



How the Atlanta Hawks created a slam dunk social strategy using Sprout Social

The Hawks do it for their city. On and off the court, the NBA team creates all-star experiences for fans near and far. From winning games to hosting charity events, everything they do holds true to their mantra: True to Atlanta.

This attitude applies to their digital presence, as well. “We’re harnessing the youth and exuberance of Hawks basketball to tap into new social audiences,” said Katie DuPre’, Atlanta Hawks’ Social Strategy Manager. “That boils down to telling our basketball story while also telling the story of the city we love.”

Building on a well-loved brand while meeting growth goals and the needs of several corporate partners can be a lot to manage. Delivering on their mission requires real-time insights, creative testing and consistent communication with external stakeholders. To pull it off, the Atlanta Hawks social team relies on Sprout Social for the assist.

Nothing but net-new insights

Creating content that audiences can't get enough of isn't a game of chance. For the Hawks, it's all strategy.

"We're a data-driven social team," said DuPre'. "Our audience's preferences are always evolving and that changes how we package and distribute content."

DuPre' and the rest of her team rely on Sprout's Tagging feature to pinpoint what audiences will want next. Their sophisticated Tagging structure allows for more granular reporting on content performance by type, theme and campaign.

"Everything we post gets a content pillar tag and a content medium tag, at minimum," said DuPre'. "We also create campaign ID tags for any larger marketing campaigns. For example, when we were at All-Star Weekend, all live content coverage got a specific tag. After the event concluded, we were able to go back and recap the success of our event coverage."

The Hawks' content pillar Tags align with key themes that ladder up to their strategic branding goals, including telling their basketball story, community outreach and more. Sprout's reporting tools have helped DuPre' quickly identify overall audience preferences and preferences by theme.

“Sprout allows us to create more honest benchmarks for our content,” said DuPre'. “Being able to assess performance by content pillar lets us be smarter about what we post because we know what will resonate the most by network.”

From partners to teammates

On top of amplifying their brand message, the Hawks social team is responsible for delivering social results to over 35 corporate partners.

“We have a ton of departments that work together to drive revenue,” said DuPre'. “A chunk of that revenue is made through content on our channels. We use Sprout to share biweekly reports on all our brand partnership content.”

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Katie DuPre’

Social Strategy Manager

Reporting on the end results is only half of their process. They also share proactive insights on what’s working across social so they can overdeliver whenever they have the chance.

“The [A/B testing](#) we’re able to do in Sprout has afforded us a lot of flexibility from our partners,” said DuPre’. “They trust us when we decide to try new things. For example, we recently tested a more casual approach to social videos taken at community events. We had a player shoot a simple, hand-held video and compared that performance to some of the more polished videos we’ve shared in the past.”

Being able to test these changes has helped DuPre’s team influence content strategies across several partnerships. “We saw a lot more success with the casual content format. It communicated the goal of the event and took some strain off our video team. Being able to share that performance data with our partners has been huge for us.”

Listening to the crowd go wild, online and in the stands

Performance metrics alone can't adequately communicate all of the love the Hawks team receives on social. To get that extra layer of insights, DuPre' relies on [Sprout's Social Listening tool](#).

"We use social listening to get a more complete picture of larger campaigns, like a jersey launch or our brand refresh," said DuPre'. "We'll set up a Listening Topic that covers relevant keywords or hashtags connected to that campaign. Then we use that data to support recap presentations that we share across the organization."

With Listening data, the Hawks social team is able to turn reports into a story that communicates how they're building their brand online.

"A lot of internal stakeholders love seeing the Topic Insights Word Cloud and Sentiment Summary. When we launched the Martin Luther King Jr. Nike City Edition jersey earlier last season, it was met with 99% positive sentiment."

DuPre' feels that Listening data from Sprout helps their team showcase social's true impact on the organization. "When we take our raw data and present it alongside listening insights and the support we're seeing from other brands we know and trust—you can't help but say 'Wow, we did a great job.'"

A new roster of social media all-stars

DuPre' and her team are working to unite the city of Atlanta over a shared love of basketball and their city. Using data from Sprout, they're able to recreate slam dunk successes time and time again.

Learn how Sprout Social can help your team craft a data-driven social strategy. [Request your free demo](#) today.



Sprout Social offers deep social media listening and analytics, social management, customer care and advocacy solutions to more than 32,000 brands and agencies worldwide. Sprout's unified platform integrates the power of social throughout every aspect of a business and enables social leaders at every level to extract valuable data and insights that drive their business forward. Headquartered in Chicago, Sprout operates across major social media networks, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Pinterest, YouTube and LinkedIn. Learn more at sproutsocial.com.