

Embracing Social Media to Build a More Diverse Society

The “CPCU Matrix”

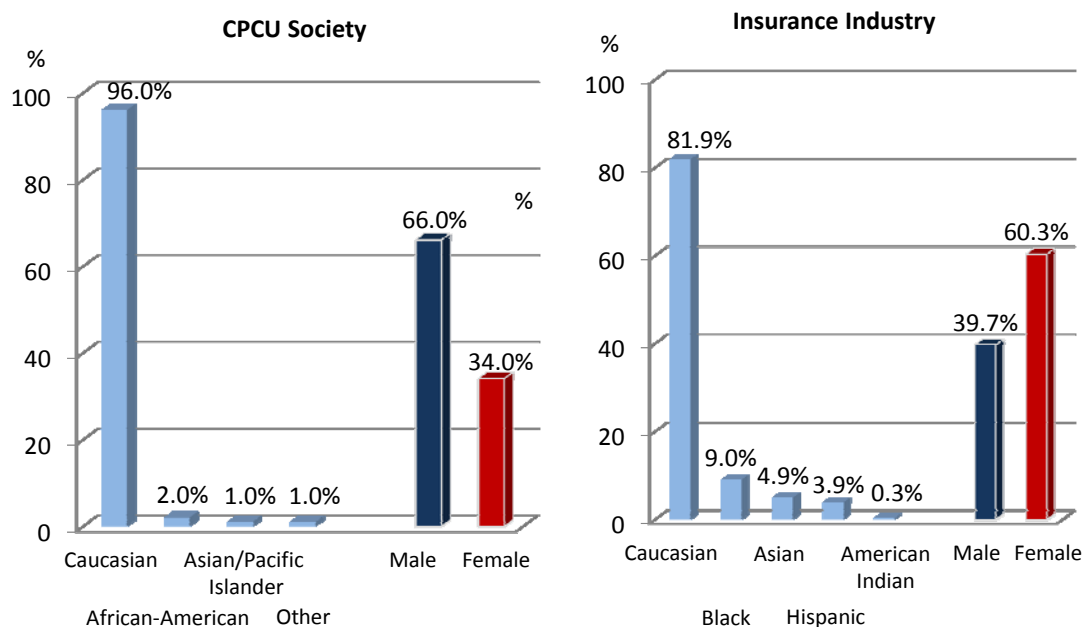
If you’ve attended CPCU Society meetings, then you’ve probably noticed that participants are typically non-Hispanic, Caucasian males in their early 50s. It’s not surprising, given the Society’s composition which is overwhelmingly Caucasian (96 percent); remaining members are African-American (2 percent), Asian/Pacific Islander (1 percent), and Other (1 percent). The gender distribution is two-thirds male, one-third female.¹

Male Caucasian CPCUs are overrepresented vis-à-vis the entire insurance industry. Compared to Society members (2006), insurance professionals are 81.9 percent Caucasian, 9.0 percent Black, 4.9 percent Asian, 3.9 percent Hispanic, and 0.3 percent American Indian. Women outnumber men, comprising 60.3 percent of professionals in this business.²

¹ CPCU Society demographic profile (2006); the 2008 male/female distribution was 62/38 percent, indicating a rise in female CPCUs.

² U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, “Diversity in the Finance Industry,” 2006

Male Caucasians are Disproportionately High in the CPCU Society



The CPCU Society is to be commended for wanting to further diversify its national membership and local chapters. Undoubtedly, many more female, minority and younger insurance professionals can – and should – be encouraged to become CPCUs and join the Society.

Why Social Media?

What better way is there to attract and maintain diversity in the CPCU Society than with social media, the leading internet activity?^{3,4} Dynamic Web 2.0 technologies encompassing a multitude of blogs and microblogs (e.g., Twitter), social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn), video sharing (e.g., YouTube), etc. have become the

³ comScore Press Release, Dec. 2011

⁴ The CPCU designation must still be earned before joining the Society.

primary means of communication in today's digital world. These tools are an easy-to-use and multi-dimensional way to interact with others, inform and educate consumers, and send real-time messages online – ultimately forming close, trusted bonds with customers and within communities. Their applications are endless: engaging in dialogue; sharing information, photos and videos; accessing news; promoting events; uploading resumes; posting jobs and recruiting; creating personal profiles or brand awareness; making friends; etc.

Social media usage has clearly filled the gaps left by traditional media. With (1) over 845 and 500 million Facebook and Twitter users, respectively;⁵ (2) nearly 80 percent of companies using LinkedIn for social recruiting;⁶ and (3) YouTube being the world's second largest search engine,⁷ its power cannot be ignored.

What makes social media an obvious solution to further diversifying the CPCU

Society membership is the fact that women, minorities and younger people are more plugged into this activity than men, whites and older people. Pew Research Center's findings on internet users who do online networking by gender, race/ethnicity and age are provided below:⁸

⁵ The Realtime Report, "Social Networking Stats for the Week," March 2012

⁶ Derived from Jobvite Social Recruiting Survey 2011 results

⁷ comScore qSearch, April 2011

⁸ Pew Internet, "Social Networking," March 2012

Percent of All Internet Users Visiting Social Media Sites		
<i>Gender</i>	Female	71%
	Male	61%
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	Hispanic (English- and Spanish-speaking)	72%
	Black (Non-Hispanic)	68%
	White (Non-Hispanic)	64%
<i>Age</i>	18-29	86%
	30-49	72%
	50-64	50%
	65+	34%

Using social media isn't a "one-size-fits-all" activity. Although Facebook is king, different online groups have different preferences. For example, Blacks blog more often than whites and Hispanics.⁹ Twitter is more popular among young adults (who are blogging less) and minorities.¹⁰ Asians are overrepresented on LinkedIn, which primarily attracts older users overall.¹¹ A larger proportion of Blacks and Hispanics download sites onto mobile devices than Caucasians.¹²

Generate the "CPCU Buzz"

There are many effective ways to engage both prospective and current CPCU Society members via social media. To leverage a stronger, unified networking presence and

⁹ UPI.com, "Science News," April 2012

¹⁰ Pew Research Center, "Social Media and Young Adults," Feb. 2010; and "Who Tweets?," Dec. 2010

¹¹ Boolean Black Belt, "LinkedIn User Demographics and Visitor Statistics 2011"

¹² Socialmediatoday, "Social Media's Diversity Problem," May 2011

increase brand awareness, develop an integrated approach: have user-friendly links connecting different CPCU sites; incorporate sites into blogs; and include social media icons and web addresses on all print products.

First impressions matter! Social media icons shouldn't be down in the home page's sidebar, but highlighted instead. To grab and keep people's attention, consider a CPCU Society Facebook makeover:

- ✓ Open with an appealing, professional looking "Welcome" page (not a wall of comments). Include a Welcome video, along with an optional fill-in section for information about Society membership.
- ✓ Include a directory of all the Society's media accounts and tabs showcasing events and news, committees, chapters, job opportunities, member skills and interests, FAQs, a discussion board, etc.
- ✓ Push traffic to a "CPCU Fan" page; share value-added information with friends who can help spread the word virally.
- ✓ Create easy-to-read pages with timely and helpful information, pre-approved banners, messages and advertising. Give multiple pages a uniform look and feel.
- ✓ Have testimonial pages or personalized CPCU member blogs with common themes (critical for reaching prospective members).
- ✓ Include appropriate, eye-catching images.

Use Twitter as well to spread the CPCU word; tweet brief, catchy messages on upcoming events, news release headlines (with appropriate links), and relevant insurance topics, or initiate questions to generate thought and dialogue. A dedicated Twitter page for Q&A is another effective way to engage prospective Society members (especially young professionals and minorities).

A CPCU YouTube channel (with colors identical to other CPCU sites) can also jumpstart viral traffic. Upload brief video clips promoting membership value and organizational activities. Have members create clips, add photos, share their personal CPCU journeys, outside interests, etc.

The Minority Connection

To attract ethnic audiences, the CPCU Society must earn their trust; research different populations and even regions with homogeneous local chapters. Get a solid understanding of cultures and values. Avoid stereotypes! Before going live, consider testing messages before focus groups to ensure appropriateness. Content should be interesting and pertinent to targeted demographic(s).

Explore the possibility of embedding CPCU social media links on different organizations' websites to facilitate access to CPCU Society pages. Industry organizations include RIMS, International Association of Insurance Professionals, and Casualty Actuarial Society. Outside ethnic groups (e.g., Black Career Women,

National Society of Hispanic MBAs, and National Association of Asian-American Professionals) may also have members in insurance who could become CPCU Society candidates.

Similarly, consider CPCU links on websites of universities with risk management and insurance curricula, libraries with minority studies programs, and Anapata – an online headhunter for ethnic law students (some who could be interested in insurance).

Partnering with other minority firms, e.g., ad agency InterTrend Communications and media company Univision that cater to Asian-Americans and Hispanics, respectively, might help the CPCU Society reach these particular demographics.

Another tactic is to invite select enthusiastic CPCUs to spread the word on minority social media platforms (e.g., MyLatinoVoice.com, BlackPlanet, AsianAve). Some insurance-related professionals may visit these sites, too.

Be mindful that successful marketing efforts with African-Americans and Hispanics (and other mobile owners) may require a mobile application that facilitates content viewing on hand-held devices. This would be especially useful in engaging Hispanics, the quickest demographic to embrace online technology.¹³

¹³ American Pulse™ Survey, Feb. 2012

Best Practices

A clear CPCU Society social media strategy should complement – rather than replace – traditional marketing tactics.

To determine which networking tools to leverage and how to properly allocate marketing dollars, be realistic and prudent in selecting target audiences. Create one or two teams to shape the messaging and ensure accurate key content that meets prospective members' needs and expectations. Other teams can manage various CPCU sites, update materials regularly, monitor posts, respond to questions and comments, document remarks, and measure the program's effectiveness.

Maintaining multi-dimensional, dynamic sites requires continual oversight and commitment. Furthermore, rapidly evolving social media technologies require keeping abreast of related laws and regulations and different platforms' service terms on privacy, copyright, compliance, etc. If necessary, invest money (if available) to hire additional staff or outside contractors to manage the CPCU Society's social media operations; run promotions and contests to elicit member participation on certain initiatives as well.

Implement a social media policy with guidelines on acceptability of comments, content structure, writing style, and other "netiquette" protocol. Address brand protection, confidentiality of personal information, transparency, regulatory requirements, disclosure requirements, disclaimers, etc.

Avoid bad networking experiences that can irritate users! Create easily accessible and efficiently navigable social media sites. Strive for personable, credible and non-offensive online conversations and timeliness in answering questions.

Set reasonable timeframes to accomplish objectives; remember....*Rome wasn't built in a day!* And of course, carry appropriate social media-related liability coverage!

If You Embrace It, They Will Come

Advancing a successful proactive social media campaign requires the right talent pool, dedication, inventiveness, time and money, but the rewards are plentiful. A strong online presence not only helps to build longer-lasting relationships with current members, but it can also attract new multi-cultural members. With greater diversity, the CPCU Society can thrive as an innovation leader and excel in customer focus, creativity, communication and collaboration.

There's no denying....the social media revolution is here to stay. If the CPCU Society utilizes this powerful and unstoppable force effectively, don't be surprised when you attend future meetings and see a more diversified, more exciting, new look!