

“THE LEADERSHIP TEAM WILL BE THE FIRST TO ADMIT THEY DON’T KNOW MUCH ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA”: HOW ORGANISATIONAL TRUST ENABLES THE PRODUCTION OF ENGAGING DIGITAL SEXUAL HEALTH PROMOTION

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Background:

Sexual health organisations are increasingly using social media platforms to distribute sexual health promotion content. However, most sexual health organisations have been unable to gain the significant reach and engagement with young people on Instagram that sexual health influencers and peer-led organisations currently have.

Methods:

This paper is part of an exploratory study involving 16 semi-structured interviews with producers of digital sexual health promotion employed by 12 sexual health organisations in Australia and the United Kingdom. Interviews focused on understanding professional experiences of producing and circulating social media content. The experiences of the five organisations whose social media content received significantly higher rates of engagement than the other participating organisations were analysed in further detail. Themes were identified using abductive analysis.

Results:

The higher level of engagement with content from the five organisations relates to their production of youth-centred communications, which mirrors the design aesthetics, tone, and vernacular that young people use to talk about sex on a given social media platform.

While acknowledging that their digital skills were critical to producing youth-centered communications, interviewees expressed that they could not produce youth-centered communications without organisational trust in their social media approach. Organisational trust was demonstrated to them by senior leadership teams providing significant resources to support the production of high-quality content and management of the organisation’s social media presence and the absence of hierarchical content approval systems.

The paper ends by considering several strategies used by these interviewees to build organisational trust in the production of youth-centered communications.

Conclusion:

While the digital skills of individual employees are critical to the production of youth-centered communications, organisations need to consider how they can actively support the production of youth-centered communications. This session will leave attendees with strategies that they can use to build up organisational trust in youth-centered communications.

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