Social Media in the City of Greensboro: Embracing New Channels

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Once upon a time

“Old school”

– Come to City Hall in person
– Try to find a phone number in the phone book
– Come to a Council meeting
– Write a letter to the editor of the local paper
– Complain to your friends
– Ignore it, elect someone new
Greensboro History

- Contact center opened in 2004 (10-digit 311)
  - Original channels – phone, walk-in, email
  - Online “self serve” added in 2006
  - Chat added in 2008 (semi-social – more “casual”, but not visible to others)
- Current daily averages
  - 1000 calls
  - 50-60 walk-in customers
  - 10 chats
  - 50-60 emails
  - 6 online work orders
- Calls remain primary channel
Greensboro History

2008 – Rise of the Blog
- Response to a controversy at City Hall
- Needed tactics to control
  - Responses
  - Engagement
  - Providing contacts and process

Greensboro History

2010 (approx) - rise of Facebook
- Departments grew frustrated with WebSite constraints
- Multiple sites created with little/no oversite or consistency
- Policies developed after the fact, enforced by communications division
The future is now

More and more people have only a cell phone – 65%, if cell phones are smart phones
Younger people prefer to use their phone for transactions, not to talk
By 2015, people born 1984 and later will be 45% of the population
Interest in communities is being sparked by Social Media
Always on, always connected

Apps

- People want to report issues as they see them
- They also want information from their smart phones or tablets
- And they want to communicate with other interested people about the problems they see
- The City is partnering with an App developer to do all of this
Decisions

- Build or buy?
- Who manages?
- How does it work with existing systems?
- Screened or “dumped”?
- Preventing duplicate work orders; integrating with existing systems
- Training staff

Opportunities

- Not a “magic button”
- Managing the Social Media Aspect
- Dealing with added work load
- Management believes this is easier!
- Communications are a Public Forum, very visible to the entire community
Bonuses

- Employees can use
- Bulk pickup scenario
- Talk to Council
- Leverage for other apps, add on services
- Alerts to user community possible

Next

DIY starring CSR’s
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