

In-house social media specialists on the rise



Dimitri Tsamados
Partner, CTPartners

Community Relations or Chief Digital Officers.

Human resources managers at Air France, Volvo Cars, Aetna and Deloitte are bringing on inhouse social media leaders to build digital platforms that will engage their customers, partners and employees.

In-house social media departments are no longer to be found only in consumer or technology companies and commonly requested senior roles include Directors of Social Media and Online

SAMPLE SENIOR ROLE IN SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

The typical senior inhouse candidate requirements call for:

- Responsible for the successful development of digital and social media strategies and the implementation of high impact campaigns
- Managing / mentoring members of the digital / social media team
- Provide a strategic creative, functional and technical approach
- Continually monitor new technological and creative developments in digital marketing
- Lead the relationship with outside providers such as digital agencies

Qualifications:

- Strong knowledge of and interest in digital and social media
- Minimum of 7-10 years of digital/new media experience
- Prior experience in developing marketing and business points of view
- Able to translate business strategies into digital campaigns and conversely interpret the results of the campaigns in terms of business impact
- Define scope, recommended approach, and manage execution of strategy
- Experience managing 3rd party vendors
- Strong business writing, storytelling, communication, presentation skills
- Proactive, self-starter who can work well both independently and as part of a team.
- Understanding of measurement, website analytics and best practices for driving traffic to online properties.

Over the last few years, most companies have been forced into the build-or-buy decision: do they train from within, go outside for talent or commission digital marketing agencies as a bridge to their internal function? The tide has finally turned as social media becomes more widespread and companies are buying talent inhouse – with digital marketing agencies, consumer goods and media companies providing a ready (though small) pool of experienced talent.

As it is with most situations where there is a surge in demand, supply has not been able to keep up and there is an acute talent gap. The ideal social media leader for an airline, automotive, insurance or professional services company is an oxymoron: "an experienced social media executive with the management savvy, business responsibility and cultural fit of a big-company corporate executive".

Social media specialists are not easy to integrate into large corporate environments and there is always the danger of "tissue rejection". To reduce drop-out rates, human resources managers can play an important role in facilitating the on-boarding of their newly appointed Chief Digital Officers.

The following tips are based on feedback from various candidates and clients with established inhouse social media teams that could be helpful to any human resources manager.

Educate them on the business

It is useful for Chief Digital Officers to get up to speed with the company's business plans and where they stand on internal processes, the allocation and use of resources, legal and trademarks and budgets. It's not all about the brand positioning alone.

Tip: Where possible, provide the Chief Digital Officer with the business strategy plan and other internal documents, so they are able to conduct a thorough business analysis of the industry environment as well as all the company's professional stakeholders, not just the end-consumers alone.

Educate their peers

Very often, the pressure is on Chief Digital Officers to bring about results quickly from the beginning, but achieving that can be difficult without the explicit or implicit buy-in of others within the company. Senior social media specialists have the challenge of encouraging cultural changes across various departments and may encounter those who are still into 'old school' marketing techniques.

HRM ASIA: In-house social media specialists on the rise(Continued)

Tip: Encourage your new Chief Digital Officer to organise inhouse workshops to educate team members from other marketing disciplines on how social media works and can be integrated into existing campaigns, and when it can work on its own. They can use external case studies and demonstrate various campaign results with the help of social media monitoring tools.

Educate them on the culture

Those who are steeped in social media language will need to remember that they may be using jargon only they understand.

Tip: Request that your new Chief Digital Officer always endeavours to make complex concepts, systems and campaigns easy to understand in simple 'layman' language.

Educate their teams

Chief Digital Officers need 'foot soldiers' to manage social networks. These juniors will eventually need to be groomed as future social media leaders. Many internal team members are probably very technically proficient but may lack the experience in engaging with others in public or other departments.

Tip: Request that Chief Digital Officer set time aside to train and groom their team members for future opportunities so their team as a whole builds credibility within the organisation.