



Case Study: San Diego Zoo

Social Media Brings the Zoo to You

Traditionally, zoos have depended on print media or word of mouth advertising to reach their larger audience. Now that more zoo organizations are integrating social media into their marketing and outreach strategies, the zoo experience extends even after their attendees leave.

The San Diego Zoo and its partner facilities, continue to successfully incorporate social media as an integral part of their marketing and program awareness strategy. Using Hootsuite to manage their social media outreach, the San Diego Zoo is able to connect with their audience and share the stories of many of their animals and programs.

The Challenge

San Diego Zoo's social team uses Hootsuite to drive and manage their social media engagement. Their top level goals are:

- To increase awareness about the zoo and their programs
- Drive attendance to the San Diego Zoo and Safari park
- Increase awareness about the work that they do at their facilities and in the field

Achieving Success

To accomplish all of the objectives of their continuing social media engagement and presence, the San Diego Zoo's social team relies on the following tools in the Hootsuite Dashboard.

The Tools



Hootsuite - The team needs one central location to manage a few different Twitter and Facebook pages. They use Hootsuite's dashboard to bring all those accounts into one place.



Twitter Lists and search streams - The team needed a solution to track hashtags during Retweet contests and larger campaigns. They use Twitter Lists and keyword search streams to monitor and engage with their followers.



Analytics - The team required a tool to measure and track results during their social campaigns and ongoing outreach.

"We measure results based on certain engagement metrics that are relevant to that particular campaign. Hootsuite helps us track those metrics with its analytics platform. We also use the analytics to keep track of what resonates with our followers and alter our strategy accordingly."

*Matt Steele,
Social Media Planner*



Scheduler - The team needs a tool that can space out their social messaging in an organic way while still targeting posts to go live during peak traffic times. The schedule and auto-schedule features helps them schedule messaging ahead of time.



The San Diego Zoo was established in 1916. They have over 2,500 employees across three facilities (San Diego Zoo, San Diego Zoo Safari Park, Institute for Conservation Research); more than 100 conservation field projects in 35 countries across the world.

"We love the ability to create different streams in our dashboard. We keep track of several lists, our home feed, mentions, direct messages, and keywords all on the same dashboard. It allows us a bird's eye view of our entire Twitter presence in one clean UI. We engage our followers in real-time, two-way dialogue to facilitate customer service and build a loyal following, as well as reach out to people who may not be talking to us directly. We interject in general chatter if we feel it's necessary and helps us achieve our goals. Hootsuite makes it very easy to do that."

*Matt Steele,
Social Media Planner*

Innovation

The San Diego Zoo has created a very interactive, engaging social brand. They do a lot with user generated content and are constantly looking for ways to capture and activate their zoo community. With regularly hosted contests and tweet-ups, they often look for ways to bridge the gap between digital and on the ground or in-person interaction. One of their most successful campaigns is the social sharing they do around their hashtag campaign #PandaCub.

On July 29th, 2012, the San Diego Zoo received exciting news, a beautiful and healthy baby panda was born at the zoo. Xiao Liwu was the sixth panda cub to be born at the San Diego Zoo, making their zoo the 2nd most successful panda breeding facility outside of China. The zoo used social to share their news. His birth and the outreach campaign surrounding him have resulted in a significant boost for their media impressions and social media numbers - especially when they decided to start live tweeting Xiao Liwu's veterinary exams. Below are some of the zoo's live tweets and photos.



 @sandiegozoo

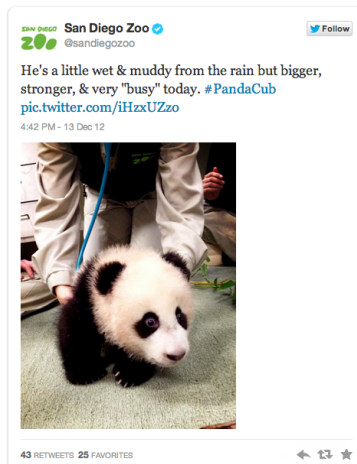
 @sdzsafaripark

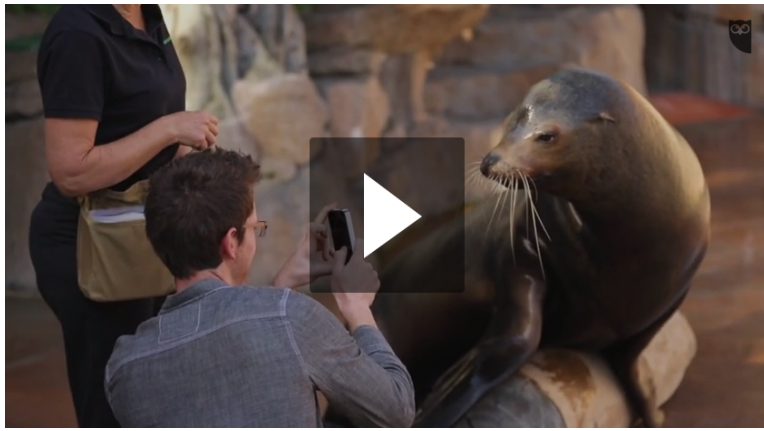
 @sdzglobal

 /sandiegozoo

 /sdzsafaripark

 /sdzglobal





Click video to watch in your internet browser

“We use Hootsuite to easily track, manage, and plan out our Twitter and Facebook efforts. It’s also an invaluable tool for coordinating among team members.”

*Matt Steele,
Social Media Planner*

Results

Through campaigns like #PandaCub and other engaging and educational social initiatives, the San Diego Zoo has created an engaged, loyal, and inspired following. This increased online following in turn brought people to the zoo.

Below are the results that the social team at the San Diego Zoo saw in the six month period after the birth of their most recent panda cub. This includes the live tweeting campaign for #PandaCub.

- 500% increase in traffic to panda cam
- 28,000 new Facebook likes in 5 months
- 22 million Facebook impressions
- 4,500 new Twitter followers
- 4,600 re-tweets
- 35 million potential Twitter impressions
- Over 4 million YouTube views



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