50 in the 314

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Saint Louis University - Business School Web / Content Marketing Strategy

The John Cook school of Business at Saint Louis University has a multitude of sources that made using a content-marketing strategy a great choice to drive traffic to our website. We had a thriving center of Entrepreneurship that gave millions to the growing startup scene in midtown St. Louis, nationally ranked programs in International Business and Supply Chain Management, and students who've volunteered with the Peace Corps and have appeared on Shark Tank.

In planning, I discovered that a content strategy meant we needed to reorganize the website. We created a full-fledged newsroom where we could store press releases and updates. For blogging, the school originally had a blog for each department. Some departments updated regularly, but we had blogs with a large amount of dead-time and disorganization. To keep content fresh and make it easier for search engines to index, we combined everything into one blog and used categories and tagging to organize posts by department. Finally, we created a workflow for student authors. This created a personal touch for our website, which which broke up the large amounts of monotonous information dumps, allowing potential students to see the school from a students point of view.

Sessions	Users	New Users
+13.01%	+20.24%	+5.02%

2013 vs 2014

Avg. Time on Site: 2:42 (Over 5 Min. for Degree Landing Pages)

Pages Per Session: 3.12

Traffic Sources

Google	+20.07%
Bing	+17.44%
Yahoo	+20.01%
Facebook	+60.07%
Twitter	+447.83%
LinkedIn	+56.39%

2013 vs 2014

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Our stories for the blog tended to be in three main categories: student posts, professor / departmental posts, and event coverage. The student posts were easy to facilitate: we had thriving student organizations that were happy to add to our site, and refreshing the authorship workflow for students allowed them to take full credit for their posts, which made good fodder for their resume and LinkedIn profile. The departments had somewhat of a content strategy in place because they put out newsletters regularly. We just had to flip their thinking of "write a story, save for newsletters" to "write a story, get it online asap, then promote through our newsletters" We assisted the departments with sending their newsletters out with Mailchimp, and in returned we used the content for our blog, tweaking and even assisting professors with ghostwriting to create the right tone and voice for their posts. To give them an idea of when their posts would go live, and for transparency, we published our content calendar school wide for reference. Finally, for a quick turn around with event posts we used Storify to take our live tweeting and turn social interaction into a blog post. The turnaround on this was great, posts only took about 20 min. to go from start to publish, and we even invested in an iPod Touch to give students control of our social feeds, and reuse their content for our blog.

Service Day 2015
(Event Coverage Using Storify)

The Service Leadership Program at the John Cook School of Business held its annual Service Day on March 27th. Over 150 students, faculty, and staff participated in aiding The Bridge in downtown St. Louis with painting, cleaning, and landscaping the community and homeless support center.

Marketing Professors Pick Their Super Bowl 50
Commercial Winners. *(Blog Post, Current Events)*

After the dust cleared on Super Bowl 50, we were treated to a puppy-monkey-baby, Peyton Manning name dropping Budweiser, and marketing teams disappointed they were not able to break out the branded #dab tweets after a Cam Newton touchdown. We asked our marketing professors to share what they liked, what didn't connect, and the winners of this year's Ad-Bowl.

SLU Undergraduates Spend Spring Break in Hungary
(Student Content using Storify)

On March 7th, undergraduates from the John Cook School of Business spent spring break in Budapest, Hungary for a Global Immersion Course. Students toured local attractions and business, learned about the countries history, and participated in projects throughout the trip.

John Cook School of Business named a Top 100 Business
School by US News & World Report *(Press Release)*

Saint Louis University's John Cook School of Business was named a top-100 business school for undergraduates and features two programs ranking in the top-10 of the nation according to the U.S. News & World Report, which released its annual undergraduate rankings on September 9.

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Saint Louis University - Business School Social Media

The Cook School of Business at Saint Louis University was a case of too many cooks with too many tool. Departments had their own accounts to go along with our master accounts, which caused a lot of seldom used platforms and dead air. When you're a second-tier brand under a main brand, your audience already more specific and takes more effort to grow. Because of this, we decided to prune some of the accounts and turn our social voices into efficient content-sharing machines. By sticking to Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn and setting up a school-wide content calendar our audience grew by 40% and reach 85% in a year. In addition to our main accounts, I also acted as a manager and advisor for the departmental accounts that we allowed to continue, either because of a large audience in place (Entrepreneurship) or being locked into the internal SLU audience, like student groups. I approved their content calendars and consulted on their usage to make sure they stayed active and the content stayed fresh..

We also switched our social media manager to Hootsuite, which allowed us to give access of our social media accounts to students for events and study abroad trips. Students were introduced with a blog post and assigned a special hashtag to sign their posts with so our audience knew that this was coming from their point of view. Using Hootsuite, we created a workflow that allowed us to approve posts and fix the minimal mistakes that did happen (usually spelling and grammar). This allowed for some really unique social content, including student perspectives of university life straight from their POV, and helped to give our brand a voice outside of a news aggregator.

Growth Over One Year

Audience	Reach
+40%	+85%

Averages Across All Networks, 2013 vs 2014

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For internal marketing towards our students, we implemented contests to help promote events and awareness of our programs to undecided undergrads. One of our most successful contests was our Leadership Ethics And Policy Challenge (The LEAP Challenge). Students would gain entries for this raffle by attending events relating to ethics and corporate policy, the specialization of the Emerson Leadership Institute. They would prove they would prove their attendance by taking a selfie at the event in front of our LEAP Challenge Posters. We used a service to gather all of the entries by hashtag, and randomly selected winners who received iPads. We had really good returns; about 3/4 of the students who entered went to the eight events required to win the iPad, and our competitors included a good selections of students from inside and outside of the Cook School.

We expanded into social media ad buys to compliment our paid search ads by boosting posts to market our MBA program. After some trial and error, we got a system that really created some great impression and click-through numbers with a affordable CPM. We realized that, surprisingly, people won't spend thousands of dollars on an MBA program just from a Facebook post. Because of this, our conversions were not applications to the program. We used these ads to point potential students to our information sessions, which had really strong conversion numbers in itself. We boosted posts on Facebook and LinkedIn; Facebook because we had our strongest audience there and expanded targeting options, and LinkedIn for the qualified candidates and job/career improvement aspect of the network. These ads acted more like a reminder about our info sessions, and soon helped drive attendance, which turned to applications for our programs.
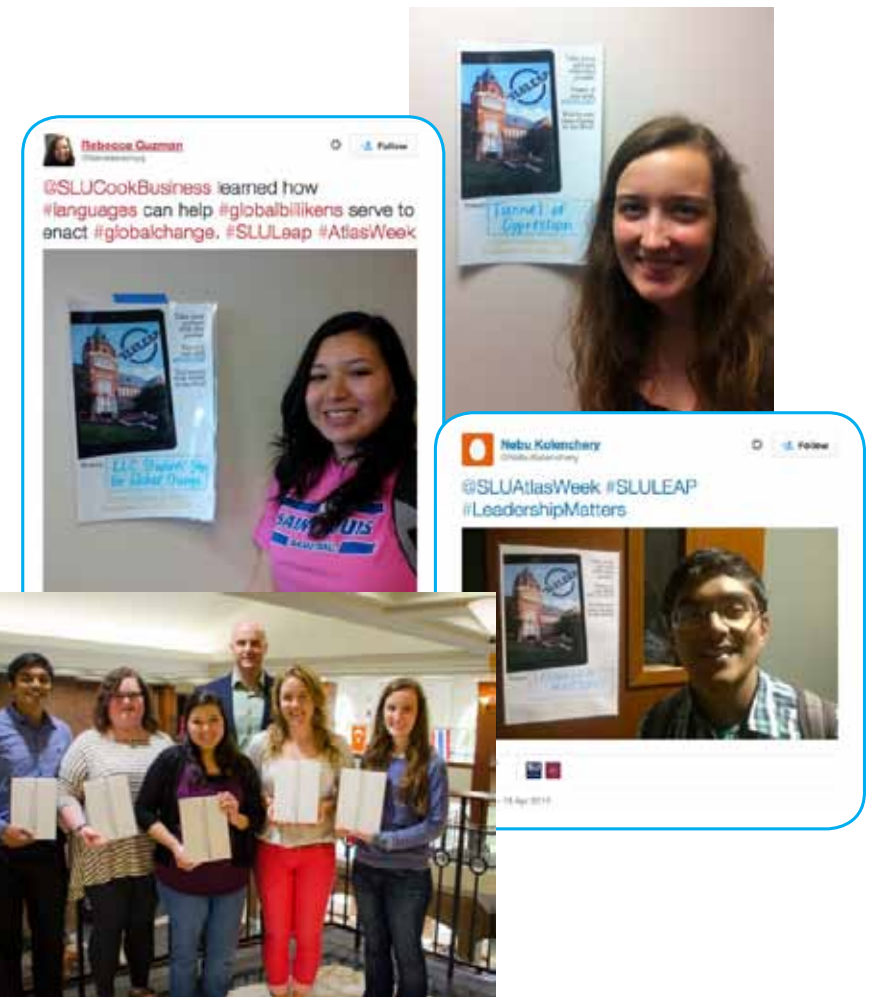
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Saint Louis University - Video Strategy

The Cook School was already interested in video by the time I came on board. The Dean invested in a quality camcorder with microphone and Final Cut Pro, and the previous coordinator already conducted interviews with a few MBA students and professors. Nothing was put together into a nice package for MBA students though, mainly because everyone was unsure on things like video length and what would be the best way to present the MBA program.

When it came to length, the usual notion for web videos is the shorter the better. Anything longer than a minute is hard to hold viewers. But an MBA degree is a big investment that covers more topics than you can fit into 60 seconds. We decided to use time-on-site as a metric to help determine video length because it's a good indicator of how deep people dive for information on that topic. Our average time-on-site for our MBA landing page was around 5 minutes, so we determined that we can go a little past the 1 minute barrier. Often, we'd split the more top lever content on landing pages with greater detail deeper in our navigation, maxing out at around 3-4 minutes each.

For presentation, I could sort of see what the previous guy was going for. He had some good, natural student interviews, but he also had some that seemed too "stuffy"; suit-and-tie management speaking about graduation rates in a downtown office building. It seemed out of spec to our target market, especially for our One-Year MBA program. We recorded new videos on campus, and instead of scripting the videos we did one-on-one interviews with our students, recording he interview throughout and taking the good content to create a great view of out MBA degree from our students point of view. It created a good natural element to humanize our MBA program.

Response has gone well; time on site increased by about two minutes which shows that people are spending time on the video, and we're increasing our reach to start videos for our Accounting and International Business programs.

40% Growth in Time-On-Site

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Saint Louis University - Business School Email Marketing Strategy

Many of our departments handled their own email outreach to alumni and business partners, which allowed for the free flow of information but off-brand designs of emails and timing issues that ended up stuffing inboxes. We decided to unify platforms, and chose Mailchimp because it played nice with some of the other programs we used like Salesforce and Eventbrite and had multi-user support. Cost was split between departments based on the number of contacts they had and I acted as the email admin, checking emails for content and brand accuracy and scheduling optimal send times.

Each department has their own lists that they manage. Newsletters went to mostly everyone and we used segmentation to split up the lists for more specialized emails, sometimes by demographics but also by activity, following up opens with an invite to an event we promoted. We also focused heavily on targeted promotion. We targeted potential students at certain companies that offered tuition benefits, sending specialized emails that pushed the tuition remission message and how to follow up with their company about attaining an advanced degree.

We created a branded base template so that each of our departments were under the Cook School brand standards. We knew from surveys that our students were often confused about the different designed that emails from different departments. We worked to make sure the point of each piece of contact was made up front to cut down on unsubscribe rates.

24% Open Rate
(Industry Average 16%)

2% Click Rate
(Industry Average 1.9%)

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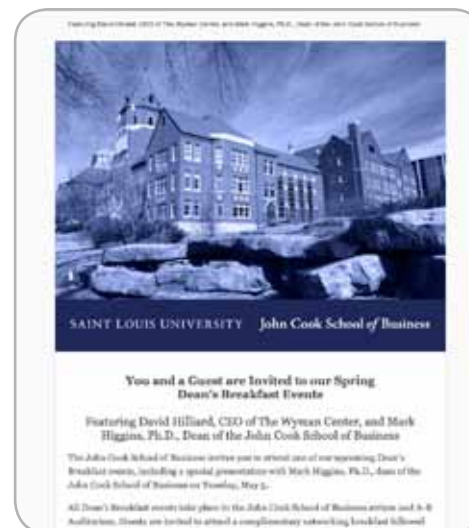
The Able Few - Internal Marketing

the able few / **JS STL.JS STLRUBY meet[:up]**

I started at The Able Few in a dual role, managing accounts and client service, and acting as marketing manager specializing in B2B connections and new business. Able was going through a transition. They started the company with most of their projects coming from marketing agencies, being brought in as a contractor when the agencies digital team needed some extra know-how. In 2012, they started to take on their own clients, and moved more towards the path of becoming an independent application developer and startup incubator. They needed a change of strategy as their online message was still stuck in this "assistance" mode when it needed to be switched to a "innovator" message. We did this by sharing our knowledge and using tactics that brought us up as equals in the St. Louis agency scene.

We became the source of knowledge for Ruby-On-Rails development in St. Louis by showing our expertise through multiple channels, and supported the development community in St. Louis. We took charge of various developmental groups in St. Louis, including Ruby Group, Java Script Group, and Code Till Dawn. We held bi-weekly meetings at our office, usually with a featured speaker, and got headhunters to provide the food and drinks. We would record the speaker presentations when we could, edit and share them on our own site and through the groups own social networks. To show our experience outside of St. Louis, we partnered with the creators of the tools that we used. A lot of the applications we used to develop and test our builds came from companies started in similar circumstances. Knowing they were looking for content to share on their networks, we collaborated with these companies. For example, we needed a way to automatically test in multiple browsers, and found a solution in Sauce Labs. We did a quick write up on how we solved this problem using their tool, and shared it on our blog, their blog, and to all of their followers, cross promoting through all channels.

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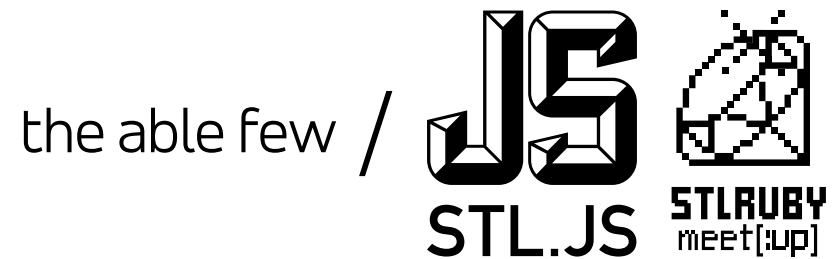
Guest Post: The Able Few and Qettlhup for Using GruntJS with Sauce Labs
May 28th, 2012 (Excerpt)

For the some time now, we have been developing an application over at The Able Few, a St. Louis & Indianapolis based product and software development company, called Click With Me Now. CWMN, is a no-download, co-browsing solution that allows users to share a browsing session with others in a single click.

In the early stages of development, we built a series of prototypes to serve as a proof-of-concept for the application when demoed in a controlled environment. We focused most of our initial efforts around Chrome/Webkit, obviously, which allowed us to cover an impressive amount of ground in a short amount of time. When it came time to start the full build of the application, however, we had to start backfilling support for other older browsers and make sure that this didn't impair our existing codebase or slow us to a complete halt with testing.

After weeks devoted to dealing with countless browser compatibility issues, mostly in IE, and many profanity laced insults hurled at the computer gods, we had a working prototype that functioned in at least the latest version of every browser. Of course that wasn't good enough and going forward we were going to need to be able to test the app in every other browser known to man.

We started writing out some Selenium and Capybara tests. This allowed us to do things like disable Websockets and Flash, in order to make sure that the application didn't crash and burn, which we could test in Chrome, Firefox, and Safari without a hitch — but not IE! Also, what about mobile? Oh, and what would happen if the Host was using an old version of Firefox and the Guest was using a Webkit nightly? As these questions began to pile up, our aspirations of adequately testing our application began to sour. We played around with VirtualBox VMs, but it quickly became apparent that the number of OS and browser variants we needed would become a nightmare to manage, not to mention the licensing costs. We also needed to think about mobile devices, older versions of OSX, Linux, and myriad other combinations that we had yet to consider.

It was a lot to deal with and we certainly felt the pressure of needing to accomplish this in a timely manner. Then by a stroke of luck we came across Sauce Labs...

Image is also important in the St. Louis area, and we wanted to plant ourselves as an independent entity, as opposed to a contractor to agencies in St. Louis. Part of this was accomplished with a move to our own space in Midtown, and we took full advantage of the buzz from this move. We followed the standard strategies, including updates on remodeling and throwing events, but we also had a little fun with it too. We moved into an old photo studio, with a giant blue screen. We, being developers, had no use for the screen, but its something we wanted to keep around. We started a Tumblr called "The Blue Screen Wall of Shame", where visitors to the office would "be strongly persuaded" take a picture in front of the screen, and we'd post the easily-editable photo online. People would submit the edited photos to the tumblr, and do their best to one-up each other. It took off, especially when we had agency owners and creative teams come in, as their personal teams were waiting for the chance to embarrass them. During our open house, we even did "Live-Shaming", showing posts on our projector to the crowd.

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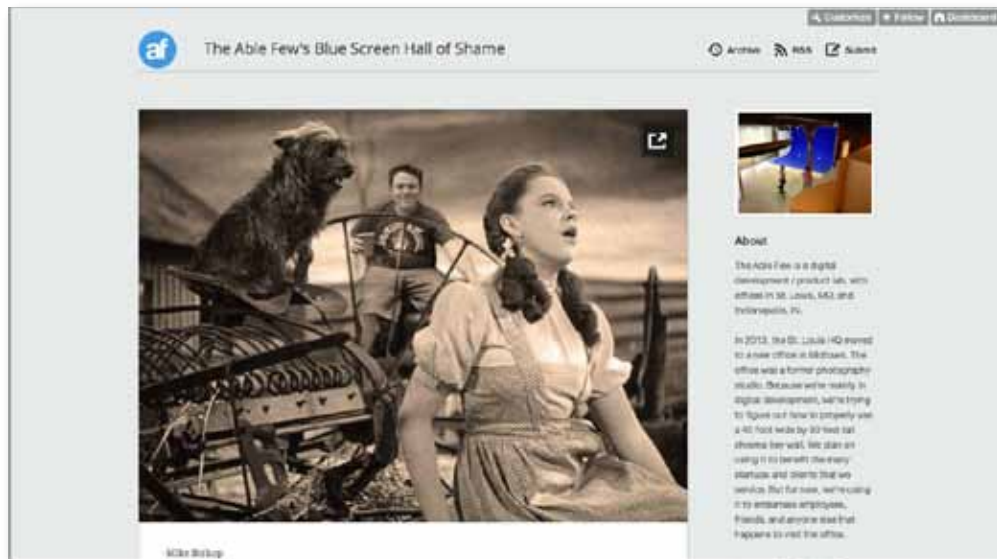
Forest Park Living

This was an interesting pitch that turned into a fully formed organization that took off in the surrounding area. The Dorchester is a high-rise apartment building off of Skinker, a very affluent street. They faced the problem of people overpricing their apartments and not even bothering to tour, as they were surrounded by high-rise million dollar condos. They wanted to promote the idea that living by Forest Park was not only affordable to everyone, but had many unseen benefits other than the close location to the park.

We pitched creating a organization promoting life in the neighborhoods surrounding Forest Park, including DeMun, U-City, and Hi-Pointe, utilizing a full online and social media effort. ForestParkLiving.org would feature articles about life in the neighborhood, reviews of bars and restaurants in the area, and contests with prizes provided by the Dorchester. Basically, we wanted to make "Forest Park Forever" for the area outside of Forest Park. To top this all off, we would also attach a webcam to the top of the Dorchester apartment building, bringing traffic in for people wanting to watch the sunrise from the east, or events like the Forest Park Balloon Race. Gave us a great tactic for repeat traffic, content whenever we needed to get something new into the either, and allowed for a "see these views everyday" plug for the company funding these efforts.

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We launched the site, immediately partnered with organizations and businesses in the area, and had a good amount of traffic following our "meetup" happy hours and major events like the balloon race. We also launched the brand on Facebook and Twitter, creating a post schedule and content calendar to allow for timely updates and efforts to keep the conversation going. This project allowed me to improve my video editing skills too. Forest Park remodeled their bike trails, and me being an avid biker, I gave everyone a tour from a camera mounted to my handlebars.

Forest Park has always been a great park for day trips, picnics, and, of course, the tons of attractions they have available. But the biking and running trails have always left something to be desired. The main problem was that the trails were always a bit too skinny, and overrun with people. Myself, being a biker, was constantly having to weave in and out of joggers. It's their right to use the trails too, but it was also an accident waiting to happen. Forest Park took a step in the right direction, though, and split the trail in two. Did it help? Check this video for an overview...

As you can see, the bikes took over most of the old trail, and the runners got a longer gravel trail that weaves more inside the park. No real complaints about that, because the outside trail is better molded for bikers anyway. The straight-aways are perfect for speed, and it's relatively easy to keep a steady cadence, especially if you end up going north on Skinker, a surprisingly easy downhill slope. Only one hill really gassed me, and that may have been my own fault.

The main problem with the trail now is that there is still confusion about who uses what trail, and a lot of runners are still using the old trail. This can be blamed on many factors, mainly lack of signage, as I barely saw any new directional markers, and the running trail being gravel, as some runners have paid a lot for their kicks, so don't want to get them dirty. Understandable argument, but bikes with road tires can't go on gravel that well, as they are not mountain bikes. We sort of need the pavement, where for runners, it can be optional. More confusion happens with the section of trails off Skinker, by the Dorchester. There turns out to be three trails running along the street; Biking, Running, and the Golf Cart Path, and the confusion was only compounded by a lack of signage.

I'm not saying the best course of action is paving the running trail. I know that if it is paved, bikers will then sneak on that side, and the problem will be reversed. I think the solution comes with better signage. The trails are largely unmarked, to the point where I even passed by the connection where I got on the trial, and didn't realize it for a few blocks. Separating the trails was a step in the right direction, it's just needs some polish and more publicity about which trail belongs to who to make it perfect.

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Plato's Closet

Plato's Closet, a "re-seller" of brand name clothes and accessories, was one of the first clients I worked with on a professional level. The St. Louis franchisee owner was great at coming up with promotions and contests, finding different ways of getting people through the door. Because of this, we had a pretty stringent promotional and content schedule, and these pieces had to be moved on a monthly basis. Once one concept was built and approved, it was on to the next one. This gave us an opportunity to stretch our creative muscle, but plan ahead to make sure we hit all deadlines.

We unified the brand across multiple mediums. The promotions would be announced on-site through ads and bag-stuffers, and online through their Facebook pages. We invested heavily in Facebook, using the FBML language to create a site within Facebook for each promotion, and created their own mini-applications where users could sign up for email updates or view the locations in their city. A very fluid system, and able to be updated fairly hassle free. We also kept the conversation going with their fans, with daily updates and quick features like highlighting the employees personal styles to humanize the brand.

Using this strategy, we grew the St. Louis Plato's Closet chain till they had the largest following out of all the stores, with almost 5,800 active users, and even added the Chicago locations to our client-roll.

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Dos Luna's Tequila

Dos Luna's sought us out wanting to increase their reach in the midwest market and a overhaul of their social media efforts. We created and executed events at bars across St. Louis and the midwest, efforts including:

• Sponsoring key events in the St. Louis area, including Cinco De Mayo at Hacienda, and the Cinco De Mayo weekend festival on Cherokee Street.
• Tweet walls: Using Tweet Wall Pro, we set up an account to broadcast tweets with the hashtag #DosLunasDeMayo. We then created instructions showing distributors and bars across the nation how to access the system through their entertainment systems, or how to set on up on their own with a laptop.
• Live Tweeting these events, with follow up on social, usuially pictures and video reviews.

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On the social media side, we were tasked with making up for some of the shortcomings of a weak web presence. We decided to set up a fan-gate on Facebook, include an FBML "Mini Site" allowing users to learn about the different brands of tequila Dos Lunas produced, and tasty recipes using the liquor. Through Twitter and Facebook, we set up a constant posting schedule, including speciality-made graphics celebrating holidays and special occasions, and kept the conversation flowing with the fan-base. We saw steady growth through our efforts, gaining on average about 1,000 followers per month, with traffic increases to the website directly relating to our efforts on social media.
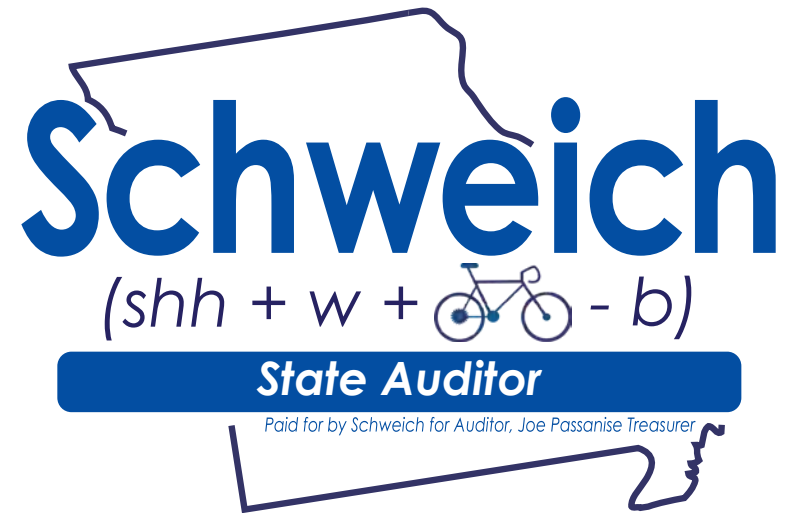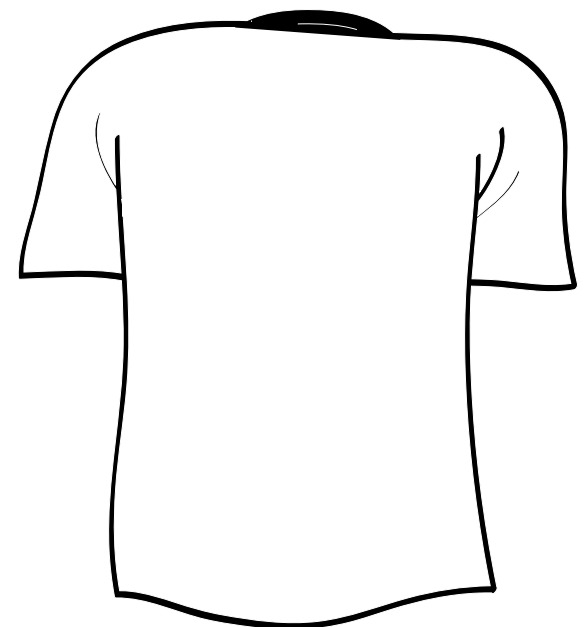

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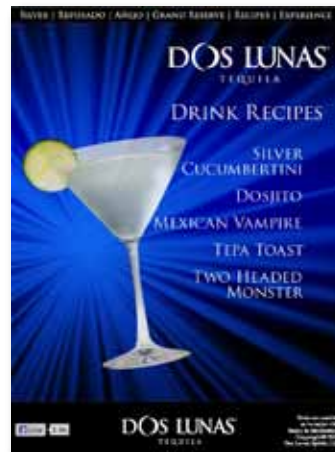
Tom Schweich for State Auditor

I was brought on to this project to create a set of "Fun" logos. Something they could put on a t-shirt or a sticker to humanize the campaign and show a different side of Tom Schweich. I took one of the ideas from a campaign staffer, who always complained of people mispronouncing Schweich's name, and turned his name into a riddle.

I also had the idea to crib off a fellow Republican, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and borrow his famous campaign slogan "I Like Ike". They ended up running with the "I Like Schweich" slogan and logo, ordering t-shirts and even placing it in one of their campaign commercials
(Strategy, Graphic Design, Print Preparation)

Schweich
(shh + w + 🚲 - b)
State Auditor
Paid for by Schweich for Auditor, Joe Passanise Treasurer

CPAs for Schweich
State Auditor

Schweich
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I Like Schweich

Paid for by Schweich for Auditor, Joe Passanise Treasurer

I Like Schweich

Paid for by Schweich for Auditor, Joe Passanise Treasurer

Tom Schweich Front Line Ad

SchweichforAuditor 13 videos Subscribe

Tom Schweich
FOR STATE AUDITOR

Experienced. Independent. True Watchdog for Us.

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I Like Schweich

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SchweichforAuditor | July 13, 2010
Announcer: "Tom Schweich's been finding and eliminating waste, fraud and...

1,163 views

I Like Schweich
www.tomschweich.org

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Ettraction's Exploreboard Expansion

My first project while working at CTM Media Group was to expand their Ettractions and Exploreboard programs. CTM traditionally worked with old-school advertising placements like brochure racks and discount coupons for tourist attractions. They wanted to expand their digital reach and developed these touch screen kiosks called "Exploreboards" which attractions could buy placement on much like a traditional brochure rack. They worked incredibly well; being linked to their vacation planning site Ettractions.com allowed us to pull metrics on site visits and impressions, while being customizable enough to fit any hotel / attraction decor. They started expansion on the East Coast, and was ready to bring them to the midwest.

When I came on, the first placement was already up at the Anheuser-Busch Tour Center, and I quickly placing them in hotels and attractions around St. Louis. This is when I discovered something about a hotel placement vs an attraction placement. Attractions gave us the most impressions, the ABTC alone being worth over 500,000 impressions every year. But, we tracked the most activity from hotel placements, which made sense as that is where the day started for most of the clientele. We made an effort to increase the board activity first, as we had the metrics to pull to show to potential clients how the board was being used, and to show that the board was being used to lead people to attractions. We added three more hotels downtown, one in Midtown, and one in Chesterfield to give us a reach in St. Charles. Using these locations, we were able to add around 15 more clients to the Exploreboard to continue its growth.

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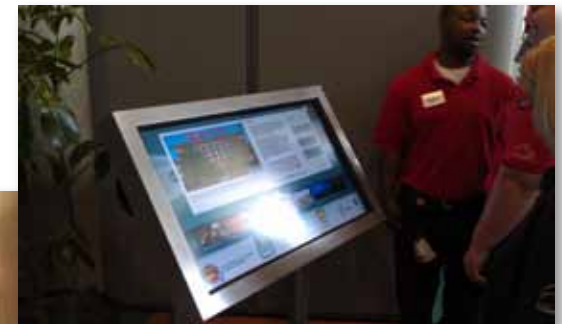
We were also lucky enough to add a packaging program to how we sold the board, allowing clients to pick and choose what services they wanted. This helped us sell more easily, and also made placement on the board more of an add-on then a separate service, so that we didn't kill traditional sales. Growth continued, and spurned growth of the Ettractions brand online. Our followers to our St.Louis Ettractions Facebook and Twitter pages grew as we got more people involved in the platform, even with a small strategy of a simple content calendar and being on-hand for replies. But the coolest thing was the reports we saw from our internal analytic system. We could track where the user clicked out of the site, and we were able to correlate jumps in followers to our clients community with traffic directed out of Ettractions.com

When I left, we just added out 10th board, and the second one at a major attraction in St. Louis; the Science Center. It brought our impressions up to 2.5 million annually, and with each board placement, profile activity rose around 15%, so no placement was going unused. A really successful expansion in only a years time.

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