



Podcast Transcript

Mental Health for Social Media Managers

Matt: Hello and welcome to another edition of the Endless Coffee Cup Podcast. As always, I'm your host, Matt Bailey, and bringing you the best in understanding social media, digital marketing, careers, and education. And today I am very excited because we've got a friend of ours, from the National Institute of Social Media and ISM, which you have heard of because we have had Jennifer Radke on many times.

[00:00:25] Matt: But now through Jennifer, I have met Robbie Schneider and I, through our conversations and talks, I am very excited to have her here this morning. She works and social media and blog content for Franciscan Health is also the board chair with socialmedia.orghealth. And she recently published a book. I think you'd be very interested in this called *Social media, Sanity, and You*, a guide to mental wellness for the digital marketer.

[00:00:56] Matt: And we have touched on this a few times in previous episodes, but now we're going to go in depth on it. Robbie, thank you so much for making time to be with us today.

[00:01:06] Robbie: Hey, good morning, Matt. How's everything going today?

[00:01:08] Matt: Very good. A little technical hiccups, but we're doing all right. Thank you so much for being here. I am so excited about this because I want to get into the book and talk a lot about that because in our previous conversations, it's very fascinating and there's some things there, I think from what I've read, there's some liberating things to know, but then there's also some disciplinary things to know.

[00:01:37] Matt: So that's the hook, listener. That is the hook to keep you on for the next however long till we get to that. Before we get into the book, I've got to ask you, you do social media for healthcare. Robbie, that is a loaded question right there. I know marketers that are in retail that do B2B, work for brands.

[00:02:02] Matt: Healthcare carries its own unique set of challenges and responsibilities. Could you tell me, just give me the mile high view and maybe drill in on a couple of things. What's it like doing social media for the healthcare industry?

[00:02:19] Robbie: I'll start out by saying my day is never dull. It's never the same day twice, much more so the last couple of years just in light of the pandemic and

[00:02:28] Matt: I can't imagine why.

[00:02:31] Robbie: It's really interesting to see science unfold real time and watch people's reactions to it. I'll just leave it there. But one of the things I love about healthcare and what kind of differentiates it from some of the retail spaces is that we touch.

[00:02:44] Robbie: Everybody's lives from pregnancy all the way to a loved one's death and helping support somebody through the grieving process afterwards. The fact that we touch people's lives across the life, sometimes not under great circumstances. It's, when you get news that you don't want to hear and you don't want to think.

[00:03:05] Robbie: But a lot of times there are those, great moments. I'm able to tell the stories and letting people know that there is light at the other end that you can regain your quality of life after your journey, I think is really fulfilling to me. And I think one of the most important things that really guides me as a health care social media professional is that really I'm about connecting people to health content that matters and helping them with their decisions and understanding what the things that are keeping them up at night.

[00:03:38] Robbie: And it's important to me as a professional. It's also important to me as a human being. I've been in that situation where you've got those unanswered questions and literally because you're not finding it anywhere. You're looking it up on Reddit of all places just to see what other human experiences are like, having been a caregiver through some tough times medical choices.

[00:03:59] Robbie: Those are all things that all of a sudden it helps you pivot how you're doing things. So it's not about, Hey, are we just increasing procedures that are electives or whatever. It's really about how are you communicating and touching and helping others through their health and wellness journey.

[00:04:16] Matt: So it sounds like you're doing education as well as promotion and a lot of empathy wrapped up in that.

[00:04:28] Robbie: Absolutely, and I work for a faith based healthcare system. So one of our things that, empathy is obviously, I don't think it's unique to faith based healthcare, but it underscores our human stories that we're telling, how do we see the best in every human that we touch and help through their journey?

[00:04:47] Robbie: It's, just to give you an example of all the things that we're touching on this week. We're talking about things like how to manage election related stress to a groundbreaking for new health care system. To Next couple of days will be all the adorable NICU babies that we've celebrated their, first Halloween.

[00:05:08] Robbie: No matter how teeny and tiny they are that, we're still bringing that moment of joy to their parents and in otherwise very tough circumstances. So, and then top on top of that, you're, rolling in health education along with that and helping people keep informed and, nobody wants to hear health and wellness information, unfortunately, I wish we could say that nobody wants to be told, hey, eat healthy and exercise because it just, we don't

being told that, but we really want to help encourage people to make the next best choice for their health and wellness.

[00:05:40] Robbie: So whether that is, gosh, my hips are hurting and it's been going on for years and years. Maybe I need to really talk to a doctor about it too. What do I do about my kid who doesn't sleep at night? All those sorts of questions. And the great thing is you're never a loss of content. The challenging thing is because you touch every human being, keeping that solid strategy and those content pillars and, really focused can be a challenge at times as well.

[00:06:07] Matt: Speaking of a challenge, so you've got to work within a legal framework. You've got, as I imagine, highly emotionally charged content or emotionally charged people that you have to deal with on social media that, they're going to go off somewhere and you become a target or at least the health system becomes a target, but you're the front line.

[00:06:35] Matt: You're the one who has to deal with that, but then you also have organizational demands. There's a lot of layers that you've got to deal with in healthcare.

[00:06:43] Robbie: Absolutely. and you mentioned, the emotionally charged people on the other side of the screen. And I think that's always important to remember that most times there's bad actors, there's bots, most of these times these are very real people dealing with very real situations that are touching their daily lives, and they're stressed whether it's about a medical bill, or they can't get into their appointment, or they've got a medical, or a loved one in a medical crisis.

[00:07:09] Robbie: Those are all truly important situations, and they may be top of mind for that person. And we'll talk about this a little bit later as we talk more on the mental health aspects. But when you add that on to 1 in 4 adults are dealing with some kind of mental illness. Currently, they're carrying a lot of stress because it may be them.

[00:07:31] Robbie: It may be their loved ones that they're, having to manage at home. And that underlying stress is only getting as aspirated by what they're trying to content with and work with your health care system to find a resolution for. So it can be very challenging from that perspective because you always want to lead with empathy, but you also have to be mindful of the fact that we are in a regulated industry.

[00:07:51] Robbie: And so we work very closely with our legal teams, our risk teams, our media relations teams, when those, actions are appropriate to help people get the information they need and the resolutions they need in a HIPAA compliant manner as well. So it's truly a lot. But, I don't think I'd trade it though.

[00:08:13] Matt: Yeah. so tell me about dealing with different teams. I imagine, being in social media, it has always been a unique space because you're bridging the direct voice of the public back to you. You're also giving a direct voice of the organization to the Republic or to the public and at the Republic.

[00:08:35] Matt: And so by that you're the front line, as I mentioned earlier, but then you've got a legal department. You've got a PR department. You've got media who is coming and wanting to talk to somebody or maybe looking at your social media and using what you say in social media and, to rebroadcast or republish.

[00:08:58] Matt: You're that bridge there. How do you deal with the different departments and, navigating those issues?

[00:09:05] Robbie: The great thing is, having worked for a long time with this organization, we've developed really strong relationships with all these teams. I also treat social media in part as a newsroom, and we are very cognizant of what's happening with the headlines of the day, what's happening with the major conversations of the day.

[00:09:24] Robbie: And being able to pivot and say, okay, these things need to, we're seeing trends about this, let's go ahead and start talking about it, or we're having concerns. Or this particular person is threatening legal action, we need to take that offline completely alert legal and then move through that process as well.

[00:09:42] Robbie: So there's a lot of juggling with it. I always say that social media is a big game of Tetris and it truly is, if you, look at our scheduling software, it's everything, we've got things plugged in, but we know that on any given day, a major event could happen. We could have a breaking.

[00:10:00] Robbie: Thing happened with our organization or something that impacts our communities and when it impacts our communities. We may not be the voice that needs to be heard, or alternately, we could be the voice that needs to be heard. So, just as an example, when we had a tornado that hit the town next to us, where my children went to school 2 years ago that was an opportunity for us to come out proactively and talk about, hey, as you're cutting down your trees, as you're doing this, here's where you need to go for urgent care.

[00:10:29] Robbie: Here are the steps that you need to do for protection, things like that, connecting people to resources in the community. Those were all appropriate. Places for us to interject ourselves. But, there may be other community conversations where it just doesn't make the most sense for your organization.

[00:10:42] Robbie: And that's something that you really have to have a really strong sense of your brand and what your brand's values are to be able to bring that authentically to the communities.

[00:10:50] Matt: Wow. How do you leverage out the content that you push? So something like that where it's very timely and you're pushing that out, either a crisis or post crisis or an event like that. You're, publishing it out, but how do you leverage it beyond just the initial, is someone's first thought to go to the blog or

[00:11:12] Robbie: Would

[00:11:13] Matt: do you know you're

[00:11:13] Robbie: Everybody said, please come to the Franciscan Health blog.

[00:11:16] Matt: Yeah How do you know, that's why, we lean in on SEO a lot.

[00:11:21] Robbie: So, I always want to make sure that we're leveraging it. If there's time, sense of things, it's always fully appropriate to share those things within your internal communications.

[00:11:30] Robbie: It's not social media is in a silo existing by itself. It is part of the community. Multichannel communications to all of our audiences, and that includes audiences internally as well. So, we share those things across social media. The great thing is there are certain things that we know to expect.

[00:11:47] Robbie: I live in Indiana and South enough in the state that we know that twice a year we will have the snowstorm that makes the northern part laugh because we shut everything down, but it's six inches of snow and that's game over for Indianapolis. And so we have our communications plan and our messaging and our strategy and everything ready to plug in place.

[00:12:06] Robbie: So there's a lot of those things that over time, you learn to develop that, knowledge library or that, that content library that you can draw from and customize. But sometimes you're thrown for a loop. So I'll be honest with that.

[00:12:18] Matt: That's what I love. Yeah. The whole, anytime you're talking about digital marketing, there's planning, and then there's what you're going to do today. It's a love hate relationship with that kind of, but it's also, it keeps it interesting. It keeps it challenging.

[00:12:34] Matt: It's such a, to me, very, rewarding, but also it keeps it interesting.

[00:12:39] Robbie: Definitely,

[00:12:41] Matt: Robby, let's talk a little bit about your background. So I want to ask, how did you get into social media and how did you get into social media and healthcare?

[00:12:50] Robbie: All right. My background is actually not in social media. Originally, I came from a journalism background. I was going to be the world's greatest reporter and solve the world. And I'm sure there's other people out there who had that same feeling, we're going to make some changes and I did the traditional reporting thing.

[00:13:05] Robbie: I worked for a major newspaper in Kansas City. Enjoy that experience, but I felt like I wasn't really fully getting or doing what I wanted to do with it. Or, doing the communications that I could. So I pivoted to working in higher education for medical school out there. And then after we moved to Indiana, I transitioned and joined what is now Franciscan Health.

[00:13:26] Robbie: And I have been working in various digital roles with them ever since I started out actually replacing a person who would print off the papers of the website. And markup changes to hand to it every month, and which still just makes me smile because they were just odd that a person could code and write.

[00:13:44] Robbie: And so I was doing a little bit of everything, and over the years, I've seen it transition from communications over bulletin boards and email news letters that have had their waves of that to, assisting with our podcast to blogging and social media.

[00:14:00] Robbie: we'd, done blogging for some unique situations, like we were doing communications for a major expansion project and that kind of thing. But social media didn't really erupt for our organization until we had a conversation one day in the office and we're like, what do you think about a Facebook page?

[00:14:17] Robbie: Why not? Let's try it. Let's see what happens. And that's one of the great things about social media is that, that you're able to experiment and say, Hey, this is what I'm going to do. Let's see what happens and, do those use cases. And that conversation led has led to a 15 year career, which I never would have imagined.

[00:14:33] Robbie: So, I love it. I love doing the strategy of it. I love doing the health content element. I love helping connect people to answers that they need that are keeping them up.

[00:14:42] Matt: Awesome. I love that you've got the journalism background. That is a common thread that I'm finding. I would say, especially in I don't want to say older, those that have been in media or marketing, I tend to find a lot of journalism careers. They're second to marketing.

[00:15:02] Matt: And so it's part of why I do make fun of marketing degrees because

[00:15:09] Robbie: I think there's value in developing strategies and having that data to back it up, but you've also got to be able to tell the stories to make it meaningful to really execute it. Make that difference. And that's where that journalism background comes.

[00:15:22] Matt: Yeah. I don't feel that marketing focuses you on content as much. I think it does a lot on tactical. It does a lot on measurement. And I remember when I took some marketing classes, I was just like, I'll never work in marketing ever because it was like theories and equations. this is marketing.

[00:15:43] Matt: To me, journalism was so much more fun. It was learning to write, learning to research, learning to cite properly, those types of skills, which to me are so transferable into so many different areas.

[00:15:56] Robbie: Absolutely. And I think if there's any students listening, taking some of those initial reporting classes and researching classes, absolutely key because that's going to help you become that better storyteller.

[00:16:06] Matt: It ties right in, like you were saying, you're a content creator. You're creating content. And which content that's social, it's SEO, it serves so many purposes, but being able to generate that content that takes some skills to come up

[00:16:28] Robbie: It takes a long time to hone that voice and to, being able to turn around content in a timely manner.

[00:16:35] Matt: Absolutely. And let's talk about this. So I love the background that you're bringing here because it's not just, I saw social media, I liked it and I started working in it. We start with journalism and then as you mentioned, you've got digital skills that you brought to the table and the ability you knew about SEO, you knew HTML, you knew some of these things.

[00:16:59] Matt: So you had a lot in your skill set prior to even working in social, let's talk about how valuable it is to have those things that you can equip yourself with, how does that change your approach to social media compared to some others, maybe coming into the industry that haven't been exposed to some of, I would say that type of tool set of the digital skills and how they have influenced your social skills.

[00:17:28] Robbie: It really helps you be able to visualize content better, strangely enough, because, as we were talking earlier, having that background, you're understanding the H1s, the H2s, tables, how things flow and fit across different platforms and different, Devices, whether it's, your phone or your tablet or your laptop and having that understanding that not everybody is ingesting and taking in content the same way I think is really important.

[00:17:55] Robbie: I know we're all talking about leaning into video right now, and there is definitely a place for that, but there's a lot of people who just need to process the written word and they have to read the words on the screen. And we need to be attentive to those needs too. So being able to, take a piece of content and say, gosh, this is a topic worthy of value.

[00:18:18] Robbie: I always say that the hardest thing for me to do is get the position in the room. Once I've got the position then we're, good to go. Because I can take that information, I can repurpose it into video. I can repurpose into blogs and social posts and all these sort of things.

[00:18:32] Robbie: And when I'm graced with the gift of time, then I could be like, okay, and then for their awareness month back next April, we've got these pieces ready to go. That is always the best case scenario. It's not always the reality. But being able to take those things and being able to visualize it's like that.

[00:18:47] Robbie: Yeah. This type of information could perform well in certain formats over other formats. I think is really important to be able to have that skill set and be able to, bring that in.

[00:18:59] Matt: Absolutely. Think that's part of it. And, even in my teaching I, try to help people understand that it's not just, let's get an idea and run to a platform. The middle piece

here, the most important piece is the media itself. But even before that, is the content. It's here's our story, but now how are we going to tell it?

[00:19:21] Matt: And what's the best medium to tell that? We can get into all kinds of areas. And I think this is one of the thing again, going back to journalism is so helpful is what's the reading level of our audience. If we're, especially in health, if you're putting out information, it's a seventh grade reading level is,

[00:19:39] Robbie: It's actually worse than that.

[00:19:40] Matt: No, don't

[00:19:41] Matt: don't

[00:19:43] Robbie: The federal government says for Medicare and similar communications like that, you're talking a 5th to 6th grade reading level. You cannot say colonoscopy. Tell me how to get a colonoscopy without using the word. So it gets very challenging very quickly, but you have to understand that people are all coming from different backgrounds.

[00:20:02] Robbie: Even if you're educated, you may not have health literacy skills. And that is just the reality of this. I've got, you and I were talking, we both have college students and teaching them how to navigate the health care system is very enlightening, because this is how this all goes.

[00:20:22] Robbie: I had a laugh when my son came and said, my knee is hurting. I need to get an MRI. I laughed at him I'm like, that is not the way it goes. We have to start by calling your pediatrician, but they don't know this just because they've never experienced it. So, teaching people how to navigate the healthcare system, whether it's a, my knee hurts and I need an MRI to crud, I'm 50.

[00:20:44] Robbie: I probably need to get that colonoscopy. And how do I even make that happen? Everybody, does something for the first time once. So I think just being able to put ourselves in those shoes and just say, Hey, how do we help that first time be as comfortable as possible?

[00:21:00] Matt: Yep. I had to laugh. you're going th I'm just happy someone else is dealing with that as well, not just me. I It just happened yesterday with one of my daughters. I'm having this. We should go here. So we had to have a little talk about self diagnosis based on internet searches and how you need, someone who has experience with this.

[00:21:23] Matt: A few searches on WebMD are not the best way to diagnose yourself and what's happening.

[00:21:28] Robbie: Exactly. Exactly. You can go down the road of really strange diseases really quickly. So yes.

[00:21:34] Matt: Oh, my goodness. Yes, there's so many directions that could take and it is it's wonderful. And like you mentioned, there is a health literacy and, in the areas where, I do a lot in media literacy and information literacy. And there are so many areas that we have to take into account.

[00:21:58] Matt: And, I know there's a lot of people trying to change this. It's at one point, this country had one of the highest literacy rates in the world and, now we're really slipping. And, I hate to say, but you're, we're all in the industry. We're all in the social media industry and how much that can affect that literacy and as well, that

[00:22:20] Robbie: When, you're trying to communicate very complex things in 15 second videos or two sentence statements, that's a lot of responsibility, frankly.

[00:22:32] Matt: wow. Yeah, absolutely. That is what we'll do that. So I love that you came from that journalism background, picked up digital skills, and then certainly how that equips you to be a great social media marketer. Before we jump into your book, we've got a little bit of time here. Tell me a little bit about joining NISM.

[00:22:52] Matt: You are a certified social media marketer. You passed the SMS exam. How has that helped you? Professionally. What has that experience been like?

[00:23:02] Robbie: I came into certification later in my career. I know a lot of people tend to pick up certifications early on and I was having, one of those seasons where questioning and it's is this the right thing for me or what have you? And, feeling stuck.

[00:23:19] Robbie: Because we all go through, despite our best intentions, we all go through those phases and decided to explore certification. And it was wonderful because my job is so complex and because we run on a lean team, sometimes you're doing a lot of things. And, if you have to push things off to agency or whatever, you're like, okay, I may not be able to do a large influencer program, or I may not be doing active paid campaigns.

[00:23:44] Robbie: So but, recognizing that I still have the understandings of the theories and the applications, even if I wasn't quite as tuned into what Meta business suite was doing this week that was very helpful just because, there are so many changes in our industry and things change so rapid fire, be able to, remember that you still have those core competencies and be able to stand that on that.

[00:24:08] Robbie: And it just was reaffirming to me.

[00:24:11] Matt: Good to hear that because yeah, that's, the certification question comes up a lot and, how that works and how that has helped people through their industry. So I always think it's interesting though, those of us who have, come from that, offline background into the digital and then being certified because most of it is self taught.

[00:24:33] Matt: And I think there's always that apprehension of I don't know.

[00:24:36] Robbie: and it's nice to have that validation that when you are self taught and you are learning real time, which frankly, I don't care if you have been in social media one year or 15 years, you are still learning social media real time and just being able to understand those core competencies and understand it's okay, we, we can be strategic even if the elements are Yeah,

[00:25:01] Matt: Absolutely. let's dive in here. You authored a book just came out, social Media Sanity and You, a Guide to Mental Wellness for the Digital Marketer. Robbie, this is incredibly fascinating. Just going through the book, one thing that initially impressed me was the amount of scholarly research that was available to you. You barely had to make a case at all because the data is there. There is an incredible issue of not just social media marketers but with social media itself presiding. And I think, even in our conversations, we talked a little bit about Jonathan Haidt and his work and what that is doing.

[00:25:45] Matt: I read the other day I think it was NPR came out and published that TikTok can become addictive within, I think it's 260 videos. Which ends up being less than 40 minutes. Just astounding how they've developed social media to be addictive. And now we're seeing the results of that.

[00:26:08] Matt: Talk a little bit, what was some of the studies that maybe just either confirmed or even wowed you that I knew it was like this, I didn't know it was that big.

[00:26:18] Robbie: so I'll, say some of the, this. Interest of mine came as results of working healthcare social media during the pandemic. And the first year particularly was the year of absolute emotional roller coaster highs and lows. We dealt with the, novelty of a virus that nobody knew anything about.

[00:26:38] Robbie: We, America, the entire world was the great science project. We were, learning scientific research real time and how it actually applies this is science fair in real time, we went from people having parades and, applauding our health care workers to threatening over social media in a matter of months.

[00:27:00] Robbie: It was very challenging to deal with. And as I was having conversations with others who work in healthcare social media, we were dealing with a tremendous amount of stress and burnout, just because one, the volume of content we were having produced to keep up with the sciences, it was evolving and address the questions that users were asking because, they want answers too.

[00:27:25] Robbie: And, dealing with the emotionals ups and downs of everything. And then dealing with the personal impacts on our lives that touched every single person, maybe in different ways, maybe you were homeschooling, and maybe you were, your loved one was out of work, or maybe you were worried that you were sick or had a loved one who was sick, there was, a lot going on in 2020.

[00:27:45] Robbie: And so it was helpful to me to figure out it wasn't a me thing. It was a, probably a healthcare social media thing that it was just resultant of this. But as I watched and continued conversations, as things lessened the load, the burnout and the stress and anxiety was still there and people are still talking about it on LinkedIn.

[00:28:09] Robbie: be kind to your social media manager, or did you realize that they're doing all these things? Or, that everybody in the organization knows my name. It's, very scary. I could go to urgent care. They're like, your name looks familiar. Or where do you, work?

[00:28:24] Robbie: I'm like, I'm the social media manager. And they're like, oh yeah, I know you. And I'm like, great. So everybody knows your name, And so going through that and I started taking a look at it and the broader picture of, burnout and how people could A, get through it and B, is this just a me thing?

[00:28:43] Robbie: And as I started looking into it, it was a, wow, this is more of a marketing communications issue and a social media problem. And not only is it, Documented and research from West Virginia University about some of the impacts and working that, but we started seeing small studies in England and Australia and United States with National Institute of social media and PRSA and all these groups are the bells are starting to flicker and, that maybe we've got a problem.

[00:29:18] Robbie: But we haven't quite quantified it yet. And so it was helpful to see that there were patterns, but it's not enough to say that there are patterns and that working in social media is stressful because we know that yes, it's stressful. And marketing has been one of the most stressful careers for decades.

[00:29:37] Robbie: back to the 1950s, they had, studies talking about, marketing and PR people and how they were at higher risks of like heart attacks, you Because of the stress. So we've got a, we've got an institutional problem that we have to deal with and what are some of the ways that we could start mitigating that, especially when we've got the expectation that because I can just type something and it's live on the Internet that we should just be able to go and produce, all the time.

[00:30:03] Robbie: So that's really what got me interested in the topic in the first place.

[00:30:06] Matt: Absolutely. That is absolutely amazing. And yeah, I think I've seen more and more that pushback a little bit with social media marketers. And I even remember, I think it was probably slightly after the pandemic. I spoke at a conference for social media for brands and, but one of the biggest questions that I would be getting is how do I, prove myself?

[00:30:32] Matt: How do I show that I'm making an impact. And that was a very real raw question to get and to be very open about. And so, we had about 50 brand social media marketers who were all shaking their head saying, I can't prove what I'm doing affects the organization. Now, you, want to talk about job fulfillment.

[00:30:57] Matt: You want to talk about being happy in what you do when you're not even sure. And you feel like I can't prove. Any value that creates, I think, a sense of anxiety within a person that You know, we have to do this, but I don't know. And then, layer on top of that, the lack of respect, the social media tends to get looked down upon compared to other forms of media.

[00:31:25] Matt: And, I've been trying to tell, CEOs, social media is much more about PR than direct response. You can't compare these things, but yet they, I just meet so many CEOs, boards, whoever, they tend to treat social media as if it were paid search and they're expecting that ROI. And

[00:31:47] Robbie: very difficult in the healthcare setting

[00:31:49] Matt: that's, yeah, exactly.

[00:31:50] Robbie: only with HIPAA, but again, nobody is choosing today to have their heart attack. you're not going to be like sign up here for your care. It may be something like, Oh yeah, I've got to change my doctor. Cause my insurance plan is, those sorts of things, those more softer touches.

[00:32:04] Robbie: So it's very much, I like, I don't like dating. we are really trying to help you get to know us. And us get to know you a little bit so that when you actually need to make that decision, that you choose our system over another. And I think that is really one of the important things.

[00:32:23] Robbie: But when you're talking about those individual touch points, my team is over organic and in our organization, we outsource are paid to our agency. And I'm able to take touch points and say, I've got actual examples and you talk about fulfillment. Telling a person that thank you for sharing your story about colon cancer.

[00:32:45] Robbie: I have three people post on here. How about they're signing up right now to get a screening. Not only have you personally made a difference from writing it, but you help somebody else take their challenges in life and turn it into something for the better. That just gives me chills every time I'm able to do that.

[00:33:00] Matt: That's awesome. That is awesome. What were some of the studies that really got your attention as you were pulling this together?

[00:33:12] Robbie: I don't think it was like a specific study that pulled out, but it was the consistency in the data.

[00:33:19] Robbie: Study after study, whether it was through Sprout or National Institute of Social Media or socialmedia.org, was showing that 40, 50, 60 percent of social media professionals were dealing with burnout.

[00:33:33] Robbie: We're dealing with extreme stress. We're worried about staying in the industry for their mental health. when you've got, half of your social media professionals considering leaving the industry in two years. That tells you, you've got a huge problem, not only for your organization and that institutional knowledge, but bringing experts to the table that can do best practices, you are really setting your brand up at risk.

[00:33:57] Robbie: So organizations really need to take a hard look and say, how are we making our social media teams be better? As effective as I can be, but protecting their team members at the same time.

[00:34:09] Matt: What were some of the factors that contribute to the stress, the anxiety, the wanting to, questioning if this is even the, industry for them?

[00:34:20] Robbie: So here's the interesting things Matt is that West Virginia University did a couple of studies during the pandemic of higher education, social media managers, and they found that no matter how long a person had been in the rule, they were dealing with the same common themes of not getting the information in a timely matter, tight turnaround working

[00:34:41] Robbie: crazy hours, not getting the respect, not being brought to the table as a strategic partner. All of these things keep contributing to the feelings of being minimized as a person and a professional. And that really takes a toll on your mental health. Additionally, that study found, and it's actually been supported by some of the other research studies that take a look at it is that being exposed to negative comments in the digital space has a negative impact on mental health.

[00:35:09] Robbie: And so even being exposed to people complaining is bringing you down so that, add that all together, add that in with everything that's been going on with the 2020s, add that on to the fact that one in four of us are dealing with mental health concern, we have a problem. And, the question is, what are we as an industry going to do to help resolve it?

[00:35:31] Matt: Wow. Absolutely. And it's interesting, like you said, this has been a part of marketing and PR for years and I, the speed of communication has just sped up as well, the, these factors, that snowball effect, it has just gotten bigger and faster and it hits people, I'm thinking to some of the people that I work with in What they're dealing with.

[00:36:00] Matt: And yeah, there's this, there is this sense of always being on. Most professionals, I think, complain about that, it's my life. It's what I do. No, conversely, I will say this through an a recent NISM get together, there were, I would say younger people. And I would, say they've been in the position or they've even been in social media and marketing for less than, I'd say six years.

[00:36:33] Matt: And each of them said, I now spend less time on my phone now that I'm working in social media marketing when I'm not at work. I'm not on my phone. And so in that way, that's how they've been. I was very heartened by that. They were, a little mystified that,

yeah, I just don't do that. And I can see where, because if it's so hard here at work, when I'm at home, I don't even want to deal with it.

[00:37:01] Robbie: So it seems to be one of two that people have learned to unplug, or they feel they're always on, and now you're bound to it. You can't escape it.

[00:37:20] Robbie: Okay.

[00:37:37] Robbie: Slack or your teams or your Outlook if you've got those loaded on your devices. And all of a sudden you're getting pinged all the time.

[00:37:44] Robbie: And the reality is when you get those notifications, it actually sets off that almost that Pavlov response of Oh, I've got to act. And that's adding stress to your body that your body has to settle back down from and that comes on hundreds of times a day that really adds up to a lot of probably unnecessary attention.

[00:38:09] Robbie: So, one of the things I always tell people to do is, set your online hours, set your phone hours, and it may be a, hey, I don't have my phone near me when I'm on conference calls, or it could be I'm going to respond to all my friends between 6 and 9. And if you send me a work related text after 6pm.

[00:38:27] Robbie: If I look at it and it's not a fire quite literally, I will respond to you at eight in the morning and, having those rules for yourself about how you will work makes a big difference.

[00:38:38] Matt: Absolutely. There is no way I could get through my day. If and now I will say, I'll just go through I turned off all notifications you know, for example, some of the social media, I took the app off my phone because if it's a marketing app or if it's a marketing platform, then I don't want it on my personal phone.

[00:38:59] Matt: We've gotta log in to see the data and I noticed if I log in to see it, I'm not as bound by the notifications. I'm not as bound by, I'm bored. Let's open up and see keeping

[00:39:11] Robbie: I took it a step forward further than that and I don't even keep the social media apps on my phone for my personal use. I do any monitoring that if I have to go check something, it's through my monitoring app. So I get on through Sprout and that's the only place I'm going to look at. Just because I don't need that busyness of getting pinged in my personal time.

[00:39:35] Robbie: And that way it keeps it all in one concise space. And you also keep, you help reduce that risk of just scrolling because, Oh, I'm already in here and I'm bored,

[00:39:43] Matt: I'm here. Yeah, I'm here. We're going to do it.

[00:39:45] Robbie: I'm still very guilty. That is still my problem. And I think that's part of being that ex reporter is that you always want to know what's going on, which is great for social media, but it's not so great when you need it to experience the world

[00:39:55] Matt: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. and some of these are practices that I put in just back from email that you can't respond to every email at the moment it comes in. And in fact, it's bad to set that precedent because basically you're training your clients, your co workers that I am going to do this.

[00:40:13] Matt: So yeah, anymore, my phone is on sleep and it's across the room. I and I tell that to clients that if I'm working on your stuff, wouldn't you rather be me focused on this? And then I have specific times during the day where now I pick up the phone, I look at my email, and then I have the time to respond to do things.

[00:40:36] Matt: And it creates a much happier environment, I think, because now it's more, a bit more controlled, more reliable, and it's set to your boundaries. Rather than your boundaries constantly being pushed, attacked, removed through allowing all of these notifications. Heh

[00:41:00] Robbie: could be in a meeting and let me text Matt and ask what he thinks,

[00:41:04] Matt: heh

[00:41:13] Robbie: In the moment, I actually prefer to take a step back and be very thoughtful with my responses, rather than a just a quick from your back. Let me get back to you I,

[00:41:23] Robbie: respond an hour or 2, or even the next morning. I do some of the best work in the morning.

[00:41:27] Robbie: So that's when I do a lot of my thought work with that

[00:41:31] Matt: I don't think probably because I'm not interrupted because nobody wants to be up early with me.

[00:41:35] Robbie: me I don't think people respect that enough. That, yes, that's a great question. I'm not going to answer that off the top of my head. There are many times where, this response needs to be thought through. And I'm going to have a couple cups of coffee on this, because this is not, you may think it's an easy question, but the answer is not easy.

[00:41:58] Matt: And so there, there is some, respect that has to happen in that way that do you just want an off the cuff answer or do you want a good answer?

[00:42:07] Robbie: But that, that also, ties into the fact that a lot of social media professionals are not seen as strategists. They're just seen as somebody who's just to stick something up there because how hard is social media? I do it all the time. But they, neglect to think about the strategy and the thought and the audience targeting that we really, we think and try, to enforce on a daily basis.

[00:42:31] Matt: A side, the pressure on creating a personal brand. So, we have the pressure of doing marketing, but I think every marketer also has that whether it's the inner monologue, but it's also the external pressure of this, you have to create a personal brand. I have seen so much of that more and more over the years.

[00:42:57] Matt: And I think that is probably just as much a contributing factor, because when you said dealing with negative comments, you're working for an organization and seeing a negative comments and they're affecting you personally, if you're focused on creating a personal brand and negative comments, that's now on you personally.

[00:43:16] Matt: And I can't imagine the, and I know sometimes when I see them yes, it affects you. It can affect your day. I will say though, I do have one attack that I actually printed out and framed because it was so wonderful because it did fit my brand that someone gave me hate,

[00:43:32] Robbie: That's awesome. but how much, do you see that? Do you feel that

[00:43:38] Robbie: There is some pressure with that, especially when you work in a digital space, I feel like there's more of that. okay, you work in social media, therefore you should be, whatever, but I feel like it's far better for you.

[00:43:50] Robbie: And frankly, for everybody else to be intentional with what you produce and you don't have to write every day on linkedin. You don't have to, spit something out just because somebody else is posting six times a day. If you want to talk about, hey, I read this article and it was really great, again, put that thought and this is what I see coming out of it and bringing adding value.

[00:44:12] Robbie: I think that's okay too. I think, just being there and being part of a conversation. You don't always have to drive the conversation in the room, but being part in there when your work life allows.

[00:44:23] Matt: I think you get into this in your book, you start talking about very practical things that social media, and I don't, this is not just social media marketers but very practical things that people can do to maybe regain some of that control that can, that taking these steps can improve your mental health as a marketer.

[00:44:50] Matt: What walk us through some of those recommendations and things that you have found. we've talked about a few of them already, and you said the word being intentional. Let's dive into that. How, can being intentional, what are some steps that people can take?

[00:45:03] Robbie: I think it's really important for us not to just to do, we're not here to fill the space. And I hate to say this, but I don't think there's too many brands out there that people are sitting on pins and needles saying, what are they going to post next? So, making sure that you're providing value to your audiences, I think is important.

[00:45:21] Robbie: Understanding where your internal or external client is coming from and trying to marry it with the needs of your audiences is key. And sometimes it takes a little more

work. For, example, I was talking to somebody about a new heart procedure that they're, working on and they're like, oh, this will be great.

[00:45:36] Robbie: And we could post it on Facebook. You could, but is it going to get the right results that you want? Probably not, with the targeting anymore, not with, other than a, Hey, it's cool that we're doing this thing. You're not going to get that bang for the buck of people lining up. So trying to put them in the shoes of okay, I'm dealing with these symptoms or these conditions and all these other things aren't working.

[00:45:57] Robbie: this is my next chapter in my story and putting in those shoes, I think, is really important. And is it as fast as just posting up that press release? No, but is it going to be more meaningful in the long run? Absolutely. I think that is very important. I think it's also very important to be intentional with your communications with your team members and whether it is, on the planning process, but also on, when it comes to dealing with changes and change management constantly, the social media is at the bottom of the hill of all the projects. So, I'm regularly on 100, 130 projects at work at a given time, which is just insane when you put a number to it, but it's just what work front tells me.

[00:46:41] Robbie: And if you are moving up your campaign and all of a sudden you need to. Pull out those assets early. There's a ripple effect and we need to be able to talk about those ripple effects rather than, Hey, we just need to start this campaign early. It's things like, okay, now you're impacting the design team.

[00:46:57] Robbie: The person who's building the blog, the person who's scheduling the content, you're impacting the other content that was scheduled. And what makes the most sense from a strategy standpoint, not only just for your, Okay. Line of business, but for the whole organization to post what, goes off the plate so we could do the best job executing this piece and the future pieces rather than just do lesser work all over.

[00:47:20] Robbie: And that's a hard conversation to have. And it's something that we're starting to turn the tide on it. we're not always going to say yes, and people don't like that, but my nose could be a no, but how can we do this for the future?

[00:47:34] Matt: Yeah, it sounds like a lot of this is and maybe this is something that I don't want to call it so much pushback, but understanding as maybe more people who have been in social media move into more management roles, the understanding of how to include, how to manage that team better because you've been a part of it.

[00:47:56] Matt: I think right now we don't have many, I would say people in management roles who have come through social media. We have people in management roles that come from finance, come from operations, come from many different roles, but from, how many people have moved from social media marketing into management.

[00:48:18] Matt: And so I think there,

[00:48:20] Robbie: But we are going to be the next CMOs because we have those touch points. We understand the data, we understand the content and we understand the human experience of our customers.

[00:48:29] Matt: Hopefully that is something that helps out because it sounded like a lot of what you were talking about is that management of the team, that management of expectations, project management of understanding, I can't throw 200 things at you and they all have the same priority.

[00:48:47] Robbie: Exactly. I think that's why it's important. Again, like I said, I, treat my team like a newsroom and we have daily standups for lack of a better term. And, we touch base mid morning. Okay, what's going on? What's going on with the world? What's going on with your projects and what things are holding you up or causing barriers for you?

[00:49:05] Robbie: And even if it's personal or professional or I'm waiting on approvals, all those things add stress. Yeah. And if we can mitigate the day to day stress, when we come to a crisis event, we are in a much better position mentally to be able to execute and, do perform informed strategy because we are not carrying those day to day stressors as much.

[00:49:30] Matt: Yeah, So how would you approach someone who does social media? And maybe they're the only social media person?

[00:49:39] Robbie: I

[00:49:39] Robbie: I have been there. I've been there for a long time.

[00:49:43] Matt: What are some some things that you have learned from the book that you would give them as, here's a practical one, two, three of things you can do to make your day better today, and it will help you with your career.

[00:49:57] Robbie: Okay. Wow. That's a lot of questions. So 3 things for a team of 1. 1st of all you need to set those, boundaries with technology make sure that you have your night hours on your phone, make sure that, you have times a day where people know them less than The corporation is on fire, you will respond at a certain time.

[00:50:19] Robbie: So setting those, boundaries and expectations, being able to communicate if then statements, I think those are very important and we don't do that enough in communications, which is so strange to me, but, really being able to articulate the impact of if we need to move this up, or if we need to push this back, these are all the things that are going to be impacted and be able to have those appropriate discussions and I think it's going to help not only you, but everybody else that you're interacting with and making sure that everybody's on the same table because really we're all about moving our organizations forward and we all have that shared goal.

[00:50:57] Robbie: We may get there from different ways, but we have that shared goal. So if we can figure out the best ways to meet everybody's needs along the way, rather than just be

reactionary, I think that's important. And the 3rd thing I'm going to tell you is make a plan for your time off. That, that's so important and that's so hard to do.

[00:51:13] Robbie: And I have been there where I was like, can I do this or not do this? Because I'm the only one and making those plans. So not only utilizing your time off, which is a part of your compensation package and it's there for a reason, but making a plan for what is coverage going to look like is, are you going to train somebody how to monitor and escalate complaints in Sprout?

[00:51:34] Robbie: Are you going to pre plan your content? Or, how are you going to manage social media so you can actually step away from your machine and hopefully not get contacted during that time away. I think those 3 things are really important.

[00:51:47] Matt: So I actually, when you first said plan your downtime, I took that a completely different direction that when you're not working, what are you doing? Because

[00:51:56] Robbie: important too, though. I, yeah, just having a life outside of your, technology.

[00:52:00] Matt: Yeah, you're, going to doom scroll. , if you don't have a plan, you're going to stay in bed and you're going to scroll.

[00:52:05] Matt: So what are you going to do on that day off that, if you don't have an activity planned, if you don't have something planned, nothing's going to happen and you get caught up and doing emails, doing social it's but yeah, I, absolutely. I actually my daughter my oldest daughter is working and we were able to go visit her.

[00:52:28] Matt: she's out of town. We don't see her much. But on her day off, she was probably texted about eight to 10 times of where is this, how do I do this? And so I had to have a little talk with her about, part of it, there was a lot of extenuating circumstances, but without her in the office, it's just thing people didn't know what to do.

[00:52:51] Robbie: And I had that happen recently too. I was earlier this month, I went on a hiking and history trip with my Sun Scout troop out to Gettysburg, which was. Phenomenal experience and I'm sitting here on a hiking trail on a hill, gorgeous country, and all of a sudden I get it. Hey, can you post this? I send, I snap a photo.

[00:53:08] Robbie: I'm like, this is where I'm at, I can't help you.

[00:53:12] Matt: Oh, that's awesome.

[00:53:14] Robbie: and just setting that expectation that just because you may be able to get text to me doesn't necessarily mean that I am going to be able to connect to the internet out here and be, That I can, I'm in a place to actually be effective for you. So, yeah,

[00:53:29] Robbie: that setting that expectation and, along, along those lines, we had communicated, we only have a team of two, but we communicated here is our scheduling, so and so is going to be on call during these days, it's going to be out of town.

[00:53:44] Robbie: This time I'll be on call, even though I will not be available for, getting on the laptop, but I can execute if needed in an emergency situation. So, having those plans in place and, communicating it. So your whole team knows, I think is really important.

[00:53:58] Matt: on the communication, we're going to wrap up here soon, but on the communication and that is so critical working with another social media marketer, part of a large organization and my consulting with them, I really had to put my foot down and say, a lot of like, how are you using Instagram?

[00:54:19] Matt: You're posting everything here. It's a mess. I just had to be completely honest with them. I said, look at your competitors. There's a consistent color scheme. There's a consistent theme. There's a consistency to what they're doing. And her response was, everyone sends it to us and says to post it.

[00:54:38] Matt: And. I'm like, okay, you need to communicate this is what this channel is for. This is who we're targeting and this is the standard of what we're going to post. And if it doesn't meet the standard, if it doesn't meet the voice, it doesn't get posted.

[00:54:52] Robbie: And if it doesn't meet the content needs for our organization, we don't have to put it up just because it exists. We can, go back with the data and say, these types of things perform well, and these don't, and these are the things that we need to stand on. Because A, it's our mission and we want to push that forward, B, it's a cause dear to us and C, this is what's going to make us money, that, there's no harm in having that understanding and expertise behind it and saying, that's going to drive the vast majority of our content.

[00:55:20] Robbie: And then here are the exceptions or, the, real cases, rather than just a, Hey, I got this thing.

[00:55:27] Matt: After six months, they did that. They set up a clear, here's how this Instagram will be used. Here's how this channel will be used. Here's how YouTube will be used. And I went back and checked and I sent an email and saying, fantastic, this looks so much better. It's so much more focused. And the response she told me was, we're getting more positive response from our target audiences.

[00:55:51] Matt: She goes, but you would not believe the stress I've had to go through organizationally. What do you mean you're not going to post it? So there's that organizational stress that you had talked about, that no respect for the social media person when they say, no, that's not being posted here. That doesn't fit the message.

[00:56:10] Matt: You've got a lot of these, internal managers who I would say didn't get the memo and they're pushing back on that. And so there's a lot of that, I think that communications part, it has to have, part of that has to come top down.

[00:56:27] Matt: Putting your social media manager in a position where they have to say no means that there was not a something published.

[00:56:36] Matt: Or put out organizationally that this is the communications plan.

[00:56:41] Robbie: Absolutely.

[00:56:42] Matt: All right. I want to ask you a good question here. How has the book helped you? when, yeah, you said you wrote it because it was, your experiences going through that. this, that's what drove you to write it now that it's done. What have you learned? How has it helped you? How did that experience go?

[00:57:01] Robbie: Wow. I didn't wake up and say, gosh, I'm going to write a book. It literally was an evolution from a, is this a me thing to how can we fix this in our organization? Make things a little bit better to wow other people are dealing with the same issue to, starting to have talks and then the book came as a fruition of that I love, the fact that I was able to take a look at and just, from, different stories, from, conversations I've had and research that I found that it's like, giving myself that permission to say, okay, this is

[00:57:34] Robbie: not just a how I'm handling it thing. It's that this is something that we need to fix in and giving myself permission to take those steps. I think has really been huge for me. And I love being able to share that with my team members as well. and we even do little quick checks about that as well.

[00:57:50] Robbie: like, how is your stress load? How is your workload? And, being able to have very frank conversations and saying, okay, things are not so much. What can we take off your plate? It's helped me really think through, how I approach things when I'm having conversations and the question isn't necessarily, am I at the table?

[00:58:05] Robbie: But we've, changed that conversation now to, yes, I am at the table and what can I do to bring, the most value to your team. And even if it's me coming back and saying, what would make the most sense for your team? As far as, do you need strategy? Do you need content pillars?

[00:58:22] Robbie: What do you need? And be able to have those more in depth discussions. I think, yes, it's more work, but I look at it as an investment. And I think that's another thing too, is that, that it's really an investment into creating the work life balance that you want for the future.

[00:58:37] Matt: Great. Again, dear listener, this has been Robby Schneider and the book is Social Media, Sanity and You, Guide to Mental Wellness for the Digital Marketer. Robby, where can they pick up that book? I'm assuming Amazon is top of the

[00:58:53] Robbie: it is on Amazon. You can get it for Kindle and for print. So

[00:58:57] Matt: Fantastic. Fantastic. Robbie, thank you so much for your time today.

[00:59:01] Matt: It has been so amazing to talk with you about your journey and about the book as well. Thank you so much for coming on the podcast.

[00:59:08] Robbie: I have loved our conversation today, Matt. Thank you so much.

[00:59:11] Matt: Absolutely. And thank you dear listener for participating in our podcast. I hope you got through your coffee. I know I got through mine probably in the first 15 minutes here.

[00:59:21] Matt: I should have had a backup cup, but I look forward to seeing you next time on the next edition of the endless coffee cup podcast.