Lessons Learned from the CDC Learning Connection Website Relaunch Campaign

Rebecca Bruening1, Molly Kellum2, Latasha Bankston2, and Gabrielle Benenson2

1ASPPH/CDC Fellow, 2Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Scientific Education and Professional Development

Introduction

The CDC Learning Connection (CDC LC), launched in 2010, connects health professionals to training opportunities developed by CDC, CDC partners, and other federal agencies. CDC LC shares timely education and training information via website features, social media and an e-newsletter.

In the Spring of 2016, all CDC websites transitioned to a new Web Content Management System (WCMS), the perfect opportunity for a comprehensive CDC LC relaunch campaign in April 2016.

The goal of the relaunch campaign was to boost website visits and e-newsletter (GovDelivery) subscribers. It included: 22 social media messages on CDC channels (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest) with a new hashtag.

Outreach to 20 internal and 21 external partners E-newsletter communication with subscribers Print material distribution at public health events

Methods

Evaluation questions and methods:

1. How effective was the campaign at increasing website visits and e-newsletter subscribers?• Compared overall CDC LC homepage visits pre- vs. post-campaign (April-June 2015 vs. April-June 2016) using Episheet (Rothman). Source: Omniture Site Catalyst (Adobe)
• Compared number of e-newsletter subscribers pre and post campaign. Source: GovDelivery

2. Which campaign elements were most effective?• Compared CDC LC homepage visits by unique campaign keys. * Source: Omniture Site Catalyst (Adobe)
• Compared CDC LC homepage visits by entry domains. Source: Omniture Site Catalyst (Adobe)

3. It is important to know your audience and be deliberate about promotion purpose and audience.

4. Facebook, GovDelivery, CDC e-blasts, Twitter, and partner outreach were most effective.

5. Most CDC LC homepage visitors got to the site directly by typing or bookmarking the URL.

Results: Website Visits Increased

Comparison of CDC LC homepage visits, April-June 2015 and April-June 2016

Results: Some Campaign Elements Worked Better than Others

Comparison of CDC LC homepage visits by entry domains, April 2016

Conclusion

1. Increase in homepage visits during the relaunch campaign was statistically significant.

2. E-newsletter subscriptions showed an upward trend during the campaign period.

3. Campaign analytics indicate that campaign gains in website visits and e-newsletter subscriptions were not sustained, although engagement with CDC LC typically declines over the summer months.

4. Facebook, GovDelivery, CDC e-blasts, Twitter, and partner outreach were most effective.

5. Most CDC LC homepage visitors got to the site directly by typing or bookmarking the page, via Facebook, or from Google

Recommendations and Lessons Learned

1. Website visits for public health training and education are cyclical and context-dependent. They vary by season and by emergent topic. It is important to pay attention to these patterns when evaluating a campaign in a single point in time.

2. Campaign keys are important for tying promotional messages to website clicks. They provide enduring data tracking to determine most effective promotional channels.

3. It is important to know your audience and be deliberate about promotion purpose. Content analysis of social media posts revealed that most successful messages on LinkedIn are those more technical in nature while most successful posts on Facebook and Twitter are more for the lay person. Although the CDC LC typical declines over the summer months.

4. Graph-centric social media channels, such as Pinterest and Instagram, were not effective for this purpose.

5. Owned social media channels may provide more options for audience analysis.

6. Google remains the first port of call for many people in need information. Explore ways to ensure search engine optimization (SEO) so that your content displays at the top of the search.

7. The most common route to our homepage was from typing or bookmarking the URL, which may be partially due to learners typing in the URL from our print materials. It is important, therefore, to ensure that the URL is easy to type and remember, and relates to the content of the site.