

PR News for the Museums of Cosmonautics

Campaign Title The title will appear on the awards website, used during the awards ceremony and on an award if you win. We reserve the right to edit entry titles if necessary.	Museums Online
Client name	The Museum of Cosmonautics
Country	Russia
Summary – 100 words	
<p>The coronavirus lockdown put museums and art centers across Russia in a difficult situation. Faced with the need to make exhibits available for viewing online to stay in touch with the public, they set out to establish and grow a presence on social media. PR News conducted a pro bono survey of their social media communications. Spanning 72,000 posts on 261 pages of 62 museums over 9 months, it answered the following questions: What new communication tools are available to museums? How can the effectiveness of online communications be evaluated? What formats and channels of communication are the most effective?</p>	
Category	Best evaluation on a small budget <£10,000 or <\$10,000)
Objective/Brief (10 out of 100 points) 200 words	
<p>The Museum of Cosmonautics (a leading science and history museum; average 550,000 visitors a year, up to 750,000 in 2020; educational activities, research, unique online events and collaborations to attract new audiences) approached PR News to evaluate the effectiveness of its communications during the pandemic. While on lockdown, online pages became the only outlet for museums to exhibit cultural and historical artifacts. Finding new formats and rethinking the whole paradigm of communication with the public presented a challenge. They needed to establish a new culture of digital consumption of art, science and history. The PR News survey searched for answers to the following questions: How can traditional formats and channels of communication be transformed during the pandemic? Which formats work best? And how can their effectiveness be evaluated?</p> <p>Goals: identify effective social media communication strategies for museums; develop a measurement and evaluation system to meet the new role of museums' online pages.</p> <p>Tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze museums' online activities; ● identify effective channels, tools and formats of communication; ● develop criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of communications; ● prepare a report for presentation at the online conference "United in Diversity" hosted by the Museum of Cosmonautics for the museum community. 	
Strategy (20 out of 100 points) 250 words	
<p>For thorough quantitative and qualitative analysis, we cast a wide net, using the statistics service JagaJam to go through the activities (posts and comments) of 62 Russian museums, art centers and exhibition halls on 261 pages across Facebook, VKontakte, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. The analyzed statistics included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● number of and change in posts; 	

- format and type of content, post length, hashtags;
- number of and change in followers;
- engagement and reaction to different types of content; engagement per post is calculated as reactions=likes+comments+reposts made by 100 followers per post;
- response rate (percentage of user questions answered);
- response time (average time to answer user questions).

Two periods were compared, before the lockdown and after it was imposed.

The chosen strategy offered the following advantages:

- a sample as large and varied as was analyzed makes the research representative enough to apply widely to all cultural institutions;
- comparing average statistics for the two periods, we were able to identify the most effective formats of communication and spot shifts in the behavior of visitors on museums' social media during the lockdown;
- we were also able to identify the optimal and most accurate criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of museums' online communications.

Execution/Implementation (30 out of 100 points) 300 words

The survey was conducted in September-October 2020 using JagaJam to go through 72,000 posts and comments posted on 261 online pages of 62 museums from January 1 to March 20 and from March 21 to August 31, 2020. Quantitative and qualitative statistics were collected and analyzed separately for each platform to identify common trends and user preferences.

Qualitative statistics:

- number of and change in posts: benchmarks and averages;
- number of followers and change in it during the lockdown.

Qualitative statistics:

- engagement (likes, comments and reposts) and types of reaction;
- format and type of content: videos, photos, links, carousels;
- post length: character count, difference in engagement;
- hashtags: engaging, informative, motivational;
- response rates and response times compared.

We calculated benchmarks and averages for each statistic to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of all communication formats used.

The strategy was to use a complex of automated, statistical and qualitative methods to accomplish the following:

1. sampling;
2. data collection; setting benchmarks and calculating averages for each category;
3. qualitative analysis of content, categorization, identification of typical and unique communication techniques, tactics and strategies, and comparative analysis of engagement and followers;
4. comparative analysis of data for the periods before the lockdown and after it was imposed.

Effectiveness of Assignment (40 out of 100 points) 400 words

The survey revealed that the pandemic served as a powerful impetus for museums to develop digital communication with the public. During that trying time, Russian museums demonstrated their best qualities, were more active than many businesses, and did what foreign museums didn't. The lockdown prompted them to try different social media activities and the survey looked at each of them to offer recommendations for the future.

Platforms:

- YouTube surged in popularity, with a third of the pages launched and reactivated after the pandemic broke out; content grew 123%.

Followers:

- YouTube showed the strongest growth at 139%;
- Instagram proved popular with both the public and museums, averaging more followers than other platforms.

Content strategies:

- Videos overtook photos in popularity during the lockdown, boosting average engagement;
- Polls proved an effective format but one rarely used by museums (less than 1% of posts);
- Facebook is for long-reads averaging up to 1,000 characters;
- Museum vlogs transformed from lectures and announcements into video tours and own creative content;
- Response to users is a virtually unused format which has potential for holding discussions on questions raised.

Recommendations:

- Post videos on all platforms: visual content is more engaging and brings museums closer to the public;
- Use polls as an interactive tool to increase engagement by enabling users to influence content and feel a closer connection to museums;
- Use unique hashtags (they increase engagement by 1.25 times) to improve recognition, widen reach and attract new audiences;
- Move from information provision and announcements to engaging, expert and educational content to meet demand for interaction through discussion and contests; this kind of communication needs to be personalized as much as possible;
- De-professionalize video content: people like amateur footage more for the immersive effect;
- Create own content and use content generated by users.

The survey's findings were presented at the online conference "United in Diversity" hosted by the Museum of Cosmonautics on October 9, 2020 as part of World Space Week and sparked discussion among Russia's top museums about their place in the new digital reality. The survey drew praise from both the museum community and communications experts. With a basic set of tools, we were able to analyze in a very short time the activities of a large number of social and cultural institutions, and used our findings to offer clear and measurable KPIs.

Supporting materials

A maximum of 4 sides of A4 allowed. Valid extension(s): png, jpeg, jpg, gif, pdf, doc, docx, xls, xlsx, ppt, pptx, txt, rtf, zip, 7z, mp3, eps, ai.
Каждый лист отдельный файлом в указанном расширении.

EXHIBIT 1. CONTENT AND FOLLOWERS: UP DURING LOCKDOWN

62

museums

261

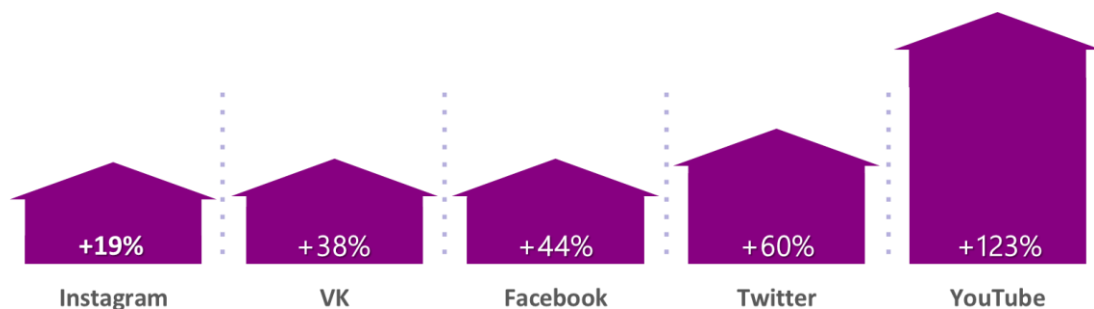
pages

72K

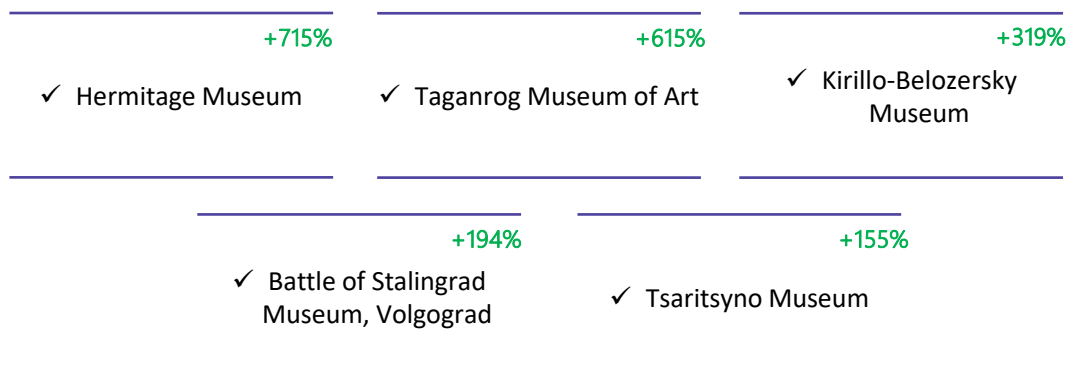
posts

Content

Change in average posts per week during lockdown



Leaders in Content Growth

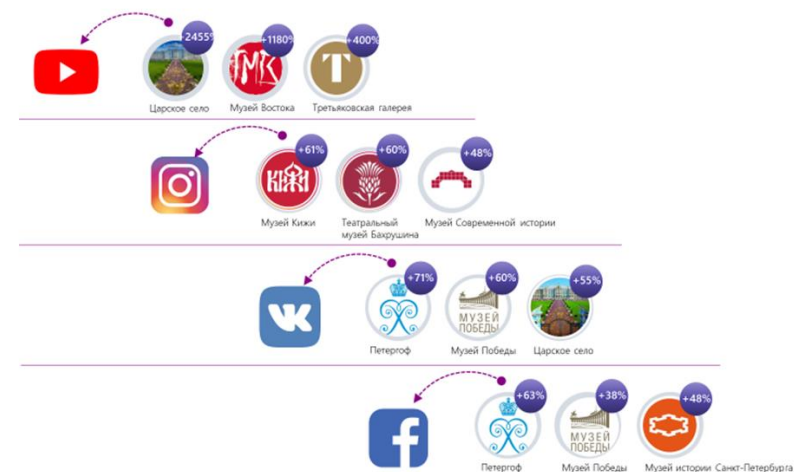


Followers

Change in January-August 2020

Platform	Среднее число подписчиков на 1 сообщество в соцсети	Средний темп прироста*	Лидер по количеству подписчиков на август 2020 года
YouTube	11 тыс.	+139%	Третьяковская галерея (141 тыс.)
Instagram	66 тыс.	+17%	Эрмитаж (586 тыс.)
VK	34 тыс.	+11%	Эрмитаж (295 тыс.)
Facebook	21 тыс.	+8%	Третьяковская галерея (133 тыс.)
Twitter	103 тыс.	+0,6%	Эрмитаж (792 тыс.)

Leaders in Follower Growth



Video Rules in Lockdown

YouTube surged in popularity, with a third of the pages launched and reactivated after the coronavirus pandemic broke out.

+46%

Change in average ER per post after lockdown start

+139%

Average change in followers in January-August 2020

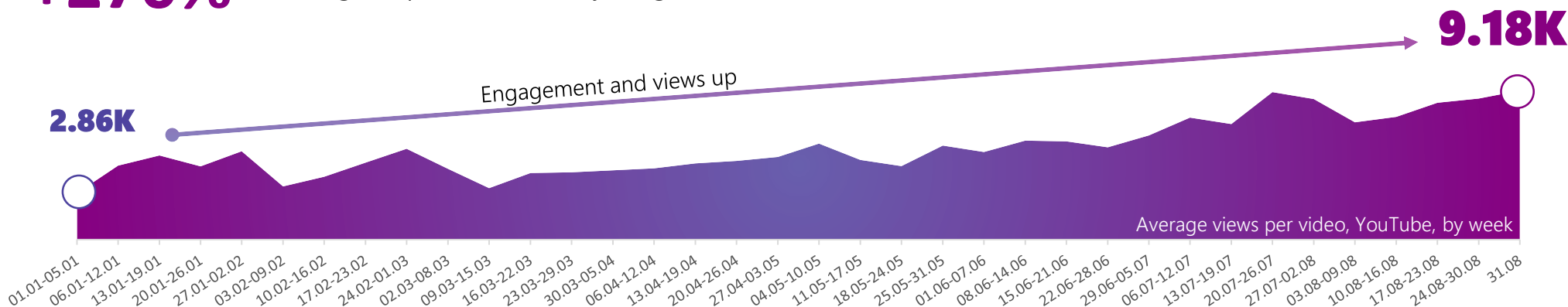
+270%

Change in posts in January-August 2020



Leaders on YouTube

Tretyakov Gallery	141K followers
Tsarskoe Selo Museum	21.6 average ER
Tsarskoe Selo Museum	52K average views per video



Museum vlogs undergo transformation from lectures, announcements and media coverage to video tours

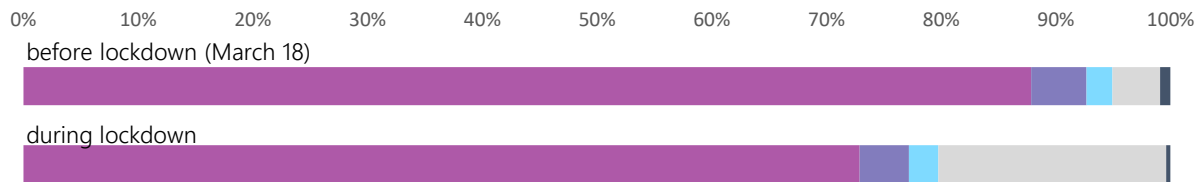
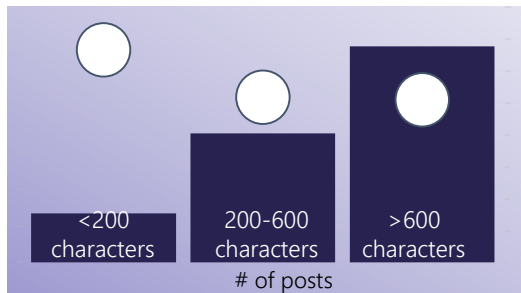
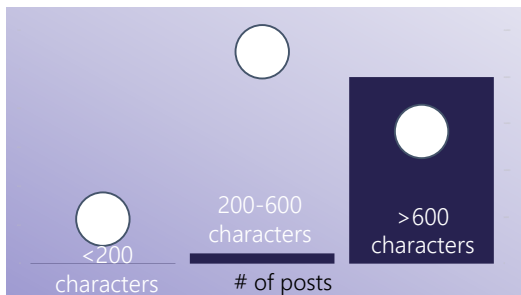
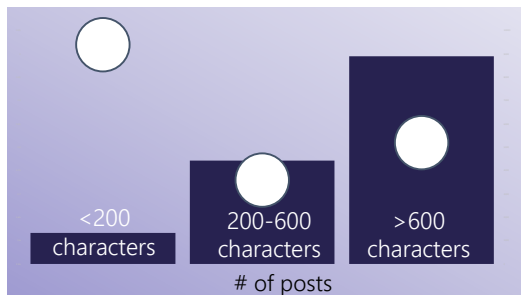
→ OWN CONTENT

EXHIBIT 3. CONTENT STRATEGIES: FORMATS AND ENGAGEMENT

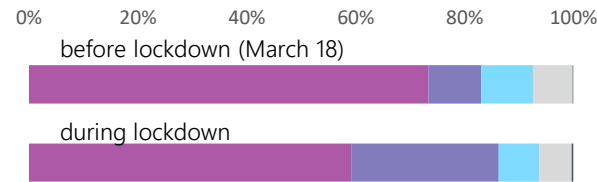
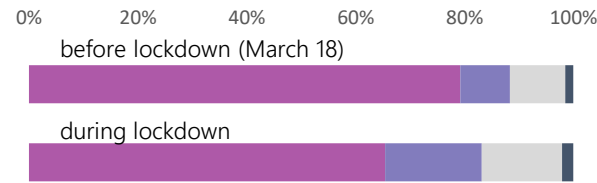
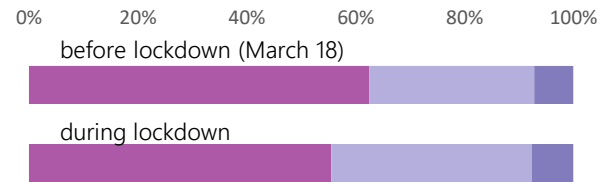
Average Engagement Rate



Engagement Rate Across Post Lengths



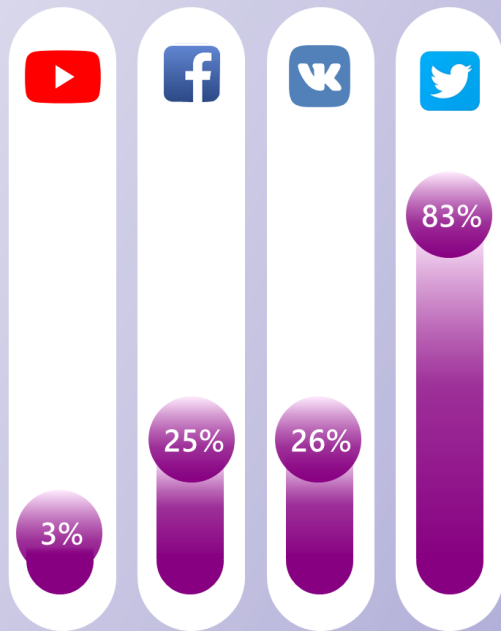
Post Formats



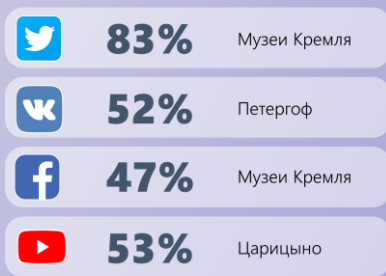
Average Engagement Rate



Response Rate*

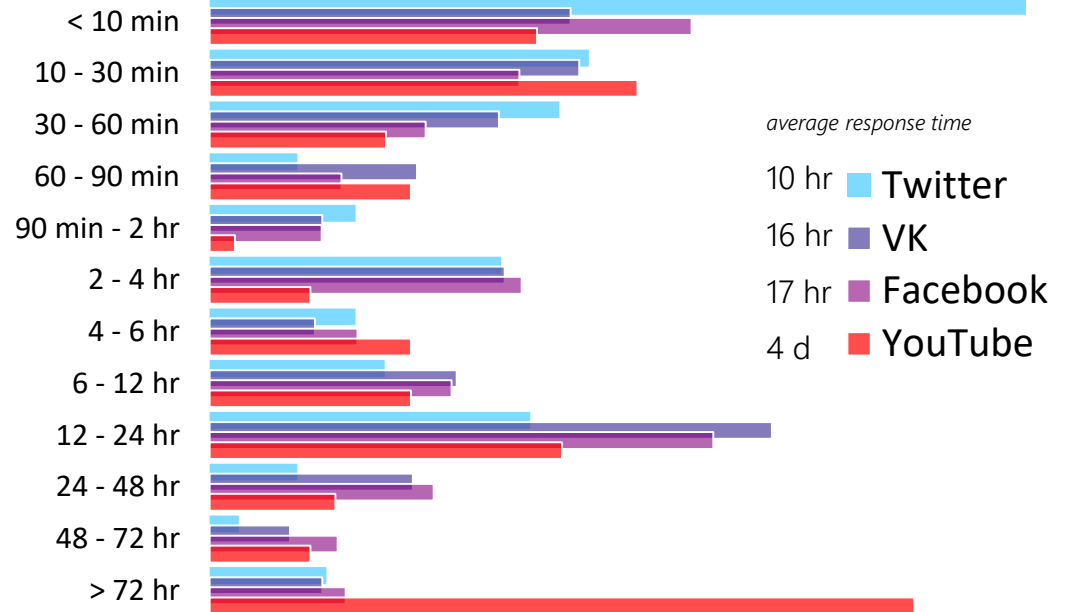


Leaders in Response Rate

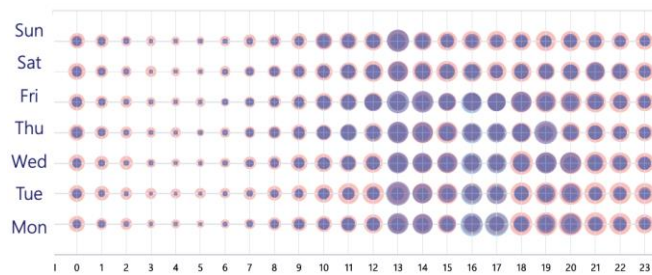


* not available for Instagram

Response Time



Best Time for Posting**



** posts and comments; data available only for VK, Facebook & YouTube