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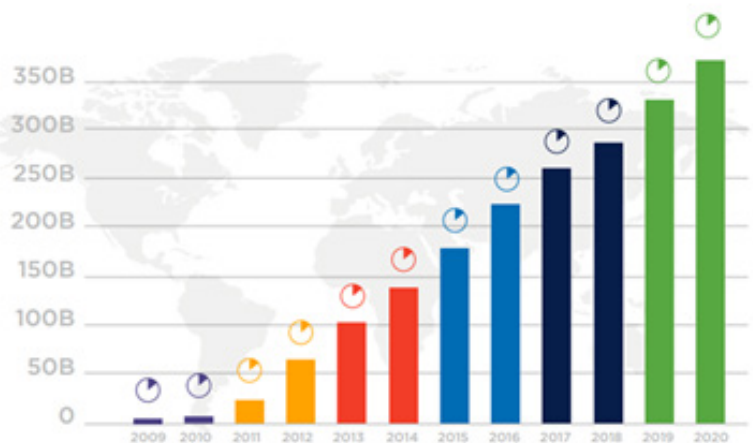
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Leverage the Power and Flexibility of Online Apps to Market Your Catholic School

Time spent using digital media in the United States continues to increase, growing by more than 50 percent in the past three years. Nearly 90 percent of that growth is directly attributed to mobile apps (The 2016 U.S. Mobile App Report). As of

March 2017, there were more than 2.0 million apps to choose from on the market. At that time, Android users were able to select from 2.8 million apps, with Apple's App Store a close second with 2.2 million (Statistica.com). Seeking to understand how apps can serve schools must be investigated, as these numbers are projected to climb in the future, making this growth a trend that is expected to continue (www.quora.com).

APP DOWNLOADS: 180B



Knowing that online users spend 90 percent of their time in apps compared to on the mobile web (Flurry, 2015), schools must determine how they can effectively leverage apps that support successful marketing for image, enrollment, and resources. Time spent researching applications that meet each school's unique needs may be an investment in human resources, but there is little doubt that using these technologies can reap great benefits.

Begin by setting parameters for an amount of time to be spent researching, learning, and training others to use select apps. Focus this work by seeking to identify an app that can solve a problem, reverse a negative perception, or promote a lesser known strength of a school. For example, is Open House quickly approaching, and is there a need to create professional materials without paying a graphic designer? Does the school need help creating a video marketing piece regarding the school's signature service program? Is a staff member running numerous social media sites for the school and in need of an efficient way to stay organized? Below are three likely scenarios and the app-based solutions that were identified to solve them, along with considerations for ensuring greatest success.

SCENARIO 1: Professional quality design skills are needed to promote an event at low cost – ASAP!

SOLUTION: Canva is an online app that makes professional graphic design work simple, attractive, and cost effective.

Canva makes graphic design simple by bringing together a drag-and-drop design tool with a library of more than one million stock photographs, graphic elements, and fonts. (Pictured below is an example of a flyer made with Canva.)

Here are five suggestions when using Canva:

1. First, take the time to search some of the 1,000,000 images that are available. Before settling on the first graphic that appears, learn what options are available before starting a design.
2. Upload school photos and branding standards. Keep continuity with marketing pieces and utilizing the same fonts, colors, and logos on particular pieces will help portray a professional image.
3. Take advantage of the photo filters available on Canva. There are numerous options for selecting a filter for a stock photo or a photo that has been uploaded.
4. View the sample pieces that are showcased. Schools don't have to reinvent the wheel when creating invitations to a PTO meeting, advertisements for the Gala, or Facebook banners. Canva has numerous options that are available to peruse which provide valuable ideas.
5. Select the correct template prior to designing the piece. Templates are available in the correct size and image quality for more than 40 pieces, including letterhead, posters, business cards, calendars, and newsletters. Before investing time in design, start with the correct template.



Other uses for this app: Recognize donors by creating a colorful poster showcasing their names, coordinate different social media posts with branded graphics, advertise upcoming events with print-ready flyers, or create budget-friendly invitations for an upcoming event.

Other similar or related apps to investigate: BeFunky, Desygert, Stencil, Fotojet, Pablo, Relay

SCENARIO 2: Impressive and entertaining marketing videos are needed to showcase the school, and must be done on a budget!

SOLUTION: Flipagram allows users to make professional, low-cost videos easily and efficiently.

In today's busy and budget-conscious world, many schools are moving toward creating videos in-house as opposed to outsourcing projects to videographers. It is astounding, and thought provoking, to note that currently more video content is uploaded in 30 days than the major U.S. television networks have created in 30 years. Also noteworthy is the fact that 87 percent of online marketers use video content to reach their audiences (wordstream.com).

How can Catholic schools easily create videos on a budget? One app that is user-friendly is Flipagram. The app allows users to take photos and videos, then edit together short, sharable videos and/or slideshows. Administrators can also share a Flipagram with stakeholders directly on the school's social media sites, which is also helpful to streamlining the activities needed to implement a school's social media plan. Don't forget to visit Catholic School Management's Facebook page to see a Flipagram that was created during the 2017 Summer Certificate Programs on the Monterey Bay (see screenshot below of the CSM Flipagram)!

Below are tips for creating videos for your school:

1. Select numerous photos or video clips to combine into the promotional piece. Picking 20-30 images adds relevance and interest to the final product.
2. Choose music that is appropriate. Prior to selecting the song that will accompany your images, listen to the lyrics to ensure that all words and messages are appropriate, and that the overall tempo and tune support your purpose.

3. Add text if needed. Many apps (including Flipagram) allow users to edit the photos to add titles, descriptions, or a commentary that can help explain the purpose of a marketing piece. It may be clear to the creator, but a few words to the audience ensure reception of a desired message.
4. Share videos on social media, embed them in e-newsletters, and post them on your website. Repurposing videos on these sites, and cross-promoting the content, will allow viewers in all audiences to see these engaging marketing materials.
5. Save the images to the camera roll in Flipagram. Saving videos to the camera roll will allow employees to easily upload them on any platform.



Finding a way to organize your videos on a desktop is also easy with most video apps, and can help alleviate storage problems.

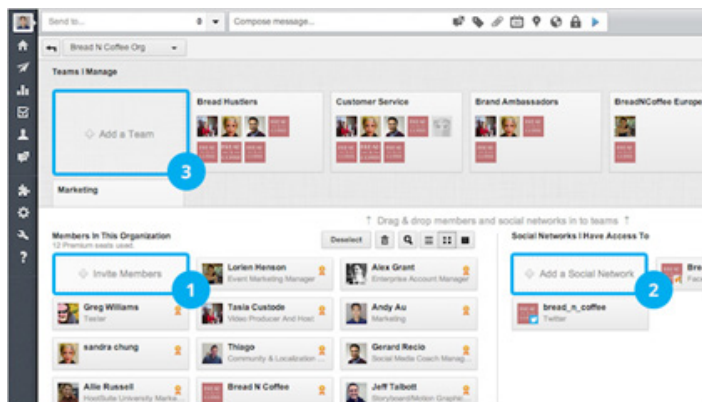
Other uses for this app: Create a slideshow to promote Open House, post a video that showcases the success of an event, congratulate student-athletes on a successful year by combining numerous athletic photos into one slideshow.

Other similar or related apps to investigate: Skitch, PicPlayPost, VideoScribe, Triller, Slideshow Maker, Dubsplash, Flickr

SCENARIO 3: Managing numerous social media sites on behalf of a school can be a challenge to organize and monitor!

SOLUTION: Hootsuite can help manage numerous social media networks and provide a convenient dashboard for displaying content.

As schools are becoming savvier with social media, managing the content of multiple sites can be a daunting challenge. One app that is helpful for staying organized is Hootsuite. The online tool allows users to manage the organization's social networks in one convenient



dashboard, and get a bird's-eye view of what's happening in your social world.

Those who utilize Hootsuite can quickly respond to messages, school mentions, and comments across social networks through a single dashboard. One of the most important elements of a successful social media plan is the use and evaluation of analytics. The Hootsuite analytics report shows what is working and allows the user to learn about audience trends, as well as how to improve social media campaigns.

Five benefits of having an online platform that helps manage social media include:

1. Scheduling social media posts is invaluable for those who manage multiple accounts or sites. The relief of knowing that quality posts have been thoughtfully produced and will run when engagement is at its peak will relieve stress and ensure maximum interaction from the audience.
2. Regularly reviewing analytics will help develop initiatives that cultivate more audience engagement, reduce unnecessary posts, and grow followers.
3. More effective monitoring allows for greater promotion of two-way communication by being part of the conversation. When the audience @ mentions on a particular social media site, respond back with a thoughtful reply. Being notified of when others talk about the school's brand will help this communication.
4. Assigning specific tasks to members of a social media team can be done efficiently on an online platform. By assigning specific messaging goals and tasks, multiple people can post using a coordinated system.
5. Utilizing a secure system can help safeguard passwords and protect the log-in of social media sites. Having a second level of security is helpful in ensuring that an outside source cannot access the account.



About the author ...

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Jennifer M. Trefelner has been the Director of Institutional Advancement at John Carroll High School in Fort Pierce, Florida since 2003. She currently manages job duties including the integrated functions of fundraising and friend-raising, public relations and media relations, marketing and advertising, electronic communications and website development, community and parent relations, alumni cultivation, and institutional planning. Jennifer also works on a part-time basis directly for the Diocese of Palm Beach as the Online Communications Consultant for the Office of Catholic Schools. Through this position, she serves as a resource to help assess, develop, and maintain online communication tools designed to support initiatives and activities undertaken by the schools and that of the Diocese of Palm Beach's Office of Catholic Schools.

Other uses for this app: Monitor engagement of stakeholders on social media, improve Social Media Plan outcomes based on statistics from Hootsuite, explain to School Board members the extent of social media efforts by showing them the data on online reach, schedule posts while the school is closed for vacation.

Other similar or related apps to investigate: Buffer, Sprout Social, Tweetdeck, Social Pilot

Given the examples above, it is clear that leveraging the power and flexibility of a variety of online apps can help market Catholic schools in powerful ways. Schools that utilize apps, and are knowledgeable about “cutting-edge” technology, also add to their potential for being perceived as having an impressive “tech-savvy” image. The majority of students in Catholic schools use technology each day, as do the majority of their parents. By committing to meet these families on technology-based platforms, they will not only be impressed, but will know the school is committed to continually evolving with changing trends.

Keep in mind that a school's Social Media Plan, which should already include thoughtful steps for cultivating and disseminating appropriate content, does not need to change because of the introduction of various apps. Rather, the policies and procedures that are in place to ensure high-quality marketing of the school for image should continue to be utilized, ensuring that content will go through the same approval processes before being communicated, just as done previously.



Consider setting a goal this school year to take advantage of app-based technologies and streamline school initiatives to market more effectively and efficiently for image, enrollment, and resources. Adding the power of various apps into marketing and communication practices can add to a school's ability to tell its story in fresh, eye-catching, and professional ways. Simply put, the use of apps will help to grow engagement in your school and its mission!

Additional examples of these technology-based tools can be found on Catholic School Management's social media sites, as well.

Connect with Catholic School Management on social media for more inspiring ideas.



Disclaimer: Catholic School Management does not have a relationship with any of the products mentioned above, although CSM staff have utilized them and are pleased with how they function.



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