

FOREIGN TRADE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF BUSINESS ENGLISH



MID TERM INTERNSHIP REPORT

Major: Business English

**FOREIGN TRADE UNIVERSITY'S USE OF SOCIAL
MEDIA IN COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES:
PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FTU: Foreign Trade University

KPI: Key performance indicators

INTRODUCTION

1. Reasons for choosing topic

Social media has been developing more than ever thanks to the development of information technology nowadays. Social media can enhance branding and connection with others. The whole world in general and Vietnam, in particular, are increasingly accessing social media and having a need to access the Internet every day. According to Digital 2022 Vietnam, there were 76.95 million Vietnamese social network users in January 2022, and the number of social network users in Vietnam at the beginning of 2022 is equivalent to 78.1 percent of the total population (Simon Kemp, 2022). Especially during the time of the raging epidemic, people need to use social networks in order to communicate with each other. Among many websites and social media platforms, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok are the most used.

Recent research has shown that the role of social media in communication activities is very crucial, so organizations, companies or schools need to pay more attention to the performance of social media in communication activities. With the rise of the internet and social media platforms, developing activities on social media platforms mentioned above will create success in communications for schools in Vietnam because communication activities are increasingly being focused on in universities. They are used effectively to connect, communicate with students, and brand the school's image.

Being one of the leading universities in Vietnam, Foreign Trade University has focused on many different activities on social media, and opened accounts on different social media. The current social media activities have contributed a lot to the school's communications. However, some limitations of social media performance still exist at the moment, which reduces the effectiveness of the school's communication activities.

For the above reasons, I decided to write a report on the topic: ***“Foreign Trade University’s use of social media in communication activities: Problems and Solutions”***.

2. Purpose of report

I expect to reach two purposes by completing this report. First, the communication activities through social media performance will be thoroughly analyzed with strengths and weaknesses being pointed out. Second, based on the evaluation, some solutions will be proposed to improve communication activities through social media platforms at Foreign Trade University in the future.

3. Scope of the report

This report is carried out at Foreign Trade University, branch Hanoi, and mainly within the Department of Communication and External Relations. This is the place where I performed as an intern and gained a thorough insight into its activities. The Department of Communication and External Relations is the main department in charge of the school's social media platforms.

4. Report structure

Except for the table of contents, acknowledgments, list of tables and figures, introduction, conclusion, and references, this report covers three chapters:

- ❖ **Chapter I:** An overview of Foreign Trade University and the Department of Communication and External Relations
- ❖ **Chapter II:** Current situation of social media platforms in communication activities at foreign trade university
- ❖ **Chapter III:** Recommendations

Chapter I gives an overview of Foreign Trade University with its formation, and organizational structure. Besides the information function and missions of the Department of Communication and External relations are also mentioned in this chapter. Chapter II revises an analysis of the current situation of social media platforms in communication activities at Foreign Trade University and an assessment of its strengths and weaknesses. Chapter III gives recommendations that I conclude by analyzing the current situation of the school.

CHAPTER 1: AN OVERVIEW OF FOREIGN TRADE UNIVERSITY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

1.1. About Foreign Trade University

1.1.1. General introduction of Foreign Trade University

Foreign Trade Institution (FTU) is a public university in Hanoi, Vietnam, which is founded in 1960. Besides its headquarter at 91 Chua Lang Street, Dong Da District, Ha Noi City, there are other campuses in Ho Chi Minh City and Quang Ninh. In Ho Chi Minh City, FTU campus is at 15 - D5 street, ward 25, Binh Thanh District, Ho Chi Minh City. In Quang Ninh, FTU campus is at 260 Bach Dang, Nam Khe Town, Uong Bi City, Quang Ninh Province. FTU is regarded as one of the most prominent institutions in Vietnam. The university has made significant contributions to the Vietnamese economy by producing bright graduates. FTU has majors and specialties in economics, business administration, finance and banking, business, and foreign languages. It provides undergraduate and graduates programs to both domestic and international students. These programs are offered in Vietnamese, English, French, and Japanese.

1.1.2. History

Foreign Trade University has undergone many changes over different periods. The history of the establishment and development of Foreign Trade University can be segmented into four major periods as follows.

From 1960 to 1962, the Faculty of Foreign Trade was officially formed in 1960. The enrollment in the Department of International Relations for the first class from 1960 to 1966 and the third class from 1962 to 1967. In accordance with a decree issued by Prime Minister Pham Van Dong separating the Faculty of International Relations from the University of Economics and Finance, the University of Diplomacy and Foreign Trade was formed under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on June 20, 1962.

From 1962 to 1967, the current locations of Foreign Trade University and Institute of Foreign Affairs were once the campus of the University of Foreign Affairs - Foreign Trade. Undergraduates of the Ministries of Foreign Trade and Foreign Affairs were educated at the University. The Faculty of Foreign Trade and the Faculty of Foreign Affairs are the university's two faculties. The site of the institution was relocated to the province of Thai Nguyen during the war.

In the period from 1967 to 1984, The Foreign Trade University (FTU), which was under the Ministry of Foreign Trade, and the University of Foreign Affairs, which was under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were divided by a decree signed by Prime Minister Pham Van Dong on August 14, 1967. The FTU campus was relocated to Ha Tay province at the same time. More faculties were opened at FTU, including the Faculty of Foreign Languages, the Faculty of Foreign Trade Practices, the Department of Politics, and the Faculty of Executive Training. The FTU campus was relocated back to Hanoi once more by the end of 1967.

From 1984 to 1999, training activities were increased and training quality was enhanced. The Foreign Trade University (FTU) was moved to the Ministry of Education and Training in 1984 from the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Board of Governors, Communist Party Committee, Faculties, Departments, Labor Union, Youth Union, and other FTU organizations were being reinforced and reformed. The establishment of the Ho Chi Minh City campus in 1993 assisted in the growth of FTU.

Lastly, from 1999 until the present, there has been constant improvement and global integration.

1.1.3. Mission, vision, and core values

Mission: The general mission of Foreign Trade University is to serve society with excellence in education, knowledge creation and transfer. Foreign Trade University provides higher education in international trade economics with the goal of providing human resources for the economic sector in general and foreign trade economic activities in particular, giving information to community members for their individual business goals, and developing a team of lecturers and academic researchers to contribute to national education, academic research, and economic growth.

Vision: In the long run, Foreign Trade University plans to become one of the leading universities and be ranked among the top universities in Asia.

Core Values: Foreign Trade University has three core values that represent the image and value of the school, which are: “Innovation and Excellence; Accountability and Resilience; and Diversity and Inclusion”.

1.1.4. Degrees and Training Programmes

Foreign Trade University has many programmes related to economics, business language, etc. Below are programmes of Foreign Trade University:

- ◆ Full-time Undergraduate Programme (B.A. Degree): 4.5 years, specialized in Foreign Trade Economics, Business Administration, and Business English.
- ◆ Master's Degree Programme (M.A. Degree): 3 years, specialized in World Economy and International Economic Relations.
- ◆ Doctoral Degree Programme (Ph.D. Degree): 5 years, specialized in World Economy and International Economic Relations.
- ◆ Part-time In-service Programme (B.A. Degree): 5 years, specialized in Foreign Trade Economics.
- ◆ Part-time In-service Second Degree Programmes for non-foreign trade graduates: 2.5 years, specialized in Foreign Trade Economics.
- ◆ Part-time In-service Second Degree Programmes for foreign trade graduates and non-foreign trade graduates: 2.5 years, specialized in Business English.
- ◆ In-service Training Courses on Foreign Trade Economics in different cities/provinces throughout Vietnam.

1.1.5. Business performance

Being one of the top universities in Vietnam, Foreign Trade University fully meets the quality of teaching at the school. The school has achieved the goals of student learning outcomes and achieved a low unemployment rate for new graduates.

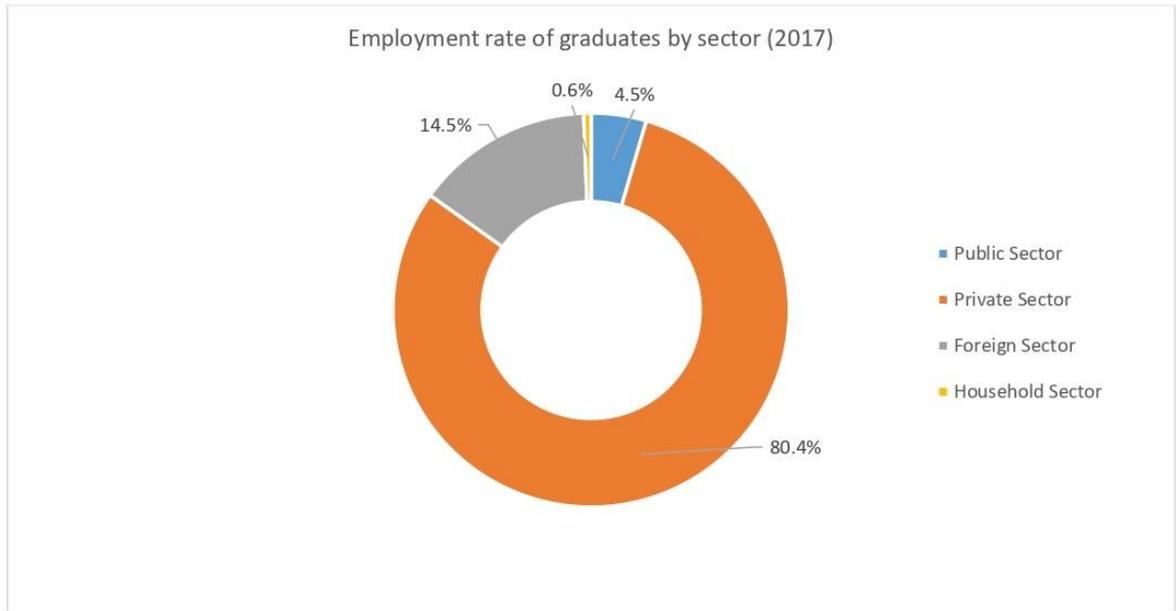


Figure 1.1. The employment rate of graduates by sector (2017)

(Source: FTU Introduction & History, 2017)

The chart above shows the number of points required for entry to Foreign Trade University as well as information about the level of employment of students after graduation in 2017. After graduating within a year, 99.9% of students find employment. The unemployment rate is considered to be extremely low compared to other universities in Vietnam.

1.1.6. Organizational structure

The organizational structure of Foreign Trade University is divided systematically and clearly, which includes three main parts: Board of Research & Training, Board of Governors, and Labor/Youth unions.

Below is a diagram of the organizational structure of Foreign Trade University:

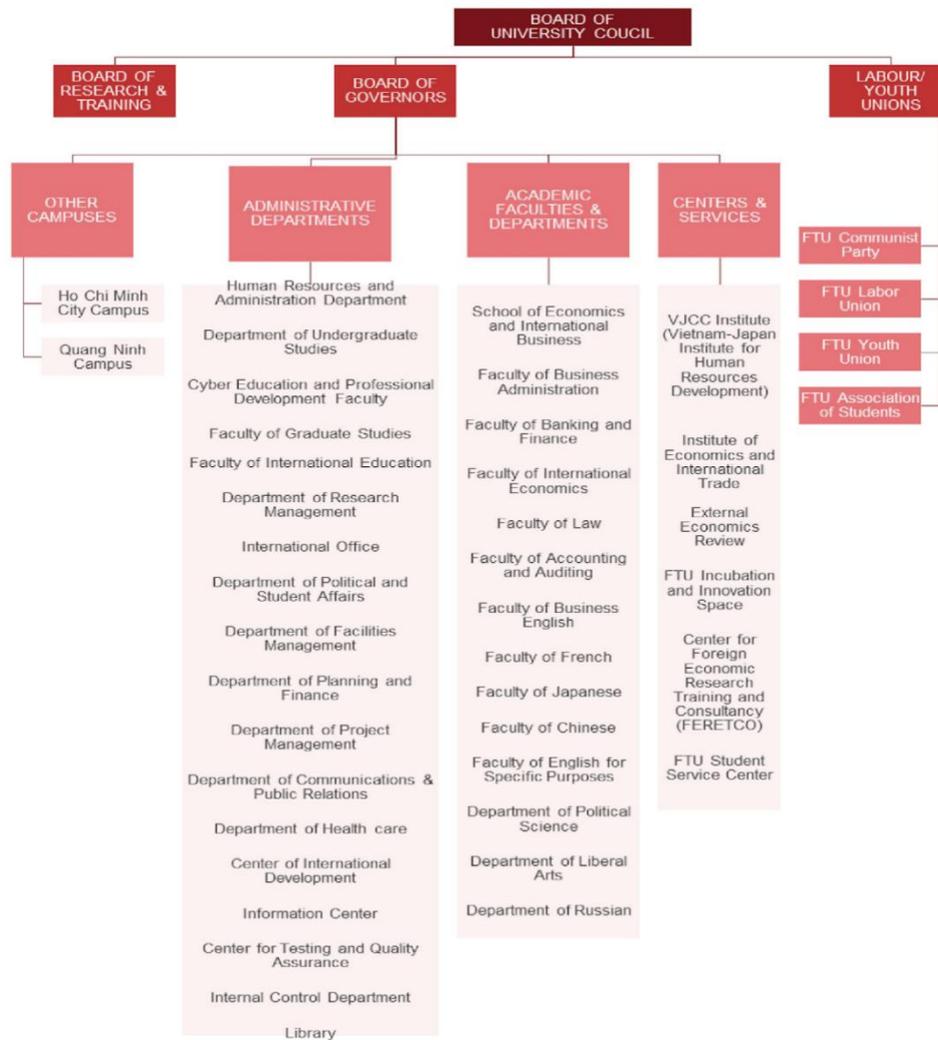


Figure 1.2. Organizational structure of Foreign Trade University

(Source: FTU Organizational Structure, 2017)

1.2. Department of Communication and External Relations

1.2.1. General introduction of the Department of Communication and External Relations

The Department of Communication and External Relations was established on October 1, 2009, according to Decision No. 842/QĐ-ĐHNT-TCHC dated September 30, 2009 by the Rector of Foreign Trade University. The unit leaders of the department are the Head of Department: MSc. Nguyen Huyen Minh and the Deputy Head of Department: Dr. Bui Duy Linh.

1.2.2. Function and Mission

The Department of Communication and External Relations has the function of advising and assisting the Rector in the management and organization of communication work, cooperative relations with organizations and businesses, and career and gender orientation. introduce jobs, connect alumni and attract funding for the University.

The Department of Communication and External Relations has the following tasks:

First, Develop and submit to the Rector for promulgation regulations on communication, cooperation with organizations and businesses, orientation, and job introduction; connect alumni and attract funding for the University and guide and organize the implementation of those regulations throughout the school;

Second, the Department of Communication and External Relations need to develop strategies, programs, communication plans for implementing propaganda activities, promoting the image of the University in association with building the identity and brand, in order to enhance the brand value of the University; organize internal communication programs and activities in the University; develop content, design, print, and complete promotional materials for the University and its units; create and manage the University's accounts with the name of Foreign Trade University on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube); etc

Third, the Department of Communication and External Relations is the focal point for monitoring and developing cooperative relationships with organizations and businesses, career orientation, and job introduction:

Fourth, connecting alumni, and attracting funding is also an important mission of the Department.

The Fifth mission is directing, providing professional guidance, inspecting and controlling the implementation of communication, external relations, career orientation, and job introduction, and attracting funding for the University at the campuses.

Lastly, the Department's mission is performing other tasks as assigned by the Principal.

1.3. My internship activities:

I have experienced working in a real working environment, so first and foremost, I learned valuable skills and rules when working at the media and foreign relations office of Foreign Trade University. During my working time, I have three main tasks as follows.

The first task is to prepare a short article to post on the main website of school. A qualified article needs to fulfill these requirements, including the right information, the right format, and the right deadlines. To be able to complete the work of creating articles, I had to learn how to present and write content as well as how to use Office like Microsoft Word. If it is a summary article because of the content of a talk, you need to fully record the important information mentioned in the talk and be able to record it to listen again. In order to complete on time, I have learned to control my schedule to balance work at the office, study at FTU as well as do my daily life activities.

My second task as an intern is to plan a content schedule for the next week on the school's official social media platforms like Facebook, and Instagram. During this task, I learned a lot of useful information about how to plan online media activities for the next week on social networking platforms like Facebook. Not only that, but I also learned about photography so that I can choose the right photos when inserting photos into a post on social media platforms.

The final task is to support full-time employees in the office. In order to complete the communication and external affairs tasks, it is necessary to pay close attention to every detail in checking documents, connecting as well as communicating with students and partners, etc.

CHAPTER 2: CURRENT SITUATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES AT FOREIGN TRADE UNIVERSITY

2.1. Theoretical framework

2.1.1. Definition of Social media and The use of Social media in Communications

To fully understand the topic of this report, I will focus on the definition of social media. Social media is the place where people can interact with each other, companies can communicate with customers vice versa on the Internet. According to Carr and Hayes (2015, p. 8), *'Social media are Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others.'* Charles H. Bélanger, Suchita Bali & Bernard Longden (2014) also stated that a digital platform that allows people to set up and maintain a semi-public or public profile is referred to as social media. In social media, users may build a profile that reflects themselves and interact with friends, family, businesses, other organizations, etc. Social media platforms play a crucial role in maintaining people's connections, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Online social media have grown in importance as communication tools today thanks to the expansion of the Internet (Sajjad Husain, Dr. Ali Ghufuran, Dr. D.S. Chaubey, 2016). Using social media will help the transmission of information between one person to another happen smoothly and conveniently. Social media, in particular at universities, enables students to learn about events and announcements from their institution more promptly. Universities believe that social media is best used for marketing and informing students about the university (Charles H. Bélanger, Suchita Bali & Bernard Longden, 2014). Moreover, social media is an economically efficient communication tool when compared to other traditional communications like radio, TV, etc. (Leeflang et al., 2014). Setting up accounts as well as maintaining and managing them is extremely fast and easy for universities. In this case, universities can brand the school's image freely.

The use of social media in school communications can have different purposes: informing students about the university's information; boosting the connection of students, and student engagement at school (Charles H. Bélanger, Suchita Bali & Bernard Longden, 2014); supporting student learning and academic results, strengthening development/alumni relationships, improving student interaction, and building campus community (Davis, Deli-Amen, Rios-Aguilar, & Gonzalez Canche, n.d.).

Lastly, using social media will be the key for businesses to understand thoroughly their customers' needs from their actions online. Customers' behavior can easily be tracked through every click, likes, share, or comment on social media. Therefore, businesses can justify their future plans based on these metrics of social media to plan a more effective communication strategy.

2.1.2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of communication activities on social media through social media platforms

In today's modern age, the evaluation of communication activities' effectiveness on social media can be conducted in a range of methods. Companies can work with third parties to evaluate their performance on social media platforms. Social media platforms are digital applications that people often use or see in daily life such as Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Tiktok, Twitter, etc. Or else, they may use applications, software, or digital tools on the Internet to calculate their work efficiency such as Google Analytics. However, the easiest method to evaluate the effectiveness of communication activities on social media is through key performance indicators (KPIs) on different social media platforms.

A key performance indicator (KPI) is a quantifiable statistic that shows how well a firm is accomplishing vital business goals (Ing. Ľudovít Nastišin, PhD. 2017). Each social media platform will have different KPIs that people need to consider tracking. This report will focus on "Engagement" and "Reach" KPIs to analyze social media platforms (Ing. Ľudovít Nastišin, PhD. 2017). "Engagement" quantifies the number of likes, shares, and comments which your social media posts receive; and

“Reach” determines if your message has reached people or not (Ing. Ľudovít Nastišin, PhD. 2017) These KPIs are essential metrics in this report to measure the effectiveness of communication activities on social media through social media platforms’ performance at Foreign Trade University.

2.2. Current situation of social media platforms at Foreign Trade University

Social media platforms’ missions in communication activities are branding the image of the school, and connecting with students, etc. The quality of these platforms is based on the creativity and work efficiency of the staff in the Department of Communication and External Relations. There are plenty of social media platforms that Foreign Trade University manages but I will only focus on four main social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and Tiktok. These four platforms have their own operational implementations, yet there are many links between the channels.

2.2.1. Facebook

Facebook is a social media platform where users may connect with groups of friends and share photos and other personal information (Buckman, 2005). It is an application that users can freely upload their profiles, share their pictures or status, or simply connect people to people. With its numerous benefits, Facebook is the most popular social networking site among college students (Educause, 2006; Golder, Wilkinson, & Huberman, 2007; Stutzman, 2006). Students may easily access Facebook to connect with friends and discuss with them about the assignments, gather information about their interests. Foreign Trade University has been using Facebook as a communication tool to brand itself; strengthen its image, and connect with students, partners, alumni. Foreign Trade University owns two official Facebook pages which are: “FTU Times” and “FTU Corner”. However, these two pages have different purposes and audiences.

**Table 2.1. Facebook metrics of FTU Times and FTU Corner in 28 days
(28/06/2022-22/07/2022)**

Date	Page Engaged Users		Total Reach		Total Impressions	
	FTU Times	FTU Corner	FTU Times	FTU Corner	FTU Times	FTU Corner
6/28/22	29271	33227	161496	208864	781385	774588
6/29/22	29482	32867	161734	208748	794577	748689
6/30/22	29562	34370	161193	212768	807658	778689
7/1/22	29503	35774	160789	215324	788345	781328
7/2/22	29609	36390	159284	219559	788040	793035
7/3/22	29445	36401	160386	221483	789969	789678
7/4/22	29471	36244	160254	223227	787891	774768
7/5/22	29479	37246	158673	222229	790261	776922
7/6/22	29896	36919	163975	224288	798927	784747
7/7/22	29984	36445	165061	220869	784146	779468
7/8/22	29842	37127	165683	223471	784045	815406
7/9/22	29946	37782	164565	227047	788398	824306
7/10/22	29996	37755	165132	226269	780049	816578
7/11/22	30231	37201	165852	221741	783203	786703
7/12/22	30442	36996	164081	221450	777539	783505
7/13/22	30572	36982	164635	220641	778646	771918
7/14/22	30355	36693	163218	218153	784730	768811
7/15/22	29676	36822	155623	216356	766525	778969
7/16/22	29300	36673	153814	213849	757169	773767
7/17/22	30047	37705	156625	214961	770266	800105

7/18/22	29899	37450	156033	213349	767937	805370
7/19/22	29850	39800	157766	212646	762697	845820
7/20/22	29665	39598	158460	209286	765606	845720
7/21/22	29287	39178	159290	206602	760123	839529
7/22/22	28691	39137	159791	204912	727764	835417
7/23/22	24622	35850	143012	194911	666315	765873
7/24/22	23759	33110	141366	187700	661499	709952
7/25/22	22294	31525	133587	175324	612171	669601

(Source: Department of Communication and External Relations of FTU)

Specifically, “FTU Times” is a page focusing on official school activities, posting crucial notifications related to learning, so as activities organized by the school. Since the content of this channel is the official announcement of the school, the words and images used must be carefully checked and appropriate. On the other hand, “FTU Corner” is a more friendly page because its content is geared toward students, including club activities, student interviews. From the above table 2.1, all three KPIs of “FTU Corner” page are higher than those of “FTU Times”, especially the Total reach KPI. In terms of the content and images posted, FTU Corner page is considered more effective and getting more support from followers.

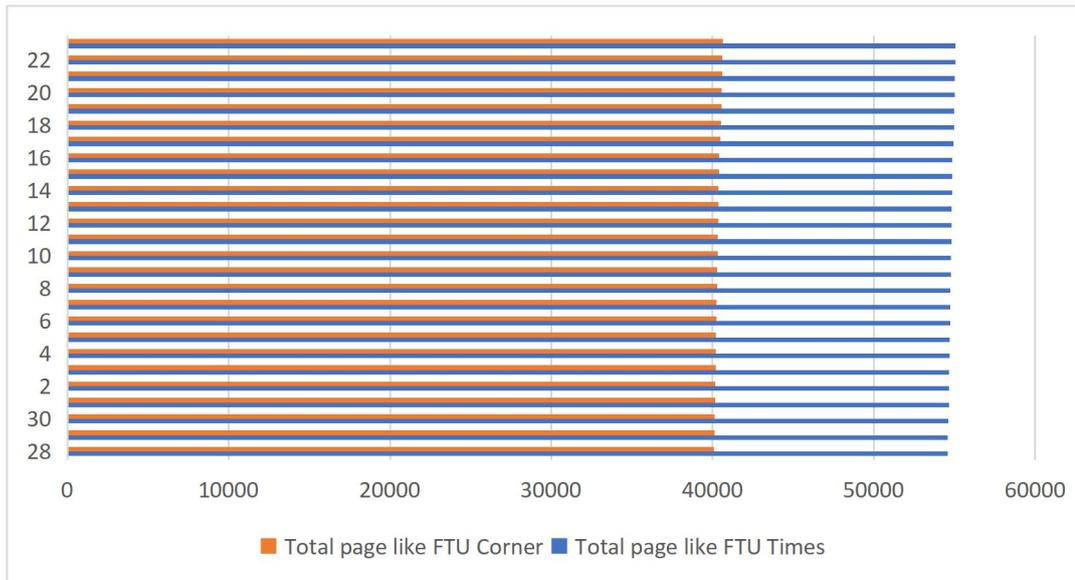


Figure 2.1. Total Page Like of FTU Times and FTU Corner (28/06/2022-22/07/2022)

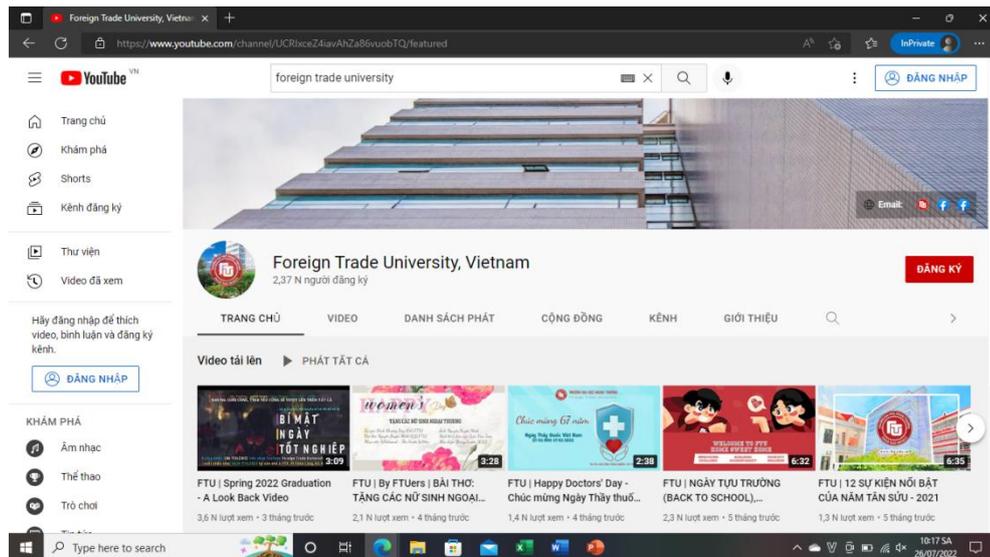
(Source: Department of Communication and External Relations of FTU)

According to figure 2.1, although “FTU Times” has more likes with more than 55000 likes, “FTU Corner” with 40720 likes has significantly more interactions. This is understandable because “FTU Corner” is student-oriented with more youthful content, so it attracts followers and students to interact easier than “FTU Times”. Both pages are updated quickly by Foreign Trade University every day, so the number of followers of these two pages keeps increasing day by day.

2.2.2. Youtube

Youtube is a great social media platform for posting videos, subscribing, or commenting if other Youtube creators upload topics or content you like. After Google and Facebook, YouTube is one of the top most visited websites worldwide (Alexa, 2015). Given that it mixes knowledge, entertainment, and customization and reaches millions of target audiences at their convenience in their regions and time zones, YouTube is a great platform for recruiting young customers ((Dehghani, Niaki, Ramezani, & Sali, 2016).). Foreign Trade University also owns a Youtube account named “Foreign Trade University, Vietnam”.

YouTube consistently has a mostly consistent online audience and has a very high level of engagement. As a result, FTU has put time and effort into creating a YouTube account. This channel's content often centers on special holidays, school's special events like the school's 60th anniversary, etc. The technical team is in charge of filming and editing videos to match the content required. Despite having limited equipment, the video concentrates on investing in visuals and content.



Source: Youtube channel of Foreign Trade University

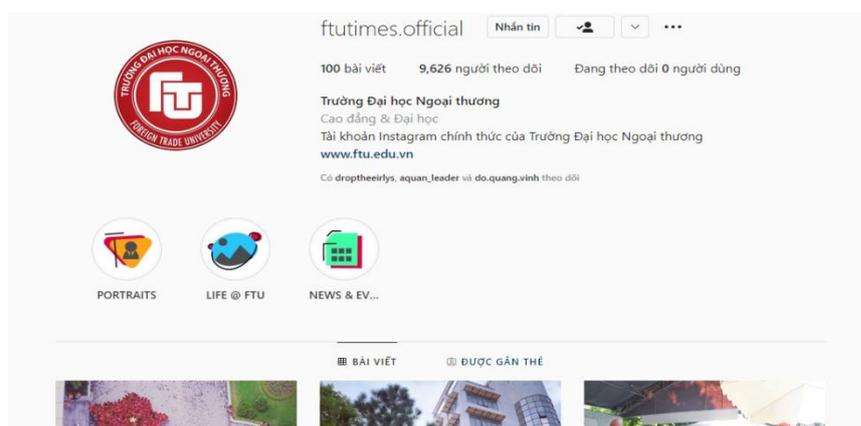
From 29th February 2020 to 25th July 2022, this channel has reached 132549 total views and gained 2370 subscribers. MV“Perfect” cover released on 3rd January 2020 by the school has now reached 95721 views with 4900 likes, which is the most viewed video of this account. The two most viewed videos following are “the school's 60th anniversary” and “FTU welcomes K60”. This means viewers of this account mainly are FTU students and people who are interested in events or information about Foreign Trade University. Although the images and videos are shot very carefully and with high quality, the posting schedule frequency is inconsistent. As a result, there hasn't been any remarkable growth in channel interactions or subscribers since this account's establishment.

2.2.3. Instagram

Instagram is a photo- and video-sharing social media website owned by Facebook, Inc; and its primary function is to let people upload pictures (and 60-second films), edit them with different filters, and arrange them with tags and comments (using the hashtag '#' sign) (Douglas, N.K.M., Scholz, M., Myers, M.A. et al., 2019). Instagram has gradually developed and is loved by many young people, especially students. According to evidence, 90% of its 150 million members are under the age of 35 (Douglas, N.K.M., Scholz, M., Myers, M.A. et al., 2019). Because Instagram is easy to use and appealing to young generations, Foreign Trade University has used Instagram in social media activities with an account named: “ftutimes.official”

From the first post starting 4th April 2022, “ftutimes.official” account is always updated daily with posts related to schools and students. The content of this Instagram account focuses mainly on the daily life of the students, the beautiful scenery in the school as well as the activities organized by the school and the clubs. Because the feature of this application can only upload short videos and images with a 1:1 ratio, it is necessary to take high-quality photos from the right angle. Therefore, the school has been regularly posting high-quality, high-resolution photos along with suitable content for the followers.

This account has now received 9626 followers with a total of 100 posts uploaded. From 24/05/2022 to 22/06/2022, the reach KPI of this account has increased by 6.4%. The most used hashtags are “#FTU”, “#ForeignTradeUniversity”. By using hashtags, it is easier to search for the school’s account, plus increases the interactions by 27.2%.

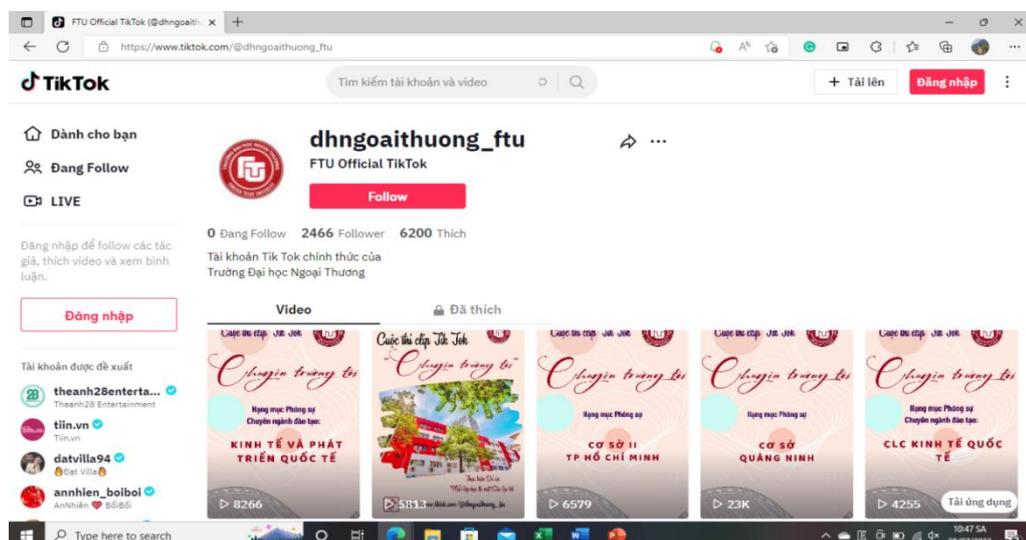


Source: Instagram of Foreign Trade University

Because this account was active in April of this year, this account is still considered relatively new. Not many students are aware of this account since it has not been widely promoted on other social media platforms such as Facebook.

2.2.4. TikTok

During the Covid-19 pandemic, an app that has been increasingly used by many people in the world is TikTok. Like the concept of Musically or Douyin, TikTok is a short-form, video-sharing software that focuses on user-generated content since it lets users upload and share videos that are only 15 seconds long (UGC) (Christian Hovestadt, Jan Recker, Janek Richter, Karl Werder, 2021). There are reasons why TikTok is famous nowadays. First, it is a user-friendly app that can be used to record short videos, lip-sync, or watch other accounts. Second, because TikTok has a feature that enables users to upload videos for no more than three minutes, users can freely enjoy the videos they like and scroll through the videos they don't enjoy. Third, it is a free application with no ads. People in more than 150 countries are using TikTok and it is offered in 75 languages worldwide (Christian Hovestadt, Jan Recker, Janek Richter, Karl Werder, 2021). This is necessary for universities to use TikTok to enhance communication activities promote the school's image, create online activities for students as well as connect more deeply with students. Therefore, Foreign Trade University is having one account on TikTok called "FTU Official TikTok".



Source: TikTok of Foreign Trade University

This TikTok account is official besides many other accounts of different clubs at school. The school's TikTok account was created with the first video posted on June 13, 2022. Most of the content on Tiktok is focusing on the clip TikTok contest "My school story" between the faculties in the school. Videos are posted quickly with high quality, interesting and fresh content from students of each faculty at school. From the first video until now, the school's TikTok account has now reached more than 2400 followers, 6200 likes with a total of 32 videos uploaded. By using TikTok, reaching the school's students and other users to promote the school's image and connecting to people is very quick and easy because the videos are updated according to the trends using the sounds or the content trending on this platform. However, this TikTok channel is quite new and only focuses on the TikTok clip contest, so there is not much interaction of students.

2.2.5. Compared with other schools

For the purpose of improving communication activities through social media, universities in Vietnam now all have their own accounts on different social media platforms. Besides Foreign Trade University, there are some schools at the forefront of social media activities such as the National Economics University (NEU) or the Academy of Journalism and Communication (AJC), and Thuongmai University (TMU), etc. Compared to the universities mentioned above, the official accounts of Foreign Trade University on different social media platforms are inferior in terms of followers as well as the number of interactions. However, because some platforms are not being updated regularly, it is obvious that the number of followers on the personal page of Foreign Trade University is less than that of other schools. Other universities understand and catch up with the trend of young people, so they attract a lot of attention from students and people, for example, the posts of the National Economics University (NEU) are posted very often along with concise information to attract students easily. These are also things that Foreign Trade University and especially the

Department of Communication and External Relations of Foreign Trade University need to pay more attention to in order to be able to keep up and develop in the future.

2.3. Assessments

2.3.1. Strengths

2.3.1.1. Content and image strategy

The school managed to keep on schedule thanks to a well-defined media content plan. Furthermore, this can help the school analyze which types of content perform best to further promote that content in social media. The principles have been agreed upon in detail in combination with a detailed content map to approach students from different perspectives.

Updated content on platforms that always keep abreast of new events is always quickly updated and evaluated with more and more diverse content so that colors are mixed with interesting content to promote greater student interaction. The content often follows the trends on social networks, so it is easy to attract the attention of students.

School-related images in the event are carefully chosen for each media campaign. Simple attractive layouts, high contrast backdrops, and vibrant color palettes stand out when selecting photographs to draw followers' attention.

2.3.1.2. Media personnel

With the school's success in communication, it is impossible not to mention the important role of the human resource factor. The Department of Communication and External Relations personnel is usually quite stable. They also have many years of experience in working well together and increasingly understand the content that attracts students and followers. Personnel in the media department are also executives and instructors at the school, so they clearly understand the effective way for the school's communications. In addition to key personnel with extensive experience, the media department periodically hires collaborators in addition to important

professionals with substantial expertise to diversify media material and to support communication plans that need a lot of human resources such as student recruitment every year.

2.3.1.3. Brand advantage

As one of the most famous economic universities in Vietnam, Foreign Trade University attracts a large number of students following two official Facebook fan pages as well as other platforms. Because accounts on different platforms are the official accounts of the school, they receive a lot of trust from everyone interested in the school. The school's official channels have huge followers along with strong interactions from followers. These media platforms help followers update information about the school, campaigns, or competitions quickly.

2.3.2. Weaknesses

Activities on some platforms such as Youtube and on social networks are not really active, so the amount of interaction is still not high. The TikTok account only has more than 2000 followers and has not attracted many followers because the account is new and the recognition is not high. The same thing happened with Instagram. Because the school's Youtube account is only a platform to store the school's memories, the videos that update information or the school's events are not posted regularly. Viewer interaction is not high, and video products posted have low views.

There are no clear long-term communication strategies yet. In fact, the media content is usually short-term events that closely follow the programs. Communication activities on social media platforms do not really have a clear long-term strategy. This long-term plan also helps measure the effectiveness of the communication strategy. Usually just planning content for each day seems to be just enough to hit the required number of posts. This makes the media content in a period of time without the connection and not using the force to have many followers from the students.

There are not enough human resources for the school's communication plans. Because there are not enough human resources as well as collaborators, there is a shortage of shooting equipment, and creativity. Therefore, sometimes communication activities are delayed in posting time on social media.

CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. Recommendation for improving social media in Foreign Trade University

3.1.1. *Recommendation for Foreign Trade University*

3.1.1.1. *Invest budget for communication activities*

The communication budget is not only the personnel budget but also the event equipment purchase budget. The current budget for these activities is still small, which may be in some way responsible for the lack of motivation to create new content for the activities.

The budget for equipment to support editing and photography should also be increased because the modern equipment available in the room is limited and inadequate, causing inconvenience to many activities. The existing shortage of funding for machines and equipment will be difficult to put even many ideas into practice.

3.1.1.2. *Increase experienced staff in the Department of Communication and External Relations*

Currently, the number of employees in the communications department is eight personnel in total and only one collaborator. Meanwhile, the media department has a lot of work to do, including building content for social media channels and organizing events. As a result, more human resources are required. The Department of Communication and External Relations can conduct surveys to determine the satisfaction and dissatisfaction points of employees, thereby offering a more effective recruitment strategy; or consider transferring personnel from other departments to the Department of Communication and External Relations. When recruiting external personnel, it is necessary to have a detailed training plan to ensure the quality of personnel. With the current workload, the department should increase two content staff and two technical staff to be able to handle all the work. In addition to hiring new personnel, the school should have effective retention and employee satisfaction strategies.

3.1.2. Recommendation for the Department of Communication and External Relations

3.1.2.1. Creative in content creation and media planning on clear social platforms

Because of the nature of social media, the success of FTU's communications on social media activities depends on creativity. As analyzed in the disadvantages section, the content as well as the form of posts on the school's current social media platforms often offer quite similar content and do not have a long-term plan.

In order to boost creativity, besides the encouragement of the school's leadership, it is also an active effort to learn from the members of the Department of Communication and External Relations. Personnel in the office should always improve their knowledge to grasp and follow currently trending topics. They need to learn from the social media platforms of other famous universities that have a large number of followers, from which the department can develop communication strategies on its social platforms most suitable to connect with students as well as to promote the image of the school.

The content of each post on each social networking site is different because each social media platform has its own characteristics when posting. Therefore, the Department of Communication and External Relations needs to invest more in content. In addition, the images and videos also need to be regularly changed in the shooting scene to suit each program of the school.

3.1.2.2. Regularly organize capacity-building training sessions for employees

The effectiveness of the work depends not only on recruiting personnel but also on the training plan for the employees in the department. Currently, the department consists of very few personnel specializing in shooting and photographing. Therefore, investing in a training plan in areas such as shooting, writing content will help employees and collaborators in the department to gain more knowledge about social media in general. This training helps employees improve themselves, from which they will want to stick with the job longer in the department. More specifically, the

department should organize training courses once every three months on content writing and advanced photography and design. The department can invite experienced experts to share knowledge with the employees.

3.2. Recommendation for improving social media for Faculty of Business English at Foreign Trade University

Each faculty of Foreign Trade University has its own accounts on different social media platforms. The faculty of Business English at Foreign Trade University is no exception. The faculty of Business English owns a page on Facebook called Faculty of Business English - Foreign Trade University with nearly 650 followers, and BESN-Business English students network with more than 4000 followers. These Facebook pages mainly focus on introducing the faculty, or the faculty's programs such as Miracle in December. They are also a platform to connect with students in the faculty. However, these Facebook fanpages do not receive much interaction from the students.

Therefore, social media activities on the social media platforms of the Faculty of Business English need to be further developed and improved. To accomplish that goal, the Faculty of Business English needs to plan specific communication activities, build its own specific content to brand the faculty's image as well as connect with students in the faculty. The faculty should regularly post useful content for students when studying faculty subjects or tips to get high scores in exams. In addition, the faculty also needs to create a plan for posting to be able to post frequently, which will increase the interaction of students as well as increase the number of followers. Moreover, the Faculty of Business English should set up multiple accounts of the faculty on different social networking platforms such as TikTok or Instagram to promote the faculty to more people.

CONCLUSION

After more than sixty years of establishment, the results of Foreign Trade University achieved are remarkable. To have the success like today, it is impossible not to mention the contribution of the communication activities of all the faculties at school as well as the Department of Communication and External Relations. The efforts of the Department of Communication and External Relations in particular and the entire school, in general, have contributed to Foreign Trade University being in the top of the prestigious and famous universities in Vietnam. The creation of a quality communication plan by using social media in the future is indispensable for the school.

Although the social media activities of Foreign Trade University have achieved many achievements as well as built a brand image for the university, there are still some weaknesses that the Department of Communication and External Relations can improve to achieve the most effective communication activities on social media platforms. In the current technology era, more and more universities have accounts on many different social media platforms. Foreign Trade University, especially the Department of Communication and External Relations, needs to be aware of the importance of building effective communication strategies by using social media, not only to promote the school's brand image but also to connect with students and followers. Therefore, measures to improve the effectiveness of communication activities on social media platforms should be taken seriously.

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