

Ninkasi Social Media Audit



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Purpose

Ninkasi Brewery is a local company that started in Eugene, Oregon, in 2006. Ninkasi started by brewing its first batch of Total Domination IPA and has since grown to include 29 types of beer. The Ninkasi Brewery now features a 50 barrel brewing system and distributes beer throughout Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Alaska, and San Francisco. The brewery competes with other local Oregon breweries such as Rogue Ales and Deschutes Brewery. Rogue Ales and Ninkasi are similar in size and scope; however, Deschutes Brewery is much larger. Deschutes sells beer throughout the West Coast and Midwest.

Ninkasi has branded itself as a local Eugene company that targets young adults. To effectively reach this audience, it has invested resources into six digital media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, YouTube, and its official Ninkasi website.

As a company that has plans for expansion, Ninkasi's strategy is to engage a wider range of young adults across the West Coast while still maintaining its Eugene image.

As young adults constantly engage in social media, a social media audit and conversation analysis will provide valuable information for Ninkasi. This research will allow Ninkasi to recognize its strengths and weaknesses in regard to social media and online interaction. In addition, this will help Ninkasi tailor its future social media use to build more relationships and awareness about its brand.

Method

The channels analyzed for this audit include the following:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Flickr
- YouTube
- Ninkasi website

While researching these channels, we used Ice Rocket, Webstagram, Social Mention and Alexa to analyze Ninkasi's online interaction. The following key terms allowed us to find information on the brewery: "Ninkasi Brewing Company," "Ninkasi beer," "Ninkasi Eugene," "Ninkasi Tasting Room" and "Ninkasi Brewery."

Throughout the research process, we observed that Ninkasi does not regularly update any of its social media channels with the exception of Facebook and Twitter. For the YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, and the Ninkasi website, we analyzed all available content since each account's creation. For the Facebook and Twitter accounts, we observed data created between September 2012 to November 2012.

Results

Ninkasi Brewery's logo, identity and voice remain consistent among its channels. Across all platforms, Ninkasi's enthusiasm for its location as a Eugene brewery and its passion for beer remain consistent. The most recent topics that take precedence on Ninkasi's social media include

its variety of flavors, artistic bottles and expansion of the brewery.

Facebook

Ninkasi Brewery is active on Facebook. It consistently posts on Facebook two to three times per day. These posts include a variety of pictures, statuses and questions for followers. There are contests included with prizes for participants. Ninkasi has 33,685 likes, which is impressive for such a small brewery. Its competitors, Deschutes Brewery and Rogue Ales Brewery, have 28,536 and 38,267 likes respectively.

While posting content, Ninkasi maintains a strong human voice. Although there is definitely marketing involved on the Facebook page with different products and merchandise, Ninkasi has a nice balance of displaying a personal feel, as well. It posts pictures of employees, updates followers on what is going on in the brewery, and updates followers of fun events and ideas by Ninkasi. The tone of the posts is casual, making it easy for followers to read. It is apparent that Ninkasi wants to befriend followers - not just sell to them.

Ninkasi's interaction on Facebook is about one response to every update. Ninkasi comments at least once on every post made to its Facebook page. If Ninkasi fans posts something on the page, Ninkasi likes the post and comments on it. Users often post pictures of their friends or family drinking Ninkasi beer, and Ninkasi consistently comments on these pictures, thanking the fan for their support.

Pictures that Ninkasi post receive the most interaction on Facebook. Some pictures have more than 400 likes. Instagram pictures are the most popular and tend to be the most creative. Ninkasi pictures that coincide with current holidays tend to be the most popular. For example, Ninkasi held a popular photo contest during the Halloween season to engage followers.

Status updates with text receive the least amount of interaction. Luckily, Ninkasi rarely posts these updates, as most of its posts include pictures or videos. Some status updates with only text have as little as two and four likes with no comments. This is an area that Ninkasi should continue to improve.

Aside from the differences in the number of likes the breweries have, Ninkasi posts similar content as its competitors. Rogue Ales and Deschutes Brewery all post pictures of food that matches well with each beer, promotional fliers about craft beer, creative pictures of beer bottles with an intriguing background, and merchandise from the brewery. Fans post similar content on the competitors' pages, as well. Fans are usually posting pictures of friends and family drinking the beer.

Twitter

Ninkasi Brewery uses Twitter as another platform of social media to help the brand. Its handle, @NinkasiBrewing, has 13,024 followers. Compared to its competitors, this is a weak following. Rogue Ales Brewery has 31,895 followers, and Deschutes Brewery has 35,291 followers. Ninkasi tweets about seven to eight times per day. There is a link to the Facebook page on almost every tweet.

Ninkasi keeps its human voice alive on Twitter. Its tweets are relevant to what is happening around the world. For example, Ninkasi tweeted about Election Day and Oregon football.

Ninkasi's interaction on Twitter could be improved. It responds to a follower's tweet about once a day. The interaction is usually answering a direct question. There could be more regular interaction without relying on users' questions. Questions and photo contests receive the most interaction, while status updates do not receive much interaction. In the three-month time frame observed, Ninkasi tweeted to many organizations, businesses and people. For example, Ninkasi has sent tweets to Eugene Weekly and Portland Beer. This shows that Ninkasi is active in the Eugene community and cultivates relationships with local businesses. To improve interaction, Ninkasi also clarifies what cities it tweets to. For example, Ninkasi will put the city it is directing the tweet to in brackets at the beginning of tweets.

Ninkasi does not compare well to its two competitors. Rogue Ales and Deschutes Brewery both dedicate more time interacting with their followers. Rogue Ales and Deschutes dedicate days on Twitter to responding to followers. Another area that sets Ninkasi aside is the visual appeal of its competitors' profiles. Deschutes and Rogue Ales both have appealing photographs as their backgrounds that relate to their brands. Ninkasi's background has no picture and is a simple pattern. Ninkasi can create more followers by interacting more and finding visually appealing backgrounds to use. Finally, the content from Deschutes and Rogue Ales are not directly linked to their respective Facebook accounts.

Flickr

Ninkasi created a Flickr account in 2007. Since its creation five years ago, Ninkasi has added minimal content to this account. There are a total of 23 pictures and one photo album. There is little evidence of interaction between the brewery and its supporters, as observed by the lack of conversation and testimonials on the account. Although Ninkasi Brewery has not engaged its customers using this social media platform, two of its competitors have effectively used Flickr to interact with their target audience. Deschutes Brewery created a Flickr account in 2008 and has since uploaded 1,423 pictures on 79 pages. These pictures show individual images of different types of Deschutes Brewery beer, the Deschutes landscape and supporters drinking Deschutes Brewery beer. The account has 42 albums and lets its customers post images to its Flickr account, which allows supporters to feel a closer tie to the organization. Another Ninkasi competitor that effectively uses Flickr is Rogue Ales. Rogue Ales created a Flickr account in 2007 and has uploaded 173 sets to its account. The content of these images includes Rogue Ales beer in a variety of settings all over the West Coast. Rogue Ales is an example of a brewery that has fostered interaction with its supporters using Flickr. Its account has joined 35 groups and added 245 contacts.

Instagram

Ninkasi is also active on Instagram with 71 photos and 867 followers. All of these pictures have the Ninkasi logo present. For example, there are pictures of the Ninkasi logo carved on a pumpkin and painted on a car. The brewery updates this social media platform on a regular basis, but there is little interaction with its followers. Most of the photos have little to no comments with the most being 13 comments on an individual photo. Its competitors have used this relatively new social media platform to create communication with its supporters. Deschutes

Brewery has uploaded 146 pictures, and the majority of these images have comments from its 2,533 followers. This brewery's Instagram account has more variety in its images by showing pictures of its beer, supporters and the Deschutes region. The best example of an Oregon brewery effectively using Instagram is Rogue Ales. This brewery has 5,513 followers and has uploaded 98 photos. Its individual pictures average 220 likes and at most have 28 comments per image. These comments on Instagram are crucial to Rogue Ales in developing a conversation with its supporters and utilizing this platform.

YouTube

Ninkasi created a YouTube channel on March 31, 2011, and posted its most recent video on Sept. 20, 2012. Ninkasi has posted 11 videos total throughout the existence of its channel. However, eight of these videos were posted over a year ago. Another video was posted six months ago, and the most recent video was posted one month ago. Ninkasi has clearly not been updating this channel frequently.

Although Ninkasi does not regularly update the channel, the content remains relevant to the company's image. Each video post includes a tasting of a Ninkasi beer in a different, relevant setting to the type of beer. The videos have a wide range of views:

- One video has 61 views.
- Four of the videos have 400-600 views.
- Five of the videos have 700-900 views.
- One video has 1,100 views.

Ninkasi has 34 subscribers to its channel and 7,839 total video views. Compared to its competitors, Ninkasi's YouTube channel has very poor results. Deschutes' channel has 153 subscribers and 133,655 video views, while Rogue Ales' channel has 502 subscribers and 195,415 video views. Both competitors update the channel at least monthly and sometimes more than twice per month.

Ninkasi website

The Ninkasi Brewing Company website provides the viewer with an inside account of what Ninkasi is all about. After browsing through the website, I concluded that Ninkasi updates the page often as the information remains relevant. In addition, under the FAQ section, Ninkasi says "We are ALWAYS working on this page – and check back soon for a more developed help page!"

The personality and voice of Ninkasi comes through in its website. The color choices, the font, the layout, and the words all reflect the Ninkasi brand. Ninkasi's written content takes on a human voice and has a conversational tone. The website pages include "Beers," "Company," "Brewery," "Merch," and "Contact." Ninkasi provides several links throughout the website, and each different page on the website has a relevant symbol that the viewer clicks on to reach the page. For example, the "Merch" page link is a clip art symbol of a Ninkasi t-shirt.

The website engages the viewer with interactive content such as video posts, colorful comment sections, symbols that link to social media, and appealing Ninkasi pictures of the brewery and its beers. The home page of the website includes a slideshow of pictures with links to view specific

articles or pages on the website. However, the amount of interaction on the Ninkasi website cannot be quantified because the comments are sent in through email and are not visible on the website.

Overall, the Ninkasi website illustrates what people love about the Ninkasi brand. Ninkasi is a bright, colorful, fun, and creative company, and this image remains consistent through the website.

In comparison to its competitors, Rogue Ales and Deschutes Brewery, Ninkasi has room for improvement. Browsing through the Rogue Ales and Deschutes websites brought to light several issues with the Ninkasi website. The websites of both competitors clearly reflect the company's brand through the design and voice of the written content. Ninkasi does this equally well. However, the competitor websites have more clean and simple layouts. Ninkasi's website felt busy and crowded with content after comparing with the other two. In addition, Ninkasi's links to other social media don't work, and the links are present more than once on the page, which is unnecessary and confusing.

Conversation Analysis

Twitter

Using Ice Rocket, we found that Ninkasi was mentioned 130 times over a seven-day period with an average of 15.7 mentions per day. After manually reading through the tweets, the user sentiment was primarily positive. Other tweets were neutral and typically asked a specific question. We saw no negative tweets. A portion of its tweets contained content related to the Eugene area (e.g., University of Oregon football game, meeting at Lane Community college). Several tweets were tweeted by accounts that have 5,000 followers or more, such as Upright Brewery and Taplister.

Ninkasi's competitors have significantly more mentions at a more frequent rate. Deschutes was mentioned 508 times over a four-day period with an average of 3.1 mentions per minute. Rogue Ales was mentioned 179 times over a one-day period with an average of 11.3 mentions per hour. After reading through both reports, the majority of tweets we viewed were positive or neutral.

Website

Ninkasibrewing.com is ranked 1,507,182 globally, according to the three-month Alexa traffic rankings. In the U.S., the Ninkasi traffic rank is 399,722 and 62 percent of visitors to the site come from the U.S. Visitors to the Ninkasi website spend about 40 seconds on each pageview and a total of two minutes on the site during each visit.

In comparison, Deschutes has a rank of 491,089 globally and 75,613 in the U.S. Rogue Ales has a rank of 324,875 globally and 95,983 in the U.S.

YouTube

After doing a search on Social Mention, we gathered that several YouTube channels were discussing Ninkasi. Many of them were personal accounts that had posted videos giving a review of a Ninkasi brew. Overall, the sentiment was positive in discussing Ninkasi, with a 10-1 ratio (positive to negative). Out of 78 mentions, 50 were on YouTube. The following channels posted

about Ninkasi: Davidrcoulter, 3DMinded, BeerTapTV, HopCast, CraftBeer, TheRealBeerHeads. Several of these videos featured Ninkasi beers. It would be beneficial for Ninkasi to continue building relationships with them.

Instagram

After researching Webstagram, we discovered that there was a positive sentiment toward Ninkasi on Instagram. Many Instagram users have posted photos relating to and tagging Ninkasi. On Instagram, 2,208 photos were posted with the hashtag #ninkasi, 122 photos were posted with the hashtag #ninkasibrewing, 65 photos were posted with the hashtag #ninkasibrewingcompany, and 31 photos were posted with the hashtag #ninkasibrewery.

Ninkasi's competitors are also using Instagram as a platform of social media. Deschutes Brewery used the hashtag #deschutesbrewery, the account received 1,329 photographs. Rogue Ales received 1,507 photographs with the hashtag #rogueales.

Facebook and Flickr

Outside of Ninkasi's own accounts, we were unable to find other Facebook or Flickr pages discussing the company through any of the research tools.

Discussion

For the size of this local brewery, Ninkasi Brewing Company is performing well on its social media platforms. Overall, there is positive sentiment among all social media sites. Ninkasi has multiple ties of communication to interact with its followers through a variety of media platforms. It is important that Ninkasi foster these different channels of communication by increasing the frequency of posts. There is little evidence that Ninkasi engages stakeholders on a regular basis, which is crucial for an organization trying to connect with a young audience.

The strengths of Ninkasi's online presence include its consistency in voice and image throughout all media channels. In addition, Ninkasi updates its Facebook regularly with engaging content that promotes interaction with its followers.

Recommendations to improve Ninkasi's social media include posting and updating its social media platforms more often. Ninkasi focuses on Facebook as its main form of social media, but it is still important to post on the other sites often. The company's Twitter background needs to be improved and updated, as well. An intriguing picture would work well, as it does for its competitors. It would be beneficial for Ninkasi to start a blog. There is plenty of information for beer companies to use on a blog, such as customers' experiences with the beer, the story behind the making of each beer, and stories about events held by the brewery. Ninkasi needs to delete its MySpace account and take the link to it off of the website. MySpace is no longer a relevant social media platform, and Ninkasi should focus on improving its more important platforms. In general, Ninkasi would also benefit from hosting more competitions on Instagram and Facebook, tweeting at individual accounts to improve interaction, and posting on other popular brewery sites to increase site traffic.

We also recommend that one person manage all of the social media for Ninkasi Brewery. Deschutes Brewery has one employee that updates all of its social media channels. This person

creates posts and responds to all posts from followers. The creation of this position will allow one person to establish relationships with individuals and communicate with them effectively. Consistent interaction between a Ninkasi representative and specific audience members will make the public feel closer to the brewery. It is easier for one person to manage all digital media accounts, rather than multiple employees contributing posts. Deschutes Brewery's social media is very active and should serve as an example for Ninkasi to follow. Ninkasi would benefit from hiring an employee to solely manage its social media.