with traditional media (P/S)

5. Be the source of information on your brand/business by sharing information, photos, videos and behind-the-scenes information on your business (P)

6. Engage with your stakeholders including off-line relationships by listening, observing and responding to conversations and by asking questions. In other words use two-way communication (P/S)

7. Investigate what is really being said about your business/brand by looking at the broader conversations taking place on social media (S)

8. Spotlight and talk about your business/brand's involvement in the community and social responsibility (S)

Methods

  This chapter will examine the methods that will be employed during this project to create a public relations campaign centered on using social media for the USWNT for the London 2012 Olympics. First, this chapter will examine the theory of agenda framing, and why it will be important to use framing in analyzing the Twitter account of the USWNT during the 2011 Women's World Cup. This section will contain a short explication of agenda framing that is necessary for the next sections of this chapter. Next, it will discuss how the frames for the campaign will be identified by comparing best practices of social media from scholarly and popular literature, by analyzing the tweets through discourse analysis and by talking with the senior communications director at US Soccer. Finally, this section will outline the limitations and availability of resources for the project.

Agenda Framing

  In most articles that discuss agenda framing in the field of public relations, Entman's definition of framing is almost always cited. Entman (1993) stated that, "to frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described." Frames are found in all forms of mass communication including public

relations, journalism and media content and can be described as patterns of interpretation (Dahinden, 2005). For public relations, framing can be a necessary tool for effective two-way communication relationships. One of the definitions of public relations is the act of building and maintaining relationships with an organization and its publics. Therefore, framing can help accomplish this goal (Hallahan, 1999).

While Entman describes framing as involving selection and salience, Hallahan's study takes the definitions a bit further. In his study, *Seven Models of Framing: Implications for Public Relations,* he explains that framing is about the contextual clues that guide decision-making and inferences drawn by those messages (1999). Those contextual clues are the basis of selection in framing. Next, the author describes how humans organize information in cognitive structures, or schemas based on priming; which is where salience can come into play (1999). Entman (1993) explains that a frame "highlights some bits of information that is salient to the audience-- salient defined as making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful or memorable to the audience." This was evident in a study regarding environmental issues and the public agenda. Maher (1997) looked at how even though public support for environmental issues was growing; public concern about overpopulation was decreasing. Scientists were having a hard time figuring out why the public could not connect the two. In this study, the authors were able to prove that when the news media give an issue salience or a particular frame, it can change the value of that issue for the general public (Maher, 1997). Entman (1993) states that journalistic objectivity would benefit from an understanding of framing. Furthermore, the uneducated can fall into the trap of being

unaware of the frame or salience that their writing can give to a particular topic (Entman, 1993).

Many authors have defined key frames that have been used in mass communication studies, but there is no clear-cut frame for sports issues. Hallahan's study that identified seven different types of frames does contain ones that can apply to sports. For example, the framing of news can be applied to whether or not a team was described as winning or losing a game: Did the Americans lose the 2011 World Cup or did the Japanese win it? Another frame that the study found was framing attributes. Framing attributes means to focus on framing of characteristics of people or events, like key players on the team: Hope Solo, or Abby Wambach. Another applicable frame from their study was the frame of situations. The frame of situations can be applied to the framing of large-scale sporting events such as the Olympics or the Super Bowl (Hallahan, 1999). Therefore, these frames can be applied not just to a particular game in the World Cup, but to the entire 2011 World Cup, or the 2012 Olympics. This is why framing can be valuable to use to examine communication between an organization and its publics. The next section will look at why framing can be valuable to sports and social media.

Sports & Social Media Frames

To understand the success of the USWNT Twitter account during the 2011 Women's World Cup, one must be able to look at the tweets through a more strategic approach. This project makes the assumption that each tweet was created with a certain message in mind. In one of the only sports articles that used framing as a way to examine media messages, the author discussed how framing could influence how the messages are

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understood. In this article, the authors explained that the media often frame black players in a physical frame; descriptions such as strength, aggressiveness and raw talent were used. Yet, white players are more often described in the media using a mental frame, with descriptions about their leadership and mental abilities (Seate, et al, 2010). Sports frames are rare, and this project hopes to identify and define frames that can be used to describe sporting events, teams and more.

Identifying Social Media Frames

During the 2011 World Cup, there were thousands of tweets per second about the event, from the official team account, to celebrities and more. For this project, we will assume that the USWNT official Twitter account, and World Cup campaign could be described as successful campaigns. To decide the frames for the account, this project will use two different methods. First, it will look at scholarly and popular literature on social media best practices to create a best practices list. Second, the tweets will be analyzed using methods based on Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach to qualitative data analysis. The tweets from the USWNT official account will be analyzed by coding different tweets into frames based on its content and identifying frames related to the field of public relations and sports. For example, a promotional frame would contain tweets that provided information about the USWNT, but does not engage with the audience. By using the heuristic method, the frames will be created based on what the USWNT account used in their tweets.

Entman (1993) stated that frames have at least four locations during the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver and the culture.

Therefore, another aspect of analyzing the twitter account and the success of the campaign will be the discussions with the USWNT corporate office that managed the account. By talking with the people who created the campaign, the analysis will be able to take a holistic approach to what went into the tweets throughout the 2011 World Cup. Also, by talking with the managers of the Twitter account I will be able to see which tweets were more popular, which tweets were re-tweeted the most and other variables that will impact the way that the 2012 Olympic campaign is designed.

<u>Limitations</u>

There are a few limitations with the analysis aspect of this project. While this campaign was considered a success, after speaking with the senior director of communication for the US Soccer Federation, there wasn't a formal campaign for the 2011 World Cup. Chapter four will examine the strategies that US Soccer put in place and how they measured the success of the campaign, however, there was not a formal written campaign. Second, the USWNT did not track any data regarding their twitter account. Therefore, there is no data on the number of re-tweets, mentions or how often its hashtag was used. Also, while the senior director of communication was able to discuss certain aspects of the 2011 World Cup campaign, he seemed very guarded about the new data that US Soccer is gathering and other aspects of the Twitter account.

Twitter Analysis of the 2011 USWNT World Cup

Chapter four contains three major components. The first component will analyze the tweets from the USWNT account during the 2011 Women's World Cup and use this data to help form a best practices list. Third, a section will examine the planning of the 2011 Women's World Cup social media campaign through discussions with the senior director of communications for US Soccer. Finally, the last section will contain recommendations for the 2012 London Olympics social media campaign for the US Women's National Soccer team.

Analysis of Tweets

From June 16, 2011 when the USWNT flew to Austria to begin training, until July 27, 2011, about a week and half after the end of the World Cup, Roxane Cheng, a Ph.D student at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, captured tweets and followers. Cheng captured this data for her research on promoting women's soccer. By taking the tweets that Cheng captured, this project was able to analyze more than 800 tweets into common themes and frames. Table 1 has the breakdown of how many tweets occurred each day and any pertinent information happening on those days such as games or training sessions. The days with the most tweets were days where the women played in a World Cup match and almost a majority (49%) of the tweets pertained to game updates and play-by-play updates.

Table 1: Tweets Broken down by Day

Date	# of Tweets	% of Tweets		Date	# of Tweets	% of Tweets
6/16/11	5	0.60%		7/8/11	5	0.60%
6/17/11	3	0.36%		7/9/11	8	0.96%
6/18/11	8	0.96%		7/10/11*	100	12.02%
6/19/11	5	0.60%		7/11/11	32	3.85%
6/20/11	0	0.00%		7/12/11	8	0.96%
6/21/11	8	0.96%		7/13/11*	100	12.02%
6/22/11	10	1.20%		7/14/11	9	1.08%
6/23/11	6	0.72%		7/15/11	10	1.20%
6/24/11	12	1.44%		7/16/11	15	1.80%
6/25/11	13	1.56%		7/17/11*	131	15.75%
6/26/11	6	0.72%		7/18/11	12	1.44%
6/27/11	18	2.16%		7/19/11	34	4.09%
6/28/11*	81	9.74%		7/20/11	12	1.44%
6/29/11	7	0.84%		7/21/11	7	0.84%
6/30/11	8	0.96%		7/22/11	12	1.44%
7/1/11	5	0.60%		7/23/11	0	0.00%
7/2/11*	63	7.57%		7/24/11	0	0.00%
7/3/11	5	0.60%		7/25/11	2	0.24%
7/4/11	6	0.72%		7/26/11	1	0.12%
7/5/11	6	0.72%		7/27/11	2	0.24%
7/6/11*	51	6.13%		Total:	832	100.00%
7/7/11	6	0.72%				

*Days that USWNT played in a World Cup match

After the initial review of tweets, three major frames were found: promotional (traditional public relations), engagement with stakeholders and game play-by-play. The promotional frame contained tweets that dealt with promoting the USWNT or the US Soccer Federation. These tweets included pictures of the players at a team dinner, player profiles on the US Soccer Federation website or information about the history of the team. Promotional tweets made up 25% of the tweets during the 2011 World Cup. The second frame, engagement with stakeholders, contained tweets that involved answering fan questions, media appearances or sponsor relations. All re-tweets of fan tweets,

mentions of fans, answering fans' questions and thanking celebrities for their support were included in the engagement frame. A tweet that stated that a member of the USWNT would be appearing on Access Hollywood or Lopez Tonight was marked with this frame. Also, if a tweet was about the members of the team doing a press conference or a photo of players in a press conference, it was marked for this frame. Tweets that referred to sponsor relations such as the Nike, "Pressure Makes Us" videos, were included in this frame. The engagement with stakeholders frame made up a little more than 25% of the tweets during the 2011 World Cup.

The final frame, game analysis or game play-by-play, included a little more than 49% of the tweets during the 2011 World Cup. These tweets included in-game statistics, play-by-plays and other relevant game information. Tweets such as "Wambach works a combo with Lloyd and the #USWNT No. 10 tries her luck from distance. Saved. 0-0 in the 37th minute here in Dresden," were included in this frame. Besides game play-by-play, any tweets that took place prior to the game that were setting the stage for the match were included in this frame. Table 2 shows a break- down of the three main frames and topics included in the frame.

Table 2: Frames

Frames	# of Tweets	% of Tweets
Promotional	209	25.46%
Information	97	
Studio 90	26	
US Soccer	11	
Photos	50	
Videos	25	
Engagement with Stakeholders	208	25.33%
Player Re-tweets	12	
Fans	75	
Media	108	
Sponsors	13	
Game Analysis	404	49.21%

The dates that the number of followers increased the most were dates that the USWNT played a soccer match. The top three dates were July 13 vs. France in the semi-finals, July 17 vs. Japan in the final and July 10 vs. Brazil in the quarterfinals. The next highest dates that increased the number of followers were other games in the early rounds or dates that followed the final three matches. It is important to note that the closest connection between what was tweeted and the increase of followers was that matches were played (Table 3). Yet, even after the World Cup was over on July 17, the account still gained more than 6,000 new followers. The majority of the tweets during the post-World Cup often were categorized as tweets in the frame of engagement with stakeholders including tweets about appearances on the Today Show, ESPN, Lopez Tonight, re-tweeting players and fans.

Table 3: Followers Increased By Days

Date	Followers	% Total	% Daily	Date	Followers	% Total	% Daily
6/16/11	12,008	0.00%		7/7/11	17,273	43.85%	0.94%
6/17/11	12,039	0.26%	0.26%	7/8/11	17,471	45.49%	1.15%
6/18/11	12,039	0.26%	0.00%	7/9/11	17,591	46.49%	0.69%
6/19/11	12,216	1.73%	1.47%	7/10/11*	20,361	69.56%	15.75%
6/20/11	12,363	2.96%	1.20%	7/11/11	22,111	84.14%	8.59%
6/21/11	12,482	3.95%	0.96%	7/12/11	22,967	91.26%	3.87%
6/22/11	12,589	4.84%	0.86%	7/13/11*	28,673	138.78%	24.84%
6/23/11	12,887	7.32%	2.37%	7/14/11	30,353	152.77%	5.86%
6/24/11	12,982	8.11%	0.74%	7/15/11	31,623	163.35%	4.18%
6/25/11	13,090	9.01%	0.83%	7/16/11	33,149	176.06%	4.83%
6/26/11	13,292	10.69%	1.54%	7/17/11*	38,789	223.03%	17.01%
6/27/11	13,501	12.43%	1.57%	7/18/11	41,085	242.15%	5.92%
6/28/11*	14,807	23.31%	9.67%	7/19/11	42,569	254.51%	3.61%
6/29/11	15,082	25.60%	1.86%	7/20/11	43,309	260.67%	1.74%
6/30/11	15,280	27.25%	1.31%	7/21/11	43,897	265.56%	1.36%
7/1/11	15,461	28.76%	1.18%	7/22/11	44,239	268.41%	0.78%
7/2/11*	16,122	34.26%	4.28%	7/23/11	44,447	270.14%	0.47%
7/3/11	16,305	35.78%	1.14%	7/24/11	44,658	271.90%	0.47%
7/4/11	16,491	37.33%	1.14%	7/25/11	44,870	273.67%	0.47%
7/5/11	16,641	38.58%	0.91%	7/26/11	45,067	275.31%	0.44%
7/6/11*	17,112	42.50%	2.83%	7/27/11	45,341	277.59%	0.61%

* Days that contained games

Another important aspect of the tweets to examine is those tweets that occurred before the World Cup was played. Those tweets mostly fell into the promotional frame and only increased followers by 9% compared to the overall 278% that increased during the entire World Cup. It wasn't until the day before the USWNT's first game in the World Cup that there began to be more tweets in the engagement with stakeholders frame. Overall it is important to look at what frames were successful throughout the campaign and which frames might have their place in the next campaign.

Best Practices List

After reviewing the data and the frames used by the USWNT, the following seven frames or best practices list was created:

1. Engagement with traditional media: tweets about appearances, links to articles or information about when games will be aired

2. Engagement with fans: celebrity re-tweets, answering fan questions, mentioning fans

3. Promotional information about the team

4. Promotional information including videos and photos about the team and particular players

5. Promotional information about US Soccer Federation related material

6. Engagement with Stakeholders: related to sponsors

7. Game Analysis: play-by-play

World Cup Campaign

Neil Buethe, Senior Manager for Communications for US Soccer, stated that US Soccer has always tried to stay on the cutting edge of the communications world. He said that US Soccer joined Twitter soon after its launch and that every aspect of their communication strategies over recent years has involved social media in some aspect. Yet, their first account was solely a US Soccer account where information was tweeted on the United States National Men's and Women's team as well as the youth leagues. As it grew, conversations in the communications department were held to discuss which groups US Soccer could target in creating separate accounts. In these discussions, Buethe

stated that US Soccer debated creating a separate men's, women's, youth leagues, men's

live games, women's live games, a Studio 90 (their soccer coverage) and more. The staff

decided they did not want the message to get too diluted. Therefore, they decided to

create separate accounts only for the USWNT, youth leagues and Studio 90. Although

US Soccer has these separate accounts, each account often re-tweets things from the main

US Soccer account and vice versa.

When discussing the plans for the World Cup, Buethe explained that they had

decided not to change their previous approach to what they had been tweeting. They did

decide that they were going to focus on three things during the World Cup: what time

they tweeted, the number of tweets that they tweeted and the number of followers they

had. Buethe stated that since the World Cup was in Germany they did not want to tweet

things at 8 a.m. in Germany, which would be the middle of the night in the United States.

Overall, Buethe stated that the main goal of the Twitter campaign during the World Cup

was to provide as much information as possible to the fans.

During the World Cup, US Soccer did not record any data about re-tweets,

mentions or the hashtag (#USWNT). Buethe stated that they have begun gathering this

data and are looking at which individuals are being re-tweeted about the most, who the

major influencers are among fans and media, and what time of day things should be

tweeted. US Soccer did not have this data available for the time period during the World

Cup. Also, Twitter has recently updated its software to make the tracking of different

aspects of Twitter more user-friendly. For example, last summer if you wanted to find out

how often a tweet was re-tweeted or marked as a favorite, you would have to manually

count it. Now, you can click on the tweet and it will tell you how many people have re-

tweeted a tweet or marked a tweet as a favorite. It will only tell you up to 50 re-tweets, though. As far as gathering data for mentions (when someone tags your account name in a tweet), you still have to manually count them unless you purchase software such as Hoot Suite or Argyle. Therefore, it is not unusual for US Soccer not to have this data. Based on an analysis of the tweets from the 2011 World Cup and the discussion with Neil Buethe, the next section will discuss recommendations for the 2012 London Olympics.

Recommendations for 2012

After reviewing the frames from the 2011 World Cup tweets and reviewing best practice lists from scholarly and popular literature, there is room for growth and expansion in the kind of strategies, content and context that are used on Twitter for the next campaign. The main strategies that should be added into the next campaign are tracking data, incorporating a strategic structure to approaching Twitter, increasing the number of frames used for tweets and broadening the use of the engagement with stakeholders tweets. While the US Soccer Federation did a great job of using the promotional frame, they only touched the surface of the engagement with stakeholders frame. For example, while they tweeted about appearances in the media, they hardly ever re-tweeted articles or blog posts about soccer or the USWNT. Also, there was only a small amount of player and sponsor interaction during the 2011 World Cup campaign. This frame has room for growth in the content that it tweeted.

The three frames used during the 2011 World Cup were successful, but as previously stated, social media is about two-way communication and more than three frames are needed for future success. Additional frames that need to be included in the next campaign include international engagement and involvement in the broader

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conversation. The international engagement frame includes tweets about other teams that will be competing in the Olympic and educating the fans about the opponents. The involvement in the broader conversation frame includes tweets about other Olympics events or other conversations that are taking place on Twitter; for example, tweeting about how the United States swimmers did during their meets or tweeting about a topic that does not deal with sports or soccer.

The next chapter will contain a proposed Twitter campaign for the USWNT beginning about two months before the Olympics, during the Olympics and two weeks after the games are over. It will include recommendations from this chapter and other related social media suggestions.

2012 London Olympics Campaign

"When we started using social media, we used it with everything. It was just a tactic. Now, we need to start viewing social media as a strategy with its own tactics."

Nick Valvano, CEO The V Foundation

Situation Analysis

This summer, the USWNT will compete in the 2012 London Olympics, where women's soccer is an official sport. Since its entrance into the Olympics as an official sport, the USWNT has won three gold medals and one silver medal. The team has an 18-3-2 record. By building off the momentum from last year's World Cup, Hope Solo's appearance on the American television program, Dancing With the Stars, and the recent Olympic qualifying matches, it is time for the team to take the Twitter account to the next level. Within the five weeks that spanned the 2011 World Cup there was a 278% increase in Twitter followers and those games were televised. Without knowing the exact schedule of the matches yet or the television schedule, it is imperative that the USNWT become the primary sources of information, updates and more to the fans.

Therefore, the **objective for this campaign is increase Twitter followers by 200% during the four-month period that covers the 2012 London Olympics**. The goal spans over four months because it allows the account to create engagement with stakeholders prior to the games and solidify them, not just a source for USWNT fans, but women's soccer fans and people interested in the Olympics.

There are two main reasons this goal was chosen. First, the 2011 Women's World Cup goal was to provide as much information to fans as possible. If the followers on the Twitter account are increased by 200% that would mean more fans are receiving information about the team matches, players and more. Last summer the increase was 278% and this can be credited to a few things: the USWNT account was the credible source for the event, there was no other sporting event going on during the summer, and the team was winning. Besides being a credible source for women's soccer updates, the other two items cannot be guaranteed and to make sure that during the Olympics the USWNT still increases its followers, a strategic campaign is needed.

Second, when sponsors are looking for new clients today, one aspect that they assess is the social media reach of potential spokespeople. The director of sports marketing and public relations for Subway® stated that when the company is considering a particular athlete as a spokesperson, one consideration is how many fans or followers that person has on Facebook and Twitter (Roundtable, 2011). By increasing followers for the USWNT account, this can affect the sponsorships of the team and, perhaps, possibly for individual players. For example, when the USWNT was at the height of its popularity, it had stars like Mia Hamm doing Gatorade commercials with Michael Jordan. This was a major sponsorship with a sports celebrity of his caliber.

Research

The research conducted for this campaign involved an in-depth interview with the senior communications director for US Soccer and a formal analysis of the team's tweets during the 2011 World Cup. Also, the author examined scholarly and popular literature

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articles that discussed "best practices" of social media. By using discourse analysis, the

tweets were analyzed into different frames. By comparing "best practice" lists from

scholarly and popular literature with what the USWNT account tweeted during the 2011

World Cup, a list of suggested recommendations were compiled for this campaign. Those

recommendations are outlined in the strategy section of this thesis.

There are numerous ways to track data from Twitter. A business can track how

often their account name is mentioned, how often a tweet is re-tweeted, or how often a

tweet is marked as a favorite of their followers. Also, a business can track how often their

followers increase and can compare the data to specific events that are taking place. For

example, if the team saw a huge increase in followers on the same day that the team had a

match, that would be important to record. During the 2011 Women's World Cup these

categories of data were not collected. Therefore, the recommendations for this campaign

will be based on the content of the tweets alone.

Stakeholders

Audiences, publics, stakeholders are all different terms that are used for the target

market of any campaign. For this campaign, the term stakeholders will be used because

the majority of the target market for a sports team is the fans. A sports team wants the

fans and sponsors to feel as if they are part of the experience – in a sense, a member of

the team. There are four primary stakeholders and three secondary stakeholders in this

campaign. These stakeholders will be identified below. In Mitchell, Agle and Wood's

(1997) article on stakeholder identification, the authors describe three characteristics of

influence: power, urgency and legitimacy. The difference between being a primary

stakeholder and a secondary stakeholder is based on the level of influence the stakeholder

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has. Primary stakeholders have at least two of the three characteristics while the secondary holders have only one. A case study of the 1999 PanAm games and the 2001 Games of Francophonie, demonstrated that characteristics of influence could change depending on whether or not it's before or during the event, such as the World Cup or the Olympics (2007).

Primary

- Fans: Fans are primary stakeholders. You need the fans to come to games, watch it on television, participate in social media campaigns, buy merchandise and support the team. Before the Olympics games begin, fans have a legitimate source of influence due to the reasons listed above. Once the Olympics begin, fans gain another characteristic of influence: urgency. If fans are not watching games or participating in social media "conversations," it is a concern for the USWNT. The third characteristic is power, but fans can never gain influence over team decisions such as playing time.

- Sponsors: If fans are first, traditional media and sponsors are in a close tie for second. Sponsors have all three sources of influence (power, legitimacy and urgency) before and during the Olympics. A panel conversation in PR Weekly in September (2011) discussed how sponsors look to see how many fans and followers different athletes have on Facebook and Twitter when they are deciding on whether to partner with an athlete. Therefore, sponsors look to fans to decide whether or not it's a good investment. In women's sports, sponsorships are extremely important; sponsorships for women's teams are not nearly as numerous

as they are for men's sports, however. That is why the sponsors of the USWNT are primary stakeholders.

- Media: Traditional media are in a close race with sponsors because of the control over coverage. Over the summer of 2011, ESPN made a decision to go all out in coverage for the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup. All the games were covered on cable television in some capacity, whether on ESPN or ESPN3. At the moment, there is no published schedule for NBC's coverage of the games. However, in the last Olympics during 2008 NBC decided to focus 90% of the airtime on five sports; women's soccer was not one of them. This is an example of how the media can gain power during the event. Before the Olympics begin, the media have two sources of influence, legitimacy and urgency. Just like fans, the media never gain the influence characteristic of power, but by having two characteristics of influence, it makes them influential during the campaign.

- International Teams: There are 11 other women's soccer teams competing in the Olympics and outcomes of their games, players on their teams and previous rivalries will help build stories for the USWNT. It is important to recognize them as influences on the USWNT and by targeting successful women's soccer teams we can help build the importance of women's soccer in the Olympics and in traditional media. Before the Olympics, international teams only have the characteristic of power because these teams have the ability to eliminate the USWNT from the Olympics. Once the Olympics begin, these teams gain the source of legitimacy. For example, fans begin to care if Brazil gets knocked out in the semi-finals or other aspects of how a particular bracket will look. Therefore,

the stakeholder status of international teams is elevated because of the connection with other primary stakeholders.

Secondary

The following three stakeholders all possess legitimacy. When a stakeholder has a legitimacy claim, it means that the claim has merit and that the stakeholder has a real investment in the brand. The following three stakeholders all have an impact on the USWNT and should be kept in mind for different aspects of the campaign. Although all the strategies for the campaign are focused on the primary stakeholders, the three stakeholders listed below will be used to execute campaign strategies.

- US Soccer Affiliates

- US Olympic athletes

- Community Partners (Non-Profits)

Strategies and Tactics

Strategy 1: Track Twitter-specific data throughout the campaign to measure impact

1. Tactic 1a: Create a list of all items you can track in Twitter

2. Tactic 1b: Meet to decide which items on the list are important and that will have impact on increasing the number of followers

   a. *For example, is it more important to just track celebrities that mention the USWNT or what time of day celebrities mention USWNT?*

3. Tactic 1c: Make final list of 10 items to be tracked

4. Tactic 1d: Decide and create the tool(s) to track data during campaign

5. Tactic 1e: Track and analyze data

Possibilities of items to track for Tactic 1a: Some examples of things you can track on
Twitter:

- Mentions of team (w/@USWNT)

    o Content/frame

    o Amount or number

    o When (time of day, certain days- games, practices, off-days)

- Mentions of players (w/@Player)

    o Content/frame

    o Amount or number

    o When (time of day, certain days- games, practices, off-days)

- Celebrity Mentions

    o Content/frame

    o Amount or number

    o When (time of day, certain days- games, practices, off-days)

- Re-tweets

    o When (time of day, certain days- games, practices, off-days)

    o Content/frame

    o Amount or number

- Hash tags (#USWNT in a tweet)

    o Amount or number

    o Content/frame

    o When (time of day, certain days- games, practices, off-days)

- Followers

- o Amount or number of them

- o Who Re-tweets

- o Who Mentions

- o Influence of certain followers

- Favorites

There are numerous ways to track Twitter data. You can track Twitter data manually, by counting each mention, or with the new tools on Twitter, clicking on a tweet and finding out about how many people have re-tweeted something. By creating a simple excel spreadsheet with different columns and using the Twitter tools, like the example below, you can track a lot of data about Twitter.

You can also take screen shots and export the use of the hashtag into an excel spreadsheet. But, if the number gets as large as the 2011 World Cup, where there were more than 7,000 tweets per second during the final game, it might get a little difficult to track manually. That is why for certain aspects, investing in tracking software would be best. Whether it's hashtracking.com, KissMetrics or HootSuite, there are a variety of methods to track information from Twitter.

Strategy 2: Incorporate a structure to tweets

1. Tactic 2a: Create a list of topics that should be tweeted about

2. Tactic 2b: Gather the information from the topics

a. For example, gather information or history on the 11 teams competing in the Olympics, members of the Olympic team, unique facts on the holidays, facts on USWNT history and more.

3. Tactic 2c: Create the 4 calendars from May through August

In the sample calendar for May on the next page, there are 10 topics that should be chosen for the 2012 London Olympics to tweet about. The 10 topics are: Media, Player (Tweets), Player Profiles, Holidays (that occur during the 4-month period), Friday Follow, USWNT Facts, Community Partnership, International Team Spotlight and the Olympics.

These topics were chosen for a few reasons. First, media, player tweets, community partnerships, international team spotlight and the Olympics are part of objectives three through six of this campaign. Also, by tweeting the player profiles before the Olympics it allows people to get to know the team members before the games. The same goes for international teams spotlight. There are only 11 other women's soccer teams competing in the Olympics. By spotlighting other teams before the games, it will allow fans to get to know the competition. Friday Follow, USWNT facts and holidays are key elements that can build a twitter following. Friday Follow (#FF) is the hashtag that people use on Twitter to tweet to other people certain accounts that they recommend following. By using Friday Follow (#FF) to tweet about player twitter accounts or specific members of the media; it can help build social media relationships.

May 2012

USWNT Social Media Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
THE KEY Media Player Player Profiles Holidays Friday Follow	**THE KEY** USWNT Facts Community Partnership Int'l Team Spotlight Olympics	**1** Media Player Olympics	**2** Player Int'l Team Spotlight	**3** Media Player USWNT Facts	**4** Community Partnership Player Friday Follow	**5** Media Player
6 Player	**7** Community Partnership Media Player Profiles	**8** Media Player USWNT Facts	**9** Player Int'l Team Spotlight	**10** Media Player Olympics	**11** Player Player Profiles Friday Follow	**12**
13 Media Mother's Day Player	**14** Player Player Profiles	**15** Community Partnership Player Olympics	**16** Media Int'l Team Spotlight	**17** Player Player Profiles	**18** Media USWNT Facts Friday Follow	**19** Player
20	**21** Media Player USWNT Facts	**22** Media Player Profiles	**23** Player Int'l Team Spotlight Olympics	**24** Community Partnership Player	**25** Player USWNT Facts Friday Follow	**26** Media Player
27 Player	**28** Memorial Day Media	**29** Player Player Profiles	**30** Community Partnership Media Int'l Team Spotlight	**31** Player Olympics		

Strategy 3: Raise awareness of community involvement of USWNT

1. Tactic 3a: Identify the community partnerships on Twitter and follow them

2. Tactic 3b: Keep up to date with the community partnerships tweets

3. Tactic 3c: Create and post tweets about community partnerships

During the 2011 World Cup Campaign, there were no tweets about any partnerships of the USWNT or of any community groups. After the World Cup there were a few tweets about the USWNT participating in some events for the Let's Move! campaign in Washington D.C. This is important to highlight throughout the Olympics to build the spectrum of the USWNT account. By highlighting community partnerships, the USWNT is making itself a part of everyday conversations and broadening its scope from just soccer.

Strategy 4: Increase use of traditional media in tweets throughout the campaign

1. Tactic 4a: Choose and follow 5 traditional media sources (ESPN or NBC are two examples) that cover women's soccer

2. Tactic 4b: Choose and follow 5 bloggers who cover women's soccer

3. Tactic 4c: Choose and follow 5 sports writers from traditional media who cover women's soccer

4. Tactic 4d: Choose between 3-5 traditional media pieces to re-tweet, mention or comment on every week during the campaign by searching Twitter and the Internet

By following different sources of traditional media, whether it is bloggers or ESPN, you are able to see what is being written about the team. Also, it can help the team

build a relationship with the media sources if you support what they write by following them on Twitter and re-tweeting or mentioning their work. There are three major categories for coverage of sports and USWNT needs to be careful about not following too many members of the media. Fifteen is a good number because it will not overwhelm the Twitter newsfeed and USWNT will be able to pull three to five quality traditional media pieces a week to re-tweet or mention.

Strategy 5: Increase the team's presence in broader Olympic conversations on Twitter before, during and after the Olympics

1. Tactic 5a: Choose 10-15 other US Olympic teams or athletes on Twitter

2. Tactic 5b: Get a copy of the Olympic schedule of events and track how the US is doing in other events

3. Tactic 5c: Tweet, re-tweet or mention two other Olympic events throughout the day that do not deal with women's soccer

4. Tactic 5d: Tweet at least once a week about other Olympic sports each day in the weeks leading up to the Olympics by finding information about Olympic trials and other United States Olympic athletes

Strategy 6: Increase presence of players' Twitter accounts to create an authentic voice for the USWNT account

1. Tactic 6a: Monitor and follow all players on the USWNT roster Twitter accounts

2. Tactic 6b: Monitor and re-tweet players 5-7 times per week

One of the greatest aspects of the team is the players and their personalities. By re-tweeting direct quotes, or re-tweeting with an additional comment items that players tweet, USWNT will build a strong, credible voice for the account. If the USWNT does this daily, it will accomplish this goal.

Budget

The budget is very different for a social media campaign. The majority of the objectives listed above will not cost US Soccer anything. Player profiles or short video clips are things that US Soccer is already producing for their website. The biggest cost for this campaign is would be whether to hire an outside consultant to execute the work. Another aspect of the decision is whether or not you will bring the outside consultant to the 2012 London Olympics.

If you brought in an outside consultant or social media strategist, it would cost between $75-$150 an hour. During the first month of the campaign, there would be an average of 10-15 hours a week of work. This may include deciding which bloggers are worth following, creating social media calendars and setting up tracking systems. Once the campaign begins, before the Olympics there would be an average of 5-7 hours a week of work. This includes monitoring different players, media and community partnership accounts as well as tweeting. During the Olympics, this would increase to 10-15 hours a week of work, not including the in-game tweets. Finally, the two-week evaluation period would also have about 10-15 hours of work per week. Therefore the cost for the campaign, for the maximum amount of about 230 hours at about $115 an hour would cost $26,450. A recent info graphic posted by Mashable stated that the average salary of a

social media strategist in Chicago, Illinois, the headquarters of the US Soccer Federation, is $46 to $87 thousand a year. This campaign is roughly five and half months, which is close to half a year's salary.

While this may justify the cost of a social media strategist, it does not explain why one might be needed. In social media, you are only granted one "lucky" situation. For example, in February 2012, during the Daytona 500 an accident took place and the track was on fire. The drivers were stuck out on the track and one driver took photos of the scene and began tweeting them. Brad Keselowski, the driver, continued to tweet from his car and was able to increase his followers by more than 130,000 in a two-hour span. This case, just like the 2011 World Cup, are examples of the one time "lucky" situation. To repeat this again, to increase your fans during the 2012 Olympics, you need to have a strategy. During the Olympics there will be dozens of sporting events going on and many people trying to get their message out on social media.

Besides hiring a social media strategist, you must also decide whether or not to bring them to London for the Olympics. The cost of the flight, room and per diem would vary depending on whether or not US Soccer or the USWNT is receiving any deals on bringing the team to London. An average cost for a round-trip flight to London in summer is between $1,200-$1,400. By looking at what the State Department's per diem is, you can make a good reasoned decision on how much it will cost to bring a social media strategist for the trip. The State Department's per diem is more than $180 a day and that is extremely generous. A per diem of $100 would be sufficient for a social media strategist. Housing would be one of the biggest issues and the State Department's current rate is $319 per night.

The one cost for this campaign is mentioned in objective one: tracking Twitter.

By investing in different tracking software, it would save a lot of the manual hours that

you would need from a social media strategist. A basic HootSuite membership is $6 a

month and gives you the option to track a few different items from the list created in

objective one. The more you pay for your monthly membership, the more you can track.

Timetable: Tactics Execution

April	
Tactic 1a: Create a list of all items you can track in Twitter	**Tactic 4a: Choose and follow 5 traditional media sources (ESPN or NBC) that cover women's soccer**
Tactic 1b: Meet to decide which items on the list are important and will have impact on increasing the amount of followers	**Tactic 4b: Choose and follow 5 bloggers who cover women's soccer**
Tactic 1c: Make final list of 10 items to be tracked	**Tactic 4c: Choose and follow 5 sports writers from traditional media who cover women's soccer**
Tactic 2a: Create a list of topics that should be tweeted about	**Tactic 5a: Choose 10-15 other US Olympic teams or athletes on Twitter**
Tactic 2b: Gather the information from the topics	**Tactic 5b: Get a copy of the Olympic schedule of events and track how the US is doing in other events**
Tactic 2c: Create the 4 calendars from May through August	Tactic 6a: Monitor and follow all players on the USWNT roster Twitter accounts
Tactic 3a: Identify the community partnerships on Twitter and follow them	

May	June	July	August
Tactic 1d: Track data	**Tactic 1d: Track data**	**Tactic 1d: Track data**	**Tactic 1d: Track data**
Tactic 3b: Keep up to date with the community partnerships tweets	**Tactic 3b: Keep up to date with the community partnerships tweets**	**Tactic 3b: Keep up to date with the community partnerships tweets**	**Tactic 3b: Keep up to date with the community partnerships tweets**
Tactic 3c: Create and post tweets about community partnerships	**Tactic 3c: Create and post tweets about community partnerships**	**Tactic 3c: Create and post tweets about community partnerships**	**Tactic 3c: Create and post tweets about community partnerships**
Tactic 4b: Choose between 3-5 traditional media pieces to re-tweet, mention or comment on every week during the campaign by searching Twitter and the Internet	**Tactic 4b: Choose between 3-5 traditional media pieces to re-tweet, mention or comment on every week during the campaign by searching Twitter and the Internet**	**Tactic 4b: Choose between 3-5 traditional media pieces to re-tweet, mention or comment on every week during the campaign by searching Twitter and the Internet**	**Tactic 4b: Choose between 3-5 traditional media pieces to re-tweet, mention or comment on every week during the campaign by searching Twitter and the Internet**
Tactic 5d: Tweet at least once a week about other Olympic sports each day in the weeks leading up to the Olympics by finding information about Olympic trials and other United States Olympic athletes	**Tactic 5d: Tweet at least once a week about other Olympic sports each day in the weeks leading up to the Olympics by finding information about Olympic trials and other United States Olympic athletes**	**Tactic 5b: Get a copy of the Olympic schedule of events and track how the US is doing in other events**	**Tactic 5b: Get a copy of the Olympic schedule of events and track how the US is doing in other events**
Tactic 6b: Monitor and re-tweet players 5-7 times per week	Tactic 6b: Monitor and re-tweet players 5-7 times per week	**Tactic 5c: Tweet, re-tweet or mention two other Olympic events throughout the day that do not deal with women's soccer**	**Tactic 5c: Tweet, re-tweet or mention two other Olympic events throughout the day that do not deal with women's soccer**
		Tactic 6b: Monitor and re-tweet players 5-7 times per week	Tactic 6b: Monitor and re-tweet players 5-7 times per week

September
Tactic 1e: Analyze Data

Evaluation

The most important aspect of any campaign is to evaluate its success. While

accomplishing the goal and increasing Twitter followers by 200% for USWNT is

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important, the tracking data that US Soccer could get from completing the first objective would be invaluable. The insights that they could gather from this data could help them with all of their social media planning for future tournaments, World Cups and Olympics. Objectives one and two are preparation objectives and at the end of the campaign, US Soccer will have a data set and content map of their tweets.

At the end of the campaign, the social media strategist or US Soccer staff member should create a discourse analysis in the same way that the tweets from the 2011 World Cup were analyzed, to show whether or not they accomplished objectives three through six. Each of these objectives will be found in the tweets from USWNT account. By looking at the quantitative and content data, US Soccer will be able to see if the increase of player tweets had an impact on whether or not the account increased their followers. This is the same for traditional media, community outreach and other Olympic sports.

Conclusion

After taking a deeper look at the USWNT campaign, it can be concluded that while the campaign was successful in increasing the number of Twitter followers, there were many aspects of a public relations plan that were missing. No other elements of data were collected and the scope of the tweets was very narrow. By looking at what popular and scholarly literature has stated, it is important to realize how impactful social media can be for women's sports. At the moment there is a social media campaign to have more US Women's National soccer games aired on television. Wouldn't this campaign be even more successful with more Twitter followers? And not just more followers, but more invested Twitter followers?

Social media is the prime example of two-way communication and the shift in current public relations practices. Twitter is a great tool to build a quality fan base for women's sports teams that are not necessarily covered in traditional media. By using a strategic plan, the USWNT can accomplish the goal of gaining quality and quantity in their fan base. And possibly, their plan can help even revolutionize the coverage of women's sports.

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