

Case Study: Social Media and SEO

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April 7, 2021

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Social Media: SEO

Social Media as challenging as it could be, can also be an extremely useful tool that can help any brand expand into new horizons. Knowing how to approach SEO or Search Engine Optimization is vital for a brand to flourish and succeed. In this digital landscape, where organic reach is diminishing by the minute, knowing the basics of SEO will definitely put a brand ahead of the game. Taking the latter into consideration, it is important to note that: “Successful SEO requires extensive knowledge of how search engines work. It takes time and practice to get right. (Patel, 2020). The key here is to understand how SEO works and to use it for the brand’s advantage in order to succeed where others have failed.

Disney Parks Blog

The Walt Disney Company is a notorious brand that has made an impact all over the world. Rather than focusing on all the brand’s activities and assets, here the focus will be exclusive to the Disney Parks in the United States. The brand’s main website houses a blog where the writers share content related exclusively to the parks. Disneyland having opened on July 17, 1955 is as popular as it has ever been with nostalgic rides and also recently adding more modern ones that cater to the needs of new audiences. The park has been closed since the pandemic started and is gearing up to reopen its doors this month. Meanwhile, Disney World opened on October 1, 1971 and just like its sister park in the opposite coast, it has adapted to change successfully adding plenty of modern thrills to balance out the original attractions. Disney World has been operating at limited capacity since last September. In addition to the two parks, the blog also hosts information regarding the company’s cruise line – currently getting ready to start operations again. This brand was selected because of their extensive blog content and for their connection to their audience. The audience connection is palpable as the guests constantly interact with blog

posts and their authors. The posts are heavily featured on external websites, social media pages and newsletters as well. This is the first (virtual) stop to learn anything that is going at the parks and the writers do a very consistent job at posting and keeping the audience updated. Finally, the blog features plenty of tools, stories, and hyperlinks to other pages within their brand's website. This makes everything easier and effectively smooth for the audience that may be browsing through. (<https://disneyparks.disney.go.com/blog/about/>).

Analysis

For the most part, this brand seems to know their audience very well. This is evidenced not only by the engagement on their posts but by the positive word of mouth in their social media pages too. On top of that, the brand seems to have extensive knowledge of how SEO works and how to use it to their advantage. The Disney Parks Blog site definitely considers their 'buyer personas' as the page focuses on families and younger people who may travel alone (millennials). Most of their posts can be seen as either trying to persuade families or millennials to visit. The way the brand approaches families is by giving them insights into what a day in the park looks like; the brand dedicates plenty of posts to explain about the safety precautions that are being considered at the parks when it comes to COVID. For millennials and such, the brand highlights behind the scenes posts where they show how some of the attractions work, high sought events, and stories on how the cast members (the park actors) would showcase their 'normal' days. It is obvious the approach here is different as they create posts that have all the 'viral' characteristics one would expect to see: relevant, fun, short, ambitious, high demand and to the point. These are the types of posts millennials crave- this too evidenced by the positive response such posts generate. The way the brand uses keywords and 'viral' characteristics seem to work just fine, particularly with the young audience (millennials mostly).

Regarding keywords in their blog site, this brand seems to consider the following: safety, family, fun, thrills, diversity, equality, women, children, rides, rollercoasters, blog, magic, Disney, Mickey, secrets, food, spectacular, shows, attraction, and some others. With their long tail keywords, the brand does a similar job at ‘sprinkling’ them all throughout their site. Some noticeable examples are: Magic is real, Behind the scenes magic, Mickey and friends, your safety is first, magical day, magic hours, family happiness, night shows, covid safety at Disney, etc. All things considered, the brand seems to have an excellent handle at the way they approach SEO and the strategies they use with it. Among those strategies is considering their audience as being primarily split between families and millennials as previously stated,

The families seem to want to go back to the magic that Disney represents but safely; many of the keywords are obviously deeply connected to their strategic thinking on families and safety. Meanwhile, when considering the other side of the coin, with millennials- things are quite different. While millennials care about health and their safety, they are not as concerned about that aspect (given that supposedly COVID does not represent a real threat to them). These are customers who are willing to go back but need different incentives other than safety since they will have to wear a mask for the duration of their stay (according to certain blogs, most of them consider a mask an imposition); in this case, the keywords seem to be different as they target all the value that this particular subgroup would get by attending. These would include special events such as food or wine festivals and exclusive behind the scenes that would not be offered otherwise. The strategic plan is definitely there when it comes to the brand’s different audiences and their keywords and long tail keywords can be observed on both.

While browsing through their blog site, their pictures are noticeably without any sort of caption. The pictures do not feature any guidelines as to what they are but when reading the blog,

some reference is usually made to the pictures contained in the post itself. The blog posts also feature a lot of hyperlinks that take the guest or customer to other pages from within the brand's main website. By clicking through some of them, one could go 'down the rabbit hole' and end up exploring other blog posts from before and even ending in a whole different place such as a page for their Hawaii or Paris destinations. It is beyond interesting to get lost in their blog as everything ends up coming 'full circle' and take you through what one could call a 'magic carpet ride' around not just their blog but their entire website as well.

Typing some of the keywords mentioned before would result in the search engine taking the guest straight to their blog. When searching for the blog, their page is one of the first three results using the most popular search engines and of course including some of the aforementioned keywords. Finally, it is interesting to see that if typing the words millennials or families accompanied by some of the keywords, the search engine produces specific blog posts targeted to whichever of those audience groups the guest would fall under.

Results/ Evaluation

The brand is doing a terrific job at blogging about their parks. The guest experience is satisfactory as no matter if the guest is someone looking for the safety that his or her family needs or a millennial needing more 'bang for their buck' - the brand delivers to both. The use of keywords and long tail keywords is impactful as well. Also, while the pictures may not feature captions, it is obvious that their alt text probably includes descriptions since the search engines' results showcase how such keywords are probably used.

In addition, the brand is consistent at posting different blogs for different audiences. The brand posts daily and several times a day by different authors. It is important to mention these authors are highlighted throughout the website and blog specifically to show just how unique

their individual voices and backgrounds are. Because there are so many multicultural writers working on the site, it is never just one person posting. One can easily see how many of these bloggers have built a nice audience with their targeted audience. Whether is families or millennials, these writers have a dedicated following and when researching their posts, it is easy to spot who the writer is and who he or she is writing for. The defined audience on the blog site stands out because it is clear the brand has spent significant time developing strategies that will give them the necessary results for their survival. The blog benefits by having different voices that resonate with different readers. This in itself is a triumph as many blogs feature the same voice or several voices that end up blending together without an identity.

Other than adding captions to their pictures, the brand seems to be doing a terrific job.. The keyword strategy could be seen as successful because when reading their blogs, the interaction is there, and the writers have different followings from each other. While one post talking about safety may not seem as interesting as one detailing exclusive after-hour events, one can still see that the connection is there through likes and comments.

More than anything, one could argument that this brand is doing great and probably getting excellent results because they know who their audience is, and they know how to give them what they want. As stated by Neil Patel (2020), a brand needs to use links, have great relevant content, use meta descriptions and effective headlines, have a positive user experience, and be mobile ready (1-6). This brand seems to have considered all five of those basic SEO guidelines. At least, it looks that way from an extensive research perspective.

Discussion

The brand while not perfect does a better job than many other brands when it comes to their blogs. The brand employs a multicultural group of diverse writers so that they can approach

the audience. They ‘divide and conquer’ and it shows how effective it is by looking at the likes and comments on individual posts. Similar thematic parks do not have the same model and seem to assume that all of their guests or audience falls under the same umbrella. In this instance, this brand is ahead of the game and seems to be doing a masterful job at identifying who their customers are and what they are looking for from them. The fact that the brand seems to follow some of the basic guidelines or principles for SEO help understand that they are indeed doing their ‘homework.’

Conclusion

This brand does a terrific job at handling their blog. From looking at it, it is easy to see how successful they are. Their use of both keywords and long tail keywords is evident too. While the main recommendation would be to include captions on their pictures and maybe a few extra headlines, the brand is already experiencing great success with their posting. Based on comments and likes, the brand seems to be generating high demand for their parks through their blog. Consistent posting is evident and also part of the recipe for their success. Finally, the audience seems to feel personally connected to the brand and that speaks volume to the extensive research the brand has done on their audience; their blog almost feels personalized for each individual reading. If someone goes on the blog site, they will be bound to find something that seems to speak directly to them. That is the Disney magic right there.

References

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