

Independent social media for AMS Vice

**Considering an Independent Social Media Strategy for AMS Vice**

For Ian Stone, AMS Services Manager

AMS Nest

Vancouver, BC

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## **Abstract**

Social media has the power to connect and inform. When the right platform is harnessed, an account has the potential to impact lives. When multiple platforms are synchronized in their goal and intent, the effect is even greater. This report explores the possibility of creating a holistic social media for the AMS Vice. Currently, Vice has an Instagram, but it is recommended that it considers creating a corresponding Facebook and blog. This is suggested because the program is not well-known to students. Prior to the creation of an Instagram, the services were rarely used and event attendance was low. Vice is an incredible program and deserves an equally effective marketing strategy. A holistic strategy would benefit not only the program, but UBC students as well.

## Introduction

Through education, guidance, and support, Vice is an AMS program that helps individuals find balance amidst bad habits. The program's interdisciplinary approach emphasizes well being, destigmatization, and harm reduction. The end goal is to equip students with the necessary tools and information to make informed decisions. Created in 2015, Vice has strong ties with other AMS programs like Speakeasy and SASC (sexual assault support center). This year, is Vice's largest overhaul, with more volunteers and initiatives than ever before.

The AMS Vice program is extremely underrated and overlooked. Last year, only nine individuals attended the peer support dialogue sessions. This extremely low conversion rate left AMS with no choice but to evaluate Vice to determine whether it is financially feasible to offer the program next year.

AMS wants to consolidate all of its services under a single roof. The idea of each service controlling its own social media brings up the very valid concern of brand unity. However, this severely limits each service's reach. Vice is forced to share a single Facebook page with six other services. This often bottlenecks the marketing process and increases the chances of Vice's voice being drowned out.

I suggest that Vice follow in the footsteps of SASC and be granted its own social media freedom. Specifically, it's own Facebook page and the ability to market on whatever platform will benefit potential participants.

Through Instagram analytics, surveys, and market research, this proposal will examine the validity of whether Vice should be given social media control.

Considering the power of social media, I recommend Vice be given permission to express its unique voice through an in-house marketing strategy.

## **Report**

### **The Importance of a Holistic Social Media Strategy**

Instagram is extremely saturated, making it incredibly difficult for pages to stand out. Having a presence on multiple platforms is the gold standard for any business or service's marketing strategy. While the majority of undergraduate students at UBC likely use Instagram as their main social media platform, others like Youtube and Twitter are valuable as well. In a way, having a presence on several platforms is a foolproof way for a service to cover all its bases. Certain individuals prefer some platforms over the other. A holistic approach is a way of ensuring that Vice's services are broadcasted to as many students as possible.

### **Relevant Service Example**

SASC (Sexual Assault Support Center) is one of AMS's seven services. It is the only one that has complete autonomy over its outreach and marketing. Not only does SASC have its own website and blog where it can outline its services in detail, but it has its own Facebook page.

SASC's personal website enables a deep dive of their services, mission and goals, all in a cohesive setting. As opposed to using just a single platform where users may have to sift through mounds of content to discover the service's "where, why, and how", SASC has effectively compiled its information into a succinct site. Not only does it direct users to its other platforms, but it is a space for longform content (ie: blogs, articles, interviews). This helps build trust around the service, as students can browse through a site created with care and intention.

SASC's holistic marketing approach has established it as a trustworthy and respected service. I believe Vice should follow in its footsteps as it has unique services to offer.

### **Vice's Current Social Media**

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Vice created an Instagram nearly a month and a half ago and it has definitely had an impact. Ever since it launched, event turnout and service usage has increased dramatically compared to previous years. While growing a following has been slow, engagement is high. This means many students are learning about the service and using it.

As mentioned before, Vice shares a Facebook page with the other AMS services. The benefits are that all the services are consolidated under one roof which houses a large audience and following. However, this is almost rendered redundant as there is a huge issue of bottlenecking when it comes to posting content. This can result in inconsistent content and delayed posting, on top of Vice's Identity being lost in the shuffle.

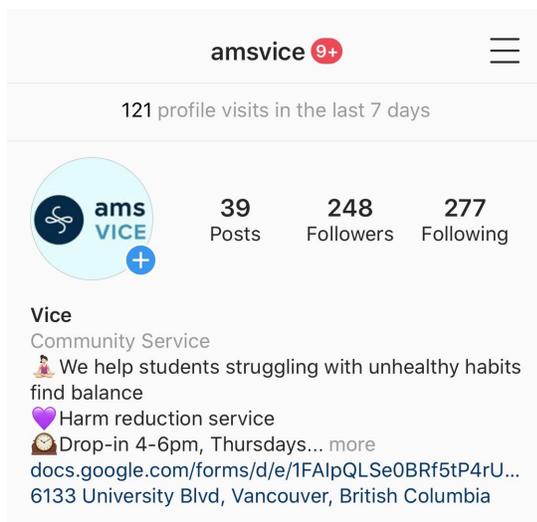


Figure 1.

Current following for AMS Vice on Instagram since October, 17, 2019

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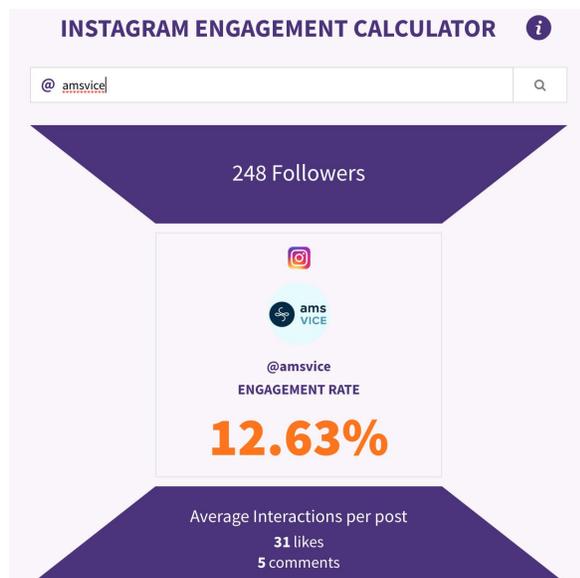


Figure 2.

*Current engagement rate for AMS Vice*

*\*Note, most accounts fall somewhere between 1-6%*

### **Survey Results of Coordinators and Volunteers**

The results of the surveys overwhelmingly conclude those involved in Vice believe a holistic media strategy would be beneficial. 80% of volunteers agree that the IG account has benefitted Vice, suggesting that social media is indeed working to increase usership and event attendance. 70% agree that Vice's social media strategy should expand to other media platforms (FB and blog) and 100% of the coordinators feel that a separate FB page should be created. These findings suggest that a holistic media strategy is supported and that the results from the IG are so impactful that expanding Vice's outreach would help the program tremendously.

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Do you think the IG account has benefitted Vice?

10 responses

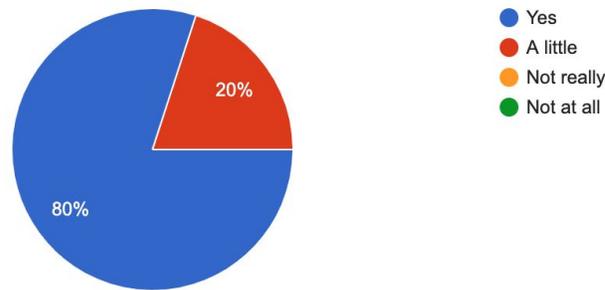
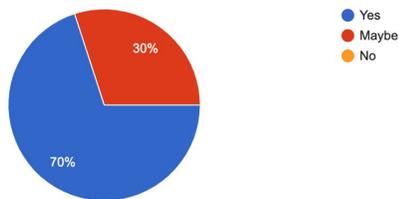


Figure 3. Volunteers response to whether they feel the IG account has benefitted Vice

Do you think Vice should create its own FB page and blog?

10 responses



How do you feel about Vice creating a separate Facebook account?

2 responses

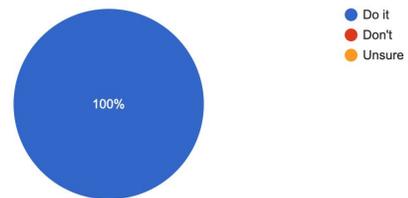


Figure 4. (First graph) Volunteers response to whether they feel Vice should create its own FB page and blog. (Second graph) Coordinators response to whether they feel Vice should create its own FB.

### Proposed Solution

AMS should consider allowing its services to be marketed independently by an in-house team of volunteers. That is essentially what is being done with the Instagram page, so why not extend it to other platforms?

This would give Vice more control over its voice, image, allow unity in campaigns, and provide it with the opportunity for more in-depth and engaging content. The creation of a blog should take no longer than a week and could easily be done free of charge. Many computer

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science students would likely be willing to take on the project and I have a few recommendations if we were to go ahead with this. A Youtube channel could be established where volunteers interview students on campus regarding Vice-related themes (Substance use, addiction, harm reduction, mental health, unhealthy habits, etc). And of course, a corresponding Facebook page should be linked to the Instagram account, ensuring cohesion of marketing campaigns.

## Conclusion

Social media is an extremely important tool for services. It provides the opportunity to connect with a target audience and bolster trust. Social media is *the* way raise Vice's profile and ensure students who need help with unhealthy behaviours can find the appropriate resources for it.

### Main findings:

- A holistic social media and marketing approach is the most effective strategy for increasing brand/service awareness, as demonstrated by services like SASC
- Surveys suggest that most volunteers agree that Vice should expand its digital media to Facebook and blog
- Vice's current social media channel (Instagram) has solid engagement and has helped increase usership of the service
- Platforms like Youtube, Facebook, and Twitter can help drive traffic to one another. This would ensure Vice's reach is optimized.

### Recommendations:

- AMS should consider giving some of its services marketing and social media autonomy

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- A corresponding Facebook and blog should be created to further enhance Vice's reach and provide it with the opportunity to showcase its purpose and services in a variety of forms (ex: video form on Youtube, longform articles on Blog)
- AMS could provide general brand guidelines if there are any concerns with continuity,
- If there are any concerns with brand continuity, AMS could provide services with guidelines to adhere to

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## References

“Vice.” *AMS of UBC*, [www.ams.ubc.ca/student-services/vice/](http://www.ams.ubc.ca/student-services/vice/).

“Vice (@Amsvice) • Instagram Photos and Videos.” *Instagram*, [www.instagram.com/amsvice/](http://www.instagram.com/amsvice/).

“UBC AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre.” *AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre*, [amssasc.ca/](http://amssasc.ca/).

## Appendix

### Social Media Autonomy Survey- Volunteers

Hello and thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! My name is Adrienne and I am a psychology student at The University of British Columbia. I am currently taking a technical writing course and completing a formal report regarding the creation of a holistic media approach for the AMS Vice program. The purpose of this survey is to obtain data regarding the opinion of this recommendation. The final formal report will be addressed to the AMS Service's Manager, Ian Stone. This survey contains both short answers and multiple choice questions, and should take around 5 minutes complete. Thank you for your time and participation in this survey!

\*Please note that your responses are voluntary and anonymous\*

1. Have you been directly impacted by the new IG account?
  - a. Yes
  - b. Sort of
  - c. No

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- d. unsure
2. If so, in what way?
  3. How do you feel about Vice's IG account?
  4. Do you think the IG account has benefitted Vice?
    - a. Yes
    - b. A little
    - c. Not really
    - d. Not at all
  5. Do you think Vice should create its own FB page and blog?
    - a. Yes
    - b. Maybe
    - c. No
  6. Please explain your answer to the question above
  7. Do you have any concerns about Vice exploring more social media channels?

### Social Media Autonomy Survey- Coordinators

Hello and thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! My name is Adrienne and I am a psychology student at The University of British Columbia. I am currently taking a technical writing course and completing a formal report regarding the creation of a holistic media approach for the AMS Vice program. The purpose of this survey is to obtain data regarding the opinion of this recommendation. The final formal report will be addressed to the AMS Service's Manager, Ian Stone. This survey contains both short answers and multiple choice questions, and should take around 5 minutes complete. Thank you for your time and participation in this survey!

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\*Please note that your responses are voluntary and anonymous\*

1. How do you feel about Vice's Instagram account?
2. How effective do you think the IG has been thus far?
  - a. Very effective
  - b. Effective
  - c. Not sure
  - d. Not effective
  - e. Extremely effective
3. How do you feel about Vice creating a separate Facebook account?
  - a. Do it
  - b. Don't
  - c. Unsure
4. Do you think a separate Facebook page would help or hinder Vice?
  - a. Help
  - b. Hinder
  - c. Unsure
5. How do you feel about Vice creating a blog?
6. Do you think utilizing more social media channels will help or hinder Vice's outreach?
7. What are your reservations regarding Vice creating a facebook page and blog?