



039: Social Media and Short Term Missions – Shayna Winn

Shayna Winn who serves at the Metropolitan Bible Church (better known as the MET) in Ottawa, Ontario.

Her role is focused on missions and she herself has participated on a number of short term mission trips. She is passionate about using short-term missions to spur in people a passion of their own for fulfilling the Great Commission. She has worked at the MET since 2010 and she is married to Graham and mother to Alexa.

Tell us a little bit about yourself and how you came to be passionate about missions.

- My own passion for short term missions came through mission conference. I think that's why I'm so excited about participating in conferences today.
- It was always amazing to hear stories of things I couldn't even wrap my mind around!
- I was 15 when I sat through my first missions conference, and I wasn't even saved at the time! It was foundational in my coming to know Christ – I was challenged by people who left everything to serve God.

Last summer you used social media to help keep the church updated on several short term trips sent by the MET. Can you describe what that looked like?

- Practically speaking, it was a fairly simple concept. It was a graphic, a hashtag and a consistent post with an update or prayer request specific to that trip.
- We used a graphic to draw people's attention. I took a picture of a country and put a colorful filter over top of it and wrote #missionsguatemala, for example.

Talk to us – what channels did you use?

- We primarily use Facebook. We get the most engagement through Facebook. We have tried Twitter but most of our engagement was through Facebook.

How you do define a successful social media campaign?

- By the number of people praying. Our success is measured by the feedback – interactions I had with people at church on Sunday who mentioned the posts. We also look at the number of likes we get on a post.
- One of the greatest challenges I find with STMs, is that people genuinely want to pray but they don't always know how to pray. So if prayer seems like a daunting task you're less likely to do it, so we kept our campaign easy and practical to remove that hurdle.

What sort of time commitment does this take?

- That's a great question. I am on staff at the MET but I am part time. I'm in the office one day a week and yet I was able to stay on top of the social media campaigns for the four or five STMs we sent this summer, so it isn't a huge time commitment.

In order for a church to run a campaign using social media, what are some of the things you recommend that they think about in advance? How do they plan for this?

- Our short term leaders are the biggest resource for the campaign – they know the trip, the schedule, the team members, they know what the prayer requests are. I met with or emailed each of the leaders before the trip and got the itinerary and the biggest challenges and some preliminary prayer requests.

What did you include in the data you were collecting?

- The schedule for each day
 - Praying for travel
 - What are the challenges that come with being five days into ministry?

How long in advance were you working on these campaigns?

- There needs to be a balance because our leaders are extremely busy in the days leading up to departure and you don't want to contact them too early.
- I found 2-3 weeks before the trip to be a good timeframe to begin connecting with the short term leaders.

While the team was away on the trip did you have any direct contact with the leaders?

- All of the leaders were able to communicate two or three times during the trip to update me and send more prayer requests and correct schedule details if things had changed.



- Just having a team member post two or three times a week, a picture and updates, motivated our congregations in their prayer for the trip as well.

Talk about the balance between text and visual (photos and videos)?

- I'm not a graphic designer, so I don't have any professional opinion, but I do find that we are a visual society. We want short text and so I see incredible value in giving people the graphic reference as well to draw people in.
- There is so much info coming through social media and so I think that pictures and graphics are important in grabbing people's attention.

What tools did you use to create these campaigns?

- I didn't use the church's website a great deal. I focused more on social media.
- It is a private Facebook page for security purposes, called MET Missions.
- Facebook appeals to a wider demographic than Twitter and Instagram and Snapchat.

Were there websites or programs or apps that you used to create your campaigns?

- My graphics were created in PowerPoint. If you take the time to really get to know that program, it really has great graphics capability.
- I used Hootsuite to schedule all of my posts. Looking specifically at our short term posts, they were up by 6 am so that people had time to read them while they were eating breakfast, having their devotions. It's a great tool that lets you manage how much your posting and when you're posting.

Are there any other tips or hints or advice you'd have for a church or mission committee that wants to use social media to promote missions?

- It comes down to just doing something – be present, be putting things out there.
- A lot of it is trial and error as you figure out your audience. Do they respond to daily reminders or weekly reminders? Do they respond more to video versus images?
- It doesn't have to be big or fancy, but just try things and figure out what works and what people respond to!

If people have other questions they want to bounce off you, how might they contact you?

- Contact me through Facebook.
- Feel free to email me – swinn@metbiblechurch.ca

