



# Case Study: The Dallas Morning News

## Introduction:

### Becoming a Social Media Enterprise

As the world turns digital, traditional print media faces many new challenges in the highly competitive, fast-paced social media environment. While print readership has decreased by half since 2000, according to Pew Research, online readership has more than doubled since 2010. Likewise, online news revenue has since surpassed print revenue. Although the shift to social media is a lifesaver for many newspapers, it poses major challenges as they move from a traditional approach to a more nimble, social enterprise business model.

The Dallas Morning News is a major regional media company in the United States, with 570,000 combined social media followers, as of January 2013. In 2011, The Dallas Morning News began a coordinated effort to embrace social media and strategically integrate it across their organization to engage more effectively with their readers. Since then, they've grown their social media following by 250%.

In this case study, discover how The Dallas Morning News adopted Hootsuite Enterprise Social Business Solutions of [Social Media Management](#) and [Social Marketing](#) to centralize control, streamline their newsroom efforts and empower their teams to amplify news updates and engage with their growing local readership.



growth in Twitter  
follower count and  
133 on Facebook



270K

new Google+ followers



10M

social referrals, an  
increase from 5 million

## The Challenge: Strategically Engaging Readers

### Gaining Centralized Control and Coordination

“Like many papers, our initial social media efforts grew up organically, leaving us with many overlapping and duplicate streams. When I began overseeing social media in October 2011, social media was on the verge of becoming chaotic. Today we leverage six major channels, but at the time we had multiple accounts fed by various parts of the organization. We had to eliminate rogue and sometimes dormant duplicate accounts to gain visibility. And above all, we wanted to keep most social media posting close to content origination, and that’s not easy,” says Michael Landauer, Digital Communities Manager.

In an effort to create a scalable social media strategy, The Dallas Morning News began by looking at powerful social relationship platforms in order to gain visibility, eliminate duplication and streamline their social content to amplify across their active media streams. “We needed a dashboard that could give us centralized reporting, but was also accessible across the organization and scalable to support our growth. In late 2012 we started using Hootsuite to help us with social media management, and by spring we had removed most of our duplicate streams and gotten our content under control,” adds Landauer. “Our next step was to prioritize and coordinate our efforts on content that drove the most engagement.”

When major news breaks, media companies have the opportunity to engage with an influx of new readers, but with that fast-paced, short-lived engagement comes its own challenges. Having the ability to carry these spikes over to ongoing customer interactions is critical — but incredibly challenging.

## Achieving Success: Driving Readership Engagement

Among monitoring and engagement, tracking with powerful analytics and educating employees to be brand ambassadors, The Dallas Morning News turned to Hootsuite Enterprise Solution of **Social Media Management** for:

- **Centralized Control:** Manage all social networks from one dashboard for high visibility.
  - With approximately 345 people in the newsroom and present on social media, The Dallas Morning News has fewer than 30 people with publishing access to their main channels — each with varying levels of access and control. This helps maintain visibility and security while repurposing great content from contributors on-the-ground.



“From now until the next big thing, social media will be first on the scene at every event, election and crisis. But just because social networks are full of information and data, doesn’t mean the public is informed.”

*3 Ways Social Media Command Centers Improve Newsrooms White Paper*

- **Streamline Workflow:** Work together with organized teams in a streamlined effort to strategically amplify social content.
  - Using a prescriptive approach, The Dallas Morning News selects socially savvy employees to be contributors on their main channels. If a particular journalist is excellent at Instagram, he or she will help support that channel with content and engagement.

The Dallas Morning News also relies on the Enterprise Solution of **Social Marketing** to:

- **Build Brand Awareness and Loyalty:** Being both active and strategic in their online presence allows them to build up a cohesive brand voice and regional loyal following.
- **Amplify Campaigns:** Create, measure and amplify social campaigns around particular regional news or events. Drive social advertising to and “boost” those campaigns that prove most successful.
- **Drive Revenue:** Set up analytics to track campaign success back to mobile, tablet, website or print customers and develop strategies accordingly.

## Success Story: 50th Anniversary of JFK Shooting News Coverage

One recent success story of how The Dallas Morning News integrated a secure, centralized and streamlined social relationship platform into their workflow is during the 50th anniversary of the JFK shooting.

“In the past, we might have put a single person on the scene posting tweets to the main account every 5 to 10 minutes. Now with Hootsuite, we have the visibility to see news coming in from our entire staff and can run a much more comprehensive effort. We had 15 reporters around Dallas sending out social messages and feeding us posts; we set up our dashboard like a newsroom command center where we could see what was unique and of the highest value to our readers. This way, we had much more varied and interesting coverage, and filled our channels with a steady stream of great content without having to hire extra staff,” comments Landauer.

“Hootsuite is set up so we can have a centralized back-at-base approach to reporting, making sure we provide robust content to our flagship Twitter streams. This is a much smarter approach,” continues Landauer.

“Now when we have big events like the JFK anniversary, we are under control so our resources are used much more wisely. We can quickly put other content on hold and let the big story take the lead, and then, by monitoring engagement, know when to return to a more normal mix of posts related to opinion, sports, weather, etc.,” Landauer adds.



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Since The Dallas Morning News is able to coordinate production efforts and work together as a social enterprise, they give their readers a richer experience across multiple channels without losing out on security, governance and regular readership engagement.

## Results: Engaged Readers on Social

Landauer explains, “When you have that many people involved in a stream you have to have good communication, otherwise you have people bumping into each other. Hootsuite has enabled our team to manage workflow and collaboration, while maintaining secure permissions.”

“With Hootsuite we have the visibility and the reporting needed to manage these efforts. As a result we have become much more sophisticated,” concludes Michael Landauer. The Dallas Morning News was successful in gaining scalable and centralized control over their social accounts, while effectively coordinating on social initiatives like breaking major news.

Like many businesses today, The Dallas Morning News is focused on tracking the ROI of social media. In less than a year, The Dallas Morning News achieved the following:

- **Increased follower growth by 52% on its flagship Twitter account and 133% on Facebook.**
- Attracted 270,000 new followers to its Google+ circle.
- **Saw social referrals to dallasnews.com increase from 5 million to 10 million.**

The Dallas Morning News also added better efficiency and coordination to their news efforts, coordinating close to 30 newsroom team members from one centralized dashboard.

“Social media is very important to us, but we also realize that it poses some unique challenges.”

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*Michael Landauer,  
Digital Communities Manager,  
The Dallas Morning News.*