Planned Parenthood and Twitter: An Analysis

 Jared Butowsky

Blank University

Author Note:

Jared Butowsky, Department of Social Media, Blank University

Any inquiries regarding this article should be addressed to Jared Butowsky, Department of Social Media, Blank University, Chappaqua, NY 10514.

Contact: saturn500j@verizon.net

**Executive Summary**

This document contains an analysis of Planned Parenthood’s Twitter presence. Specifically, it provides a look at how the national (referred to within as simply “National”) and Hudson Peconic branches use the site, and then offers suggestions for improvements. These suggestions include the Hudson Peconic branch tweeting more (as well as having more variety in those tweets, meaning more tweets that are not just links to news articles from other sites), and all branches having daily tweets on their Twitter accounts (at least one per day).

Planned Parenthood and Twitter: An Analysis

In today’s society, where seemingly everyone is competing for the attraction of the masses, it is important for any organization to have a strong social media presence. In fact, any organization which does not have a good social media following is unlikely to do anything except fade into obscurity. Being a person who focuses on social media can make one very aware of this. The purpose of this report is to analyze Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic’s Twitter presence, which includes, but is not limited to, a comparison to that of Planned Parenthood as a whole, and offer ideas for improvements, both for the Hudson Peconic branch and for National. Following these suggestions should hopefully draw in more followers, and ultimately help make activists out of thousands, if not millions.

First, it is important to talk about Twitter itself. Twitter is a popular social media website which was founded in 2006. The main feature of this site is that it has a 140-character limit for posts, also known as “tweets”. This character limit encourages fast communication. It is also possible for somebody to “retweet” any tweet, which posts it on to the feed (or “timeline”) of anyone currently following that user. Twitter accounts can become “verified”, which bestows several privileges to the account in question.

**Statistics**

National has two accounts on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Google+, and Instagram, as well as one on Tumblr. Each individual branch has social media accounts of their own, which, for the Hudson Peconic branch, are two on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, along with having one on Tumblr and YouTube. The reason for this is that one is for health, and another is for action. This format applies to their Twitter accounts.

 On Twitter, the main Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic account (@PPHP) has 1,349 followers, while following 528 other accounts. This is around a 2.6:1 ratio of followers to following. By the standards of Twitter accounts for organizations, (which, on average, have tens, if not hundreds of thousands of followers (Lee, 2015)) this is not good. The activist account (@PPHPActivist) has 2,330 followers, and is following 1,155 other accounts. This gives the activist account approximately a 2:1 follower to following ratio, which is not very good, either. Of course, it is very possible that this is related to simply being a branch of Planned Parenthood as a whole. The main National account (@PPFA) has more than 78.2 thousand followers while following 652 other accounts, for a follower to following ratio in the area of 120:1. The National activism account (@PPact) has over 210 thousand followers and follows 1,504 accounts, having a follower to following ratio of 139.8:1 (Twitter, n.d.). This does not, however, explain how the number of followers for the Hudson Peconic accounts are as low as they are, considering the Hudson Peconic area has many more people, and therefore many more Twitter users in it.

**Suggestions**

 A good part of the reason for this is, perhaps, that neither of the Hudson Peconic Planned Parenthood accounts are verified, whereas the national accounts are. Granted, none of the “local” accounts are verified, but that simply means they all should be. Verified accounts have priority in search results, so it is very useful for an organization to have a verified account in order to get a lot of followers on Twitter. Unfortunately, it is impossible to request verification (FAQs about verified accounts | Twitter Help Center, n.d.), so doing this is out of the question. It is still, however, very likely to be part of the reason the Hudson Peconic accounts have so few followers.

 One thing which the National accounts do quite well is tweeting at a good rate. Something that is easily noticed across both of the Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic accounts is that they tweet rather scarcely, meaning they may tweet every few days or so, but not very often. When they do, in fact, tweet, it is typically to post a news article from another website. The problem with doing this on a fast-paced platform such as Twitter is that few people will want to follow an account with tweets that are so rare, and which do not follow the 60-30-10 rule. The 60-30-10 rule states that tweets from an organization’s Twitter account should be 60% retweets and links, 30% conversation, and 10% announcements (Ochos, 2011). Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic has too many retweets and links, with too little conversation and announcements. Many popular corporate accounts tweet at least once daily, and provide original content in those tweets. This engages their followers, and makes them want to interact with the tweets in question. The Hudson Peconic branch could probably learn from the content of those accounts.

 There is, of course, the possibility that this is related to a shortcoming of every Planned Parenthood account on Twitter. After all, an organization as well known across the nation as Planned Parenthood should probably have more than a couple hundred-thousand followers on the National accounts. It should be noted that several organizations have Twitter accounts with millions of followers, so it is clear that National could be doing better.

 It is very possible that the Planned Parenthood Twitter accounts for all branches need a daily tweet, such as a “Photo of the Day” or “Fact of the Day” (Ochos, 2011). Perhaps a “Fact of the Day” could be one talking about a service provided by Planned Parenthood, for instance. Alternatively, it could be a statistic. There are many possibilities for this variety of tweet, and ultimately, they will engage Twitter users and serve to spur them into activism.

**Conclusion**

 While these suggestions should be fairly easy to implement, they will ultimately serve to significantly broaden the exposure of Planned Parenthood on Twitter, resulting in more followers, as well as more widespread activism.

# References

(n.d.). Retrieved from Twitter: https://www.twitter.com

*FAQs about verified accounts | Twitter Help Center*. (n.d.). Retrieved from Twitter Help Center: https://support.twitter.com/groups/31-twitter-basics/topics/111-features/articles/119135-about-verified-accounts#

Ochos, R. (2011, October 3). *24 best practices for nonprofits using Twitter* . Retrieved from Socialbrite: http://www.socialbrite.org/2011/10/03/24-best-practices-for-nonprofits-using-twitter/