

Communications Audit: STEMconnector

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Objective

The objective of this audit is to evaluate the effectiveness of STEMconnector’s communication channels, alliances/coalitions/partnerships and messages in 2016.

Plan

Audit Area: Communication channels, alliances/coalitions/partnerships and message strategies

Audit Method: Secondary research

Publics: Internal and external publics

Audit

A. Communications Channels

Table 1: Audit of External Communications Channels

Communication Channels/Tactics	Target Publics	Communication Model Used
Facebook	Members, partners, educators, students, STEM employees	Public information
Twitter	Members, partners, educators, students, STEM employees	Public information
Google+	Members, partners educators, students, STEM employees	Public information
LinkedIn	Members, partners, STEM employees, students	Public information
Email newsletter	Members, partners, educators	Public information
Blog (curated STEM information)	Educators, partners, educators	Public information
STEMdaily (STEMconnector related information)	Members, partners, media, educators	Public information
Event (Global STEM Talent Summit)	Members, partners, educators, scientists, global companies	Two-way symmetrical

STEMconnector mostly practices the public information model. All of its communication tactics are used to present its stakeholders with information and news. STEMconnector has taken the role as a content curator across all of its social media platforms, but does not interact with posts or communicate with its publics on this platform.

STEMconnector should start using the two-way symmetrical model on their social media pages. There is no indication that STEMconnector has liked any of their stakeholders' content, although they do share/curate information. Followers comment on their posts and do not get a reply. Building a relationship through two-way communication would help build trust with the company and facilitate a sense of community between STEMconnector's many partners. It could also position STEMconnector's social media as a place for discussion and sharing ideas.

The blogs should continue to follow the public information model. This is beneficial for educators, students and scientists seeking more information about STEM advancements.

The event should continue to be two-way symmetrical. It allows STEMconnector and its partners and publics to continue working together and influencing one another.

B. Alliances, Coalitions and Partnerships

Table 2: Current partnerships and sponsorships in alphabetical order

3M	AAUW	Acord	ACSESS	ADM
Aetna	AFA	Alamo Colleges	American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture	American Society for Plant Biologists
APCO	Apollo Education Group	Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.	Association of Community College Trustees	AT&T
Austin Community College	BAE Systems	Base 11	Becker College	Bloomberg Media
Boy Scouts of America National Foundation	BP	Burning Glass	Campbell Soup	Cargrill
Carnival	CASIS	Cengage Learning	Centene Corporation	Center for Science Teaching and Learning
Chevron	Chicago State University	Cigna	CIO Magazine	CISCO Systems
Cognizant	Cognosante	Dallas Community College District	Dassault Systèmes	Deloitte
U.S. Department of Energy	Des Moines Area Community College	Discovery Education	Diversity Communications	Diversity in Action
Diversity Woman	DiversityComm	DiversityComm-Diversity in STEAM	DiversityComm-Hispanic	DiversityComm-Professional Woman's Magazines

DiversityComm-Black EOE Journal	DLR Group	Drake University	DuPont	Eaton
Enterprise Knowledge Partners	Enterprising Women	EVERFI	Excelsior College	Express Scripts
FedEx Freight	First	Fleishman Hillard	Florida International University	Forbes Magazine
Franklin Institute	Gallup	Gateway Technical College	General Motors	Genesis Rehab Services
Glenmede	Gravity Pro Consulting	Gulfstream	HACC	Harper College
Hawkeye Community College	Hedberg Consulting LLC	Honeywell	Hope Street Group	Howard University
Indeed	Innovation Staffing	Intel	Interos	Ivy Tech Community College
Jason Learning	Johnson & Johnson	Kelly Services	KPMG	L-3 Communications
Latina Style	Launch Tennessee	Learning Blade	Lockheed Martin	Madison Area Technical College
Manpower Group	Marymount University	McKesson	Mead Johnson Nutrition	Mentored Pathways
MESA	Michigan Tech	Micron Technology, Inc.	Midtown Group	Mind Research Institute
Monsanto	Monster	Morehouse College	My College Options	National FFA Organization
National Press Club	National Science Foundation	Nationwide	New York Academy of Sciences	Noble Foundation
Northrop Grumman	Northwell Health	Oak Ridge Associated Universities	Olin College	Omega Travel
PepsiCo	Pillsbury Law	Pinnacle Group	PTC	Rutgers University-Camden
S&P Global	Samsung	Science Spark	Skyline College	Smithfield Foods
Smiths Group	Sodexo	Sony	Sprint	STEM Jobs
Statusys	Taft College	TATA Consultancy Services	Teach for America	Techna Link
Teen Life Magazine	The Clearing	Tivitz	Tuskegee University	UMBC
Unilever	United Negro College Fund	University of California, Davis	University of Central Missouri	University of Iowa
University of Massachusetts-Boston	University of Nebraska	University of Phoenix	University of the District of Columbia	UPS
US News	US Veterans Magazine	USA Funds	USA Science Engineering Festival	USDA
Verizon Foundation	Walmart	Washington State University Tri Cities	Western Governors University	WIPRO
Women of Distinction	Women of Wealth	Women's Business Enterprise National Council		

STEMconnector already has a wide variety of partners and sponsors in education, media, science and technology, the government, diversity groups and business. However, STEMconnector can add more partners and continue to build influence.

One of the partners STEMconnector should consider adding is the U.S. Department of Education. Because one of the missions of STEMconnector is to increase the amount of STEM education in the U.S., pursuing a partnership with the Department of Education will allow STEMconnector and its partners to have a better connection and influence in the public school system.

Another partner STEMconnector should consider seeking is the American Council on Renewable Energy (ACORE). STEMconnector would gain the reputation as a company that wants to use technology to protect the environment and connect environmental-focused nonprofits with technology companies. The partnership would invite other companies interested in using technology to protect the environment to join STEMconnector, and the partnership would be appeal to environmentalists and educators.

STEMconnector should also seek NASA as a partner. NASA is a high-profile organization that utilizes top technology and scientists for its projects, and it could benefit from STEMconnector's influence with companies and universities. STEMconnector would gain more credibility, publicity, and influence in the government sector.

C. CSR Analysis

The corporate social responsibility (CSR) areas that STEMconnector is committed to are education, environmentalism, gender equality, and diversity. STEMconnector promotes these ideas through its different initiatives, which are the STEM Food & Ag Council, the STEM Innovation Task Force, Million Women Mentors and the STEM Higher Education Council.

Posts from STEMconnector's Facebook were examined from Dec. 1-Dec. 30 for corporate social responsibility and corporate ability messages. After analyzing each post, it was determined that 2 percent of the messages were a CA message, 2 percent were a CSR message, 4 percent were hybrid CSR and CA messages, and the remaining 92 percent were neither (see appendix for details).

Based on these results, it is recommended that STEMconnector begin incorporating more CSR and CA messages into its communications.

Recommendations

STEMconnector is making a large impact in the STEM community, but it is not communicated through its public messages.

STEMconnector's social media is not indicative of STEMconnector's purpose or its initiatives, which is confusing to a person or organization trying to learn more about or get involved in STEMconnector. Curating content is effectively positioning the company as a thought leader. However, STEMconnector is not supplementing the news with information on how STEMconnector is helping make changes in the STEM community.

It is recommended that STEMconnector begin increasing both corporate ability and corporate social responsibility messages. STEMconnector could benefit from promoting its initiatives, impact and research through CA, CSR and hybrid messages regularly. This would attract possible members and inform current partners and sponsors of STEMconnector's efforts and influence.

Some of the news STEMconnector shared was about or from their partners and sponsors. STEMconnector should indicate if it had an involvement in its partner's success to build its reputation.

In addition, STEMconnector use a two-way symmetrical model on its social media. Because STEMconnector's mission is to connect people in the STEM fields, it needs to engage its publics active on social media. STEMconnector's social media has the potential to facilitate discussions among its publics.

It is recommended that STEMconnector continues its communications audit with establishing and collecting digital analytics for its communication channels and tactics. From this data, STEMconnector can determine which communications are effective and which are not.

Next, STEMconnector should send a survey sent to its external publics about preferred social media platforms and communications. STEMconnector could ask respondents to rank the information they would be interested in hearing from STEMconnector and to rank which social media platforms they prefer.

STEMconnector should also hold a focus group involving representatives from its sponsors, partners, educators and initiative leaders to research how they want STEMconnector's efforts and impact to be communicated.

Appendix

Facebook Post Copy	Message Strategy
NSF awards \$61M to 67 projects to help the education community understand, explain & address challenges in #STEM learning and participation	Neither
Johns Hopkins lands the top spot again in NSF's annual rankings of #Ed R&D expenditures. #STEMHigherEd	Neither
#STEMdaily News Alert- December 1, 2016	Neither
2017 FIRST #STEM Equity Community Innovation Grant aim to increase access to innovative STEM programs! #STEMdiversity #omgrobots	Neither
Amazon partners w/ Techstars for new Alexa Accelerator program at UW's Startup Hall. #STEMHigherEd	Neither
Watch, Re-Watch & Share the Webcast of our #STEMconnectorAt5 5-Year Celebration & Website Re-Launch!	CA
#STEMdaily News Alert- December 2, 2016	Neither
Purdue senior and former Yelp intern Jesse Collins finds #STEM interns are better paid than most U.S. workers. #STEM #STEMJobs	Neither
#STEMdaily News Alert- December 5, 2016	Neither
#STEMdaily News Alert- December 6, 2016	Neither
#oecdписа results show U.S. students are interested in #STEM jobs, yet rank 19th in science scores	Neither
#STEMdaily News Alert- December 7, 2016 (with link)	Neither
#STEMdaily News Alert- December 8, 2016 (with link)	Neither
PLTW President Vince Bertram & Verizon Foundation's Justina Nixon-Saintil's new Op-Ed in U.S. News: Computer Science Education Week Isn't Enough. #CSEdWeek #CSforAll #STEM	Neither
Cartoon Network Celebrates Computer Science Education Week by announcing new #STEAM advisory board to continue the network's \$30M commitment to STEAM and a new coding project based around its show #StevenUniverse! http://buff.ly/2gljjok #CSEdWeek #CSforAll #STEM	Neither
Bakersfield's Castle #STEM Academy receives \$80K from #Chevron to develop an #engineering lab!	Neither
#STEMdaily News Alert- December 9, 2016 (with link)	Neither
Winning Richmond middle school of @NorthropGrumman's Fab Schools Lab contest unveiled its \$100K #STEM lab today! #STEMcomps	Neither
#STEMdaily News Alert- December 12, 2016	Neither
NSF grant will help researchers at Purdue study how to help low-income students succeed in #STEM	Neither
#STEMdaily News Alert- December 13, 2016	Neither
ICE study finds the number of international students studying #STEM in the U.S. grew 10.1% from November 2015 to November 2016. #STEMHigherEd	Neither
Today's students are more likely to visit career centers than past graduates but less likely to rate those interactions as very helpful, a new Gallup-Purdue University study finds. #STEMHigherEd	Neither
#STEMdaily News Alert- December 14, 2016	Neither
Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand announces legislation to help universities w/ their #engineering & #manufacturing programs	Neither
Plan to close PS 241's #STEM Institute of Manhattan halted by public support	Neither
Washington state adopts new set of computer-science standards #CSforall	Neither
Dropbox makes gains in its #diversity hiring- but CEO says the "numbers aren't where we want them to be." #STEMdiversity #WomenInSTEM	Neither
#STEMdaily News Alert - December 15, 2016	Neither
California loses its bid to suspend #science tests for 2 years and test-drive newer exams	Neither

Each year, Edison International awards \$40,000 scholarships, paid over four years, to 30 high school students planning to major in STEM fields at four-year colleges and universities. Scholarship applications are now being accepted through Feb. 1. Eligible students must live or attend a public or private high school in SCE's service territory or attend an eligible high school surrounding SCE's San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station. Visit http://buff.ly/2h8YIFP for a list of designated high schools!	Neither
Boeing South Carolina expands its partnership w/ STEM Premier to identify & develop #STEM talent at 3 more high schools!	Neither
Cool slideshow compiled by Megan Rose Dickey for TechCrunch - "A look back on tech diversity and inclusion in 2016" #STEMdiversity#WomenInSTEM	Neither
Northern #KY program that connects specially-trained #vets from non-profit Operation Honor to Owen County High School students in #STEM learning earns \$25K donation from AT&T Kentucky	Neither
#STEM Toys, Randstad's #Workforce2025 Report, the #purpleplowchallenge, and much more round out today's #STEMdaily!	Neither
Civil Air Patrol #STEM program helps an Alabama elementary school earn Blue Ribbon distinction	Neither
Our 4th Annual CS Roundtable w/ TCS Encourages Collaboration w/ Industry & #HigherEd. #CScollaborations	Hybrid CA/CSR
Study by Randstad projects massive shift to agile employment & staffing model in the next decade #Workforce2025	Neither
Using Skype and holding up sketches to the camera, students at Miami University in Ohio helped residents of the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan shield themselves from the sun.	Neither
The number of students enrolled in #engineering major jumped 4% in the past year. #STEM	Neither
12/21 #STEMdaily is out! Read all about our #CScollaborations Roundtable with TCS!	Hybrid CA/CSR
STEMconnector shared National Science Foundation (NSF) 's post: Our favorite end-of-year countdown: 30 scientific discoveries, innovations and milestones enabled by NSF-supported #supercomputing centers.	Neither
Dual-enrollment program will allow high school students to get a jump-start on #STEM at Indiana University of Pennsylvania	Neither
Business & Industry partners of the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council donated over \$360K to #STEM initiatives in #Iowa in 2016!	Neither
Happy Holidays from STEMconnector & Million Women Mentors! We'll have 1 #STEMdaily & #EdTech Weekly this week, then normal schedule Jan 3rd!	Neither
Cool slideshow from TechCrunch!	Neither
Interest in math is all it takes for teenage boys to consider physics careers, while teenage girls need to score well on exams to think about going for jobs in the math-heavy field, a study finds. #STEM #WomenInSTEM	CSR
Last #STEMdaily of the 2016! We have an #EdTech Weekly Report coming out tomorrow then we'll be back to a regular schedule on January 3rd. Happy Holidays!	Neither
Facebook's hardware development team announces partnership w/ 17 universities to collaborate on technology research projects. #STEMHigherEd	Neither
Former research scientist at Lawrence Livermore gets 18 months in prison, \$3M fine for lying to get funding	Neither