

How to succeed in public relations

An easy guide for all iGEM Teams

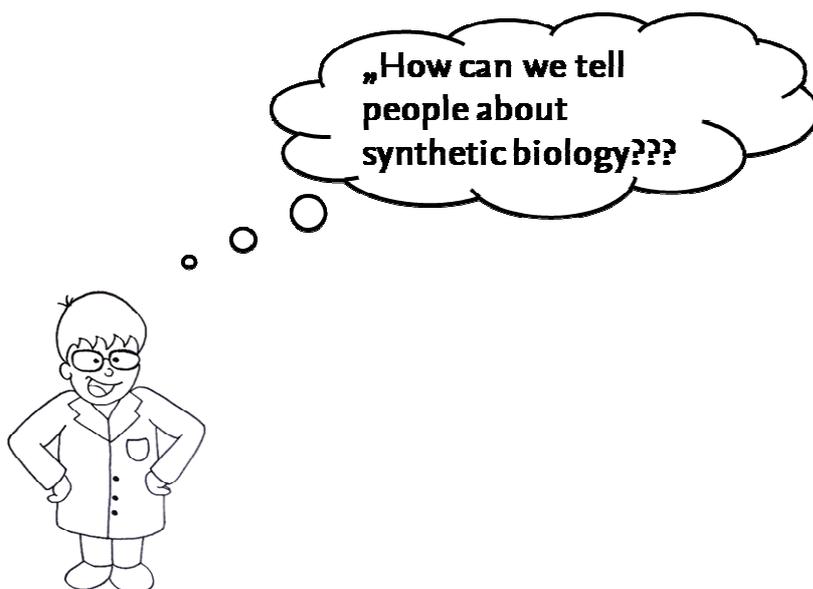


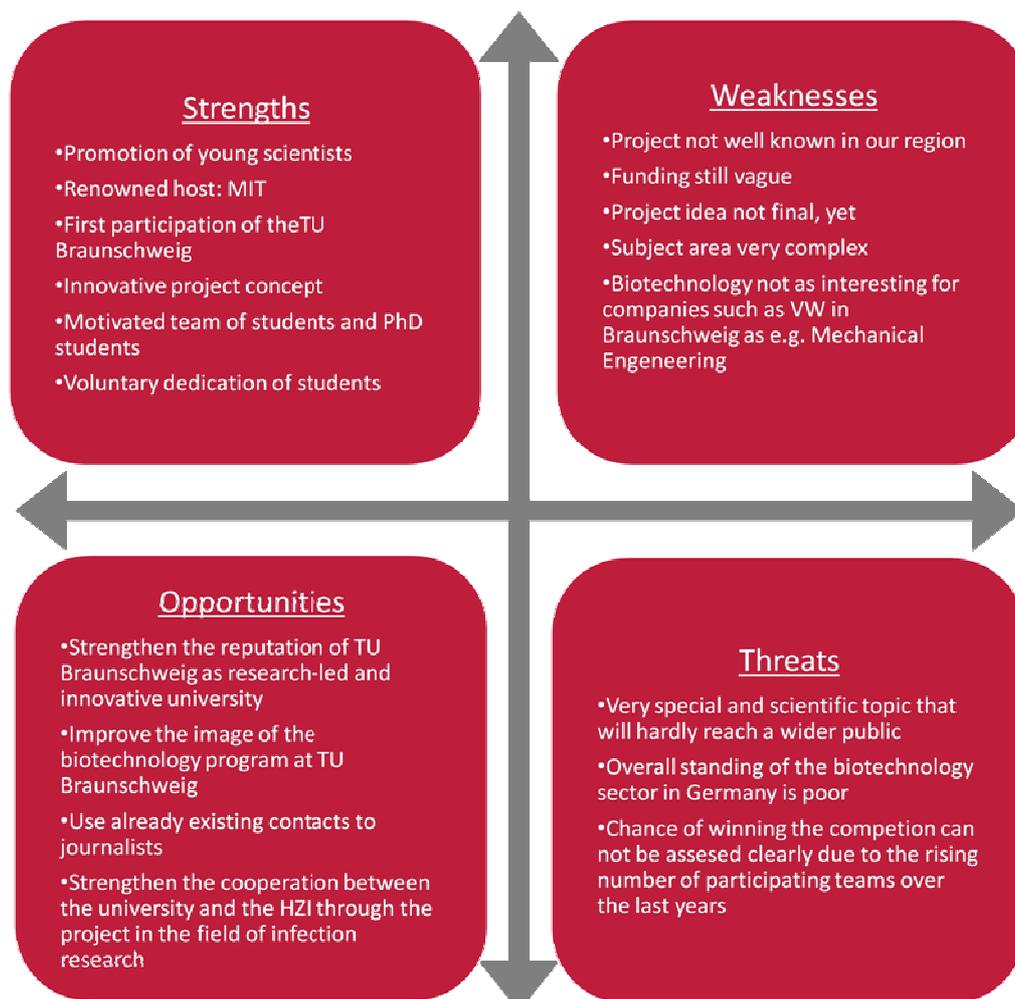
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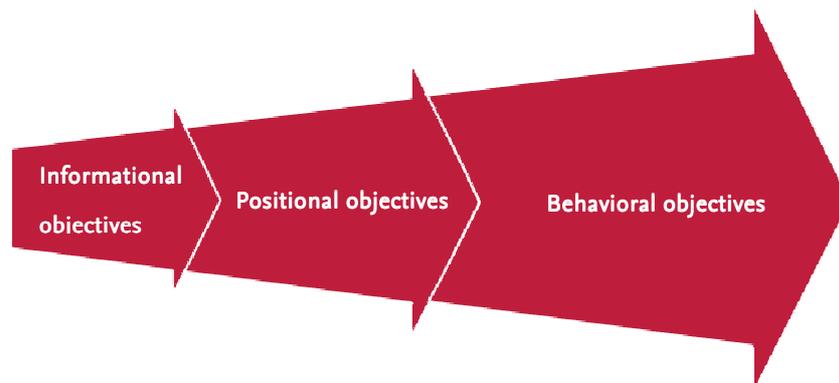
1) Communication strategy

Before any communication activities are started, it is essential to develop a communication strategy. A communication strategy is a strategic plan, which helps to pursue the objectives of public relations. As the activities should be effective on the long run, a coherent concept is needed.

The first step is the analysis of the initial situation and the development of a SWOT-Analysis where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats going along with the project and synthetic biology in general are identified. This is an example for the result of an SWOT-analysis as it has been completed for the iGEM Team Braunschweig in 2013.



Then the objectives as well as internal and external target groups have to be constituted. Also the messages that should be made public and the instruments for implementation have to be defined. Last but not least, a timeline where all dates and corresponding activities are recorded, has to be prepared.



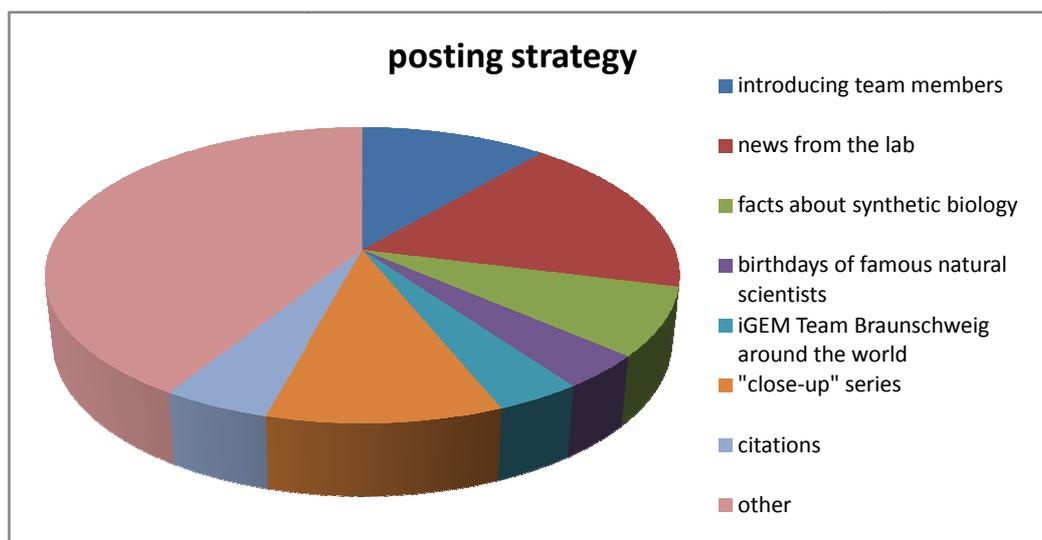
One part of the strategy is the formulation of specific objectives that range from informational to behavioral objectives. The former are more general and try to get the attention of the people. Positional objectives point out the advantages of the project and last but not least the behavioral objectives try to change peoples' minds and call to action.

Based on the SWOT-Analysis and the objectives the target groups can be defined. Internal and external target groups as well as opinion leaders and opinion spreaders have to be identified. Afterwards the special messages for these groups are phrased before the real implementation can start.

A detailed example of a communication strategy can be downloaded from our wiki.

2) Implementing the communication strategy

Implementing the communication strategy one should first of all focus on the internal activities. This is to say all the organizational work, as creating an own iGEM e-mail address, that helps you to better perform in the following external activities. To facilitate the communication processes among the team, a private Facebook group can be helpful. Our team used such a group to discuss and plan posts for Facebook and twitter. In a separate calendar e.g. the Google calendar, an editorial schedule can be created. It is advisable to develop a posting-strategy with different threads of topics. We had for example the following topics: introducing all team members, news about the laboratory work, interesting facts about synthetic biology, birthdays of famous natural scientists, iGEM Team Braunschweig around the world, a “close-up”-series and citations of natural scientists that are linked to the iGEM idea. The following diagram shows which topics were posted how often to provide a diversified fanpage.



Concerning the external activities generating a corporate design should be the first step. This gives your team a recognition value and makes you look more professional for the

target groups. This includes a logo, iGEM t-shirts, standardized patterns for letters, presentations, press releases, fonts and so on. Here you can see the corporate design of the iGEM Team Braunschweig:



The corporate design is used for the web presence, the Twitter account, the press releases, the wiki, the t-shirts and letters, to just name a range of applications.

As it is important to get people to know about the existence of your team and your project, you should try to persuade important stakeholders of your ideas. In the case of the iGEM competition this could be your university, your city, research institutions or companies.

Having set up all the important channels it's time for the first press release. Therefore a press distribution list, including specialized and daily press, is needed. This means that you should read up on the right contact persons in the local or science-department of the newspapers, radio stations, online departments etc. However, your press release should not only be sent to the people on your press distribution list, but can also be uploaded on special gateways for press releases. You can choose from a wide range of offers, but pay attention to take those that are relevant for your topic.

Here you can see a collection of some German gateways that are free of charge:

Gateway	Web page
inar	www.inar.de
News4press	www.news4press.com
openpr	www.openpr.de
Live-pr	www.live-pr.com
Pr-inside	www.pr-inside.com
prcenter	www.prcenter.de

Last but not least also events can be used to generate news coverage. Keep in mind, that all events you plan should somehow be made public either by yourself or by journalists that you invited in advance. All activities should be accompanied by reportings on your website, on your Facebook fanpage and Twitter account and maybe by a press release.

3) Media Coverage Report

We feel that all the thoroughly planned events and activities around the world shouldn't be overlooked and we hope that this tool will help you to fully leverage the impact of your activities!

As it comes to press relations, the *coverage report* is the most important instrument. It contains the *clippings* that were collected over a certain period of time, in our case half a year. *Clippings* are press cuttings, thus all publications that are related to the company or organization in question. Clippings are the most important instrument to measure the success of public relation activities. They mirror the publicity of an organization and thus its success and image. The coverage report usually starts with an overview chart of all press activities.



Media Coverage Report
iGEM Team Technische Universität Braunschweig 2013
October 2013

Communication channel	Coverage
igem-braunschweig.de	3.241
facebook.com/iGEMBraunschweig	38.26
twitter.com/iGEM_Braunschweig	2.611

Date	Publication (print)	Coverage
27.06.2013	Peiner Allgemeine Zeitung	57.795
01.07.2013	Newsletter I U Braunschweig July/August 2013	3.360
10.07.2013	Neue Braunschweiger	405.443

Date	Publication (online)	Page impressions
06.05.2013	facebook.com/helmholtz.hzi	3.341
23.05.2013	hausdenwissenschaft.org	165.389
23.05.2013	tj-braunschweig.de	271.180
24.05.2013	nar.de	4.354
24.05.2013	live-pr.com	1.627.195
24.05.2013	news4press.com	1.000.000

The front page of our coverage report.

The second part consists of the detailed clippings with the original press cuttings or screen shots from the websites where the article was published. Every article gets its own page in the report where the source, the date, the kind of publication (print or online) and the reach are documented.

Date	10.07.2013
Medium	Neue Braunschweiger
Publication (print/online):	print
Frequency of publication	2 times a week
Coverage	495,443

GESCHENK

Familienpaten helfen

Die PSD Bank unterstützt den Kinderschutzbund zum dritten Mal



Carsten Graf (PSD Bank Braunschweig) übergab eine Spende an (v.l.) Annette Brühl, Dr. Regina Olshausen und Astrid Keller vom Deutschen Kinderschutzbund. Foto: Peter Sierig

Braunschweig. Bereits zum dritten Mal unterstützt die PSD Bank den Deutschen Kinderschutzbund bei der Fortbildung seiner Familienpaten mit 20 000 Euro.

„Die Familienpaten helfen jungen Familien, die sich vorübergehend in schwierigen Lebenssituationen befinden. Dieser ehrenamtliche Einsatz ist für die Gesellschaft sehr wertvoll und wird von uns gern unterstützt,“ sagte Carsten Graf, Vorstandssprecher der PSD Bank, bei der Übergabe der Spende an die Vorstandsvorsitzende des Kinderschutzbundes Dr. Regina Olshausen.



Studenten nehmen an iGEM-Wettbewerb teil

Eine Forschungsgruppe aus elf Biotechnologie-Studenten (Foto) vertritt in diesem Jahr erstmals die Technische Universität Braunschweig beim renommierten iGEM-Wettbewerb des Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Die Bürgerstiftung und die Ecki-Wohlgelegen-Stiftung machen die Teilnahme an der Europa-Auscheidung, die im Oktober in Lyon stattfindet, finanziell möglich. Die Studenten haben ein Konzept entwickelt, das die Nutzung von Bakterien für industrielle Anwendungen erleichtert. oh

An example of a print clipping in a local newspaper.

Which figures does the report include and what do they tell us?

Creating a coverage report at least three different kinds of publications have to be taken into account: print, online and social media. Of course also television and radio programs should be considered. In our case there were press reportings about our team in print, online and social media. That is why we will focus on these three channels in the following.

Print: To calculate the coverage of a newspaper article you need the daily print run. Coverage means how many people could have come into contact with your article. In 2010 the average number of readers of one newspaper was determined to be 2.8. Accordingly the coverage of a newspaper article equals the daily print run multiplied by 2.8.

Example: The daily print run of the newspaper are 20,641 copies. $20,641 \text{ copies} \times 2.8 \text{ (readers per copy)} = 57,795 \text{ coverage}$.

Date	27.06.2013
Medium	Peiner Allgemeine Zeitung
Publication (print/online):	print
Frequency of publication	daily
Coverage	57,795

DONNERSTAG, 27. JUNI 2013

BRAUNSCHWEIG

TU nimmt an globalem Bio-Wettbewerb teil

Team des Instituts für Biochemie, Biotechnologie und Bioinformatik forscht an Bakterienstämmen



Elf Studenten forschen an Bakterienstämmen, um die TU in einem Bio-Wettbewerb zu vertreten.

Braunschweig. Zum ersten Mal vertritt ein Team der TU Braunschweig die Universität beim iGEM-Wettbewerb (International Genetically Engineered Machine Competition) des Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston.

Der Wettbewerb ist ein internationaler Wettstreit der synthetischen Biologie. Insgesamt 216 studentische Teams aus der ganzen Welt konkurrieren in diesem Jahr darum, die besten biologischen Konzepte für wissenschaftliche oder gesellschaftliche Probleme zu entwickeln.

Bereits seit Mai laufen die Projektvorbereitungen in den Laboren des TU-Instituts für Biochemie, Biotechnologie und Bioinformatik. Von den Ver-

staltern des Wettbewerbs haben die elf Studenten Bio-Bausteine für das Projekt zugeschickt bekommen. In ihrem Projekt wollen sie drei Bakterienstämme – ein Trio von Escheria coli Stämmen – so miteinander koppeln, dass sie symbiotisch voneinander abhängen.

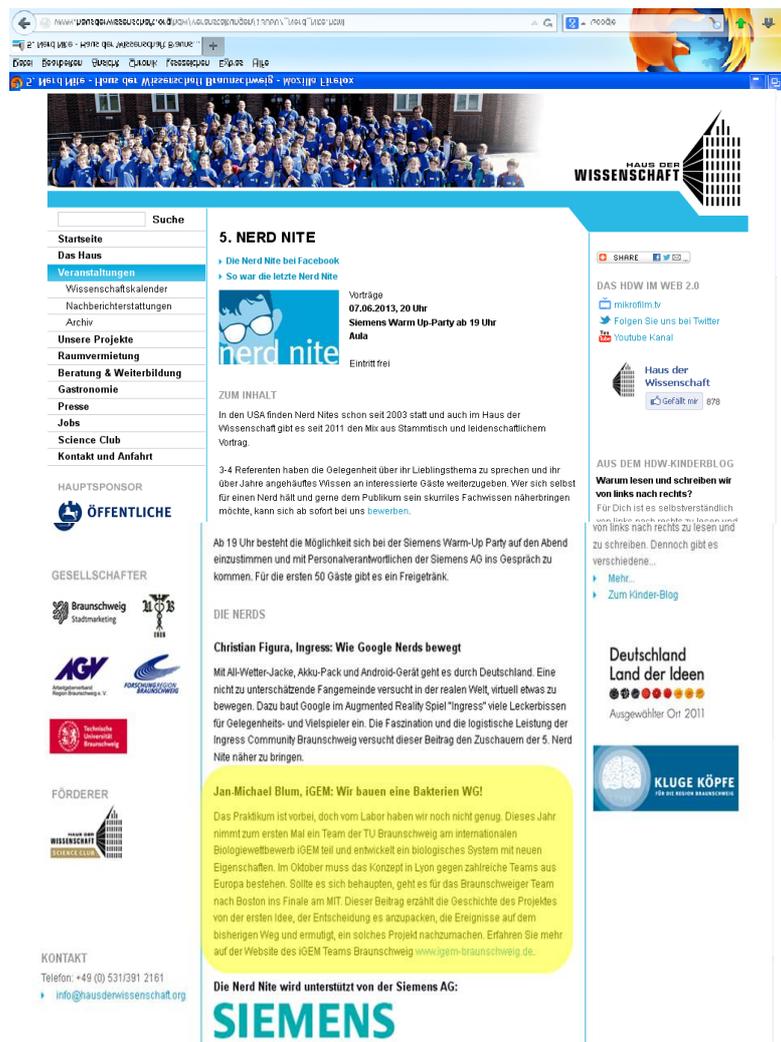
Dadurch wird eine gegenseitige Regulierung der Bakterien erreicht. Ziel der Studenten ist es, ein System zu schaffen, das einem mehrzelligen Organismus ähnelt.

Die Stämme können dann Aufgaben untereinander aufteilen. Bakterien werden schon jetzt immer häufiger dazu eingesetzt, Industrieprodukte herzustellen oder verunreinigtes Wasser aufzubereiten.

Online: The most important figure are the so called “Page Impressions” that tell about the number of users who accessed a single website. The figures are collected and summarized to a monthly figure.

Example: The average visits per month are **165,389**.

Date	23.05.2013
Medium	hausderwissenschaft.org
Publication (print/online):	online
Frequency of publication	daily
Page Impressions	165,389



The screenshot shows the homepage of 'Haus der Wissenschaft'. The main content area features an announcement for the '5. NERD NITE' event. The event is scheduled for 07.06.2013 at 20:00 Uhr in the Aula. It is a free event (Eintritt frei) and includes a 'Siemens Warm-Up-Party ab 19 Uhr'. The announcement text describes the event as a mix of a Stammtisch and a passionate lecture, with 3-4 referents presenting their work. A yellow callout box highlights that Jan-Michael Blum from iGEM is participating with a project titled 'Wir bauen eine Bakterien WG!'. The Siemens logo is prominently displayed at the bottom of the page, indicating their sponsorship of the event.

Social Media: The coverage of social media activities is not as easy to measure as print and online activities. This is because there is a lot of data that could be taken into account. For example the number of fans/followers, the number of people talking about a fanpage, the activity of the fans and so on. To make these figures comparable to each other we decided to use the monthly outreach of our Facebook fanpage following the procedure for online coverage.

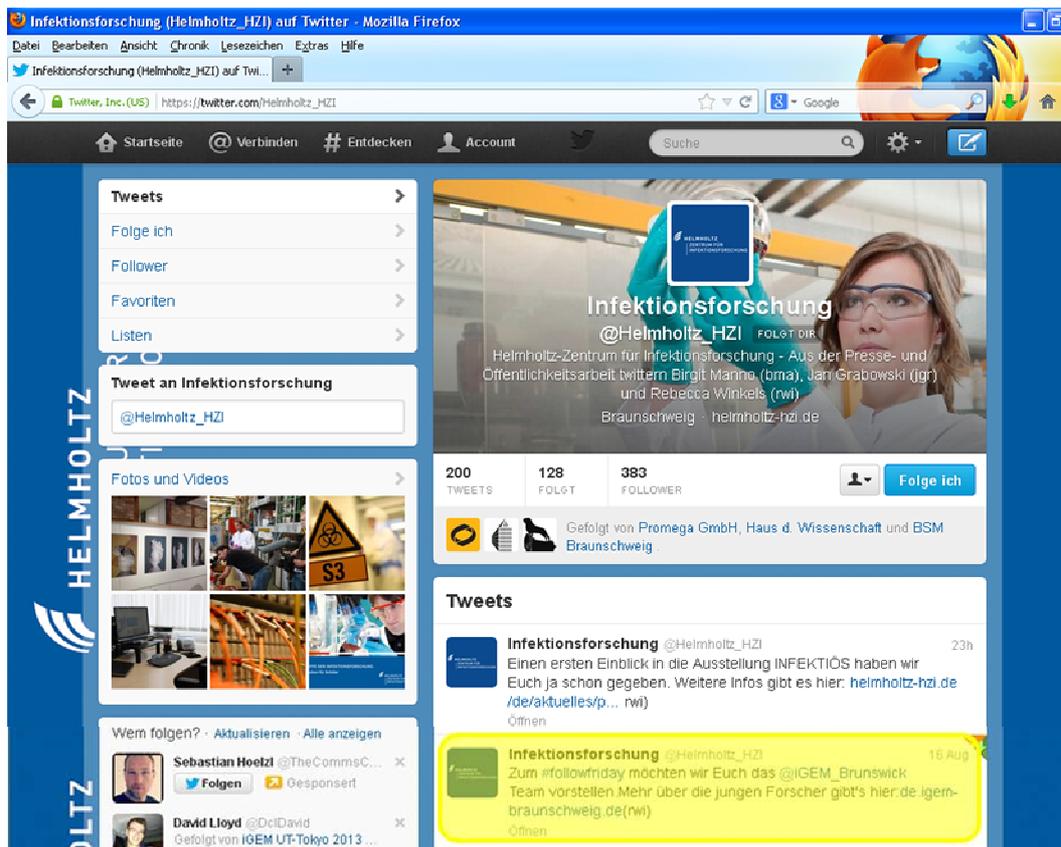
Example: Our fanpage had an average monthly reach of 3,826 single users. Reach in this case means the number of single users that saw any content related to the fanpage during one month.

To measure the success of Twitter activities a formula for coverage that factors in the number of tweets during one month and multiplies it with the number of followers can be used.¹ As there is no automatic or provided tool to see twitter statistics, this is the easiest way to measure the reach.

¹<http://www.monitoring-blog.de/2013/03/reichweite-und-interaktion-auf-twitter-messen/> [23.09.2013].

Example: In August the Helmholtz Center of Infection Research (HZI) tweeted about us and recommended our Twitter account to their followers. Since the formula is based on the monthly outreach, the HZI's 31 tweets and 383 followers in August have to be taken into account. Hence, the monthly reach was **11,873** single users.

Date	16.08.2013
Medium	twitter.com/Helmholtz_HZI
Publication (print/online):	online
Frequency of publication	daily
Page Impressions	11,873



As an example the full clipping report of the iGEM Team Braunschweig 2013 can be downloaded from our wiki.

4) Social Media Analysis – Facebook

As Facebook was our most important communication channel, we would like to provide some guidelines for future iGEM teams on how to use this channel more effectively for Human Practices activities. Therefore we analyzed our own fanpage exemplary for others to show how to optimize activities on this channel.

As iGEM is an international competition, it is most important to post and twitter in English to reach the fans and followers worldwide.

Global origin of fans

Discover where the 306 fans are located. Click on a region to see more details. Click again to zoom out.



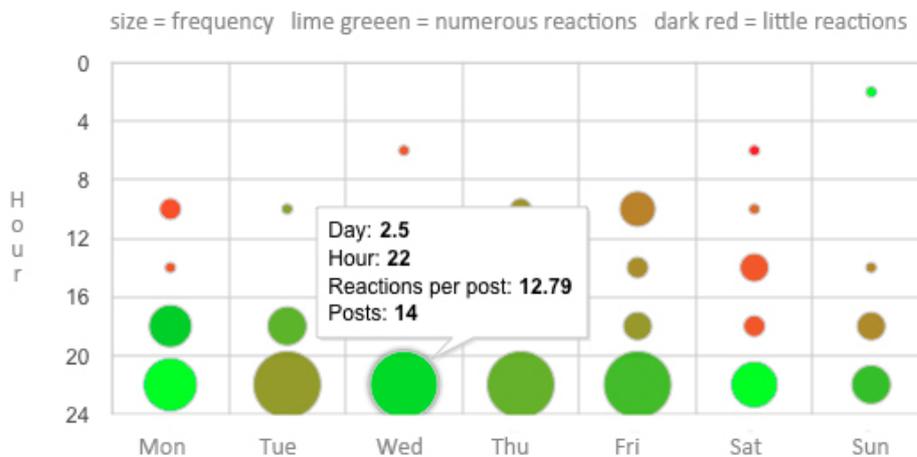
The graphic shows where on the world our Facebook fans are located.

(Source: <http://www.fanpagekarma.com/>)

Regarding to the country of origin of the fans, a matched posting strategy can be used. As expected the fans of our fanpage mostly come from Germany. However, we also reached stakeholders in multiple other countries. As most of our fans come from Europe and North and South America we chose to post and twitter at 10pm German time. The following diagram shows that this tactic was the right decision:

Best times for postings

The tables show times and days when posts were published. The bigger the bubble, the more posts. The color indicates the achieved degree of engagement; the greener the bubble the more likes, shares and comments.



(Source: <http://www.fanpagekarma.com/>)

The best time for posts is 10pm. This daytime is perfect for European users who are at home after work but also for Americans where it is afternoon then.

Wednesday 10pm is the best time for posts. All in all we posted 14 times on Wednesday evenings and got an average of 12.79 reactions per post.



Summing up we can say that iGEM Teams can reach a wide range of stakeholders via Facebook as it is an international social network with a huge number of registered users. To get into a vivid dialog adjusting the times and language of posts is therefore useful.

If any further questions arise, please do not hesitate to contact us: igem@tu-braunschweig.de.

We hope you found this guide to successful public relations useful and it helps your team to better communicate the idea of synthetic biology.