The Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing in Higher Education: State University of New York, the College at Brockport

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The Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing in Higher Education: State University of New York, the College at Brockport

A Senior Honors Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation in the College Honors Program

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# Abstract

This thesis discusses the use of social media as a form of marketing in higher education, specifically used by public colleges. The focus will be on the intended use and the actual results of its use, as a case study of The College at Brockport. “What are the reasons why students do or do not follow their school's social media?” The College at Brockport Facebook page has only about 1,078 followers out of their 8,413 students, while SUNY Cortland has 7,576 followers with 7,358 students enrolled. That's roughly 1 in every 8 students at Brockport versus the equivalent plus faculty (and probably many alumni too) at Cortland. Social media has become the main form of communication among the younger generations. If firms or colleges in this case, do not adopt social media, they may be potentially losing out on a huge marketing opportunity. By focusing on this issue, colleges will be able to refer to the practices of others, in this case The College at Brockport, and reform their methods to better fit their community.
Introduction

“In the social economy, relationships are the new currency.”¹

What is Social Media Marketing?

Social Media Marketing can be referred to as SMM. First, let’s introduce some of the social media websites and terms:

Facebook™ – The biggest social media outlet there is today; Facebook allows users to create a profile with their personal information, interests, favorites, photos and videos. You can “Friend” people you know or “Like” pages for organizations and companies.

Twitter™ – A platform that allows users to “Tweet” or post a status update about their day, possibly including where they are, what they’re doing, opinions, or pictures. Interactions come from “Retweeting” or “Mentioning” a Twitter “Follower.”

YouTube™ – A search website on which users can upload or watch videos regarding any interest. Popular video searches are for music, interviews, how-to’s and movie clips.

LinkedIn™ – Users post their personal information, like their résumé and work experience, in order to network with other professionals in any career field. Many users are searching for job opportunities; however, many use it to build up their professional contacts for other general purposes within a business.

¹ (Solis 2008)
WordPress™ – A platform that allows users to create blog pages for any subject or interest. Users write and post for the public to read, or for only your friends to read.

Flickr™ – A photo blogging platform that allows users to upload photos from their computer, mobile device, or email, and then share their photos with stories or comments. Users can create tags, or add information about the people and locations. Flickr acts as a stream through Facebook, Twitter, or blogs.

Figure 1. The Conversation Prism. Communications or service professionals find themselves in the center. They are able to utilize every leaf for different purposes.

\(^2\) (Solis 2008)
SMM refers to the use of one or more social media platforms, such as the ones listed above, to market or advertise a product or service to consumers. SMM is the process of gaining attention through these sites. SMM efforts focus on creating content that attracts customers and encourages them to share it with their social networks. This kind of activity promotes brand awareness and can even help a business improve their customer service. It is also an inexpensive or even free strategy for marketing.

Why is Social Media important in Higher Education?

While SMM is an important tool for any business, it is also important that higher education institutions utilize this tool. Many people may not relate marketing with colleges and universities, but it is important to realize that these institutions need a strategy to increase their enrollment and increase revenue. Education may not be regarded as a business, and while education operates differently than a corporation, they both have the same basic principles in delivering a product or service. According to survey results, 22% of students are more interested in applying to a college because of its social media presence. On the other hand, 80% of surveyed high school students reported not having looked for a prospective college on Facebook. Higher Education institutions need to market their service; when their target market is young adults from ages 16-24, the internet is a key strategic tool.

3 (searchengineland.com 2012)
4 (Wikipedia 2012)
5 (Maguire Associates, Inc. & Fast Web 2011)
6 (Reuben 2008)
In the U.S., 55% of teenagers online use social networks. In order to reach out to prospective and current students, colleges go to where they all dwell: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The best marketing is the most memorable and available. Commercials that make customers laugh usually win at being memorable; information that is numerous and easy to find constitutes available marketing. Professionals are constantly working to improve their marketing campaigns as the population changes and sways to the movement of technology and trends. Colleges are involved in the same type of activity.

For transforming SMM from business to education, Rachel Reuben offers her guide for use of social media by higher education professionals. There are four concerns to be addressed before implementing a SMM campaign. (1) Professionals must understand that not all involvement by students will be positive, meaning that they must be prepared to address negative comments and perceptions. Reuben suggests that marketers “steer,” to create a positive perception, instead of control discussions on their media.

(2) Address the time commitment needed to effectively utilize social media. She suggests marketers to post or update at least once a week, which could take time away from their other job commitments. To avoid this, have a strategy. Not only is a social marketing strategy important, but so is an employee who is committed to media monitoring only. For a large university, this could mean a full-time individual whose only job is to monitor and engage on these platforms. A smaller university could use one or two student interns, keeping in mind that the social media must be maintained over breaks and with the help of different interns. A small college, like the College at Brockport, has several employees who post to the different platforms, keeping the frequency up and the individual time committed by each person down.

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7 (Noel-Levitz 2007)
Information overload is the fear of bombarding your work with too much media, on top of the emails and media used in the daily work environment. Because Reuben does not provide a clear solution to this concern, I add my own. By using programs such as Google Reader, you can organize articles and posts about a specific topic and find them in one place. Besides technology, a more obvious, but not as easy solution is to hire a young professional who is completely devoted to only SMM. Some individuals experienced in the college atmosphere or possibly nearer the same age, may have better insights into the life of a college student. They could better relate to the target audience and most likely be better equipped to handle and control the “overload.”

Officiality of accounts can be a problem among several platforms (i.e. Facebook and Twitter). The problem here is that they don’t perform background checks on official accounts made. An individual can challenge the authenticity of an account, but it can still be a time-consuming battle. Reuben’s suggestion is to create accounts for your organization to “reserve” your name, even if you do not anticipate using that platform for a while.

Using Social Media for Marketing and Advertising

Now that strategy and the team have been discussed, we need to understand SMM itself and how to utilize it properly. Several videos on YouTube describe the most effective elements of using social media. In one video titled “Social Media in Plain English” the emphasis is on the customers. It states that the purpose of social media is to allow customers to describe, rate and leave messages about new ideas so that one can learn from them. This leads to better products and better customer relations. The video says customer reviews are “more valuable than costly

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8 (Reuben 2008)
advertising.” Social media creates a “unique community” consisting of blogs, videos, and podcasts, in which customers can find exactly what they want from the feedback and promotion of other people.

Another video answers the challenging questions about SMM. According to the authors of “Social Media Marketing in 3 Minutes,” there are four steps in establishing an SMM presence: (1) Find people, (2) Give content, (3) Capture their information, (4) Stay in touch so you can sell to them. The main objective of SMM is to increase your customer base and establish a connection with these customers so they remain loyal. But it doesn’t end there. You must give the customer information about your product and promotions. Using this content you can keep the connections updated and assure that their quality is more than getting someone to click the “Like” button. The video goes on to state that the objective is not to make money with social media, but to make money doing business with people that trust you because of your SMM.

The authors’ advice is to offer customers something of high perceived value, “an ethical bribe,” in exchange for their information. Then with that information you send updates and any requested information. If the customer sees you as the expert, it makes you credible, builds new relationships through referrals, increases demand, visibility and familiarity, and makes you top of mind. One of their greatest points is “provide content, not commercials.” This is important because social media users would be more likely to ignore a commercial or advertisement than the actual content. For example, a company can create a viral YouTube video, which casually promotes their product in place of a commercial which plays before a different video. The more

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9 (LeFever 2008)  
10 (LeFever 2008)  
11 (Underhill & Kurit 2009)  
12 (Underhill & Kurit 2009)
hype over something, the more likely it will get more attention; we can deduce that a company will have gained a large number of customers from that attention.

The main platform to focus on for companies and brands is Facebook. This site dominates with 90% of time spent on social-networking and approximately 160 million visitors each month from the U.S. alone. Users on Facebook are more likely to find branded content in the Newsfeed than on the actual fan page. This demonstrates the importance of companies reaching out to customers. There are two ideas to keep in mind when utilizing Facebook:

1.) Brands can better understand and optimize how they control their presence on Facebook by focusing on the reach of their branded content.

2.) Brands can realize untouched benefits by reaching out to the friends of their fans.

Avoiding “Consumerism”

Gibbs and Murphy (2009) encourage ethical practices in marketing by higher education institutions in their article titled “Ethical Marketing of Higher Education: What might be done to encourage its adoption?” Their premise states that as competition between state institutions intensifies and they begin to participate in marketing activities, they risk eroding their “educational and social offering to society” instead of enriching it. Gibbs & Murphy conclude

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13 (Lipsman et al. 2012)
14 (Lipsman et al. 2012)
15 (Gibbs and Murphy 2009)
if colleges and universities do not use marketing or advertising, they may fail to bring in more students and could close down.\textsuperscript{16}

To avoid consumerism and the potential failure of institutions that do not engage in marketing, Gibbs and Murphy propose their own plan of an “ethical architecture for educational marketing.”\textsuperscript{17} At the core of their approach is \textit{phronesis}; “In Aristotle’s words \textit{phronesis} is an intellectual virtue that is ‘reasoned, and capable of action with regard to things that are good or bad for man.’”\textsuperscript{18} In other words, they base their approach on \textit{phronesis} because it covers educational ethics, which is the basis for their article. The following principles make up their model:

1. “professional ethics;
2. institutional ethical policy statements to include principle and values statements, and institutional credos and codes to set limits around ethical decisions;
3. An ethical culture of collegiality, fairness and student-centeredness.”\textsuperscript{19}

It is important, even without this study, that universities follow these ethics because of their higher-level of intellectuality and social role modeling. A university should have an ethical marketing plan established, so as to protect, “enrich and enhance the institution’s brand” through a balance of character, competition, and ethics “for and with its stakeholders.”\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{16} (Gibbs and Murphy 2009)  
\textsuperscript{17} (Gibbs and Murphy 2009)  
\textsuperscript{18} (Flyvbjerg 2009)  
\textsuperscript{19} (Gibbs and Murphy 2009)  
\textsuperscript{20} (Gibbs and Murphy 2009)
Applying SMM to Admissions

Steering this information over to higher education, we can apply some of these concepts to specific departments within a university. One of the areas that uses social media the most is admissions. This department works to get application numbers up and to assure that prospective students get a real idea of what life at their institution is like. In other words, admissions is recruitment.

According to the National Research Center for College and University Admissions, more than 60% of high school seniors in 2007 preferred student and faculty blogs over other sources of information and 80% of students in high school said they would read or respond to a message from a college representative.\(^1\) Also, 57% of teenagers online reported using the internet to find information about college or university (Pew Internet & American Life Project).\(^2\) Today, recruitment occurs online, leading admissions and recruitment professionals to use media outlets through the internet such as viral marketing, buzz marketing, community marketing, grassroots marketing and product seeding.\(^3\) The article by Gastwirth (2007) also recommends using a mixture of new marketing techniques that are exhibited in the following campaigns:

**Virtual Environments.** Coca-Cola built an interactive community based on love for music. People could use a virtual recording studio to mix music, share music, take surveys and quizzes and play games. Chat, email and instant messaging brought record traffic. They maintained interest through updates and special promotions.

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\(^1\) (Gastwirth 2007)
\(^2\) (Gastwirth 2007)
\(^3\) (Gastwirth 2007)
Gastwirth suggests: “Have students design a “Joe College” persona or other virtual reality.”24

Social Utility Groups. Students in the “Bright Futures” scholarship program at the University of Florida created a social utility group. The group was made of thousands of students, who put it on their social profiles. The group communicated through an online message board. “College access marketing initiatives could use this model to market need-based scholarship programs.”25

Novelty Messaging. The movie *Snakes on a Plane* marketed with an interactive and personalized service that allowed for customized messages in the voice of Samuel L. Jackson to be sent to friends and family through telephone or email. Famous athletes or performers could be cast to encourage positive behavior.26

Gaming Environments. “Gaming is a popular, time-consuming and engaging activity for students of traditional college age. Information about college attendance could be creatively incorporated into video game software, or a college-going theme could be part of a video or computer game.”27

Interactive Promotions. The National CPA Student Recruitment initiative used a website with interactive personality tests and games to generate interest among students in certified public accounting. Students could build business skills with their “Build a Record Label” promotion, or get interested in forensic accounting with their “Catch Me If You Can” game. In two months it reached eight million

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24 (Gastwirth 2007)
25 (Gastwirth 2007)
26 (Gastwirth 2007)
27 (Gastwirth 2007)
high school students. “College access marketing might team up with specific professional organizations or institutions to promote their cause in a similar manner.”

**Merchandising.** Florida’s “Truth” campaign determined that merchandising was important to attract attention to young people. “Truth” merchandise was distributed around the state. “Popular, branded teen merchandise ensures that messages will be sustained and seen by the target population”: fashionable or humorous clothing would be a big hit for a college campaign.

**Cross-Promotions.** “The U.S. military launched a recruiting campaign that incorporates a website, a youth-targeted magazine distributed to teachers and students, an IMAX film, and a prominent role for an Army instructor written into a new ESPN reality show. College access marketing should take a similarly multifaceted approach to reach tomorrow’s students.”

Ashley Hennigan, part of the admissions team at the Rochester Institute of Technology, hosts an episode of Higher Ed Live titled “A Social Media Toolkit for Admissions Pros” (“Higher Ed Live is a live weekly web show network about the world of higher education.”) In this episode, she speaks about successfully creating media for students and keeping them connected with the college. What they mention most is monitoring Facebook and Twitter to see what students are interested in, participating in, hoping for, etc. It is more important to know what the students want and the main place to find this is on Facebook.

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28 (Gastwirth 2007)
29 (Gastwirth 2007)
30 (Gastwirth 2007)
31 (Higher Ed Live 2012)
When creating content for prospective students, she suggests an “overall community” with a “little bit of everything”: 50% of content is professional – professional video and pictures, while 50% is student-generated content. This mixture gives a more realistic view to prospective students, prompting more interest from them when they see a real student doing real things on or around campus. Another step may be to have a highly engaging “Accepted student FB page,” allowing them to connect with current students and faculty. The problem with this is that most students will not interact on a social media page that they think is monitored by the college, thinking that they could get in trouble for something they post, or just that they would rather have a student-only discussion. Hennigan’s solution is to have “student ambassadors” manage the interaction with students.

Each university department can have their own social media page, as long as they follow the same guidelines above. Having separate pages will make it easier to monitor as well as making a more streamlined group for relaying information and initiating discussions. However, it is important to not push information on the students. For example, overloading student “friends” on Facebook with event requests or website links on their walls would be social media overkill. Encourage conversation and make the student want to come to your page to see the news. It’s acceptable to post information in your own newsfeed so that they can see it, but can avoid it if they want.

Recruitment also has to take into account the large percent of students and parents that rely on actual campus visits to choose a school (78%). When we reflect on the “Communication Expectations of College-Bound High School Students” survey, we can see that

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32 (Hennigan and Apfel 2011)
33 (Hennigan and Apfel 2011)
34 (Noel-Levitz 2012)
most students prefer interviews with admissions staff, talking with current students, and college fairs as opposed to social media pages. In other words, social media is important for bringing students to the school, giving some limited content, but not necessarily helping students in their decision to attend that college.

Viral Marketing

Viral marketing and word of mouth (WOM) are two major factors in marketing via social media. As already mentioned, the customer’s voice on social media platforms is what is important for a company. Consumer opinion spreads by social media interaction and is then picked up by marketers so that they may improve their relations and their products to meet this opinion. People rely more on the opinion of their family and friends than they do on the commercials of advertisers. This is what creates the viral spread of brand information: “creating informative and entertaining messages to be passed among the consumers in a virtual environment”.35

SMM is the fairly new concept being implemented by businesses all over the world. As involvement in social media platforms increases, so will SMM. Already you can expect to find a Facebook page or Twitter handle for almost every medium or large business, including most major universities. The importance of effectively using these platforms to market to students and alumni is the key for higher education institutions. By studying the work of The College at

35 (WOMMA)
Brockport, State University of New York, others may be enriched with real information and results from an actual case of SMM to college students.

Best Practices

The website CMO.com offers plenty of information about marketing strategies, especially SMM tools for chief marketing officers of corporations. One of their publications, which was created and designed by 97th Floor – a Search Engine Optimization (SEO), social media, and viral infographics firm, gives an outline of the most widely used social media platforms and in which area they are the most useful. The guide covers customer communication, brand exposure, traffic to your site, and SEO.

Focusing on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, this guide simply states how the platform delivers in the above areas:

**Customer Communication:**
You should use Social Mention and HootSuite to track people's tweets about your institution. Find where they originate to increase frequency.

**Site Traffic:**
Large potential if you promote right. You can turn off customers by promoting too heavily but not catch attention.

**Brand Exposure:**
Allows for Website integration and viral engagement of customers. It has become a necessity for branding and public relations.

**SEO:**
Tweets and username have high ranking in search engines. Shortened URLs do not benefit. (CMO)
Maguire Associates in their 2011 College Decision Impact Survey creates social media personae, which are “hypothetical archetypes of actual social media users.” Institutions can use them to understand the motivations, behaviors, profiles, and preferences of user groups. They are created from the analysis of real data and allow the marketing professional to use more user-targeted marketing. The six personae that Maguire Associates created from their data are Super-User Sandy, Consumer Cecil, Networking Neal, Reciprocal Rachel, Broadcaster Betsy, and Anti-Social Aaron. Appendix A shows the social media interactions of each personae and Appendix

36 (Maguire Associates 2011)
37 (Maguire Associates 2011)
B gives importance rankings of various social media activities according to each personae. This information is used to better target specific groups of prospective students.

Looking more closely into Facebook, we identify practices that have been successful for other universities in “Biz Growth’s Guide to Facebook Pages in Education.” They consider ten questions when developing a college Facebook page:

1. Why will someone want to ‘Like’ and become a member of your community on Facebook?
2. Have you developed a Facebook engagement policy/statement to publish on your Page which references that you will delete comments if appropriate?
3. Who is going to manage updating content to your page? When and how will they be trained to update and manage your Page?
4. How frequently will you post content to your Page? Do you have a content calendar?
5. What exclusive content could you ‘share’ on Facebook?
6. How will you promote your Facebook Page so people know to join you?
7. What multimedia content can you share e.g. videos, photos, audio? (Check you have the digital rights to post that content)
8. How can you engage other members of the Faculty/School to get involved?
9. How will you monitor the success of your Facebook Page? (www.Facebook.com/Insights is a useful tool)
10. What other support do you need to get started and who can help you?38

The universities that are highlighted by this guide are Harvard University, University of Salford, Texas A&M University, Fordham University, University of Miami, Tufts University, Stanford University, and Oxford University. The two features that De (2010) highlights by Harvard and Salford are a customized ‘Welcome’ tab that includes links to certain pages on their

38 (De 2010)
website.\textsuperscript{39} Texas A&M is featured for a customized ‘Welcome’ tab but also includes links to other resources and Twitter, along with atypical visuals. The University of Miami is featured for having a FAQ’s and ‘Ask’ feature on their page. Other tab ideas are YouTube, Twitter, gifts, wallpapers, and commencement.\textsuperscript{40} Another idea addressed is featuring other pages associated with the college in ‘Favorite Pages’. Stanford University is mentioned for having an application where students, alumni, and parents can share their Stanford stories about scholarship, which encourages foundation gifts. These ideas are applicable to most universities and can easily be implemented. They also relate to the proper audience – students, alumni, parents, and donors.

\textsuperscript{39} (De 2010)
\textsuperscript{40} (De 2010)
The College at Brockport is a four-year college, part of the SUNY system of New York State. Located just outside the Rochester area, it has a variety of undergraduate programs, as well as several graduate programs. The college has its own Office of College Communications (ColCom), including Marketing, Public Relations, and Graphic Design, all geared towards use of its website, www.brockport.edu, and its enhancement of promotional methods for the college.

The materials posted on their website vary in nature from news stories and student profiles to college accomplishments. For example, this semester, the main page has featured three student profiles – a marketing strategy designed for prospective students and alumni to read about the accomplishments of several students during their time at Brockport. These stories highlight the programs and professors at Brockport to give a feeling of importance and success by students in order to generate interest within prospective students and foundation interest for donating alumni. The homepage featured a story on the newly appointed Vice President of the College at Brockport and another about the football team joining a state conference.

The purpose of highlighted stories on Brockport’s homepage is to relay what is deemed the most important news and information currently at the college. It is also to catch people’s attention when they go to the site. Not only are they giving information, they are trying to highlight Brockport’s best programs.
This document gives the main objectives, image campaign, recruitment marketing, and budget of the college’s marketing plan. The objectives of the college’s marketing plan for the year 2011-2012 are to support recruitment, fundraising initiatives, and support and promote the brand image of Brockport. The image campaign is to create preference for Brockport among prospective students, parents, alumni, and the community of Rochester. This campaign also works to increase the awareness of Brockport by other institutions. ColCom planned to use the college’s leading academic programs as a positioning tool and to attract more interest towards these areas. Their strategy includes enhancing their marketing efforts by using social media. Their three plans are:

1. Coordinated Twitter and Facebook messaging
2. Use www.brockport.edu homepage for more feature stories
3. Continue to capture video content to push out via the Web (i.e. YouTube Channel, homepage, etc.)

In their recruitment campaign, which works to increase enrollment and quality of the student body, they suggest using LinkedIn and social media to interact with graduate prospects while using social networking for undergraduate prospects. The plan still issues e-marketing tools like e-mailings and website advertisements for both prospect groups. College Communications pays to use the Zinch website, which is a database of high-school student information that generates leads for the college. Brockport is made aware of student matches,
based on demographics and academics in student profiles, and is then able to communicate with these student matches on the Zinch platform.

The Office of College Communications does not presently have a formal SMM plan and strategy but plans to implement one for the following school year (2012-2013.) However, they follow some guidelines when using social media. These include promoting programs of distinction, promoting awareness, following the overall goals of the college, telling the “Brockport story,” targeting to parents, alumni, students and donors, and tying in objectives with the overall marketing strategy.

Why Brockport uses Social Media

- No, it’s not just a chance to follow Snooki and MCHammer.
- It’s cheap. It’s easy.
- We disseminate news.
- We establish relationships with media contacts.
- We establish relationships with the community.
- We reach out to people who might not find us via traditional PR methods.
- We broaden our reach: Page views from Newfoundland, Vietnam, Russia, Finland, Vatican City et al.

Marketing and Advertisement by Brockport in 2011-2012

The college has a presence in the social media platforms that are most used by students, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. You can find these pages under “The College at Brockport State University of New York” (Place on Facebook), “College at Brockport”

43 (Roy & Tyler 2009)
(@Brockport handle on Twitter), and “Brockport News” (YouTube). According to Rachel Reuben’s 2008 survey, of the 148 colleges that responded, 53.79% reported having an official Facebook, 28.4% have a Twitter, and just over half have a YouTube channel. The College’s departments and student organizations also have profiles on one or all these sites, as seen in Appendix C.

Many of these pages and profiles have less than twenty followers or friends and neglect to update their information/events frequently. It is possible that most of these groups were made and then abandoned due to lack of interest by students or lack of necessity by the group. The College does not have control over these sub-groups and probably couldn’t because of the commitment it would require.

The College at Brockport produced a television commercial in fall 2011 that was not specifically mentioned in the marketing plan. While this was mainly played on local stations in the Western New York area, it was also posted on the college’s YouTube channel, making it accessible to a much wider audience. Here they have tied in traditional marketing techniques with SMM. This is important for a smaller institution like Brockport. Where they can combine methods of marketing and advertising, they can obtain unexpected results.

Also in fall 2011, Brockport implemented a new form of SMM – a student vlog – or video blog. Five current students were given video cameras to record their everyday activities at Brockport and instructed to write blog entries on the “Winging It” WordPress site. Admissions, First-Year Experience and College Communications collaborated on the program to better show prospective students a real look into the life of a Brockport student. This kind of social media

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44 (Reuben 2008)
innovation for a small college is important. If they can differentiate themselves from the other small SUNY colleges, they can attract more prospective students from those areas.

**How do others do it?**

Two other schools that are similar in size and structure to Brockport are State University of New York, College at Cortland and State University of New York Fredonia. Both colleges also have a social media presence with Facebook pages, Twitter handles, and Fredonia having a YouTube channel. Although College Communications does not compare their practices to others’, we will use a comparison to raise some questions. When looking at all three schools’ profiles, they appear equally professional and updated. The difference is in the numbers. On Facebook, Fredonia has 6,606 likes, 95 people “talking about this,” and 23,547 “were here,” meaning that many people had posts at SUNY Fredonia; Cortland has 7,576 likes, 224 “talking about this” and 5,854 location posts; Brockport has 1,078 likes, 57 “talking about this,” and 5,970 location posts. Cortland excels at having students and alumni followers on Facebook with Fredonia close behind. Brockport lacks in this area, having a gap of greater than 5,500 followers behind Fredonia.

On Twitter, Brockport has the most activity, logging 704 tweets and 1,403 followers; Cortland is close behind with 642 tweets and 1,260 followers, while Fredonia only has 117 tweets and 450 followers. Also taking YouTube into consideration, Fredonia has a channel with 100,147 views and 153 subscribers, Cortland has none, and Brockport has 118 subscribers and
103,178 video views. Both colleges have promotional and news-related videos on their channels but where Fredonia has 26 uploaded videos, Brockport has 206.

To properly compare these results, student enrollment has to be considered. Graduate and undergraduate enrollment numbers for Brockport and Fredonia from fall 2011 are 8,413 and 5,730, respectively. While these numbers reflect in the differences in their Twitter and YouTube numbers, they do not fit for Facebook. The 5,500+ difference in followers on Facebook between the two colleges must come from some other variable. It could be that more Fredonia students are aware of their school’s Facebook page than Brockport students are of theirs. Fredonia could be posting content that is of better interest to their students than that of Brockport. Other factors could include alumni engagement, school pride, Facebook advertising, or outside account linking. Companies can advertise their account pages on Facebook’s sidebar, saying to “Like our page,” which would bring larger numbers. Another possibility is the outside account linking which refers to the schools including their account information on outside advertisements like a newspaper or brochure. This is the information that professionals need to improve their SMM.

Cortland and Brockport are closer in enrollment size; Cortland has 7,358 graduate and undergraduate students. These numbers are constant with the Twitter numbers given above; however, Cortland also has more followers on Facebook than Brockport, leading to the conclusions above (awareness among students, better content, etc.) or to the conclusion that Cortland and Fredonia both have more emphatic SMM programs for Facebook than they do for

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45 (YouTube 2012)
46 (SUNY Fredonia 2012 & The College at Brockport 2012)
47 (Cortland 2012)
One best practice that they have just recently implemented is tweeting about live events. Social media makes it easier to keep a live interaction with students and faculty while an event is happening. They used to cover large events like Homecoming, Scholar’s Day, and Commencement, but have expanded to cover smaller organizational events as well. The last practice is to separate each platform and keep the content personalized for that specific audience. By avoiding automation of posts between accounts, they can make their messages more personal and “real.”

Part of Brockport’s social media process that may or may not include best practices is their damage control. Fortunately, Brockport hasn’t had a major social media crisis. College Communications mainly deals with negative perceptions from students, community members, and alumni. Some of the steps taken to monitor these opinions are to watch the internet for keywords, respond to complaints from students and alumni, and help the plaintiff to find help or answers. By using sites like SocialMention.com, Icerocket.com, and Addictomatic.com, they can search all social media platforms, deeper than Google, at the same time and read through posts and articles that contain a certain phrase or topic like “Brockport.”

College Communications will also take into consideration the department in question and contact them to ask or notify about the post. This way, they can get back to the poster with information about their problem or inquiry. By doing this, they greatly increase the reach of their customer service and create a better perception about administration’s caring for its students. The important element of this is responding as quickly as possible and not taking too long to decide the right thing to say.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network</th>
<th>Impressions</th>
<th>Clicks</th>
<th>CPM</th>
<th>CPC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>17,110,026</td>
<td>3,750</td>
<td>$0.29</td>
<td>$1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AdWords</td>
<td>5,787,706</td>
<td>5,055</td>
<td>$2.06</td>
<td>$2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millenial</td>
<td>5,076,860</td>
<td>31,462</td>
<td>$2.49</td>
<td>$0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandora</td>
<td>1,995,557</td>
<td>7,854</td>
<td>$8.12</td>
<td>$2.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The March Transfer campaign targeted users between the ages of 18 and 26 who are at Monroe, Erie, Genesee, Onondaga or Finger Lakes Community College (7,640 users). This campaign had a reach of 6,683 (86.3% of target) and generated 983,994 impressions and 191 visits at a low CPC of $1.57 and a CTR in-line with industry standard for Facebook.49

The number of social media followers has shown an increasing trend over the past several years. College Communications launched their Facebook page on December 3rd, 2010 with zero fans. From February 2012 to April 2012, the number of Facebook fans increased from 903 to 1,204, an increase of 300 fans in just two months. The number of Twitter followers has nearly doubled from 770 in September 2011 to 1,483 in April 2012, demonstrating the growth that College Communications has taken in delivering content via this platform.

49 (Tipping Point Media 2012)
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http://www2.cortland.edu/about/facts-figures/.


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March 2012.


http://bportwingingit.wordpress.com/


http://www.youtube.com/user/BrockportNews/videos


http://www.youtube.com/user/sunyfredonia/videos
### Social Media/Networking Interactions with College by Personae

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Anti-Social Aaron</th>
<th>Broadcaster Betsy</th>
<th>Consumer Cecil</th>
<th>Reciprocal Rachel</th>
<th>Networking Neal</th>
<th>Super-User Sandy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contacted a professor or admission counselor through a social network</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Became a friend or fan of a college or university on a social networking site</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watched a YouTube video created by a school</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read student blog or other posts about a school on a college or university website</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read posts about a school on a social networking site</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatted online with students enrolled at a school</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatted online with faculty or an administrator at a school</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscribed to a school’s news feed (RSS)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Followed a school on Twitter</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received a text message from a school</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted negative feedback about a school on their Facebook wall</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used a web service to explore your “fit” with colleges and universities</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Done a campus tour narrated via a mobile phone application</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More strongly considered applying to a college because of a recommendation read on a social media site</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searched for scholarships using social media or networking sites</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix A.** Maguire Associates 2011 College Decision Impact Survey p17. This table shows the difference in user groups in their different areas of social media and networking interactions.
### Important to Student of Each Social Media Function by Personae

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Anti-Social Aaron</th>
<th>Broadcaster Betsy</th>
<th>Consumer Cecil</th>
<th>Reciprocal Rachel</th>
<th>Networking Neil</th>
<th>Super-User Sandy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read other peoples’ posts and updates</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to update friends and family about what I am doing</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get news and announcements about upcoming events and activities</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule events such as meetings or group projects</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upload photos/videos</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post/read ratings or reviews of products or services</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become friends/fans of a company or other group</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet new friends for purely social reasons</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join groups who have common interests and/or opinions</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find old friends</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job hunt or develop business contacts</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale: 1 (Not at all important) to 5 (Extremely important)

### Appendix B. Maguire Associates 2011 College Decision Impact Survey p18. This table shows the difference in user groups when it comes to which social media function is most important to them.
### Appendix C. The organizations and groups within the College at Brockport that have social media accounts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YouTube</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BrockportTelevision</td>
<td>Brockport Doggies (Men’s Rugby)</td>
<td>Brockport Student-Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrockportStudentGovt</td>
<td>Brockport Pep-Band</td>
<td>Brockport Alphas (Fraternity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrockportChamberOrch</td>
<td>Brockport Phys Ed</td>
<td>Ells Worth (Campus Events)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrockportMensGym</td>
<td>Brockport SSWO (Student Social Work Organization)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ThePointAfter891 (Radio Station)</td>
<td>Brockport Softball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrockportAthletics</td>
<td>Brockport Honors Club</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrockportEHS (Environmental Health &amp; Safety)</td>
<td>Transfers at Brockport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brockportstylus (Newspaper)</td>
<td>Campus Ambassadors – Brockport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrockportRoller (Roller Hockey)</td>
<td>Brockport ResLife</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport Rollers (Roller Hockey)</td>
<td>Brockport State ice hockey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrockportStudentGovernment</td>
<td>College at Brockport Recreational Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport Alumni</td>
<td>Brockport Men’s Gymnastics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPJ @ Brockport (Brockport Society of Professional Journalists)</td>
<td>The College at Brockport Women’s Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport ResLife (Residential Life)</td>
<td>Brockport Television &amp; Production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport HPPS (Health Promotion &amp; Prevention Services)</td>
<td>Brockport Wrestling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport Parking</td>
<td>Brockport Cheerleading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport Comm. (Communications Majors)</td>
<td>Brockport Fencing Club</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport Television</td>
<td>The College at Brockport Fencing Club</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport CS (Career Services)</td>
<td>The College at Brockport: Foundation Scholarship Office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport PR Club (Public Relations)</td>
<td>African Students Union</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport Admissions</td>
<td>Department of Education and Human Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>myBrockport</td>
<td>Exercise Physiology Major</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport Leadership</td>
<td>The College at Brockport Homecoming Weekend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport Group Ex (Group Exercise)</td>
<td>Department of Modern Languages and Cultures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport Fencing</td>
<td>Men’s Club Volleyball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOP at Brockport</td>
<td>Political Science &amp; International Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport DPhiE (Sorority)</td>
<td>Athletic Training Major</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport Orchestra</td>
<td>Theatre Department Main Stage Productions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport ITS (Information Technology Services)</td>
<td>Veterans Affairs Office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport Theatre</td>
<td>P.E. Majors Club</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellsworth Eagle (Athletics)</td>
<td>Seasons of Gratitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSG (Brockport Student Government)</td>
<td>Society of Professional Journalists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport Orchestra</td>
<td>Institute for Engaged Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport Theatre</td>
<td>Department of Chemistry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockport Fencing Club</td>
<td>The College at Brockport – Seymour Union</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ells Worth (Campus Events)</td>
<td>International Student Admissions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>