MISSION AGENCIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

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Some initial observations about the use of social media by mission agencies in the UK.
Category: Observations

I'm just starting a short research project looking at the use of social media by mission agencies. My aim is to discover what agencies are putting in their social media feeds and to see what their impact is. The initial step in the research was to look across the agency sector as a whole and to see which agencies were using which social media channels.

I took a sample of 148 mission agencies from the Global Connections web page (it's the same sample I've used for other work). The first step was to examine the front page of the agencies' websites and to see which agencies linked to social media channels. This was a convenient measure as it meant that I had only to look at 148 different web pages, rather than search each of the social media channels 148 times (think about it). However, it wasn't entirely successful as some agencies which I know to have extensive social media presence listed nothing on their front page. I'm not sure why this is, but it does mean that I will have to search all of the individual social media channels at some point in the future.

The next stage will be to take a much smaller sample of agencies and to analyse what actually goes into their social media feeds and what the response is.

Taking the whole sample of 148 agencies:

- 69% linked to a Facebook page from their home page,
- 57% linked to a Twitter account
- 33% linked to a YouTube channel
- 32% linked to Instagram

102 of the agencies had links to social media pages on their website home page, of these:

- 99% linked to Facebook
- 83% linked to Twitter
- 48% linked to YouTube
- 46% linked to Instagram

At the moment this doesn't tell us a great deal, other than that lots of agencies use Facebook but far fewer use Instagram. However, an initial glance at a number of agencies shows that the impact of these social media channels is limited. It is rare for the number of people following an agency on any particular channel to exceed the low thousands, and in some cases, it falls to the hundreds or even tens. While a few agency YouTube videos have been viewed 10,000 times, there are others that have less than 20 views, with a rough median lying in the low hundreds.

Clearly, there is a lot more counting and number crunching to be done before any firm conclusions can be drawn, but these initial figures are interesting.