

Summer | 2010

MICHALSKI STUDIO

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Our findings and recommendations for Matthew Michalski for his architectural design studio,
presented for the Digital Communities class by Prof. Kristen Sosulski.

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Executive Summary

The architecture industry has yet to embrace the Groundswell. There is little social media web presence from Michalski Studio, the competitors we researched, or the industry in general. We believe that this presents an opportunity for Mathew Michalski to be used as a competitive advantage over other industry professionals. We have outlined a plan for Michalski Studio to embrace this opportunity and build a social media presence on the web. The plan includes short-term recommendations such as the launch of a Facebook page, a LinkedIn account and participation in architecture forums on the web. Long-term recommendations such as setting up a robust website and exploring of other technologies to improve the studio's on-line presence are also included.

Initial Analysis of Michalski Studio

Michalski Studio has online presence only as a blog hosted on Google's free blogging platform, [Blogger](#). The blog includes information on his past projects and photos of his designs. Matthew uses the blog to post information online and communicate with potential customers inquiring about his work. While Matthew currently does not have a presence on microblogs such as [Twitter](#) or [Tumblr](#), he has indicated that something this dynamic is not necessary for his typical projects since they are of longer duration – over six months. Matthew has a personal page on Facebook and although he has a link to his studio from his personal page, the Michalski Studio page currently on Facebook has neither any content nor does it have any fans.

Matthew does not have a profile on [LinkedIn](#). However, he could easily be confused with another Matthew Michalski in the building industry and located in Macao. The only differentiating factor is Matthew's namesake is much older.

We think that LinkedIn can help Matt in establishing his credentials via use of the recommendation mechanism. Customers of Michalski Design Studio can recommend his work and thus help his online reputation. We recommend that he obtains references and recommendations from his past clients, and contact other professionals in complimentary industries in order to start building his network.

[American Institute of Architects](#) is an architect organization in existence since 1857. It has a robust website that includes member profiles and ways to search for AIA architects. Matthew is not currently a member, and does not have a profile on the website. He should consider creating a profile on this website and other similar professional organizations as a way to provide information about his credentials and experience. In particular, Matthew should consider joining offline professional organizations and use their online resources.

Some wikis post information about ongoing projects but Michalski is not present on any of them. The wiki format also seems to be an efficient channel to include historical information over the life of a project. Currently some prominent examples include environmentally friendly projects for schools and institutions.

[Architecture Week](#) has a mature website that allows for blog posts and hosting of forums. Matthew could post on this website as a contributor. [Technorati](#) did not yield any tagging results for Michalski Studio or Matthew. Another Architecture social network that has been in development (beta phase) called [Architecture Linked](#). It is international and has over 3000 members already. It may be worth exploring as well.

What Customers Are Saying

Searching for “Matthew Michalski” or “Michalski Studio” on [Yelp](#) does not return any results. Yelp has postings for other architects and architecture firms in NYC. There is no user-generated content on the Internet anywhere about Michalski Studio.

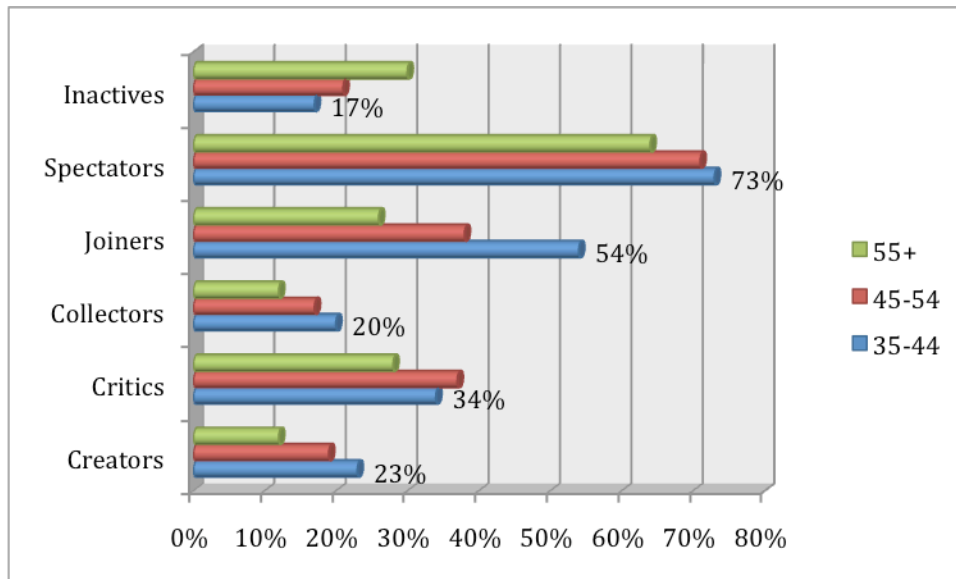
Social Technographic Profile

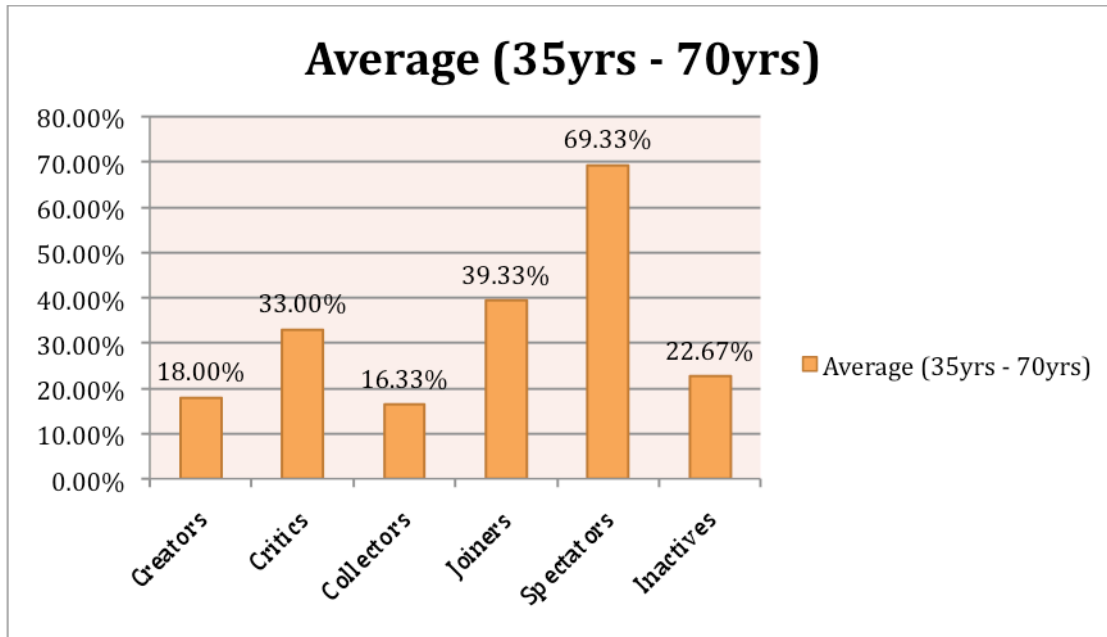
Matt indicated that his clients are generally between 30’s and 70’s and are mostly not tech savvy. According to Forrester’s’ [Groundswell website](#), we can see that almost 70% of them fall into the Spectators category, while almost 23% of them belong to the “Inactives” category.

Focusing on the 23% *Inactives* statistic could make it difficult for Matt to embrace the groundswell. However, with a large number of *spectators*, and the growing trend of social networking, he could have a first-mover advantage by embracing the groundswell and building his presence on the Internet. The current generation of socially web savvy users represents potential future customers. His current customers may be participating in the groundswell more

than he might imagine because so many people in that bracket are part of the groundswell. Additionally, as baby boomers (46 – 64 years of age) begin to retire, they may have more time to network socially on the web, and to discuss designing and building retirement homes and/or vacation homes. Many people in that age bracket have accumulated enough wealth to warrant the large projects that Michalski would like to engage in. The time is ripe to create an integrated web profile, which, over time, will generate good SEO rankings.

Since about 40% of his customers are *Joiners*, we can assume that they could follow the latest status updates on their project directly from Matt, and might even be willing to participate and even provide feedback on the postings. (33% are *Critics*)





Competitive Analysis

For most of his competitors, there is some good visual content in the websites and the firms have comparable experience and resources. However, none of the competitors has truly creative content, or a strategy that Michalski Studio would want to emulate.

www.je-designstudio.com

The architect's name is Jeff Etelamaki. He has a website that lists his publications and shows some magazine covers for design. It is unclear if the content refers to his business or education credentials. He has a *Contact* and *About* page with links to his resume. The website also includes a list of his projects that are a mixture of residential and commercial. Photos of rooms, as well as architectural diagrams of the projects are also included. His portfolio is nearly the same as the project list and displays a running slide show.

A Google / Bing search – brings his website as the top result. It also identifies his role as an adjunct professor at CUNY School, New York City College of Technology, Architecture department. He has some ratings for his schoolwork posted on www.ratemyprofessors.com, but only 3 ratings between January and November of 2007, all of which are positive (overall 4.2 out of 5). A search on Google reveals his website as the first link. The second link is to the website

of the school with which he is associated. That page includes his picture and some profile information. The third link lists him as part of a team that worked on the ‘Irish Hunger Memorial’ (below).



Jeff’s name also appears as one of the editors of a book called *Process (es) – A Problematization of Method and Moment in Architecture (volume 7)*

Jeff’s social presence is very limited. He is not on LinkedIn. A Google Blog search on his name does not return any results; neither does a search on searchenginewatch.com. He has neither any videos on Youtube, nor any presence on Yelp, Epinion or Twitter.

In summary, it seems he is only interested in displaying his previous work – he is neither looking for feedback nor listening to clients or prospects. His business does not have a Facebook page, which could be ideal for a service that has primarily visual effect on clients and prospects. Jeff does not actively embrace the groundswell. It is possible that he does not know he can reach customers with a better on-line presence.

denniswedlick.com

Dennis Wedlick is a well-established architecture business with 20 architects on staff. He has published three books that sell on Amazon and elsewhere. His has a well-maintained main web site that includes information on his designs, books and articles that he wrote, as well as customer testimonials. In his Book section, it is possible to sign up for a newsletter that provides updates on his publications.



A Google search returns many references to Wedlick, mostly having to do with the books he authored. However, his name also comes up in a few (dated) articles on the web describing him as a rising star in architecture. This presence on the web seems impressive for someone looking into his business. Apart from that, Wedlick’s social web presence is weak. He has a LinkedIn page but does not seem to connect with many contacts other than his employees. His Facebook profile is personal in nature. He posts updates of projects he is working on and the people listening seem to be mostly his friends and family. Other than comments on his website, we did not find any other feedback on the Internet or any ratings of the work he has done.

In summary, someone researching Wedlick on the web would find favorable information. However, the company is not actively using the Internet to attract more customers.

[wka+d](#)

Wenger Kois + Design is an architecture firm situated in Fanwood, NJ. It has projects throughout the New York tri-state area. The firm has also worked on projects in the areas as diverse as Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, North Carolina and New Hampshire. Maria Wenger Kois and Adam Kois founded it in 2004. The firm offers full interior design and decorator services including space planning, interior finish and fittings, and new furniture specification.

They develop and fabricate custom furnishings such as tables and seating. They operate their own woodshop and manufacture handcrafted furniture, which provides wka+d the competitive advantage of streamlining the design and fabrication process in addition to maintaining and controlling the product quality.

Maria Wenger Kois is a registered architect in several states and a member of the American Institute of Architects. After graduating as valedictorian of the School of Architecture from the Pennsylvania State University, she has worked on numerous residential, mixed-use and multi-family projects in New York. She specializes in collaborative, creative problem solving.

Adam Kois is a registered architect in several states and currently volunteers as a historic preservation commissioner for his town. He graduated from the Pennsylvania State University and studied architecture in Rome. While working with some prominent firms in New York City, he has completed numerous residential, commercial and institutional projects.

The firm has a simple website with project plans of completed projects and some furniture designs. However, no other social media website features the firm, nor does it have its own blog or presence on any of the groundswell technologies like Facebook or Twitter.

A Google search for the firm's name or the founders' last name only returns the website's name. We did not find any paid listings in search results.

Proposed Project Plan for Michalski Studio

There is an insufficient presence for either his competitors or Michalski Design Studio in the groundswell. However, we believe that with our help, Matthew can develop a significant competitive advantage by carefully stepping into the online world.

People: Matthew's prospective clients are between 30+ and 70+ years of age, which constitutes a large portion of participants in the groundswell as identified via the Social Technographic profiles. The members of this target audience are mostly spectators (70%) and joiners (40%) in the groundswell. They will want to hear what Matt has to say and may even join his community.

Objectives & Strategy: Matthew's main objective is to increase his ability to receive contracts and thereby expand his business. This includes (but is not limited to) identifying larger projects (commercial and residential) and expanding geographically. We believe he can begin to achieve these goals by *listening to*, *talking with* and *energizing* the groundswell. By *listening* to the

groundswell, he can find out what people need from an architect. What are the current home design trends? Are there any geographic influences? Which materials are in vogue? These activities are equivalent to traditional market research. By *talking* to the groundswell, he can communicate his overall expertise in the field of architecture, share his previous projects with potential customers, and identify his area of specialization to other professionals. These activities are traditionally associated with marketing. By *energizing* the groundswell, he can begin to spread the word of his business online. This can provide a reference to his offline contacts enabling him to use technology engage with his customers, which is equivalent to a sales campaign. As a long-term goal, he can look forward to *supporting* and *embracing* the groundswell but for now, creating a groundswell presence should be the focus.

We recommend a ***three-part plan*** to achieve these goals. The plan includes participation in Facebook, LinkedIn and architecture blogs. Matthew should launch a Facebook page for his business that includes a picture gallery and testimonials of his work. The page will allow him to collect fans of the studio and interact with prospective clients. He should also create a LinkedIn page with his resume and start collecting contacts and recommendations. We also recommend that he submit these URLs to different search engines so that they come up higher on the search list. He should also start a greater involvement in online forums and websites (some of which were noted above). He should post on these forums with links to his Facebook and LinkedIn pages, in order to build his network and overall online presence. We recommend that he spend at least two hours per week interacting on his Facebook page and communicating on online forums to increase his fan base and contacts. In order to facilitate his participation in the online community we have set up a ‘Google Alert’ for architecture forums and blogs so he can easily find forums to post on. The advantage of those alerts is that they are refreshed daily, and remain relevant and current. This plan requires an investment of Matthew’s time and does not require monetary investment. We also recommend connecting his current blog with Facebook so that the posts will automatically translate into entries on his Facebook page.

As a long-term goal, we recommend an investment in a professional website to be his public face on the Internet. It should be a site with both static and dynamic content. The main page should be static and if someone were searching for him, this should lead him or her to Matt. There should be links to his Facebook and LinkedIn accounts. It would also include

recommendations of his past work (possibly from LinkedIn) and list his affiliations, resume, awards and other accolades. There should also be a dynamic component to the site, including a weekly or monthly link area about on-going projects. The website should also include a form for consumer feedback, comments and requests. This would be an investment ranging from \$1,000 and \$3,000. Some other technology that he should consider investigating is the use of 360° photography for his projects. This might fit into his current photography budget for projects. Some vendors (i.e. Apple) use this technique to convey the 3-D aesthetic nature of their product. The 360° view could be either static or a short video clip showing the work from all possible angles. Before engaging with the complete website, and since Matt owns his own domain michalskistudio.com, he may want to create some addition to the website for e.g. a Contact Us form. This recommendation is for the short term, to start building the brand and listening to the online community with minimal investment.

Prototype A: Facebook

In order to facilitate his Facebook presence, we have created a page for his Studio. We have built his page with the main picture featuring one of his own designs for a kitchen, an inviting picture into the world of Michalski's Studio. The page includes information about the company and posts of his past projects. Currently, only 3 people like this page (the members of our group). The goal is an initial increase to 20 followers via a launch to Matt's friends, previous customers and professional contacts and a continued focus to increase fans. Growth can come from recommendations of current fans as well as advertising. The page gives Matt a voice to *talk* to the groundswell, posting past or on-going projects and other communication to the online world.

Michalski Studio



Wall

Info

Photos

Discussions

Reviews

Boxes



Detailed Info


Website: <http://www.michalski.com>

General Information: We are a full service architecture firm providing a fascinating levels of customer service.

Our studio approaches each project as a great opportunity to produce unique results towards satisfying your goals.


Dedicated and efficient, we understand your needs.

We want to build not just beautiful designs, but meaningful, long-term relationships!




Let us create a world of joy!

3 People Like This



Maria R Tapia




Jacob Shutzman

[Create a Page for My Business Report Page](#)


Michalski Studio Like

[Wall](#)
[Info](#)
[Photos](#)
[Discussions](#)
[Reviews](#)
[Boxes](#)
»

[Michalski Studio + Others](#)
Michalski Studio
[Just Others](#)




Michalski Studio




Park Slope Brownstone Construction on this 120 year old brownstone was recently completed. It's owners hired Michalski Studio to reconfigure it's layout creating a tri-plex unit over a garden flat...

July 28 at 8:35pm · [Comment](#) · [Like](#)




Michalski Studio




Hillsdale Residence

July 28 at 8:35pm · [Comment](#) · [Like](#)




Michalski Studio




Chelsea Lobby A complete update to all interior finishes of this Chelsea lobby using a mixture of flamed and honed bluestone panels and durable cement panels. Custom metal profiles and custom linear light shades by Michalski Studio.

July 28 at 8:35pm · [Comment](#) · [Like](#)



Michalski Studio



Park Slope Brownstone Construction on this 120 year old brownstone was recently completed. It's owners hired Michalski Studio to reconfigure it's layout creating a tri-plex unit over a garden flat...

July 28 at 8:35pm · [Comment](#) · [Like](#)

RECENT ACTIVITY

- Michalski Studio discussed [Howard Roark is Frank Lloyd Wright?](#) on the [Michalski Studio](#) discussion board.
- Michalski Studio discussed [Favorite Western Architecture Revival Style](#) on the [Michalski Studio](#) discussion board.
- Michalski Studio edited their [Website and General Information](#).
- Michalski Studio joined Facebook.

The entries currently included on the page are the information that he shared previously on his blog and are examples of how information on previous work can help him communicate with prospective customers. If there is a 360° clip on an interesting project, it can be embedded as well.

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Michalski Studio



Michalski Studio Discussions

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Discussion Board

Show: ▾

Displaying all 2 topics.

[Howard Roark is Frank Lloyd Wright?](#)

2 posts. Created on July 29, 2010 at 7:41pm

Latest post by [Soumitra](#)

Posted on July 29, 2010 at 8:25pm

[Favorite Western Architecture Revival Style](#)

1 post. Created on July 28, 2010 at 8:53pm

Latest post by [Michalski Studio](#)

Posted on July 28, 2010 at 8:53pm

Matt can also *listen* to the groundswell by receiving feedback on his posts. Comments on his wall will allow him to respond to follower's inquiries. He can also *energize* the groundswell by accumulating fans of his page that will help him spread information about his business to their networks. The info tab contains general information about his business and will help him get introductions to prospective customers including those referred by searches or via friends of his friends.



Michalski Studio's Notes

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Michalski Studio's Notes

View: [Full](#) | [Compact](#)

2009

Sep 23 [Park Slope Brownstone](#)

Sep 23 [Hillside Residence](#)

Sep 22 [Chelsea Lobby](#)

Sep 21 [East Village Loft](#)

Sep 21 [Connecticut Art Studio](#)

Sep 3 [Commercial / Mixed Use](#)

Sep 2 [Residential](#)

Sep 1 [Under Design](#)

Sep 1 [Furniture](#)

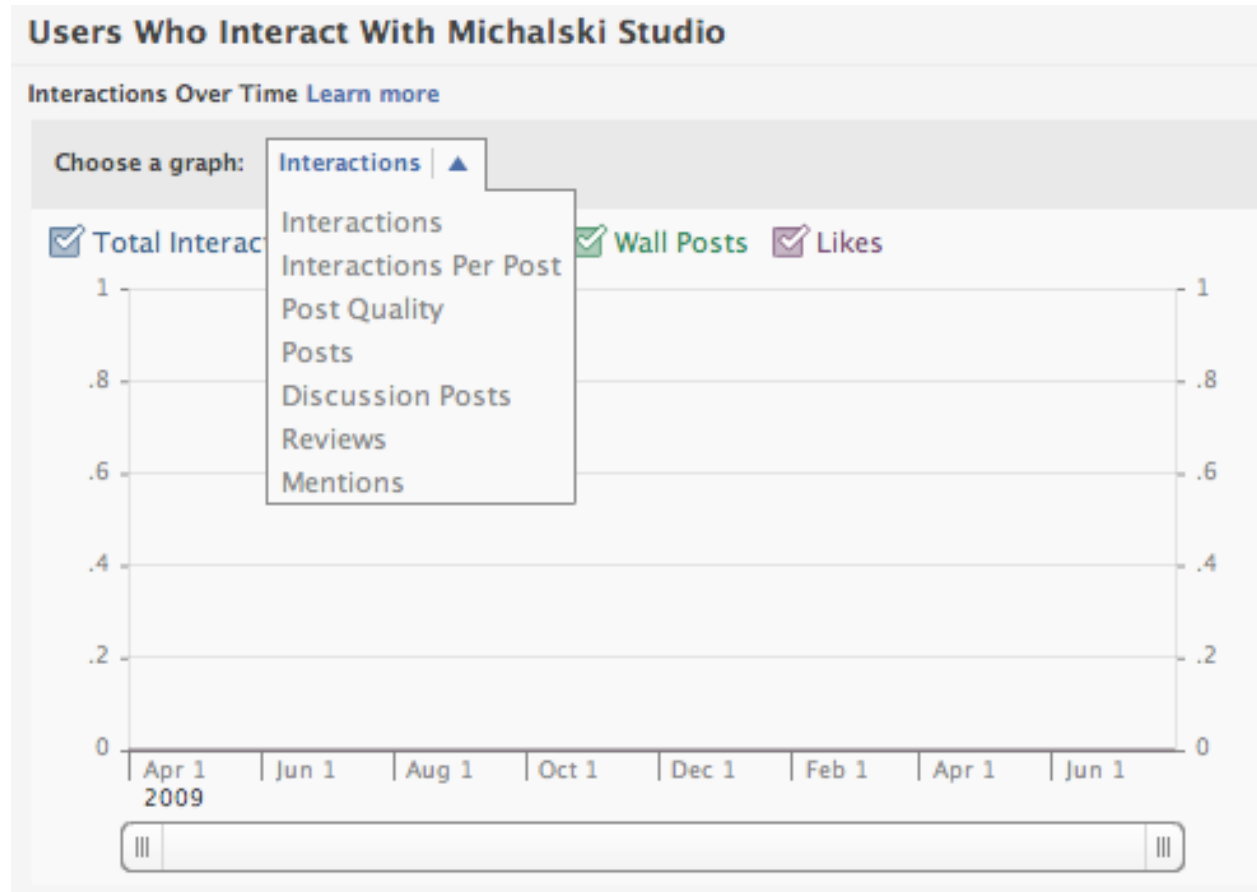
Subscribe to these Notes

[Michalski Studio's Notes](#)
[Subscription Help »](#)

Welcome to your new Insights Page.

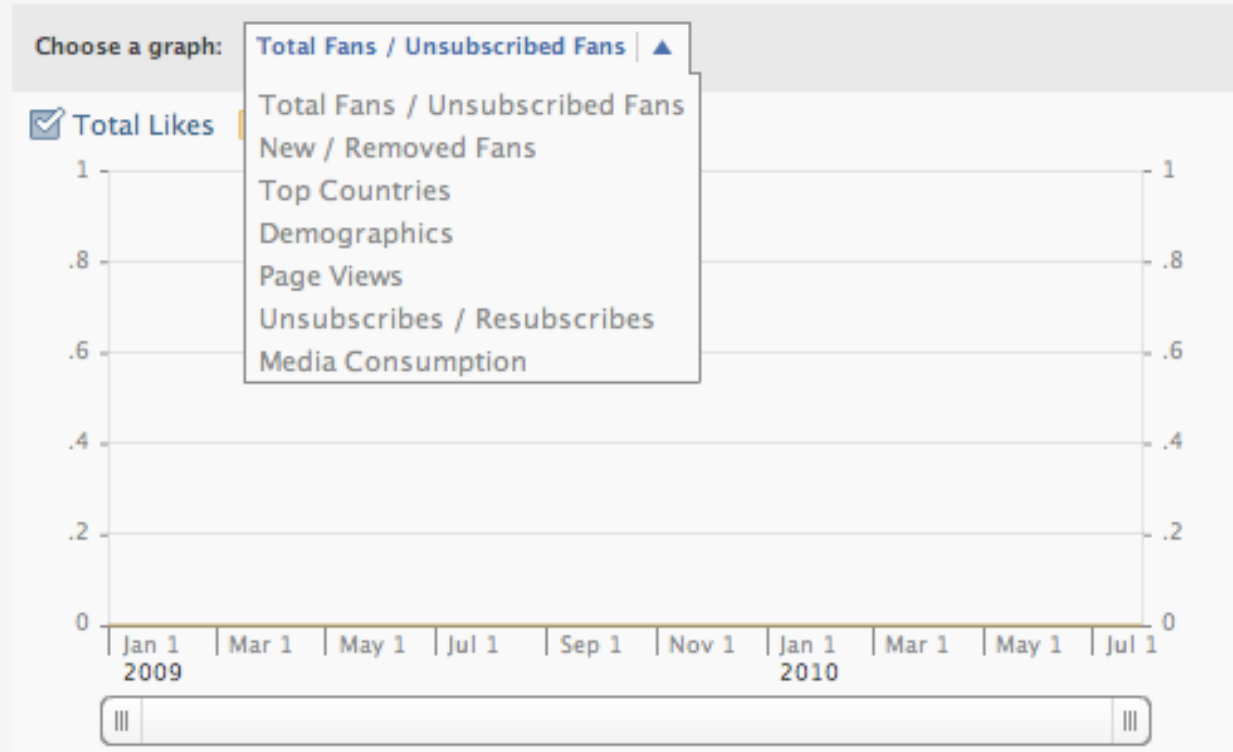
Facebook allows you to engage with your fans in more ways than ever before – and Insights now allows you to dive into the context of those analytics. We now show you how users are interacting with your page, broken down by Wall posts, likes and comments. Your Post Quality shows your posts are to your fans, and your star rating compares your Post Quality to other pages of similar size. Your Fans Over Time graph now decide to unsubscribe from your posts in their News Feed. And we now provide statistics on where your fan base is located and which language you would like to export your reports, please click "Switch to the Old Insights" in the menu above and follow the Export link. Check back frequently for new metrics in the coming weeks and months!


Facebook page will also let Matt delve into the analytics, which will inform him about the activity of the fans or other visitors on his page. Currently, there is no activity, but the screenshots below show the potential power of the graphs that are possible.




All People Who Like Michalski Studio

All Likes Over Time [Learn more](#)

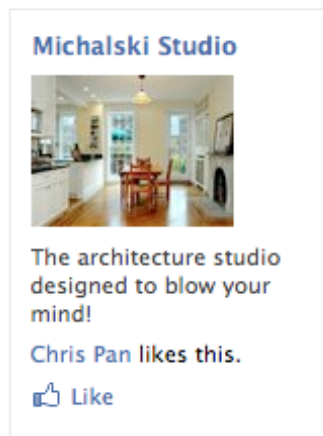


 No data on active fans to display at this time. For privacy reasons, Facebook will not provide demographic data (such as age and gender) unless there is a greater number of fans interacting with your page. To increase your number of active fans, you may want to write on your Page's Wall, post photos, or post videos to your Page. [Learn more](#)

 You do not have enough recent interactions to display geographic data. You can generate interactions by publishing more posts to your fans.

If required, Matt can also advertise either his page or his business on Facebook. Below is a sample advertisement that created on Facebook. The target demographic audience is as shown. Facebook estimates that the estimated number of people reached with these criteria is 600 and the current costs are about 50¢. By removing the last criterion (people who like interior design etc) the target grows to 100,000! Note that the audience is strictly New York, NY and this could be a way of expanding to some new target markets.

Ad Preview:



Ad Name:

Michalski Studio

Audience:

This ad targets users:

- who live in the United States
- who live in New York, NY
- between the ages of 30 and 60 inclusive
- who like interior decorating or architecture interior design

Campaign:

My Ads (New Campaign)

Bid Type:

CPC

Bid:

\$0.56 USD per click

Daily Budget:

\$5.00 USD per day

Duration:

This ad will run indefinitely

To maintain a consistent presence, and drive activity to Linked In and Facebook, Matt should update his current blog to include links to his Facebook page and Linked In profile (and vice versa). He needs to update the blog needs since it represents his studio and defines his brand. Owning the domain name is an important aspect in defining his brand.

Prototype B: LinkedIn

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for Matthew Michalski. The profile header includes his name, title 'Lead Architect at Michalski Studio', and location 'Greater New York City Area'. There are two buttons: 'Contact Matthew Michalski' and 'Add Matthew Michalski to your network'. The 'Current' section lists 'Principal Architect - residential & commercial architecture at Michalski Studio'. The 'Past' section lists 'Project Architect / Manager at Gray, Watt and Associates', 'Architect at Naomi Leff and Associates', and 'Architect at Independent Work'. The 'Education' section lists 'Penn State University'. The 'Industry' is 'Architecture & Planning'. A summary section follows, describing his experience and studio's approach. On the right, there is a 'Public profile powered by: LinkedIn' badge, a link to 'View Matthew Michalski's full profile', and a list of actions: 'See who you and Matthew Michalski know in common', 'Get introduced to Matthew Michalski', and 'Contact Matthew Michalski directly'. Below that, a section titled 'Others named Matthew Michalski:' lists three other individuals with their titles and locations.

This is Matthew's external profile on [LinkedIn](#). This will allow him to turn his off-line contacts into online contacts and build a mutually beneficial community. Matthew should include professionals in complimentary industries such as builders, decorators and suppliers. This will allow him to connect to people that are interested in their services, and could be interested in his as well. The tool will also allow him to solicit recommendations from professionals with whom he has worked in the past. This will also help him generate business as it increases the value of his brand on-line. The initial plan for this launch is to connect with at least 5 contacts in complimentary industries, with a focus on building additional connections. Connections will most likely come from off-line activities such as trade shows, and projects.

Long Term Strategy

Once he embarks on a strategy for the groundswell, Matthew needs to be consistent. He should engage in on-going activity, which he can support either himself, or via hired help. He told us that he has limited time to engage in the groundswell, so starting with a few hours a week

would help him develop his presence on the Internet. Matt indicates that he would like to maintain a web presence rather than focus on marketing, but a static presence will not allow him to grow the business. In addition, as he gets familiar with the Internet, he will be able to see the potential groundswell has to offer for his business.

As a part of his long-term strategy, we recommend that he hire a professional web designer to create his website on his primary URL. The website will have links to his Facebook page, his linked in profile as well as links to his blog.

Website Mockups





The website should be re-designed by a professional and include a feedback form (a way to communicate with Matthew.) It can also later include a blog feature where he shares information on long-term projects. We are assuming short term to be six months and long term to be more than one year.

Measuring Success

The most straightforward way to measure success will be by the size of his network. If he is able to reach the goal of adding 5 new fans every month this will greatly expand his network. This increase in fans could lead to new contracts, since the friends of previous customers are likely to have comparable income and could afford Matthew's services and friends of colleagues in complimentary industries could be in search of an architect. For Matt, stepping into the groundswell would most likely be an iterative process in which he can try one technology, evaluate results, adjust his strategy and select new tools or venues if necessary. Evaluating if his new contacts online generated any sales will allow him to decide whether to continue investing

the time and/or money necessary to continue building his online community. Matthew should also keep an eye on evolving trends and refine his goals as required by his business.

The following is a suggestion for measuring Return on Investment for the business over a period:

- Collect statistics:
 - a. When a client signs a contract, have him/her fill out a form and indicate how he/she had found the studio, with the web being one of the options.
 - b. Over time, this will help Michalski measure what percentage of projects he gets because of his web presence.
- The website includes tools to allow measuring:
 - a. Page views
 - b. Unique visitors
- Measure actual figures:
 - a. Measuring the cost of the online activity (primarily time invested).
 - b. Over a period of 1-2 years, if business increases, calculate the incremental business revenue, apply the percentage determined to be from on-line referrals. Compare this last figure with the cost associated with maintaining an on-line presence

Example:

- We have found that 20% of the projects resulted from some type of online referral. This resulted in a certain amount of revenue.
- Cost of online presence (8 hours monthly, or 96 hours per year @ \$100 per hour + \$3k expense for website building and other online tools = $\$9,600 + \$3,000 = \$12,600$). In this case, the additional revenue would have to be \$63,000 to break even with the online expense

($[(12600/20) \times 100]$), so in other words with this example, the studio would have to gross additional \$63K annually to justify the continuation of the online presence. In reality, Matt would apply his figures similarly and get his measure of success.

The correlation between the additional revenue and the website analytics will indicate the effectiveness of the website with capturing business. Clients may visit his main website through other activities like blogs and comments on the architecture discussions, which will indicate areas for tweaking the strategy or directing the focus of online activities. For instance, if an introduction of a YouTube clip with the embedded website address at the end increases traffic to the website, this may be another tool to use.

Works Cited

1. Groundswell: <http://www.forrester.com/Groundswell>

Bibliography

There are no sources in the current document.