

Case Study: Brand Identity & Social Media

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Brand identity can help make a product or company flourish while also serving as a double-edged sword since it could just as easily, hurt or break the company or product -if not executed right. The same goes for social media; having a strong social media presence can deeply affect the performance of a company or product. When pairing them together effectively or ineffectively, their chances to make a business or product succeed or fail are even greater.

Shudder

Shudder is a streaming service similar to Prime Video, Netflix, and HBO Max. The main difference between this and those other services is the fact that this product is dedicated exclusively to the horror genre. “For fans of the horror genre, Shudder is one of the best streaming services. It has ton of classic, obscure, indie, and more recent horror films and TV shows.” (<https://www.androidauthority.com/what-is-shudder-1030147/>).

Shudder was launched in 2015 by AMC Networks and it is widely available in the United States. In addition, the service costs \$5.99 monthly or \$56.99 yearly; it also supports devices from Android and Apple devices. Finally, in September 2020, it was announced that the service had exceeded 1 million paid subscribers (<https://www.androidauthority.com/what-is-shudder-1030147/>). This shows the grow in popularity for Shudder as well as how cheap it can be (Netflix and other go north of \$12.00).

I selected Shudder because I love all things horror and I honestly believe that while it is doing some great things in brand identity and social media, there is always room for improvement. I think analyzing this service can help me see some of the best practices they have but also some of the weaknesses and perhaps, put into practice both my background knowledge on the subject and what I have learned in this class so far.

Analysis

1. Facebook. – For the most part Shudder’s posting calendar is consistent, and they post at least once daily in this platform. I noticed that for the most part they only post twice on the same day when they change their cover photo; They do this to market their newest releases or the movie that is trending online. Tracking back to a few months and looking at their KPI’s (Key Performance Indicators), you can definitely see some growth in their likes, reactions, and followers. It is clear they have been growing follower wise. Also, one can notice that if you analyze some of their most well-liked posts, a lot of people mention having subscribed to the service and feeling they are getting a lot out of it for the price they pay; even the 500,000 likes they have on their page show a lot of people are following their page. This would translate to at least half of the subscribers they have reported as having (1 million). The key strategies I noticed are definitely connected to how they spread the word on new and exclusive releases. Shudder also shows cultural awareness by addressing holidays such as Hispanic Heritage Month or Women’s Month. Finally, I noticed that they post a weekly/ monthly calendar promoting the new movies coming to their streaming service.
<https://www.facebook.com/shudder>).
2. Instagram. – Here, while Shudder shares some of the same pictures as on Facebook, they mostly do not show the same posting time. In addition, I noticed there are several contests and live events that were nowhere to be found on Facebook, this taking advantage of IGTV (Instagram TV), which is not available on Facebook- at least not the same way. They also have less followers here than on Facebook. They have about

200,000 followers and I would think that their KPI's are measured through the amount of likes and again through the mention of how many people seem satisfied with their service. Furthermore, I also saw that they showed some growth from older posts to nowadays, which probably shows more followers and thus subscribers discovering the service. They heavily promote their new exclusive original content, more so than on Facebook. (<https://www.instagram.com/shudder/>).

3. Twitter. – Out of the three platforms, this is the one with less followers (about 100,000) but at the same time, this is the one where Shudder seems to interact more with their followers. They post a lot of memes (probably aimed towards younger demographics) and plenty of interactive questions that engage with their audience in a way they do not do on Instagram or Facebook. They also host several viral challenges and they even retweet many of their followers' posts. It feels more intimate and connected to their audience just by looking at it. Once again, a KPI could definitely be the fact that they have been growing in likes, retweets, and mentions of satisfied customers (<https://twitter.com/Shudder>) .

One key common thread among all of their social media platforms is the fact that their voice, logo, branding, and colors are plastered all over their individual posts and social media in general.

Results/ Evaluation

The first thing I noticed right away is the fact Shudder uses memorable stand out colors in their logo and posts (red/ blood and black/ darkness). Their identity translates to horror aficionados; they seem to be trying to be the home for all horror fans online. In addition, Shudder continues to show their customers/ followers that they know what they crave considering them as

close friends. The latter is evidenced by how Shudder interacts with their customers in most of their platforms. This could also be reflected by John Williams (2019) saying, “Simply put, your brand is your promise to your customer. It tells them what they can expect from your products and services, and it differentiates your offering from your competitors'.”. (p.1).

I also noticed Shudder is extremely consistent in their posting calendar. “Inconsistent branding says, ‘I don’t care about my business.’”. (Buchanan, 2018). Shudder definitely cares about their business and seem to be on top of things when it comes to their posting calendar and pages. For the most part, they do not post at the same time, which shows that they may have strategic thinking involved in their planning. This goes to exemplify that Shudder considers the best times to post to each of their social media accounts. Some of their accounts lend themselves for different things such as contests and challenges, while others include more references towards critics’ reviews and memes. Additionally, and as a Hispanic person, I enjoyed the fact that they are very culturally sensitive; they include information for different global holidays, and they try to make their audience aware of different cultures. As part of this, they also seem firm in promoting content from all over the world rather than just from the United States. Finally, something else regarding consistency would be the fact that they make a point to showcase how easy it is to watch movies from other countries and they even try to encourage watching films in their native language instead of watching them dubbed to English. Kathryn Wheeler (2021) makes such a valid and related point by stating, “Your product leaves an impression on your customers long after you’ve made the sale. Brand identity is the process of shaping that impression.” (p.1). All of the information previously stated paired with what Wheeler and Buchanan stated shows how consistent they are about both their brand identity, voice, and that impression they want to leave on their customers.

I think Shudder is aware of their success and their social media campaigns working. They keep promoting their new movies, but they also engage with their public, especially when there is mention of how good their service is. I noticed that they seem to respond to comments where customers/followers mention that they enjoy their platform. Their reactions, retweets and shares continue to increase and their interactions with their followers feel more like a small business at times. I believe that they followed the following advice, “Do your research. Learn the needs, habits, and desires of your current and prospective customers. And don't rely on what you think they think. *Know what they think.* (Williams, 2019). This further proves Shudder genuinely cares about both their customers and their social media pages, which in turn pretty much shows that probably their campaigns are working and providing influx of new paid subscribers to their streaming service. Shudder seems to know what their present and future customers want.

Finally, regarding what I think Shudder could do better, I would say that they are already doing great. If anything, perhaps some promotions and ‘watch parties’ to add more paid subscribers. The pages are excellent in part because they have that small family business feel to them, but I think they could benefit from bringing in more content involving some of the big names they have on their roster. Finally, some contests where they give away posters, blu-rays or even some ‘movie kits’ involving some horror memorabilia or collectibles could never hurt.

Discussion

I enjoyed working on this assignment because I love Shudder and I honestly believe in their mission of sharing this horror genre with the world and in creating a community where horror aficionados can share their love for the genre. Buchanan recommends to “Put together a document or leaflet that details exactly what is acceptable for your brand and give all employees a copy.” (P.3). I believe that Shudder must be implementing such a document as their

consistency spans all across their social media platforms and pretty much on the way they conduct themselves on all posts. Even, when you look at specific posts and their responses to some of their comments, you can clearly see that they seem to have the same voice. I found this particularly interesting because where I work right now, I serve as the social media manager; there I and my team have a document that showcases how our brand voice should look like across all social media. This is something that Shudder seems to be doing effectively for sure.

Finally, Wheeler (2021) elaborates on the fact that in order to be successful as a company, you need to research your audience and competition; design an interesting logo; connect on social media; know what you should avoid; monitor your brand and maintain its brand identity. (p.6). From what I could see and based on my learning, I could see that Shudder did their homework and also could potentially have gone through that checklist.

Conclusion

Shudder is on the right track to become a streaming success. I know they have a high number of paid subscribers already but probably will not rival Netflix or others anytime soon. At the same time, it is important to remember that they cater to a specific audience and because of that, this platform service is probably better off having less subscribers. They still continue to have a small business community feel to them and that is something you do not see on those other streaming media giants. I personally enjoy their posts, their community engagement, and I think if they implemented some of my suggestions, then their audience and paid customers would grow even more. My only concern would be to hope that they employ more manpower to make sure that even when getting more paid subscribers they still continue to watch for that small community feeling they have had so far. I hope they continue to shine while also taking care of their customers and making them feel how important they are- just like they have so far.

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