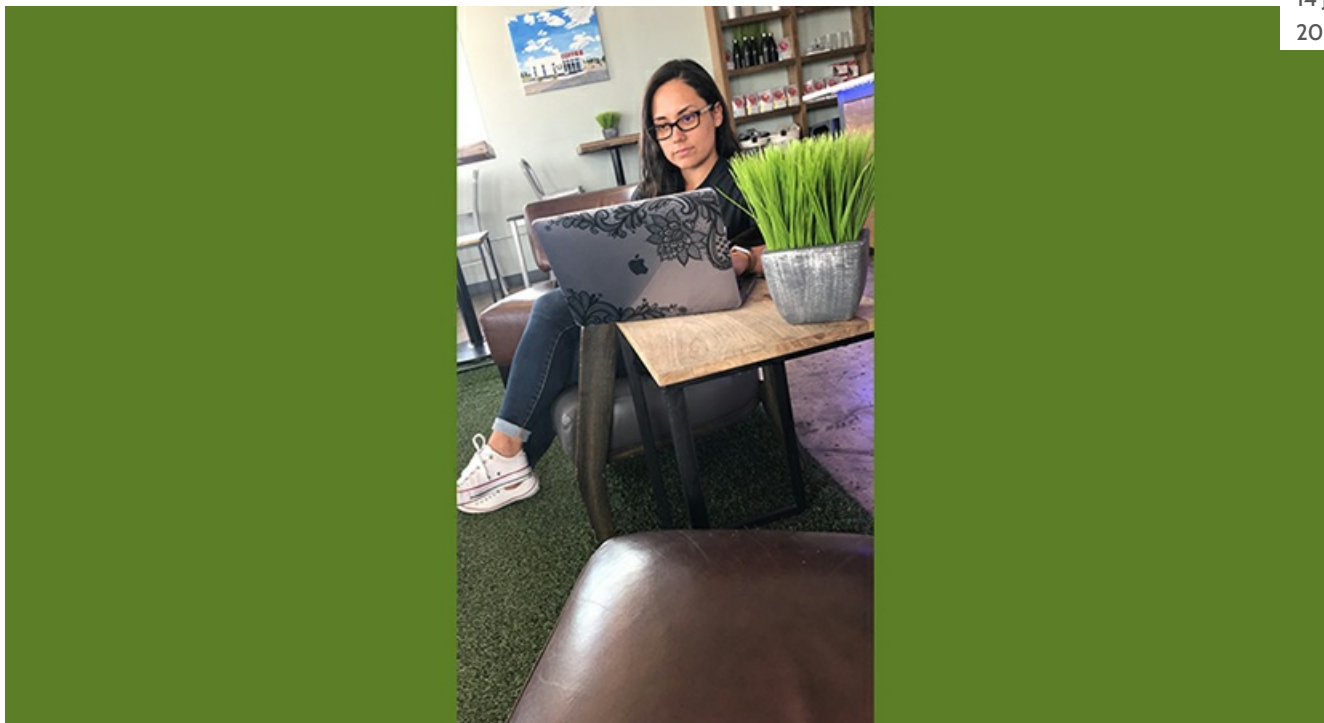




# News

14 June,  
2018



## SWOSU Social Media Analyst Program Benefits Businesses and Students

Photo Caption: Southwestern Oklahoma State University student Alexandra Young of Mangum conducted a social media analysis for her clients at White Buffalo Coffee Bar. Young was part of a SWOSU Consumer Behavior course that encourages students to apply classroom marketing theories and concepts in providing social media content recommendations for a real-world client.

Students in a Consumer Behavior course at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford recently participated in a program where they had the opportunity to serve as social media analysts for a wide variety of private businesses and public organizations.

The clients for the program included U.S. based companies in Oklahoma, Florida and Pennsylvania as well as international clients in Japan, Sweden and England.

Students were encouraged to seek out clients who are leaders in their future career fields. The social media analyst program was meant to provide both a networking experience and an opportunity to add hands-on marketing experience to students' resumes.

The industries represented included gas and oil, hotel and restaurant management, beauty and fashion, production agriculture as well as sports and fitness companies. The public organizations included nonprofits and government agencies.

"In the marketing classes at SWOSU, we offer students the opportunity to excel in real-world projects which are designed to give them a distinct advantage upon graduation," said Everett Dobson School of Business Marketing Endowed Chair Dr. Amanda Evert. "Our expectation is that our graduates have both the book knowledge and the hands-on experience to be competitive in their future industries."

DeShawna Smyth of Elk City was one of the students working on an international project. Smyth plans to live abroad after graduating from SWOSU. Her project enabled her to gain additional international experiences.

"I recently developed marketing strategies within the social media platform which resulted in added profits as well as exposure to The Rising Sun Public House," Smyth said. "I was able to deliver proven results based on my knowledge and ability to market the company online."

According to Ashley VanDeburgh of Weatherford, her class assignment had a real-world impact for her client.

"I have worked with the City of Weatherford to improve their Facebook page," VanDeburgh said. "This helped them obtain several more followers and improve their communication and transparency with their followers. I was able to show them how simply doing weekly posts can greatly improve getting information out quickly to everyone and keeps everyone informed on things that are important to them."

Students signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with clients, which gave the students access to the companies' social media accounts. Next, the students looked for trends in the available data and related their findings to the theories and concepts they learned in the Consumer Behavior course.

After completing the MOU with her client, Alexandra Young of Mangum was able to develop impressive outcomes for her clients' business. According to Young, she strengthened her social media analytic skills by developing a consistent and efficient posting schedule for the White Buffalo Coffee Bar. By ensuring the Facebook posts are about consistency, innovation of product, community engagement, and the overall feedback showed that White Buffalo Coffee Bar valued their customers.

"I've learned the times that are most efficient for posting and what posts bring the most sales volumes and traffic to the page," Young said. "I was able to increase followers by 10% and sales on Mondays and Tuesdays by 18-20%."

At the end of the project, students provided their clients with an analysis of the data as well as recommendations for future social media use based on the findings of their research.

Organizational Leadership major Cody McCaskill of Norman was able to help his client improve their workforce hiring process. In January of 2018, he started a project to make Keane Group more visible on social media with the goal of attracting future employees and customers alike.

"Using my strong social media analytics skills, the Facebook page grew rapidly, and almost immediately the company started to see an increase in attendance at hiring events and product showcase in the Permian area," McCaskill said.

Future marketing classes at SWOSU will include similar teaching/learning innovations, which pair students with business leaders in working on solving business problems and identifying new opportunities.

"With our emphasis on hands-on, real-world learning, we are developing a cohort of graduates who will have the skills, experience and confidence to have a powerful impact on local, regional, state-wide and international businesses," Evert said. "Our students will leave SWOSU with impressive marketing resumes and the ability to hit the ground running."

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