

BUILDING AND PROTECTING YOUR DIGITAL REPUTATION

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR

Akshaya Shanmugam

PREPARED BY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dr. Akshaya Shanmugam is one of the leading and youngest CEO's in the health technology industry. However, Dr. Shanmugam is missing out on a huge opportunity to increase her digital presence and to be more widely regarded as a thought leader within her industry. Dr. Shanmugam has done an excellent job of making sure her profiles are thoroughly filled out but still needs to utilize these platforms more efficiently to influence and engage with her followers. By studying her digital footprint, it is clear she has much to offer her followers but might fail to realize the impact it will have on both her personal and her company's success.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is beneficial for Dr. Shanmugam to better understand the importance of social media and take a look at ways she can improve her digital presence. We have outlined different strategies for her to consider when moving forward with her digital presence as well as pinpointed potential areas for improvement.

To further develop Dr. Shanmugam's digital reputation, we propose the following recommendations:

- 1. Increase engagement and activity on LinkedIn*
- 2. Increase influence as a thought leader*
- 3. Expand digital presence on social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram*

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME:

By implementing these recommendations, Dr. Shanmugam will increase her digital reputation and establish herself as one of the leading figures in the health technology industry. She will further her network of followers, increase engagement, and have more articles and positive content associated with not only her name but also her company.

DIGITAL VOICE OVERVIEW

According to Russ Stoddard, “CEOs can and should use social media to share what is important not only to them, but to their business. Content might communicate with shareholders and consumers, but at the same time, it should showcase an organization’s personality and values,” ([Social Media May Be Habit Forming - and for CEOs, That’s a Good Thing](#)). Dr. Shanmugam has a limited digital voice. Currently, she has two public social media accounts on LinkedIn and Facebook but does not regularly engage with her followers and peers. Her LinkedIn profile is fully filled out and showcases some of her recent achievements, including her inclusion in ‘Forbes 30 Under 30.’ However, she purely uses her profile to display her resume and does not publish original content or share content from those in her network. Dr. Shanmugam has over 500 connections on LinkedIn and has a large reach of potential followers and fans. On Facebook, Dr. Shanmugam has not publicly shared content since October 2018. The content that is publicly available showcases her work and articles she has been featured in. Like LinkedIn, she has a large following with over 600 friends following her account.

Outside of social media, Dr. Shanmugam can be easily found on search engines such as Google and Bing. Most of the content tied to her name is positive in tone and highlights her accomplishments as a young CEO. The search results include her social media profiles and articles from various publications highlighting her accomplishments, specifically ‘Forbes 30 Under 30.’

It is difficult to fully define her digital voice at this time because it is extremely limited. Through the recommendations provided later in this report, Dr. Shanmugam will be able to have a stronger and more approachable digital voice that will showcase her experience and leadership authority within the health technology industry.

SWOT ANALYSIS

An effective way to measure Dr. Shanmugam's current digital reputation is to conduct a SWOT analysis. By taking a look at her strengths, weaknesses, and threats and looking at any possible opportunities for Dr. Shanmugam, we were able to develop a strategic plan to help improve her digital presence. According to Scholley Bubenik, in the Forbes article, "[Gaining a Competitive Edge by Conducting A SWOT Analysis On Your Workforce](#)", "your workforce SWOT analysis is the first step to achieving a competitive edge by building a dynamic workforce." This same principle applies to personal branding. Having an effective SWOT analysis on your personal brand is the first step to achieving a competitive edge because it builds a dynamic brand and story. We applied this idea when conducting our SWOT analysis for Dr. Shanmugam.



STRENGTHS:

- LinkedIn profile is thoroughly filled out.
- Large network of followers on LinkedIn and Facebook.
- Great press and articles show up when conducting a web search of her name.
- Does not have much (or any) negative press appearing in the first few result pages of a web search.

WEAKNESSES:

- Does not frequently update social media profiles (ex- has not posted on Facebook since last year)
- Only uses two platforms, Facebook and LinkedIn, and does not have a public Facebook “fan” page.
- Does not appear to have her own personal URL.
- Other social media accounts not tied to her show up when searching her name (ex-Twitter).
- Lack of variety in the content that appears tied to her name- most of the content is related to her feature in ‘Forbes 30 Under 30.’
- Risks not being able to respond to negative comments or reviews.
- Out of loop/ misses out on conversations and learning opportunities with her peers.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Would gain from using other platforms other than LinkedIn and Facebook. Twitter would be extremely beneficial for what she is trying to accomplish.
- She does post on LinkedIn and could benefit from posting regularly about what her company is working on, trends within the industry, etc. to establish herself as a thought leader within her field. She is already a leader but may not be seen as a prominent thought leader due to her lack of engagement online.
- Owning her own URL and maintaining (or having someone assist her in doing so) her own website can help continue to build credibility and be a place where she can showcase her accomplishments in one place.
- Could gain more exposure and variety in search results if she partnered with an online publication and published articles or short blog posts on a regular basis relating to her work. She is clearly a thought leader in her field and she should be able to showcase this to a wider audience.

THREATS:

- Other young entrepreneurs are more visible online and may take the spotlight away from her over time.
- The rising expectation from the general public that company CEO’s are more present and vocal online.
- By not utilizing digital platforms, she risks not gaining valuable feedback from followers, consumers, and industry professionals.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of our ongoing strategy to grow Dr. Shanmugam's digital voice and reputation, we have three overarching strategic recommendations for her. Tom Peters' article, "[The Brand Called You](#)", served as the backbone in developing these recommendations. In achieving these recommendations, Dr. Shanmugam will showcase what makes her unique and different, further refine her pitch, uncover the influencer power she has fully yet to do, and build on her future as a thought leader in her field.

1. INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVITY AND LINKEDIN

In our reading, "[How to Become a LinkedIn Influencer](#)," Gwen Moran emphasizes the importance of engaging on LinkedIn. She studied Jim Keenan's LinkedIn success and notes he regularly comments on others' content and shares content that he finds valuable, tagging the author in his post. He also strives to respond to at least one-quarter of his followers' messages and comments.

Currently, Dr. Shanmugam interacts very little with her connections and followers on LinkedIn. She has over 500 connections and is not using these numbers to her advantage. With the number of connections she has, she can easily gain more attention and build rapport with others in her field. In order to increase engagement and activity on LinkedIn, we recommend that Dr. Shanmugam focus on endorsing the skills her peers have, leaving recommendations for those she currently or has worked with, and share her thoughts on the content her peers are sharing. To further engage with her audience, she should aim to respond to at least one-quarter of the comments and messages left for her as recommended by Moran. To measure her success, Dr. Shanmugam should track the number of comments, shares, and mentions she receives from her posts. The feedback provided in the comments can guide her in knowing the type of content her followers enjoy most or are looking for.

2. INCREASE INFLUENCE AS A THOUGHT LEADER

In the live lecture from week 13, Evan Kraus from APCO Worldwide emphasizes the importance of thought leadership. When a CEO is considered to be a thought leader, they are trusted by their peers and others within their field and also have more authority to influence and create conversations around issues or topics that impact their company. Using Mr. Kraus' insight as inspiration, our second recommendation for Dr. Shanmugam is to focus on increasing her influence as a thought leader within the health technology sector.

In order to do this, our recommendations are twofold. Our first recommendation is for Dr. Shanmugam to book speaking engagements at universities, conferences, and digital news media. Through these offline engagements, Dr. Shanmugam can focus on increasing her digital presence and showcase her experience. To do this, our second recommendation is for Dr. Shanmugam to share her conference speeches and thoughts with her social media followers via articles on her social media platforms and on industry websites and blogs. It would be valuable to her followers to hear what she had to say at the conference without needing to be in attendance.

In [“How to Create a Digital Portfolio That Stands Out From the Pack,”](#) Chris Christoff not only tells his readers to show off their best work but to tell their story. In order to increase her influence as a thought leader in the health technology sector, it is important that she share her relevant experience, knowledge, and journey. Christoff suggests that a video could be a creative and productive way to showcase experiences on LinkedIn. Dr. Shanmugam should share videos of her speaking at conferences and engage with her followers.

To measure success, Dr. Shanmugam can look to the number of comments or questions she receives when posting keynote speeches and articles online. This would provide insight into what information her followers are looking to gain by following her. Additionally, success can be measured by how many conferences and presentations Dr. Shanmugam is invited to speak at. An increase in appearances can be an indicator that her influence as a thought leader is increasing and therefore, grow her digital reputation as more individuals seek to follow Dr. Shanmugam online.

3. EXPAND DIGITAL PRESENCE ON TWITTER AND INSTAGRAM:

Our third recommendation for Dr. Shanmugam is to expand her use of digital platforms to include Twitter and Instagram. Anna Segova notes in, [“Social Media for Business? A Complete Overview of Social Media Platforms,”](#) that Twitter is extremely valuable when trying to connect with other professionals in your industry and to grow a personal brand. With the vast amount of work and knowledge that Dr. Shanmugam brings to her industry, she could easily share her experiences on Twitter in brief pieces of information or updates. It would be a great opportunity for her to host Twitter Chats and receive feedback from followers and other professionals. On Instagram, she can post photos highlighting a current project her company is working on or post behind the scenes videos on Instagram Stories showing her followers how she prepares for a keynote presentation.

As she would be establishing these new profiles, there are a few key performance indicators Dr. Shanmugam could look at to measure success. The first indicator would be to measure the initial interest from Twitter and Instagram users via the number of followers she gains. Another indicator would be to measure the attendance and engagement she receives when hosting digital events such as a Twitter Chat or an Instagram Live. Dr. Shanmugam should track this engagement and attendance by using a designated hashtag on Twitter (ex- #LummeChat, etc.) and follow the increasing number of tweets and posts including this hashtag.