



## ONTARIO SPORT MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

### COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

July 16, 2014

#### Meeting Notes

##### In Attendance

Russell, Andrea	Alpine Ontario	Communications Director
Biggar, Anthony	Athletics Ontario	Manager of Communications and PR
Paredes, Luis	Boxing Ontario	Marketing and Business Development
Rosenfeld, Brooke	CAO	Communications & Events Lead
McLaren, Stuart	CAO	Coach & Partner Development
Mauer, Laura	CSIO	Senior Communications Coordinator
Gray, Devin	OFSAA	Communications Coordinator
Jackson, Jason	Ontario Volleyball Association	Marketing & Communications Coordinator
Wilson, Laura	Ontario Wheelchair Sports	BTG Provincial Coordinator
Kates, Ruth	OPHEA	Marketing & Communications Leader
Bruce, Jennifer	Parasport Ontario	Program Coordinator
Dewdney, Jessie	Parasport Ontario	Intern
Smith, Brock	Rugby Ontario	Communications Coordinator
McInnes, Kate	Softball Ontario	Program Coordinator
Eagleson, Hope	Softball Ontario	Intern
Griffin, Meaghan	Sport 4 Ontario	Project Manager
Bari, Sadeed	Sport 4 Ontario	Community Animator
Chan, Sophy	Sport 4 Ontario	Community Engagement Coordinator

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

## 2. Content Marketing – by Victor Harris, Digital Echidna

- Content Marketing – What people are trying to say or are open to say
- Commerce – the action you want people to take after they have reviewed your messages
- Prioritize quality of content as opposed to quantity of content
- Use keywords so you can be found on Google
- People are for your content and that's what driving traffic to your content
- Content Marketing Institute is an online organizations that's focused on content marketing
  - Creating and distributing relevant existing content
  - Clearly understanding who your audience is
  - Telling people what you want them to do
- Understand your organization
  - Why you are doing this
  - Identify your challenges
  - What opportunities do you have
- Go back to leadership team and tell them your goals and what you are trying to achieve based on your market activities
- Building out your content market strategy
  - Dig into your audience and know who you are going to speak to and use the appropriate tone or language
- Does your content have a call to action?
  - Now that you are targeting your audience, what exactly do you want them to do?
- People are looking online for solutions to problems. Build your content around solving those problems

- How will the audience consume your content?
  - Depends on what type of content you will produce (e.g. Text, Video, Pictures)
- Developing content – People could be looking for content you published previously
- Build consistency – Send out a blog or newsletter every week, month.
- Ask yourself if you can reuse your content on a different level (Can you turn your blog into an email or newsletter)
- Carry information people are looking for and add a commentary around it (what's your opinion on the subject or event?)
- Promotion – You have taken the time to develop all of your content, how are you going to get it out?
  - Recommendation: Think about promotion in the planning stage
- What resources do you have internally? Can you maintain it based on the schedule you have laid out?
- Look at the content that has been successful in the past and try to repeat that content
  - It means that the audience likes to consume that type of content in that particular way so if you made similar content, they would consume it more
- Connect with others that know what has been successful for them
- Always make sure you measure results
  - Develop insights along the way
  - Did you deliver and achieve the goals you set out in the beginning?
- Overview: 5 steps
  1. Understand your organization (Planning, goal setting)
  2. Build your content strategy
  3. Develop content publishing plan
  4. Promote your content
  5. Measure your results

Resources:

- Content Marketing Institute - <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/>
- Hubspot – <http://www.hubspot.com/>

### Open Discussion on Success Stories:

**Q (Victor):** Anybody have any success stories to share?

**A (Rugby):** We successfully converted people playing rugby in high school into clubs. Teamed up with OFSAA for co-promoting. Amount of people going onto the websites increased.

**Q (Victor):** How did you push out the content?

**A (Rugby):** Social media! And then direct them to our website

**Q (Victor):** What was the content?

**A (Rugby):** How rugby is doing and links to clubs and resources

**A (OWSA):** If you are planning to start a blog or newsletter, have at least 6 stories banked before you launch your first issue. If you wait too long between issues, you will lose readership.

**A (Ophea):** We had to hire a writer to develop our newsletters because there was limited staff capacity to take on more work.

**A (Alpine):**

- We have several different regions, but some of them feel disenfranchised from the organization because they are smaller regions and a lot of the attention and athletes are focused in larger regions.
- Alpine decided to make them feel included and drive traffic back to the Alpine Ontario website.
- Alpine partnered with the Toronto Star to do an "Athlete of the Week" profile
- Alpine offered 1 athlete showing for each club, which was linked to the Alpine Ontario website where there was a full profile.

**A (Athletics):**

- We began compiling all race results for high school, regional, local and Athletics Ontario sanctioned events, effectively creating a one-stop shop for all results
- 10,000 visitors/week on the site would go up to 40,000 visitors/week during OFSAA
- Athletes liked to be able to compare themselves provincially and nationally
- They also liked the way it compiled results which were difficult to find elsewhere
- It has also become an online community where people share stories and post videos

**Q (Victor):** Were you curating and publishing all of those results before hand?

**A (Athletics):**

- Yes, we were tracking down all the results and posting them to our site.
- It hasn't yet translated into members, though there has been a 15-20% growth in clubs
- Athletes have increased by about 5%
- Though, the number of people participating in Athletics is probably close to that of soccer when you consider how many people can be on a single track & field team

**Q (Victor):** Have you thought of monetizing your site? 40,000 is a lot of eyeballs!

**A (Athletics):** We have tried in the past, but it's an issue of staff capacity

**A (OFSAA):**

- We're not necessarily trying to increase numbers, as there are maximum numbers for our teams. Overall, we are trying to get our brand image out, and get people involved in school sport more generally. It's also not about being the best, but about promoting student-athletes.
- I also work with TrojanOne where we do content marketing. For example, selling ticket packages for the Canadian Football hall of fame and Grey Cup
- We craft a content calendar of Facebook and Twitter messages that are advertisements, but are framed like they are providing information. There is always a call to action at the end of the message.
- Also work with the CHL. BMO is a big sponsor of the CHL, but essentially all of the content for BMO is just about what is happening with the CHL.

**Q (Victor):** Can those strategies be transferred to OFSAA?

**A (OFSAA):** We struggle a lot with the commercialization of school sport, but we do appreciate that sponsors are helping student athletes

**Comment (Victor):** You can't lead with the sales messaging. It's about leading with the benefit statement.

**Comment (OFSAA):** It does also align with our commitment to getting everyone involved in sport

**Q (Victor):** Anyone else want to share?

**A (CAO):** A problem we have is that our content comes out as we make it, it can be hodge-podge with no consistency or timelines. We're looking to change that because we recognize how important it is to viewership.

**Q (Victor):** If you do move to something more structured, at some point do you need to stop what you're doing to build your branding and outline your calendar?

**A (CAO):** You have to do twice as much work at once!

**Q (Victor):** From a resource perspective, how do you have the staff power to make that happen?

**A (CAO):** We're using down-time in the summer. You can always hire an intern. You can also scale back the content a little bit while you are doing that planning.

**A (Victor):** You can also do less, but of better quality. It's also always easier to ramp up. But if you have some additional capacity at certain points, you can use those times to build up your bank.

**A (OVA):** You can also put your effort into soliciting user-generated content. Spend a week asking for story submissions and player profiles, or articles about teams going to tournaments instead of writing a blog. These are some of our site's most popular stories.

**A (Alpine):** You can also incentivize that by hosting a mini-oscars to showcase all the stories.

**A (S4O):** A lot of sport organizations also do awards, where they give a whole bunch of information about nominees. You can feature the nominees on your website leading up to the awards, which is more content that you can essentially outsource.

**A (Rugby):** We are releasing a manual to our clubs that has a communications component in it. We are urging clubs to use Rugby Ontario's communication resources & staff. This is also a good way to get content for your website.

**A (OVA):** We also use other people's content, like articles from Volleyball Canada. We copy a paragraph or two and then give them a link to the rest on the Volleyball Canada website.

**Comment (Victor):** In that case you would also want to make sure you are making the linkage to your audience, and explaining why it is important for them.

**Comment (CAO):** That approach makes a lot of sense for a multi-sport organization like ours as well.

**Victor (Question):** Are there any organizations here that would be able to pull resources from the other organizations around the table? For CAO, would you want information on coaches from all these different sports?

**A (CAO):** Yes

**A (Parasport):** We're a multisport organization too, but we struggle a lot with capacity as such a small staff. We have a resource directory, but the last time it was updated was in 2011!

**A (Victor):** Do you know for sure if people are still looking for the same information provided in that 2011 toolkit?

**A (Parasport):** We think so – there’s still a lot of awareness building. Only 3% of Canadian’s with a disability are active in sport.

**Comment (Victor):** It sounds like you have some really powerful statistics. How can you take those and wrap them into a campaign that is targeted to a specific audience? Maybe in a “Did you know” type campaign

**Comment (OWSA):** If it’s a recent injury, there is actually a whole set of steps after people become injured but before they are ready to participate in a sport. Our challenge is following up with them years later, when they may no longer be at a rehab centre.

**Q (Victor):** Are there any kind of long term resources available to them?

**A (OWSA):** Yes, but that is difficult to coordinate on a provincial level

**Q (Alpine):** Does it make sense for you to get in touch with the able-bodied sports? A lot of our para-skiers were skiers before their accident, and then they get into paraskiing.

**A (OWSA):** Yes, I think that there also need to be able bodied people in parasports as well, even if it’s just to fill out the club structure of the parasports so there are meaningful participation opportunities.

**Comment (Alpine):** You can work with the able-bodied sports in the room too

**Comment (Ophea):** We have also direct messaged people on twitter to share and retweet things. We spend some time asking people that have huge followings, and they were pretty willing to do so.

#### **Other Business: Ontario’s Amateur Sport Social Media Project – Stuart McLaren**

- This is basically a community building social media initiative for amateur sport
- The hope is to profile amateur sport in the way that professional sport is profiled
- The idea is still very vague, and there is currently no money or resources for the project, but we are planning to meet next Tuesday to talk more about it and figure out what it could be on July 22 – 10:00 -10:30am
- This will be a short meeting where we:
  - o Outline the purpose/goal and concept/approach in greater detail. Suggestions, ideas, passions welcome.
  - o Have a short group brainstorming of goals, perspectives, ideas, challenges.
  - o We will then outline some rough parameters regarding scope and reach (so we aren’t overwhelmed by our audacity and delusions of grandeur)
  - o Then lay out a few key questions / tasks to think about / work on till the next meeting.

#### **Other Business: Canadian Anti-Spam Legal Jargon – Meaghan Griffin**

- There have been a few requests for examples of legal jargon on membership forms in compliance with the new anti-spam legislation
- If you have something that you are putting on your membership forms to allow people to consent to receiving electronic communication, please send it to [mgriffin@sport4ontario.ca](mailto:mgriffin@sport4ontario.ca) (with an explanation of how you came up with it) so that it can be shared with the group

**Question:** Did anyone send out an opt-in email to ensure compliance? How did it go?

**A (CSIO):** We're at about 30-45%

**A (OVA):** What percentage of people were opening your emails anyway? Probably about 30-45%! As much as it's a bit of a hassle, it's also a good opportunity to clean up your list. Your open rates will go through the roof!

**A (CSIO):** Since a lot of what we send out is informational anyway, we'll still be allowed to send all of that stuff out

**A (S4O):** You do have to keep in mind that legally, the definition of a commercial activity can be extended. If you send an invite to a free event, but there are opportunities to make purchases at that event, the event could be considered a commercial activity.

## 5. Adjournment

*For any other inquires, contact Meaghan Griffin at [mgriffin@sport4ontario.ca](mailto:mgriffin@sport4ontario.ca)*