

FOR THE LOVE OF HUMANITY

by

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A THESIS

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Primary Thesis Advisor

Philanthropist: Someone who donates their money, time, and/or talent to a cause that aims to improve lives and better the community.

“The word philanthropy comes from the words “Philos” meaning “love” and “Anthropos” meaning “man” or “humanity.”

Ayça Çubukçu

Abstract:

A picture is worth a thousand words and this documentary says it all. This documentary is pulling back the curtain to illuminate what it's like to be a student worker at the University of Oregon and highlights the UO Coffee Outlets baristas and how the UO Coffee Outlets' social media has impacted the internal communications of the company. I chose to use a digital medium for my thesis in an attempt to restore humanity to student workers as being more than just employees of the university, but dynamic, vibrant, real students who have lives, friends, and crucial relationships that power our university. The documentary includes testimonies, interviews, and the journey of what it takes to run a social media account that has united our team in a way we never predicted. Our social media has not only aided in our business and exposure to the rest of campus, but also our internal relationships with one another as students, co-workers, and friends.

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This thesis and documentary have challenged me in more ways than one. The creative process is not for the faint of heart. It was intimidating, stressful, and unpredictable. This thesis has challenged the way I think about constructing an assignment, approaching a creative medium, and trusting myself. I want to thank Brian McWhorter, my Clark Honors College Thesis Representative, for teaching me how to structure a thesis. Brian's approach to education, the creative process, and vulnerability as a professor is both inspiring and a breath of fresh air.

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Thank you to my roommates who have sat through every "night before the presentation dress rehearsal," student ambassador script sessions, fake tour, and paper about anthropomorphism or totalitarianism. You have supported all of my work, picked me up and dusted me off, and most importantly introduced me to allergy medication.

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me. My parents have Ph.D.'s in Psychology and Education, have taught all over the world, and have been changing lives since the second they stepped foot into the realms of academia. They have served on thesis committees and capstone projects, and they have theses of their own they've created and defended, so you can imagine they have much wisdom and advice on the matter. So, for every Sunday night family FaceTime, midday phone call pep talk, or visit home, I want to thank them for just being my parents and not my professors. I hope one day I can leave an impact on people's lives just like you have.

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Supplemental Materials: [!\[\]\(2e897e890e69d81eae4503a8342c36b0_img.jpg\) For the Love of Humanity 2.mp4](#)

Technique, Methods, and Procedures

Pre-Production

During preproduction, I did research about how to successfully run a social media account, and how it's benefited other companies, both large and small. I also did research about documentaries, the different styles of documentaries, and how they go about capturing footage and constructing a story. I first created a list of questions to ask my coworkers to gain a better understanding of their experience while working at the UO Coffee Outlets. These questions ranged from What do they like about working at the company? What do they like about social media? How do they feel social media has benefited our company both externally and internally?

Production

During production/filming, I documented everything. I documented my co-workers working, capturing content for our social media, every step of managing the social media, and interviews with my coworkers where they shared their experiences as UO student workers and answered the questions from pre-production. This footage captures the humanity of being a student worker in a way that verbal descriptions in an ordinary paper report never could. I discovered the key was to keep cameras running the entire time on set in case there was a moment that was impactful for the documentary that wasn't scripted or structured. After filming all the initial interviews, I took the time to sit down and film my own reflections about running the social media, being a student worker, and any takeaways I had from working at the UO Coffee Outlets.

Post-Production

During post-production, I compiled all the footage I had accumulated and began coding my interviews. Finding common patterns and narratives among all my coworkers allowed me to derive overarching themes and conclusions to build a story around. In this case, the overarching narrative is the internal communications benefits to the UO Coffee Outlets through social media. I was able to piece together interviews to convey the overall takeaways and thoughts my coworkers had about working at the UO Coffee Outlets. I then edited the interviews and layered them with coinciding scenes/shots that had to be separately edited to demonstrate what they were describing. Both the visual and auditory methods help create one cohesive story.

Transcript:

UO Coffee Outlet employees: Welcome to the Coffee Outlets. Welcome to the Coffee Outlets.
Welcome to the Coffee Outlets. Welcome to the Coffee Outlets.

UO Coffee Outlet employees: Best job I've ever had with friends I never knew I'd ever have.

UO Coffee Outlet employees: Grace said she'll give it a go. So, we all said Let's go!

UO Coffee Outlet employees: We have a social media. My lovely coworker, Grace runs our social media. She's posting twice a week.

Grace: Hi, my name is Grace Smith. I am a General Social Science major with a concentration in Crime, Law and Society. I am the Social Media Manager for the UO Coffee Outlets Instagram, and this is my thesis.

Grace: We're here today at the coffee outlets; we're the wrong set. It's filming day, and we have a lot of content we have to get done, but it's gonna be a great day!

Grace: I was hired in the fall of 2021, so I was 19. I'm 22 now. When I first applied for this job, I was only thinking about the work experience that I would receive and getting paid. I never knew what this job would turn into...

Mallory: My name is Mallory,

Janessa: Hi, I'm Janessa.

Alex: I'm Alex,

Isabel: I'm Isabel.

Chloe: My name is Chloe.

Winter: My name is Winter.

Clara: My name is Clara.

Lucas: My name is Lucas.

Alex: I don't know. The people definitely make the job for me.

Chloe: My favorite part. I mean, honestly, like, this is the longest job I've ever had before, just because in high school only doing, like, summer positions and stuff like that. So, I think what's really kept me up this job is the people. For the first time, I'm actually really excited to see the people. And I look at the schedule and I'm like, who am I gonna see today? Who am I gonna work with?

Lucas: My favorite part of the job is making people's morning.

Clara: I love my coworkers. If my coworkers weren't here, I wouldn't be here anymore.

Isabel: Interacting with a bunch of people that I probably wouldn't have come across besides having this job.

Janessa: My favorite part is just socializing with everyone. And just like being a positive light to everyone.

Mallory: Getting to interact with a lot of different people and meeting so many people do this job. We have so many co-workers, and they're all fantastic.

Grace: I'm essentially documenting how to run a social media, how I got into running this social media account, and how it's benefiting the company. I originally thought that I was doing this to benefit the company and its relationships externally and throughout this process of documenting everything that I've been doing, I'm actually documenting how the social media is benefiting our company, internally.

Alex: If I could describe our social media in one word, it would be energetic...

Mallory: Playful.

Brandon: Amusing.

Isabel: In one word, it would be probably...

Janessa: Welcoming.

Clara: Spontaneous.

Lucas: Friendly.

Isabel: Entertaining.

Clara: Some of the benefits, I think, of the Coffee Outlets having social media are like, we just have a good community because of it.

Winter: It shows the fun side of all the employees and puts some personality to a business.

Janessa: I think just engagement around the campus, I feel like not a lot of people know about the Coffee Outlets. So just having social media as like a side advertising is good for us as a whole.

Lucas: Outreach to like customers and even employees, just to like build a little sense of community.

Mallory: I think it gets the word out about the Coffee Outlets in general. I think a lot of people don't know that we have so many cafes and so many different drinks and things that we offer.

Grace: At the time when I was hired, we didn't have a social media. And I thought it was crucial that we have one. You know, I see the school business have a social media. The College of Art and Design has a social media. Everyone has a social media on campus, and I thought that it was interesting that we didn't. I thought it was even more interesting that the coffee outlets are part of Housing and Dining. We're like under we're like, one of the things under the big umbrella, and we're not on the Housing and Dining social media site. They never feature us. We are often forgotten about. And when I was first hired here and I started meeting all the incredible people who it takes to run this cafe, I thought: how awesome would it be if I had the power to highlight how amazing this job is and how amazing these people are? I started doing a lot of research on social media as a whole. I started doing research on how to run it, how to manage it. I really dove into understanding business best practices, which are basically a criteria, a rubric that digital marketing and advertising teams should be following to both improve internal communications and external communications, whether it's interacting with your audience and like, likes, comments, posts, finding what relates to the public to make you seem more relatable. That was a big thing. Making trendy content that was also a really big thing that I wanted to learn about and dive into, because through analysis of the social media, I've discovered that trendy videos are doing a lot better than my long-form content, and that was really interesting to discover. And something that I'm trying to do with the social media is, you know, break that norm. Every Friday, I do interviews with different co-workers, asking them, you know, like, what's your

favorite drink to make, or what's your favorite new special something that's a little more personal. I wanted to represent our cafes in a really specific way.

Poppie: My name is Poppie Stirrup, and I am the retail dining services. You came to me and like suggested doing a social media account. I wasn't really sure. First of all, I have a hard time not having my hands in all aspects, and this is something I know nothing about. So, I was a little bit nervous. Our higher-ups were nervous as well, but also you represent the university in a really good way in multiple facets here on campus. And I think that was a huge driving force for me to fight for it because it was definitely not something people were super excited about. I had to promise to keep my eyes on it and notice what's going on. I think it's great bringing attention to baristas and that they're not just there to serve you right, that they're people, and they have things going on in their lives, and all of ours are students. So, I thought that was great. It's to bring attention to the cafes in my mind as well, not just to our student staff, you know, featuring some of our specials, how we create those specials, and bringing attention to those lost little cafes that no one knows about, and making those a little more well known, I think it's great. I think it gets our staff excited, which then hopefully spreads excitement throughout campus. You know, I wasn't part, really a part of Instagram too much beforehand, and now I look at it often, opens me up to social media a little bit more than what I have, kind of closed myself off.

Grace: So, what do I actually do when I say I'm managing a social media? So, I have no idea what I'm doing. I never know what I'm doing actually. I am faking it till I make it. I've never run a social media before this, I had never really done any video editing before I started this. I essentially went to Poppie and somehow convinced her that I was capable of building a social

media from the ground up without having any experience. Usually a few days before filming, I will do brainstorming sessions where I sit down on the couch and I literally just scroll through coffee content to get ideas, and then I come to the cafes a few days later, and we do it.

Something that I really love about my coworkers is that we have created such an amazing relationship that I could come up with an absolutely ridiculous idea, and they trust me. You know, this is going out onto the internet, 5,000 people are seeing our videos and they trust me,

Makayla: You come around and you record, and you tell all the beautiful people who follow us on Instagram what we do and how we do it, and all about us as students, and we are students, and we're not just baristas.

Elizabeth: She comes to the different locations, and she comes up with content ideas, if it's like a trend, or just like something she came up with, and we all participate, and we create videos, or like pictures, and then she edits them and posts them on social media, and it just kind of gets everybody involved, and it's really fun, and it's always a good time. When she comes to the store.

Kennedy: I think it's really cool. You know, I like being in your videos and stuff. I don't know. I think they're really fun. You always have such like fun ideas.

Emma: Your job is to come up with fun ideas to make us do as baristas. I think they're fun. I like being in the videos. It makes me feel a little bit famous.

Samantha: You come in, help us promote the cafes. Make these awesome videos where we can show ourselves to the public, our coffee skills. You make some cool editing videos with coffee. Yeah, just gonna help us promote ourselves to the public, promote the business and let people know who we are.

Jenna: She makes a lot of really fun content, which gives us a fun time. She shows us fun videos, and then we recreate them with our own Coffee Outlets, twist and then she puts in a lot of hard work, like I can I see the behind the scenes work that Grace puts in, she's hard at work on her computer editing videos, and you know, I can also see all the progress that she's made since her starting this.

Zoe: Grace walks around with her two tripods everywhere, and then comes and sets up in the middle of a cafe and makes us do silly things like get on her shoulders and control her or do interviews, but she also does really cool things where she does the coffee coming through a phone and stuff like that. That is actually really impressive and cool. But she does all the content for us, and kills it

Grace: When people watch the social media and when a lot of my co-workers watch me film, it kind of looks like a one-man job. You know, it's me walking to all the different locations, and I'm bringing my tripod, I'm setting stuff up. But something that I wanted this thesis and documentary to highlight is that it's not just me. It takes a village. There are 80 of us here who work at the coffee outlets and power the university through caffeine every single day. Filming all these videos is teaching us to collaborate with one another more and communicate more and

create close relationships and bonds, which I think is really awesome. Every day we come together to be a team. The coffee outlets would not be what it is without our employees. My creativity would never get to play out in real life on everyone's phones if I did not have the coworkers that I had today.

Grace: I've discovered the new thing that I'm really getting at is internal communications. Internal Communications is essentially a continuous process within an organization to keep employees informed and connected, whether that's using verbal, written, or digital channels. So, in this case, our social media, I have coworkers who, if they're always working here at this location, they're never gonna see their fellow co-workers who are working over in the Lillis business complex. And so when I film videos of us doing stuff here, the coworkers at Lillis get to see it on Monday morning, and they go, That's awesome that they're over there doing that, because there are so many of us, and we don't always get to work with each other. This social media is doing more than just connecting us with the outside world, but it's connecting us with one another inside the company. It's making us feel more like a team. Internal communication promotes a shared understanding of what our overall goal is, what we want to be accomplishing, what we want our company to look like. Something else that I've gotten lovely comments about from my bosses, Poppie and Eric (because they follow the social media), they also love seeing what we're doing. You know, a lot of the time they're in their office in Carson Hall. They don't get to see us all working with each other, and so my boss, Poppie, will always send me a little text going, oh, I saw this video today that was so fun. Like, thanks for making me have a good laugh. So, it's connecting our higher-ups with us, which makes us all feel more connected as a team. I think

Lucas: I think our favorite part is or my favorite part is seeing like co-workers just having fun, not like being strict about the job, like all the creative little ads you do. I think it's awesome.

Isabel: I think it's really funny, and it's like, just like a fun little thing that we can do when there's some slight downtime. And I personally am a follower of the page. I think it's hilarious seeing all my other co-workers having to do little skits.

Clara: It's so fun, and it's very consistent, which I appreciate. I love waking up and seeing the little cute videos. This makes me smile, and I feel like I get to see my coworkers and I never work with

Janessa: I like how creative it is. I think it's very out there. And I've never seen like out of all the departments on campus, I think this one's the most creative for their content.

Mallory: You never see the same thing twice. And I feel like I get to see a lot of different people that I don't see very often.

Winter: I love that there's so many like it's really fun to be able to be able to just film the videos every day and do a bunch of different things within them, things that are honestly haven't see.

Chloe: I don't know. I think it's just awesome to like, see people that I haven't worked with for a while, or just like other co-workers making very like, relatable posts honestly. And when I see it, I genuinely and like, I would want to go to my cafe and, like, talk with these people I would

want, I don't know. I feel like when I send my friends the videos, the engagement level is very it's good, and I think we should keep doing it, even when you graduate. I think it should be a thing forever.

Grace: This job, doing this social media, has changed my life, but even more than the success of the account or the views or the positive accolades from my bosses, I love coming to work every day and making my co-workers smile. I love making them laugh, and I love entertaining them. These Honors College theses projects are meant to make change in this world. I am not someone who wakes up every morning thinking I'm going to change the world, but if I can make one person smile a day, I count that as a win.

Literature Review

The articles I researched not only gave me insight into how to run a social media account but also how to maintain it and use it as a tool for both external and internal communication. Social media is now being used as a business marketing tool to promote, increase awareness, and boost a company's reputation, product, business, etc. (H. Annabi, S. T. McGann, S. Pels, P. Arnold, C. Rivinus, 2012). The articles I found outline the benefits of social media such as its accessibility, virality, and cheap approach to marketing, its drawbacks such as its limited demographics, stigmas surrounding social media, and its lack of impact compared to traditional marketing. Many case studies and articles emphasize increased internal communication and it's important for the success of social media for their business. Communicating is a way of survival and there's no tougher place to survive than within a large company. Internal communication is a type of communication method used within businesses to provide consistent communication dispersed through a company that builds trust, and understanding, and keeps a company informed and connected. Internal communications have also been linked to overall productivity and performance. Internal communication also allows employees to have a voice within the company and feel they have more autonomy even among the masses (Whitworth B, 2011) Other articles explore the potential of online communities and the importance of two-way public relations communications for businesses to cultivate personal relationships. Research demonstrates how massive companies such as Walmart and Coca-Cola have harnessed social media as a marketing tool to create online communities by evaluating which platforms they want to invest in, connecting with different publics through the relevant, entertaining content, and also maintaining two-way communication to learn from their consumers.

The main takeaway from the article is for companies to benefit from social media they need to focus both on the content being produced and appealing to different audiences to create relationships with audiences (Culnan, Mary & McHugh, Patrick & Zubillaga, Jesus, 2010).

Interpersonal Takeaways

This has been the most challenging project I have ever had the pleasure of creating. As a type A person, I am hard-wired to plan out every step of every aspect of a project before undertaking it. For the last 16 years, we've been taught to think of a thesis statement, compile evidence that supports our claim, and derive an overall conclusion based on what we researched. This documentary has challenged my entire method of approaching/constructing a project. In order to create my thesis, I had to use the approach of a journalist. I had to document everything first before deriving any conclusion and let my thesis statement reveal itself through the creative process, which is something I've never done before. This thesis forced me to trust my coworkers, my documentation abilities, and most importantly, myself and my ability to pull this off. This has been my favorite job I've ever had, and I am forever grateful to the amazing co-workers who have shaped my time at the University of Oregon.

Significance:

It is no secret that student workers at the University of Oregon aren't treated with the utmost respect. As I defend this thesis the UO Student Union is pushing for all student workers to go on strike in order to gain more rights and feel more valued as both students and employees of the university. This documentary is important because it highlights and restores the humanity of the student workers at the UO Coffee Outlets, emphasizes the importance of social media and internal communications, and hopefully reminds people that we're more than just the person who gets your coffee. The UO Coffee Outlets Instagram has become a tool to grow our digital audience, bring awareness to our positive work culture, put a spotlight on the student workers who run the business, and create a community within the UO Coffee Outlets to make us feel better connected with one another as student workers, a team, and as friends.

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