50/314

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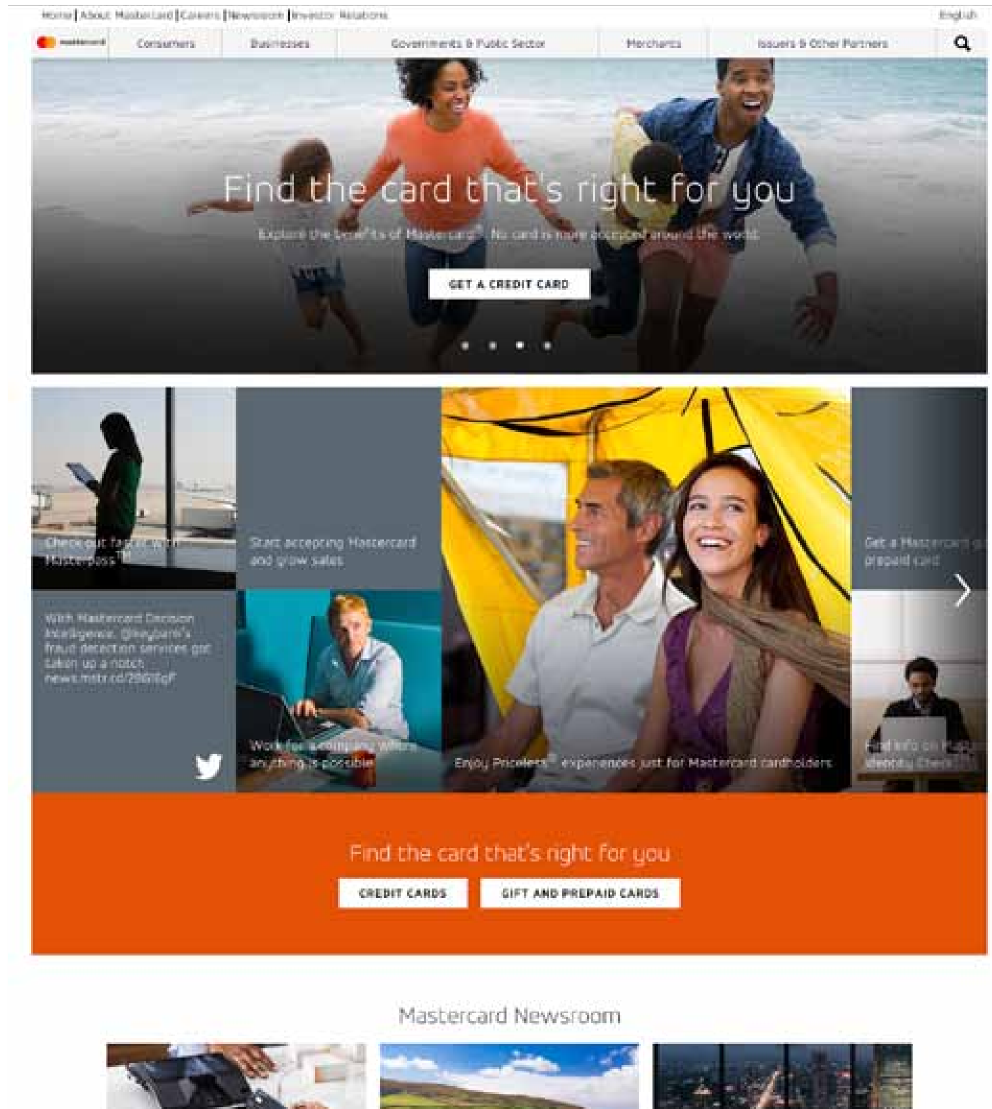
Mastercard.com Redesign Roll-Out

One of my first projects at Mastercard was the roll-out of new Mastercard.com properties. We had to move over 80 country-specific sites off of multiple different CMS's into one universal design, built in Adobe Experience Manager, modify the content to match the updated information architecture and image specs, ensure we were not interrupting any continuing promotion, and in the middle of this comply with the new European GDPR standard set in place to protect consumers privacy. Nothing like a trial-by-fire to welcome you to a company.

I was one of the leads for a team that included 4 project managers, and about 15 or so contracted workers both here in the US and abroad in Pune, India. We delegated the work based on two factors; location to avoid 11pm meetings as much as possible, and by size of sites. We had two IA templates; a normal site, and a skinny version. More than likely if the country was small, the business owner just wanted a smaller version of the site, not much custom content except for translations. For the larger regions with their own marketing team behind them, we either had a large template, or a start from scratch build. We were able to move a lot of the replicable, smaller builds out of the PM's hands in order to save time.

The builds were phased out so that we could stay on a schedule for instals and launches. The first phase was copy. We allowed the business owners to translate and edit our stock copy decks (built in excel), while we enabled their access to AEM (which took a while, as any financial company will have stringent security guidelines). After that, the offshore team took the deck and moved it into the webpages. We then went into a review period with the site owners, tracking issues in our ALM application. After content approval, our team tested the sites based on about 30 qualifying features per page, and after all approvals were met, we launched.



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Mastercard.com Redesign Roll-Out

There were two main points where we made massive improvements in the process. The first was tracking. We originally tracked issues in excel, as it allowed the business and our teams to work off the same sheet. But that can get really messy after a while, especially with the 100+ page sites. We moved it to a submittal process. The business submitted an issue, we logged in ALM, and the business could check on the status there. Eventually, this was build out to full on dashboards, tracking burndown processes and timing of fixes.

Finally, we were able to semi-automate much of the testing. Using a few internal automation tools, we were able to analyze the raw HTML output of the site to automatically close test cases. For example, we had a rule of no more than three YouTube videos on a page for speed/load purposes, and had that test ran for every page. Using an automation script, we eliminated any pages without any YouTube links, and turned 100+ tests into maybe 5 manual checks per site.

I came in right when the roll out phase started, and from what I've heard, I missed rough design and development phase before that. A lot of issues and infighting since the CMS was new and the tools were being built from the ground up. My team was able to take all that work, and implemented it in a way that really helped put a good ending to the project. Like any new-tool roll out, you have to play the part of "technical therapist", letting the users know their tools are still there and that the site is being built to help them, not cause more work. Making this process as smooth as possible helped ensure future use and updates of their web presence.

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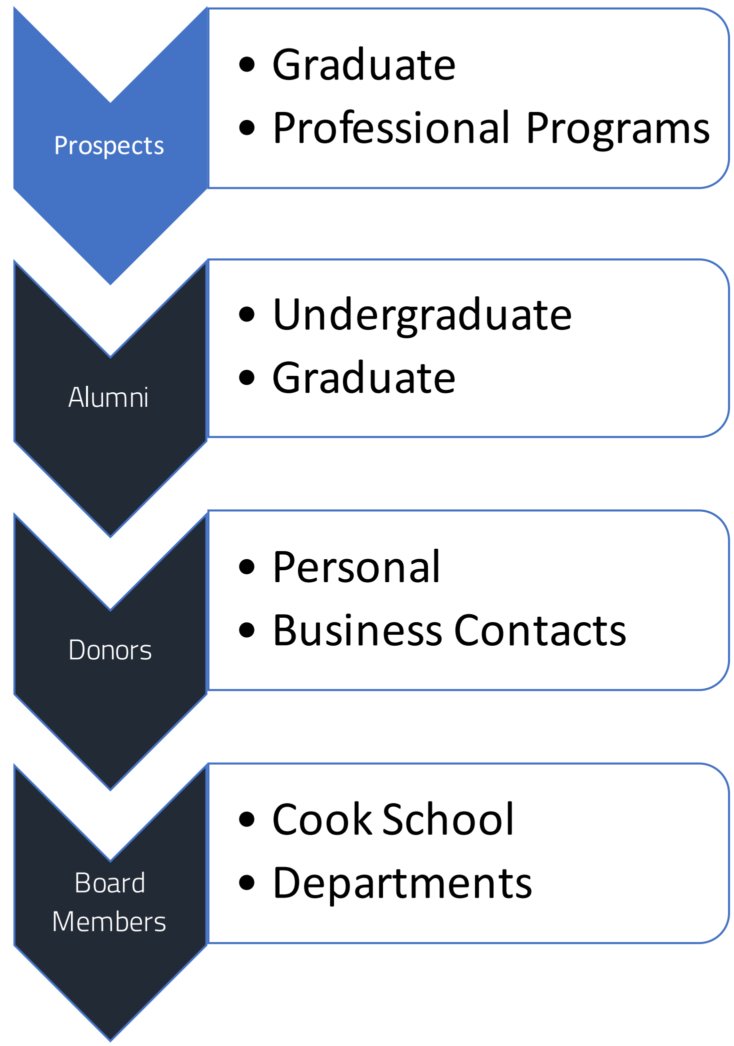
Saint Louis University - CRM And Digital Recruitment Strategy

Starting my career at the Cook School, one of the first decisions I made was that the department and centers needed to be more interconnected and in sync with each other. We worked hard to unify our email marketing and social media platforms, and the next step in the process was to do the same for our customer relationship management software. Each department and center had their own system installed, ranging from Salesforce installs and free CRM software trials to excel spreadsheets and massive google contact lists, so the process was going to be unique to say the least.

The early stages of this process revolved around choosing a CRM provider and getting the departments on board. We chose Salesforce, as they had a good University / Non Profit plugin, spoke to the rest of our marketing tools, and was convertible to the university's main system. Convincing the department heads to jump on board was the harder part. I sat down with each department to listen to their concerns, many of which revolved around misuse of contacts and organization issues. We did two key things to solve this issue;

- Created a "VIP" contact designation for board members and high end donors, which meant edits needed approval by an admin, and contact outside of the department needed approval from the department account holder.
- Created a flow for contacts that allowed for status conversions. We did not have a simple conversion from a lead / prospect to a contact or customer; a contact can go from undergraduate student to alumni to donor to graduate student lead to graduate student to board member. We created a fluid system that allowed the contact to be designated, and allowed the right messaging to go to the right type of student.



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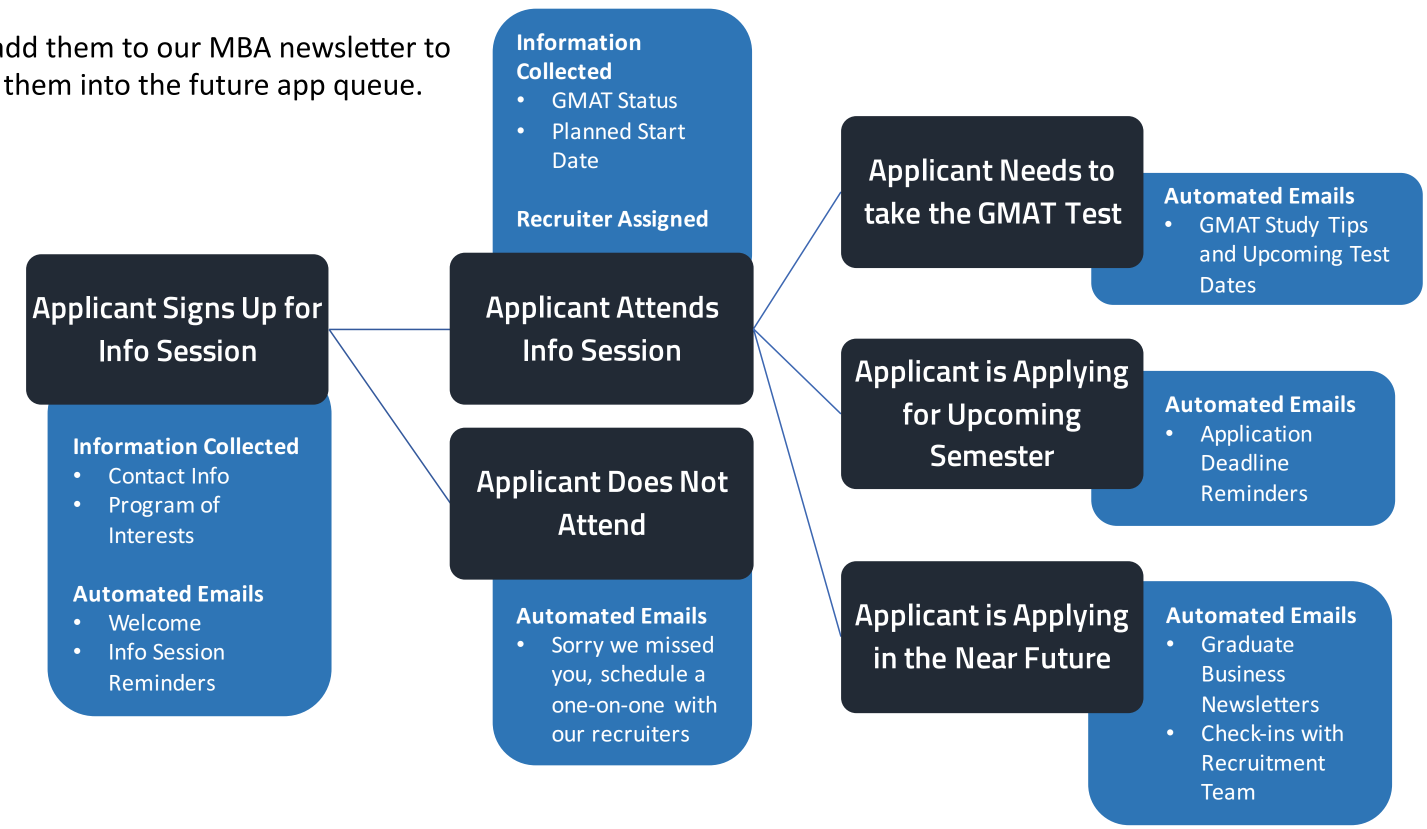
We created a contact flow for our graduate business program, and figured out the best way to automate messaging through Salesforce / Mailchimp to keep our graduate business leads in the know. Application to a business school is not just acceptance and paying tuition, you need to have letters of recommendation, transcripts sent, and a current score for the GMAT placement test. We didn't want to overload our leads, but help them along the way. Much like our strategy in our social ads, we used our information sessions or a one-on-one meeting / phone call as the conversion point to show that a lead is interested. When a user signed up for an info session, they get a welcome email and reminder emails leading up to their session or a one-on-one meeting with our recruitment team. Their attendance is tracked, and they are assigned a recruiter (which the prospect receives their personal info) and sorted into multiple "nudge flow" email reminders;

- If they need to take the GMAT, we send them information on test sites and study tips.
- If they are applying for the upcoming semester, we send application deadline info.
- If they are applying in the future, we add them to our MBA newsletter to keep them connected to SLU, and put them into the future app queue.

The program had two key success points in its early stages: it gave our recruiters more time to follow up with their leads and help the students navigate their graduate education, and it kept students plugged into the SLU ecosystem, keeping them informed about our programs and differentiators when compared to the competition. We are continuing to add more flows, including highlighting if a lead is "shopping" universities to have a good comparison point between us and other STL area schools, and if a student is looking to get tuition assistance from their employer, giving out tips on how to connect with their HR department and our deferment policies.



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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 recurring campaigns. 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.

One of the biggest discoveries after full implimentation of our CRM system was the value of our email lists; our event blasts drew around 4 times the response rate that our print invites did, and the guests showed up more reliably. This allowed us to cut down on our printing and be more effected with our messaging.

24% Open Rate
(Industry Average 16%)

2% Click Rate
(Industry Average 1.9%)

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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.

For this strategy to fully develop, we had to redo the information architecture of the site with analytics in mind. For degree and departmental pages, we were at a disadvantage that our application process went through the university's site, not our own, so the application process happened off site and we couldn't track traffic to applications to admission. Conversion tracking was not possible. The most we could track were the bounces / outbound traffic to the application site, so we set all of our "Apply Now" outbound links to the same page, so we'd have some semblance of a metric. Because of this, we made our key stats % new visitors, and time / pages per session:

- We wanted to see around 75% new traffic on the department pages, mainly because we understood that picking a graduate school was a long process that might take multiple visits. A good mix of new and returning traffic accounted for these visits, and current students looking up class information.
- The time and pages per session was our big metric, and we did a lot to improve the flow of information to make it easier to research our programs. Our page hierarchy gave users the chance to find the key stats that made the difference in their mind, weather that was ranking, faculty, or student life. We improved our average time on site to around 5 mins, and even greater with traffic following our search engine traffic flow (Search Engine – Landing Page – Program Pages).

We programed our AI and created new landing pages customized for traffic sources, which made the flow of traffic a lot easier. We also had to reorganize our blogs and newsroom. Under the old hierarchy, each department had their own blog and newsroom, which really subdivided that traffic and created stagnant content. We put everything into one newsroom and blog, with category pages to replicate the old functionality so that we could still show a custom department focused feed.

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

JOHN COOK SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Sessions	Users	New Users
202,493	138,858	66.72%
+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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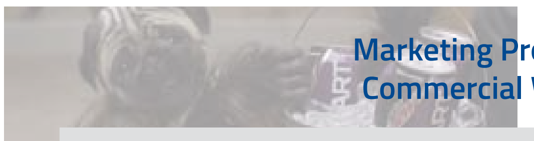
Our stories for the blog tended to be in three main categories: student posts, professor / departmental posts, and event coverage. The student posts were easy to facilitate: we had thriving student organizations that were happy to add to our site, and refreshing the authorship workflow for students allowed 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.

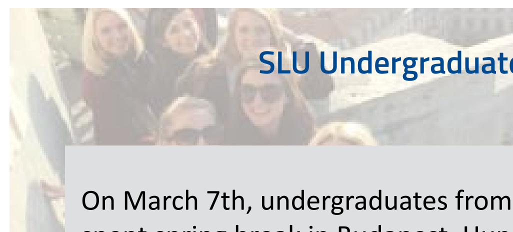


Marketing Professors Pick Their Super Bowl 50 Commercial Winners. *(Blog Post, Current Events)*

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.

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.



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.

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Saint Louis University - Business School Social Media

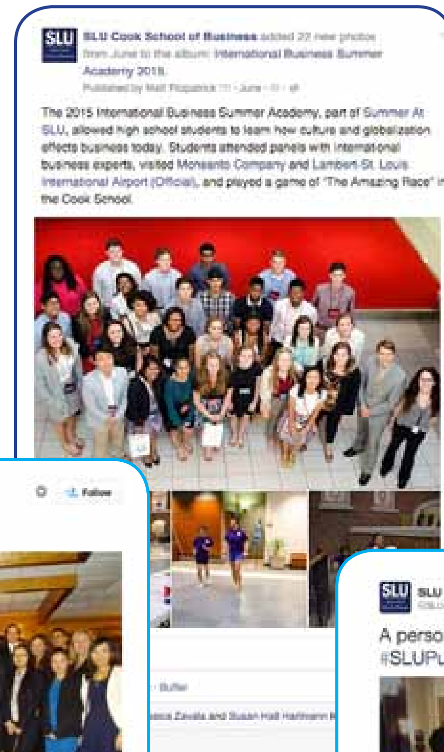
The Cook School of Business at Saint Louis University was a case of too many cooks with too many tools. Departments had their own accounts to go along with our master accounts, which caused a lot of seldom used platforms and dead air. When you're a second-tier brand under a main brand, your audience is 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 and alumni 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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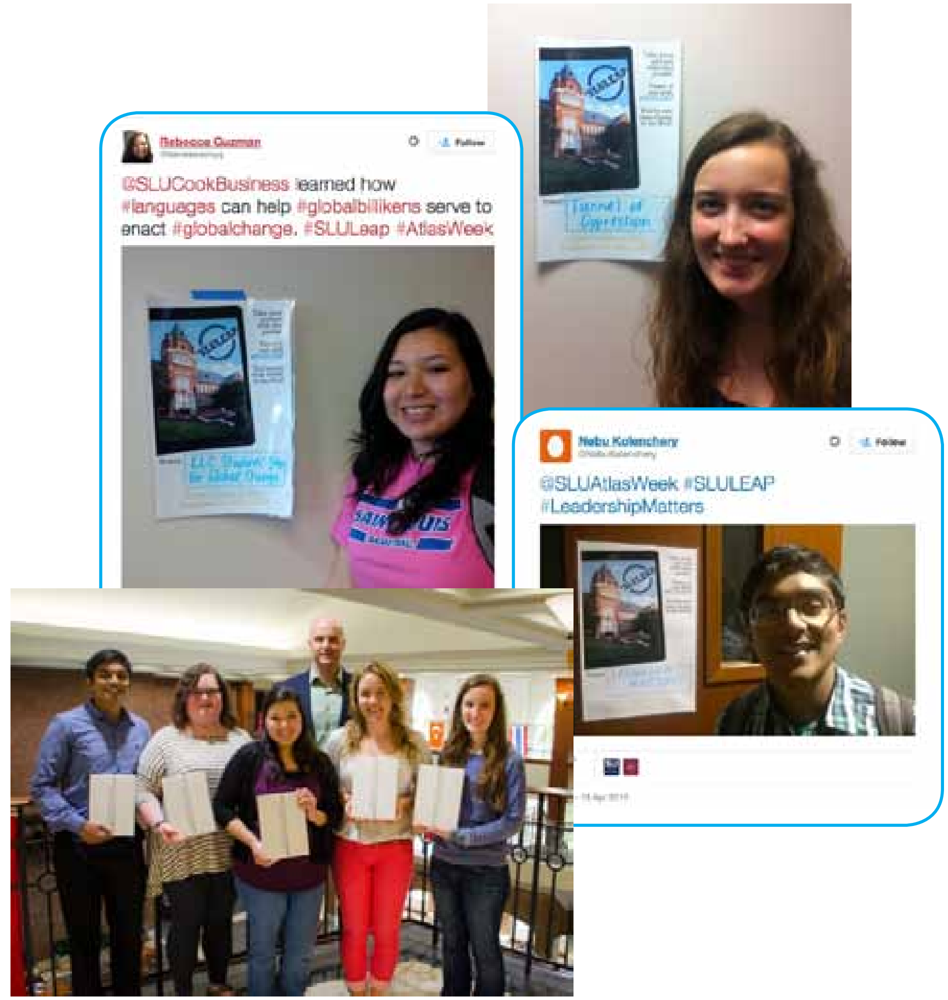
After seeing our success in organic social, our dean wanted to try paid ads for our graduate programs, as a way to compliment our paid search effort and to add a push digital marketing tool to our pull strategy. This took some trial and error to get right. We first started with a general “Apply Today” message that got a good number of impressions, especially when we attached a gimmick to the post (resolution posts in January), but we just were not sending traffic to the site that was converting. We realized that, surprisingly, people won’t spend thousands of dollars on an MBA program just from a Facebook post. We retooled, made these ads not about applications, but attendance to our information sessions.

We used these ads to point potential students to our monthly 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. We also ran the ads in 2-3 week periods, not continuous, in order to get more spend closer to our sessions. These ads acted more like a reminder about our info sessions, and soon helped drive attendance, which turned to applications for our programs. Our budget was small for these ads, but because of the nature of the programs, our target market was also small, so we spent like we had a bigger budget and these small wins matriculated into apps. We also kept narrowing down our target market, including specialized ads targeting people at companies who offer tuition remission, which really helped jump our info session numbers when close to application time. This also moved into a social buy strategy for our events on campus, like our Deans Breakfast and our speciality conferences.



Facebook Boosted Posts

	Impressions	CPC	CPM
Top Impressions	137,039	$1.83 (327 Clicks)	$4.37 ($600 Budget)
Top Clicks	68,163	$0.74 (540 Clicks)	$5.86 ($400 Budget)

LinkedIn Boosted Posts

	Impressions	CPC	CPM
Top Impressions	47,694	$4.80 (90 Clicks)	$8.44 ($400 Budget)
Top Clicks	21,483	$3.87 (98 Clicks)	$15.20 ($325 Budget)

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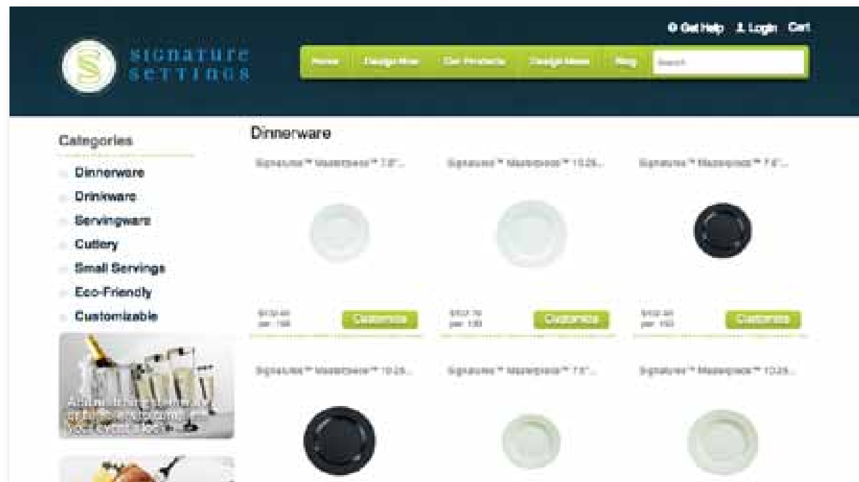
Signature Settings

Signature Settings is a great example of project management, asset and build organization, and thinking one step ahead when it comes to your client. This project was the family side project for a gentleman who was a VP at the supplier for this plasticware, and his sons (college students) and wife were the main report. Because of this interesting dynamic, it took a concerted effort to keep them hooked into this project, which meant a lot of planning ahead of time. When talking to them about the database upload, we gave the sons templates to follow, and a photoshop script to automatically resize images to spec. And when we were lucky enough to get everyone under one roof, we took an effort to focus on timelines, working around our development schedule and their kids classes.

There was over 500 products in their catalog, many very similar to each other, and every image needed to be resized and edited to some extent. I never thought I'd memorize the brand name and specifications for spoons, but here we are. The client also wanted to build out custom landing pages for different categories (wedding, birthday, holiday), and some sort of custom artwork on each landing page to match the overall theme and style. I think our product database, including thumbnails, ended up being close to 750 mb of data, not including the custom products.

In addition to this, they had about 50 stock design assets for their plates that needed to be hand vectorized, outlined so there was no fills, and resized to fit the different kinds of custom plates. Overall, a very difficult build where a massive organizational structure and diligence was needed, but in the end, we launched a successful store.



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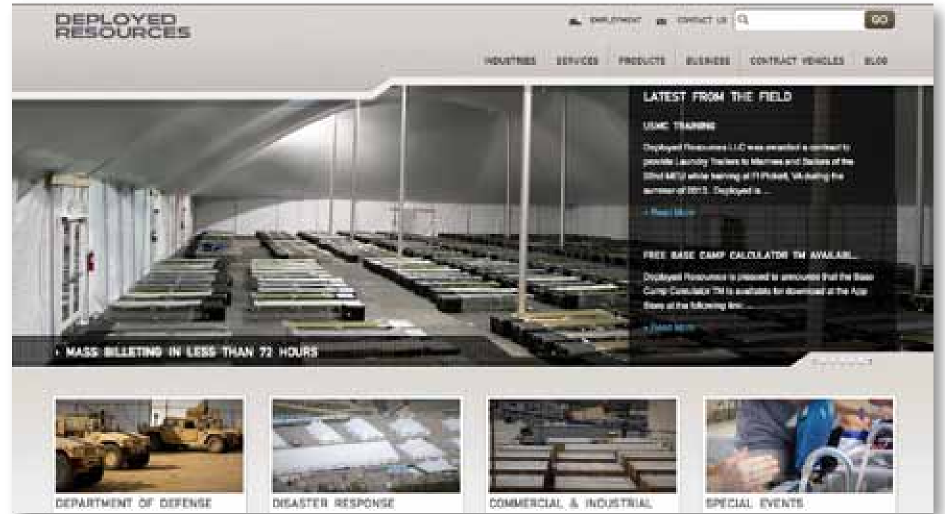
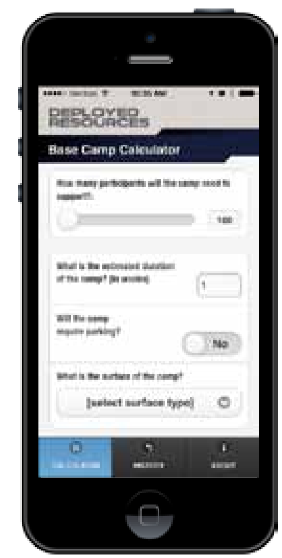
Deployed Resources

This was one of the first builds I was a part of at the Able Few, and it thoroughly impressed me that behind an agency famous for their technical know-how was a great design team to get their hands fully on a project. Deployed Resources gave us that chance. The design was military in concept, but became something that screamed “Quick and Effective Response” at the end. This design was fully responsive, showing the same experience on large screens to mobile devices. Part of this build was a “Base Camp Calculator”, where someone could easily put in their needs, and receive an auto-generated bid for their services.

As an account manager, there’s always a time where a client has a request that makes you go “can we really pull this one off?” We were requested to make the Base Camp Calculator a mobile app, iOS and Android. As an agency, we only dabbled in mobile builds, focusing on Ruby on Rails sites and web-apps. But, we had developers with experience on both platforms, we had the foresight to make the calculator work with the API’s needed, and the design assets still fresh on our minds. It basically came down to timelines and our relationship with the client. We asked the client for a looser timeline than with the website build, and the understanding that this was not our forte, but we were confident in our abilities. By opening up the lines of communication, building on the success of our last build, the client was happy to give it a try. At the end, it took a few revisions, and a little hand holding to help the client figure out what their needs for the app were, but in the end a website build became two apps and a great relationship.





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The Able Few - Internal Marketing

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 would partner 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.

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

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...

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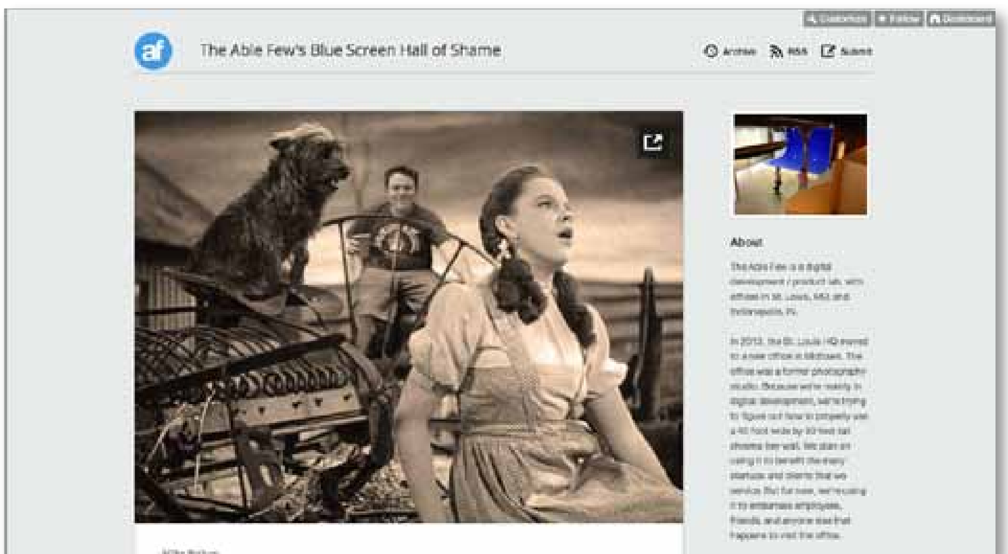
Image is also important in the St. Louis area, and we wanted to plant ourselves as an independent entity, as opposed to a contractor to agencies in St. Louis. Part of this was accomplished with a move to our own space in Midtown, and we took full advantage of the buzz from this move. We followed the 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 anonymously 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 design and creative 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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Ettraction’s Exploreboard Expansion

My main project while working at CTM Media Group was to expand their Ettractions and Exploreboard programs. CTM traditionally worked with old-school tourisim advertising placements like brochure racks, attraction magazines, and visitor maps. 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 began 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 their 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.

CTM
MEDIA GROUP
Targeting Today’s Traveler

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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. While the big players in St. Louis had a digital strategy down, a lot of our clients still were exclusively paper and brochures. This pairing allowed them to dabble in digital, and supplement their traditional strategy. 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.

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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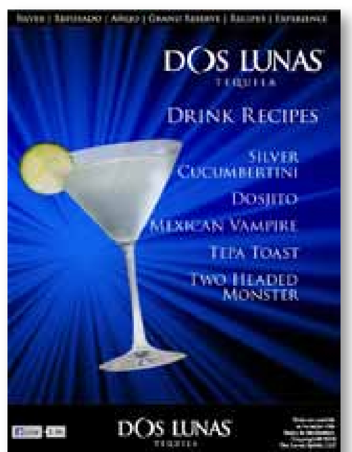
On the social media side, we were tasked with making up for some of the shortcomings of a weak web presence. We decided to set up a fan-gate on Facebook, include an FBML "Mini Site" allowing users to learn about the different brands of tequila Dos Lunas produced, and tasty recipes using the liquor. Through 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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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.

Forest Park Living.org

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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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