

Effectively Sending Messages to Different Target Audiences
Through Social Media

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to determine how to effectively send messages to different audiences using social media. More specifically, how can the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Department social media team effectively use social media to send messages to their three target audiences of prospective students, current students, and alumni.

The methods used to conduct this research included interviews, a survey and researching Facebook Insights of the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook page. Interviews were conducted with nine people, three people from each target audience group. The survey was conducted through Survey Monkey and had a sample size of 67 participants. Facebook Insights were researched using the Facebook Insights tool that admin of the Cal Poly Graphic Communication page have access to.

Results from the research revealed different things about each target audience. Prospective students, current students, and alumni had different social media platform preferences and different social media habits. These results helped lead to conclusions. The first conclusion was that there was a lack of awareness about the Graphic Communication social media pages. The next conclusion was that the content of posts on social media was key in having an effective social media plan. The last conclusion was that different platforms should be used to target the different audiences.

Chapter 1

Statement of the Problem

This research addressed the most effective way to reach the different audiences of the Graphic Communication Department through social media. These groups included Graphic Communication Department alumni, current students and prospective students. Each audience is so demographically different that it is important to understand what appeals to each one.

The department's social media efforts started in Fall 2013. Within the first few months after the Department's Facebook launched, the page already had over 500 likes. Over winter break the GrC LinkedIn page was launched and had reached almost 150 members since launch. Although the social media efforts had been successful, the department wanted an even stronger social media presence.

There were plans to increase the amount of Facebook posts, Twitter fans, Instagram followers and to create a campaign to increase the department's LinkedIn members. With so many different social media platforms, it was extremely important to know the department's audience and target them appropriately. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to determine how to more effectively send messages to The Graphic Communication Department's different target audiences.

Significance of the Problem

This is important for Graphic Communication Department because social media has become an important part of any business. It is a great way to directly speak with an audience and get their feedback. Launching a Facebook and LinkedIn page for the Graphic Communication Department was a huge step in the right direction. There are several problems in the department that can potentially be solved if social media is used effectively. One problem is connecting students to alumni and industry members to place more students in jobs in the industry. This disconnect can be solved through faster and more relevant information channels of Twitter, Instagram Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Another problem the department has is featuring its academically diverse program. Many people do not know that a Graphic Communication major with a management concentration takes a wide range of businesses classes such as accounting and entrepreneurship. Current students, prospective students and those looking to hire from our department should know about the diversity of the curriculum.

By researching the best way to send messages in different ways and to different audiences the GrC department can improve its visibility. This research will help industry members to connect with students looking for jobs, alumni to keep up to date with what is going on in the department, prospective students to see the diversity of the program, and current students to be fully immersed in the department and never miss an opportunity or event.

Interest in the Problem

Every year since I started as a student at Cal Poly, I held an internship position or job in which I was in charge of social media. I found it very interesting to work so closely with the customer or consumer. Social media allows a company to speak directly with their consumer and get feedback immediately. Social media is the voice of the entity you represent. This voice, if used appropriately, can build a company with no followers to a company with thousands of followers who care about what the company has to offer them. People love to feel involved and cared about, and social media is a proven way to do this.

After graduation, I hope to obtain a job in which I am involved in digital marketing, public relations, and social media marketing. I would love for this research to help me with future endeavors in my career. I will most likely be creating social media campaigns in which I will continually be answering the question, “who is my audience and how do I effectively send messages to these different audiences?”

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction:

Larson & Watson (2011) define social media as “the set of connectivity-enabled applications that facilitate interaction and the co-creation, exchange, and publication of information among firms and their *networked* communities of customers.” The use of social media has been on the rise for many years. Social media has shifted web towards “user-driven technologies such as blogs, social networks and video-sharing platforms” (Smith, 2009, p.1). Different social media platforms include Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and more. The shift to social media means that user generated content more often than not dominates what is on the web (Smith, 2009, p. 1). It also means that web content will be driven by the consumer.

The increasing trend in social media usage does not seem to be going away. Tom Smith ran a study from 2006 to 2008 in which he measured the usage of mainstream social platforms across the world. The study included 17,000 active web users. His studies showed that in two years, 23% more active web users read blogs, 17% more wrote blogs, and 51% more watched video clips (Smith, 2009, p. 1). In the past there has also been some speculation that only the younger generations use social media. However, according to the 2013 survey from the Pew Research Center’s Internet Project, 73% of *adults* in the United States who use the internet also use a social networking site (Print in the mix, 2013). In the U.S., online adults using social media sites has increased 4% from 2012 to 2013.

Although there are currently many different social networking platforms, Facebook still remains the most popular platform (Duggan & Smith, 2013, p. 1). Pinterest, a visual tool that people use to collect ideas for their different interests, is used more by woman than men.

LinkedIn, a career networking tool, is most popular among college graduates. Two other social networking tools, Twitter and Instagram, appeal more to younger generations (Duggan & Smith, 2013, p. 1-2). It is clear that different age groups prefer different social media platforms over others. The Pew Research Report on Social Networking in 2013 also outlines how different age groups *use* social media differently.

To have a successful social media presence for an organization such as the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Department, we must determine the best ways to reach audiences of different age groups. In the case of the Graphic Communication Department, these age groups break up into prospective students (under 18), current students (18-22), and Alumni (30-49). Past research and studies will help determine how to most effectively reach these different audiences. The social media platforms that the Graphic Communication Department is currently using are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Current Students

Undergraduate college students tend to have a strong social media presence amongst all platforms, but the most popular still ranks with Facebook at 84% (Duggan & Smith, 2013, p. 5). Although 84% of internet users between ages 18 and 29 are using Facebook, there seems to be a trend in falling usage. Eighteen to twenty-nine year olds on Facebook fell two percent since last year (Tsukayama, 2013). Twitter use among 18-29 year olds is 31%. Instagram use is highest among this age group (Duggan & Smith, 2013, p. 6). LinkedIn usage is only at 15% for those under age 30 (Duggan & Smith, 2013, p. 8). Although LinkedIn usage is highest among college

graduates, this does not apply for students who are still enrolled in college. Finally, 27% of all internet users ages 18-29 use Pinterest (Duggan & Smith, 2013, p. 7).

It is important for the Graphic Communication Department to connect with current students through social media. It will allow the department to keep current students up-to-date with the most current events in the department, as well as keeping them connected with career, internship, or contest opportunities. Social media will also allow there to be more transparency in the department so Graphic Communication students can see what is happening in other classes and across different concentration courses. A social media presence for the department will also help create a more united community among the students. The best way to reach current students will be through Facebook and Instagram, because these platforms have the highest usage among the age group of current students (Duggan & Smith, 2013, p. 5-6).

Prospective Students

Prospective students will be considered ages 12-17 for the purpose of this research. They will also be referred to as “teens.” According to the 2013 Pew Research Report on Teens Social Media and Privacy, Twitter use is growing among this age group. There was a 50% increase in Twitter usage between 2011 and 2013. Although Twitter use is increasing, teens seem to be less than enthusiastic about Facebook. Sixty percent of teens are on Facebook, but attempt to keep their profile as private as possible. The increased usage of Facebook by adults, drama created by Facebook, and over-sharing of information are a few reasons why teens are less excited about Facebook (Madden et al, 2013, p. 2).

	2011	2012
Facebook	93%	94%
Twitter	12	26
Instagram	n/a	11
MySpace	24	7
YouTube	6	7
Tumblr	2	5
Google Plus	n/a	3
Yahoo (unspecified)	7	2
myYearbook	2	*
Pinterest	n/a	1
Gmail	n/a	1
Meet Me	n/a	1
Other	8	6
Don't know / Don't have own profile	2	1

Figure 1. Where teens have social media profiles or accounts
% of teen social media users who use the following sites...

Source: http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2013/05/PIP_TeensSocialMediaandPrivacy_PDF.pdf

	2012
Facebook	81
Twitter	7
Instagram	3
YouTube	1
Tumblr	1
Google Plus	1
Yahoo (unspecified)	*
myYearbook	*
Pinterest	*
Gmail	*
MySpace	0
Meet Me	0
Other	1
Use all my social network profiles/accounts equally	2
Don't Know/Don't have own profile	1

Figure 2. Which social media profiles or accounts teens use most often
% of teen social media users who use the following sites most often

Source: http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2013/05/PIP_TeensSocialMediaandPrivacy_PDF.pdf

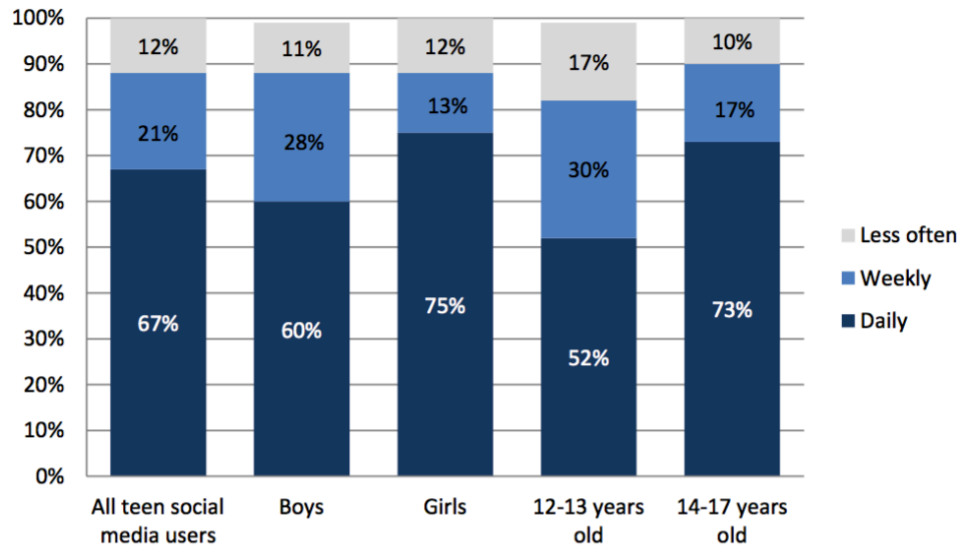


Figure 3. Daily use of social media

% of teen social media users who visit social networking sites, by frequency

Source: http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2013/05/PIP_TeensSocialMediaandPrivacy_PDF.pdf

According to the Pew Research Center, “The frequency of teen social media usage may have reached a plateau; three in four teen social media users visit the sites on a daily basis.” (Madden et al, 2013, p. 22). Research has come to this conclusion because the percentage of teens who visit these social media sites either “several times a day” or “about once a day” has stayed practically the same since 2011 (Madden et al, 2013, p. 22). Teenage girls have the largest presence on social media. 48% report to visit social networking sites several times a day, while teenage boys only report this at 36%. Older teens, ages 14-17, are about twice as likely as younger teens, ages 12-13, to use social media several times per day (Madden et al, 2013, p. 22).

The Graphic Communication Department wants to connect with prospective students to recruit high school students into the program and show them what the department has to offer. Reaching out to prospective students through social media will help promote the department. Many prospective students are unsure about what it means to be a Graphic Communication Major. The transparency of social media will show these prospective students about classes,

student culture, faculty and staff culture, and events in the department. Facebook will still be the best way to reach prospective students. However, Twitter may be a good way to connect with them because of the huge increase in Twitter usage among teens. It will also be important to cater posts to both teen boys and girls to help balance out the predominantly female demographic of the department (Madden et al, 2013, p. 2).

Alumni

An audience other than teens and young adults should encompass adults between ages 30-49. This age group will represent “alumni” that would apply as an audience for the Graphic Communication Department’s social media. It is especially important to determine how to best reach this audience because they do not use social media as often as young adults and teens (Duggan & Smith, 2013, p.1). Therefore, it is crucial to find the most direct route when catering to the alumni audience.

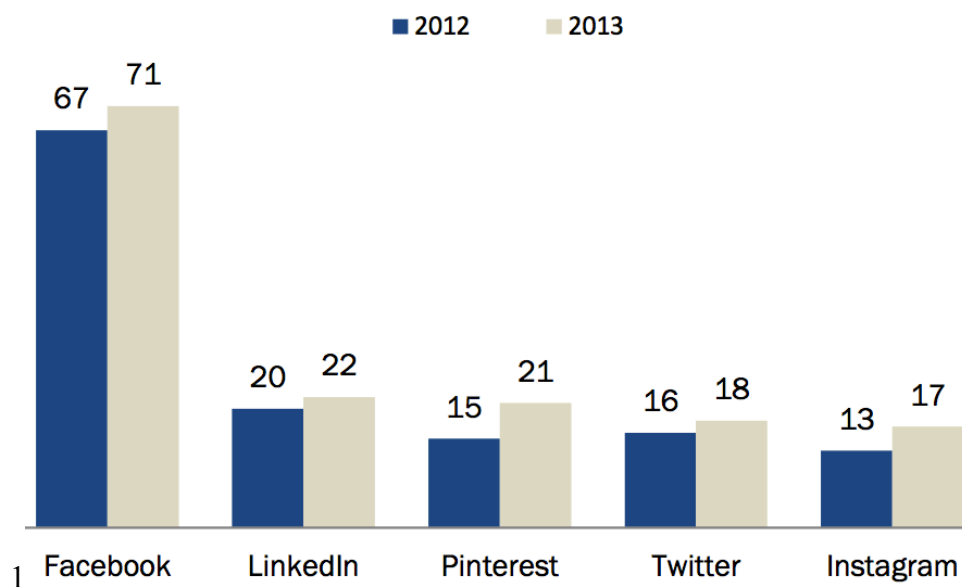


Figure 4. Social media sites, 2012-2013

% of online adults who use the following social media websites, by year

Source: http://www.pewinternet.org/files/old-media/Files/Reports/2013/Social%20Networking%202013_PDF.pdf

Facebook remains the most popular form of social media among adults ages 30-49.

Seventy-nine percent of all online adults report to use Facebook (Duggan & Smith, 2013, p. 4).

Twitter use among anyone over 30 is a mere 19% for ages 30-49, 9% for ages 50-64, and 5% for ages 65 and up, therefore Twitter is not the best platform to reach alumni (Duggan & Smith,

2013, p. 5). Although Instagram use has grown since last year, only 18% of online adults use it.

(Duggan & Smith, 2013, p. 6). Pinterest usage among Alumni is about the same as usage among the “current students” age group. LinkedIn usage is highest among those who make \$75,000 or more a year, and is also highest in the alumni age group. LinkedIn is most popular among those who have graduated from college or graduate school (Duggan & Smith, 2013, p. 8).

Internet users over the age of 50 can also be included in the group of “alumni.” In 2010, social networking use among internet users ages 50 and older had almost doubled from 22% to 42% in just a year (Madden, 2010, p. 2).

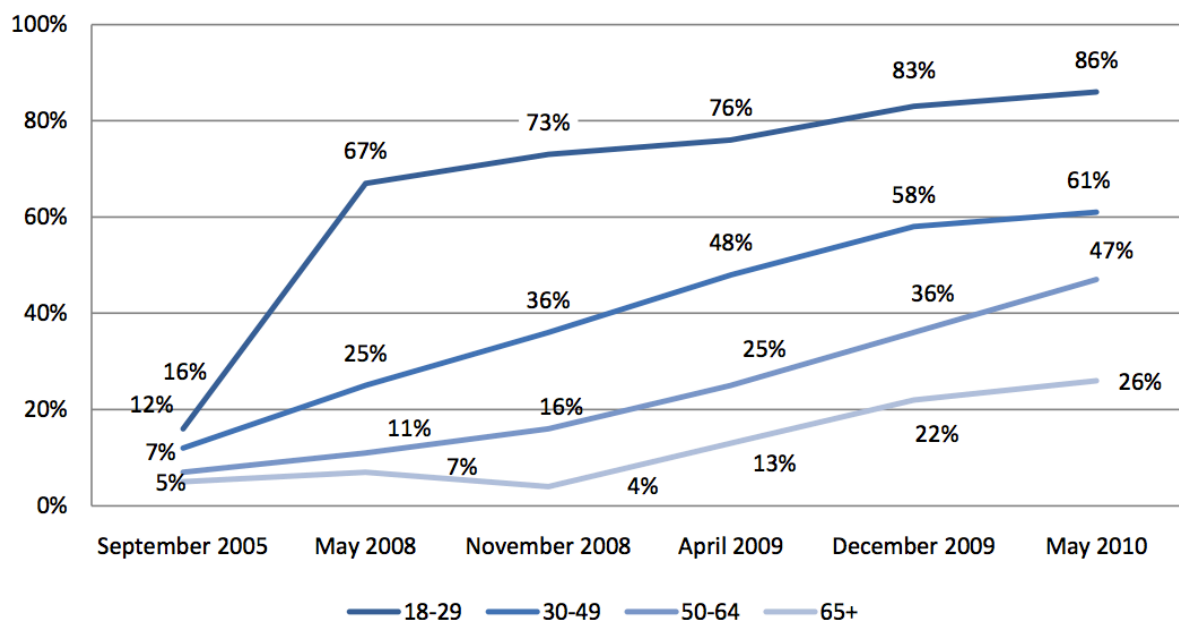


Figure 5. Social networking use continues to grow among older users

The percentage of adult internet users who use social networking sites in each age group

Source: <http://www.pewinternet.org/files/old-media/Files/Reports/2010/Pew%20Internet%20-%20Older%20Adults%20and%20Social%20Media.pdf>

Although more adults are now on social media sites, they still rely on email as their main form of communication. Ninety-two percent of internet users ages 50-64 read email or exchange email on a typical day (Madden, 2010, p. 4). The Pew Research Report on older adults and social media found several reasons as to why adults may be starting to use social media more often. One reason is that social networking sites make it easier for this age group to reconnect with people from their past which can help build a support system closer to retirement, or help an older adult find a new career path. Another reason is that older adults are more likely to have a chronic disease in which they reach out to online social networking as a support system. A third reason is that social media is a great way to bridge generation gaps (Madden, 2010, p. 6-7).

Alumni is one of the most important demographics the Graphic Communication should be concerned with reaching out to through social media. Alumni are important in donating money to the department as well as hiring current students into the Graphic Communication Industry. Without alumni, the department does not get the financial support it needs, and students do not get placed in jobs as often. Alumni are also important to Cal Poly's International Printing Week in January each year. Many industry members that come to speak are Cal Poly alumni, and the department is lucky enough to have them present and give advice to current students. Figure 4 from Pew Research Center (2013) shows that Facebook and LinkedIn are the best platforms to reach alumni. Facebook posts will keep alumni updated about what current students are doing and what is happening around the department. Facebook posts can also show off accomplishments of students to impress the alumni. Getting alumni involved in Cal Poly Graphic Communication Department's LinkedIn will allow them to post jobs and connect with current students looking for jobs or internships.

Integrating social media into a marketing plan

To effectively use social media, it must be integrated with existing strategies and marketing plans. “When social media is not integrated with the firm’s strategy, the effectiveness and efficiency of social media will suffer,” (Moorman, 2011, p. 1). Christine Moorman, director of The CMO Survey and senior professor of Business Administration at Duke University, points out ten characteristics that apply to social media: Gain support from management, do not segregate social media from the rest of marketing, train employees on social media so they see the value, have social media personnel do cross-functional work, do not outsource social media, choose metrics to see the value in social media, use social media to collect customer information that may be important, use it to challenge the norm of the company, make sure the social media team converses with the rest of the company, and “have social media and marketing personnel report to the same person,” (Moorman, 2011, p. 1-2).

Customer management strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Target customers: Is your social media focused on your company’s target customer?- Most valuable customers: Is social media designed to engage with your firm’s most valuable customers?- Customer acquisition: Does social media help your company retain and grow existing customers?- Customer retention: Does social media help your company retain and grow existing customers?
brand management strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Brand consistency across social media platforms: Does your company use a consistent image and benefits across social media platforms?- Brand consistency across social media and other marketing/sales activities: Does your company use a consistent image and benefits across social media and other marketing/sales activities?
innovation management strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Drive innovation: Is social media a driving force for innovation and growth in your company?- Leveraged innovation: Is information about customers’ social media activities important to your company’s innovation strategy?
information management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Single view of customers: Does your company integrate information about a customers social media activities with other customer information (e.g. purchase behaviors, demographic and/or geographic information)?- Insights out: Are insights communicated from social media people to the rest of your company on a regular basis?- Insights in: Are insights communicated from the rest of your company to social media people on a regular basis?
organization management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Part of strategic planning: Are social media strategies discussed as a part of your firm’s strategic planning process?- Linked to valued company outcomes: Is social media evaluated on financial criteria of strategic importance to your firm?- Leadership: Does the social media group report to the same internal leader as marketing or to marketing itself?

Figure 6. A Social Media Integration Report Card

Source: <http://cmosurvey.org/files/2012/02/Integrating-Social-Media.pdf>

Future plans

After deciding upon the best way to integrate social media into the current marketing plan, the next step is figuring out how to make social media effective and successful for the company. An easy place to start is researching where customers spend their time on the internet (Mershon, 2012). For example, different age groups that spend more or less time on specific social media platforms. Once research has been done about where the customers are online, the company should “find content that will resonate deeply with their audience” (Mershon, 2012). People want to be engaged and will be more responsive to content that they are familiar with, or want to respond to. Focusing efforts on Facebook is another successful tip because most people are on Facebook more than any other social network (Mershon, 2012). “Facebook captures 14.6% of internet users’ time compared to 2% for all other social networking sites,” (Mershon, 2012). Video is another social media component that can be used to ensure success in marketing. About one third of the U.S. population watches a video online every day, so video should not be overlooked (Mershon, 2012). An example of successful use of video is the company Whole Foods. Whole Foods has created over 500 videos that have been watched by about 2.8 million people. The videos cover everything from how-to tutorials to a “funny organic love story series” (Mershon, 2012).

It is also important to determine which social network is best for a company’s particular kind of business. Facebook is good for any kind of business and is great for creating lasting relationships with customers (Overfelt, 2013). Twitter is generally better for time-restrained business owners who are looking to promote events or specials (Overfelt, 2013). LinkedIn is great for hiring purposes and networking with potential clients. LinkedIn is another tool that can

be used by any kind of business, especially younger companies trying to get the word out about their services (Overfelt, 2013). YouTube can be used by any kind of company and is a great way to show off the companies personality and creativity. However, it is important to keep videos short and to the point (Overfelt, 2013). Pinterest is a tool that is good for “promoting your brand to a female-skewed audience” and is really best for retailers and companies who can use images to sell (Overfelt, 2013). Finally, Instagram is another image-centric tool that can help with branding and promoting a company to a younger audience. Instagram is particularly good for businesses such as hotels, restaurants, or other companies that have a lot of photos of properties and goods (Overfelt, 2013).

Measurements of success

Determining which social networking platforms to connect with different age groups over is meaningless unless there is a way to measure your social media efforts. Social media can often be a difficult thing to measure. With its increasing use in businesses, there are now some helpful, free tools with which to measure if a company’s social media efforts are successful and effective.

Facebook Analytics is a great place to start measuring the interaction on a companies' Facebook page. *Fan Reach* is a metric that tracks the number of “fans” of your page. Fan reach is an organic metric and only measures the views that occur *directly*. The per-post fan reach is the most important metric according to *Social Media Examiner* (Ernoul, 2013). It is the most important metric because it is telling you if the content you are posting appeals to your audience. “The higher the quality of your audience and the more interesting your content, the more fans (and potential fans) you will reach” (Ernoul, 2013).

“Organic reach” is a number that includes people who are not fans of the page, but have still seen the content you posted on the page. The organic reach number can be found in Facebook Insights. Organic reach is a good way to improve content’s visibility. If the organic reach number is close to fan reach number, it often means that people are not exposed to the page’s content unless they are a fan (Ernoul, 2013).

“Engaged users” is another metric that can be found in a page’s Facebook insights. Engagement is a measurement of the number of people who clicked anywhere in the post (Ernoul, 2013). This includes liking, commenting, sharing, clicking on a commenters name, or page name. The raw engagement number needs to be converted to really get use out of it. Instead, you want to look at the number of engaged people, and the number of people reached for a particular post. Divide the engaged users by reached users, multiply by 100, then the company will have a good benchmark number of how each individual post performs (Ernoul, 2013).

“People talking about this”, or “storytellers,” measures interaction with a post only from likes, comments, or shares. It “highlights the number of fans who did something to show engagement to their friends” (Ernoul, 2013). This metric is best used in measuring how many people spread the word about your content (Ernoul, 2013).

“Click-through rate” tells the company how many people clicked on a link in the content, viewed a video, or looked at the full size version of a photo in the post. Click-through rates are helpful in determining if the audience was interested enough to pay attention the post. For example, instead of a viewer skimming past a video post in their newsfeed, they click on the video to watch it.

“Negative feedback” helps measure users who didn’t like the content. Something registers as negative feedback if the viewer hides a post, hides all posts, unlikes the page, or reports it as spam. Negative feedback can affect how future posts perform, so it is extremely important to be aware of posting content that continues to get negative feedback (Ernault, 2013).

Google Analytics is another free way to measure and track social media performance. Google Analytics’ most basic report gives you information on your Social traffic report. This tells “how traffic coming in from different social media sites are converting along the lines of Average Time on Site, Page Views, and Goal or Ecommerce conversions. This will help a company understand how their social spend is impacting your bottom line” (Vazquez Levi, 2013). Without measuring metrics, it is impossible to align strategy with success.

Conclusion

Prospective students, current students, and alumni all use social media in different ways. Having several different audiences for the Graphic Communication Department’s social media efforts means research needs to be done on each audience. Only then will the Graphic Communication Department social media team properly be able to utilize social media to its best capabilities. The department must also carefully align their social media strategy with their current marketing plan. Measuring social media activity will be the last step in ensuring the department’s social media strategy is a success.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to determine how the Graphic Communication Department Social Media Team can effectively use social media to reach its different target audiences. The department hopes to increase its presence on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. The most effective way to reach Graphic Communication Department current students, prospective students and alumni was determined through a survey, interviews, and Facebook Insights.

Objectives research consisted of the following:

- Compare how alumni, current students, and prospective students interact with the Graphic Communication Department's social media platforms.
- Test which social networks perform best with these audiences.
- Determine how to increase audience size of the Graphic Communication Department social media platforms

Data Collection Plan

Collecting data to improve the Graphic Communication Department's social media presence consisted of a survey, interviews and Facebook Insights. The audiences for data collection were current Cal Poly students, prospective Cal Poly students, and Cal Poly Graphic Communication Department Alumni. The sample size for the interviews was three people per audience group. The sample size for the survey was 67 people. All survey participants were internet users. Facebook Insights were analyzed from the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Department Facebook page.

The survey that was conducted consisted of questions to help determine daily social media use and preferences among the different audiences. Survey Monkey was used to conduct the survey. There were nine questions. The survey began with questions that were used to help segment the sample. These questions included age, audience identification, and occupation. Following these questions were questions regarding social media platform usage and preferences. Questions combined yes and no answers with second level questions to gain additional understanding. The survey also had informed consent, letting the survey taker know the parameters and intentions of the survey.

The next part of my research consisted interviews with three people from each audience to gain a more in-depth view of how they used social media and what they wanted to see on the Graphic Communication Department social media sites. I conducted these interviews through phone calls and over email. The participant had the choice to decide between communicating through email or over the phone. Participants 1, 2, and 3 were prospective Cal Poly students. Participants 4, 5, and 6 were current Cal Poly students. Participants 7, 8, and 9 were Cal Poly alumni and advisory board members. Each participant was asked the same set of questions.

Using the Facebook Insights on the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Department Facebook page was another part of my research. Facebook Insights helped me research how people were engaging with the page and posts, what the demographics of people who like the page were, what posts were performing best, if the page had negative engagement, how quickly the audience was growing, and who the posts were reaching. Facebook Insights shows data from the most current week. The week in which I collected the data was May 12, 2014- May 18, 2014..

Data Analysis Plan

After the data was collected, the survey was compiled into a table to analyze the results. The results were analyzed by comparing and contrasting trends and characteristics to the different audience groups of prospective students, current students, and alumni. Figure 7 shows how the survey results were organized and analyzed.

		Alumni	Current Student	Prospective Student
Occupation	GrC Industry			
	Non GrC Industry			
Main Social Media Platform	Facebook			
	Instagram			
	Twitter			
	LinkedIn			
	Don't Use Social Media			
Times of the Day on social media	Other			
	6 AM-8 AM			
	8 AM- 10 AM			
	10 AM - 12 PM			
	12 PM- 2 PM			
	2 PM - 4 PM			
	4 PM - 6 PM			
	6 PM- 8 PM			
	8 PM - 10 PM			
	10 PM - 12 AM			
	12 AM - 2 AM			
	2 AM - 4 AM			
	4 AM - 6 AM			
Use Hashtags?	Yes			
	No			
Where do you use hashtags?	Facebook			
	Instagram			
	Twitter			
Why do you unlike a FB page?	Comment			
What platform do you use to learn about companies?	Facebook			
	Twitter			
	Instagram			
	LinkedIn			
	Don't Learn about companies through social media			
What content do you want to see?	Other			
	Career Info			
	Department Events			
	Student Work			
	Senior Projects			
	Recent graduate profiles			
	Undergraduate profiles			
	Staff & Faculty profiles			
	Curriculum			
	Dept. Club Information			
	Other			

Figure 7. Survey Results

The research collected through interviews was transcribed and is located in the Appendix. This data was analyzed by comparing and contrasting answers among different audiences. Recommendations that participants gave during the interviews helped shape conclusions and recommendations.

Facebook Insights allows for easy analysis because it provides the page admin with graphs and charts. Data was analyzed from the charts and graphs provided by Facebook Insights. Figure 8 shows an example of a graph that Facebook Insights generated for the admin to analyze. Facebook Insights data that was analyzed included the following: Likes, Reach, Visits, Posts, People, and Engagement.

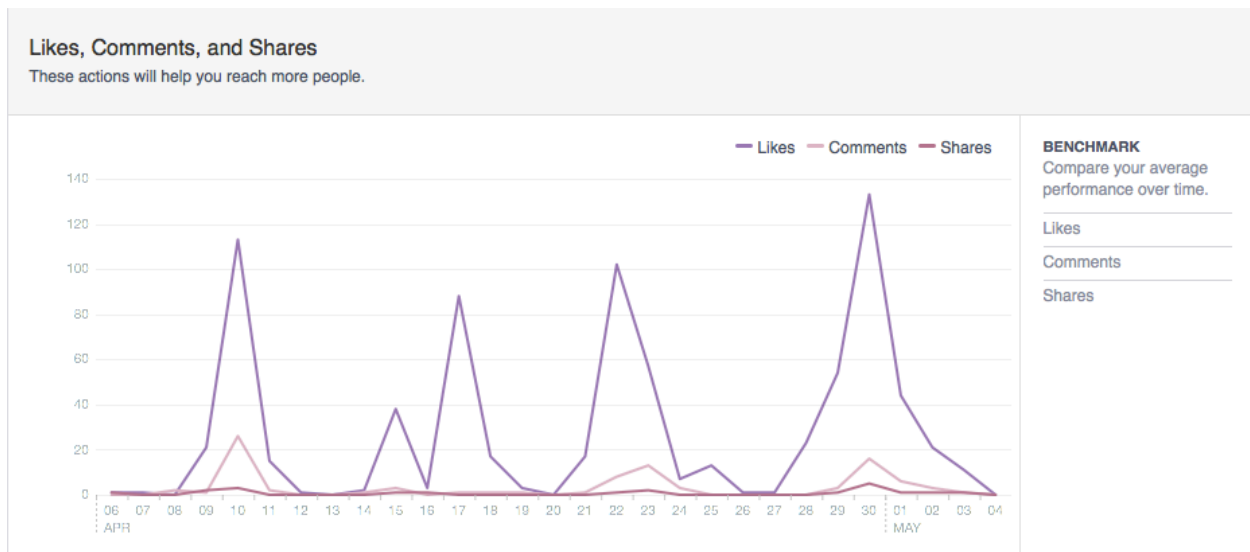


Figure 8. Facebook Insights Graph
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navReach>

After all of the data was collected, the results were used to determine what social media platforms work best to target prospective students, current students, and alumni. Certain demographics were more likely to be using one platform over another. This information can now be used to help the Graphic Communication Department better target their audience.

Chapter 4: Research Data

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research was to determine how to effectively use social media to send messages to the Graphic Communication Department's different audiences of prospective students, current students, and alumni. This research consisted of Facebook Insights, interviews, and a survey. The purpose of the interviews were to obtain an in depth analysis of how each audience uses social media. Research through Facebook Insights allowed for analysis of past performance on Facebook. The insights were quantitative research that allowed me to reach conclusions from past post performances and metrics about the audience. The purpose of the survey was to get a large amount of quantitative data in a short amount of time.

Facebook Insights

Facebook Insights were part of my quantitative research. Facebook Insights is a great tool to track the success of a Facebook page. It creates statistics based on a page performance. Facebook Insights also provides the page admin with information about page demographics. This tool provides insights on everything from individual post performance to negative feedback that the page is getting. Facebook Insights focuses on data from a page's performance during the most recent week. The research collected for the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook page was during the week of May 12, 2014- May 18, 2014.

The first components of Facebook Insights that were researched were Likes, Total Page Likes as of Today, Net Likes: What Changed, and Where Your Page Likes Came From.

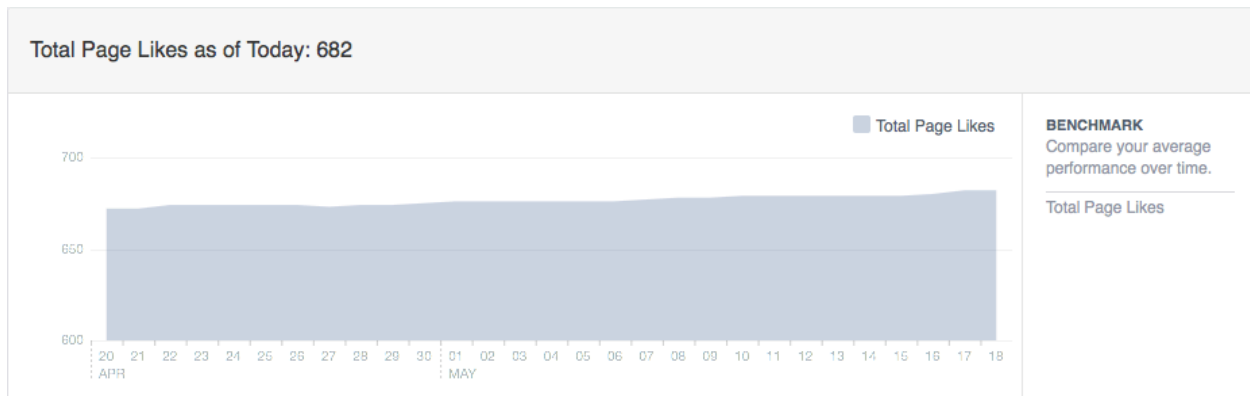


Figure 9. Total Page Likes as of Today: 682
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navLikes>

Figure 9 shows the trend in the total page likes of the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook page. There was little to no growth in the number of page likes between April 2014 and May 2014.

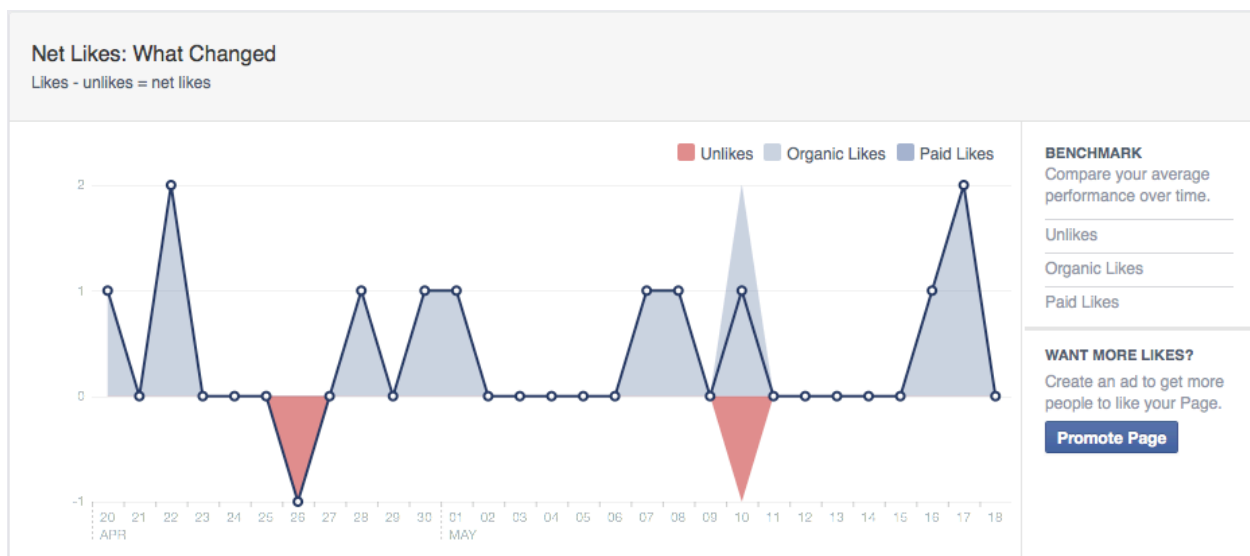


Figure 10. Net Likes: What Changed
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navLikes>

The “Net Likes” figure shows the total number of likes based on likes and unlikes. This analytic helps prevent future negative feedback. On April 26, 2014 and May 10, 2014, the page had two unlikes. There were no “paid likes” because the Graphic Communication Department

did not spend any money or have a budget for social media efforts. All of the likes were organic. Organic likes mean that anyone who liked the page found it through their own efforts.

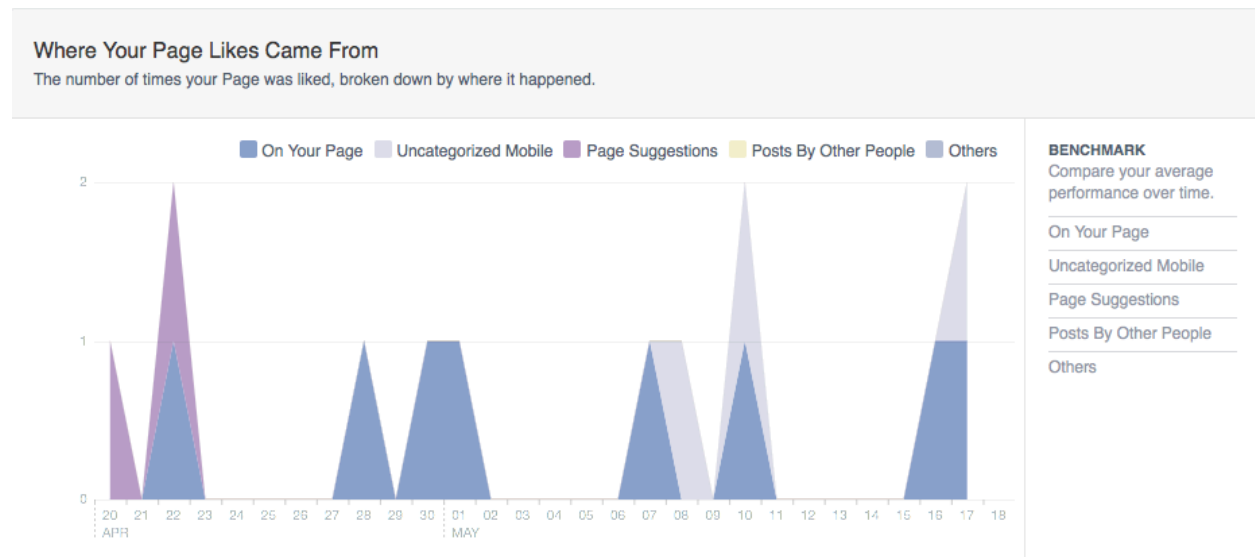


Figure 11. Where Your Page Likes Came From
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navLikes>

Figure 11 shows that the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook page was only receiving likes from directly on their webpage, through page suggestions, and through uncategorized mobile. The other two categories of “Posts By Other People” and “Others” did not contribute to any page likes.

The next component of Facebook Insights that was researched was the “Reach.” The Reach insight measures how many people have seen a post. There are two kinds of Reach: Organic and Paid. Paid reach refers to the number of unique people who saw a post through an ad. Organic reach refers to the number of unique people who saw a post from your page in their News Feed or on the GrC Facebook page. This includes people who saw it from a story shared by a friend when they liked, commented on or shared a post, or answered a question or

responded to an event. The Reach insights consisted of graphs pertaining to Post Reach, Likes, Comments and Shares, Hide, Report as Spam and Unlikes, and Total Reach.

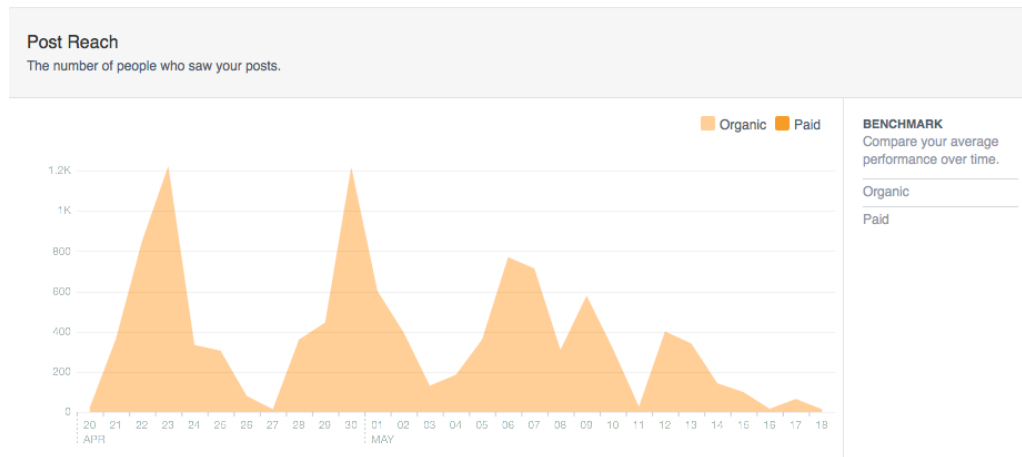


Figure 12. Post Reach

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navReach>

The Post Reach figure refers to the number of people who saw the Facebook posts from the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook page. All of the posts were seen organically because the department does not have a budget for social media and does not use any money to promote posts on their Facebook page. There was a declining trend in the post reach from April 2014 to May 2014. The graph also shows a sharp decline during the weekend when no content was being posted on the page.



Figure 13. Likes, Comments, and Shares

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navReach>

Likes, Comments, and Shares shows what actions the audience was using to interact with the posts. The purple line shows “Likes,” the pink line shows “Comments,” and the maroon line shows “Shares.” Between April 2014 and May 2014, there were almost no posts shared. In this same time period, there was a good amount of comments on posts ranging from zero comments on the lowest end to sixteen comments on the highest end. Between April 2014 and May 2014, the majority of people interacted with the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook posts through likes. The range of likes was from zero on the lowest end to 133 on the highest end.

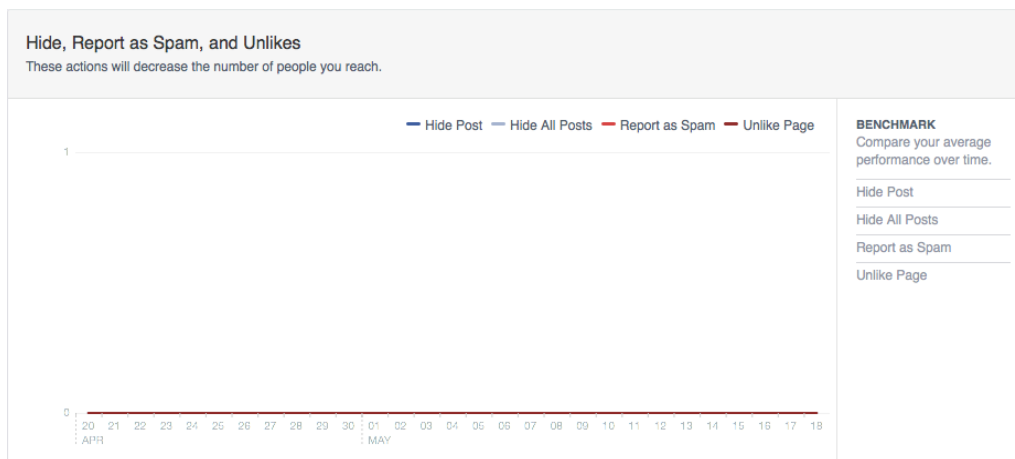


Figure 14. Hide, Report as Spam, and Unlikes
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navReach>

The actions of “hide,” “report as spam,” and “unlikes,” are all negative actions which decrease the number of people that posts reach. Between April 2014 and May 2014, there was no negative activity on the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook page.



Figure 15. Total Reach

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navReach>

Total reach refers to the number of people who saw any activity from the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook page including posts, posts by other people, Page like ads, mentions, and check-ins. All activity that people saw from the page happened organically because the department did not spend any money to increase reach. Between April 2014 and May 2014 there was a declining trend in total reach. There was also sharp declines during weekends when the social media team did not post anything on the page.

The next component of Facebook Insights that was researched was Visits. Visits allows for evaluation of how users interact with content other than posts on a Facebook page. The Visits insights reveal the number of times each of your page tabs was viewed, the number of actions people took that involved your page, and the number of times people came to your page from a website off of Facebook.

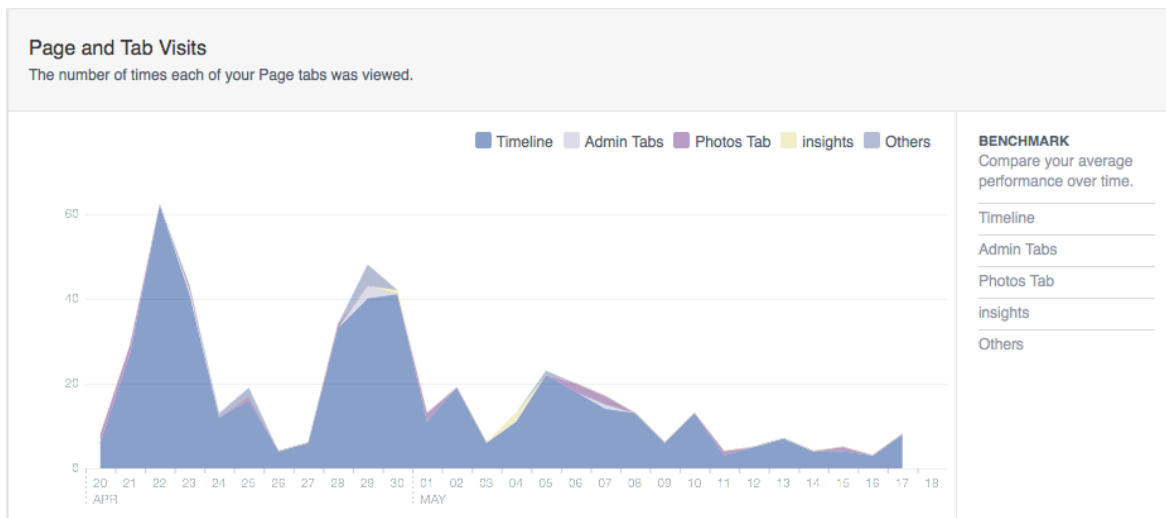


Figure 16. Page and Tab Visits
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navVisits>

Figure 16 shows the number of times each of the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook page tabs were viewed. The page does not have any tabs for extra content that has been created for the department. The “timeline” was the most viewed tab, followed by “photos” then “admin” tab. The “insights” and “others” tab were rarely visited.

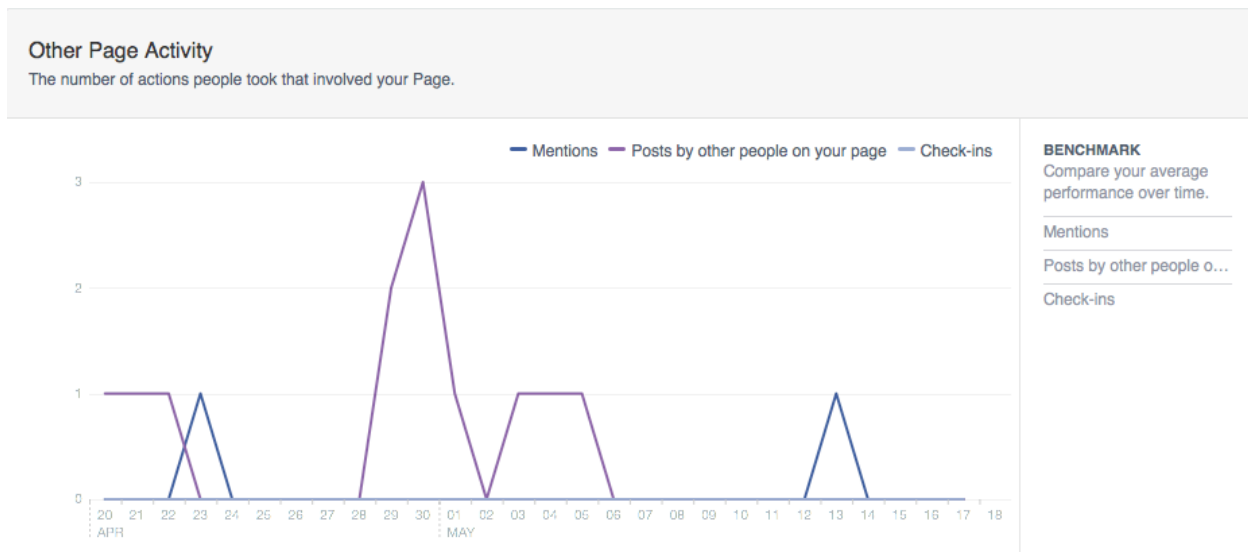


Figure 17. Other Page Activities
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navVisits>

Figure 17 shows the number of actions people took that involved the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook page. The most common action that people were involved with on the page was posting on the timeline. Between April 2014 and May 2014, there were 11 posts by other people on our page, 2 mentions, and 0 check-ins.

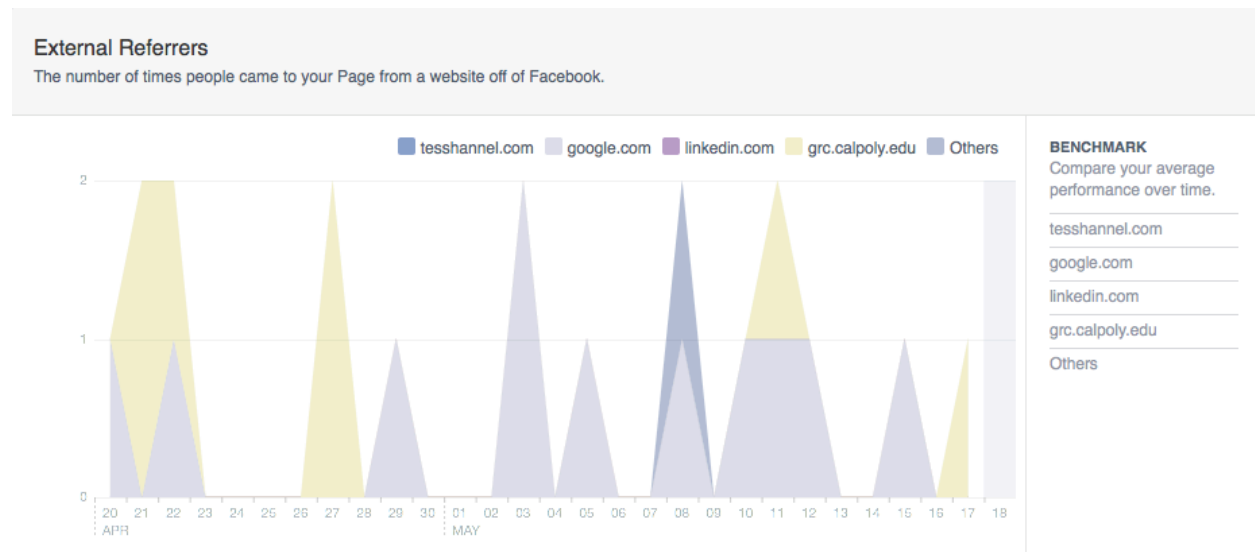


Figure 18. External Referrers
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navVisits>

External referrers determines the number of times people arrived on the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook page from a URL that is not part of Facebook.com. The external referrers from April 2014 to May 2014 were grc.calpoly.edu, google.com, and tesshannel.com. Grc.calpoly.edu is the Graphic Communication Department website, which directed no more than 6 people to the Facebook page in the two month time range. Google.com directed 9 people to the Facebook page in the two month time range. Tesshannel.com is a student's personal website who was part of the GrC social media team. Her personal website directed people to the Facebook page through her online resume.

The next component of Facebook Insights that was researched was Posts. Posts insights revealed analytic information about when fans were online. Figure 19 shows that people were on

Facebook consistently throughout the day, with a dip during sleeping hours of midnight to 6 AM and slight peak around 9 PM. Friday, Saturday and Sunday also experience a slight dip in fans being online.

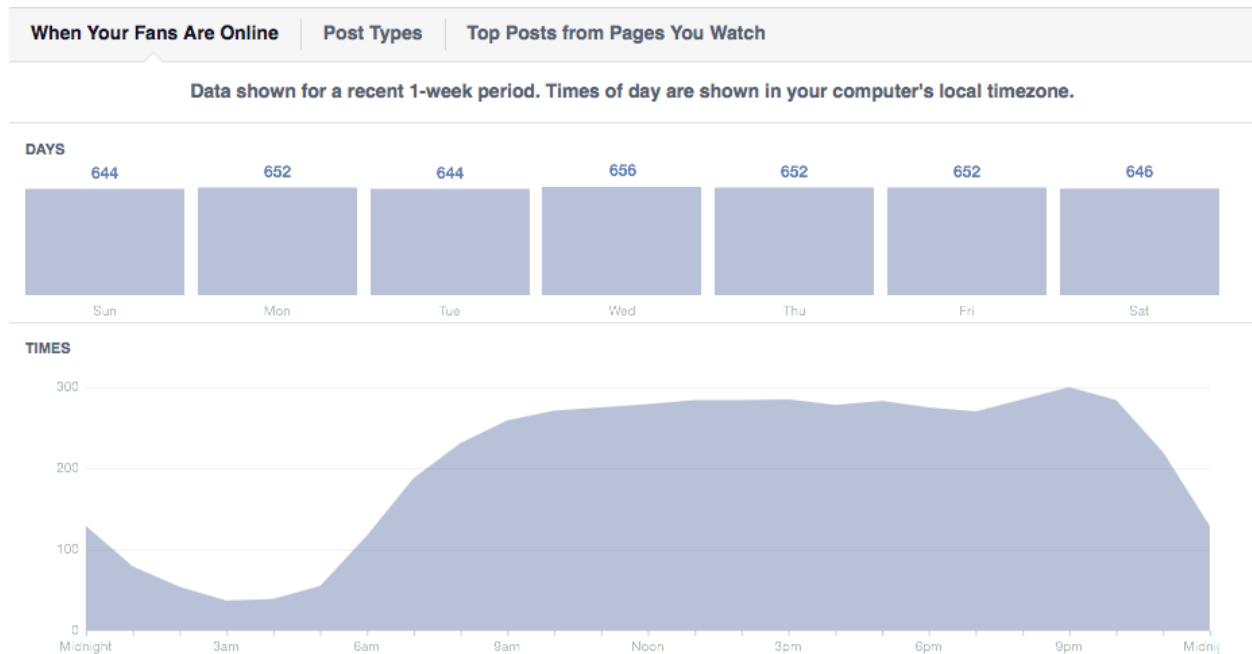


Figure 19. When Your Fans Are Online

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navPosts>

The next component of Facebook Insights that was researched was People. The People insights reveal demographic information of the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook page fans including gender, location, and age.

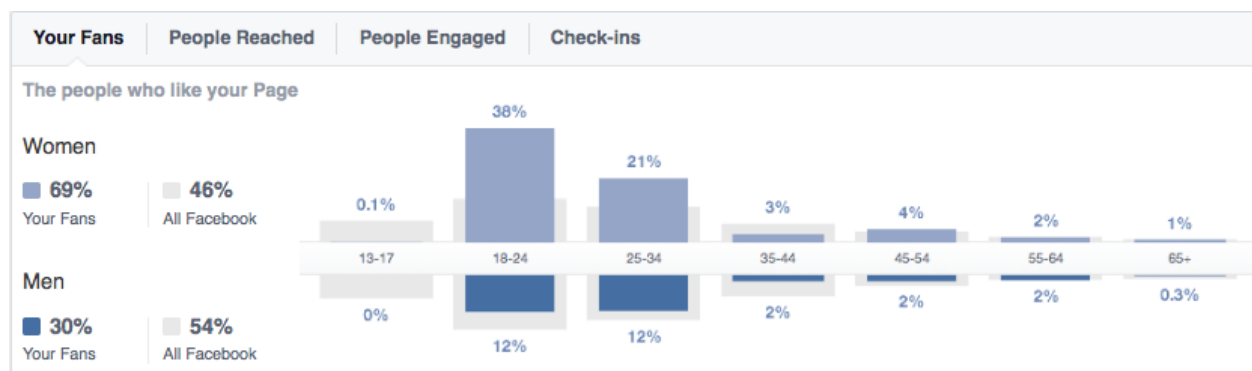


Figure 20. Your Fans

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navPeople>

Figure 20 shows that 69% of the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook page's fans were women while 30% were men. The age group that most of the page's fans fell into were 18-24. This age group would be considered the current student audience, overlapping slightly into the alumni and prospective student audience. The age group that the second largest amount of fans fell into was 25-34. This was the age group of alumni. The least number of fans were ages 13-17 and 65 and up. The majority of the page's fans were part of the current students audience.

Country	Your Fans	City	Your Fans	Language	Your Fans
United States of America	666	San Luis Obispo, CA	291	English (US)	647
Germany	2	San Francisco, CA	53	English (UK)	22
Russia	1	Los Angeles, CA	21	German	4
China	1	San Diego, CA	16	English (Pirate)	1
Japan	1	San Jose, CA	16	Russian	1
Turkey	1	Atascadero, CA	8	Spanish	1
New Zealand	1	New York, NY	8	French (France)	1
Nigeria	1	Sacramento, CA	6	Leet Speak	1
Hong Kong	1	Santa Barbara, CA	6		
Georgia	1	Seattle, WA	6		
Algeria	1	Santa Maria, CA	5		
Sweden	1	Arroyo Grande, CA	5		

Figure 21. Location of Fans

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navPeople>

The location of fans shows what country and city the page's fans reside in. This analytic can be used to target people or promote posts using location. Figure 21 shows the majority of Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook fans reside in San Luis Obispo where the program is

located. There were 12 fans from different countries.

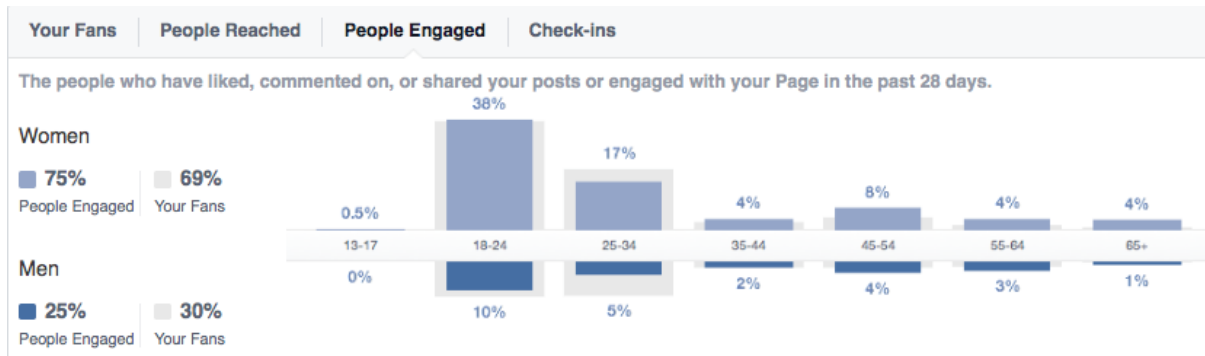


Figure 22. People Engaged

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/CalPolyGrC?sk=insights§ion=navPeople>

The People Engaged insight revealed the people who liked, commented on, or shared posts or engaged with the page in the past 28 days. This analytic showed who was most likely to engage with the page. Women between the ages of 18 and 24 were most likely to engage with posts while only 25% of men were engaging. When broken down just by age, age groups 18-24 and 25-34 were most likely to engage.

Interviews

For the qualitative aspect of my research, nine people were interviewed. Interviews were with three prospective students, three current students, and three alumni. A list of questions was used to help guide the interview. Interviews were conducted over the phone and through email. Participants had the choice to communicate through phone or email. A list of questions used for this interview is included in the appendix. Figure 23 describes each participant. The description of each participant is relevant only to the time in which the study was conducted.

	Audience	Description	Gender
P1	Prospective Student:	high school senior attending Chico State University in fall 2014	Female
P2	Prospective Student:	high school senior attending Cal Poly San Luis Obispo for GrC in fall 2014	Female
P3	Prospective Student:	high school senior attending Cal Poly San Luis Obispo for GrC in fall 2014	Female
P4	Current Student:	third year college student studying Graphic Communication at Cal Poly	Female
P5	Current Student:	Senior in college studying Graphic Communication at Cal Poly	Female
P6	Current Student:	Senior in college studying Graphic Communication at Cal Poly	Female
P7	Alumni:	Cal Poly GrC alumni & GrC advisory board member	Male
P8	Alumni:	Cal Poly GrC alumni & GrC advisory board member	Male
P9	Alumni:	Cal Poly GrC alumni & GrC advisory board member.	Male

Figure 23. Study Participants

Conducting interviews was a useful method to investigate each individual's social media usage patterns and preferences in an in depth way. The interviews allowed for discovery of how each individual thought and felt about social media and why they held those opinions. Interviews also helped add human dimension to impersonal data. Social media preferences and usage is a personal topic because it relates to how individuals prefer to digitally interact with other people and the environment around them. These interviews led to a deeper understanding and explanation of the quantitative research of Facebook Insights and a survey. Through this deeper understanding, more accurate and detailed conclusions about how to effectively send messages to the Graphic Communication Department's different target audience's using social media was reached.

Participant 1, who will also be referred to as P1, was a high school senior who applied to Cal Poly for Graphic Communication but was not get admitted. P1 was considered a part of the prospective student group. P1 chose to attend Chico State University in the Fall of 2014. The

interview with P1 was conducted through email. P1 used Twitter the most often and only checked her Facebook 2-5 times per month.

Participant 2, or P2, was a high school senior attending Cal Poly in the fall of 2014 to study Graphic Communication. P2 was considered as part of the prospective student group. The interview with P2 was conducted through email. P2 strongly felt that the Cal Poly Graphic Communication social media sites were not being advertised properly. P2 did not know we had a social media presence. P2 mostly interacted on social media using Instagram and Facebook.

Participant 3, or P3, was a high school senior attending Cal Poly in the fall to study Graphic Communication. The interview with P3 was conducted through email. P3 was part of the prospective student group. What stood out in the interview was that P3 felt the information on the Cal Poly Graphic Communication social media pages was not relevant to her because she was still in high school. P3 mentioned, “As of right now I do not like any of the GrC social media pages, but I have been on them. I want to like them when I'm enrolled in classes because I feel that's when most of the class of 2014 will join as well.” P3 suggested that the Graphic Communication Department start a Tumblr to showcase projects that are created in the department.

Participant 4, who will also be referred to as P4, was a senior in the Graphic Communication Department at Cal Poly. P4 was included in the current student group. The interview with P4 was conducted through email. P4 used Facebook as her main social media platform and used Twitter and YouTube the least. P4 was interested in seeing posts about projects in the department, students, teachers, and events. P4 felt it was important to continue to “get the

word out” about our social media sites to increase likes on the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Facebook page.

Participant 5, or P5, was also a senior studying Graphic Communication at Cal Poly. P5 was part of the current student group. The interview with P5 was conducted through email. P5 was interested in seeing less posts about faculty and staff and more information about events and career fairs. P5 also mentioned that about one post per day was enough.

Participant 6, or P6, was a junior at Cal Poly studying Graphic Communication. The interview with P6 was conducted through email. P6 is considered a part of the current students group. P6 felt overall that the Graphic Communication Department’s current social media practices were effective. P6 mostly enjoyed the light-humored posts about students and staff in the department. She also felt that the LinkedIn page was very effective in relaying job and internship listings. P6 did not follow Cal Poly Graphic Communication on Twitter or Instagram. P6 suggested to have teachers promote the social media sites to increase followers. Specifically, “get teacher’s onboard and have them make it an assignment to find something relevant to post on social media.”

Participant 7, or P7, was in the alumni group and was a Cal Poly Graphic Communication advisory board member. The interview with P7 was conducted over the phone. P7 graduated from Cal poly in 1977 with a management concentration. He has taught over many years and was an honored alumni in 1999. He was also the chairman of the advisory board for 3 to 4 years. Before the interview, P7 had not seen any of the Graphic Communication Department social media pages and was not even aware that the department was on social media. P7 scrolled felt that the social media team needed a plan. P7 suggested paying to promote the page and using

analytics more often to create an effective social media strategy. P7 also strongly felt that relevance of the content was much more important than frequency of content. P7 is an avid Facebook user and uses social media often for his own business. P7 offered to meet with the Graphic Communication social media group to help create a plan.

Participant 8, or P8, was part of the alumni group. P8 was a senior manager of Worldwide Education Services at EFI. He graduated from Cal Poly and was a Cal Poly Graphic Communication Department advisory board member. P8 was not an avid social media user. P8 stated he barely used Facebook because he does not have enough time. As a busy professional, he felt social media was not the best way to communicate information about the department. P8 also was not aware the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Department was on social media. He felt there was a huge issue with awareness of the Graphic Communication social media sites. He suggested the alumni receive emails promoting Graphic Communication social media sites. He was hoping to see more of a voice coming through in emails he received from the department. He felt that with a more personalized voice and message over email, alumni would be more inclined to visit the social media sites. P8 felt that awareness of the Graphic Communication social media sites was a huge issue.

Participant 9, or P9, was part of the alumni group, and was a Cal Poly Graphic Communication Department advisory board member. The interview with P9 was conducted through email. P9 only used Facebook and LinkedIn. P9 was not aware of the Graphic Communication social media sites and requested an invite. He felt email was a great way to communicate with alumni. P9 was interested in seeing interesting stories about students. He also

mentioned, “As a board member, I’d love to see a regular email communication from the social team with stats and a summary [of] various efforts. (Include an invite to the social media pages).”

Survey

The next quantitative portion of my research consisted of a survey conducted through Survey Monkey. The survey was nine questions. It was distributed through email and Facebook. The purpose of the survey was to get a better understanding of how prospective students, current students, and alumni interact with social media and with the Graphic Communication social media sites. A survey is a fast way to reach a large audience. There was a total of 67 participants. The following figure shows the breakdown of the age groups of the survey participants.

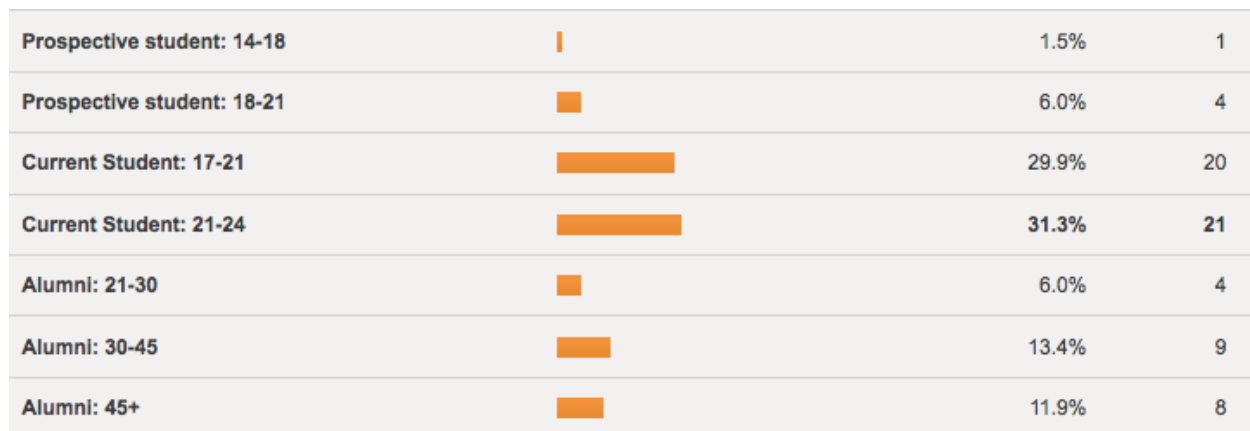


Figure 24. Survey Participant Ages
Source: Survey Monkey

The table titled, *Survey Analysis*, in the appendix shows the breakdown of survey responses by overall responses, and by the group of prospective students, current students, and alumni. Facebook was the main social media platform used by alumni, current students, and prospective students. 85.10 % of participants said Facebook was their main social media platform. When it came to what time of the day people were most likely to be on social media,

the morning and evening were the most popular times. 68.70% of participants claimed to be on social media between 8 PM and 10 PM. The overall consensus for why participants disliked a Facebook page was that because of too many posts, irrelevant posts, or they do not have interest in the content of the posts. When it came to content, alumni were most interested in seeing career information, department club information, and department events. Current students were most interested in seeing career information, department events, and student work. Prospective students were most interested in seeing content about career information, department vents, recent graduate profiles, and department club information. Other content not included in the survey options that participants wanted to see was alumni social events, alumni profiles, department history, relevant news, designs and projects.

The survey was an effective way to breakdown the Graphic Communication Department's three target audiences and analyze the most effective way to communicate with them through social media based on the responses they gave on the survey. These survey responses helped form recommendations and conclusions about the three target audiences.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Purpose

In the fall of the 2013-2014 school year, a team of about 10 students in the Graphic Communication Department came together to create a social media plan for the Department. There were many goals when starting social media pages for the Graphic Communication Department. One of those goals was to create more awareness about events, industry news and career opportunities. Another goal was to create a stronger sense of familiarity among current students, staff, and teachers. One more goal was to help prospective students, current students, and alumni network and connect. The social media team started by creating a Cal Poly Graphic Communication Department Facebook page. They soon branched out to make a LinkedIn page, Twitter page and Instagram account. By June 2014, the team had grown to about 30 people and was launching a YouTube channel. Talks of a Pinterest and Tumblr were in the works as well. The one thing the team seemed to be missing was a clear plan as to how to grow their audience and use these social media platforms to effectively send messages to prospective students, current students, and alumni.

After the first few months that the Facebook page had launched, the number of page likes began to plateau. The department's social media sites were performing well from an interaction prospective but performing poorly from a growth prospective. The purpose of this research was to help put a plan in place to improve the effectiveness of posts and increase audience size on the Graphic Communication Department's Social media sites. Researching how to most effectively target the department's different audiences of prospective students, current students, and alumni through social media will allow the social media team to create a plan based on research and

recommendations. Conclusions from this research will help create a plan to strengthen the strong aspects and improve the weak aspects of Graphic Communication social media.

Upon concluding my research, there were three major themes that stood out. The first theme was that awareness of the Cal Poly Graphic Communication social media sites is very important. The next theme was that content is very important to an audience who uses social media. The third theme was that it is important to properly utilize the different social media platforms when targeting different audiences.

Awareness:

The main takeaway from the interview portion of the research was that there was not enough awareness of the Cal Poly Graphic Communication social media sites. Mainly the alumni and prospective students were unaware that the department had a Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. All interviewees said they would have liked or followed the pages if they knew it existed. If prospective students and alumni are not even aware that the Graphic Communication Department is on social media, the department is missing a huge audience.

Interviews with alumni led to the conclusion that email was a great way to bring awareness to this group. Alumni and advisory board members occasionally get email updates from the department. Participant 9, part of the alumni group, stated, “The challenge is as alumni, we have regional alumni emails and overall alumni messages coming from chapters rather than the actual department.” P9 mentioned this because he felt there needed to be a stronger voice coming specifically from the Cal Poly Graphic Communication Department. Sending out shorter, more personalized emails more frequently to the alumni could be an option to drive more alumni

traffic to the social media pages. Facebook or LinkedIn URLs could be incorporated into the content of these emails. For example, when a Graphic Communication career day event is coming up, the email could link to a Facebook post advertising the career fair. Another way to raise awareness through email is integrating a widget into the email that asks people to “like and follow” the Graphic Communication social media sites.

Another possible plan to increase awareness is to create a realistic budget for the social media team every quarter in which they can use to promote posts. Participant 7, part of the alumni group, stated, “If you had a budget of \$10, you could do sponsored posts, in stream news feed advertising, posted content that links back to the page for more information, and create customer audiences for people interested. You could identify specific markets, and use CPM advertising in the news feed. \$10 would get you 40,000 views. You can get as high as 7,000 views for as little as a dollar.” At the time of this research, all Facebook posts were reaching people organically. This means a Facebook post would not be seen unless someone was already a fan of the page. Spending money on Facebook posts would allow the social media team to target Facebook posts to a specific audience and geographic location. This would result in a Facebook post reaching a much wider audience. Facebook users who are not fans of the Graphic Communication Facebook page would find Graphic Communication Facebook posts in their news feed.

When Participant 2, who was part of the prospective student group, was asked what the social media team could be doing to improve, she stated, “Advertise more that there are social media sites because up until now, I didn't know there were sites.” Participant 1, part of the prospective student group, said, “I would suggest advertising your social media pages better

because without me going to look for it I wouldn't have thought to follow the Cal Poly GrC pages on twitter and Instagram.” Again, there is a lack of awareness which alienates a huge audience that could potentially be interacting with the Graphic Communication social media sites. Further research should be done to come with a plan to increase awareness in the prospective student group. Research done for the purpose of this senior project did not get a wide enough range of information from the prospective student target audience to come to any conclusions about a plan to increase awareness in this demographic. However, a common place that many prospective students research the Graphic Communication Department at Cal Poly is through the Cal Poly Graphic Communication website, grc.calpoly.edu. At the time that this research was conducted, grc.calpoly.edu had a small widget in the bottom right hand corner of the website homepage. The following image displays how the widget appeared on the website homepage at the time of this research.

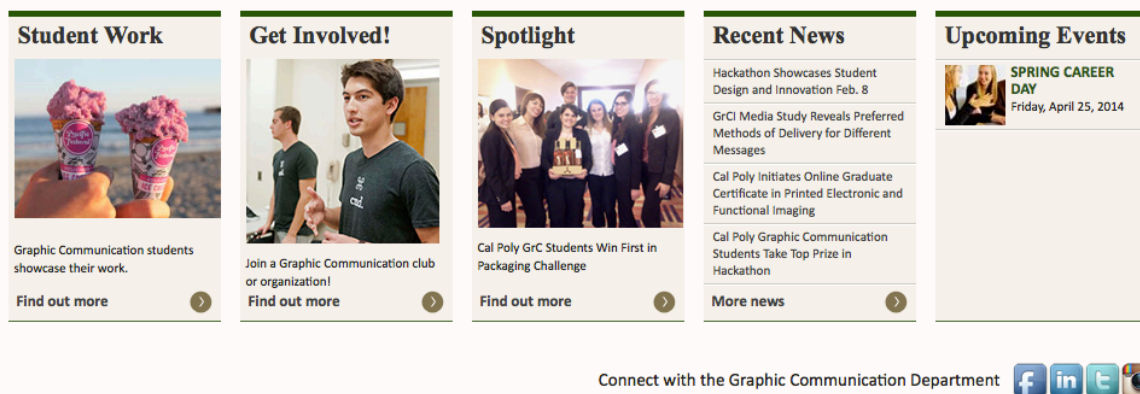


Figure 25. Cal Poly Graphic Communication Homepage
Source: www.grc.calpoly.edu

Designing a bigger widget or advertising the social media sites in a more prominent area on the website are a few options for creating awareness for the prospective student target audience.

When it came to current students, they seemed to be very aware that the Graphic Communication Department had a social media presence. Current students are often part of the content posted on social media which is most likely why the awareness in this group is not lacking. However, it is still important to consider ways in which awareness can be improved for current students. Participant 6 suggested, “An immediate way [to get current students more involved] would be to get teachers onboard and have them make it an assignment to find something relevant to post on social media.” Getting teachers involved in promoting the Graphic Communication social media sites would be a great place to start. Specifically, teachers could create a hashtag and assign it to certain student projects that a class creates. For example, if a design class is creating a movie poster, the teacher could create the hashtag, #grcmovieposter, then ask students to post pictures of their projects to social media using that hashtag. Then the Graphic Communication Department could promote this hashtag on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Current students would get to showcase their hard work and projects to followers of the Graphic Communication Department social media sites.

Another way to raise awareness among current students would be to create signage around the department promoting the social media pages and create a single hashtag for the department. The hashtag should be short and simple such as, #GrC. The social media team should create eye-catching signage with a call to action and QR code for people to easily, “like,” or “follow,” the Graphic Communication Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and platforms to follow. Signage should be printed from the University Graphics System to promote camaraderie between UGS and the social media team.

Content:

After conducting a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research through interviews, a survey, and Facebook Insights, it was concluded that content posted on different social media platforms was important to the different target audiences of prospective students, current students, and alumni. Each target audience had generally similar topics that they wanted to see, with slight differentiation between each audience. In the survey, one of the questions asked participants the reason why they “unliked” a Facebook page. The general consensus was that participants were not interested in seeing information that was irrelevant to them, repetitive, or un-interesting. Content is key in effectively sending messages to the Graphic Communication Department’s different target audiences of prospective students, current students, and alumni. The following chart shows information extracted from the survey about what kind of content each target audience was interested in seeing

Type of Content	% of all participants	Alumni	Current Students	Prospective Students
Career Info	86.60%	16	37	5
Department Events	83.60%	16	35	5
Student Work	62.70%	10	30	2
Senior Projects	46.30%	10	19	2
Recent Graduate Profiles	50.70%	10	20	4
Undergraduate Profiles	34.30%	8	12	3
Staff & Faculty Profiles	41.80%	8	17	3
Curriculum	20.90%	5	8	1
Dept. Club Information	65.70%	12	28	4
Other	Alumni events & profiles, history, relevant news, designs and projects	4 Responses	1 response	0 responses

Figure 26. Content Preferences

Overall, career information was the most chosen type of content. Department events was the second most chosen topic. At the time of this research, there was a disconnect between the request for career postings and the interaction with career postings that were already being posted to Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Essentially, career posts were the worst performing posts on the Graphic Communication Facebook page with almost zero interaction. The gap between audience interaction with career posts and the interest in more career information must be bridged. At the time of this research, career posts were a simple description of the position and a link to more information or how to apply. To bridge the gap and have more interaction with career posts, the content of the posts should have a call to action. Another option is to incentivize the audience to interact with the career posts. An example of this would be asking the audience to share the career post with someone they think would be a good fit for the job. The social media team could keep track of everyone who shares the career post and enter those people into a drawing for a gift card or small prize at the end of every quarter. In conclusion, career information is highly requested among all target audiences, but the performance of these posts must be improved in order for the post to reach more people. The more interaction a career post gets, the more people it reaches. If the posts continue performing with zero interaction, the career information will continue to fall through the cracks and not reach a wide audience.

Data from the survey showed that prospective students were most interested in seeing content relating to career information, department events, recent graduate profiles, and department club information. This is the content that should be used when posts are catered towards prospective students. Prospective student and Participant 1 stated,

“For social media posts, I like to see updates of the facility, student work and awards students have earned. I like to see updates on current students and student work. I also like to see events being hosted on campus for students to attend. I would like to see less updates about other programs at Cal Poly. I like when the page is strictly about the GrC program. I love seeing examples of student work especially when they won a competition or an award for that piece of work.”

Prospective student and Participant 3 also had insight about specific content she was interested in seeing.

“I would like to see pictures of GrC events and links to projects created by the GrC majors. I would like to see less promotion and ads on social media. I would like to see more hashtags because I think they're really useful. A Facebook post is exciting because it's a person putting out information that one would might not already know. It offers something new, informs people of something. I find it annoying when people post hundreds of photos of the same thing/same event.”

It is important to devise a plan as to how to involve prospective students in the posts although they are not attending the school yet. Hashtags are a good place to start because prospective students can get involved with hashtags even if they are not attending Cal Poly yet or live far from San Luis Obispo. Hashtags will help prospective students more effectively search for information they are interested in. For example, if a prospective student is interested in typography, all student work posts that use typography should use a typography hashtag. Then when the prospective students searches this hashtag, they will be able to see all of the projects, clubs, events and careers related to typography. This is an effective way to give prospective

students a close look at things they could potentially get involved in if attending Cal Poly to study Graphic Communication.

Data from the survey showed that current students were most interested in seeing content about career information, department events, and student work. Facebook insights showed that past Facebook posts that related to faculty and student projects typically performed very well among current students. Current student and Participant 4 stated, “I like to see posts about department culture, students, staff and curriculum. I don’t care as much about information pertaining to events or alumni.” Participant 5 who was also a current student mentioned, “I want to see more updates on things and events coming up. And school stuff coming up in general like the general career fair for Cal Poly and even ASI events. I want to see less faculty stuff.” Lastly, current student and Participant 6 said,

“I love seeing pictures of what students are working on. It gets me so excited to see the process and the finished product. I also get a kick out of silly/miscellaneous information about our professors, and funny pictures of them during class. On a serious note, I appreciate the job postings via email and LinkedIn. I always check to see if any of them are relevant to my career path, and if they are I’ll get more information and possibly apply. Because our department is so tight knit and we all know everyone, I wouldn’t mind seeing daily posts of funny things going on or pictures of student work. I’d say more than once a day is too much. As far as job postings and serious information, I’d say once a week, sent in one email/post.”

The trend brought up by data from interviews, a survey and Facebook Insights shows that current students want content that reinforce the camaraderie and familiarity in the department. Another trend shows that current students feel it is very important to be involved in the Graphic Communication Industry which relates to why they want information about careers and events. Using hashtags and tagging people or companies in the content of posts is a good way to involve more of the current student audience in posts. When catering the content towards current students, the posts should have a “voice.” Creating a voice through social media means that the content of the posts have a personality. A strong voice will help current students get more involved in posts and be more interested in the content.

Data from the survey showed that alumni wanted to see content about career information, department events, and department club information. When catering content to alumni, posts should provide information that is relevant to them. To effectively use social media to communicate with alumni, the social media team needs to get alumni more involved in the content posted. By this, I mean post information about interesting things alumni are doing or introducing the advisory board to students and connect students with the alumni for career opportunities. Alumni and Participant 7 stated,

“Alumni like to know where people end up. Use information you can get off of LinkedIn, LinkedIn updates (cross post with graphics department) think about what you are posting from the position of who is reading it. It’s good to see stuff about the GRCi (cross link to GrCi page) and cross post into the alumni group. I would also like to see featured senior projects, activities going on, new equipment (arriving or different kind of deal) and faculty projects.”

Alumni and Participant 8 said, “Alumni love hearing about recent graduates. We want to hear the success of the program because we are associated with it.” Trends from the interviews show that an effective way to communicate with alumni through social media would be to create more content that shows the alumni the strength of the department. This would mean showing awards and bigger projects that involve students in the larger scale of the whole Graphic Communication industry. Alumni want to see content about the big picture of the Graphic Communication Department. Trade shows, senior projects, and capstone classes are examples of content that show the Graphic Communication in a big picture sense. The content should encompass all the great things the department offers to make the alumni proud.

Platforms:

Prospective students, current students, and alumni prefer different social media platforms over others. By targeting the different audiences using the proper platforms, messages will be more effectively relayed to these audiences. Facebook was the most used social media platform overall. Further researched showed the breakdown of platform preference after Facebook.

The survey conducted showed the LinkedIn was the next main social media platform after Facebook used in the alumni group. Participant 7, part of the alumni group, discussed which platforms he preferred to use.

“I actually use Facebook quite a bit. I spend a lot of time on Facebook because of backend access to data and ability to create precise audiences and drill down to whatever I’m interested in doing. I Haven’t done much with Instagram yet. I’ve done a bit with Pinterest but it’s not the right market for my business, Pinterest is

a female dominated market, not the best thing for us. I have 1800 connections on LinkedIn. I use linkedIn quite a bit for introductions and referrals.”

Participant 7 mainly uses social media for his business. He is less concerned with the platforms from a personal perspective. The platforms Participant 7 choose were based on the target audience of his business. Participant 8 discussed his preference for different social media platforms from a personal and business perspective.

“For me, I don’t do much more than use LinkedIn because I am busy, I’m not interested in knowing everyones business every three or four hours. If I spend any time at all on social media it is typically LinkedIn. Use it for professional, not personal. Social media can also be as simple as messaging and emails. There is something to be said for that. That is my next most common form of communication. My company uses social media but personally I don’t. I don’t use Pinterest too much, I focus on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Feedback from alumni Participant 7 and 8 show that busy, working professionals do not have as much time to be on social media for personal use. This leads to the conclusion that LinkedIn is a great platform to use to effectively send messages to alumni. LinkedIn allows for the Graphic Communication Department to relay messages to alumni in a timely and professional tone. LinkedIn allows alumni to stay in touch with the department while they network for business opportunities. Updates such as career and industry opportunities, awards and department news are appropriate messages that should be updated on the department’s LinkedIn page.

The survey conducted for purposes of this research project showed that after Facebook, current students were most likely to use Instagram as their main social media platform.

Instagram is an image-based social media platform. This is to the advantage of the Graphic Communication Department because there are so many tangible projects that students create and can show. Although the survey showed Facebook and Instagram as the main social media platforms among current students, participant interviews showed that current students are fairly well-rounded in the social media platforms they use. Participant 6 discussed which platforms she preferred to use.

“I avidly use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. I usually check Facebook and Instagram a few times throughout the day, Twitter once a day and LinkedIn every week or so. I only use my youtube account when I have to upload something, which is maybe once a year. Pinterest is too complicated for me, I don’t want to waste too much of my time online! I’ve never used foursquare or vine for time’s sake.”

Although current students appear to use many different social media platforms, Twitter did not appear to be an effective way to send messages to current students. Only four current students who participated in the survey claimed to use Twitter as their main social media platform. Participant 4 also stated, “I use Twitter/YouTube the least,” when asked what social media platforms she preferred to use. Participant 5 claimed to only use Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. Approximately 27% of current students surveyed claimed to use LinkedIn as their main social media platform. However, approximately 51% of currently students surveyed said they used LinkedIn as the main social media platform to learn about companies. In conclusion, Facebook and Instagram are the most effective social media platforms to use to send messages to

current students. It should be noted, however, that LinkedIn is an effective platform to use with current students from a career standpoint.

The survey conducted for this research showed that Facebook and Instagram were the main social media platforms that prospective students used. There was an equal distribution among this audience with four participants who chose Facebook and four who chose Instagram. Because the survey sample size of prospective students was so small, it is hard to come to conclusions based on this research. The interview component of the research provided more insight to which platforms prospective students prefer to use. Prospective student and Participant 1 spoke to which social media sites she used most and least often.

“I check Instagram and Twitter at least once a day but more depending on how much down time I have. Twitter is the site I use the most because it is constantly updated but I really like Instagram because of the pictures. I check Facebook about 2-5 times a month. I do not have a YouTube account but I do use it about once a day to look up various videos and resources. I do not use linkedIn at all.”

Participant 1 appeared to like social media platforms that delivered concise information that was constantly being updated. If this is representative of a larger audience of prospective students, Twitter and Instagram would be the most effective platforms to send messages to this audience. Participant 2 also discussed which social media platforms she used most often.

“I use social media everyday, especially Facebook and Instagram. I occasionally use Twitter. And sometimes StumbleUpon, I don't know if that counts. I use YouTube most everyday as well. However, I use it mainly to watch videos and

rarely to comment or like videos or channels so I would hardly call it a social media site. I don't use LinkedIn, Pinterest, Tumblr, Formspring or MySpace.”

Both Participant 1 and 2 stated Instagram as a main platform they use. Further research should be done with prospective students to get a better understanding of which social media platforms they prefer to use. Further research should entail another survey with a sample size of at least 30 people. More interviews with a sample size between 10 and 15 people would show further trends among this audience. After further research is done with a wider audience of prospective students, a plan can be created and implemented to effectively send messages to this audience.

Implications for further Research:

Social media trends are constantly changing. With fast-paced technology and new social media platforms arising all of the time, it is important to continue doing research. The goal of further research would be to stay up to date with the changing social media trends among different audiences. My suggestions for further research include another survey with a larger sample size, more interviews, continuous monitoring of Facebook Insights, and open-ended interviews in a group setting with each audience.

Having a larger sample size for a survey and more interviews will allow for trends to develop. Because of a time and resource restraint, the sample sizes for this research were smaller than hoped for. Continuous monitoring of Facebook Insights is an easy and accessible way to continue research. Without measurement or monitoring there will be no improvement. A leader in the Graphic Communication social media team should create benchmarks and goals to meet which can be tracked and measured. Measurement is the only way to evaluate if an implemented

plan is working. Measurements are a necessary part of any social media strategy. Another method of further research would be to have open-ended interviews in a group setting with each audience. Groups of about 10 people would sit in a room and be asked open-ended questions. This is a good method of research because participants feel comfortable to open up about their thoughts and compare and contrast their opinions to other participants in the group. The group session should be filmed with all participant's consent.

In any successful business, strategy changes throughout time. The Graphic Communication social media team should use this research to continually improve and grow their social media audience. Trends will continue to change and new social media tools will arise. The team must stay ahead of change to be successful.

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Appendix

Interviews:

Participant 1:

“ My name is [...] and I am 17 years old and from Folsom, California. I am currently a senior at Vista del Lago high school. Next year I will be attending Chico State University for a major in communication design.”

“ I check Instagram and Twitter at least once a day but more depending on how much down time I have. Twitter is the site I use the most because it is constantly updated but I really like Instagram because of the pictures. I check Facebook about 2-5 times a month. I do not have a YouTube account but I do use it about once a day to look up various videos and resources. I do not use linked in at all.”

“ At one point in time I liked/followed the Cal Poly GrC pages on Instagram and Twitter but have recently un-followed them because I am not attending Cal Poly. I never looked for the pages on Facebook because I hardly use Facebook anymore. I like to see updates on current students and the projects they complete and if they win competitions or awards. I also like to see the facility and the campus.”

“I don't get involved in Facebook posts because I do not use Facebook very much and when I do it's for a small amount of time.”

“For social media posts, I like to see updates of the facility, student work and awards students have earned.”

“ I like to see updates on current students and student work. I also like to see events being hosted on campus for students to attend. I would like to see less updates about other programs at Cal Poly. I like when the page is strictly about the GrC program.”

“I love seeing examples of student work especially when they won a competition or an award for that price of work.”

“I find it annoying when the Cal Poly GrC page re-tweets about other programs at the school but I understand why they did. I just like to focus on the program I am following.”

“It gets annoying when Instagram is updated more than 2 times a day but twitter can be updated more per day, around 5 times at the most.”

“It is effective to show the potential students what Cal Poly's program is all about by showing student work and the events they host. Social media is a great way to get students interested and involved with the GrC program. It is also effective to introduce the program and what it entails to show potential students what your program is like.”

“I would suggest advertising your social media pages better because without me going to look for it I wouldn't have thought to follow the Cal Poly GrC pages on twitter and Instagram.”

“I have no questions at this time.”

Participant 2:

“I am eighteen years old. I go to Santa Barbara Senior High School and I will be attending Cal Poly SLO next fall as a Graphic Communication major.”

“I use social media everyday, especially Facebook and Instagram. I occasionally use Twitter. And sometimes StumbleUpon, I don't know if that counts. I use YouTube most everyday as well, however, I use it mainly to watch videos and rarely to comment or like videos or channels so I would hardly call it a social media site. I don't use LinkedIn, Pinterest, Tumblr, Formspring, or MySpace.”

“I wasn't aware that the Graphic Communication department had social media pages. I'd like the pages if I had the links!”

“I will get involved if I relate to the post but usually I will not participate.”

“I don't know if they already have them but it'd be cool to see current students' work.”

“When I relate to a post or it is interesting news or if it's funny, then it will excite me.”

“When the post is an inside joke or something religious or political that doesn't apply to me, I will just ignore it.”

“Maybe like 5 or more is too many.”

“Maybe post things that allow the reader to get involved, such as questions or links to student work.”

“Advertise more that there are social media sites because up until now, I didn't know there were sites. Can you send me links to the sites?”

Participant 3:

“I'm 17 years old from Los Altos, California. I am attending Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, majoring in Graphic Communications.”

“I am an average social media user, in the sense that I do check social media sites at least twice a day. I use Facebook, Instagram and Tumblr, as well as watch Youtube videos but do not use my account really. I use Tumblr the most out of the three. I don't think I'll ever use Twitter because when I promote events, I use Facebook and I don't think I could utilize 140 characters as well as I'd like to.”

“As of right now I do not like any of the GrC social media pages, but I have been on them. I want to like them when I'm enrolled in classes because I feel that's when most of the class of 2014 will join as well.”

“Facebook posts are good to get involved in because when you comment or like one, it usually shows up on someone else's newsfeed. It brings exposure.”

“I would like to see pictures of GrC events and links to projects created by the GrC majors. I would like to see less promotion and ads on social media. I would like to see more hashtags because I think they're really useful.”

“A Facebook post is exciting because it's a person putting out information that one would might not already know. It offers something new, informs people of something.”

“I find it annoying when people post hundreds of photos of the same thing/same event. I also find it annoying when people that I definitely do not know add me.”

“More than 2 posts is too many per day.”

“An effective way to use social media for a college program would definitely to have a Facebook page. On that Facebook page, it's important to post projects and events going on to keep the people interested up to date.”

“One suggestion I'd have is to make a Tumblr to post GrC projects! On Tumblr you can share your work with followers and the work can be shared with your follower's followers and so on. It's also a way to post a variety of projects, from photos to links.”

“I don't have any questions!”

Participant 4:

“Yes, I am an avid social media user. I check Facebook most often, then Instagram, then LinkedIn.

I use Twitter/YouTube the least”

“Yes, I like the Facebook and Instagram. I like the updates about current GrC projects, and other department updates about teachers/students/events. I don't as much like the random updates/statuses.”

“To get involved with posts, I usually “like” them. When I like the posts or see them in my news feed I like to “like” them to help other people see UGS in their feeds, and show my support”

“I like what I see so far on the GrC social media sites.”

“I haven't seen too many posts so far.”

“I haven't seen much information on careers and internships. I like to see posts about department culture, students, staff, and curriculum. I don't care as much about information pertaining to events or alumni.”

“Yes, I would you reach out to the social media team to share on Facebook/Instagram/Twitter”

“Keep it interesting/new/relevant. Reach out to potential new students and keep working to get the word out about the new social media.”

“To get people more involved you should post the page on social media sites, increase “likes” and awareness of the pages.”

“I have no questions.”

Participant 5:

“Yes. I use Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat all day. But only those three.”

“Yes, Facebook. I like seeing info on events and things that are coming up. I'm not a huge fan of random pictures of faculty and stuff.”

“Not really. I never really saw a need to.”

“I want to see more updates on things and events coming up. And school stuff coming up in general like the general career fair for Cal Poly and even ASI events. I want to see less faculty stuff. I think a post a day is good. If there is more info than more would be fine.”

“I don't recall it relaying internship stuff and i think it needs more events. It relays staff, students, and department culture well. I don't recall alumni posts either or curriculum.”

“More events including general Cal Poly events news. More job postings.”

“Make the postings things that will be useful to them, not necessarily just fun to read.”

Participant 6:

“I avidly use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. I usually check Facebook and Instagram a few times throughout the day, Twitter once a day, and LinkedIn every week or so. I only use my youtube account when I have to upload something, which is maybe once a year. Pinterest is too complicated for me, I don't want to waste too much of my time online! I've never used foursquare or vine for time's sake.”

“I follow GrC on Facebook and LinkedIn. It is helpful to see information on Facebook when I'm scrolling through my newsfeed on a daily basis, as Facebook is used not just for personal use, but to follow other business pages. I love being on the GrC LinkedIn page. It is so convenient to see jobs and internships available when I am already on the social network to search for them anyway. I do not follow GrC on Instagram or Twitter. I only use Instagram too look at my friends' cool photos and to keep in touch with a few celebrities - not the social media network for business or school department updates. For twitter, I guess I just haven't gotten around to it!”

“If a post is relevant to me I'll definitely like it. I have to be really intrigued to comment because it takes more time. If I think the post will appeal greatly to my friends who do not “like” the GrC page, I'll most likely tell them about the post, but probably not actually repost/share.”

“I love seeing pictures of what students are working on. It gets me so excited to see the process and the finished product. I also get a kick out of silly/miscellaneous information about our professors, and funny pictures of them during class. On a serious note, I appreciate the job postings via email and LinkedIn. I always check to see if any of them are relevant to my career path, and if they are I'll get more information and possibly apply. Because our department is so tight knit and we all know everyone, I wouldn't mind seeing daily posts of funny things going on or pictures of student work. I'd say more than once a day is too much. As far as job postings and serious information, I'd say once a week, sent in one email/post.”

“I find GrC social media posts very effective. I am able to see what our students and staff are up to when I am not around, what internship opportunities arise, and about current events. These social media platforms have definitely sparked student and staff relationships for the better. It is also nice to hear about events or specific information in another form other than email, since it typically isn't checked as often as social media.”

“I would definitely reach out, though I am not really involved in GrC other than going to class and on a few field trips. If I did, I would reach out via facebook since it is the most popular for students. If I had a job opportunity I’d have it sent out in the newsletter, Facebook, and on LinkedIn.”

“It’s awesome! I do get a kick out of the pictures/funny comments from professors. Maybe you could start a segment following Ken’s bowties or something!”

“An immediate way would to get teacher’s onboard and have them make it an assignment to find something relevant to post on social media (as far as current students.) As far as alumni and prospective students, maybe an incentive could be offered. Open house would be a great opportunity to pass out stickers/cards/etc. to them.”

Participant 7

“I graduated from Cal poly in 1977, management concentration. I have been teaching over many years and was an honored alumni in 1999. I’ve been on the board of directors since 1993. I was also the chairman of the advisory board for 3-4 years.”

“I am not familiar with the Facebook efforts.”

“I actually use Facebook quite a bit. I spend a lot of time on Facebook because of backend access to data and ability to create precise audiences and drill down to whatever I’m interested in doing.”

“I Haven’t done much with Instagram yet, done a bit with Pinterest but it’s not the right market for my business, Pinterest is a female dominated market, not the best thing for us. I have 1800 connections on LinkedIn. I use linkedIn quite a bit for introductions and referrals.”

“I don’t currently like any pages because I wasn’t even aware of them. I knew you were doing some social media stuff but didn’t know the names of the group.”

“A tool you should use is “likealyzer” it gives you a rating of 1-100, your rating is “67” which is a very healthy page. Your growth rate is slow (1.82%). If you get growth rate up to 7+ percent, it will self propagate. Engagement rate is 21.9 % which is really good. People who are there are engaged. Your timing is way off. Posting content to the page when people aren’t seeing it. Don’t post so much content that posts become ineffective. You should use hashtags, calls to actions, put information on blog and do a link to the blog. Post type is 37.5 percent pictures, 33% posts, 20.8% links, you need more pictures. Pictures engage the highest. Step up picture percentage.

Schedule the posts around the times where you are most receptive. Change your settings from not allowing people to post into the timeline. You need to change setting in pages to allow people to post.”

“I always try to get involved in Facebook posts. I spend about 2 hours a day. Because of communities I participate in, the Facebook instant messaging is a constant thing in terms of getting connected for clients and different activities.”

“Alumni like to know where people end up. Use information you can get off of LinkedIn, LinkedIn updates (cross post with graphics department) think about what you are posting from the position of who is reading it. It’s good to see stuff about the GRCi (cross link to GrCi page) and cross post into the alumni group. I would also like to see featured senior projects, activities going on, new equipment (arriving or different kind of deal), and faculty projects. Use hashtags strategically. I liked the use of the hashtag during printing week. Random hashtags are not helpful. Social media is not about frequency of positing, its about data behind it. You need to understand how to access this data and how to use graph search, ad-manager, create groups and audiences. Monetize advertising from it. If you had budget of 10 dollars, you could do sponsored posts, and in stream news feed advertising. Posted content that links back to the page for more information, create customer audiences for people interested. Specific markets (flexography), identify different markets, use CPM advertising in the news feed. \$10 would get you 40,000 views. You can get as high as 7,000 views for as little as a dollar.”

“I’m always up to get involved. If you want to get together at Cal Poly I can meet with you and Ken. I did an hour long presentation on how to use social media, and what the trends are from a business stand point, what the trends are online and what it means to individuals in business that are using social media to remain relevant and connected. What is good today is different in 90 days, but the fundamentals stay the same. Creating relevant content that people want to read and share. In terms of asking people to like the page , Facebook is cracking down on people begging for likes. Make sure to put content there that is highly sharable. The News feed is dynamic, rolling fast, when you get a thing for the career fair or event for print week, you could be positing twice a week at different times of the day. There are multiple opportunities. Facebook has throttled back reach of all pages so it is less than 10% of the people are going to see it. On any one given day, 50 people will see whatever you post for that day unless you post multiple days.”

“I would never go to the cal poly page unless we posted something in a stream we see every day (like Facebook and LinkedIn). Think about it as traffic, where is the traffic to your content coming from. We have limited sources and exposure. You compound limited exposure by posting

at inappropriate times during the day. You are limiting engagement. 20% engagement on your page is remarkable considering everything stacked against you.”

“You need a plan. It sounds like you have a bunch of random posts. We are being reactive. When someone asks us to post we do it. We have no plan in place, no metrics in place. Likealyzer shows improvement in engagement. We need to set goals for social media. Biggest negative aspect of social media, how do you measure it for effectiveness? Need to understand how to incorporate into social media plan.”

“Can you send me links to the social media pages? I can get together with Ken or other people. Youtube is phenomenal. I have done a lot of youtube stuff. I know what it takes to get views, get people involved, how you embed links into descriptions that takes you back to Facebook page. Everything we are doing needs to be viewed as a magnet or source of direction for traffic. I have done a lot of video marketing in terms of how to create kinds of videos people want to watch.”

Participant 8:

“I am a Senior Manager of Worldwide Educational Services at EFI. I graduated from Cal Poly.”

“The advisory board has little awareness about what is going on. What are you trying to accomplish? Based on that, I have some obvious questions: depending on target audience, what is an acceptable interest or attach rate? Some people are tuned into Facebook, don’t use LinkedIn, etc.”

“You should have consideration around demographics. You will get pretty key findings based upon age. Two key considerations: what did people grow up with and what have they adopted in personal and professional life. I graduated in 1990. I struggle with social media aspect, and finding better ways to use it. From a personal stand point, targeting busy professionals, most of my social media is based on LinkedIn. Good network of alumni and people in the industry, communicate well and work well within LinkedIn. I use one form of social media from a personal and one from a professional standpoint, for me as John. I don’t have time to be a social media maven to drive my business. I don’t need that yet. There is huge value from an organization, a lot of things we can do. I oversee an international organization for training an organization for a high tech firm so I have to keep up on trends from learning and dev environment. Social media helps people learn. People learn in a classroom, video on youtube, reading book, article, but were finding that the cooperative nature of sharing information is hugely valuable. Community based approach to knowledge and awareness that can do two things: company, building relationship with customers, as you understand more about them, you can get that information because you can get reporting or analytics out of it. For me, I don’t do much more than use LinkedIn because I am busy, I’m not interested in knowing everyones business every three of four hours. If i spend any time at all on social media it is typically LinkedIn. Use it for professional, not personal. Social media can also be as simple as messaging

and emails. There is something to be said for that. that is my next most common form of communication. Company uses social media but personally I don't. Don't use Pinterest too much, focus on Facebook Twitter and LinkedIn. For what we do, our business is unique, at EFI social media means different things to different people. Primarily around community to support our customers and comes from how do we support them technically, it helps them understand our products, makes them aware of new releases, that's how we use it today. I can't speak to the effectiveness of it, but having a Facebook page, I can't tell you what that means as far as increments business or opportunity we have developed because of that. But it is a big consideration, goals of social media: cost of doing business, interest for customer, cost because customers don't pay for it, they just get info from you. Can you use social media to drive business? Driving awareness to advertising, social media has a lot of value with that. Drive people to Facebook pages (product announcements and pages). We have a twitter feed during trade shows, product announcements."

"Part of the challenge is how do you make awareness available to your audience? For example, vast majority of uses, webpage is awesome for GrC dept. Because you can drive them to LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, as an advisory board member, we have an advisory board LinkedIn page, as an alumni, we're really stuck in email thing. Challenge is as alumni, we have regional alumni emails, overall alumni messages, coming from chapters rather than the actual department. Maybe there needs to be a bigger question about how does the department want to be a voice to various groups? I get a lot of emails, but I don't see a voice of the GrC department back out to the alumni. I mean that voice could be an email or an invitation to know all of the other cool stuff we have available for them. Could be bigger question, how to engage alumni, the questions to ask are what would it take for you to participate or be a willing recipient of information and messages from the GrC department? I didn't even know there was a webpage. You should have a discussion around how to engage various target audiences. Alumni are tough because there are vary large age range and large technical acumen for these folks to get on these things. May be some focus on awareness that hasn't happened yet. Because we have all these tools, they are all there but doesn't mean people can come to them. We need to be pushing awareness out to them. Being an alumni, I don't remember seeing engaging enrollment to show tools to stay in touch. Alumni love hearing about recent graduates. They want to hear the success of the program because we are associated with it. For example, you have the department, but nothing saying within department communication tool, how do we have voice of alumni shared on a platform that could be used for Facebook or Twitter? I don't feel I am getting communication. That says as a GrC department I'm not feeling like I have a need to comeback and see anything on the web page because i don't know what is there. Find that the website is really cool, unless someone does a google search. I don't know the magic formula for you guys but what would it take to move this to a level of awareness that people want to be engaged and aware of this? How do we make them care? How do they feel this is for them not the GrC Department? It feels like there is a lack of engagement. People aren't aware of what is the website. Lets make an assumption, given people are involved currently, readily on email address that is checked on, if that is the start, does that department have a good working database of alumni in working form? If no, how do we build that database, if we do, are we validating these are a good way to interact? A lot of

people are email centric. “did you know?” A compelling personalized communication. How much do you want to put into communication versus driving back to webpage? Ask alumni if they are interested in getting involved. A component in communication that is awareness, and component that is a call to action, “now that you do know do you want to do more?” Find out how many people opened email you sent, then of those people how many clicked a link to the link you provided? You need to have metrics for this. It needs to be proactive. You may find there are general trends among groups you are going after. How do they communicate, what drives their interests, then decide what it looks like to move forward. Awareness plus call to action results in opportunities to see what works and what doesn’t work. On our site, we are working towards 2 or 3 really easy graphical questions, we are trying to understand who people are and what they do on a daily basis around our projects so with 1 or 2 questions we can filter out 95% of what they don’t need, we end up with a personal landing page with what they do need. So much more personal. When we have so much info, people need to filter it out because people don’t know what they need to know. I’m fortunate because I have insight being involved with the advisory board, but even still I don’t know about these pages.”

Participant 9:

“The only social media I use are Facebook and LinkedIn.”

“Yes! Just need an invite.”

“I want to see Department news, student and graduate stories.”

“I don’t want to see Anything not written by students.”

“I get involved in other pages posts, not GrC. I like, share depending on how much time I have.”

“I haven’t seen any social media pages you have yet.”

“Probably not. I’d prefer to talk to a professor or use the career fair folks.”

“Don’t forget broadcast email! At least for the board/alum audience. Write and broadcast interesting student stories. Track success by measuring open rates, likes and follows.”

“As a board member, I’d love to see a regular email communication from the social team with stats and a summary various efforts. (Include an invite to the social media pages.)”

Survey Analysis:

		All participants	Alumni	Current Student	Prospective Student
Occupation	GrC Industry	58.30%	13	NA	1
	Non GrC Industry	41.70%	7	3	NA
Main Social Media Platform	Facebook	85.10%	19	34	4
	Instagram	46.30%	5	22	4
	Twitter	10.40%	3	4	0
	LinkedIn	26.90%	8	9	1
	Don't Use Social Media	0.00%	0	0	0
	Other	Tumblr	0	3	0
Times of the Day on social media	6 AM-8 AM	16.40%	8	1	2
	8 AM- 10 AM	44.80%	13	15	2
	10 AM - 12 PM	28.40%	5	10	4
	12 PM- 2 PM	32.80%	9	11	2
	2 PM - 4 PM	25.40%	5	10	2
	4 PM - 6 PM	22.40%	3	10	2
	6 PM- 8 PM	44.80%	6	20	4
	8 PM - 10 PM	68.70%	12	29	5
	10 PM - 12 AM	42.30%	4	24	1
	12 AM - 2 AM	13.40%	0	8	1
	2 AM - 4 AM	1.50%	0	1	0
	4 AM - 6 AM	3.00%	1	1	0
Use Hashtags?	Yes	55.20%	10	24	3
	No	44.80%	11	17	2
Where do you use hashtags?	Facebook	18.90%	3	3	1
	Instagram	91.90%	7	24	3
	Twitter	43.20%	6	10	0
Why do you unlike a FB page?	Comment	General consensus: Too many posts, irrelevant, lack of interest	21 responses	41 responses	5 responses
What platform do you use to learn about companies?	Facebook	52.20%	6	24	5
	Twitter	4.50%	1	10	1
	Instagram	17.90%	1	2	0
	LinkedIn	50.70%	11	21	2
	Don't Learn about companies through social media	26.90%	9	9	0
	Other	Their own website	0	2	0
What content do you want to see?	Career Info	86.60%	16	37	5
	Department Events	83.60%	16	35	5
	Student Work	62.70%	10	30	2
	Senior Projects	46.30%	10	19	2
	Recent graduate profiles	50.70%	10	20	4
	Undergraduate profiles	34.30%	8	12	3
	Staff & Faculty profiles	41.80%	8	17	3
	Curriculum	20.90%	5	8	1
	Dept. Club information	65.70%	12	28	4
	Other	Alumni social events, alumni profiles, history, relevant news, designs, and projects.	4 responses	1 responses	0 responses

Interview Questions:

1. Are you an avid social media user? How often do you check social media? Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.
 - a. Which one do you use most often?
 - b. Which one will you never use/go on?
2. Do you currently like any of the Graphic Communication Department's social media pages? Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn?
 - a. If no, would you like to, why or why not?
 - b. If yes, what information do you like seeing? What do you not like seeing?
3. Do you try to get involved in posts?
 - c. Comment
 - d. Like
 - e. Share
 - f. Why/Why not?
3. What would you like to see on the Graphic Communication social media sites?
 - c. What do you want to see more or less of?
 - d. What do you find exciting?
 - e. What do you find annoying?
 - f. How many posts is too many?
4. Do you find our social media efforts effective so far in relaying:
 - c. Careers/internships
 - d. Department culture
 - e. Students
 - f. Staff
 - g. Curriculum
 - h. Events
 - i. Alumni
5. If you had a job posting, event, news that is relative to the GrC industry/Department, would you reach out to the social media team to share on Facebook/Instagram/Twitter/LinkedIn?
6. What suggestions do you have for the GrC social media team?
7. How do you think we can get [alumni, current students, prospective students] more involved with social media?
8. Do you have any questions for the GrC social media team?
9. Would you like to stay in touch with us for further social media development?