CATEGORY:

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITIES

DIVISION: CORPORATE
CATEGORY: EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

CLICKABLE

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED

Clickable was founded in late 2006, when it introduced the first Web platform to make search advertising simple, instant and profitable. While the product was simple and effective, the unproven startup had to build its reputation, drive customer acquisition, create loyalty, and increase innovation.
While search advertising is critical for business growth, the complexity of search makes marketers feel overwhelmed and anxious. Further adding to the complexity is the fact that search advertisers must manage campaigns across multiple networks, such as Google AdWords, Yahoo Search Marketing and Microsoft adCenter, all of which have unique interfaces and requirements.

At first, marketers struggled to solve their search-advertising challenges by reaching out for answers and advice on the Web. Clearly, marketers needed a trusted advisor, someone willing to contribute their expertise on the top search-marketing forums to help them succeed. They were desperate for a "pain pill" that would make things simple, easy and effective and our task was to demonstrate that Clickable provided exactly that service.

The target audience for the campaign consisted of search advertisers, small and mid-size business owners, as well as agencies managing search for small and midsize clients. These advertisers manage campaigns on all of the major ad networks (Google, Yahoo, and MSN) and connect with one another on several online search-marketing communities. Some popular communities include Google AdWords Group forum, WebMasterWorld, and Microsoft adCenter community.

SOLUTION/TOOLS USED/RESULTS

Clickable's initial marketing strategies needed to directly confront its "live-or-die" startup challenges. Clickable had to drive the acquisition of new customers, and foster loyalty in existing customers. Moreover, Clickable had to rapidly build a reputation for its fledgling brand while developing a cutting-edge, innovative product for the search-marketing community.

> The Guru program's objectives immediately connected to Clickable's marketing, product development, and customer experience operations. Core examples include:
>
> • Outbound Customer & Prospect Outreach: Over the past year, the Clickable Gurus have directly and indirectly contributed their expertise to thousands of

struggling marketers in the top search-marketing forums.

• Inbound Customer and Prospect Engagement: The Gurus' community interactions became highly relevant seed content to launch the Clickable Forums, and the Gurus' front-line experience guided their weekly editorial contributions to the Official Clickable blog, creating rich, relevant content for both marketers exploring Clickable as a possible solution and driving inbound leads from search engine queries on key marketing keywords.

• Customer Learning Assets: The Gurus' learning directly drove the creation of Clickable University, a robust, online customer-learning center filled with Best Practices, Case Studies, Product User Guides and Clickable's comprehensive Certification Program. The Gurus' past year of writings were aggregated into a published hard copy and eBook anthology, "The Clickable Guru's Guide To Better Search Marketing."

• Surfacing Trends & Insights: The Gurus codify each of their community interactions in a common Guru database, summarizing trends and learning. These insights are shared directly with the product and engineering teams, in order to influence and improve Clickable products and experience.

• Codifying Product-To-Market Fit: Because of their daily interaction with a variety of search marketers struggling with a wide array of problems, the Gurus have become a highly effective sounding board for strategic market questions across the Clickable organization.

When we deployed the Gurus to patrol online communities and introduce clarity to the complex search-marketing landscape, we charged the Gurus with upholding nine core principles:

1) Be a trusted advisor

2) Engage authentically

3) Maintain a steady rhythm of good deeds

4) Help marketers at all skill levels

5) Offer simple solutions and objective advice

6) Use real, personal profiles

7) Always disclose affiliation with Clickable

8) Never shill, but welcome newcomers to Clickable when appropriate

9) Channel learning to help improve Clickable

As a fledgling, venture-backed startup in a dynamic marketplace, Clickable needed to rapidly establish its brand to ensure short-term survival and long-term growth. The principles of the Guru program however, dictated that Gurus serve as a search-marketer's trusted advisor, and engage authentically with search marketers at all skill levels. The challenge for the Gurus was to provide objective and simple advice, as well as straightforward solutions, while promoting the benefits of the Clickable brand.

The output of the Gurus within Clickable's University, Forums and Blog has become a critical arm of the product itself, with full integration into the online dashboard experience. The resulting learning assets have become the primary help and training reference materials for Clickable's customer support team. In addition to Clickable's live chat and 800-customer service number (available on every single Web page of our site and product) customers and prospects can get help with their questions from the Gurus in the Clickable forums.

The Clickable community is built on a dynamic infrastructure that reflects the timely, helpful advice we offer to search marketers. The single sign on process our developers have created enables customers to manage their search marketing campaigns and participate in our community in a seamless manner.

Our community blogs and forums, where the learnings from the Guru program continue to be codified, are powered by Telligent Community Server, and customized with additional features to enhance the visitor experience. We are always building and improving our infrastructure to make our community accessible and helpful to search advertisers everywhere.

The Clickable Guru program was the brainchild of Clickable Vice President of Marketing, Max Kalehoff. Max is a renowned expert, evangelist, and student of interactive marketing, with an extraordinary track record of defining and building the reputations of early-stage companies. Prior to joining Clickable, Max spent over three years at Nielsen BuzzMetrics, most recently as Vice President of Marketing, where he helped grow the business from a startup into the global measurement standard in online consumer-generated media.

The inaugural team of gurus included talented experts from both within and outside of Clickable;

Hanny Hindi is a technical writer with expertise in copywriting, search engine optimization, and search marketing. He has worked as a developer on portal implementations for the United States Army, Navy, and Department of Homeland

Security; as a technical project manager at Cantor Fitzgerald; and has implemented numerous customized blogs and Web sites as a freelance consultant.

Tony Soric has worked as a search-marketing strategist for eMergent Marketing (now Rosetta), where he managed accounts for mid-sized to Fortune 500 companies in the online retail, financial services and hospitality verticals. In 2006, he took on the role of Director of Search Marketing for a Chicago based online retail startup. Here he managed pay-per-click, affiliate, email, and organic marketing programs.

Andrew Bernero is an experienced online marketer who is versed in managing paid search campaigns as well as optimizing Web sites for organic search. He has managed multi-million dollar search campaigns for Fortune 500 companies and has been creating search acquisition programs professionally since 2001.

Trace Johnson is an online advertising and analytics consultant who works with businesses and non-profit organizations to improve their online presence. He has worked with clients ranging from start-ups to Britney Spears, non-profits, educational institutions and businesses.

Ehren Reilly is an experienced search marketer who has worked with a diverse set of clients. During his tenure at Catalyst Search Marketing, he managed search accounts for several Fortune 500 companies. As an in-house Director of Search Marketing for an affiliate marketing and lead generation startup, he managed and trained a team of junior search marketers. Ehren holds an M.A in Cognitive Science from Johns Hopkins University. Prior to his search-marketing career, Ehren published several scientific papers on how people read and process language.

Day-to-day coordination, and tactical aspects of the Guru program were managed by Hanny Hindi and Anna Agishtein, Clickable's Community manager.
The Clickable Gurus have made a measurable impact in driving Clickable's reputation, customer acquisition, loyalty, and product innovation.

The Gurus and Clickable's community platform now generate over 50% of new customers, resulting in a 400% increase in new monthly billable advertising. (Clickable expects to reach profitability in mid-2010.) The Clickable Gurus have established themselves as trusted advisors in the search marketing community, a reputation that has been further solidified with the distribution of a published, hardcopy anthology of their teachings.

To gauge our online reputation, we track inbound links from other Web sites and blogs, the volume of our Web pages indexed by major search engines, and visibility in search engines for key search terms that drive customer signups" combined, these metrics form Clickable's "Buzz Index" . The program drove a 2000% increase in Web site visitors and a 300% positive increase in Clickable's index of online buzz and search-engine visibility.

It also led to Clickable's University, which has become central to customer-service execution. Finally, frontline Guru insights drive significant product innovation.

The Gurus have become the kingpin of Clickable's marketing: the company's board of directors has committed to indefinite investment and continuation of the program.

Awareness & Reputation

• Traffic, Buzz And Search Visibility: To gauge our online reputation, we track inbound links from other Web sites and blogs, the volume of our Web pages indexed by major search engines, and visibility in search engines for key search terms that drive customer signups. With the Clickable Gurus at the center of Clickable's community and marketing strategy, Clickable's "buzz index" increased 200% over the past year: monthly visitors to Clickable.com have jumped from less than 5,000 in July 2008 to nearly 100,000 per month as of July 2009.

• Positive Sentiment: Qualitative evidence of the impact on reputation includes sentiment expressed in social media channels, particularly online communities and Twitter. There is no identifiable negative sentiment, and positive sentiment most often includes references to the helpfulness of the Clickable Gurus and customer support team, the usefulness of the Clickable Guru's Guide, and the simplicity of Clickable products.

• Industry Recognition: "Clickable Guru Tony" has been invited to join Google's exclusive innovation community; this is significant considering Google is one of Clickable's most important partners, and the search industry's most noteworthy entity. The Clickable Gurus were also invited to become regular featured columnists on Search Engine Land, the preeminent trade publication for the search marketing industry. Fred Wilson, one of the most famous bloggers and venture capitalists, frequently cites the Clickable Gurus as an example of the future of marketing and earned media, including at John Battelle's recent Conversational Marketing Summit. (Disclosure: Fred Wilson's firm is an investor in companies like Twitter, Disqus and also Clickable.)

Customer Acquisition and New Business

• New Customers: Clickable's community program, led by the Gurus, now directly generates at least 50% of all new leads and customers. (The remaining are driven by paid, performance-advertising tactics.)

• Profitability: The Gurus' community program drove 400% more in new monthly advertising spend managed on Clickable versus a year ago. This metric is significant because Clickable's business model is to charge 5% of total spend managed. Clickable expects to reach profitability in mid-2010.

(* Clickable can provide more detailed sales and profitability results under agreement of confidentiality.)

Customer Loyalty

• Primary Help Center: The output of the Gurus within Clickable's University, Forums and Blog has become a critical arm of the product itself, with full integration into the online dashboard experience. The resulting learning assets have become the primary help and training reference materials for Clickable's customer support team. In addition to Clickable's live chat and 800-customer service number (available on every single Web page of our site and product) customers and prospects can get help with their questions from the Gurus in the Clickable forums.

• Product Innovation: The Gurus submit ongoing reports to Clickable product and innovation team. The product and engineering team comprises 75% of Clickable's 108 employees, so frontline industry insights from the Guru team are considered critical. Their reports have influenced several new product features, improvements and adaptations. The Gurus are also instrumental in identifying weaknesses or bugs with each Clickable software release. As noted above, "Clickable Guru Tony" has been invited to join Google's exclusive innovation community, which is an exclusive source of insight about looming developments inside the world's largest search engine (and Clickable's largest business problem).

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Society for New Communications Research

DIVISION: NONPROFIT
CATEGORY: EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

SUTTER MEDIAL CENTER CASTRO VALLEY

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED

Introduction:

Albert Maruggi has nominated the Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley (SMCCV) Social Media Project, the first social media project of its kind undertaken by Sutter Health as a pilot program,, a SNCR Fellow, for a 2009 EXCELLENCE IN NEW COMMUNICATIONS AWARD. Author Shel Israel also included the story of our project in his new book, *Twitterville: How Businesses Can Thrive in the New Global Neighborhoods* (pp. 103-105), and agreed with Mr. Maruggi that the SMCCV project might qualify for a SNCR Award. They both remarked that they “loved the story” and found this project to be “unique, a first of its kind,” and encouraged our team to apply for a 2009 SNCR Award.

[Please note that the project officially launched on October 22, 2008, but because that would have been after the submission date for the 2008 SNCR Awards, and because we would not have been able to show significant results until January, 2009 or later, we were encouraged to wait until 2009 to submit our entry.]

Indeed, because of its uniqueness and being the first known social media project of its kind, the SMCCV Social Media Project is difficult to categorize, as it could be entered in any or all of the following categories: Online Reputation Management, Influencer Relations, External Communications & Communities, and Social CRM. It even includes elements of New Media Creation, Online Publishing and other categories as well. We’ll leave it up to the SNCR Awards Committee to designate an appropriate category—or perhaps create a new one, for “Community and Constituent Information, Outreach & Advocacy” or the like.

This project also crosses Industry categories, as it is about communicating, informing and advocating in the hospital community around the innovative design and construction process for a new, state-of-the-art hospital and adjoining medical office building located on the existing campus of the current Eden Medical Center, in the Alameda County (East Bay) suburb of Castro Valley, in Northern California.

This project has been a groundbreaker in the use of social media in health care. It has been used as an example in conference presentations by respected Industry professionals, including at Health 2.0, by Shel Holtz; and at other Health Care Industry conferences by Ed Bennett, Phil Kaufman, Albert Maruggi, and others.

SMCCV Social Media Strategists and Consultants Cathryn Hrudicka and Shelly Gordon were asked to give a presentation about this project for the San Francisco/Silicon Valley Social Media Club earlier this year. Additionally, members of the architecture firm and project team have been asked to speak at hospital design and construction events, as the design and construction of the new hospital and adjoining medical facilities have won innovation awards, such as the prestigious FIA TECH Award.

While other hospitals and health care facilities are using social media for health education, marketing and fund-raising, the Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley (SMCCV) project was developed primarily as an advocacy and community outreach program to inform the regional community about progress in the design and construction of a new hospital to replace an existing, beloved hospital of 54 years that had to be replaced by no later than 2013, in order to meet California earthquake safety standards. If the hospital is not rebuilt by then, the existing hospital will be closed by the state.

Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley (SMCCV), the recently renamed and re-branded facility that will replace the current Eden Medical Center (http://www.edenmedicalcenter.org), is an affiliate of Sutter Health (http://www.SutterHealth.org), a California-based nonprofit health care organization, with headquarters located in Sacramento, California.

Sutter Health, which posted annual revenues of approximately $5 billion at the outset of our project, and some of its 26 affiliate hospitals and medical facilities, are now pursuing other uses of social media (list available upon request, with new social media projects potentially to be added in 2009-2010); but it was the SMCCV project that has been a hallmark for the organization. Since the project launch, after noting the success and effectiveness of the SMCCV project, Sutter Health corporate headquarters and several affiliates have launched additional social media projects, with diverse objectives that range from health education and fund-raising for several of its Foundations, to recruiting new physicians and other employees. The SMCCV social media project can also be replicated in other communities where Sutter Health is building new hospitals and medical facilities.

Problems/Challenges to Be Addressed:

While the majority of the regional community around Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley/Eden Hospital (which actually includes the communities of Castro Valley, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Dublin, Pleasanton, and other nearby towns) supported the construction of the new hospital and other medical facilities on the Eden campus, there were some community members who did not fully understand the necessity for the new hospital; and there were others who feared that union jobs would be lost.

A relatively small number of nearby small businesses and apartment tenants would be required to move, in order to park construction vehicles and re-route traffic around the hospital campus and a few of its surrounding residential streets.

Additionally, there was an image problem with a large, Sacramento-based organization coming in and buying a beloved local institution from the township that had previously owned it. Sutter Health had sometimes been portrayed in local traditional media as a large organization that had purchased Eden Medical Center and was now "taking over" the beloved, formerly community-run facility. The local Eden Township, which had formerly owned the hospital, was not able to continue managing and running it because the Township had gone into significant debt and thus, had to find another buyer for the medical center in order to keep it open. There had been controversy over this process when it occurred.

As part of the sale agreement, Sutter Health had placed over $325 million in escrow and committed to building a new facility to replace Eden Hospital and its adjacent medical office building while still maintaining full services at the current Eden Hospital by building the new hospital in an adjacent space; the old hospital would not be demolished until the new hospital was in place. Some local residents feared that crucial emergency services would be lost during construction, so one of the tasks was to inform the community that there would be absolutely no loss in emergency or other services during the entire construction process, which would need to be completed by 2013 to meet State of California seismic requirements.

A marketing firm had implemented a 2008 survey of the local community, which demonstrated that approximately 80% of those polled said they would support the new hospital at the outset of the social media project; but there was still significant misinformation and misperceptions among the local community, which at that point, had no official online vehicle to ask questions, express opinions, or have their concerns addressed by Sutter or Eden officials.

Although the local print and television media were covering the story about the new hospital's design and building process, there were often factual errors or misrepresentations. It became clear to the Project Communications Director, Cassandra Clark, that social media would be an ideal vehicle to address these problems. She and Ron Marshall, Vice President of Business Strategy and Development at Sutter Health, met with Social Media/Public Relations Consultants Shelly Gordon, Vice President of G2Communications, and Cathryn Hrudicka, CEO of Creative Sage/Cathryn Hrudicka & Associates, to determine how to create and develop a social media program for the SMCCV project that would meet these needs and raise the support rating above 80% among the local community, which included patients and other local citizens, clinical and non-clinical employees, local business leaders, media, and the government officials who would be required to vote on passage of the various entitlements needed to construct the new medical center facilities.

It became obvious to all concerned that one-way messaging would simply not work; and that a well-planned social media program integrated with the hospital's other public relations and community outreach programs would offer an effective way to have two-way and multiple conversations, in order to respond to questions, correct misinformation, and openly address issues about every aspect of the new hospital's construction process between 2008-2013, when it would officially open to the public.

Finally, a new level of public trust needed to be gained, which would contribute to the successful re-branding of Sutter Health and the new hospital name, Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley.

The major communications issue:

To encourage more transparent, open, two-way and multiple conversations with all segments of the audience [previously listed in (5.)], in order to reassure the local and regional community that hospital facilities, including the Eden Hospital Emergency Trauma Center, would remain fully open and operational during the building of the new Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley.

Additional priority communications issues, as previously mentioned:

- To answer community questions, address all concerns and issues, and correct misinformation and misperceptions in the community and the media, regarding the new hospital's design, construction and government approvals processes;
- To gain more public trust and support for the new, renamed and re-branded hospital and medical facilities on the Eden campus, and to increase the support rating from approximately 80% to closer to 90% or above;
- To increase public awareness of Sutter Health and the Sutter name, with a more positive image and connotation in the regional community and in the media;
- To reach out to all media, including bloggers and previously under utilized online media, and to provide a new blog site and its newsroom as an online hub for sharing information and conversation, along with carefully selected social networks determined to be used by the local/regional population and hospital constituents.
- Patients and other local citizens, including neighbors, and a limited number of apartment building tenants who had to move due to the new hospital's construction
- Clinical and non-clinical employees; and potentially, new doctors and medical recruiters, as some of the current hospital's staff will be retiring by 2013
- Local business leaders, including some business owners who were being displaced by the new hospital construction
- Chambers of Commerce and other local trade associations who would be key influencers in supporting the new hospital

•Regional and Industry print, broadcast and online media, including influencial health care bloggers and podcasters
•Government officials who would be charged with hearing conflicting arguments and passing at least 3-4 city, county and state entitlements to permit the new construction to go forward in a timely manner
•Agencies involved in LEED Environmental Sustainability Certification for the new hospital
•Physicians and recruiting agencies who might be recruited for the new hospital, assuming some of existing staff would retire by completion of the project
•Potential donors and supporters of some of the new and existing hospital's programs in the community, including the Eden Foundation
•Other local community groups with influence, including neighborhood groups, churches, and social organizations
•Additional stakeholders in the organization and larger community.

While these are the primary audience members, there have been significant secondary benefits of the SMCCV social media project, and a wider health care industry, national and even international audience that has been reached by this project. More details are available below and in the attached materials.

To encourage more transparent, open, two-way and multiple conversations with all segments of the audience [previously listed in (5.)], in order to reassure the local and regional community that hospital facilities, including the Eden Hospital Emergency Trauma Center, would remain fully open and operational during the building of the new Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley;

•To answer community questions, address all concerns and issues, and correct misinformation and misperceptions in the community and the media, regarding the new hospital's design, construction and government approvals processes;
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•To increase public awareness of Sutter Health and the Sutter name, with a more positive image and connotation in the regional community and in the media;
•To reach out to all media, including bloggers and previously under utilized online media, and to provide a new blog site and its newsroom as an online hub for sharing information and conversation, along with carefully selected social networks determined to be used by the local/regional population and hospital constituents;
•Secondary goals and objectives were to continue building a community for fund-raising and donor activities that would be deployed later in 2009 (by Eden Foundation); and to reach out to doctors, other health care professionals and recruiters, who would develop an interest in the new hospital, learn about its

innovative features, and further enable to hospital to continue its tradition of hiring the most outstanding staff available when the new hospital opens in 2013.
•While there was no primary revenue goal for this social media project, certainly the secondary benefits of fostering an active donor community would enable to hospital to continue to serve the community with new equipment and additional resources for programs. Additionally, the good will of the community would support ongoing revenue from patient services in the future.
•Added visibility of Sutter Health and the innovative new SMCCV hospital would increase the organization's already high rankings and stature even further in the state, national and even international Health Care Industry.

Due to budget limitations, partly from revenue losses due to the poor economy in 2007-2008, and the expense of designing and building the new hospital and adjoining facilities, lead Social Media Strategist Cathryn Hrudicka suggested a cost-efficient approach to the SMCCV Project Team by using free WordPress blogging software and having it customized with design elements of other Sutter Health web sites, including the existing Eden Medical Center web site. The Project Team liked that idea, as they wanted the blog site to be independently hosted, while retaining the look, branding and other characteristics of a Sutter Health web site.

Ms. Hrudicka recommended design, SEO and social elements, including a social media newsroom, social bookmarking, RSS and Feedburner email subscription form, and a customized social networks widget, to be incorporated into the design. She researched, conducted interviews and obtained competitive rates from over 20 blog design and customization firms, most of which she found using Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and personal contacts.

The WordPress customized blog site at http://suttermedicalcentercastrovalley.org/blog serves as the Internet headquarters, where community members and other readers can find updated information about the building in process, comment, ask questions and discuss issues. On the blog site, there are links to other popular online social networks, such as Twitter, a Facebook fan page, Facebook group, LinkedIn group, YouTube channel, and FriendFeed account, where we have started groups and online communities for further discussion about the new medical center.

Members of the media have regularly visited the "newsroom" page on the blog site, and there is a "photo gallery," "video gallery," and a "resources" page (with subpages), where media and community visitors alike can find information about the state earthquake laws, download a copy of the Environmental Impact Report, and see renderings of the new hospital-in-progress, plus look at a Web cam on the site.

Additionally, the social media team for SMCCV has reached out to other regional online groups and social networks, such as the already existing Facebook groups: Castro Valley: Where Legends Are Made, Sutter Health Fan Club, Holy Cross Episcopal Church of

Castro Valley California, Castro Valley Mothers Club - members past and present, Castro Valley Forum, The Castro Valley, the local Chamber of Commerce social networks, and some neighborhood social networks in the Castro Valley/San Leandro area of Alameda County, and adjacent towns served by the hospital.

We have also found it vital to schedule periodic, in-person events, such as Open Houses at Eden Hospital, to introduce and discuss the social media program, particularly because the Castro Valley community was not thought to be as internet-savvy as, for example, comparable communities in Silicon Valley. However, we have found that the Eden/SMCCV community is indeed using the Internet--we just needed to find out where, and how to reach them. To that end, Cathryn Hrudicka and Social Media/Public Relations associate Shelly Gordon developed a social media/Web 2.0 survey, which was conducted online, by telephone, and in-person.

SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO SUTTER MEDICAL CENTER CASTRO VALLEY

Social Media Project

Established Structure

Established goals, objectives, milestones, timelines and determined additional personnel needed (i.e., blog designers/programmers, possible video professional, etc.

Evaluated over 20 designers, identified, managed and coordinated with chosen designer and blog programmer to design, produce and implement Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley blog.

Created social networking profiles (i.e., Twitter, FriendFeed, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, MySpace, etc.). Oversight and implementation of regular posts and schedule; developed methods to grow the communities on social networks, located SMCCV constituents, and replied to posts and messages from community members on all social networks. Posted almost daily.

Created social media tools accounts (PBWiki, Technorati, Google Analytics, Feedburner, del.icio.us, Digg, etc.), and managed project Wiki and coordination with Shelly Gordon, Cassandra Phelps and other project staff as needed.

Wrote, edited, collected content to post in blog Newsroom, Resources, About Pages. Wrote profiles of each blog team member and posted under Blog Team with their photos.

Collected video footage for YouTube section of blog; video included footage shot at Oct 22 event, including presentations and interviews with attendees on their reactions to new hospital design.

Regularly scouted for news about Eden, Sutter, Sutter Castro Valley through Google Alerts and other search engines.

Collected past articles about agreement between Sutter and Eden Township Health Care District to build new Sutter hospital and posted on blog

Followed top five health care blogs, including Health 2.0 blog, Running a Hospital, Hospital Impact, NY Times, Wall St. Journal and sought out relevant posts to comment on; sent posts to George; drafted and edited his reply comments

Mentored and trained other team members and associates in using social media tools, techniques and processes; presented blog and other social media and networks to SMCCV Project Team, Ron Marshall, Cassandra Phelps, other staff and community (at October 22, 2008 event and staff meetings).

Developed goals and metrics for tracking results

Assembled blogger team; wrote profiles for each; recruited guest bloggers in construction, clinical, administrative roles.

Created editorial calendar for blog posts; polled blog team for topics and sent the calendar with our list of recommended posts.

Developed blog comment policy

Developed instructions for blog team in writing posts, edited, sought approvals and published. Also worked with bloggers to respond to comments on their posts in a timely manner

Interviewed blog team members; they wrote posts, managed approvals and published on average 2 new posts per week, since October 22 launch event (see below).

Published posts on blog, adding links, images, categories, tags, style elements, coding the above as needed.

Conducted surveys in local communities and at both Eden campuses and through Eden employee newsletters to determine Web 2.0 “literacy” and introduce social media program; used surveys to determine which social media and social networks would be most appropriate to pursue; determined if new networks or groups should be created and on which platforms, i.e., Yahoo Groups, Google Groups, etc.

Helped create October 22 social media launch event to announce the new blog and other social networks to attendees, as well as promoted event through e-mail campaigns inviting constituents and community members to attend the event, join the social networks, read the blog(s) and comment. Presented at event; prepared slides and presented to Ron Marshall in advance.

Building Traffic, Subscribers, Advocates

Monitored news stories and blog posts on other key media sources; made suggestions for staff/team responses and comments to provide back links and boost SEO, as well as branding, for the SMCCV blog, SMCCV, Eden Hospital and Sutter Health.

Conducted numerous outreach efforts to recruit locals to sign up for blog and social networks through email blasts, civic club mailings, Hayward and Castro Valley Chamber of Commerce mailings and website postings, press releases for local and online exposure.

Contacted Homeowner Associations and civic clubs to promote SMCCV blog and social networks through newsletters, emailings, and speaking engagements.

Held conversations with community “movers & shakers,” including Eden Foundation board members, physicians, civic club leaders, Chamber directors, etc., to engage them in social media program; increase blog subscribers.

Regularly posted, monitored, managed, responded to comments and continued to invite more people to join and build community on the blog and social networks.

Monitored news stories and blog posts on other key media sources and made suggestions for staff/team responses and comments to provide back links and boost search engine optimization (SEO), as well as branding for the SMCCV blog, SMCCV, Eden Hospital and Sutter Health.

Building Viral Awareness

Made contact with key media, bloggers and other influencers, introducing and conversing with them about the innovative use of social media by SMCCV and Sutter Health; have interested them or pitched them about covering this story in appropriate media.

Obtained interest from other professional organizations as well, and positive feedback from media, influencers and community members, and have made suggestions to Sutter/Eden PR staff and Cassandra Phelps regarding potential media coverage that could result from implementation of the social media outreach program.

Through traditional PR (print and broadcast, plus online), generated stories in local print and online newspapers; led to coverage in *BusinessWeek*, MedCity News Blog, Yahoo's My Blog Log, Comcast Newsmakers/CNN.

Awareness online and daily posting on social networks led to inclusion in social media luminary's forthcoming book, Twitterville, listing on Hospital Social Network list

Developed a Social Media Transition Plan, Task List, and List of Recommended Social Media Positions and Job Responsibilities following the end of Cathryn Hrudicka's and Shelly Gordon's initial contract period on June 30, 2009. Since July 1, 2009, the SMCCV Social Media project has been fully managed by Cassandra Clark, Project Communications Director.

Trained Project Communications Director Cassandra Clark in Social Media management and implementation, and also trained, mentored and advised other Sutter Health staff at the SMCCV/Eden site, at Sacramento headquarters, and by phone/teleconference to several staff members of other affiliates.

The Sutter organization was not known to be as transparent and open as it could be at the outset of the project. As is the case with many large organizations, it is fairly hierarchical in structure, and was mainly using one-way messaging practices in its public relations, marketing, event planning and other outreach. The SMCCV Project Team for the new hospital was more innovative in its methods of operation, but team members had little or no prior experience in blogging, interacting on social networks, or otherwise participating in social media.

From the outset, the entire Project Team felt strongly that blog posts should be written by the team members themselves, rather than being ghostwritten by professional bloggers or consultants. Social media consultants Cathryn Hrudicka and Shelly Gordon needed to work closely with team members, individually and as a group, to mentor them in writing their own blog posts, developing an editorial calendar for the blog, posting on social networks and responding to questions and comments, using best social media practices. Even the CEO of the hospital, Mr. George Bischalaney, had never written a blog post before and needed to be coached. (As it turns out, his "Straight Talk with the CEO" posts have turned out to be among the most popular with subscribers.)

After several training, coaching and mentoring sessions--in person and via teleconference--most of the key Project Team members learned to blog, respond to comments, and otherwise interact more openly with social network members on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, FriendFeed and other local online groups. In fact, one of the most intriguing and unique aspects of the newly created blog site was that there have been posts by the chief architect from the Devenney Group, the Project Manager, the Landscape Architect, the Government Affairs Liaison, and others, including several team members who grew up in the Castro Valley area, which enabled them to write blog posts that local readers could more readily identify with.

Another challenge was getting frequent blog posts assigned, prepared and approved on a regular, timely basis, from the Project Team staff, who are always extremely busy, including the hospital CEO. By setting up a firm editorial calendar and creating a regular approval process that was successfully communicated to the entire team, the Project Communications Director and the rest of the team were usually able to meet their deadlines and post at least 2-3 times per week to the blog.

The social media consultants and other hospital staff posted daily on Twitter (@SutterEdenMed) and the other social networks between October 22, 2008 and July 1, 2009; but there has been a decrease in the frequency of blog and social network posts over the summer. However, we anticipate it will increase again as the Project Communications Director (Cassandra Clark) continues to enlist the assistance of other staff, who are now enthusiastic and increasingly knowledgeable about social media practices.

Intermittently, there have been some controversies in the community that have slowed down the entitlements processes (permits) in different phases of the new hospital's construction, but by using social media tools and social networks, the majority of the community has remained supportive. In fact, the support level has increased significantly above the 90% level, judging from metrics, increasingly positive comments, and a strong presence by supportive community members at the local and county government hearings that have been required to pass the entitlements. A number of community members and employees at all levels testified on behalf of the hospital at the hearings (including Castro Valley MAC and two Alameda County Board of Supervisors' meetings).

The blog site [http://suttermedicalceentercastrovalley.org/blog] is a WordPress-optimized site that has the look and feel of other Sutter Health affiliate sites, blending in easily with the current Eden Medical Center site. It was designed and optimized by Mitra Creative in New York, a firm that was chosen after a careful search by Cathryn Hrudicka of Creative Sage/Cathryn Hrudicka & Associates.

The Project Team and social media consultants used mostly free online metrics, search and monitoring tools, such as Google Alerts, Google Analytics, Feedburner, Google Documents, Twitter Search and a host of Twitter tools, plus Technorati, Digg, Delicious, and other widely-used social bookmarking tools. A project Wiki was created at the outset of the project, so that Cassandra Clark, Cathryn Hrudicka, and Shelly Gordon could collaborate, create and edit project timelines, upload key documents, and share information. They also held regular teleconferences and in-person planning meetings, plus additional meetings with other members of the Project Team.

Although Ms. Hrudicka and Ms. Gordon recommended Radian 6, Techrigy and other metrics tools, due to a limited budget, the staff decided to use free tools for the initial year of the project, and will reconsider using more sophisticated, paid metrics tools in the next year.

We have already described most of this above, but the Project Team is listed on the blog site at http://suttermedicalcentercastrovalley.org/blog.

The team consisted of Project Communications Director Cassandra Clark; lead Social Media Strategist and Consultant Cathryn Hrudicka; associate Social Media and Public Relations Consultant Shelly Gordon; and the additional Project Team staff, headed by Mr. Digby Christian, Senior Project Manager for Facility Planning & Development. There are about 8 to 12 key staff on this team, plus the CEO, Mr. George Bischalaney. At times, additional staff and department managers were involved in the program, such as the Public Affairs Director, and an event-planning consultant.

The components of the program have already been discussed, and have included the new blog site, extensive use of social networks (including Twitter, a Facebook fan page, a Facebook group, a LinkedIn group, YouTube, FriendFeed, and the Castro Valley-area groups previously mentioned. We also added in-person community groups, public appearances, and staff training sessions to the program after determining a necessity for them. Additionally, we integrated the social media program with more traditional media outreach, which significantly increased the effectiveness of all of the program's outreach channels.

Summary of Results for Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley

Social Media Outreach Program to Date

A Few Online Comments in Response to the Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley

Social Media Outreach Program

(Copied from the SMCCV Blog and Social Networks)

> "I always mention your program as one of the leaders in Hospital social media I consider the SMCCV social media program to be 'one of the top two' on my list, tied only with the Mayo Clinic."
> Ed Bennett, web strategist for University of Maryland Medical Center and creator of Health Care 100 List [of health care organizations throughout the U.S. using Social Media] http://ebennett.org/hsnl/
>
> "You guys have done great in marketing what you're doing."

Ed Bierman, web strategist for Palo Alto Medical Foundation, who is observing our social media program with great interest

[SMCCV is] excellent example of healthcare delving into social media in the right way"
Katie Adams who writes for HealthGrades and *HealthLeaders* magazine

"Found you via Twitterholic. BTW, my grandma was just [at Eden] for a broken hip. Thx for taking great care of her!"
Individual from Castro Valley whose grandmother was treated at Eden for a broken hip. Don't be alarmed if that new friend request on Facebook comes from Sutter Health and Eden Medical Center.

"But no 'pokes' here. It's all part of an online outreach program to promote their plans for a new hospital to replace the aging Eden Medical Center. Officials are touting their efforts to delve into social networking sites as a first for such a project.

At the blog site, visitors will be able to get updates and comment on building regulation approvals through all phases of construction
BusinessWeek (republished from the *Daily Review*, January 7, 2009)

"George, I think you are being very modest in your assessment of how Eden Hospital performed. I just reviewed the data from OSHPOD. Among hospitals that do greater than 50 craniotomies per year, Eden had THE LOWEST MORTALITY IN THE STATE, far better than any other hospital in the Bay Area! Way to go Eden!"
Comment on SMCCV blog from Lawrence Dickinson, M.D. on news story about Eden's ranking in OSHPD report.

@sutteredenmed used Tw, Fcbk, YT, Blog along with traditional media/PR best practices to create support/trust & educate.

Power of SM (Social Media): @sutteredenmed using SM to build community trust/overcome objections for new hospital tower http://cli.gs/p6qT3n
(Tom Stitt is a healthcare journalist.)

The quotes above are a small sample of the positive reactions we've received in the ten months since we launched the Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley Social Media Outreach Program. Likewise, our metrics demonstrate constant, gradual growth in the numbers of SMCCV blog readers and social network participants. [Please see attachments with key data from metric sources that include Google Analytics, Feedburner subscribers, Technorati ranking to date, plus more comments on the blog and social networks.]

For an early-stage blog and social network presence, SMCCV has attained significant brand recognition locally, nationally and even internationally--not only for the name "Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley"—but also for "Sutter Health" and "Eden Medical Center." Indirectly, there is also increasing brand recognition for "Castro Valley" as a location, due to repetitive mention on the blog and all social networks.

From the metrics on Google Analytics, comparing results in early November 2008 to metrics obtained in the first quarter of 2009, blog readership, including RSS and email subscriptions, had tripled overall, especially in several key Bay Area and Northern California regions where there are Sutter Health affiliates. Since the first quarter, readership and subscriptions have continued to nearly triple every subsequent quarter. (Google Analytics and Feedburner attachments are available upon request.)

Blog readership in the project priority communities of Castro Valley, San Leandro, Hayward, Dublin, Pleasanton, Berkeley, Oakland, Piedmont, and Alameda, in particular, increased significantly, with readership in Castro Valley increasing 2.5 times during the initial three-month period alone. We are confident these numbers will continue to grow in the next year and beyond.

On social networks, we have found the most active participation on Twitter, followed by FriendFeed and our Facebook fan page, the Facebook group, and LinkedIn. Recently, we have become aware of other Castro Valley area Facebook groups, neighborhood and business groups, so we plan to invite more of their members to join our already established groups, plus we have requested membership in these native groups.

We anticipate participation in social networks to continue building gradually and steadily over the next year and beyond, and we are continuing to search for individual members of all social networks who reside in the key targeted geographic communities of Castro Valley, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Hayward and other Sutter Health affiliate communities.

Comments we have received on the SMCCV blog and all social networks -- and in private social network or email messages sent to Cathryn Hrudicka and Shelly Gordon -- indicate an increasing brand awareness of, and positive feelings toward SMCCV and Sutter Health in general.

Substantial Referrals to our Blog from Social Network Sites and Media Coverage (Print, Online, and Broadcast)

As demonstrated in the Google Analytics metrics [see attachments], the Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley blog site is receiving a substantial number of referrals from our social networking sites, especially Twitter, Facebook, FriendFeed, and, to a slightly lesser degree, LinkedIn and YouTube. Clearly, SMCCV's social network presence is key in sending viewers to our blog site; and as the links to new blog posts and relevant discussion topics are posted regularly on each social network, members become further engaged and encouraged to visit our blog and comment.

We have also encouraged the blog/project team and Eden staff to comment on other key, relevant and popular health care blogs and online media outlets to draw traffic to the SMCCV blog and boost search engine optimization (SEO).

Gradually, we are becoming aware of more possibilities there and are in the process of working with the project team and staff to increase their participation in this activity.

Social Network Referrals to Media Coverage

Additionally, we have received print, online, and broadcast media coverage in key outlets that demonstrate a connection to the SMCCV blog and social network presences. [See attached Media Coverage to Date List.]

Cathryn Hrudicka and Shelly Gordon have been contacted by bloggers, medical journalists and editors on several of the social networks, who became aware of Sutter Health and Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley through discussions and conversations they observed or participated in on the social networks -- most predominantly, Twitter and FriendFeed. They were referred to the SMCCV blog and individual posts; and, Shelly and Cathryn were able to “pitch” stories to them through a natural, authentic conversational process that allowed them to build relationships via the social network discussions.

The SMCCV’s presences on Facebook and LinkedIn, as well as Twitter and FriendFeed, have also caught the attention of other Sutter Health affiliate employees, plus health professionals all over the U.S. and overseas, including a number of physicians, nurses and health care recruiters. We can supply a list upon request, simply among our Twitter followers, and among other social network participants/members.

The blog readership during the past ten months has increased from hundreds to thousands of readers, although it should be kept in mind that the priority goal was to attract local or regional readers and subscribers. Although we now have blog subscribers from over 43 countries, the Project Team continues to monitor very closely that we are reaching the priority audiences (which our metrics clearly support).

We have consistently observed that Eden CEO George Bischalaney’s “Straight Talk with the CEO” blog posts are the most widely read posts, and they tend to engender the most comments. We strongly recommended that Mr. Bischalaney and other Castro Valley-based project team members continue to write new blog posts every month, and this has paid off in the nature of the comments we have received, indicating readers supported this approach.

The SMCCV blog subscriber statistics on Feedburner show that we have had a steadily increasing number of subscribers over the past ten months, following the initial launch month, starting on October 22, 2008. Most subscriptions are by email; and we would recommend continuing to encourage RSS subscriptions, as those boost SEO and are more likely to bring returning subscribers to new blog posts, plus RSS subscriptions more easily enable sharing with other potential blog readers. As we have done more in-person educational meetings in the community explaining RSS, the subscriber base has consistently upgraded.

The Feedburner statistics are likely to grow exponentially over the coming year and beyond. We recommended continuing to educate project staff, Sutter staff subscribers, and local community subscribers, about RSS feeds and their value.

Similarly, our early Technorati rating was “5.” This was normal for a relatively new blog, and we would advise continuing to encourage blog readers to rate the SMCCV blog as a whole, and to rate individual posts, as favorites, so our ranking increases. To support this goal, we added a “Technorati favorite” button to the front page of the blog, asking readers to click on it if they find value in the blog. We will also continue to make that request in our social network posts. We expect the Technorati ranking to exponentially increase as the blog gains more readers over the next year and beyond.

We initially recommended producing and uploading Videocasts and Podcasts on the SMCCV blog. A decision was made by Sutter/Eden staff that they did not want to produce high-end video clips or a podcast during 2009, and instead, focused on adding a high quality animated architectural fly-over and fly-through to the SMCCV blog site, plus a CNN/Comcast interview of Communications Director Cassandra Clark, where she discussed the ground-breaking social media program, and additional, informal video clips of the blog launch Open House on 10/22/08, plus video clips of the new hospital ground-breaking ceremony on July 1, 2009. Additionally, an in-progress Webcam of the construction site has been linked to the blog site so community members can see the construction in progress at the new hospital site.

We are also ready to begin a donor/fund-raising or “community” page for the SMCCV blog, and to initiate fund-raising efforts through the social networks, which have proven to be outstanding vehicles for raising funds for many of the major nonprofit organizations in the United States and internationally. We have several specific recommendations to make in that regard, which we would be glad to discuss further upon request.

Additionally, we have seen increased understanding and participation in the local Castro Valley area communities, especially when the project team reaches out through in-person appearances and activities, such as speaking to Rotary and other business groups, employee groups, and the like. We strongly recommend continuing and increasing in-person appearances to educate people about the social media program.

We also recommend mentoring and training for Sutter Health corporate staff, in active social media and social network participation. We are receiving inquiries from other affiliates, and Cathryn Hrudicka and Shelly Gordon have been approached to provide mentoring, training, coaching and consultation by other Sutter Health corporate and affiliate staff, as well as by health care professionals across the country. We feel that a more formalized process or role should be developed for the Sutter Health organization as a whole, and for interested Sutter Health affiliates, to maximize the positive impact of social media and social network use, and to coordinate among affiliates in their social media advocacy and branding efforts.

To conclude, we have strongly recommended that the benefits and impact gained in the past ten months of the blog and social network presence (dating from the October 22, 2008, blog launch) be continued on an ongoing basis, as we anticipate blog readership, subscribers and social network membership and participation to increase geometrically and exponentially within the next 1 to 2 years and beyond. Clearly, our brand recognition and advocacy goals are being met, as evidenced by metrics and the quality of the comments the project is receiving, as well as increasingly positive media coverage (traditional and online).

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Society for New Communications Research

DIVISION: ACADEMIC
CATEGORY: EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITIES

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED

Located between San Francisco and San Jose in the heart of Silicon Valley, Stanford University is recognized as one of the world's leading research and teaching institutions. Leland and Jane Stanford founded the University to “promote the public welfare by exercising an influence on behalf of humanity and civilization." Stanford opened its doors in 1891, and more than a century later, it remains dedicated to finding solutions to the great challenges of the day and to preparing our students for leadership in today's complex world.

Stanford has a history of embracing new technology to further its research and education mission. For example, Stanford was the first university to create an online social networking community for its alumni (2002). Stanford was one of five launch partners for the Google Books Library Project, which made the university’s vast library holdings searchable and accessible worldwide in digital format (2004). Stanford was the first university to partner with Apple to make lectures and educational content freely available through iTunes (2005). And Stanford was the first university to launch an official iPhone application (iStanford) that provides real-time information to students and visitors on a mobile platform (2008).

The popularity and reach of external social networks (Facebook in particular) presented a new set of challenges and opportunities for Stanford. How could Stanford University fulfill its overall research and educational mission—in conjunction with specific unit goals (e.g., recruitment, institutional reputation, emergency communications, alumni relations)—by way of an official, central identity (e.g., Page) within Facebook? And to what extent could Stanford take full advantage of the social and community elements of Facebook in doing so?--Because Stanford was one of a small number of launch partners for Facebook’s redesigned Pages product, there were many communications uncertainties to be addressed. In particular, community norms and best practices had not yet been established around how individuals interact with brands and organizations within Facebook.

For example, to what extent would individuals—who were accustomed to interacting with their friends—accept postings by a university in their Facebook News Feed? What type of content, community building, and user experiences would be most appropriate within Facebook, and at what frequency? How should Stanford develop institutional voice within Facebook? And most importantly, what types of communications and experiences offered by Stanford within Facebook ultimately “move the needle” with respect to attitudes and perceptions? Could Stanford offer experiences within Facebook that further its core research and teaching mission?

A second set of communications issues revolved around serving multiple and sometimes competing audiences via a singular, centralized Facebook identity. As a large institution engaged in many diverse activities, Stanford has many audiences (e.g., prospective students, current students, alumni, staff/faculty, those interested in research findings, etc.) within Facebook. Would it be possible for Stanford to communicate with and serve multiple audiences through a centralized Facebook channel? Would it be possible to build community among different audiences?

--Broadly defined, the audience consisted of all Facebook users with an affiliation with or interest in Stanford University. This was then be broken down into various sub-audiences: prospective Stanford students (undergraduates and graduate/professional school); current Stanford students (admits, undergraduates, and graduate students); Stanford alumni; faculty and staff; parents, siblings, and relatives of Stanford students; local community members; Stanford sports fans; and self-learners or industry/government practitioners who are interested in the university's knowledge, research, and discoveries. The "Facebook friends" of the target audience served as a secondary audience; within Facebook, a user's engagement with Stanford is frequently visible to that user's social graph.

--In alignment with the mission of the university, the primary objective was to increase the accessibility of Stanford's knowledge, research, and teaching. In particular, the goal was to extend the "first-generation" of the university's online learning initiatives, which largely consist of publishing educational free knowledge, research, and discovery online (e.g., tunes, You Tube, Stanford Engineering Everywhere, Stanford News Service, High Wire Press). The "second-generation" of the university's online learning initiatives would attempt to enhance the online learning experience by way of Facebook's social modality and multimedia capabilities.

SOLUTION/TOOLS USED/RESULTS

From a public affairs perspective, the primary goal was to enhance Stanford's reputation—especially with respect to its research and teaching mission—across all audiences. Because engagement constitutes a form of advocacy by way of Facebook's social graph, this virtual word-of-mouth advocacy constituted another important public affairs goal.

In addition, two specific goals were applied to key sub-audiences. For prospective students, a primary goal was to motivate them to learn more about and apply to Stanford University. For alumni and current Stanford students, a primary goal was to help them feel more connected to the university.

Because of the many uncertainties involved in the new media (see Communications Issues above), Stanford adopted an iterative experimentation approach toward the project. Given the time constraints (two-weeks from project kickoff to launch) and many unknowns, it would have been ineffective to create out a comprehensive rollout strategy that involved all potential stakeholders. Instead, a single person with ownership of the platform was responsible for all execution and decision-making. The four components in Stanford's approach toward developing its centralized, official Facebook presence were as follows:

1. Concentrated ownership and oversight of the project. Although ownership was concentrated, it was important that the right owner was selected. Stanford's Office of Public Affairs is responsible for the university's external communications with respect to the university's research and teaching mission; in addition, the Office of Public Affairs works closely with communicators across the university (e.g., Stanford Alumni Association, Undergraduate Admissions, Athletics, various schools and departments) and is well positioned to manage a centralized Facebook presence that meets many objectives across the university.

2. Systematic testing. For example, during the first two weeks after launch, Stanford systematically posted every type of media offered through the Facebook Page (e.g., status, note, link, video, photo, etc.) in order to understand engagement as a function of media. The same type of testing was applied along many other dimensions (e.g., content frequency, story content, etc.).

3. Measurement-driven iteration. Every action was considered a mini-experiment, and key metrics provided by Facebook (e.g., likes, comments, removed Fans, media consumption, etc.) were used to continuously improve Stanford's Facebook communications and community building.

4. Evangelization and sharing/codifying best practices. As the Office of Public Affairs discovered best practices , it shared them with communicators across campus. There are now over 20 official Pages for various Stanford schools (e.g., medicine, engineering, etc.), events (e.g., Stanford Lively Arts), and units (e.g., athletics) across campus. All such Page owners are receiving guidance and internally published best practices based on the learning of the Office of Public Affairs.

Stanford now utilizes a similar iterative experimentation approach toward many other communications initiatives (e.g., @Stanford Twitter account, etc.).--On March 4, 2009, Stanford partnered with Facebook as an alpha partner for the launch of Facebook's redesigned Pages product for brands and organizations. Since then, Stanford has used its approach of iterative experimentation to create a series of user and community experiences on its official Facebook Page (http://www.facebook.com/stanford), and more importantly, to its "Fans" through the Facebook News Feed.

In keeping with its core mission and project objectives—and evolving over time in accordance with its strategy of iterative experimentation—Stanford's Facebook postings have so far consisted of the following:

• Stanford Open Office Hours: Every month, Stanford hosts an asynchronous, video-based conversation with a faculty member or distinguished member of the Stanford community. Although the videos are cross-posted on YouTube and other Stanford websites, Facebook is the exclusive channel by which participants interact with the host. Hosts have included Phil Zimbardo (department of psychology), BJ Fogg (Stanford Persuasive Technology Lab), Dr. Abraham Verghese (school of medicine) and Dean Richard Shaw (undergraduate admission and financial aid). This series is centerpiece of Stanford's Facebook efforts and represents a significant innovation over first-generation, one-way online open education initiatives. Open Office Hours examples: http://bit.ly/zimbardo-p1, http://bit.ly/zimbardo-p2, http://bit.ly/zimbardo-p3.

• Profiles of Stanford students and faculty, often told via first-person storytelling: One of the early observations in the university's iterative experimentation was that users frequently directed their comments to the student or faculty member portrayed in news story. As a result, a concerted effort has been made to favor people-centered content, such as Stanford Open Office Hours. Some of the most engaging (measured by likes and comments) posts have been first-person stories (e.g., a transcription of a student's speech about how he went from seeing his dad in prison to Stanford, and what that meant to him) and videos (e.g., a series of first-person narrative videos produced by Stanford's Office of Development that tell the story of how scholarships are making a difference in the lives of students).

• Stories and media (e.g., video) about Stanford research: Links to new knowledge/discoveries/research, TED Conference talks by Stanford faculty and alumni, etc.

• Stories and media (e.g., video, photos, audio) about student life: For example, photo albums and videos of graduation, Admit Weekend, and Stanford's celebration of the Holiday festival. Audio tracks of the Leland Stanford Junior University Marching Band.

• Status updates and media to build community within and among the university's key sub-audiences: In order to successfully build strong sense of community, it was insufficient to post interesting content. Providing opportunities for self-expression, affirmation, and connection constituted another core element of Stanford's Facebook efforts. For example, one of the most engaging posts consisted of a simple status message congratulating Stanford's class of 2013 admits and asking alumni/current students to give them a shout-out. Over 200 alumni, current students, and even students who were denied admission to

Stanford commented or "liked" the status message. In response, many admitted students posted comments about feeling like part of a Stanford family, and prospective students posted comments about how the thread inspired them toward applying to Stanford.

• Giveaways and contests: Stanford has experimented with giveaways (e.g., free 30-song iTunes summer mix download for Facebook Fans) and contests (e.g., poetry/haiku contest to win a signed book by a Stanford author)

• Listening and user support: Stanford monitors the community's postings on the Wall and comments on postings, and frequently responds to questions and comments. At the same time, the university moderates spam, wildly off-topic, abusive, and other content that violates Facebook's terms of service.

The primary obstacle has always been one of resource. To date, the Office of Public Affairs has spent less than $300 (survey software subscription) on Stanford's Facebook efforts. From a people perspective, the project only has approximately 15-20% of one FTE, in addition to whatever help has been provided by others across campus (e.g., filming/editing Open Office Hours).

In many ways, the resource constraints have actually been helpful. For example, content creation (e.g., Stanford Open Office Hours, interesting stories and news, etc.) is almost entirely dependent on the work of the various schools, departments, and units across campus. As a result, the university's Facebook presence has become a valued resource within an extremely decentralized organization; communicators across campus have become invested in and highly supportive of the university's central Facebook activity, since they know that the best of their work might be featured there. In addition, the lack of software development resource has focused the university's attention on making the best use of Facebook's core functionality -- particularly user experiences through the News Feed—as opposed to creating Facebook applications or extensive graphic design. Since the primary mode of interaction within Facebook is the News Feed, lack of resource actually helped the university focus on the most important element of effective Facebook engagement.

Facebook is a rapidly developing medium, and its frequent feature changes and redesigns could have potentially disrupted Stanford's Facebook efforts. However, the university's iterative experimentation enabled Stanford to adapt quickly to changes in the medium.

Facebook's redesigned Pages product was the primary tool used. For measurement purposes, Facebook provided most of the metrics used during iteration. For corroborating measurement on other sites (e.g., to understand quantity and quality of traffic sent from Stanford's Facebook activity), Google Analytics, and YouTube analytics were used. SurveyMonkey was used to online administer surveys.

All aspects of the project—conception, execution, editorial creation, community management, and measurement -- were managed by Ian Hsu (Director of Internet Media Outreach, Stanford University Office of Public Affairs). However, many others across the university were involved in the creation of content and user experiences for Stanford's Facebook Page. For example, all of the Stanford Open Office Hours videos were produced in conjunction with others (e.g., Stanford News Service, Stanford Medicine, Stanford Technology Ventures Program, Office of Undergraduate Admission, and Financial Aid) on campus. Similarly, the Stanford School of Medicine donated three signed books for a summer reading haiku/poetry contest and Prof. Andrea Lunsford volunteered her time to judge the submissions.--In terms of sheer reach, Stanford's Facebook Page has grown from approximately 11.5k Fans at the time of launch to over 41.1k Fans six months later. As a point of reference, the average number of Fans for the US News & World Report's top 25 universities is 7.9k; the largest of these belong to large public institutions: UCLA (22.5k) and UC Berkeley (18.7k). According to a July 2009 report from the higher education consulting firm Blue Fuego, Stanford had 10 times the number of fans than the average of 171 similar-sized universities (5k-9k undergraduate students).

Although the reach of Stanford's Facebook efforts provide some indication of the university's success, the more significant measures come from survey data. In early September 2009, Stanford ran a survey (n=493) to better understand outcomes of its Facebook presence. With respect to the goals stated above, the university's Facebook efforts have been effective at influencing key attitudes:

1. Institutional reputation: Across all attributes surveyed (e.g.,, faculty expertise, unique and positive differentiation, educating the next generation of leaders, etc.), the university's Facebook presence has enhanced the university's reputation in a significant way. For example, when asked How much have Stanford's Facebook postings done to enhance or reaffirm your belief that Stanford is producing innovative research and important discoveries, over 80% of respondents answered A great deal or A fair bit. Only 4.5% answered Not at all and 15.2% answered Only a little.

2. Prospective student interest: When asked How much have Stanford's Facebook postings done to give you a feeling that Stanford is a school you'd like to learn more about or apply to (now or in the future), over 90% of prospective students answered A great deal or A fair bit

3. Alumni/current Stanford student connection: For example, when asked How much have Stanford's Facebook postings done to enhance or reaffirm your pride in your Stanford affiliation, over 70% of alumni and current Stanford students answered A great deal or A fair bit.

> Qualitatively, some of the most interesting outcomes have been on faculty and students, and the extent to which engagement on Facebook might positively shape the pedagogical experience. For example, after hosting Stanford Open Office Hours, Phil Zimbardo advocated for using Open Office Hours in Stanford's standard curriculum practices, as a way to of reaching shy students or students who cannot otherwise attend office hours (http://www.stanforddaily.com/cgi-bin/?p=1030842). Similarly, Dominique Llew, a student who participated in Prof. Zimbardo's Open Office Hours indicated that she is now more inclined to visit her professors in in-person office hours.

Survey data points map exactly to the key objectives stated above.

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LEXISNEXIS MARTINDALE-HUBBELL

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED

Online social and professional networks, such as the familiar sites of Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn, have quickly become an easy and hugely popular way for individuals to communicate, interact and share content on both a personal and professional level. Online social networking is a trend that was once largely eschewed by the legal profession due to concerns that it was a passing fad, but now it is starting to gain significant traction within the legal community. The legal community is beginning to adopt the best practices, tools and rules of the digital era and yielding positive results from their late entrance.

LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell recently commissioned a survey conducted by Leader Networks, the 2009 Networks for Counsel Survey, which revealed that more than 70 percent of lawyers are members of an online social network and that more than 50 percent of respondents think online networks have the potential to change the business and practice of law over the next five years. 65 percent of lawyers who participated in the survey expressed an interest in joining an online professional network designed specifically for their profession and nine percent have already joined one.

Starting last year, LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell embarked on the process to create a private professional network for the legal community. The challenge for LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell was to launch and grow the premier online networking solution designed specifically for legal professionals and in the process, strengthen the position of Martindale.com as the preeminent online destination for legal professionals. A central component of this challenge centered on communicating to the legal market the unique benefits and advantages to their participation in a “gated” online network for legal professionals that provided value beyond what they could get through more established, open networks like LinkedIn, Facebook and others.

We knew from our own research that networking remains a critical means of business and professional development for lawyers even as opportunities for face-to-face networking have become severely limited by budget and staff cuts. Online networking has emerged as a viable and fast growing means for legal professionals to accelerate or augment their ability to connect with their peers and share best practices. For example, corporate counsel often reports that they are isolated from other in-house counsel on a day-to-day basis. Frequently they are faced with legal and business challenges that counsel from other companies must have encountered. The challenge has always been how to find these colleagues and benefit from their experience. In-person conferences and events are one option, but they’re infrequent, expensive and take time away from the office. Online networking helps break isolation by providing a trusted environment in which they can find colleagues, collaborate and solve pressing problems.

Professional networking also provides lawyers with a secure forum to share ideas, solicit feedback, and communicate with peers. Receiving tips and background information on different legal topics advances education among legal professionals and expands the scope of valuable information passed along from peer-to-peer. The exchange of tips in turn enhances partnership and collaboration, which builds on the facilitation of legal information and reinforces the network of trusted sources.

Finally, a quality online network can help legal professionals become more informed when making key decisions. The online nature of the network helps legal professionals tap into trusted resources quickly—assisting the lawyers to reach conclusions in a fast and more efficient manner. Additionally, the more trusted information gathered and feedback received on outside counsel for example, the easier in-house counsel can make better decisions about hiring a firm or lawyer.

SOLUTION/TOOLS USED/RESULTS

Leveraging its global database of attorneys and legal content, LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell responded to this challenge by launching its own global online professional network for legal professionals: Martindale-Hubbell Connected. The network is custom designed for the legal community, and enables lawyers and other legal professionals to connect, communicate and collaborate with trusted contacts to solve legal and business issues.

In order to create a legal community of trusted members, all Martindale-Hubbell Connected users are authenticated during the registration process to ensure that they are who they say they are and that their legal credentials are accurate. We believe the authentication requirement is key to giving potential members the confidence that those with whom they might interact inside the network are in fact, legitimate peers. In addition, we use a variety of other social footprints to help establish and grow trust between members.

Using Martindale-Hubbell Connected, attorneys are able to expand their professional network to uncover relationships and trusted references. Legal professionals are able to share information and insights, collaborate and interact in a virtual community on legal issues with fellow practitioners. Martindale-Hubbell Connected also provides access to compelling content, benchmarking statistics, counsel-created research, as well as online events exclusively for legal professionals.

Members of Martindale-Hubbell Connect report improvement in the quality of their decision making process when buying legal services and increased recruitment efficiency when hiring in-house staff. Through this authenticated network, legal professionals also enhance partnership and collaboration, as well as improve recruiting activities by enabling outside counsel to share referrals, experience, reviews, and analyze competitors' profiles and marketing trends.

For corporate counsel, Martindale-Hubbell Connected breaks the isolation felt by so many of them when seeking trusted references for outside counsel or input on legal issues from fellow practitioners. This new network community enables them to engage in private online discussions about key issues of interest to counsel worldwide, empower members to raise their profile and stature among colleagues, and provide access to special in-person and online events.

For outside counsel, Martindale-Hubbell Connected offers them the ability to connect with corporate counsel to demonstrate thought-leadership, find information act as connectors and grow their network of potential clients. Outside counsel can identify potential clients and actively network for new business, grow alumni network and exchange critical/useful information within affinity groups, blogs and other network communities.

—The targeted audience is comprised of legal professionals—primarily corporate counsel and private practice lawyers -- who are looking for online communities that enable them to connect, communicate and collaborate with trusted contacts to solve legal and business issues. In response to feedback we received from members, we recently opened up the network to other qualified legal professionals including paralegals, senior marketing and IT professionals within law firms, as well as law students and professors.

--The goal is to leverage the unique assets of LexisNexis and Martindale-Hubbell to resolve challenges associated with networking in today's legal market by offering attorneys a comprehensive, interactive and secure online destination where they can build a legal network to get trusted information from trusted contacts for better decision making on everything from hiring legal to perspectives on legal issues.

--The Martindale-Hubbell Connected network delivers a number of key benefits to users, including:

- Smart Connections. Network connections are identified in search results so members not only see with whom, but specifically how or why they are connected. Network technology proactively suggests contacts from among 45 million potential connections by matching one's career and educational background with the full set of lawyers from the martindale.com® service. Additionally, the network also mines court documents to identify useful connections between a member and other lawyers he or she has teamed with or faced in court.

- Exclusive Combination of LexisNexis Content. The network offers members access to an exclusive combination of authoritative information from LexisNexis and other sources such as data, statistics, research, news, competitor profiles, marketing trends, ratings, polls and client reviews.

- User-Generated Content and Interactive Capabilities. The network also delivers access to quality user-generated content such as blogs, podcasts, more than 27,000 pieces of counsel-created research, online events and other content contributed by peers. Additional features in subsequent updates to the network will include a legal wiki, and expanded access to content from LexisNexis® and other sources.

- Access to the Martindale-Hubbell Career Center and more than 5,000 job openings in the legal field. Job postings are linked to a firm or corporation's Martindale-Hubbell profile and allow job seekers to view connections to the company via both the Martindale-Hubbell Connected and LinkedIn networks. The system also includes a resume bank that allows employers to seek qualified candidates and manage online applications.

- Integrated Access to 37 Million LinkedIn Users. Complementing the Martindale-Hubbell Connected legal network, an agreement with LinkedIn offers Martindale-Hubbell Connected users instant visibility between lawyers they are searching and integrated access to their personal LinkedIn profiles. This means Martindale-Hubbell Connected members can quickly and easily find non-lawyer connections or referrals in the broader LinkedIn business network.

—Martindale-Hubbell Connected launched officially on March 31, 2009 and has grown to more than 15,000 members across 115+ countries in under five months.

- Need to overcome legacy directory heritage and internal culture and re-position Martindale-Hubbell as leading edge Web 2.0 company.

- Mining our historical database and court docket information to identify potential relationships between the 1 million lawyers in our database. The proprietary relationship-matching algorithm allowed us to uncover 45 million "suggested relationships" between lawyers globally that create value to members immediately upon joining, regardless of the size of the growing network. This overcomes the chicken/egg syndrome of professional networks, that don't provide much value to members when their network of connections is still limited.

- To build a trusted network, we needed to implement a robust authentication process whereby we validate the identity and role of the members (e.g. corporate counsel vs. law firm lawyer). This process needed to balance strength of security without being too burdensome for the user. In addition, we wanted an automatic process to approve as many users as possible and only manually review exception cases.

• Challenges integrating Connected with legacy data and content systems. Value of the integration is the vast content and data repositories that Martindale-Hubbell and LexisNexis have that feed the professional network.

• The legal industry has traditionally been slow adopter of new technologies, so awareness and usage of web 2.0 tools, including online social or professional networking, is still relatively low. This is especially true among senior corporate counsel and law firm partners. As a result, marketing and building membership for Connected has required educating the market not only about the value of Martindale-Hubbell Connected, but also about the value of social media in general.

• For many, the social media business model remains and elusive golden ring: Online social and professional networking sites are typically free for it users to try to maximize the value of network effects. However, unlike many online networking startups, Martindale-Hubbell Connected is a line of business and has a substantial revenue and profit stream with thousands of paying subscribers. In order to monetize Martindale-Hubbell Connected, we needed to provide enough value to these subscribers so that they continue to remain subscribers, but still provide enough value to non-subscribers so that they have a positive experience and continue to participate in the community.

—The networking functionality of Martindale-Hubbell Connected was built internally due to the need to get to market quickly and to integrate tightly with the existing martindale.com site and lawyer database. We worked closely with Endeca, our search engine vendor, to extend the capabilities of their platform to allow our users to search our lawyer database and receive results filtered by the relationship information gleaned from the connections formed between members as well as the historical relationship information described above,

In more recent releases, we licensed Community Server by Telligent to power the community and user-generated content functionality for Connected. These include discussion forums, file library capabilities for document sharing and collaboration, blogging functionality for Connected members as well as groups' functionality to allow members to form smaller sub-communities within the larger Connected community.

—Team

- The team that developed and launched Martindale-Hubbell Connected consisted of business unit leadership, technology development, marketing and communications and a dedicated community manager. Working with Leader

Networks, a research and strategy firm that focuses exclusively on helping organizations create online communities for business, we developed and executed on a strategy that balanced the unique needs of the members and the goals of the business to create and grow the Connected community in a way that served all well.

—Roles

- Business unit leadership—Identified the opportunity and potential benefits of creating an online network for lawyers, conducted market research to verify those opportunities and focus on lawyer needs for networking, set up business plan for creating and launching the network

- Technology development -- Took the direction from leadership and developed the offering.

- Marketing and communication—Marketing led the way in terms of naming the offering, as well as soliciting beta testers from the legal community via direct-to-client communication. Communications and PR helped get the word out about Martindale-Hubbell Connected and establishing its leaders as experts in the area of online professional networking via interviews, authored articles and media coverage of Martindale-Hubbell Connected.

- Community management—Helps members and moderates discussions. While Martindale-Hubbell believes communities come together naturally, especially with professional networks, a dedicated community manager is necessary to help busy professionals achieve their visibility goals as richly as possible.

Components of program:

- Beta launch — Late May 2008. The Martindale-Hubbell Connected beta site launched in May and engaged a select group of beta members to refine the community features, discussions and content for its formal launch in 2009.

- Communication—Late 2008 to present. PR has been active in this component by soliciting and earning positive media, blog and analyst coverage of Martindale-Hubbell's use of Web 2.0 technology and previewing the launch of the network. ABA Journal, American Lawyer and Law.com are among the dozens of media that have covered the site and the Martindale-Hubbell networking initiative so far.

- Full launch—March 31, 2009. Martindale-Hubbell Connected formally launched on March 31 and the network has since grown to more than 15,000 members.

—Launched with 3,000 beta members on March 31, the network has since grown to more than 15,000 members across 115+ countries. Partner programs also play an essential role in the Connected community. We've enlisted more than seven organizations as Martindale-Hubbell Alliance Partners including the Council on Litigation Management, Pro Bono Net, the National Association of Women Lawyers, the Minority Corporate Counsel Association, Lex Mundi, Commerce & Industry Group, and the European Company Lawyers Association. Inside the community, members have created close to 300 groups.

As part of our effort to communicate to the legal marketplace the existence and the benefits of Martindale-Hubbell Connected, our media outreach efforts have yielded more than 175 pieces of PR coverage so far in traditional and social media outlets as well as analyst reports reaching an audience of millions.

Results for users of Martindale-Hubbell Connected include the following:

- Saves lawyer's time and money on networking by reducing travel.
- Breaks the isolation felt by many corporate counsel lawyers when seeking a trusted recommendation or opinion from other counsel.
- Changes the way lawyers find and communicate with each other.
- Provides more robust information about peers and perspectives for better decision making when it comes to hiring counsel or addressing an issue.
- Provides a focused venue for users to demonstrate thought leadership to potential employers or clients.
- Helps users grow their network of potential clients or vendors.

—Martindale-Hubbell Connected is now the largest online professional networking site in the world designed specifically for legal professionals. We're also delivering on our mission to create the world's most trusted online community to enable legal professionals to connect, collaborate and solve business challenges. Evidence of this comes from the 2009 Networks for Counsel Survey: Respondents were asked to pick from a list of organizations including LinkedIn, Martindale-Hubbell, Legal OnRamp, AVVO, Thomson, the Association of Corporate Counsel, the American Bar Association and several others, to identify those they felt were best suited to deliver an online, global legal community. Martindale-Hubbell—cited by 52 percent of all corporate counsel and private practice lawyer respondents—was the most popular and trusted choice by far.

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GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED

Develop a social media strategy and tactics to build awareness of the" Keep the Promise: Save the Great Bear Rainforest" campaign and to generate signatures for the petition.

The Great Bear Rainforest is one of the few truly wild places remaining in the province of British Columbia in Canada. The Great Bear Rainforest is home to the endangered spirit bear, six million migratory birds, 3,000 genetically distinct salmon stocks and many unique species of plants all coexisting in a space roughly the size of Ireland. Most importantly, it's the largest tract of intact coastal temperate rainforest left on the planet. And, until a few years ago, there were no concrete, long-term plans in place to preserve it.

SOLUTION/TOOLS USED/RESULTS

In 2006, the BC Provincial government, logging companies, First Nations councils and environmentalists agreed to an independently developed management plan for the Great Bear Rainforest and committed to its implementation by March 31, 2009. In an effort to keep pressure on the provincial government to ratify the agreement, Greenpeace Canada, ForestEthics, and the Sierra Club of B.C. launched the Keep the Promise: Save the Great Bear Rainforest campaign. Capulet Communications was brought onboard to run the social media component of the campaign.

Online social media users and environmentally conscious individuals in the province of British Columbia in Canada.

1. To raise awareness of the Keep the Promise: Save the Great Bear Rainforest campaign among online social media users living in British Columbia.

2. To generate signatures for the petition.

3. To encourage the B.C. government to keep their promise and ratify the action and management plan for the Great Bear Rainforest.--Capulet Communication planned to use social media channels including Facebook, Flickr, blogger outreach and Twitter to build online awareness for the campaign and garner more signatures for the petition.

The social media campaign would work in tandem with offline marketing and media relations already underway.

• Save the Great Bear Rainforest Facebook Group: This Facebook group attracted over 4,000 members and became the hub for the campaign's online activities. In addition to participating in our other online activities, like signing the online petition, members were encouraged to donate their status message for one day to the Great Bear Rainforest.

http://bit.ly/1OrwgQ

• Bear Your Soul Flickr Contest: More than 200 Flickr users participated in this contest and submitted photographs illustrating why the BC government needed to honour its agreement to conserve the Great Bear Rainforest.

http://www.flickr.com/groups/bearyoursoul/

• Local Blogger Outreach: Capulet targeted B.C. bloggers writing on ecological or environmental issues and approached them to cover the campaign. Many did, including DeSmogBlog (http://bit.ly/2jtSDo), OutdoorVancouver.ca (http://bit.ly/17Jr0V), VancouverBC.com (http://bit.ly/n36mB), and Hummingbird 604 (http://bit.ly/3IYDuS).

• Capulet also maintained a Twitter feed for the campaign.

The target audience needed to be motivated enough to sign the petition. Good content in the social media channels (and a good cause) goes a long way in getting constituents to act. All elements of the campaign were executed using pre-existing online social media tools and/or websites. These included:

• Facebook group - www.facebook.com

• Flickr photo pool and contest

• Twitter feed 'hosted' by a Kermode bear living in the Great Bear Rainforest

• YouTube video--Capulet Communications devised the social media strategy, executed on that strategy and managed all the social media assets during the campaign.--At the peak of the campaign, supporters were sending nearly 100 emails per day to the provincial government through the Save the Great Bear website. The campaign received coverage in several mainstream media outlets, including *The Vancouver Sun.*

(http://www.vancouversun.com/business/fp/over+Great+Bear+Rainforest+plan+reached/1449409/story.html) and the CBC (http://www.cbc.ca/mrl3/8752/bc/ondemand/video/bc-081127-enviro-forest-fight-JOHNSONL.wmv).

Some of the mainstream media covered the social media aspects of the campaign. In the end, more than 16,000 British Columbians signed our petition and the BC government kept its promise. On March 31, 2009, the agreement was ratified.

We raised awareness of the Keep the Promise: Save the Great Bear Rainforest campaign among online social media users living in British Columbia. Our Facebook group attracted more than 4,000 members; our Flickr contest had more than 200 participants. and we received coverage on more than 40 prominent B.C. blogs.

More than 16,000 British Columbia residents signed the petition.

The B.C. government ratified the agreement on March 31, 2009, and a management plan was put in place for the Great Bear Rainforest.

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NETAPP

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED

Connecting employees, customers, and partners

As part of a branding initiative in 2007, NetApp conducted extensive studies and surveyed thousands of customers, partners and technology experts. The majority of respondents stated that they wanted an interactive community to facilitate the sharing of knowledge around product, technology, and business concerns.

SOLUTION/TOOLS USED/RESULTS

Just a little over a year ago (March 2008), we launched our external NetApp user community to provide a safe place for customers and partners to engage with their peers and NetApp experts. With over 23,000 community members to date, NetApp community is having a positive impact on how our customers engage with their peers and NetApp experts.

Customers leverage NetApp communities' 24X7 to get answers to their technical questions, resolve simple support issues, and learn more about NetApp products. Customers and partners are consistently sharing their ideas and leveraging communities when creating or enhancing their own storage architecture. Building on the initial community success, NetApp has now deployed both a successful support community as well as an internal collaboration community called NetApp Live. Additional areas of future community growth include building collaborative workspaces for partners and expanding the community to include partner specific discussion areas.

NetApp communities are helping technical experts from across the company realize productivity gains as they are helping answer questions from NetApp customers and partners. Our channel partners required an effective way to engage with NetApp experts. Today, NetApp communities provide channel partners with a robust and collaborative space to engage with NetApp and other experts. Sales engineering dropped several internal distribution lists and exclusively uses the community to support the channel partners' inquiries.

Expert Quotes:

> "Amount of time our SMAI Technical Marketing Engineers spent answering questions went down from 3 hours a day to 1 hour a week."
> Brajesh Goyal, Director, SMAI Products

> "If we can harness the collective brain power of our field, resellers and our team, we will make giant strides in field communication and learning. We need to continue to add and post the Sales Engineering community and build this as a key communication vehicle for the business unit."
> Bryan Semple, General Manager, V-Series Business Unit

With programs like NetApp University Free Training, Technical Solutions contests, and Ask-the-expert events, customers and partners have the opportunity to engage with NetApp experts to learn from and share ideas with. Our Ask-the-expert events generate useful and reusable content addressing customer issues. This direct access to subject matter experts reinforces and grows the power of our technical community.

Customer Quotes:

> "I only discovered the communities since moving to my new job, and it is a fantastic tool."- Anthony Feigl, TD Securities, End User

> "VDI Ask the Expert session was brilliant: A real eye opener. One of the most frequented bookmarks I have." Chris Kranz, B2Net, Reseller

The NetApp community serves NetApp customers, partners and employees around the world.

Ease of use ensuring rapid adoption—people will not participate if it's not super intuitive. Integrated web 2.0 technologies—one-stop shop (wikis, blogs, discussions, people)

Flexible platform—reflect NetApp brand and seamlessly integrate in NetApp's web experience.

Open API to integrate with other systems—critical for single sign-on (SSO) requirements.

To ensure the success and adoption of the community, NetApp focused on four key areas:

- Executive sponsorship—actively participate to make embracing the community part of the company culture

- Simple and easy to use tool—no training required

- Forum moderators and content creators — gurus in the company were recruited to provide exceptional thought leadership (this is not a level-one support function)

• Dedicated community manager—constantly monitor and feed the needs of the community and exploit new opportunities

• Compelling content—ongoing nurturing of audience with relevant and compelling content and programs

• Building relationships—non sales and marketing interactions increase user engagement and create enthusiasm

• Active listening—be open to feedback and learn from what our users are saying

• Appropriate response—every question needs to be addressed whether or not it is answered and escalated if necessary

To accelerate the implementation NetApp decided to have the community fully hosted by Jive. The utilization of experienced consultants from Jive further accelerated the deployment of the community. Meanwhile, NetApp used Jive internally to collaborate on the development of the new brand.

From a technical perspective, the main challenge was finding the right platform. Jive was best-of-breed and continues to be a robust solution for our needs. The other challenge was internal. Communities are a new concept requiring solid direction. The marketing organization wanted (and still does) to use community for more than a marketing venue and then demonstrating the technical value to the engineers to ensure participation.

--Please see our customer success story
https://admin.na3.acrobat.com/_a773188684/p20088214/--Navneet Grewal
Director, Online Marketing Programs,NetApp

Terri Peluso, Communities Program Manager, NetApp
John Summers Communities Manager, NetApp—One of the objectives of community was to encourage collaboration on an on-going basis between employees, partners, and customers NetApp employees continue to post a large volume of critical content and answer both technical and business questions. Users and competitive partners are helping each other succeed in their NetApp deployments. NetApp's community is helping to deliver upon the objectives of the company's branding initiative:

• Engaged a broader audience in both technical and business discussions.
• Expanded brand awareness and loyalty.
• Tapped into a much richer pool of ideas that help drive company and product priorities.

This is a possible thanks to the ability of the NetApp Community to:
• Connect people: customers, partners, and employees

• Engage in discussions and support user groups
• Share information: best practices, documentation, code, downloads
• Share news: company, products, and events
• Solve problems: leverage the community of experts to answer questions
• Spawn on-going discussions from Newsletter articles (instead of being just one-way)
• Establish a forum for customers and partners, to continually provide feedback

NetApp communities help drive innovation.

Members submit solutions that are leveraged by thousands of customers around the globe. There are many examples of how NetApp communities are helping technical experts from across the company realize productivity gains while providing exceptional customer and partner support. NetApp community showcases NetApp's open and collaborative culture and helps us deliver on our promise to provide an outstanding customer experience.

Expert Quotes:

> "Amount of time our technical experts spent answering questions went down from 15 hours a day to 1 hour." - Brajesh Goyal, NetApp, Director
>
> Thousands of community members across more than 150 countries. Exceeded adoption expectations by 1,200%. Accelerated global branding initiative. Growth is still trending up month-on-month (averaging 1,000 new members per month).

By the numbers:

**Over 23,000 total registered users
**Over 1 million views since October 2008
**Represents 180 countries/territories
**3,443 threads, 2,032 documents, 13,177 messages and 169 Blog Posts
**Total exchanged to date 18,821 engagements
**Integration with other Social Media tools throughout the community: Social Bookmarking, YouTube NetApp TV, Facebook, and Twitter

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PALLADIUM GROUP WITH LEADER NETWORKS

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED

Palladium Group is the global leader in helping organizations execute their strategies by making better decisions. Our expertise in strategy, risk, corporate performance management and business intelligence helps our clients achieve an execution premium. Our services include consulting, conferences, communities, training and technology. The Palladium Execution Premium Process (XPP), based on the seminal work of our founders and the creators of the Balanced Scorecard, Drs. Robert Kaplan and David P. Norton, is a proven framework used by hundreds of organizations worldwide to link strategy and operations to achieve performance results. This closed-loop process is a flywheel that helps organizations make better decisions.

Like the methodology on which Palladium was founded --The Balanced Scorecard-- we are intrinsically client focused. Our clients are students and practitioners of strategy execution and performance management. In 2008 it became clear that one of the largest needs of our clients was to gain enhanced access to thought leadership in the field and, for the first time, gain 24/7 access each other. We quickly realized that the only way to give them this type of up-to-date and continual access was through an online community.

Our challenge then was; How do we create a viable online community for strategy and performance management practitioners that would enable them to share the details of their practice while accessing thought leaders and the resources they need to succeed?

We knew that a typical social media implementation would not work because our clients are executives who would require a private and secure network in which to exchange knowledge and interact with peers facing similar organizational and transformational issues.

SOLUTION/TOOLS USED/RESULTS

We discovered that there was no existing business model that could fulfill such specific client needs while providing access to each other and to such a vast collection of thought leadership. It was then that we applied the principals set forth by Palladium in the Execution Premium Process (XPP) and began the process of building a social media solution, and it was then that—XPC, the Execution Premium Community, was born. We believe that XPC represents the first rigorous implementation of social media using a strategic methodology. We took the principals that we use to create big business success and applied it to building our own online community. As you will see throughout this application, we are measuring and growing according the XPC based on the methodology set forth in the XPP and the Balanced Scorecard.

We began this process with a few basic questions:

How do you capture the imaginations and the involvement of executives in strategy/performance management practitioners in large enterprise?

Our target demographic is older, powerful, and influential executives who are extremely busy, and not well versed in social media tools. How do we help them overcome their biases towards social media and give them access to the world's largest resources on strategy and operations without overwhelming them?

How do we ensure that our community is representative of the global perspective of our firm and our clients?

XPC's audience ranges across sector, across job types and across the globe. Many members are bilingual, with 30% of our Beta members coming from Asia Pacific and 25% from Europe/Middle East/Asia. Our members work in executive roles where stellar performance and strategy management skills are a must. In 2008 we conducted a series of interviews with Palladium clients who showed us that our target audience feels professionally isolated and that there were limited resources that supported information sharing within this field. XPC was built with these needs in mind and the type of activity we are seeing on the site supports this data. Members are exchanging ideas, best practices, dashboards and scorecards. They have even created groups based on geography and industry and they are reaching out to peers and experts for answers to difficult questions!

First and foremost, our goal has always been to give back and to give more to our clients. XPC provides us with an innovative and high-touch mechanism to do just that. XPC is the only place that strategy and performance management practitioners can get 24/7 access to the work of Drs. Robert Kaplan and David Norton, the founders of the most used and most effective system of business management in the world. XPC is the only online place where these practitioners can engage Drs. Kaplan and Norton, as well as other thought leaders directly through forums, discussions and groups. An important part of ensuring this access was to create an easy to use repository of the wealth of knowledge that is contained in dozens of books penned by Palladium authors, within hundreds of our Balanced Score Card Reports, our whitepapers and Harvard Business Review articles.

Intertwined in the aforementioned goals was the paramount objective that our community be safe and secure. We knew members required absolute security in order to share their best practices and to engage in open and honest discourse.

During the time in which we plotted the course to deliver on our goals and objectives we were well advised by our team at Leader Networks that, “Collaboration is the primary driver of community success. Without a shared goal—a reason to collaborate—there can be no lasting community.” With this in mind, we focused on the most urgent need presented by our clients: education, information and collaboration activities surrounding the Balanced Scorecard and the Execution Premium. Based on interview data and industry research, we designed XPS as a “destination site” for practitioners that offers the following online value propositions:

• A “members-only” environment where they can find information and share opinions about one of the most challenging aspects of their role at the different stages of the XPC lifecycle

• A community of practice where member experiences, ideas and best practices are showcased and practical application of theory is showcased throughout.

• Access to content and information by and from Palladium in a single place and easily organized

• Access to news and information about events, practices and practitioners.

• Answers to questions whether they are experts or learners.

• Opportunities to further their training and certification goals.

These value propositions provided the framework for creating the site itself. XPC is a private online community with 5 major areas.

1. A Member Directory and Member Center— Allows for members to connect with each other and search for each other.

2. Forums- Here tutorial style thought leadership is exchanged. For example, members have had vibrant discussions on the following user generated topics: “Best Practices - Strategy Development (Stage 1),” “Customer Perspective - Branding Measures and Targets” and “Performance Management Beyond Measuring.”

3. Groups- In this area, members can either start or join public or private groups that focus on specific issues. Two examples of current groups are: The Pacific Rim Balanced Scorecard Group and the Kaplan Norton Balanced Score Card Certified Group.

4. Solution Center- This is our primary content area, which houses our vast collection of print materials as well as video and podcasts.

5. Ask the expert and the member spotlight-These areas encourage one on one interaction. Ask the Expert is a forum for members to pose specific questions to a thought leader. Member spotlight focuses on the interests and specialties of a specific member with the hope that other members will reach out directly to him/her.

In Spring 2009 we launched the XPC with 500 beta members. The members were predominately executives within the fields of strategy and performance management. Our beta members participated in the design and development of the online community along with us. Within days of launching the beta we began receiving additional membership requests. Within the first week of launching we had a series of substantive discussion threads being initiated and responded to by members.

Currently we have two tiers of membership, Premium, which is for-pay access that offers deeper access to thought leaders and specialized content and general free access that is supported by top-tier sponsors such as Harvard Business Publishing and Microsoft.

Despite the tumultuous global economy, we are growing and we've become an essential place for information exchange and for peer-to-peer relationship building. We began a peer referral program that is continually accruing more traction and in September we will fully rollout the community in EMEA and APAC. To date we are approaching 1,000 members with our full launch date scheduled for September 2009.

We encountered a few challenges during the creation and implementation of XPC. The first was an issue of internal communication and buy-in around devoting institutional equity to launching an online community. Because XPC from its beginning had high-level executive visibility through our CEO David Friend, we were able to use David to position and promote XPC to both our executive committee and to the Board of Directors.

Palladium is a global firm, and we were determined that all of our offices internally would be part of the creation process. In order to secure this global buy-in we created a global focus group that met during the creation of the XPC to ensure that its mission remained aligned with our global brand.

Perhaps the largest obstacle we encountered was a large demand by non-practitioners who wanted access to the community, people such as students and strategy consultants. In order to preserve the sanctity of the information exchange for XPC members we decided we could not allow these potential members the same access to the site that we granted pre-qualified members. Our solution has been the creation of a third tier of membership, "XPC Neighbors." Neighbors will be launched in early 2010 and will allow free access to a gated portion of the site for non-practitioner users that will aim to fulfill their information and connection needs.

We released an RFP for a software platform on which to launch XPC and interviewed the six most promising candidates. We decided on Awareness, and they now provide our software solutions. Internally we worked to integrate our CRM system and XPC so that we may develop the most comprehensive client database possible.

Since the inception of XPC we've enjoyed executive support and active participation. From the beginning we involved key stakeholders across the organization, including members of our consulting, events and training/certification teams. An early and a vital decision we made was to hire an outside consultancy, LeaderNetworks, which helped steer the strategy for the planning and deployment of the community. They proved to be an integral resource as Palladium began its venture into social media. In the beginning of 2009 we hired a seasoned community manager to run the community as full time employee. He now works with a team to support all-things XPC.

Currently, we are assembling an advisory board for the XPC, this highly visible group of leaders will reflect our global constituency and the many specialties of our members. The Board will work to grow and steer the future of the XPC.

Following the Balanced Scorecard methodology, we've developed a robust scorecard for identifying and tracking metrics that will update us to the vibrancy of our online community. Some of these metrics include client penetration and satisfaction, user engagement, peer-to-peer referrals and financial stability. We are also collecting testimonials and other forms of anecdotal references about our user's experiences. One of our largest areas of qualitative success thus far is the engagement we are seeing in discussions and in the forums on XPC.

One of the quantitative metrics we are most excited about is that 15% of our members come from referrals. This solidifies that our beta members have found the XPC to be an engaging, useful and important --to the extent that they are personally participating in its growth.

An exciting ancillary benefit to the launching of XPC is that our users are deepening their awareness as to Palladium's range of services and opportunities. Already we have users that are signing up to attend our trainings, certifications and other events that they may not have known about otherwise.

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uTEST

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED

With new software applications vying for media attention, VC investments and consumer dollars, the pressure to get apps built, tested, and launched has never been greater. But testing and launching fully tested Web and mobile applications have proven difficult and prohibitively expensive.

The critical problem centers on creating testing coverage globally by human testers — across locations, languages, operating systems, browsers and mobile handsets. To solve this problem, software developers needed a global community of professional testers they could tap into and use when and where they needed them.

This calls for a fresh approach to software testing — crowdsourcing. uTest launched in August 2008 and introduced crowdsourced software testing, an innovative alternative for customers to test their applications through a professional community of 19,000+ professional testers from 157 countries.

After establishing this global software testing marketplace, uTest encountered a new challenge: How could they turn this “crowd” of software testers into a true community and put a human face on crowdsourced software testing?

The social web has led to a dramatic increase in online platforms that create business value and enable social connections, including crowdsourcing models such as uTest. uTest revolutionized software testing by creating the first global marketplace for web, mobile and desktop application testing. Through uTest, companies achieve real-world, global testing coverage across location, language, operating system, browser, handsets, and experience levels.

SOLUTION/TOOLS USED/RESULTS

So, how could uTest turn this “crowd” of 19,000 professional testers in 157 countries into a vibrant, collaborative community? The answer was found in re-launching uTest’s website (May 2009) to introduce community-centric applications, including tester forums and a software testing blog; updating the uTest platform (July 2009) to include discussion threads; and collaborating through multiple social networks. These new social tools have increased visibility into uTest’s global testing community and enhanced collaboration and information sharing among the community of testers.

> "The secret of our marketing and community-building success is that we actively strive to not 'market' to our customers, testers or media constituents. Instead, we focus our energy and efforts on having authentic, human conversations with them and producing original content that informs and entertains our audiences. And in doing so, we make their professional lives better, and indirectly introduce them to uTest in a way that makes a decidedly positive impression."
>
> — Matt Johnston, VP of Marketing & Community, uTest

uTest's new web experience highlights the human face of software testing and enables a previously unstructured, loosely assembled crowd into a unified, professional community. These innovations include:

- "Meet The Testers" application that uses an interactive global map to let site visitors explore the uTest community
- Discussion Threads establish a virtual meeting room for the virtual testing team, enabling direct, real-time communication between the customer, testers and uTest on each project
- Community Forums enabling 19,000+ testers to share ideas and best practices
- Software Testing Blog bringing readers breaking industry news, testing tips and original thought leadership content from around the QA industry
- Social Networking Sites facilitating the free exchange of ideas via Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn

Since adding these new collaboration tools, the uTest software-testing marketplace has accelerated its growth, recording more than 30% quarter-over-quarter gains.

At a company level, uTest's customer audience ranges from startups to Fortune 500 enterprises that need a fast, cost-effective way to get their web, desktop and mobile applications tested. At an individual level, we have established a number of user personas (ranging from the startup CEO to the enterprise QA manager) that guide our messaging, tone, communication channels, media buys and offers.

uTest's tester audience includes beginner to expert software testing professionals who have experience testing web, mobile, gaming and desktop applications. This community hails from 157 countries around the globe and all walks of life -- from testers who are between jobs, to directors of engineering who manage large teams, to college students to 10-year QA veterans. Again, we've established personas to help us communicate with each segment effectively and on their own terms.

uTest Puts a Human Face on Crowdsourced Software Testing

uTest's new website (launched May 2009) and online platform (updated July 2009) have increased visibility into its global testing community and enhanced collaboration and information sharing among QA professionals worldwide. The following new applications and social networks have turned an unstructured crowd into one, unified community:

Meet the Testers Application

This interactive map lets users browse the tester community (http://www.utest.com/meet-testers).

Browse testers by country, operating system, browser, app type, handset and experience

Each country displays number of testers, testing cycles and bugs discovered

Featured testers are profiled via an online reputation system

Since its launch, this is the second most viewed page on the website, with more than 6,000 unique queries

Discussion Threads

This virtual meeting room is a place for the customer, uTest, and their virtual testing team to "meet" and discuss the project in real time (http://bit.ly/2f0oBw).

Offers a secure message board for testers who have been invited to a particular testing project

Testers can ask and answer questions, and communicate directly with the customer and the uTest project manager

Since its launch, the threads have driven valuable tester feedback that customers have used to build stronger virtual testing teams and higher quality apps

Community Forums

The uTest forums enable testers to discuss software testing trends and best practices with QA professionals from around the world (http://forums.utest.com/).

An intuitive GUI with discussions structured by testing type and app type

Enhanced collaboration, including private messaging and personal tester profiles

Upload feature for easy knowledge sharing of best practices and product updates

Ability to subscribe to specific content, forum or topic and receive email notifications

Since its launch, tester activity has spiked and forum posts have quadrupled

uTest's Software Testing Blog, RSS

The software testing blog delves into how crowdsourced testing is helping companies improve their software, along with uTest news, insights from industry leaders, and best practices (http://www.blog.utest.com). Posts include:

"Testing the Limits"—uTest interviews a leading industry leader in the world of testing and software (e.g. James Whittaker, Author and Test Director at Google) each month

Industry News—Breaking testing news, including bugs of the month, partnerships and crowdsourcing news

Guest Bloggers — Top testers share their insights, tips and tricks on software testing

uTest News — These posts follow uTest to industry events, track award wins, & stay on top of product updates

RSS feed available for those who prefer to follow real-time news through RSS readers

Since August 2008, blog visits have doubled

Social Networking

uTest also communicates with the marketplace -- customers, testers, and the media -- and shares relevant news and events in real time through the following social media tools (case studies below):

Twitter — http://www.twitter.com/utest

Facebook Fanpage — http://www.facebook.com/utest

LinkedIn Software Testing Group —
http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=44496&trk=hb_side_g

Website Redesign

Lastly, customers and testers can now access an unprecedented amount of information through the uTest website. The new, dynamic site puts our customers and community of testers at the forefront, spotlighting real-world customer success stories, tester case studies, eBooks, webinars, and other testing resources from industry-leading experts (http://www.utest.com/who-uses-us).

--Anybody can build a loosely affiliated, unstructured crowd -- a mob. uTest's plan was to move far beyond that and create an interactive community of professional testers, and to use community-centric applications and social tools to enable community engagement, collaboration and knowledge sharing.

--uTest rolled out the new website with community-centric apps, the tester forums, original content, and the software testing blog in May 2009. The online platform was updated with discussion threads in July 2009.

The uTest website, platform and social networking sites have increased visibility into its global testing community and enhanced collaboration and information sharing among software-testing professionals worldwide. Since adding these new collaboration tools, the uTest software testing marketplace has grown more than 30% quarter-over-quarter.

With 19,000 testers in 157 countries, the uTest marketplace is still building greater coverage in some countries and demographics. The uTest community team continues to recruit testers every day—more than one thousand a month—and intends to fill these gaps within the year. —Community-building tools include WordPress (blog), PHPBB (community forums), Drupal (website content management system), ActiveKB (help repository), Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Rackspace (hosting).--Tester Forums Case Study

The tester forums have yielded unprecedented results in engaging and unifying the community. In August of 2009, uTest held its quarterly "Bug Battle," a software testing competition, where thousands of software testers from around the world compete to find bugs in today's high-profile web and mobile applications. In this bug battle, testers would compete to find the best bugs in search engines, including Google, Google Caffeine, Bing and Yahoo. The day testing began, the forums were immediately buzzing with testers collaborating and sharing bugs and ideas in the form of images, videos and text. The forum thread yielded a total of 90 posts and more than 520 views.

Another forum thread that is garnering much attention is the “Platform Features Request” string. Here testers can share their ideas and recommendations on how to keep the platform fresh and full of helpful features. The uTest marketing team also uses this forum string as an opportunity to keep the community aware of uTest’s progress in implementing these requests. This thread has yielded 58 posts and 406 views.

Other forum threads with particularly high numbers of posts and views include useful testing tools and applications, those that uTest initiates to solicit testers with specific experience (e.g., in mobile testing), and Most Valuable Tester (MVT) program details and winners (a program used to foster the tester reputation system).

“It’s been a wonderful experience being able to test such a diverse amount of applications. It’s also been a great privilege being part of the uTest community with all of the uTesters worldwide.”— Top uTester, Bernard Shai Lelchuk (http://www.utest.com/bernard-shai)

Media Case Study

Twitter has been especially valuable in enabling real-time communication and ultimately creating a tighter knit community. The uTest marketing team has secured media coverage, speaking engagements, and award recognition through the micro-blogging platform, as well as made several connections with testers, prospective customers, and industry leaders.

One such industry leader was John Winsor, BusinessWeek writer and VP of Strategy & Innovation at Crispin, Porter & Bogusky. Back in April 2009, John twittered a simple message —“Need Help for a BusinessWeek Op/Ed Piece I’m Writing on Crowdsourcing”—and linked it to his blog. Because the uTest marketing team was tracking the word “crowdsourcing” on Twitter to keep up with current crowdsourcing trends, they immediately saw John’s call for resources.

Responding to John through Twitter initiated a series of tweets, emails and conversations that led to uTest being mentioned in his story, “Crowdsourcing: What It Means For Innovation,” in BusinessWeek on June 15, 2009. John has kept in touch with uTest and recently spoke in Boston on crowdsourcing trends. uTest attended John’s event, and has continued the relationship by blogging about his event (to which he commented on the uTest blog) as well as continuing to follow his work on Twitter and his blog, Cultural Radar. (http://blog.utest.com/all-about-crowdsourcing/2009/08/#comments)

uTest has had similar experiences on Twitter with other industry leaders, including Jeff Howe, who coined the term “crowdsourcing” in his book Crowdsourcing: Why the Power of the Crowd is Driving the Future of Business, and Andrew Muns, President of *Software Test & Performance Magazine*.

"The current global economic conditions have forced all of us to do more with less. Unemployed workers now look for new ways to participate. They may not be able to find traditional paid work in their chosen field, so they're turning to crowdsourcing marketplaces such as InnoCentive, TopCoder, uTest, and CrowdSpring." —John Winsor, Business Week writer

(http://www.businessweek.com/innovate/content/jun2009/id20090615_946326.htm)

Customer Case Study

As a leading online media company, Internet Brands operates 150+ community and e-commerce websites, attracting more than 49 million unique visitors per month for a total of 800 million page views. After searching for a cost-effective way to increase testing coverage, Internet Brands discovered uTest's community and signed up as a customer in early 2009.

Being an agile development shop, the company's average cycle is usually less than a week. Internet Brands needed the ability to locate testers in specific regions for assignments on extremely short notice. uTest made perfect sense.

Speaking of cents, Allen was fully aware of controlling costs. So when he called on uTest to provide functional testing on new websites and major releases, he freed up the company's in-house resources for test case creation, advanced testing tasks, and scripting for automated test tools.

In fact, Allen has calculated that in less than 12 hours, the uTest community can perform GUI testing that would take a single staff member an entire week for roughly the same cost. Suffice to say, Internet Brands continues to use uTest for what they call "just-in-time" software testing.

With uTest, we were able to test projects targeted towards specific regions and countries. We've been very pleased with the testing coverage uTest has provided us.

—Allen Lin, QA Manager, Internet Brands

(http://www.utest.com/spotlight/internet-brands)

--uTest software testing marketplace (testers and customers) has grown 30 percent quarter-over-quarter, and the company achieved a 300 percent increase in quarter-over-quarter revenues during the first quarter of 2009. The uTest community of QA professionals has increased to total more than 19,000 testers in 157 countries worldwide.

Other significant social tech achievements include:

Meet The Testers: Since its launch in Q2, this is the second most viewed page on the uTest website, with nearly 10,000 unique queries.

Discussion Threads: Both customers and testers have reported that serious issues have been prevented or quickly resolved through the real-time threads.

Community Forums: Tester activity has spiked and forum posts have quadrupled in the past quarter.

Software Testing Blog: Blog traffic has more than doubled since the beginning of 2009.

uTest's vision for a global community of real-world software testers is being realized and changing the face of the software testing industry. With the help of social media tools, the tester forums, the software testing blog and community-centric applications, the uTest community is growing at an ever-increasing rate. More than 1,000 testers per month are joining the uTest community, which becomes more structured and engaged every day.

The Tester Forums, Twitter and Customer case studies above are just a few of many examples of how uTest's "c,rowd" of software testers has become a true community. Whether it's through social networking, the blog or forums, or the uTest platform, uTest is there to ensure the marketplace has visibility into the tester community and that the community of software testing professionals are engaged, collaborating and have a platform for sharing ideas.

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MICROSOFT

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED

In May 2009, Microsoft launched Bing, the latest version of the company's Internet search engine. The company had been struggling to make traction within the search market for five years, trailing a distant third behind Google and Yahoo in consumer search. Microsoft also faced a media and analyst environment that had an unfavorable opinion of its previous Live Search offering and was skeptical of the company's ability to both innovate in search and attract people to an alternative search service since Google has become a habit. In addition, consumers had little brand awareness of the current Microsoft offering, meaning any media coverage reached an uneducated audience.

•With the impending launch of Bing, the team had a chance to take a new approach in working with its media, analyst and reviewer influentials to set the course for consumer adoption of Bing. Microsoft needed a strong and interesting engagement tool that could tell the story behind the product to win over its target audiences. In partnership with Waggener Edstrom, Microsoft created a digital guide -- found at www.discoverbing.com/behindbing -- to tell the story that there's room for improvements in search and that Microsoft, through Bing, was making significant steps to translate the activity of searching into decision-making.

•The audience consisted key influencers such as press and analyst targets, along with a mix of tech-savvy online consumers. Since each audience already had a preconceived notion of Microsoft's past search engine offerings, we did a thorough analysis to help us determine usage patterns and online behavior of the key audience.

•In May 2009, Microsoft launched Bing, the latest version of the company's Internet search engine. The company had been struggling to make traction within the search market for five years, trailing a distant third behind Google and Yahoo in consumer search. Microsoft also faced a media and analyst environment that had an unfavorable opinion of its previous Live Search offering and was skeptical of the company's ability to both innovate in search and attract people to an alternative search service since Google has become a habit. In addition, consumers had little brand awareness of the current Microsoft offering, meaning any media coverage reached an uneducated audience. The goal was to broaden the products target audience and gain customer traction, as well as gain positive views.

•Working with our client, the vision behind our site was to create a virtual dashboard for all things Bing -- a central place to find insight on the product, new features and updates and a snapshot of the online conversations taking place. The site, and supporting application, was designed to be modular and adaptable, so influentials interested in learning more have one destination they can turn to over time.

—Engaging features on the site include:

Compelling visual design on the homepage playing off the signature orange brand color

An easy-to-navigate "Gallery" of content such as a hero info graphic demo, featured videos, and product guide.

Ongoing snapshot of real-time feeds of chatter about Bing from the Twitter and community blogs

An in-depth product guide in digital format, including jump-to table of contents, screencasts and screenshots.

Desktop application available for download and install including dynamic feeds of Bing chatter from Twitter and community blogs.

Videos that provide color behind the development of Bing.

Search Challenge tool that allows an easy results comparison between Bing and Google.

As mentioned in the problem/challenge section above, Microsoft encountered a media/analyst environment that had an unfavorable opinion of its previous Live Search offering. They were skeptical of the company's ability to both innovate in search and attract people to an alternative search service since Google has become a habit. In addition, consumers had little brand awareness of the current Microsoft offering, meaning any media coverage reached an uneducated audience.

SOLUTION/TOOLS USED/RESULTS

Tools that were used in this campaign were Silverlight Web development and video capabilities so consumers could easily interact with the website.

Bringing Digital/Online to the Forefront—The Behind Bing website marked a fundamental shift from print to digital materials for Microsoft and key search influencers—a natural move to introduce a service that lives and breathes online. We know this strategy works as not one influential has requested print materials on Bing.

Pivotal Role in Campaign—Behind Bing served as an essential education tool that helped set the tone, share our messages and shape coverage favorably at launch.

Socially Connected—Behind Bing takes risks by keeping pulse on the online conversation about the service taking place on Twitter and in online blog forums, reflecting the true conversation as its happening—whether positive, negative, or someone in-between.

Communicates in Color—By featuring videos with the team behind the service and development insights, our influentials felt like they were getting a glimpse at the innovation at work.

Going Head-to-Head with the Competition—Setting up a place where you can compare results between Bing and the current leading search engines helped our influentials with their stories, drove trial of the service—and ironically, became the first of many other sites dedicated to search comparisons (http://www.google-vs-bing.com/, comparison reviews such as PCWorld's)

--Bing has received positive reviews from top influencers and www.discoverbing.com/behindbing is playing a large role in an ongoing media campaign around Bing: first week visits to the site alone topped 100,000.

The Behind Bing guide was leveraged as a tool for our broader influential tour and outreach. In total, we garnered 4,152 print, online, and broadcast stories, with 32 million broadcast impressions. More encouraging was the substantial breakthrough with the new generation of influential consumer outlets, seeping into all facets of pop culture. We were successful in reaching the new wave of influential consumer outlets, such as Huffington Post, Perez Hilton, The Onion, ABC World News Webcast with Charles Gibson and Wait, Wait Don't Tell Me on NPR. Results surpassed expectations with consumer coverage by garnering favorable viewpoints of Bing.

--The campaign results specifically map to the objectives by achieving and going beyond initial expectations. With over 4,152 print, online and broadcast stories, and mainly positive tone, the "Behind Bing" campaign piqued the interest of a new generation of consumers with a broad range of coverage.

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AT&T

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED

Fleishman-Hillard (FH) Digital was challenged with furthering AT&T's commitment to innovation in mobile applications, ongoing collaboration with third party developers and bringing the best mobile applications to market for their millions of customers.--Since the launch of Apple's App Store in July 2008, mobile applications have been thrust into the spotlight of the mobile world. The App Store introduced a new model of openness and collaboration by giving developers a platform to distribute their applications to consumers and allowing consumers to provide direct feedback on those applications.

Applications are not new to AT&T however; their wireless customers have been buying and using applications for more than four years, but their application portfolio's visibility in the industry and among their vast customer base remains low. Additionally, AT&T customers using non-iPhone devices lacked any way to systemically evaluate apps before purchase or provide valuable feedback on their experience using them, therefore hindering AT&T's ability to improve existing apps or bring new apps to market that their customers want.

The primary audience for the program is AT&T wireless customers owning one or more of the approved handsets with unlimited data plans. These customers fall primarily in the 18 to 45 age range, and have likely downloaded mobile content to their phones in the past.

--The goals and objectives for the program are:

1. Bring AT&T wireless customers using non-iPhone devices and app developers together via a common community platform.

2. Allow customers to download and trial the latest mobile apps for free and share their ideas for how to improve the apps in a community setting.

3. Collect customer feedback to help developers improve their applications as well as to guide AT&T's decision-making processes around what apps to bring into their applications storefront and how to market them.

4. Bring visibility to AT&T's application portfolio across devices by building an ongoing relationship with a friendly set of customers and developers.--Our solution was to bring AT&T wireless customers and app developers together via a common community platform, known as Apps Beta, that would allow customers

to download and trial the latest mobile apps for free and share their ideas for how to improve the apps directly with the development community and AT&T.

By allowing customers to have a say and input into the apps that AT&T chooses to make widely available, they would build an ongoing relationship with a friendly set of customers.

SOLUTION/TOOLS USED/RESULTS

A large part of developing Apps Beta involved creating buzz among app developers to get them excited about featuring their new apps in the site. In order to do this, FH Digital created an in-depth onboarding process and toolkit so developers would have all the necessary information and process requirements up front.

The program was launched and announced by AT&T in April 2009 at the annual CTIA Wireless Conference, the largest conference in the wireless industry, where a call for applications to developers was also made. A leave behind brochure was distributed highlighting the key aspects of the campaign, supported handsets and a URL for developers to get started.

The Apps Beta website (att.com/appsbeta) was built to facilitate the conversation between customers and app developers. Customer feedback is collected and used to help developers improve their applications as well as to guide AT&T's decision making processes around what apps to bring into their applications storefront as well as how to market them.

The site launch coincided with the CTIA announcement, and shortly after that an email was sent to qualified AT&T customers describing the program and inviting them to join. New users were encouraged to tell their friends about the program by sending out invites from the site.

Since launch, new apps and handsets are being added to the site on a weekly basis and monthly email updates are sent to all users highlighting the newest apps for their handset, driving repeat visits and user engagement with the site. --FH Digital had eight weeks to plan, design and develop the Apps Beta site, onboard all of the application content, and plan and create the developer toolkit and marketing strategy. This compressed timeline was certainly a challenge on its own.

A significant technical challenge was supporting applications from a variety of handset manufacturers that spanned all of the major mobile operating systems including RIM BlackBerry, Microsoft Windows Mobile, Java, and Symbian. Each operating system accepts different application file types, so we had to ensure that application files could be successfully delivered and downloaded to all relevant handsets.

FH Digital developed the community strategy for the Apps Beta site and a key challenge to ensuring success was training AT&T product managers and third party developers on how to use the site to engage with users on a regular and consistent basis. This is a continuous process as new developers are added to the site weekly.

The Apps Beta site was built in Drupal, an open-source development software, that allows for a range of customization to include community and social networking features. It was important to have a site that allows users and application developers to leave and respond to comments, rate applications and create personal profiles.

Distributive Networks (DN), a mobile marketing and services firm, serves as a sub-contractor for the project. DN co-developed the SMS framework module within the site that connects to their SMS gateway in order to deliver text messages and WAP pushes to the end users' mobile devices for application downloads.

Email communication is also utilized to alert users of new applications added to the site. Each email is targeted to a specific handset and the new applications for that handset. This is based on each handset a user is registered to in their profiles.--FH Digital was responsible for the overall strategy, design and development of the Apps Beta program and site. We continue to manage the site on a daily basis, make enhancements to functionality, and are responsible for developer relations and all onboarding of new apps and content into the site.

The program has several components which all revolve around the community website. New developers are being added all the time, and this involves a significant process of onboarding their apps onto the site. Developers communicate directly with FH Digital on a daily basis, to work through the onboarding process and launch processes for new apps.

Once an app has launched on Apps Beta, users can download, rate and review the apps. The feedback loop begins with user reviews, and then developers revise the apps and launch a new release on the site. This loop continues until AT&T has enough data and information on the app to "graduate" it from Apps Beta and potentially launch the app on their storefront. Download data and user demographics are captured for each application, and weekly and monthly metrics and analysis are provided.

In order to build awareness of the program and increase user registrations, a key component is planning for new marketing strategies beyond cross-promotion on AT&T owned web properties. These strategies have included search engine marketing, email campaigns and public relations activities to date.

The program launched April 1, 2009. In less than five months, the site has attracted more than 11,500 registered users, well over the initial target of 3,000-5,000 participants within the first 90 days. The site has received nearly 500K page views to date, and over 8,000 downloads across 32 unique mobile applications.

The large number of participants in Apps Beta far exceeded the original goal of 3,000 to 5,000 participants in the first 90 days. The community that has evolved from the site has provided invaluable feedback to AT&T and the developers. One such example is Notifier, a social networking application which was the first app launched in Apps Beta. The feedback and reviews generated from the users in the site was used by the developer to enhance the app's performance, and the upgraded app recently launched in AT&T's storefront as a white-labeled application known AT&T Social Net and is free to customers. The reviews from Apps Beta participants helped the developers hone in and focus on improving the features, functionality and overall experience within the app that the user community wanted to see.

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BUSINESS WIRE

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED

"When we launched our new media press release service, EON: Enhanced Online News service one year ago, we found that our clients frequently were befuddled by much of the jargon and acronyms that described a new approach to press releases. SEO, RSS struck many as alphabet soup. Twitter and Facebook seemed like crazy timewasters—why would they ever want to understand them?

Education has always been a hallmark of Business Wire's client outreach since its founding in 1961. We have historically spent substantial time and resources teaching people about our industry—from PR 101 to new technology for communicators.

The challenge presented: how to cost effectively educate our clients, colleagues, and others in new media technologies as they apply to press releases, creating an environment in which clients can understand our service offerings, and thus utilize them if appropriate?

The communications issue to be addressed is to keep our thousands of clients and colleagues up to date and educated on a dynamic Web 2.0 environment—and at a time when budgets were being cut and the economic squeeze felt deeply.

SOLUTION/TOOLS USED/RESULTS

Enter a proactive content creation campaign, which expands on the FREE Business Wire webinar series that got off the ground in 2008. In 2009, we expanded the program to include 24 online events by our well-versed team of new media specialists, as well as by outsider speakers.

In addition, we added the All Things Press Release podcast series, providing resources in MP3 format, as well as staging monthly PR Peeps polls—simple one-question polls for which we utilized Twitter and the webinars themselves. In total, we have reached tens of thousands of our clients, colleagues and prospects while sharing a collective wisdom that makes them, and us, better communicators.

NOTE: Webinars are free and open to the public; podcasts and other resources are free and available for download at the Business Wire website, social media sites, and Businesswired blog.

Advantages of our free content creation campaign: Saves time for clients and staff: From too much to do to limited staff or resources, we are all experiencing a major time squeeze. Being able to participate in a learning seminar from your desktop, (or watching the replay at your leisure) and listening to the podcasts on the treadmill is not only convenient, but also more likely to be utilized. Discretion is an added benefit. We found that clients who might be embarrassed to ask a “stupid” question in a live setting are not so shy when they are sitting at their own desks. Webinars offer an attractive privacy where one doesn’t have to admit publicly what he or she doesn’t know.

New methods: We continue to strengthen our embrace of new media tools, expanding useage of the GotoMeeting webinar interface to include polling, which increases engagement and interactivity with attendees. These webinar polls begat our monthly PR Peeps Poll, which we promote on Twitter and to date we have polled more than 2,000 people using the web-based free tool, SurveyMonkey.

We also launched the All Things Press Release podcast series, which addresses how-to tips for best press release practices; these are hosted on our blog. Our team’s use of presentation software, links, social media sites for storing resources and email follow-up contribute to the program’s success while also demonstrating that we ourselves use the tools.

Flexibility: Because of the nimble technologies we are using to do the webinars, podcasts, polls and presentations, it’s easy to change and update content as we go along. The ability to store webinars online for later or host podcasts and our poll results on our blog on Wordpress make it more convenient for our clients, and also allow us to track useage.

Business Wire clients and colleagues are generally professional communicators, marketing personnel, financial professionals and executives at companies and organizations of all sizes. They range from freelance publicists to investor relations professionals at publicly traded companies. Our webinars are open to professional communicators and other interested individuals and are NOT limited to Business Wire clients. They are free.

Educate communications professionals about the dynamic new media landscape and the role it plays in the communications industry in general, press releases in particular.

- Encourage best practices for creating web-friendly press releases—do’s and don’ts, tips and tools.

- Reach a larger audience than our sales force is able to reach in person while maximizing time and budget.

• Create quality content that can be utilized by our staff, clients and others to reinforce best practices for press releases and other communications.

• Create an environment of credibility regarding the understanding and embrace of new media tools in which sales can be made.

To stage a series of free webinars, usually one a week, that addresses different aspects of the changing new media landscape and how the subject applies to the communications industry in general, press releases in particular. Each webinar and podcast is promoted separately via our blog, email, advertising, press releases, social media posts and sites as a stand-alone event. Interested parties can register for one, all or simply view archived webinars at their own pace.

Deployment is simply ongoing content creation in the form of informative, educational webinars, presentations, podcasts, and polls, as detailed below.

• Sampling of Business Wire webinars

• Press Release Optimization: Build Your Press Release Like a Pro

• Be An SEO Hero: Optimize Your Press Release for Search

• To Tweet or Not to Tweet Your Press Release? And Other Frequently Asked Questions

• Press Releases, Public Companies and Social Media: What To Do?

• Understanding XBRL and the SEC's Proposed Rule

• Sampling of All Things Press Release Podcasts:

• Episode 1: When's the best time to send a press release?

• Episode 2: How to write a good headline

• Episode 3: How long does it take to write a press release?

• Episode 4: Why add links to your press release?

• Episode 5: How much does it cost to send a press release?

Please go to businesswired.wordpress.com/allthingspressrelease to see the above examples or see attached powerpoint.

Sampling of PR Peeps Polls

- PR Peeps Poll: Advertising Equivalencies? Say what? 32% Don't Know What it Means

- Business Wire PR Peeps Poll: News Release or Press Release?

- Business Wire PR Peeps Poll: Quality Rules over Quantity for Press Release Postings

- Business Wire PR Peeps Poll: More Than a Third Optimize Press Releases for Search Engines

- How Long Does it Take to Write a Press Release? Several days, said half of those polled

Please go to businesswired.wordpress.com/polls to see the polls or see attached PowerPoint.

Creating the content, keeping it fresh and sustainable, learning the new tools like recording equipment, and finding the time to get it all done have been the primary challenges.

GotoMeeting is our webinar vendor. We develop a monthly webinar series, repurpose the info as a blog post, draft a press release and post the schedule on our highly trafficked website and social media sites, and do numerous email blasts, as well as advertising in online industry sites like BullDog Reporter.

We tweet each webinar before the event to generate interest and just recently started live tweeting webinars using the hashtag #bwevents.

For podcasting, we use a simple Macbook Pro and a digital recorder, and host them on WordPress. We promote all of the above with a press release, tweet campaign, Facebook posts and the usual email blasts and some minimal traditional advertising, so it's truly a hybrid approach, marrying new and traditional channels.

Following each webinar, we make the presentations available as a PDF and archived recording, and we direct participants to our EON Resource page on Delicious. We send personalized email follow-up to each participant who has requested specific information. We also host the recorded webinars for later viewing.

As Vice President of New Media, I work closely with our Senior Vice President of Media Services and Product Strategy Laura Sturaitis as well as our Senior Vice President of Marketing, Tom Becktold.

We also have a team of new media and product specialists on staff who volunteer as "teachers." This has proven to be a great leadership cultivation tool for staff, and it's no coincidence that those who become specialists also excel in sales and other areas.

Generally, two new media specialists agree on a topic, develop the presentation or the podcast, then develop the webinar content or podcast script. Then they make the presentation or record the podcast. See examples, above. Webinars typially include polling, chat and interactive questions typed in by participants, with intense follow-up by the webinar hosts, who also put participants in contact with the Business Wire local office if appropriate.

Through August of 2009, we have staged 25 webinars with 4,539 participants in attendance an average 182 per webinar. The total represents a 30% increase in attendance over the same time last year. Our webinar exit surveys average a positive rating of 4 out of 5. And the positive feedback, literally hundreds of appreciative emails, has been overwhelming.

Blog readership is up 17% over last year, since we began the proactive content creation campaign using new media tools.

Meanwhile, the fact that our staff is more informed, educated and able to enlighten clients and prospective clients gives us a competitive edge in the marketplace. We're finding that being an authentic resource provides us a significant competitive advantage.

Perhaps most impressive, in this down economy and with most product offerings losing ground, sales for our EON: Enhanced Online News service is showing a healthy 12% growth YTD over the same time last year.

Increased sales, more informed staff and clients, public positioning as a company that embraces new media and at minimal additional resource outlay (less than $1,000) has convinced us that this approach has reaped positive benefits on all fronts.

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STATE BAR OF TEXAS

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED

Each year, several hundred recent law graduates take the Texas bar exam. Once the exam is complete, there is a three-month span in which they are awaiting their exam results. This time is often spent biding one's time with no real direction. The challenge was to engage this group during that three-month period and offer them resources to prepare them for a career and life in the law.

The issues these graduates are facing are amplified by the current economic climate, in which massive layoffs have hit the legal industry just as law graduates are preparing to begin their careers. Many will be forced to go it alone, in solo or niche practices rather than large firm. This changing legal landscape offers tremendous opportunities for those who adopt new approaches to their law practices and careers.

Create a program to offer valuable resources to recent law graduates who have just taken the bar exam. Use new communication tools where possible. Make this program as useful and substantive as possible.

Persons who recently completed the Texas Bar Exam. These are mostly recent law school graduates.

The program should provide real, substantive resources to person who recently completed the Texas Bar Exam, in order to help prepare them as they begin their careers in law. The program should include cutting-edge educational materials and online community, as well as recognition for those who successfully complete the program.

SOLUTION/TOOLS USED/RESULTS

The State Bar of Texas sought to meet the needs of recent law graduates using an array of new communications tools. The program, After The Bar Exam, would consist of a website where participants are given access to a wide range of online educational materials, including streaming video courses. These online courses would be hand-selected from our existing online course library which is maintained by our professional development program, TexasBarCLE. Courses would focus in four key areas: finding your place in the legal profession, managing your practice, ethics and professionalism, and connection with the profession. These online courses are taught by experienced and accomplished attorneys and will serve to complement what these recent graduates have learned in law school and better prepare them to meet the challenges they will face as new lawyers.

TexasBarCLE would arrange for After the Bar Exam participants to access all courses free of charge. Participants will be asked to complete six hours of instruction in order to receive a certificate of completion from the State Bar. For most of these online courses, full continuing legal education (CLE) credit will be available once the attendees become licensed attorneys.

Participants will also be invited to join an After The Bar Exam Facebook group, where they can connect and communicate with other recent law graduates. The program would be promoted with all communications tools available, including the State Bar of Texas website, Facebook, Twitter, Bar publications, and Bar meetings. Cooperation would be sought from law schools to obtain lists of recent law graduates who we would contact directly to inform them of the program.

After The Bar Exam was launched on August 1, 2009, at AfterTheBarExam.com. The site includes introductory videos by State Bar of Texas president Roland Johnson, and links to online course materials hand-selected for our audience. We also included a link to the After The Bar Exam Facebook group and instructions on receiving a certificate of completion. The project was deployed in short order over the course of six weeks.

A key challenge of After The Bar Exam was how to best leverage our library of online courses for this new audience of recent law graduates. We settled on giving this group free, unlimited access to our online course library at TexasBarCLE.com. This could have created significant obstacles regarding authentication and certification of this group of recent graduates. The solution was to allow them into our course library on an honor system, where they simply swear that they are among the group eligible for the After The Bar Exam course. As a major revenue source for the State Bar there is some risk involved in opening our library like this but we decided that the benefits down the road were potentially great, because we'd be familiarizing this group of young lawyers with our products and winning new customers down the road. This free model ultimately allowed us to deploy quickly and satisfy all of our internal constituents that this was both the best way to approach the product and a prudent business move.

> TexasBarCLE.com online library, with video streaming by Manexa (much of the material is presented in Silverlight)
> TexasBar.com
> Facebook
> Twitter

State Bar President Roland Johnson provided the idea and vision for After the Bar Exam, making it his marquee program for his bar year. State Bar of Texas Communications Director Kelley Jones King directed the project internally along with representatives from

TexasBarCLE (Martin Chait, David Kroll), TexasBar.com (John Sirman), Texas Bar Journal (Kevin Priestner, Judy Marchman), Communications (Holly Priestner).

We are still in the middle of the program, having launched it on August 1, 2009, as a three-month service for recent law graduates. On August 14, 2009, we reported on our blog that one person had completed the program after only eight days (http://blog.texasbar.com/2009/08/articles/state-bar/recent-law-grad-aces-after-the-bar-exam/). To date, six persons total have completed the program. The Facebook group currently has 85 members. We will soon be prepared to supplement these numbers should SNCR request it. We can say that we informally our last class of licensed attorneys at our new lawyer induction ceremony and all stated that they would have taken advantage of such a program were it available to them upon graduation.

These results demonstrate, at this early stage, the demand for such a program to bridge the gap between when someone completes the bar exam and when they receive their results. We believe those who take advantage of this program will be better prepared as they begin the careers, and that the legal profession as well as the public who are served by these lawyers will be better for it.

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VERTICAL RESPONSE

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED

As a leading self-service direct marketing provider to over 60,000 small businesses, and a small business itself, VerticalResponse (www.verticalresponse.com) needed to continue leveraging Twitter as a powerful tool to bring in new customers, keep connected with current ones, and increase profit. VerticalResponse had launched their Twitter outreach program in October 2008 as a way to manage customer communication, but with just one staff member monitoring Twitter part-time, the number of customer requests and support questions was too large to maintain solo. Another common problem occurred when multiple VerticalResponse employees would respond to the same customer enquiry, so it didn't present an integrated persona to customers. In June 2009, VerticalResponse decided to adopt CoTweet in order to manage the large volume of Tweets, ensure there was no duplication of Twitter responses, and assign each Tweet to the appropriate representative within VerticalResponse.

The company also had to ensure that their use of Twitter complemented their use of existing VerticalResponse resources such as the corporate blog, Community Lounge and website. By taking this combined approach of using both the online communities built and maintained by VerticalResponse—plus the external online communities that their customers chose to participate in (Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn)—VerticalResponse could address the challenges associated with keeping their email marketing product at the cutting edge and continue being seen as an industry thought leader.

SOLUTION/TOOLS USED/RESULTS

In the past, VerticalResponse had successfully advocated the use of social media, and was confident in its ability to leverage CoTweet after it received the following recognition for its efforts in the social media space:

- VerticalResponse's "Email Marketing Blog" [http://blog.verticalresponse.com/], penned by CEO and Chief Executive Blogger Janine Popick, was awarded Blog of the Year by the Stevie Awards for Women in Business (2006). The blog also won the ClickZ Marketing Excellence Awards for Best Business/Marketing Blog (2007) and was a finalist for Best Blog in the American Business Awards (2009).

- The VerticalResponse website won the 2008 Web Marketing Award for Outstanding Achievement in Website Development, and received a Small Business Standard of Excellence Award.

> As VerticalResponse's customer-base continues to grow exponentially, the company is dedicated to maintaining open lines of communication, and ensuring they are in constant touch with the diverse customer base. In late 2008, Twitter was already contributing successfully to this ongoing dialogue, but the number of Tweets was fast becoming too cumbersome to manage.

Before deploying the CoTweet solution, the specific communications issues to be addressed were:

- Maintaining an open dialogue with customers through tools such as Twitter, to ensure product upgrades and new price offerings were informed by customer requests and feedback,

- Mastering new communications channels such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn to monitor customer requests and respond directly to these requests and feedback,

- Using consistent messaging through all disparate communication channels, for a consistent "VerticalResponse voice" at all times.

Ultimately this meant that VerticalResponse was challenged with combining new media tools such as Twitter and "traditional" communications tools, such as:

- The customer service team,

- VerticalResponse Marketing Lounge—the company's own social networking site created for VerticalResponse users to build their own community and share marketing information,

- Marketing education and support to its customers through a library of articles, case studies, how-to videos and a regular marketing podcast,

- Marketing Events—hands on workshops held across the country, throughout the year to share expertise and experiences with small business owners

The target audience for VerticalResponse is small businesses with less than 100 employees. Due to the small staff size of their typical customers, often there is no dedicated email marketing expert within the company. Email marketing may be an afterthought, or just one of many tools they use to keep track of customers (e.g.: doctors emailing appointment reminders) or to solicit additional sales from their customers (e.g.: wineries sending out promotional or sales-based emails).

VerticalResponse has a customer base of just over 60,000, which spans across industries including wineries, retail, ad agencies, real estate agents, software, and hardware vendors.

Another key audience segment is the nearly 3,000 non-profit organizations that take advantage of the 10,000 free emails VerticalResponse offers to those with 501(c)(3) status. The one aspect that all their customers have in common is that they need to continue to evolve their business knowledge and email marketing expertise through new media.

The VerticalResponse team aimed to use CoTweet to manage their Twitter outreach, and update customers on relevant content. Along with VerticalResponse's Community Lounge, Facebook Group, and LinkedIn group, the CoTweet Twitter platform was designed to get people using VerticalResponse's marketing solutions instantly.

Specifically, the goals were to:

- Ensure all customer support requests, questions and the support team addressed complaints,

- Research competitors to determine their announcements, product updates, blog postings and any unsatisfied customers,

- Notify current VerticalResponse customers of new blog content when VerticalResponse's Chief Blogger Janine Popick would post new content to the company blog, or when she contributed as a guest blogger to Inc. Magazine on a monthly basis (http://blog.inc.com/women-in-business/janine_popick/),

- Act as an expert resource for small businesses by linking to relevant content on Twitter, such as educational content, "how-to" videos and frequent webinars,

- Keep the media informed of press announcements and keep customers in the know about relevant significant coverage,

- In the event of a problem with our service or downtime, we wanted to use this tool to keep customers updated on the expected extent of the problem.

The social media specialist at VerticalResponse met some executives from CoTweet at a local Twitter conference, and was pitched on the many benefits of the service. The plan was to use CoTweet as a platform to provide existing and potential customers with everything they needed to know on how to create a successful marketing campaign, and to keep in contact with customers. The initial steps were as follows:

- The in-house social media specialist at VerticalResponse signed up for a BETA test of CoTweet so she could learn enough to present a comprehensive demonstration to the senior executives at VerticalResponse. This phase would take approximately one week.

• In the official demonstration to executives, the social media specialist would have to campaign for permission to assign CoTweet logins to four separate contacts within VerticalResponse. From a staffing perspective, the time would have to be justified by a measurable result in improved customer communications.

• Initially VerticalResponse planned on using one Twitter ID for their CoTweet account, to determine whether this would suffice. The first Twitter ID to be trialed was VR4SmallBiz, which was intended to provide the educational content, links to VerticalResponse blog posts and news, and other relevant customer communications.

The social media specialist would assign Tweets to the four individuals named to the account to respond to the specific needs of their Twitter followers.

• If necessary, the ultimate plan was to use CoTweet to manage two separate Twitter IDs for VerticalResponse, with the second Twitter ID of SupportVR being intended to answer support-related questions.

The final phase of the plan was to measure the impact of using CoTweet, and the resulting improvement in customer communications. This process has begun, but is ongoing, with future measures planned to quantify the percentage improvement in customer satisfaction.

After achieving sign off from the executive management team, the deployment process was very easy. Once the social media specialist had signed up for the original BETA account, she simply sent invitations to the nominated CoTweet users. They then had their own login address and password, in order to access the account at any time. --There was an initial phase of education that needed to take place as CoTweet is a relatively new communications tool for businesses. From a management perspective, the initial CoTweet demonstration was imperative, because sign-off was mandatory before social media tools are adopted.

From a staff perspective, the individual users had several questions on best practices for CoTweet. There was a two-month education process where the social media specialist acted as a resource for any questions or proofing of Tweets before they were distributed.

Another challenge was establishing a best practices guide for internal use, which provided recommendations on who would respond to which query, and what kinds of content could be mentioned in company updates.

The primary tool involved was CoTweet, which allows multiple people to communicate through corporate Twitter accounts and stay in sync while doing so. Specific benefits to this service which are listed at (http://cotweet.com/about) include:

• Engage people throughout your company -- Tap the collective wisdom of people across functional areas like marketing, PR and customer service. Assign tasks and track follow-ups.

• Focus on the conversations that matter -- Know when you need to jump in. Track your exchanges through simple case management. Schedule updates to make company announcements.

• Keep your brand human -- Automatically include signatures in your updates to identify who's talking and keep conversations personal.

VerticalResponse has five contacts involved in the management of the CoTweet application:

• Janine Popick—CEO, founder and chief blogger—who Tweets about her VerticalResponse blog posts, company coverage and general industry updates/ advice,

* Jenna Jantsch—who posts content related to marketing, upcoming educational webinars and relevant topics of discussion for small businesses,

• Elias Hishmeh—who answers all support-related questions,

• Alyssa Calonge —who responds to questions regarding events, and conducts "live-Tweeting" from VerticalResponse's own events,

• Patricia Callaway—who monitors the competitive space.

--CoTweet became a powerful tool in the fight to keep customers updated on best practices, special offers and company news. From a quantitative perspective, the results are as follows:

• VerticalResponse social media referrals growth in 2008 was 300%, and partly due to CoTweet we predict an additional 43% growth for the whole of 2009,

• Our social media customer referrals are currently growing faster than new visits to our website, and are helping us to promote our products and establish us as an email marketing expert.

There are a plethora of qualitative measures of success:

• As a result of CoTweet, VerticalResponse is better equipped to keep track of online sentiment. VerticalResponse is in constant dialogue with its growing customer base, and is able to measure in great detail how, and from where, it is adding new companies to its roster.

• The results map to the objectives above as follows:

1. OBJECTIVE: Ensure all customer support requests, questions and the support team addressed complaints,

RESULT: CoTweet allows VerticalResponse to answer 100% of questions and reply back to all people who comment on the company, whether they are users or not. Perhaps even more importantly, we can use CoTweet to engage people who weren't going to call us in the first place, and who would have simply commented on support questions online. We use CoTweet to determine which users we should send relevant educational content to—such as the "getting started kit."

2. OBJECTIVE: Research competitors to determine their announcements, product updates, blog postings and any unsatisfied customers,

RESULT: With CoTweet, we are better able to keep up with competitive announcements and monitor them for future product enhancements or red flags.

3. OBJECTIVE: Notify current VerticalResponse customers of new blog content when VerticalResponse's Chief Blogger Janine Popick would post new content to the company blog, or when she contributed as a guest blogger to Inc. Magazine on a monthly basis (http://blog.inc.com/women-in-business/janine_popick/). Keep the media informed of press announcements and keep customers in the know about relevant significant coverage,

RESULT: This has been highly successful, as people now expect to see this content posted to Twitter before they see it on the blog or website.

4. OBJECTIVE: In the event of a problem with our service or downtime, we wanted to use this tool to keep customers updated on the expected extent of the problem.

RESULT: People appreciate being kept updated via CoTweet/ Twitter in the event of service interruptions. Since we began using Twitter as a communication tool in October 2008, we have seen the customer sentiment become about two-thirds more positive during minimal service interruptions.

VerticalResponse's users appreciate the increased communication with our staff members through CoTweet, and they now expect to be communicated in this way. On a final note, we have seen them begin to adopt similar new communications tools, after we are advocating the benefits they bring to small businesses.

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