

Digital marketing strategy

WORK PACKAGE 7

Outplacement Support For Doctorates In Emerging Areas – OUTDOC

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ABSTRACT:	This report outlines the dissemination plan to be followed for the overall duration of the project. More specifically, the report initially identifies the stakeholders to be targeted and the most appropriate means to approach each one of them. The report also presents the dissemination activities planned, such as attending and organising events (i.e. workshops, conferences, briefings and open days), circulating frequent newsletters, publishing press releases, etc. Furthermore, the report presents the dissemination material prepared, such as logo design, design of promotional material (poster, leaflets, etc.) and the project's website.
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1 Introduction

Digital tools provide us an easy to use way of reaching different audiences. As OUTDOC is aimed at multiple audiences, from educators, doctoral students and employers, a digital marketing strategy is necessary in order to present the idea to as many stakeholders as possible. Nowadays, both society and the job market are fast changing and highly specialized. The merging sectors are changing due to technological development and it is expected that these sectors will require a high-level of research skills amongst other necessary abilities. According to the current situation in the job market, these jobs will not be occupied due to an insufficient number of doctorate holders. Due to this, the objective of this project is to contribute to the employability of PhD students in emerging sectors by developing a clear and simple way to transition from the Master to the PhD program and eventually to the labour market and exploring alternative ways of insertion into the labour market.

Project Outplacement Support For Doctorates In Emerging Areas - OUTDOC is aimed at improving the employability of doctorate holders in emerging sectors by giving them the opportunity to participate in learning mobility. During its course of three years, the partner institutions will conduct a study on the skills that employers see as the most important in their employees with PhD, design a program and test it with a limited number of students.

The main purpose of this project is the improvement of employability amongst PhDs in emerging sectors. Job opportunities for this group of students can nowadays be found all across Europe. Geographical mobility increases their employability according to the predictions. PhD graduates are and will be increasingly important for economic and social development in developed countries in general and in Europe in particular.

This digital marketing strategy plan outlines the goals, specific objectives, timetables and other online activities.

2 Digital marketing timeline

Delivery Number	Title	Partner	Dissemination Level	Delivery Month
1	Website creation	USAL/Surovina	Public	M1-M6
2	Creation of social media pages	UM/Surovina	Public	M1-M6
3	Preparation of materials for website	All partners	Public	M1-M36
4	Preparation of materials for social media	All partners	Public	M1-M36
5	Press releases	All partners	Public	M1-M36
6	Yammer social media page	Surovina/USAL	Public	M19

3 Digital marketing strategy

In order to achieve effective communication results, a variety of tools is needed. The digital marketing strategy will include communication to the general public as well as to the main stakeholders - PhD students, universities, enterprises. It is strategically important for the OUTDOC project to have active partners in their local and national communities in order to create public awareness of the project and its results. This means that all local activities which include press releases, brochures, informal meetings with stakeholders are to be pursued during the course of the project.

Generally, digital strategy will cover three main channels, which will be further presented in this plan:

- Project website
- Social media
- News media
- Newsletter

3.1 Project website

Project website will be utilized as the main platform for communication activities. It will also be used to publish own materials that will later be shared on social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn). The site will be available in English. It will be used as a collection of all materials and publications that will be created, such as work package reports etc. The website will serve as a platform for exchanging ideas, drafting newsletters and to share related content on a blog. Partners will update it regularly to offer visitors relevant data on past and future activities and materials.

The project website will be available at <https://outdoc.usal.es/> (Image 1) and will offer the following categories of content:

- About the project (vision, mission, problems with employability of PhDs)
- About the consortium
- Survey (one month only)
- Survey results and other outcomes
- Media corner (press releases)
- Registration for newsletter
- Related content (similar projects and publications)

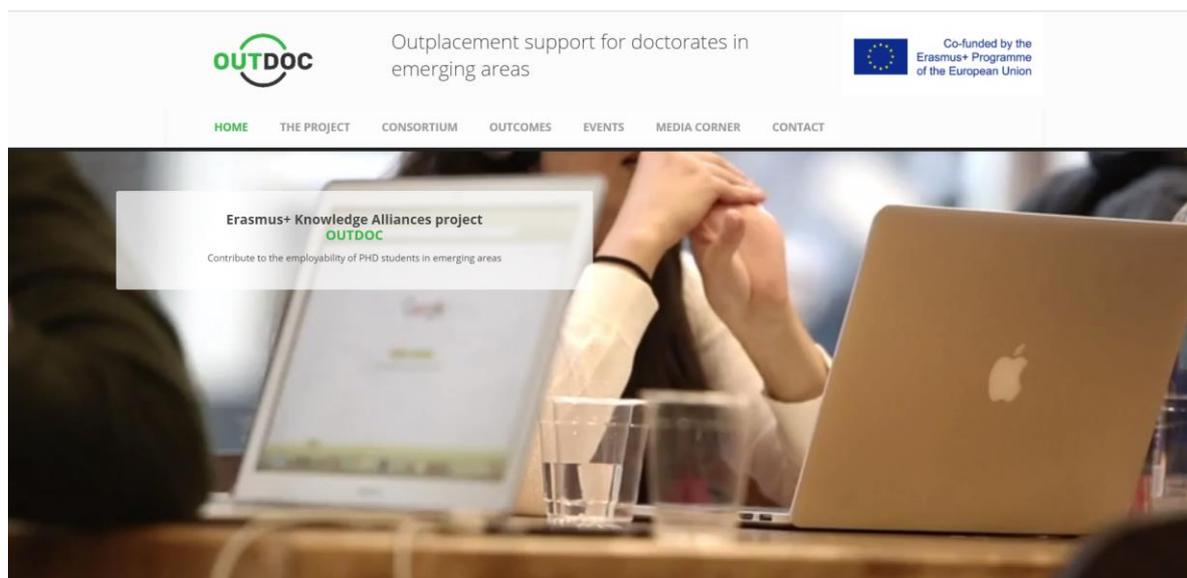


Image 1. Project website.

The project website will be linked to partners' institutional websites and vice versa. It will also be repeatedly advertised via social media by general posts, such as presentations of our mission or by sharing articles, published on the website. All partners are expected to contribute content and dissemination materials for the website. It will be updated regularly during the project lifetime, but will also be maintained after the completion of the project. It is planned that after the project is finished, the platform will also serve as a bridge between employers and potential employees, who will be able to search for posted jobs.

3.2 Social media

Social media is one of the most influential media. It enables easy reach of different segments of the public that would otherwise be difficult to communicate to. The main social media channels will be LinkedIn for professional dissemination and Facebook/Instagram for more social aspects. Since the traffic from social media sites is usually highly targeted, the probability to draw attention to the project is generally higher than using a search engine query. Another important benefit of traffic from social media is that it is essentially free or relatively low cost compared to other forms of traffic generation, so it will be used regularly to communicate to our target audiences. We will also utilize a set of hashtags that are related to the project's purpose, such as #PhD, #doctorat, #highereducation, #emerging etc. Hashtags will connect the posts to similar content from other organizations and individuals. If applicable, we will also join relevant groups that are aimed at similar stakeholders, such as groups of doctoral students in emerging areas. We will also use #outdoc on all social media posts related to OUTDOC to easily collect all posts and enable easier searching.



Image 2. Instagram profile.

Since PhDs, and especially PhDs that want to work in the digital-technological sector, are familiar with modern communication means, we see the great importance of social media as a communication tool. OUTDOC project will be active in multiple European countries, but our goal is also to reach people from other countries. Due to this, social media will be a great tool to inform the public about current activities, publications and events that will take place during the time span of 3 years. All communication will be done in English.

In order to execute a successful social media campaign, we will adopt the following list of guidelines:

- Identification of target audience needs: What do the target audiences want? What are their needs with regard to project activities? The project events, the direct communication with the public and the theoretical studies will shed light on the specific needs of each target or stakeholder group. The promotional activities will then be structured around these needs.
- Regular online presence with updates. It is essential that project partners post regular, useful or entertaining updates to maintain an active online presence and high level of interest for all target groups. The more often the project shares interesting or informative content with fans

and followers, the more often it will catch their attention. While it may seem counterproductive to spend time finding an article or blog post that project target groups and followers would like and then sharing it, it actually builds credibility and authority in the eyes of the readers. Over time, the project will become known as something to trust in the mind of its readers.

- Building relationships with target groups and stakeholders. As mentioned above, creating relationships with target groups and stakeholders is one of the parts of the social media marketing that gives it so much power. These relationships can be built by posting updates that users actually want to read, not just a never-ending stream of unrelated or uninteresting pitches. Project updates must be used to inform, entertain and address the needs of target audiences. Opening up a two-way conversation with them via the comments sections and message boards that many social media sites include are paramount for the success of the campaign. These relationships build credibility and help keep the project in the mind of the reader.
- Maintaining a consistent message. When posting information across several different sites, it is easy for the message the sender is trying to convey to become garbled as they try to tailor it for a variety of media and audiences. The tone or codification of the message for Facebook will not work on Twitter. This is important for the sender of the message to know as successful communication with online communities requires specific “language”.
- Participation in the community. As stated above, social media sites are usually tightly knit communities. In order to gain trust (and followers) within one of these communities, one must be willing to participate as well. This is usually done in the form of commenting on the postings of others and the sharing or re-sharing of posts.
- Paying attention to the posts generated by the project. In the effort to maintain a regular online presence, it is often tempting to skip editing, proofreading and screening the content of a post or a message. However, this entails a significant degree of risk. In the business world, for example, unfiltered content has been the downfall of many companies trying to establish a social media presence. Even a simple spelling error can cause a post to have unfavourable effects, so it is imperative that project posts are screened, edited and proofread before coming online.
- Raising awareness inside and outside of the Internet. The social media campaign must be effectively coupled and matched with all other dissemination activities in order to raise the widest possible awareness of target groups and stakeholders who may be or may not be online.

Three main social media platforms will be used – LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. LinkedIn was chosen as it is known to be a “professional social networking site”. According to previous studies, it is especially popular with students (Osman, 2020). This is the main reason for choosing this platform. Facebook on the other hand, has a higher number of users and thus wider reach. Lastly, Instagram will be used to present visual materials and share articles, produced by project partners.

The social media pages will be used for publishing information about dissemination activities, project results, significant events and relevant news. We will not only project information, but also other related content, for example educational content related to the topics. All project partners will be actively involved in providing materials, either by finding information online or by producing short articles.

Social media publishing will be planned at least a month in advance and scheduled, if the platform enables this function (Facebook and Instagram). Otherwise, the content will be manually published (LinkedIn). Access to the social media platforms will be provided to Surovina, UM, USAL and other project partners will request it for publishing. The content should be posted regularly to improve visibility of content.

3.3 Newsletter

Newsletter will also be utilized as a part of our digital marketing strategy. The website visitors will be able to register for newsletters that will be sent out two to four times per year. The newsletter will mainly cover press releases, general updates on project progress and past activities, reports on visited conferences, updates on project meetings and information on future activities. Project partners will also be asked to provide any other ideas for newsletter content.

4 Overview of digital marketing activities

Channel	Content	Responsible partner
Project website http://outdoc.usal.es/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> About the project About the consortium Survey Outcomes (reports) Media corner (press releases) Newsletter registration Related content 	USAL/Surovina
Social media https://www.linkedin.com/company/outdoc https://www.facebook.com/projectoutdoc https://www.instagram.com/outdocproject/	Cross-posting of content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles about employability issues, soft skills requirements Related content from other sources Invitation to events Press releases 	All partners
Newsletter		All partners

5 Conclusion

This digital strategy plan is a flexible and light-weight plan. Based on the defined target groups and objectives described in the *Dissemination and exploitation plan*, the communication strategy is aimed at maximizing the use of project deliverables.

Digital tools will be utilized by all partners, who will be encouraged to disseminate news about OUTDOC on their own websites and social media channels. Dissemination through the digital tools is especially important as they are easy and quick to use and can reach many target audiences. Thus, the digital marketing strategy will be regularly updated to suit the changing requirements of the project.



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