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# A Healthy Digital Image: Exploring its Impact on B2B Sales Lead Generation in a Professional Social Network

Jaclyn G. Getonga Ms.

*University of Connecticut - Storrs*, [Jaclynrulles@aol.com](mailto:Jaclynrulles@aol.com)

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# A Healthy Digital Image: Exploring its Impact on B2B Sales Lead Generation in a Professional Social Network



**Advisor: Dr. Narasimhan Srinivasan**

**Student Name: Jaclyn Gina Getonga**

## UConn School of Business '14

NetID: JGG10002

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### **Statement of Originality**

I certify that this thesis, and the research to which it refers, are the product of my own work, conducted during the current year of my undergraduate bachelors degree in Business Marketing at University of Connecticut. Any ideas or quotations from the work of other people, published or otherwise, or from my own previous work are fully acknowledged in accordance with the standard APA referencing practices of the discipline.

### **Acknowledgements**

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## **Abstract**

This project looks at the social media-selling environment and how a “healthy” digital image can assist a firm in identifying itself to create value for new customers. This project will explore whether the B2B sales lead generation process can be conducted as part of a social media strategy and how a digital image affects its performance. The sales landscape has changed: buyers have more power, relationships are based on two-way communication, and customer-centric technologies have enabled users to create, share, and converse about content over the Internet. A “healthy” digital image is based on the attributes of a LinkedIn company page, which added value to the B2B social relationship and prompted buyers to connect with the firm first. In this study we will infer if a social media strategy with an effective strategic goal and budget can convert leads or prospects into loyal followers using the LinkedIn digital image of the UConn School of Business. I shall measure each attribute using a scoring rubric that will sum up to find out whether the overall effect of a digital image positively or negatively affects sales lead generation. In addition, I shall obtain data from Google Analytics, LinkedIn Company Page Analytics, Inquiry Forms collected by the UConn School of Business. Eventually we will be able to correlate results and look at the challenges of my methodology on the part of the firm, social media strategy, and external environmental influences.

**Keywords:** social media, B2B, lead generation, added value, customer relationship, LinkedIn, Facebook, UConn School of Business, social networking

## Introduction

An investment in social media by firms around the world has influenced the changes in consumer buying behavior and the sales environment. Regardless of whether they are a business-to-business (B2B) or business-to-consumer (B2C) firms, the adoption of social media as a sales tool has transformed the way firms attract their potential clients and altered the sales lead generation process. Firms can choose to identify themselves in a professional or social manner, which heavily influences the type of relationship they want to form with their leads. This study will take a closer look at the B2B relationship in the context of LinkedIn, the world's leading professional networking site, to connect with potential, new, and existing clients.

A “healthy” digital image characterizes the successful representation of a firm on the Internet and helps them qualify leads through its multi-faceted behavior. The term “healthy” can be applied to a wide range of individual and company profiles that are hosted online, but it is the continuous usage and updated content that increases value for both the buyer and seller, and qualifies it as a “healthy” image not just a successful one. As firms work to establish their social media presence, they identify the mission, values, and objectives that correlate to that target audience and use that to steer their image in the right direction. Buyers and sellers interacting online to generate content furthers the relationship between two parties and forms this value, which we term “healthy”. This strategy creates value because it benefits both parties and makes the first point of contact less invasive and more mutual.

A few questions that will be explored in this study include: How has the sales process evolved over time? In what ways has B2B customer relationship management changed over the years? What is a “healthy” digital image and why is it important? What are the differences between social and professional networking environments and how does that affect a digital image? How can we measure and score the attributes of a “healthy” digital image and its effect on sales lead generation results? And finally, what are some of the challenges companies encounter while constructing their digital presence in an online community? This study aims to highlight the importance of a social media

strategy in sales and how it has become an integral part of B2B selling and relationships communication with one another.

**Research Question**

In what way does a healthy digital image on LinkedIn affect lead generation success in B2B sales?

**Research Objective**

This is an exploratory study on developing a “healthy” digital image and examining its relationship to lead generation.

## Past and Present Trends

### **The Sales Process**

The traditional seven steps of selling as defined by Selling Net (2012), consists of (1)prospecting, (2)pre-approach, (3)approach, (4)presentation, (5)overcoming objections, (6)close, and (7) follow-up. Prospecting and pre-approach stages are all about the research and findings salespeople do to get new customers and potential leads. Prospecting includes a discussion of qualifying the prospect or lead and screening them before discussion. A large part of this stage is called cold calling, where a salesperson calls potential customers that fit within the descriptive criteria of its target audience to gauge their interest in the company's products and services with a value proposition or 10-second elevator speech. Pre-approach activities involve more research but the resources to do so are expensive and include cold calling, secondary research, lots of meetings and doing homework on the needs of your prospective client in order to present them with a business proposition that they will interest them. In the last two decades, professional salespeople have found a way to condense these two steps in to one social media strategy making it easier and faster to reach their target audience. Lead generation in social media allows buyers and sellers to get to know one another, which strives to build a connection that can push a conversation between the two parties. Due to the evolution in social media technologies, globalization, and more diversity in our population firms have placed a real emphasis on building value-added relationships with consumers (**see Table 1**).

Driven by new opportunities to grow, companies have changed their sales strategy to adapt to the Internet, otherwise known as Web 2.0, to connect buyers and sellers. Trainor (2012) observes that social networking websites enabled users to communicate in more ways than one using images, voice, video, and instant chat messaging features which increased its popularity. Globally, social media provided an easily accessible platform for buyers and sellers to interact and converse over long distances. In particular, social media, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and now Google+, and always-on communication technology, such as mobile Internet and the smartphone, appear to be more than simple extensions of traditional technology such as static phones, desktops, and even laptops (Marshall et al., 2012). These new technologies are easily accessible and used around the world.

According to a report by Forrester Research, 98 percent of business decision-makers read blogs, watch videos, or listen to podcasts and 79 percent of them maintain their profile on social networking sites. Social media use by B2B marketers varies, based on the stage of the customer lifecycle, the job type, and the age of the customer (Levine, 2013). Throughout the evolving selling process, the seller and customer work together to build mutual success through needs satisfaction over the Internet (Selling Net, 2012). This explains why a social media strategy is all about knowing your target audience and identifying what type of relationship you want to create, versus calling or prospecting random clients. The sales personnel and marketers utilize social media because they want to understand their consumers better, how diverse they are, their lifestyles, and changing interests so that they can adapt their value and business propositions. B2B firms need to provide a two-way engagement that will increase a firm's likeability with its target audience to gain leads.

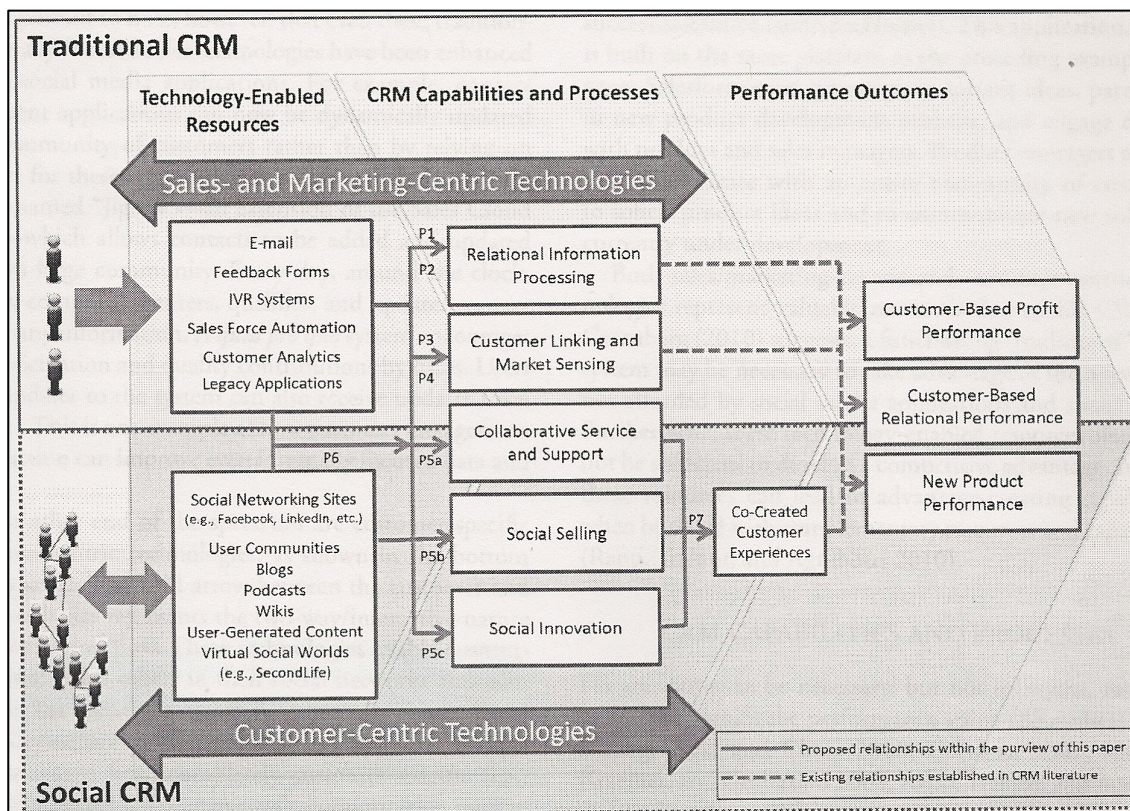
Comparing Traditional and Social CRM Technologies		
Emphasis	Traditional CRM Technologies	Social CRM Technologies
Customer Relationship	One-to-one relationship between customer and organization.	Network of many-to-many relationships between (1) customers and organization and (2) customers and peers.
Customer Communications	One-way monologue.	Interactive dialog.
Technology Use	Method often deployed to increase employee efficiency and effectiveness; internally focused and usually marketing/sales oriented.	Method deployed to support outside-in processes that connect the firm to the external environment; customer oriented.
Organizational Learning	Customer information viewed as input to decision support systems and internal responses.	Knowledge co-created with customers; locus of innovation/learning is the interaction between customer and firm.
Value Creation	Company-centric focus: targeting and managing the "right" customers and defining value to be delivered.	Emphasis on dual creation of value: customer co-created experiences, collaborative service and support, innovation co-creation.
Data Sources	Information delivered from customer to firm.	Information created through interactions with and between customers.
Information Processes	Customer information captured and made accessible for use across organization.	Customer information from legacy systems and customer-centric social applications integrated to create complete view of customer and networks of customers. Customers are active participants in information updates via interaction-enabling technology.

**Table 1.** Comparing the traditional and social forms of customer relationship management (CRM) technologies. These are the elements viewed as important in building both types of relationships. The Traditional CRM (TCRM) gives very broad understanding on how to manage customers, whereas the Social CRM (SCRM) includes more details that facilitate the relationship going forward. SCRM portrays high level of expectations from customer and a customer-centric focused strategy that involves two-way engagement. (Trainor, 2012)



## Social Customer Relationship Management - SCRM

The highest number of leads can only be achieved if businesses invest in a social customer relationship management (SCRM) strategy. SCRM is born out of the traditional ways of traditional customer relationship management (TCRM) but includes a two-way/interactive nature of information flow that is strictly controlled by users of the network (**see fig.1**). The capabilities-based model in Figure 2 demonstrates what types of resources are used in SCRM versus TCRM. The bold arrow between customer and the technologies show us that SCRM encourages two-way communication, active participation, and quality contribution from both parties (Trainor, 2012). Customer-centric technologies like the social networks, user communities or blogs links companies with customers allowing them to interact in two-way engagement within exclusive user networks. This is a significant difference because it illustrates how much technology has transformed from not only being a place where customers can reach out to other customers, but B2B firms can also participate too.



**Fig. 1.** Conceptual Model: Technology Resources, Capabilities, and Outcomes of Traditional and Social CRM. This shows the traditional CRM and social CRM technologies and their similarities and differences. Sales-and-marketing centric technologies communicate with customers one-way and customer-centric technologies communicate two-way. However, a vast improvement in these technologies has helped firms reach out to customers in user networks.

Customers will develop a stronger relationship with firms who initiate conversation through their content, images, videos, webinars, slide share, company updates, and pay-per-click (PPC) advertisement campaigns. Content that pushes customers to start a two-way conversation with salespeople after visiting their landing page, company profile, or blog page has added value to the relationship. People should right from the start be able to present their identity both to identify themselves and to get in touch with other participants (Berlanga et al., 2008). Buyer power is a function of information sharing and prospective buyers will want to connect with a firm that portrays similar ideals, beliefs, and cultural values that they can relate to. Thanks to these new social media technologies we can analyze and measure interactivity from buyers and sellers by looking at the effect its has on the strength of a relationship. This can be done by measuring the effectiveness of a “healthy” digital image, we will base it on the multiple ways firms interact with their potential leads through engagement levels, links, sharing, and so much more.

### **Co-Created Customer Experience**

The co-created customer experience defines the numerous ways customers collaborate to co-create content that is innovative. Trainor (2012) says, “customers take a more active role in communicating and interacting with companies, these quality interactions, which enable customers to co-create unique experiences, are the key to unlocking competitive advantage”. As innovative ways to communicate are increasing, new markets are born out of this and firms must come up with strategic moves that will sustain their position in the market and increase SCRM. Due to the amount of power buyers have, the co-created customer experience is all about positively influencing and collaborating with members in a network. This will allow B2B firms to keep up-to-date with research on consumer behavioral patterns, trends in the market, and improve on their digital image. Firms will have to respond to the changes by innovating and using collaborative technologies like YouTube to support user-generated content (UGC). For instance, LinkedIn Company pages consist of user-generated content (UGC), blogs, slide share, and other features that increase a firms SCRM capabilities (Agnihotri et al., 2012). Fortunately, the investment in the co-created experience does not cost a lot



but frees up customer service personnel, and provides more time for lead generation (Trainor, 2012).

This study will look at the ways in which a “healthy” digital image can impact the sales lead generation process. We shall also look at the attributes of a company page on LinkedIn where B2B firms build their SCRM using a social media strategy and measure the impact it has had on lead generation.

## **A “Healthy” Digital Image**

### **Definition**

The word “healthy” alongside digital image is an unexplored concept and in order to provide you with a solid understanding of my core topic I shall define it in my own words below:

A “healthy” digital image describes the way a firm uses the Internet to add value to a relationship with its potential, new, and existing leads via a social media platform. It is through the firm’s mission, values, and objectives that they may successfully portray who they are and what they do in their company page to share unique, interesting insights that will grasp the users attention and increase the value of that relationship.

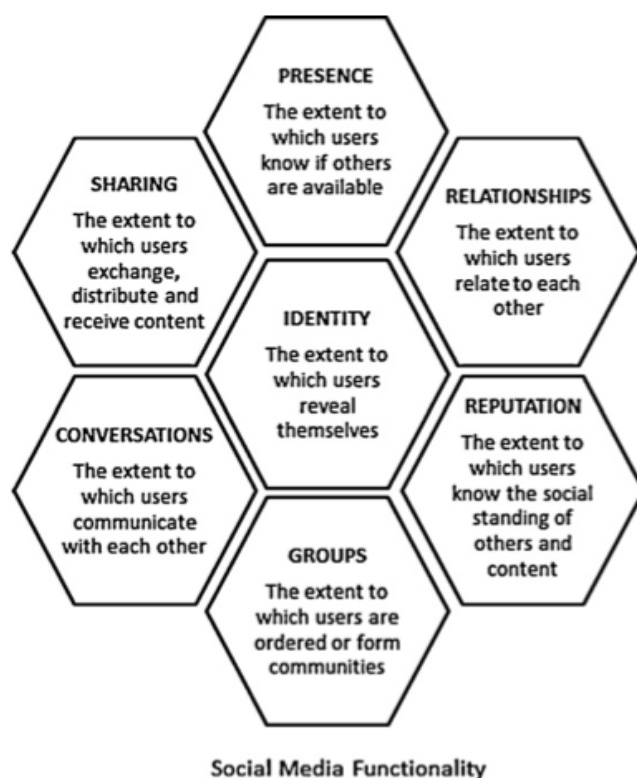
### **Importance**

The increasing use of the Internet has led to an abundance of information, customers know more about the company beforehand from various other sources including websites, online journals and newspaper articles, and social networking sites; this drives 90 percent of their decision-making. Establishing a social media presence like a “healthy” digital image delivers the additional value and prevents a waste of technological resources, giving firms a chance to connect and collaborate with other firms. Rodriguez, Peterson, and Krishnan (2012) support this concept by mentioning that social media platforms not only provide detailed information, but also enable sales professionals to increase their social capital and build deeper relationships by sharing product information that is a better fit for the prospective client. By knowing more about the product or service, it makes the first point of contact less invasive and more targeted towards the information viewed on a company page. This is an example of how a digital image opens up many opportunities for the company to present itself in a

unique, interesting way so that potential leads and sellers may start a conversation based on this shared content.

In the Definitive Guide to B2B Social Media, Marketo (2010) classifies social media as the production, consumption and exchange of information through online social interactions and platforms. This is important because a digital image strives to offer the best value for B2B buyers with information that they can talk about and share amongst each other. Cohen (2011) described it as a service and communication tool facilitating connection between peers with common interests. Knowing more about the demographic, psychographic, social, cultural, and global background of a target audience is important because it gears towards satisfying their needs and building the relationship based on those common goals and interests.

Kietzmann (2011) defines the current use of social media as being democratized, whereby consumers connect in online communities via sharing, liking, and engaging in discussion which builds a network of relationships. (See **fig. 2**). At the core of this honeycomb framework is identity and it demonstrates the integral part profiles play in any social network, where one wishes to interact and build relationships with other people. LinkedIn, for instance, allows users to see how they are linked to others and how many degrees of separation they are from a 'target' member. If a company uses the attributes of a company page, such as the degree of connections, it will achieve success in



**Fig. 2.** The seven functional blocks of social media. These are the specific facets of the social media user experience and how they correlate with one another. Utilized individually or together, these blocks help firms manage their social media ecology; understand their audience and engagement needs. When examining the framework, firms should aim to strike a careful balance among the different blocks. Sometimes focus is more on one aspect than another depending on the social networking site.

other areas of its network such as creating more group conversations, increase sharing and a positive reputation.

A “healthy” digital image allows firms to present information about who they are, what they do, and show them to their target audience using the attributes of a company page. These attributes consist of:

- 1) Company Updates
- 2) Header
- 3) Sponsored Updates
- 4) Products/Services
- 5) Use of rich media
- 6) Followers
- 7) Engagement Levels

The successful implementation of these will push the potential client to gain contact with the B2B firm and there the client can explore interests in the product offering, company, or any insights they may have. B2B sales lead generation success is measured over a period of time where firms can see the high-low visitation points, number of viewers, click-through-rates (CTR), usage rates and other metrics; these methods will be described later on in the paper. The most popular form of lead generation measurability is by collecting physical forms or online forms featured through websites, landing pages, or a link that redirect the user to a form. As lead generation results are collected over a period of time, the firms digital image is being scored based on the attributes mentioned above. Today, there are many ways to measure lead generation apart from collecting forms but companies privately hold access to this data. Once the lead generation results have been collected, B2B salespeople match the performance of a “healthy” digital image to the amount of leads generated in that particular period of time.

We shall explore a few theories that prove how an effective digital image goes hand-in-hand with the social media strategy’s B2B firms are executing today. After this we shall look at the leading social and professional networking environments B2B firms sell through. The attributes featured on a

LinkedIn company page are suited towards B2B sales lead generation and this study will look at how they can measure sales lead generation success.

## **Social Media Selling**

### **Theory one – Social Media Investment**

Businesses should always have a social media strategy in mind when determining what tools to use to create the most value for their online customers and build stronger relationships. Part of this strategy depends on how much the company is willing to invest in social media marketing; these can be like pay-per-click advertisements or sponsored updates. The campaign investment must seek to generate returns for the B2B firm, this means tracking return on investment (ROI) from these attributes and adjusting them to create a positive ROI over that period of time. Marketo (2010) identifies that as online activity continuously shifts to social media, marketers are reallocating investments into different social networks, search engine optimization (SEO), and content marketing to generate more leads.

According to Trainor's article (2012), social media expenditures were projected to reach nearly \$2.1 billion in 2012, and they are expected to reach nearly \$5 billion annually by 2016 in the United States. Organizations have invested billions of dollars in technology in order to make their sales force capable of dealing with the new social selling process (Rodriguez et al., 2012). HubSpot (2013) announced that social media and SEO each contribute 14 percent of marketers' total pipeline in 2013. The social media selling process is more than just targeting an audience or identifying core competencies of a firm, which is why metrics are used to measure the effectiveness of a digital image so that firms can adjust their budget towards individual advertisement or sponsored updates.

### **Theory two – Social Media Goals**

Levy (2011) outlined the application of a social media strategy:

- (1) Define business goals
- (2) Target the specific use of social media by the target audience
- (3) Take into consideration the competitors' moves and strategy
- (4) Keep track of market events

(5) Set milestones to follow progress.

Social media is very active and fast-paced, offering a multitude of opportunities for businesses to optimize their on-screen image. Thus, the goal of a salesperson's social media strategy should be to build social capital so as to facilitate the successful execution of service behavior. This goal can be achieved through identifying the types of communication that would encourage customer engagement (Agnihotri et al., 2012). Customer engagement will provide firms with information about their top leads as well as their online sales environment. Social media selling has evolved the sales process so that both parties, including salespeople, can learn more about one another. Levy (2011) explains that you should already know your core audience, but you also need to know how that audience engages with social media. The purpose of this is to identify where your digital image would have the most impact on sales lead generation.

The second step would be to analyze the target audience and understand whether they fit in a professional, social or other online community i.e. blogs. Sales firms can focus on ideal clients that fit their business model and, as a result, may minimize time wasted on less than ideal customers and maximize time spent focusing on more promising opportunities (Rodriguez et al., 2012). Based on this information firms can decide what type of social media they will use and track the marketing of these events. They should also keep in mind what their competitors are doing and which social media outlets they are using too. This will enhance their awareness about the market and supply them with information they can use to build a competitive advantage. As explained in the fifth step, firms should set some reachable objectives in the first few years of social selling to strengthen the company image and nurture the relationship it has with its existing leads. Overall, if a sales goal is outlined firms will be able to increase awareness through social media, target a specific audience, create content that is suited towards the goals and interests of the audience, and grow sales leads. Despite the numerous resources on social networking sites, the right type of organization and strategic planning can increase a firms wealth and help it build its social and professional network.

## **A Social and Professional Network in B2B Sales**

### **Identifying the right Social Media**

In 2013, HubSpot (2014) reports that blogging and social media have enjoyed consistent strong annual growth, with 23 percent of marketers investing in these channels, a 9 percent increase from 2012. Marketing through search engines like Google, pay-per-click (PPC), and email are a very important part of marketing, but social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Slideshare drive a large portion of the B2B interactions on the web (Marketo, Inc, 2010).

LinkedIn and Facebook have similar end-user technologies; they were customer-centric because they represent the two-way/interactive model of information flow between network members resulting in high SCRM. They also allow users to build their own network of friends and control who sees their profiles and who doesn't. Their popularity stems from the ability to give customers control over the creation, co-creation, exchange, and distribution of personal and professional information.

**Table. 2.** Social Networking Software Use (Skeels and Grudin, 2009)

Age (% of sample)	LinkedIn	Facebook	MySpace	Live Spaces
<25 (7)	46	72	36	36
26-35 (44)	61	63	33	41
36-45 (37)	64	52	29	41
46+ (12)	51	46	21	28

In 2009, the study of workplace LinkedIn usage found that LinkedIn was utilized highest among older employees then these figures dropped steadily with a decrease in age (see **Table 2**). Unlike LinkedIn, Facebook had an increase of usage amongst younger employees and it steadily declined as age went up. Based on these results, we can see that the usage rate for both sites is very high compared to other sites, which means they are top social networking sites in the world. We can also observe that the most viewers for each site come from different age segments signifying the difference in targeted segments. LinkedIn targets young professionals and older professionals/academics; Facebook targets young people who wish to communicate socially. Most people view LinkedIn as a leading professional network, whereas Facebook is viewed as a social

network. This is associated with the attributes featured on each social medium that draws the attention of its specific consumer segment and results in high engagement.

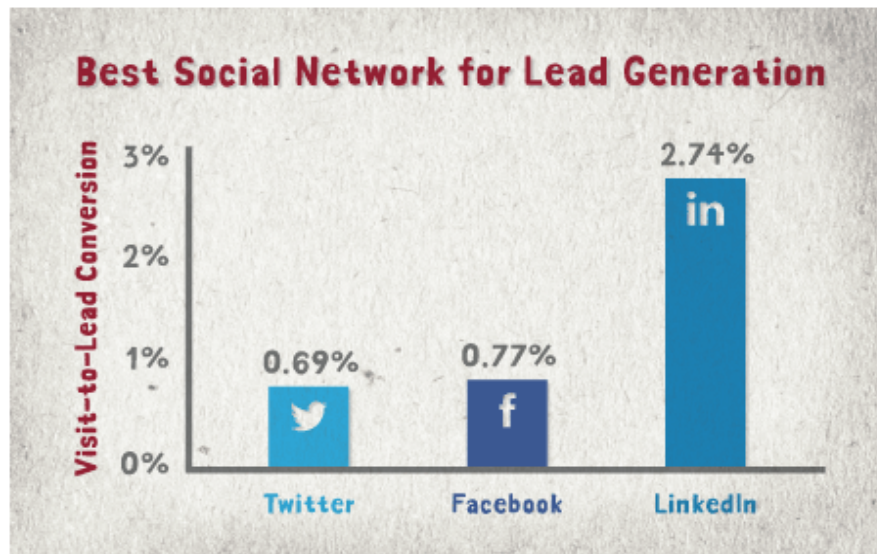
### **Attributes of Facebook**

According to Marketo (2010), Facebook has been predominantly a personal social network, but B2B decision makers can also use it. B2B firms have started to take advantage of this large social community to interact with their customers, promote their product offerings, and brand name.

Facebook manages this segment by allowing them to set up Facebook pages, groups, events, and advertisements to create awareness. Facebook helps B2B firm's track information about their target audience based on sponsored updates, advertisements, or other types of PPC sources. It is the fastest, easiest way to generate leads because companies can broadcast messages and reach a vast amount of customers quickly because they visit Facebook more often than any other social network worldwide.

According to a survey done by HubSpot (2014) in their State of Inbound Marketing 2013 report, Facebook leads social media customer sources, more than 52 percent will find a customer in 2013, compared to second highest which was 42 percent from LinkedIn and company blogs.

The evolution of the buyer process has redefined social media attributes, firms can now maintain a digital image on multiple platforms i.e. LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook are indirectly linked to each other. Facebook's audience is primarily B2C customers, who are more concerned with the product or service versus building a connection with the firm (Levine, 2013). Therefore, when B2B firms choose to utilize Facebook as a sales tool they identify themselves by directly addressing end-users who like to shop there, rather than as a company. They also must be aware of what types of media to use to capture that audiences attention, despite the wide breadth of taglines, rich media, and the use of hash tags, a professional audience would not be attracted to this landscape. The Kinesis Blog reports that LinkedIn was voted the best social network for lead generation because of its ability to attract prospects with two-way interactive social strategy and analytics. **(see fig. 3).**



**Fig. 3.** Best Social Network for Lead Generation (Kocurek, 2013)

### Attributes of LinkedIn

LinkedIn audiences consist of professionals who aim to build a B2B relationship based on qualifications and attributes. Forrester reports that, 40 percent of LinkedIn users will interact with a group affiliated with a brand or vendor, even though the dominant activity for 88 percent of LinkedIn users is connecting with peers and colleagues. Their communication style is predominantly through in-mail and initiating contact through a landing page, form, or website. LinkedIn supports B2B firms by providing LinkedIn Company pages, groups, sponsored advertisements and updates, and most recently adding showcase pages. Adriana J. Berlanga (2008) writes that Facebook's registration is very short, whereas LinkedIn's registration process is extensive containing passwords, country information, professional background etc. Based on the report by Jorgen Sundberg, (2012) a majority of LinkedIn users haven't completed their individual profiles, but the interaction on group discussion boards are high. LinkedIn operates in a different social selling environment than Facebook, however B2B firms use both to build relationships with clients to generate leads and create value for their customers (Marketo, Inc, 2010). Both platforms allow users to gather detailed background information on potential organizations, products or services they are interested in - this is similar to the traditional pre-approach step within the Seven Steps of Selling Model whereby information searching is done before they approach the actual firm.



## **Describing a “Healthy” Digital Image**

### **What is a Company Page?**

A LinkedIn company page is similar to a website, it tells users who you are, what you do, and why they should follow you. The differences lie in the breadth and nature of information given to you on a day-to-day basis. Company websites usually remain the same, albeit the additional news-feed or RSS updates on the front. Company pages consist of information regarding the firm but daily posts consist of new information that increases engagement, number of viewers, and information sharing regularly. As Rand Fishkin says, “it pays to have pages that are both worthy of being shared and contain enough information to drive the conversation” (Marketo, Inc, 2012). For B2B customers, 85 percent still use the Internet as a source for preliminary decision making-product attributes, price comparisons, reviews etc. (LeChasseur, 2010). A “healthy” digital image is supposed to create value that goes beyond the knowledge of the consumer, entices them to socially interact with the company resulting in a conversation. By tailoring your conversations with members about their professional interests, you will improve the image of your brand and fuel purchase intent for your products and services” (LinkedIn, 2012). Company pages are a way to increase the firms SCRM by offering a two-way connection with relevant followers, displaying products, and posting important content.

### **What are Company Page Attributes?**

In a very broad sense, Heidi Cohen (2011) defines social media as, “digital content and networking interactions that are developed and maintained by and between people”. The attributes on a company page target professional audiences by offering a unique, multifaceted way to interact on a professional level with user-generated content (UGC) and two-way engagement. It is important for companies to make full use of all attributes at the same time and balance them so that they can maximize the full potential of building a “healthy” digital image via a company page. The attributes of a company page are:

- 1) Company Updates
- 2) Header

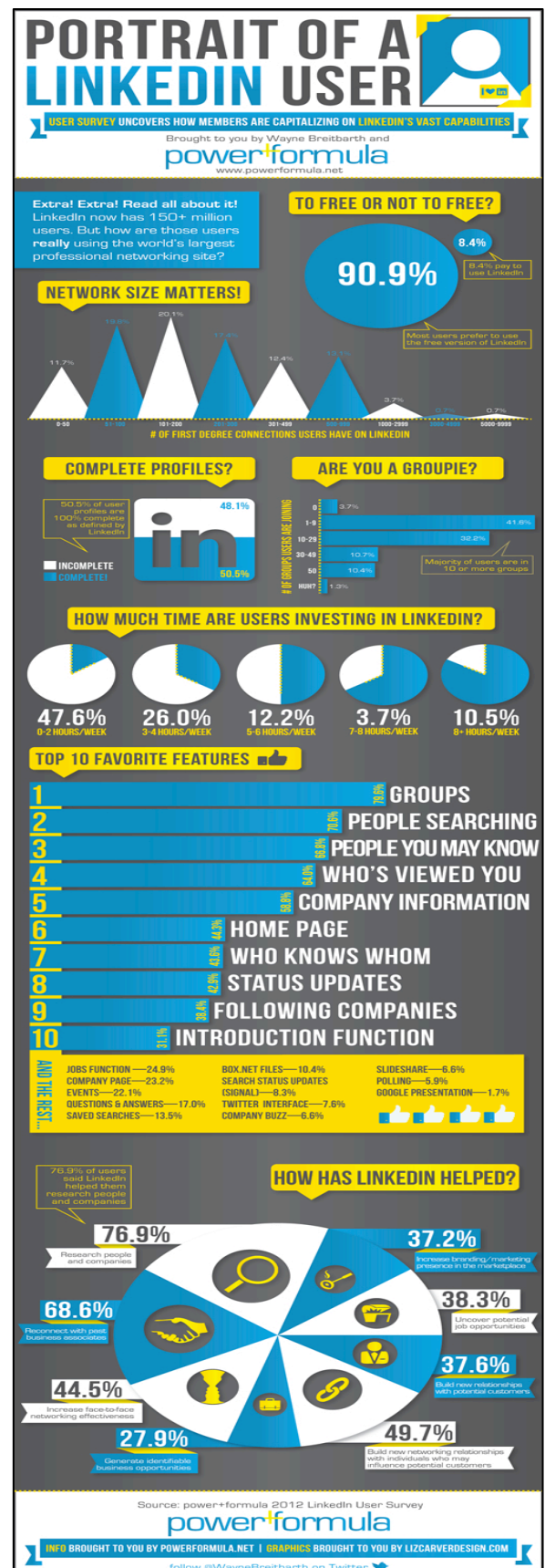
- 3) Sponsored Updates
- 4) Products/Services
- 5) Use of rich media
- 6) Followers
- 7) Engagement Levels

LinkedIn goes beyond personal profiles and status updates; the attributes work as a great resource for networking, influencing relationships, and lead generation through paid programs, recommendations, mutual friend connections and so much more.

Sammons (2012) explains that because users visit the site for purely work-related purposes, LinkedIn lends itself to making business connections. Data released by Power Formula in 2012 showed that out of 150+ million users 76.9 percent use LinkedIn to help them research companies and people, 68.6 percent reconnect with past business associates and 44.5 percent use it to increase networking effectiveness. The study also showed that the fourth most important feature people viewed was company information (see fig. 4).

Figure 4 demonstrates that the attributes in a LinkedIn Company page are an important tool for social media users and make up the digital image of B2B firms on LinkedIn. Firms seek to provide a “healthy” digital image through these attributes because they will create value for the customer and

**Fig. 4. Portrait of a LinkedIn User**  
(Sundberg, 2012)



push them to initiate contact with the salesperson. Lots of content marketing strategies are geared towards drawing audiences to the information on a page, however their main goal should be to push users towards the next step: initiating contact with the buyer. When we talk about SCRM processes we focus on building relationships through social media efforts that help consumers strengthen their connection with B2B salespeople. Information sharing is a key component and the more it is effectively illustrated, the more followers a company obtains, the higher the engagement rate, the more employees are connected with the firm, and the higher your CPM value. Effective use of all company page attributes is a way for firms to convert leads in to loyal followers; the ways to do this are described below.

### **Scoring a “Healthy” Digital Image**

Company pages consist of numerous features that when used collectively could alleviate the digital image of a firm and make it appear “healthier”. According to Marketo, lead scoring is essential to lead generation, it tells companies whether prospects need to be fast tracked to sales or lead nurtured (Marketo, Inc, 2012). Similar to lead scoring, we can score each company page attribute and define what numeric grade each type of usage could gain. These scores will be supported by illustrations from several company pages I collated from LinkedIn.

The scoring system will range from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) for each attribute where every attribute will be scored based on a 5-level system. This system is based on the push social strategy i.e. the likelihood of increasing lead generation results using attributes. The scores for each attribute sum up towards the overall digital image, a “healthy” digital image ranges between a total score of 25 to 35; this portrays effective, balanced use of all attributes and reflects positively on the companies B2B social media strategy. The scoring rubric is based on set criteria, which can be applied to any other company page on LinkedIn over any period of time. Maintaining this score over time can be difficult for most companies because of the upkeep of labor and the financial investment. Also, the digital image of a company does change regularly due to external factors like the running of a campaign, a seasonal promotion, a change of management that results in more or less social selling, a change in market trends, or target audience.

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## **Attributes of a Company Page**

### **1) Company Updates (Table 3: Fig 5)**

A well-designed content marketing strategy emphasizes the value a firm holds for its customers. It is important to always keep in mind what LinkedIn members want to receive from the information posted by a company. Company updates include any information generated from posts, comments and rich-media on the company page news feed. A total of 68 percent of LinkedIn members say they would like to receive relevant news articles or insights from companies (LinkedIn, 2012). Content enables users to socially share new information within their network promoting the digital image of the company. Embedding a call-to-action (CTA) into the message of an update generates leads and through targeted updates, keyword-rich updates, and links firms are able to track the effectiveness of the content. CTAs are usually very persuasive, engage the customer in doing something such as “click on this link”, “go to this page for more information!”, which prompts the customer to actively scroll, click, and view more content. The content must be relevant, interesting, timed, and valuable in order for social sharing to occur and make an impact on B2B sales lead generation.

#### **a) Keep intros and headlines concise**

In order to drive higher engagement, shorter updates should be used to capture the reader’s attention. They should also contain CTA phrases or keywords that prompt leads to share your content. As Chaney (2014) states, “the most recent updates appear at the top of the page engaging new followers and appealing to new prospects when they first visit the page”. Targeted updates also allow users to control which target audience sees a particular post so they can generate interest from followers. Companies are able to select the company size, industry, job function, seniority, and geographical region, which their targeted audience belongs to (King, 2012). LinkedIn’s Company Page Analytics allow B2B firms to see the number of viewers they got as well as their engagement levels and demographic data (Lazzaroni, 2014). We’ve seen promising results from early tests of Targeted Status Updates, for example Philips saw a 106 percent increase in follower engagement after posting Targeted Status Updates during a six-week period (LinkedIn, 2012).

**b) Develop content that is quick to consume**

Updates that include rich attractive images or some form of rich media generally result in a 98 percent comment rate. For example, posting interesting videos linked to YouTube will engage followers twice as much (LinkedIn, 2012). High quality updates will persuade members to share it within their networks, hence increasing a firm's coverage. Referrals from social media views from videos, subscribers to video channels, and views of videos on social sites will lead prospects to a company page too. LinkedIn enables users to feature their posts at the top of the company page in order to receive more views and attention.

**c) Experiment to find the right balance with messages.**

Mixing entertaining and inspirational posts with informative ones will provoke your audience to think, ponder, and discuss. This opens up conversation about that particular update and increases your viewers. As Marketo (2012) describes 80 percent of content should be informational and educational, 20 percent should be promotional and based on company message or campaign. We can measure the amount of followers who diligently track a company's updates from the LinkedIn's Company Page Analytics, which will show the customer engagements (i.e. shares, impressions, likes) generated. This is an important metric for understanding how often members take action on updates.

**d) Create an editorial calendar but react to newsworthy events.**

Firms should let their editorial calendar serve as a guide, but be flexible enough to respond to relevant news, topics, and trends as they occur within your industry as it may increase your company page activity and create a word-of-mouth buzz around your update. Company oriented engagement is a new product LinkedIn introduced in 2013 that makes B2B conversations even more effective. Companies are able to like and comment on another company's page to respond to competitor's advertisements (Levin, 2014). Salespeople can learn more about a competitor's strategy as well as their customer base because of this tool (Agnihotri et al., 2012). The comments generated by the company in response to the update could also increase its followers and leads. Company oriented engagement can be utilized in

the B2B sales processes to track agreement from potential company pages.

### **e) Break up big themes into a series**

Firms should publish at fixed intervals to keep followers looking for new content. In general, companies that post 20 times per month reach at least 60 percent of their unique audience (LinkedIn, 2012). Consistent and timed updates enhance image-building efforts through content creation and optimize the amount of leads a company can have. Updating posts at particular times during the day like in the morning could earn a higher customer engagement. By keeping the conversation going, monitoring discussions, and removing inappropriate comments are all part of maintaining “healthy” communication through a social platform (Cherian, 2013).

### **f) Include a call to action**

According to LinkedIn, content that includes links receive twice as much engagement as those that don't. The Weidert Group observed that Keyword-rich status updates with links to articles, news releases or featured promotions enhance a page and show up on followers' feeds (Isca, 2012). Status updates containing links have up to 45 percent higher follower engagement than updates without links (LinkedIn, 2012). To demonstrate that a company page is trusted, firms create links within their on-page content to establish authority i.e. status updates, company overview. These links can also be embedded in external sources like Google search engine or other company websites, which will give more credibility to the company and site traffic. Ideally, the anchor text in the link from the external site should use a variant of keyword phrases common to the company page (Marketo, Inc, 2012). CTA click-through-rate is a way to evaluate how many viewers clicked through inbound and outbound links. B2B sellers can also use Traffic-Driving Keywords to see how much traffic is being produced by certain keywords when people search or click on links (Corliss, 2013).

Table 3: SCORING		
Attribute		Description
Company Updates	1	No status updates or targeted updates Language is uninviting, not exciting, and does not contain keyword-rich tags.
	2	2 -3 updates about the company, posts are made more than one week apart. Language is uninviting, not exciting, and does not contain keyword-rich tags.
	3	2-3 updates about the company, posts are made a week apart. Frequent posts. Contain links to external sources Language is uninviting, not exciting. Limited to company information Contains keyword rich tags, meta tags, that helps Search engine optimization (SEO) and links to different sites
	4	More than 4 updates about the company, its products/services, and thought-provoking messages. These includes: senior level management, expert opinions, volunteer activities performed, interesting news from around the world, industry news, humorous quote Company oriented engagement – companies link up to one another by comment, like or sharing Contains keyword rich tags, meta tags, that helps Search engine optimization (SEO)
	5	Updates are frequent, and targeted towards a specific audience appearing on their news feeds. Updates are featured on most popular LinkedIn newsletter. Language consists of call-to-action message, clear, exciting, and thought provoking. Company oriented engagement – company's link up to one another by comment, like or sharing. Multiple ways the company page is linked to external sources - First-touch clicks, and multi-touch clicks



Fig. 5. Company Update

<p><b>1</b></p>  <p><b>Brewski</b> decks decks · decks</p> <p>Artisan Crafted. All-Natural. Locally Brewed.</p> <p>Like (1) · Comment · Share · 1 month ago</p> <p>Christopher Sheridan, PE, LEED AP</p> <p>Add a comment...</p> <p>Brewski Keep up with what's going on in the world of Brewski by following us on FB: <a href="http://lnkd.in/dB_xHK">http://lnkd.in/dB_xHK</a></p>  <p><b>Brewski</b> facebook.com · Brewski, 139 likes. You call it a beer, we call it a Brewski. For many, the word Brewski stands for beer... we couldn't agree more. The Brewski story begins in the 1920's where Jerry's ancestors originated in the Slavic foothills of the Carpathian...</p> <p>Like (2) · Comment · Share · 2 months ago</p> <p>Briton Zamoyta and Natalia Kuziiv</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	<p>About the company. does not contain keyword-rich sentences.</p> <p>Posts are more than one week apart</p> <p>Very little engagement</p> <p>language is not inviting, exciting</p>
<p>Thought-provoking status update contains call-to-action words prompting users to respond</p> <p>Over 50 "likes", lots of comments, high engagement</p> <p>Expert opinions</p> <p>Company oriented engagement. Company responds to clients</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>  <p>Time's up.</p> <p>Like (80) · Comment (16) · Share · 1 day ago</p> <p>Lee Grandowski, Craig Allbutt +87</p> <p>See previous comments</p> <p>Ben Greedy Maxus I.T are currently carrying out Windows XP upgrades for users / business's that require Windows 7 or Windows 8/8.1 info@maxus-it.co.uk 2 hours ago</p> <p>Arthur Oaker Accountants for SME's I have Spybot and AVG spyware on my computer. What will happen if I do not upgrade. I use AOL, email and Fasthost I understand they have their own built in protection. What area of security is not protected by what I have and can I fix it. Or have...more 2 hours ago</p> <p>Add a comment...</p> <p>Microsoft We ask our experts to answer some of your FAQs about Windows XP End of Support: <a href="http://bit.ly/1dyMK1q">http://bit.ly/1dyMK1q</a></p>  <p>Our experts answer some FAQs about Windows XP End of Support. bit.ly · With today being the Windows XP End of Support we look to some of our experts to answer some of our most frequently asked questions about why you should upgrade...</p> <p>Like (8) · Comment (3) · Share · 1 day ago</p> <p>Chris Mitchell, Marie Louise Daigle +6</p> <p>See previous comments</p> <p>Microsoft What would you like help with Heather? 1 day ago</p> <p>Petez Ameri Basically, you could take a look at: <a href="http://www.microsoft.com/windows/en-us/xp/default.aspx">http://www.microsoft.com/windows/en-us/xp/default.aspx</a> , there are many valuable resources there. 1 day ago</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>



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## 2) Header (Table 4: Fig 6)

The page header is a way for firms to achieve a first impression, capture consumer interest and create awareness about a product or service. The 2013 LinkedIn Company Page header incorporates a banner image at the top to enhance visual presence of a company and engage its customers and prospects (Khavinson, 2013). The large banner/header alleviates brand personality and can be used to advertise a particular product or service; particularly on Showcase Pages, which are profiles assigned to company products only.

B2B sellers can track the follower base and the growth of visitor frequency on LinkedIn's Company Page Analytics or Google Analytics after a change in banner image. The test does not take into account other influences affecting customer engagement, for example rich media, so it may not be the best. Another test we can use to test the effectiveness of a banner image is A/B Testing, which isolates variables except for the dependent one. Using A/B testing we can look at how changing a single aspect i.e. banner image can optimize lead conversion rates, clicks, or number of viewers (Marketo, Inc, 2012). Unfortunately, I do not have access to these metrics because companies held them privately or the advertising agency they work with holds it.

Company Information can also be found in the header (right below the banner image) and includes a company description and key. Populating the "About" section creates a compelling, search-engine friendly, interface for B2B buyers to learn more about the company. Companies must be careful to provide eye-capturing information in the beginning of this section because the first few lines are truncated, unless expanded by the reader; typically new leads do not spend as much time reading through company description when scanning the web. Similar to the content generated through updates, the company information should appear concise, up-to-date and use relevant keywords (Sammons, 2012). 90 percent of consumers find custom content useful and 78 percent believe that companies that create custom content are interested in building relationships with them (Maynard, 2014). The greater the fit between the salesperson's information sharing behaviors and the social media capabilities to pull customers toward sales-person generated content, the greater the customer perceived value (Agnihotri et al., 2012).


Table 4: SCORING		
Attribute		Description
Header	1	No header image Company name is written out. Company description does not exist or contains a sentence about the company Vague language, not interesting
	2	No header image Company page with a very short description about the company i.e. two sentences long. Abstract language, not clear about what products/services they provide When extended there is nothing left
	3	Header image of company building, or slogan of company Company page and description are both clear. Concise description about products and services, as well as helpful details about the company.
	4	Header image is based on company message, features people or group activity to illustrate movement, enjoyment, service provided, or company culture. Company name and description are both clear, concise. Includes more information about specialties i.e. core competencies, website url, industry, type of company i.e. public or private, location, company size, founded date
	5	Header Image is up-to date i.e. constantly changing based on seasonal or marketing strategy of company. It is clear, contains graphical highlights, good quality image with context, people and message combined. Company name and description contain meta tags, description, words that are exciting, thought-provoking. They do not immediately jump into the information about the company but create awareness about brand message.

Fig. 6. Header

No thumbnail picture, no banner image. Looks like a blank page

No company information or description

1




**Above the Title Entertainment**

[Home](#)

Very short description about the company. Abstract language

2



**Boston AV Productions**


[Home](#)

A provider of Audio Visual services in the Medford/Somerville area, specializing in small to mid-size events and productions. The company is run by A/V technicians, which ensures the highest level of... [see more](#)

Thumbnail picture


Header image related to message. Features people with emotional or humorous experience. Active image, up-to-date, good quality

5



**Microsoft**

[Home](#) [Careers](#) [Products](#)



Description is thought-provoking, attracts clients to message and urges them to expand and "see more"

Come as you are. Do what you love.

At Microsoft we help people and businesses throughout the world realize their full potential.

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So why not take a closer look at Microsoft? We think you'll find that amazing things really do happen here. [see less](#)

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**Industry**  
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**Type**  
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**Headquarters**  
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**Company Size**  
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**Founded**  
1975

### 3) Sponsored Updates (Table 5: Fig 7)

Sponsored updates allow companies to promote their message to followers and non-followers (those that are not connected with company) to the company post. A LinkedIn (2012) study found that non-followers actually engaged with status updates 30 percent more than followers did. Companies can target who sees that message by specifying what company size, industry, job function, seniority, and geographical region their target audience belongs to. Plus, you can publish Sponsored Updates with rich media and ensure relevance with robust targeting functionality. These updates can be bid on at an auction to be featured on LinkedIn's homepage where it will increase their exposure and increase lead generation too (LinkedIn, 2013). B2B firms pay for this social media campaign based on the number of cost-per-clicks (CPC) or cost-per-impressions (CPM) they wish to generate (Coles, 2013). This pay-per-click (PPC) campaign allows firms to optimize the targeting of their content delivery. Similar to a targeted update it needs to consist of relevant, interesting, concise headings and a professional post that captures the reader's attention. The LinkedIn Campaign Manager tool is where firms select whether they want to pay for CPC or CPM. Sponsored Updates can be applied to any update, turned on/off, and tweaked based on your audience (LinkedIn, 2013).

HubSpot used sponsored updates to drive qualified, targeted leads by promoting their best offers and content to marketing professionals alongside original content that had posted on LinkedIn in the past. It generated 400 percent more leads within their target audience than lead generation efforts on other platforms. Adobe also used Sponsored Updates to reach an engaged, professional audience who were targeted marketing executives. They were able to inform and educate 50 percent of marketers that Adobe is shaping the future of digital marketing and 79 percent of marketers that Adobe can help optimize media spend (LinkedIn, 2013).

Firms can also look at the investment placed into the PPC campaign and its return-on-investment (ROI) to measure the effectiveness of sponsored updates on lead generation. A recent study by the Nielsen Company surveyed three quarters of advertisers, and 64 percent of them increased paid social media advertising budgets in 2013. Metrics such as likes and click-through-rates (CTR) are often used to measure paid social media advertising ROI (Voskresensky, 2013). Although the world of social media brings with it new ways of measuring activities and interactions,

the traditional ROI metrics of revenue – cost savings, conversions, cost per lead, etc.– are still what matters when it comes to proving the value of your social media marketing initiatives (Marketo, Inc, 2010). Companies invest a lot of time and money into building awareness and demand for their products and services, so its important to understand the performance of these lead generation programs. According to Marketo (2010) companies can accurately track their lead generation programs by looking at numerous statistical information on analytics including first-touch (FT) and multi-touch (MT) clicks. Common wisdom is that it takes seven clicks to turn a lead into a sale.

Please find FT and MT methods explained below:

- i. First-touch ROI – tells firms whether they are attracting the right type of people. When a deal is made, credit is given to the program that originally created or acquired the lead. This includes websites, landing pages, paid online or email, and outbound sales like door-to-door or event marketing.
- ii. Multi-touch ROI – examines the value of every marketing interaction with an account in terms of driving opportunities, pipeline and revenue. Programs include email, webinars, and links on website's that could drive leads to a company page.

Table 5: SCORING		
Attribute		Description
Sponsored Updates	1	<p>No Sponsored Updates</p> <p>Content is not user-specific, or targeted towards an audience, very broad and vague sponsored update.</p> <p>Words-only and run-on sentences that reduces interest. Most users do not read through everything.</p>
	2	<p>Creating targeted content that is Free and not supported by LinkedIn Campaign Manager.</p> <p>Running of an update that uses rich media like images, slide share, and videos to illustrate message.</p> <p>Contains keyword rich tags, meta tags that help search engine optimization (SEO) and links to different sites.</p> <p>First-touch and multi-touch clicks do not lead to user-friendly website with information regarding event.</p>
	3	<p>Sponsoring 1 update or ad campaign that targets company followers.</p> <p>Update targets a very specific segment of people</p> <p>This minimizes reach and limits engagement: “clicks”, “likes”, “shares”, “comments”, “followers”.</p> <p>This would reduce users interest and PPC i.e. Click-through-rate (CTR), cost-per-impressions (CPM)</p> <p>Running of an update that uses rich media like images, slide share, and videos to illustrate message.</p> <p>First-touch and multi-touch clicks lead to user-friendly website with information regarding event, related to campaign message.</p>
	4	<p>Creation of a Sponsored Update or Ad campaign that targets followers and non-followers. This will give company message broader reach and attract different people. A broad target audience could weaken the amount of “clicks” and “impressions” collected.</p> <p>Running more than 1 sponsored update or campaign at the same time.</p> <p>Constant maintenance of update to remain creative, up-to-date, changing to target a different audience</p>
	5	<p>Company update or ad targets different segments of people.</p> <p>Running more than 4 active campaigns at the same time, combination of ad campaign and sponsored update run simultaneously.</p> <p>Utilizing the “duplicate campaign”, “hiding campaign”, “turn on/off” features to control the message of company</p> <p>Constant maintenance of update to remain creative, up-to-date, changing to target a different audience.</p> <p>Company was highest maximum bidder and pays lowest CPC for CPM and CTRs. This will reduce overall costs of running campaign.</p> <p>Contains keyword rich tags, meta tags that helps search engine optimization (SEO) and links to different sites.</p> <p>First-touch and multi-touch clicks lead to user-friendly website with information regarding event, related to campaign message.</p>

Fig. 7. Sponsored Update

**Hewlett-Packard** Sponsored

Have a work deadline but no Wi-Fi? We've all been there, but now you don't have to be. With 4G LTE built-in you can meet your deadlines without worry. [<http://lnkd.in/bOpP2U9>] [<http://lnkd.in/bQ5Jw5h>]

Follow Hewlett-Packard · Like (142) · Comment (16) · Share · 2d ago

Mark Russell, Michael Petroules and 140 others

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Crystal Williams I admire hp.They have a good quality branch of computers and laptops. I own one now. 1d ago

Maha Ajawi QUESTION ,IF YOU HAVE WIRELESS CONNECTION ,CAN YOU STILL USE WIFI AS INTERNATIONAL OR STAE CONNECTION ?IS IT LIMITED OR NONE? 6h ago

Add a comment...

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Published on Apr 7, 2014

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Targets followers and non-followers

Links to external sources i.e. Youtube, HP notebooks with Qualcomm Gobi 4G LTE built-in Landing Page. Enhances first-touch and multi-touch clicks.

High engagement: likes, comments, and shares due to call-to-action wording



#### 4) Products & Services (Table 6: Fig 8)

The products and services page use to be a part of the digital image a B2B firm included in its design to engage followers. LinkedIn recently took down this tab on April 14 2014 to encourage firms to use Showcase pages which will be explained in this section too. However, for the purposes of this research I shall explore the products and services tab page because it existed during the time of most of the LinkedIn company pages I am observing in this thesis.

An effective social strategy is to post information on the “Product Overview” section about a firm’s product or services in a clear, consistent, up-to-date manner. Maynard (2014) advises that in order to get the most out of your company products and services tab you should:

1. Customize different versions of this tab by audience segments based on industry, job function, seniority, geography, and company size
2. Customize each product and service by adding different banners, features, special offers and rich media
3. Spotlight certain products and services that are top-performers

Members can Recommend and write reviews about these products on the “Products Overview” page which will add credibility to the digital image of the firm. These endorsements can also be linked to one another through the “shares” button, which will then broaden the reach of the digital image and form more connections. A Forrester survey released that 70 percent of buyers trust the recommendations of their friends and family (Marketo, Inc, 2012). The number of recommendations received in a network is a good way to measure consumer interest and feedback about products. The customer can often provide immediate feedback to the company based on current products and services, or even propose new ones (Andzulis et al., 2012). This can influence sales lead generation by building trust between businesses that aim to create content and initiate a conversation. LinkedIn company page amplifies information across the professional social network, and it helps prospective clients find a company through relevant keyword-rich searches of products and services (Kocurek, 2013).



LinkedIn's Showcase Pages are dedicated pages for parts of a business that they want to highlight, such as product lines or vendor brands and highlight top-performing products to customers (Chaney, 2014). According to Hana Abaza (2014), director at Uberflip, "firms should create a Showcase page that caters to one of their buyer personas, positioning themselves as a thought leader around a topic and using it as a way to promote a major event". For example, Microsoft's Office Showcase Page on LinkedIn appears to focus more on productivity and getting things done in the work place. The social strategy is to create original content that caters to an audience and their need to interact on this social platform (Abaza, 2014). The company page metrics like pay-per-click (PPC) and click-through-rate (CTR) can also be applied to Showcase pages and enable the company to target, promote, and track their niche followers. The Showcase Page exists in addition to a Company page, but is dedicated to a particular brand, product, or initiative of a company. This compliments the overall digital image by enabling it to reach new prospects through content-specific platforms like these, which allow two-way interaction and insights from buyer to seller.

Table 6: SCORING		
Attribute		Descriptions
Products & Services	1	No product/service page OR Less than 5 products on product/service page supported with information No showcase pages, endorsements/recommendations, rich media, banner images or content.
	2	5 - 10 products with 1 recommendation. There is no banner image for this page or product/service overview Product and service descriptions are specific, detailed, and clear. Relevant content relates back to company page. Promotion of top product offerings at top of page
	3	More than 10 products with more than 2 recommendations endorsing product/service Employees will endorse or recommend product based on email request from company. This will show on their news feeds and the feeds of their connections. Banner image and product overview are descriptive, clear, concise, and attractive; similar to ideal company page header layout. Top performer featured on top of product/service page.
	4	10 – 20 products with more than 5 recommendations from followers and employees Products and Services individual descriptions contain rich media i.e. images, video, and slide share. This will attract potential recommendations. The descriptions are clear, interesting, and increase engagement: “comments” “likes” “shares” Showcase page for individual product or service, linked to product or service page. This will increase the number of followers and create more buzz about company products. It will increase the number of CTR for the product. It is also a targeted way of getting users who are specifically interested in that product/service to follow its improvements.
	5	Over 20 products with more than 50 recommendations from followers, non-followers, and employees. Number of viewers, CPMs, CTRs and all other metrics keep increasing. First-touch and multi-touch links to product and service page and showcase pages. Products and Services individual descriptions contain rich media i.e. images, video, and slide share. This will attract potential recommendations. The descriptions are clear, interesting, and increase engagement: “comments” “likes” “shares”.

**Fig. 8. Products and Services**

1 product, 0 recommendations

Supporting information

45 products & services, 650 Recommendations

Attractive banner image

Detailed, exciting product overview

Top performer featured at the top of page: Dell XPS 18 Portable All-in-One

1

Shizzlr

Home Products

Groupcentric

Groupcentric is an API for developers to quickly and easily add rich, robust group chat into their apps. It takes between 5-10 minutes to install and is infinitely customizable. We built Groupcentric from the ground up to be simple, yet robust. Getting our group chat integrated into your app takes...

Recommend Share

Previous | Next 1 - 1 of 1 First | Last

5

Dell

Home Careers Products & Services

Efficient manageability without the complexity.

Presenting the new Dell Latitude™ and OptiPlex™ business-class solutions

Learn More Now >

Listen. Learn. Deliver. That's what we're about.

For over 28 years, Dell has empowered communities and people everywhere to use technology to realize their dreams. Customers trust us to deliver technology solutions that help them do and achieve more at home, work, school or anywhere in their world.

Dell XPS 18 Portable All-in-One 40 recommendations

The Dell XPS 18 is the world's thinnest, lightest and most portable all-in-one PC, and can easily be transported around the house for watching movies in the living room, playing games with the family, viewing recipes in the kitchen or creating professional presentations in the home office. The...

Recommend Share

Dell XPS 12 Convertible Touch Ultrabook 70 recommendations

The Dell XPS 12 Convertible Touch Ultrabook takes "no compromise" to a whole new level. It elegantly blends performance and design, and provides two premium devices in one. With both a powerful Ultrabook™ and tablet in one device, you can carry just one device instead of two. Utility and elegance...

Recommend Share

Dell XPS 18 Portable All-in-One

40 people recommend this

Product Overview

The Dell XPS 18 is the world's thinnest, lightest and most portable all-in-one PC, and can easily be transported around the house for watching movies in the living room, playing games with the family, viewing recipes in the kitchen or creating professional presentations in the home office. The versatile AIO can be used in three ways: docked in an optional powered stand for the traditional AIO desktop experience, on a table with flip-out feet to stand upright or lay flat for tablet mode. The XPS 18 features a Full HD 18.4" capacitive touch display with wide viewing angles, a built-in battery with five hours of run time, and an aluminum-backed design with soft grip for traction. Starting at just 4.85 lbs, the XPS 18 redefines the desktop and expands the touch PC experience. See product album here <http://dell.to/XQJQUR>:

Windows 8, 64-bit OS Starting at 4.85 lbs - built for travel  
Up to 8GB Dual Channel DDR3 SDRAM 5 hours battery life  
memory  
Up to 500GB SATA hard drive 18.4" Full HD (1080p) touch screen  
Intel HD Graphics 4000 video card Tablet to desktop conversion w/  
Fast boot with optional SSD storage adjustable stand

All Recommendations

Julio G., Client Technical Support Specialist at Dell Compellent  
Panama  
recommending  
June 26, 2013 Flag

Hi, Julio. My name is Devyani Srini and I work with Dell. Thanks for your recommendation of the XPS 18 AIO. What do you like about this system? Any suggestions for improvement? Please let us know your feedback. Thanks!

Devyani S., Social Business Lead, Brand at Dell  
Austin, Texas Area  
July 22, 2013

Get more info:

Dell XPS 18 Portable All-in-One

Visit our website >

Linked to Dell XPS 18 Portable All-in-One Landing page

Dell XPS 18 Portable All-in-One

Product overview is thorough, clear and interesting with additional details.

Use of rich media on products/services page to show all benefits of it

Drop your stacker friends  
"The Commutagon's Guide" is a sourcebook for living an active life.

You're Hopkins material.  
It's not too late to apply for the Global MBA - Scholarships available.

Master the RFP process  
[www.dell.com/insiderails](http://www.dell.com/insiderails)

High engagement: 40 recommendations

XPS 18 Portable All-in-One Desktop with Touch

★★★★★ Read 57 Reviews Write a Review

Desktop power made portable.  
The world's thinnest and lightest portable all-in-one features 3rd Gen Intel Core™ powered power, Windows 8 and an 18.4" Full HD touch display.  
Starting at \$799\*\*

Configurations

or Highlight different specs

Contract Price: \$100 off

XPS 18 Touch \$799.99 56 Reviews

XPS 18 Touch \$999.99 56 Reviews

XPS 18 Touch with Stand \$1,399.99 56 Reviews

Dell XPS 18 Portable All-in-One Landing page provides more information about the product.

---

### 5) Use of Rich Media (Table 7: Fig 9)

Social selling is not limited to user-generated content (UGC), status updates, and information regarding products and services. Using social media as a tool to generate leads enables sales people to use all types of media like YouTube videos, images, Slideshare, and to pull customers towards their company page. LinkedIn is a content community that encourages users to use a wide range of different media types to shape their image and demonstrate, in more ways than one, what they are trying to say. In June 2006, a pair of performance artists shot a video featuring a series of geysers they created by dropping Mentos brand mints into 2-liter bottles of Coke; the clip became a major hit on YouTube. Realizing customers' enthusiasm for this performance, Coca-Cola fostered the sensation by airing the video on late-night television and ensuring broad digital distribution across different content communities. Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) observed that besides the advantage of high impact/low cost media coverage, the campaign also resulted in a measurable sales uplift. If the sales achieved from this video advertisement met their profit goal and exceeded expectations then that would be a positive indication of lead generation success. The best indicator of lead generation success is a physical indication or appearance of the lead, such as the forms or face-to-face purchase.

The best way to measure rich media is using links, keywords, and relying on first-touch and multi-touch ROI on the media. Search-engine optimization (SEO) is also capable of optimizing the visitor frequency to a company page by filtering keywords, attributes of the media, and relevant links. The Weidert Group suggests that keyword-rich updates consist of meta-tags in a page description, alt tags, and encoding title tags that will drive traffic from search engines like Google to a firm's website, landing page, or LinkedIn company page (Isca, 2012). For example, using images on your page can actually help you in rankings, because traffic can come from image-based search engines like Google Images. Moz suggests that your images have a title, filename, surrounding text, and alt attribute to create a visitor frequency (Marketo, Inc, 2012). B2B firms can use Google Analytics or LinkedIn Campaign Manager to track the impact of these tags and also set up a budget that authorizes what tags or alt links have the most influence on lead generation.

Table 7: SCORING		
Attribute		Descriptions
LinkedIn Rich Media	1	No Slide share, YouTube videos, presentations, Infographics or images.
	2	Use of links to other pages with rich media. First-touch or multi-touch links to external sources.
	3	1 – 5 uses of rich media on updates or ad campaigns. Rich media related to company, which is detailed, informative and interactive Targeted updates, unpaid Uses of LinkedIn Campaign Manager to track CPM and engagement
	4	5 – 15 uses of rich media on updates or ad campaigns. Rich media related to company, but also contains thought-provoking messages from external sources e.g. senior level management, experts, or talks from events. This is tailored towards specific audiences. Sponsored Updates and ad campaigns will contain rich media. This will increase CTR and lead to website or landing page with more information. Increased tracking of effective rich media through Campaign Manager, LinkedIn page Analytics, and Google Analytics
	5	Over 15 uses of rich media posted on LinkedIn page and linked to showcase pages and other company pages. Rich media is a featured update or one of the “top stories” on LinkedIn Enhanced company engagement: “comments”, “shares”, “likes” Sponsored Updates and ad campaigns will contain rich media. This will increase CTR and lead to website or landing page with more information. Increased tracking of effective rich media through Campaign Manager, LinkedIn page Analytics, and Google Analytics

**Fig. 9. Rich Media**

## LINKS TO ARTICLE ON COMPANY

**CDW** Save \$125 on an APC Smart-UPS SC with our Deal of the Week Offer valid until noon 4/11 or until sold out. Don't miss out! <http://cdw.io/c2vvgGS>



**SAVE \$125**

Like (6) · Comment · Share · 3 days ago

**APC Smart-UPS SC 620VA**

Don't let power failures dictate your business. The Smart-UPS SC features network-grade run time, hot swap batteries and built-in data line protection.

- 410 Watts / 620 VA
- Input: 120V / Output: 120V
- Interface Port DB-9 RS-232
- Smart UPS signaling RS-232 cable

**CDW SPECIAL PRICE\***  
**\$74.99** [Add to Cart](#)  
 Was \$199.99

**FOLLOW @CDWBESTDEALS**

\* CDW Special Price for EDC 2514768. 25 unit limit per customer. Offer not available to resellers. Offer excludes contract pricing. Offer cannot be applied to previous purchases. Total quantity available is 350. Offer valid through Noon (CT), 04/11/14 while supplies last. 62% savings based on the difference between CDW advertised price and CDW Special Price.

**MORE**




**SAVE \$125**

Paint 2

**NEXT WEEK'S DEAL**  
 Upgrade to Windows 8 with this frenzy fast tablet?

**?**

## LINKS TO INFOGRAPHIC



**Boost Social Selling with LinkedIn Infographic**

LinkedIn Companies have seen measurable results leveraging LinkedIn Sales Solutions. Check out this infographic to learn how to drive revenue with social selling. <http://linkd.in/PVMZGU>

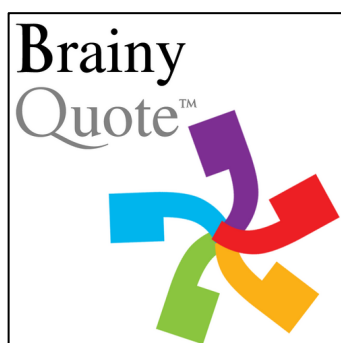
**Boost Social Selling with LinkedIn Infographic**

linkd.in · LinkedIn Sales Navigator has an impact on the effectiveness of sales professionals. The studies were completed by the Aberdeen Group and the Sales Management Association. Companies have seen measurable financial results leveraging LinkedIn for...

Like (9) · Comment (2) · Share · 4 hours ago

Paint 2

## OTHER TYPES OF RICH MEDIA INCLUDE LINKS TO:



## 6) Followers (Table 8)

Growing a follower base is essential to maintaining the firm's digital visibility and building customer relationships. B2B firms do this using a network of first-degree and second-degree connections that act as nodes that are linked to one another and connect in a network. The link that employees create when they cite their workplace through individual profiles and follow the company page exposes the company to more followers. Employees are a great first-degree connection because whenever they engage on the company page through status updates conversations, "likes" and "shares", it appears on the news feed of other connections. LinkedIn automatically generates a summary of "how you're connected" to the company and places it in the top right hand corner of the page or they email members who have subscribed to their network. These emails include information regarding top stories, recommendations, comments, likes, shares, and basically anything that was recently featured within an individuals network.

With LinkedIn Company Page Analytics firms can see how many followers their Targeted Status Updates attracted and the characteristics of the members that engaged with the update (i.e. demographic region, job function, gender, industry). Companies can also track click-through-rates (CTR) and other lead generation efforts with pay-per-click (PPC) programs using Company Page Analytics. A call-to-action (CTA) prompts followers to continue supporting a firm's sales effort and strengthens their loyalty to the company. People following your company represent a "warm lead" which makes it easier to convert them into a prospect. Developing a robust follower community will also generate referrals and attain viral reach for rich content (Lazzaroni, 2014).

Building a larger follower network creates more opportunities to sell through social media. Lead generation is all about supplying information to knowledgeable customers and they will follow a firm because of new, enticing content generated through its company page. B2B sellers create "Follow" buttons that connect its non-followers to followers via other external sources. If a customer has a strong relationship with a top-performing program, they may develop an additional relationship with LinkedIn because of the association.



Table 8: SCORING		
Attribute		Descriptions
Followers	1	Below 20 followers, under 20 employees
	2	51 – 100 followers, 20 - 100 employees 1 <sup>st</sup> degree connections which are all employees
	3	101 – 1000 followers, 100 - 500 employees 1 <sup>st</sup> degree connections and 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree connections Follow button or link placed on social media networks e.g. Facebook, Twitter or on email newsletter
	4	1001 – 5000 followers, 500 - 5000 employees 1 <sup>st</sup> degree connections and 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree connections Follow button or link placed on social media networks e.g. Facebook, Twitter or on email newsletter
	5	Over 5001 followers, over 5000+ employees 1 <sup>st</sup> degree, 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree, 3 <sup>rd</sup> degree and other connections Follow button or link placed on social media networks e.g. Facebook, Twitter or on email newsletter

Table 9: SCORING		
Attribute		Descriptions
Engagement	1	Engagement percentage is <0
	2	Engagement percentage is 1 < % < 2
	3	Engagement percentage is 2 < % < 10
	4	Engagement percentage is 10 < % < 25
	5	Engagement percentage is >25

**BuzzStream** Learn creative link building with our new free guide, Linking Outside the Box. Featuring contributions from industry leaders like Paddy Moogan and Lisa Buyer, Link Outside the Box will help you link different and employ the new strategies that work today.



#### Linking Outside the Box - Free Link Building eBook from BuzzStream

resources.buzzstream.com • Want to improve your link building skills? Download the new free link building ebook from BuzzStream and link different.

Organic  
Targeted to: All Followers

162 impressions    2 clicks    0 interactions    1.23% engagement

Gained from Sponsored

**Fig. 10.**  
Engagement

## 7) Engagement (Table 9: Fig 10)

When a firm posts content to a company page, their followers can “like”, share, or comment on updates, which “amplifies” engagement levels and reflects on how effective that particular update or advertisement was (LinkedIn, 2012). On external sources like emails, social media, and newsletters, firms can generate the most traffic by promoting content to non-followers. B2B companies that are not sharing what they know to grow their customer base are losing sales every day (LeChasseur, 2010). As members amplify posts through LinkedIn, it gives the companies a chance to build relationships with more prospects that discovered content through a closer contact. The Click-through-rates (CTR) and Cost-per-impressions (CPM) generated from company or sponsored updates are able to turn site viewers to potential leads by increased engagement levels. You can view these for free for each update through LinkedIn Company Page Analytics. The factors that contribute to engagement are:

1. **Impressions** - The number of times each update was shown to LinkedIn members.
2. **Clicks** - The number of clicks on your content, company name, or logo. This doesn't include interactions (shares, likes, and comments).
3. **Interactions** - The number of times people have liked, commented on, and shared each update.
4. **Engagement percentage-**

$$\frac{\# \text{ of interactions} + \# \text{ of clicks, followers}}{\# \text{ of impressions}}$$

The best engagement levels are those that have a high engagement percent. This indicates that viewers are being transformed in to potential leads and prospects through higher interactions, clicks, and connections with the firm. The firm can then use their push strategy to continue persuading customers to initiate contact with them or they can improve their SCRM strategies to make the digital image stronger. Another alternative is that firms can use these potential engagement levels to investigate the reasons why certain updates get a higher engagement than others based on its target audience. If the popular posts have a consistently high level of engagement, the firm should be able to alter their sales strategy, communication style, and overall image to reflect something that consumer's

want. For example, if a sports post received more engagement than a political one every time, a news group would alter its updates to more sports stories to increase the impressions, clicks, and interactions. The more time and frequency of visits spent on a company page, the easier it will be to convert a potential lead to a real one.

## Other metrics

**Lead scoring:** This is essential for lead generation, it tells companies where they need to fast track sales or nurture relationships. This ROI metric is observable and often collected via an online form or registration process. The best lead scoring systems use explicit methods like BANT (budget, authority, need, and timeline), demographics and firmographics (where a firm is located). Companies try to determine the right lead fit so they can invest in social selling in the right places. Tracking prospect's behavioral patterns such as clicks, keywords, web visits, and social interactions are part of implicit lead scoring methods (Marketo, Inc, 2012). A study released by The 58 percent of advertisers and 65 percent of agencies indicated that "clarity around how to measure social media ROI" would lead them to increase their use of paid social media advertising (Voskresensky, 2013).

**Number of MQLs:** MQL stands for marketing qualified leads and is a way to determine whom a company's top leads are through a threshold. A firm takes into consideration a combination of actions-like filling out a form, visiting frequency of a company and product page. The purpose is to know what leads will generate the most sales. Company's can look at this metric over a month, as a percentage over time, or simply as a conversion rate per offer. If 20 percent of leads became and MQL after attending a webinar hosted on LinkedIn, but 10 percent became MQL's after watching a YouTube video on LinkedIn, then a company would say its webinar has a higher MQL conversion rate (Corliss, 2013). The social

customer relationship (SCRM) for B2B firms is to nurture leads whether or not they have contact information. By identifying qualified leads, firms can post valuable content freely and build a credibly, trustworthy reputation (Marketo, Inc, 2010). This will increase the likeability of a lead contacting the seller for more information in the long run.

Cost per MQL: To achieve the greatest results with limited resources firms aim to keep their costs low. The factors that influence this are the Cost per Opportunity, running lengthy sales cycles with sponsored updates or targeted ones, the overall investment into social media and analytics software (Marketo, Inc, 2012). By being more conscious of a firm's budget, ROI increases and PPC programs that create the biggest impact will generate the most leads.

## Summary

The description and scoring of each attribute is a guide that firms should use when implementing their social media strategy. This helps increase efficiency and keep track of what you need to be aware of in a social media campaign. I apologize for the lack of data or examples regarding metrics that should be used to measure each attribute. This information was unavailable because companies have chosen to not disclose that information. However, I compiled a summary of all the key points mentioned in my previous section where I describe attributes of the company page and their respective metrics (**see Table 10**). I would urge you to look at it as a referral when you wish to apply it to another firm's digital image. The other metrics have not been included in the table because they are used to measure the overall company page.

In the next section of this study I will examine and score the attributes of the UConn School of Business LinkedIn Company Page. I shall then compare it to the lead generation results obtained from Inquiry Attendance Forms collected throughout the year of 2013 by the school at their open house info session. I aim to prove that a LinkedIn "healthy" digital image positively correlates to lead generation success.

**TABLE 10.  
SUMMARY RUBRIC**

	Attribute	How does it help generate leads	Metrics Used
1.	Company Updates	<p>Daily company updates on news feed - Targeted Status Updates, concise, most recent update</p> <p>Featured Status Updates</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>Company oriented engagement</p> <p>Links</p> <p>Keyword-rich sentences. Ask for feedback. Mots effective way to start a conversation.</p>	<p>Call-to-action Links</p> <p>Keyword rich status updates</p> <p>Click-through-rate</p> <p>Traffic-Driving keywords</p>
2.	Header	<p>Banner Image on Company Page</p> <p>Company Information</p>	<p>Follower Analytics</p> <p>A/B Testing</p>
3.	Sponsored Updates	<p>Click-through-rate (CTR) and cost-per-impression (CPM)</p> <p>Sponsored Updates incorporating rich-media, user-generated content, featured</p> <p>Creating targeted content</p> <p>Auction for Sponsored Updates on pages</p> <p>Links on different programs to leading to company page</p>	<p>Cost-per-click (CPC)</p> <p>Cost-per-impression (CPM)</p> <p>LinkedIn Campaign Manager</p> <p>Google Analytics</p> <p>Pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns</p> <p>Return on Investment (ROI)</p> <p>FT-ROI and MT-ROI</p>

4.	Products & Services	<p>Products/services tab - promoting top-performers and multiple products</p> <p>Banner Images, Rich Media, Clear Content</p> <p>Endorsements/Recommendations</p> <p>Showcase Pages</p>	<p>Call-to-action Links</p> <p>Keyword rich status updates</p> <p>Click-through-rate</p> <p>Traffic-Driving keywords</p>
5.	LinkedIn Rich Media	<p>Slideshare</p> <p>YouTube videos</p> <p>Presentations</p> <p>Info graphics, images</p> <p>LinkedIn Campaign Manager and Google Analytics enabling users to set up tracking on links.</p>	<p>Meta tags, alt attribute, encoding links in to media</p> <p>Click-through-rate,</p> <p>Search-engine-optimization (SEO) using keyword-rich searches</p> <p>Return on investment (ROI) first-touch and multi-touch</p>
6.	Followers	<p>Employees linking up to Company</p> <p>“Recommended” section</p> <p>“Shares” via external links</p> <p><b>Follow Ads – follow ad button</b></p>	<p>Per-per-click Website traffic</p> <p>Follow Ads – [ay-per-click</p> <p>Conversion rate</p> <p>Company page Analytics</p>
7.	Engagement Rate	<p>Impressions</p> <p>Clicks</p> <p>Interactions</p> <p>Engagement percent</p>	<p>Google Analytics</p> <p>LinkedIn Company Page Analytics</p>

## **UConn School of Business**

### **Lead Generation Analysis**

As far as a social media strategy goes B2B firms do not need to worry about initiating the first formal contact with the buyer. This is because the push strategy, if done right, equips the potential lead with plenty of information, resources, and points of contact via a firm's company page. Fortunately, this strategy also gives salespeople enough time to work on their accounts versus chasing down potential leads. This is not a restrictive concept and sellers do sometimes have to initiate the first contact with buyers, particularly if it's an important client. As leads slowly trickle in during the season, companies have to constantly adjust their social media strategy in preparation for next season. At the end of the season, when it comes to converting leads in to actual numbers the firm will be able to see how effective their social media strategy was during that period of time. If this number is higher compared to previous seasons and that correlates to the "healthy" digital range of 25 – 35, it would mean that the firm successfully maximized the full potential of its attributes to achieve high sales. Therefore, examining the website, landing page, or LinkedIn company page isn't enough, salespeople have to compare the results of lead generation to the scoring of a digital image to understand what their maximum potential sale or lead would be.

The UConn School of Business at the University of Connecticut (UConn) boasts the prestige of having both a business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) relationship with its stakeholders. The B2C relationship it has is with undergraduate and graduate students who enroll at the school, their main advertising and promotional campaigns are targeted towards this audience. The B2B relationship is defined as the partnership between UConn and large companies to invest in programs that enhance professional development, and leadership. Companies endorse professional development courses open to graduate students and offered by the UConn School of Business Graduate Business Learning Center (GBLC). I have chosen to examine the digital image of the graduate school during a specific period of time whilst examining its lead generation results during the same time frame. I would like to prove that my hypothesis is correct; that there is a direct correlation between lead generation success and a "healthy" digital image.



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## Background Information

Founded in 1941, the University of Connecticut School of Business (UConn BUSN) is one of the most comprehensive business schools in the nation offering undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs that cater to students of all diverse backgrounds. It has been fully accredited as one of the top business schools worldwide by the AACSB International – The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, since 1958. Forbes ranked the UConn Masters in Business Administration (MBA) Program as #16 among U.S. public institutions and U.S. News ranked them #53 best graduate business schools in the country. The mission statement of the UConn School of Business confirms their commitment to academic excellence, experiential learning, and globalization that sets them apart from everyone else (UConn Business):

“Real World, Real Learning, Real Impact. Be a globally recognized provider of exceptional managerial and business leadership through innovative experiential learning in a dynamic global business context: integrating real world education, outstanding research and strategic outreach.” -

(UConn Business Website)

Ranked among one of the best MBA programs in the world, the UConn School of Business Graduate Business Learning Center (GBLC) has established a strong reputation for its individualized programs that focus on the individual learner and his/her career goals and interests. The MBA Program offers students a chance to gain real-world experience whilst challenging their intellectual ability both in and out of the classroom. MBA courses are delivered in Hartford, Stamford, and Waterbury all year long. They are flexible, convenient, and designed as individualized programs that cater to every student's personal and professional needs. The UConn MBA program is offered in three distinct formats – full-time, part-time and executive (EMBA), it also has other graduate and certificate programs that enhance the professional ability of students. Please visit <http://grad.business.uconn.edu/> for more information.

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**B2B relationship: UConn School of Business GBLC**

Domestic and international corporations who want to enhance the leadership and professional development training for their potential new hires and employees-in-training support graduate programs. The UConn MBA intense curriculum that offers students a chance to work with complex business issues in a real-world context is what draws stakeholders to do business with the school.

According to the UConn MBA website, “In today's tough economic climate, the return on investment for an MBA education is more important than ever” (UConn Business). In their 2013 report on the “Top MBA Programs in the U.S.”, Forbes ranked full time MBA programs based on their return on investment (ROI), which is the total compensation (i.e. salary, bonuses, and exercised stock options) an alumni would earn in their first five years out of business school (Badenhausen, 2013). UConn School of Business was ranked #46 and their total 5-year MBA gain was \$45,900, this was more compared to a pre-MBA salary of \$40,000. Most of the businesses recruiters and investors at UConn hire graduates for consulting and finance/accounting positions (Forbes, 2013). The ROI is a good indicator of the worth of an alumni and companies who compensate at a higher five-year out salary are willing to invest in candidates that come from a highly ranked program. Today, graduates are usually the first to get picked for full-time jobs by employers who will be able to offer them a competitive salary depending on their performance and skill set (Forbes, 2013). Remaining competitive both academically and professionally will alleviate the value of the UConn MBA programs and ensure that their candidates have the professional, real-world experience that big companies would like to invest in.

Five year out salaries also indicate the type of investment corporations are willing to spend in support of graduate programs. UConn currently runs a Student Managed Investment Fund (SMF) program, which is a fund-raising drive designed to reach out to alumni and give them an opportunity to participate in the school's program and invest in it (UConn Business SMF). It has made significant financial contributions to the BUSN and is now worth \$1.3 million. UConn aims to continually involve its alumni and close partners in projects that they can use to increase their brand image and offer students an opportunity to experience business issues and challenges that are happening today. These endorsements also promote the name of investors like Apple or IBM in collaboration with an

educational outreach program. The act of corporate social responsibility strengthens a firm's position in the market with its fellow stakeholders and consumers. This B2B relationship is a win-win for everybody because it is cultivated through these endorsements that seek to improve the identity of the school and their corporate partners. Looking forward, the UConn MBA plans to leverage their international partnerships to enhance learning of global experiences and be recognized as an institution that is cultivating a workforce in an expanding global business environment to gain more support from stakeholders.

### **BUSN Marketing and Sales**

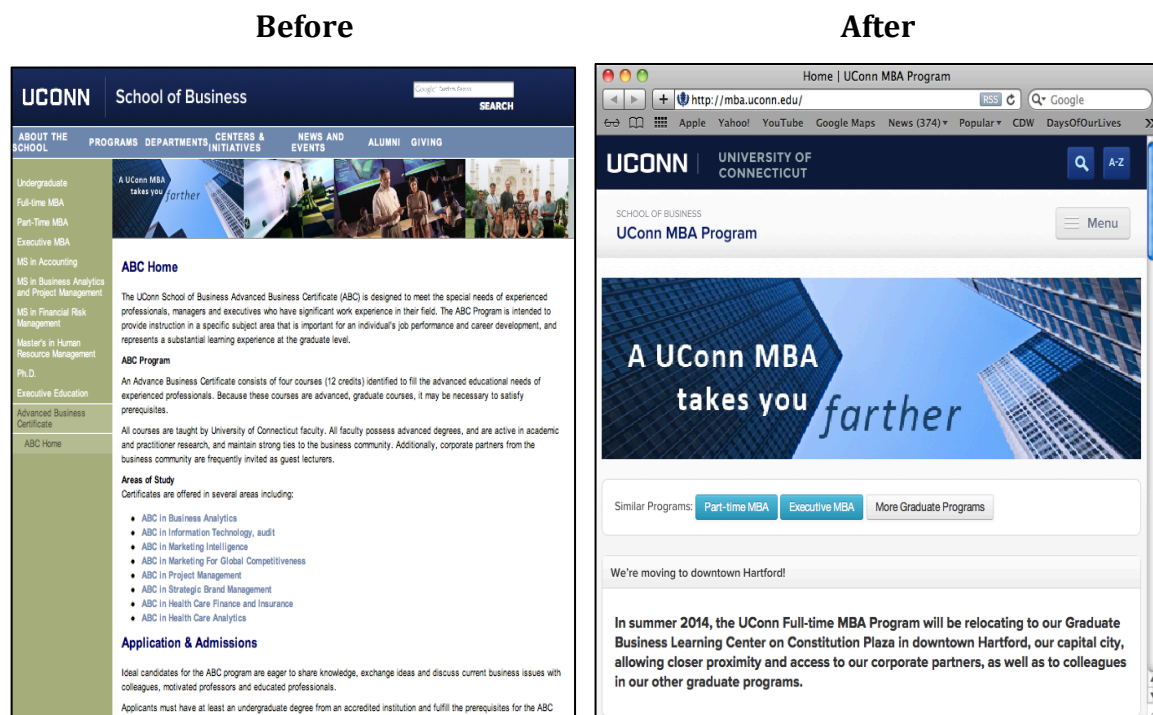
A majority of the marketing and communications done for the school is done through the UConn Communications department. The school's objective has been to increase enrollment in their graduate business programs such as the Full-time MBA (MBA), Part-time MBA (PTMBA), Executive MBA (EMBA), Accounting Certificate, Masters in Business Analytics and Processing Management (MSBAPM) and Masters in Financial Risk Management (MSFRM). The school's primary method of promotional advertising was on billboards, emails, brochures, online radio like Pandora, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Content on these mediums was simple, concise, and text-only. Billboards in particular drove higher leads because prospective graduate students ages 21 and over would drive and sit in traffic, therefore increasing the ads impact. Facebook and LinkedIn were used to advertise the same message, non-altered, and increase their reach. The digital image of these content-based ads was weak because it was text-only and did not attract a lot of viewers. According to Melissa Ferrigno, social media campaign manager for UConn Communications, "big news stories were featured on the LinkedIn Page and Facebook had a lot more photos versus written content. People did not want to spend ages reading things, they also did not have time to".

As the school's population kept growing, BUSN made changes to its selling techniques to target their audience more effectively. The main challenge was bridging the identity gap between UConn School of Business and the university. BUSN wanted to increase awareness about their programs to prospective students, but still be viewed as an institution for corporate leadership, training and

development. BUSN used R.S.V.P. forms on their website, email campaigns, and Inquiry Forms to collect data about their attendees at each monthly info session for their numerous programs. They collected data about their leads through hand-written Inquiry Forms and the clicks received when users were directed to the landing page from online links. UConn began to develop a separate website using Aurora software to make the landing page look like a cleaner and attractive version of the existing UConn Website (see fig. 11). When they clicked on links via LinkedIn Advertisements, Pandora, or Facebook they were redirected to this new page where they would gain access to more information about the respective event or program.

**Fig 11. BUSN Campaign Page.**



## Visual Ad Campaign

The first visual advertising campaign that UConn ever ran on LinkedIn was from 02/17/13 – 05/12/13, this was an awareness campaign for the top 5 programs offered by the UConn graduate business programs office: EMBA, MSFRM, PTMBA program, MSBAPM, and Accounting Certificate. It was a rotational ad campaign that would circulate around different LinkedIn pages as the student or faculty member was scrolling through LinkedIn. This visual ad campaign was targeted audiences from Hartford, CT to Springfield, CT area. The ad used search-engine optimization (SEO)

and click-through-rates to guide users to the exclusive landing page that gave them quick facts about the info session. This campaign page was designed to exclude information from the original MBA website, that was not relevant to the info sessions. The content was written to be simple, clear, and informative (see fig. 12). The decision to transition from text ads to visual ads gave the school a better brand identity.

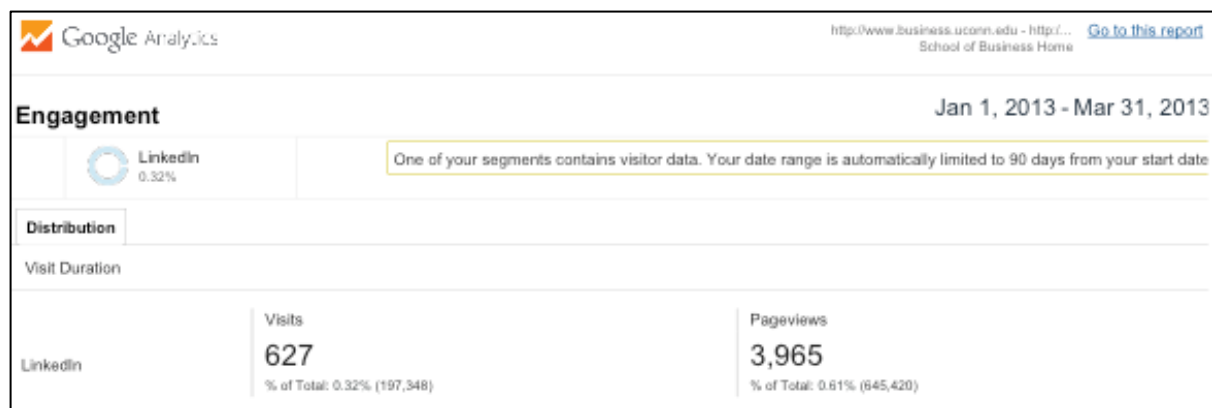
1. Previously visual content was placed on billboards and newspapers such as the Hartford courier. However, they received positive feedback about these ads and wanted to transfer the same likeability to all their platforms.
2. A visual ad campaign also enabled the BUSN to be consistent and cohesive with their message on all platforms. Same picture on billboards will create a resonance amongst its brand loyal clients and repetition could positively impact sales

**Fig 12.** Visual Ad Campaigns

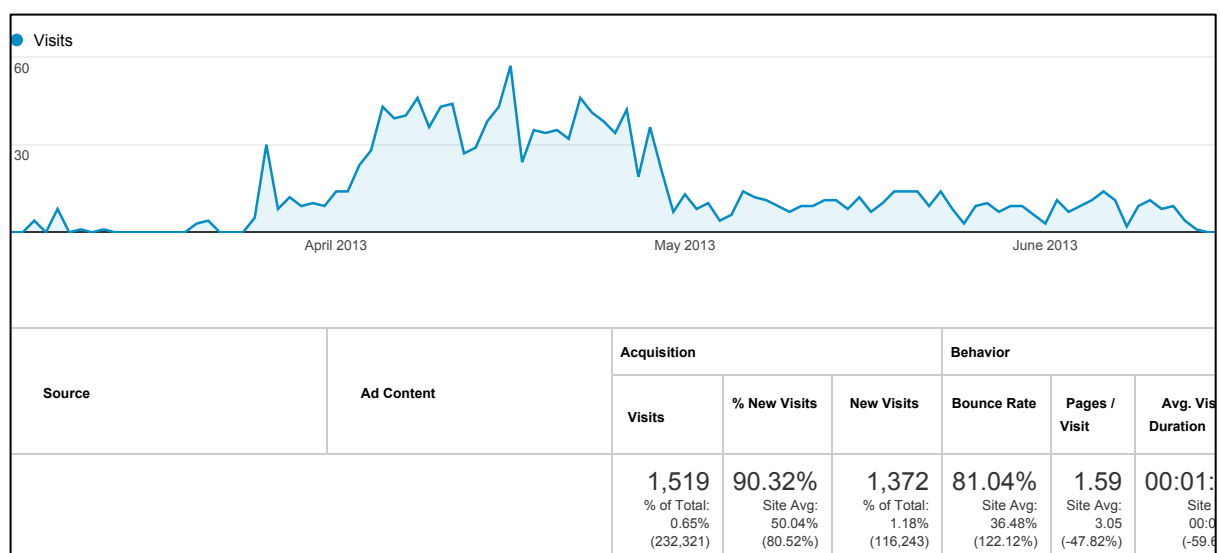


According to Michael Deotte, Head of UConn Communications, the investment into this Spring 2013 ad campaign was around \$28,000. He is quoted saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words. Trying to convey what you want to convey in a creative way can only be done through visual. Rather than spinning wheels to think about concise messages, visual campaigns strive for an impact”. UConn used market survey results from an ad agency and Google Analytics to analyze the impact this ad would have on the number of visits (see fig. 13 & 14). The number of visitors increased from the time before and after the campaign was released; there were 627 visitors on the LinkedIn Company Page from January to March and 1,519 visitors from April to June. The page experienced its highest involvement during the launch of the ads between April 2013 and May 2013, 90 of these were new visits. The students who visited the page a lot came from the United States, followed by India, China and Singapore (see fig. 15).

**Fig. 13** Number of visits from 01/01/13 to 03/31/13



**Fig. 14** Number of visits from 03/04/13 to 06/16/13



**Fig. 15** Demographic information of LinkedIn Followers

## Visits and % New Visits by Country / Territory

Country / Territory	Visits	% New Visits
United States	1,729	52.92%
India	590	91.19%
China	92	93.48%
Singapore	22	68.18%
United Kingdom	12	100.00%
(not set)	12	100.00%
Germany	9	66.67%
Canada	6	100.00%
Hong Kong	6	100.00%
Switzerland	3	100.00%

The statistics show us that the level of SCRM increased once these ads were posted because it drew attention to the BUSN info sessions. The ad campaign successfully managed to reach out to international, diverse scholars from different countries and turn them in to leads. Program advisors and recruiters view this as an opportunity to reach out and answer any questions the student may have in order to increase the likelihood of them joining UConn School of Business. The addition of these new students in to the School of Business would further enhance its image as a globalized institution and would proliferate their enrollment numbers in the next graduate studies application period.

### BUSN Lead Generation via Inquiry Forms

I collected Inquiry Forms from the GBLC for the period 02/23 – 08/13 to see what programs each student was interested in and where they found out about the info session (**see fig. 16**). I decided to measure results a few months after May 2013 when the ad campaign had finished to see what the effects would be on consumer behavior. I apologize for the lack of data for March 2013 but the other months are available. These results show how the digital strategy of the UConn BUSN impacted the number of students who came for the info-sessions between 02/13 and 08/13 (**see fig. 17**). The study showed that the number of students who attended the info-sessions increased from 14 in 04/13 to 44 in 07/13. Most leads were generated through the UConn BUSN Website; they collected their highest



leads of 22 in 07/13. After the ad campaign aired in the Spring '13, students were impacted by this and used the UConn BUSN Website to initiate contact with the school and attend the info sessions held at the end of the ad cycle in May '13, as well as over the Summer '13.

**Fig. 16** Sample Inquiry Form from the GBLC


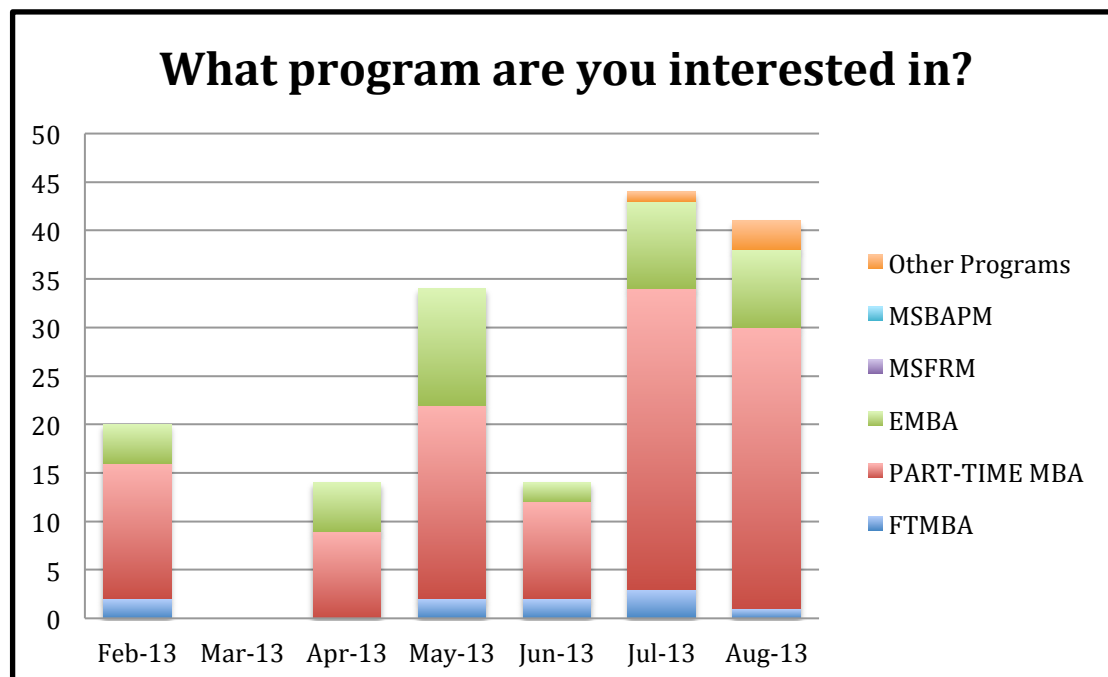
		<b>Graduate Programs</b> <b>Open House Inquiry Form</b>		Hartford
Last Name*		First Name*		Middle Name
Address 1*		Address 2		Address 3
City*		State*		Zip
Email Address*		Cell Phone		Work Phone
Employer		Title/Position		
<b>I am interested in:*</b> <i>Select one</i>		<b>How did you hear about us?</b> <i>Select one or more</i>		
<input type="radio"/> Full-time MBA <input type="radio"/> Part-time MBA <input type="radio"/> Executive MBA <input type="radio"/> MS in Financial Risk Management <input type="radio"/> MS in Business Analytics and Project Management <input type="radio"/> Other Graduate Degree Program <input type="radio"/> Advanced Business Certificates <input type="radio"/> Non-degree/Non-certificate		<input type="radio"/> Billboard <input type="radio"/> Direct Mail <input type="radio"/> Email message from UConn <input type="radio"/> Employer/HR Office <input type="radio"/> Internet Search <input type="radio"/> Newspaper <input type="radio"/> Online Advertisement <input type="radio"/> Radio <input type="radio"/> Word of Mouth <input type="radio"/> Other		
		<b>Were you referred by a UConn MBA Student or Alum?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		
		Name of Student or Alumn		

Fig. 17 Lead Generation Results

Lead Generation at Info-Session							
Program	Feb-13	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Total
FTMBA	2		2	2	3	1	10
PART-TIME MBA	14	9	20	10	31	29	113
EMBA	4	5	12	2	9	8	40
MSFRM							0
MSBAPM							0
Other Programs					1	3	4
<b>Total Leads</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>167</b>
Billboard			2	1	1		4
Direct Mail							0
Email		1			1	2	4
Newspaper				1	3		4
OnlineAd							0
Radio			4	2	3	7	16
W-O-M	7	3	7	2	11	10	40
Employer/HR Office					1	1	2
UConn Website	12	9	19	5	22	17	83.7
Internet Search	1	1	2	1	2	2	9
Other				2		2	4
<b>Total Leads</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>167</b>

Out of a total 167 students that attended all the info-sessions in this time frame, 113 students were interested in the PTMBA program, compared to the 40 EMBA or 10 for the FTMBA (see **Figure 18**). This is because most graduate students are taking the university courses for training on behalf of their company or as a way to increase their skill set and earn a higher position. Interest in all the programs doubled in May 2013 mainly due to the exposure the visual ad campaigns had gained over the past few months. The popularity of the PTMBA program is one facet of the school's initiative to drive corporate leadership and training; by getting a UConn MBA it increases the exposure for the school and increases their funding. The buzz that was created because of this campaign led to an even sharper increase in July and August 2013. Students would be attending more info-sessions in order to network with program advisors or preparing to submit applications to graduate schools.

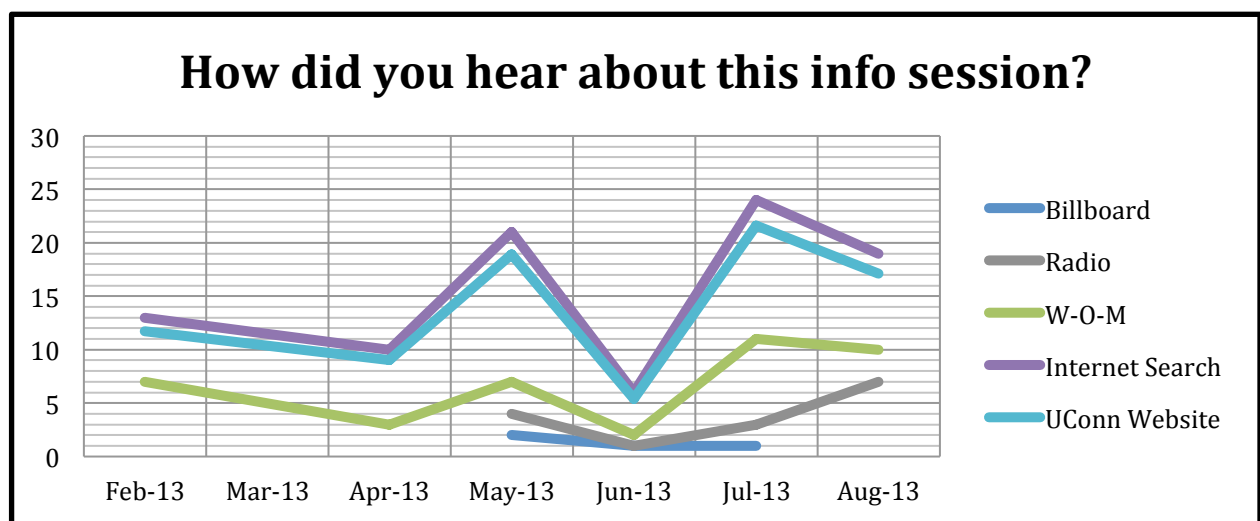
**Fig. 18.** Lead Generation Results: Program leads



The studies also show that the top 3 methods buyers use to obtain information are word-of-mouth, Internet searching, and the UConn Website (see **fig. 19**). Most of the clicks that went through to the UConn School of Business Website were generated through external links via social media. We can assume that these social media links came from LinkedIn, as that was the only ad campaign

running for BUSN during that time. The linear trend line that is drawn on the second graph demonstrates that buyers are increasingly obtaining information from the Internet and through their own research rather than other methods. This makes sense because the push social strategy is all about building a customer relationship through user-generated-content, co-created customer experiences and engagement. B2B firms need to utilize this information to capture their strongest leads; by building their digital image and enhancing its so it can appear “healthier” and increase the prospects

**Fig. 19.** Lead Generation Results: Where did leads come from?



## **Scoring the BUSN LinkedIn Company Page**

During the implementation of the five visual ad campaigns, the LinkedIn company page received its highest number of viewers of all time. I will examine and score the attributes on the BUSN company page during the period of 02/13 – 05/13. There are no records indicating a change of attributes from the time the company page was started in 2012. Taking this in to account, we will look at some of these attributes as they are currently due to the fact that they were not captured in that moment of time.

### **i. Company Updates: 2**

*This data reflects company updates posted during the period of 02/13 – 05/13.*

The school posted their first LinkedIn Company updates last year. This update and subsequent updates were a month apart. For each of these updates, there was no additional content or information given in regards to the post. Language was not interesting, did not attract audiences to the post, or contain key-word rich tags. The updates were limited to links that led the user to external websites; a majority of them were not directed to the UConn BUSN Website or any landing page. Please find a list of company updates in order of posting date below:

1. Posted in 05/01/13: Geno Auriemma UConn Leadership Conference
  - Linked to UConn Today page
2. Posted in 05/09/13: 20th Anniversary Hall of Fame Induction & Awards Celebration 2013
  - Linked to UConn BUSN website
3. Posted in 05/13 – 06/13: Travelers EDGE Helps First Generation UConn Students with a Degree and a Career
  - Linked to UConn Foundation site

### **Suggested Improvement**

In order to improve their company update score, the BUSN must consistently post updates within one week apart from each other. It should also come up with content that initiates discussion amongst its follower's i.e. call-to-action words, expert's opinions, interesting world news, and global business

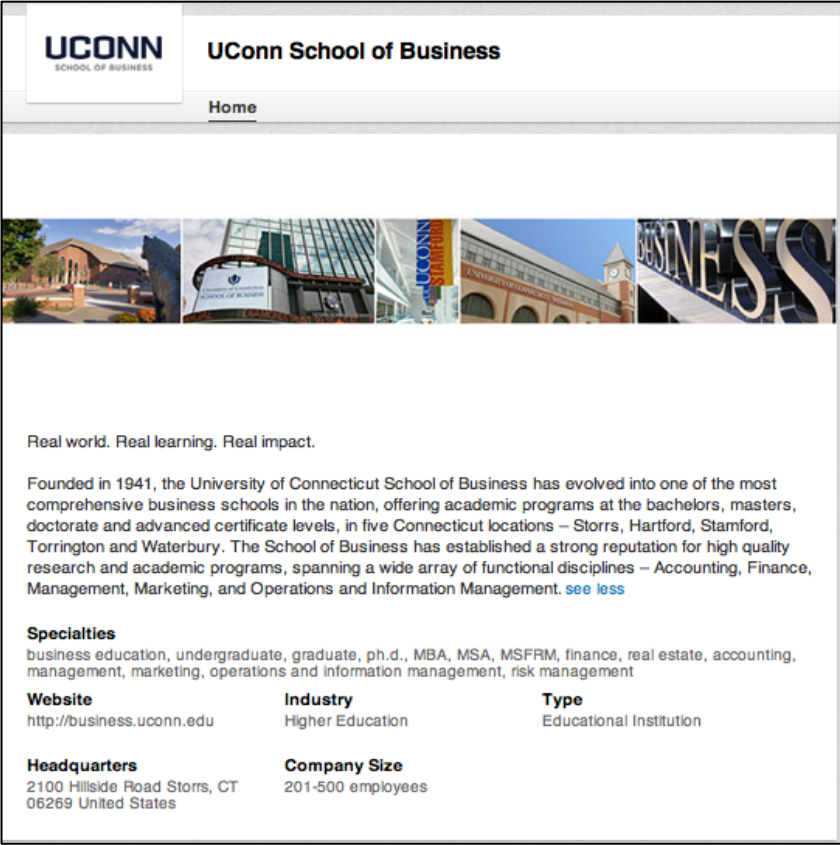
affairs. A level 5-company update would be featured on the top of the LinkedIn news feed because it received impressions (CPM) and high engagement from its targeted followers. A firm can target a specific audience for free and apply this setting to any update on their page. A great example of this is the University of Connecticut Foundation, Inc. page, which posted frequent updates that included interesting content for the audience before the link. Please find a list of their updates posted between the period of 02/23 – 05/23 below:

1. Posted in 04/15/13: Students 4 Sustainability
  - Linked to HuskyDrive Ignite page
  - “Our featured Ignite student group this morning is also a very timely one! Today, the...”
2. Posted in 04/20/13: Geno Auriemma UConn Leadership Conference
  - Linked to landing page containing information about conference
  - “You can read more about the conference and the great lineup of speakers at...”
3. Posted in 04/22/13: White coat Gala Supports Bioscience Connecticut
  - Linked to UConn Today
  - “Thank you to everyone who attended the successful...”

ii. Header: 4

*This data reflects the header used as of 03/13/14.*

Fig. 20. BUSN Header



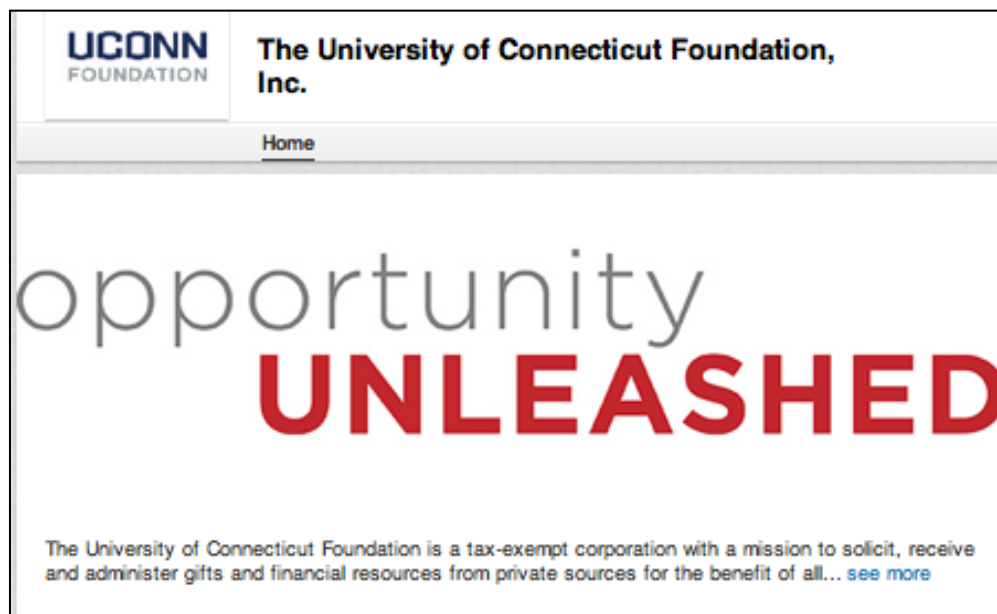
The School of Business has its signature logo as a thumbnail, which is up-to-date and relevant to the company message (see fig. 20). They also have a banner image that contains more than one picture portraying different aspects about the school. According to Melissa Ferrigno, UConn communications LinkedIn campaign manager, these banner images are not up-to-date and since then the schools slogan, font, colors, and appearance has changed. The images do not actively engage the audience. The company description is concise and simple. It can also be expanded/truncated for viewers to see more or less of the information presented. Description contains additional information about the School of Business e.g. specialties, industry, type, size. However, it does not attract audiences to the page, the language is dry and strictly based on school information.



### Suggested Improvement

In order to increase their header score, BUSN should post a new banner image that is up-to-date, good quality, and fits in the whole header format box. Their existing image falls in between the box allocated to a banner image and leaves a lot of white space. According to Marie LeBlanc, the ad campaign for UConn Communications, the university chose new banner images, colors, and logos that would represent its individual programs. These images were consistent with the message of each program and can BUSN should implement the same strategy. The description should also begin with an inviting message after the signature slogan “Real world. Real learning. Real impact.” This will create more excitement for viewers and increase the time spent on the company page. The University of Connecticut Foundation, Inc. company page is a good example of this (see fig. 21). They use two bold words as a banner image to create awareness about their mission and vision statement. It is relevant and concise but still eye capturing and makes use of the white space with big letters.

**Fig. 21.** UConn Foundation Header



### iii. Products/Services: 3

*This data reflects the activity of the products & services page up till 03/13/14*

LinkedIn took down all products and services tabs on 04/14/14 because they felt that this page was being under-utilized by users and firms. That being said, all BUSN data was captured before they took down the page.

The page had 10 products with more than 2 recommendations from followers and employees. According to UConn Communications, faculty/Staff, alumni and partners of the BUSN were invited to endorse programs via email (see fig. 22). There was a banner image and product overview for each program that contained a good description. The top performer was featured at the top of the page; this was the FT MBA program, which had the highest impressions and most engagement out of all the programs.

The products & services page did not receive a score higher than 3 because it has not utilized the showcase pages feature. The removal of the products & services tab will encourage the school to create one for each of its programs to increase awareness for that particular program. They could also use rich-media to promote each program and treat each showcase page like a sub-company page to strengthen their digital image. BUSN had 10 programs featured on the page with a total 2,976 impressions and 1.21percent engagement rate

**Fig. 22. BUSN Products and Services****Products & Services****Full-time MBA**

Offering students an excellent return on investment, UConn's flagship full-time, 57-credit MBA curriculum takes two years to complete. UConn's rigorous, interdisciplinary MBA curriculum leverages traditional academic instruction with unique learning accelerators, successfully closing the gap...

10 recommendations

**773 impressions**

**4.66% engagement**

**Part-time MBA**

The UConn Part-time MBA is offered in Hartford, Stamford and Waterbury. For students seeking flexibility and convenience, the UConn Part-time MBA offers a thorough grounding in contemporary management while blending and balancing academic rigor, management theory, practical application, and...

3 recommendations

**199 impressions**

**Executive MBA**

Recently ranked #40 in North America for "Best Masters in Executive MBA" by Eduniversal, UConn's Executive MBA Program is designed to enhance existing skills - and develop new ones - for experienced managers, professionals, and entrepreneurs. This is accomplished through a selective admissions...

**159 impressions**

**Undergraduate Program**

The Bachelor of Science (BS) degree offered through the University of Connecticut School of Business is designed to develop the interpersonal, technical, and managerial competence necessary for successful performance in business, industry, government and education. With an emphasis on real-world...

**102 impressions**

**MS in Accounting | MSA**

Recently ranked among the Top 10 "Best Online Graduate Programs" by U.S. News & World Report, the University of Connecticut's Online Master of Science Program in Accounting (MSA), one of the most acclaimed accounting programs in the Northeast, is the first online Master's program at UConn. With...

1 recommendation

**156 impressions**

**MS in Business Analytics & Project Management | MSBAPM**

Recently ranked #35 in North America for "Best Masters in Engineering and Project Management" by Eduniversal, the Master of Science in Business Analytics and Project Management (MSBAPM) at the University of Connecticut School of Business is designed to meet the growing demand for professionals to...

2 recommendations

**979 impressions**

**MS in Financial Risk Management | MSFRM**

The Master of Science in Financial Risk Management (MSFRM) is designed for finance professionals who want to enhance their careers by fully understanding how to identify and manage various types of financial risk. The 15-month program emphasizes both rigorous theoretical and quantitative analysis,...

**234 impressions**

**Ph.D.**

The mission of the Ph.D. Program in Business at the University of Connecticut is to prepare students to conduct high quality, state-of-the-art research and to assume faculty positions at leading universities. This is a full-time, in-residence program and is designed for superior students who are...

**77 impressions**

**Advanced Business Certificate**

UConn's Advanced Business Certificate is designed to meet the special needs of experienced professionals, managers and executives who have already earned a Master's, Doctorate, Doctor of Medicine or Juris Doctorate degree. The certificate program is intended to provide instruction in a specific...

**175 impressions**

**Executive Education**

In today's challenging business environment, even the most skilled managers and executives need advanced training and education to successfully manage and lead complex organizations. As an employer, investing in the professional advancement of your human capital can help secure a sustainable...

**122 impressions**

#### iv. Sponsored Updates or Ad Campaign: 5

*This is just one of the five ads run during the period of 02/13 – 05/13.*

**Fig. 23.** PTMBA LinkedIn Advertisement



They targeted a certain demographic of people i.e. students located between the Hartford – Springfield area looking to pursue a graduate degree program or certificate. They did not specify age, gender, job occupation and other details. It targeted followers and non-followers, which broadened its reach, and helped increase number of viewers, CPC and

CPM. Ad campaigns targeted based on key-word rich tags and meta-tags associated with like “part-time” would appear on related search pages – SEO.

This ad was rotational and directed clicks to landing page (**see fig. 23**). First-touch and multi-touch clicks through UConn website, different LinkedIn profiles and pages.

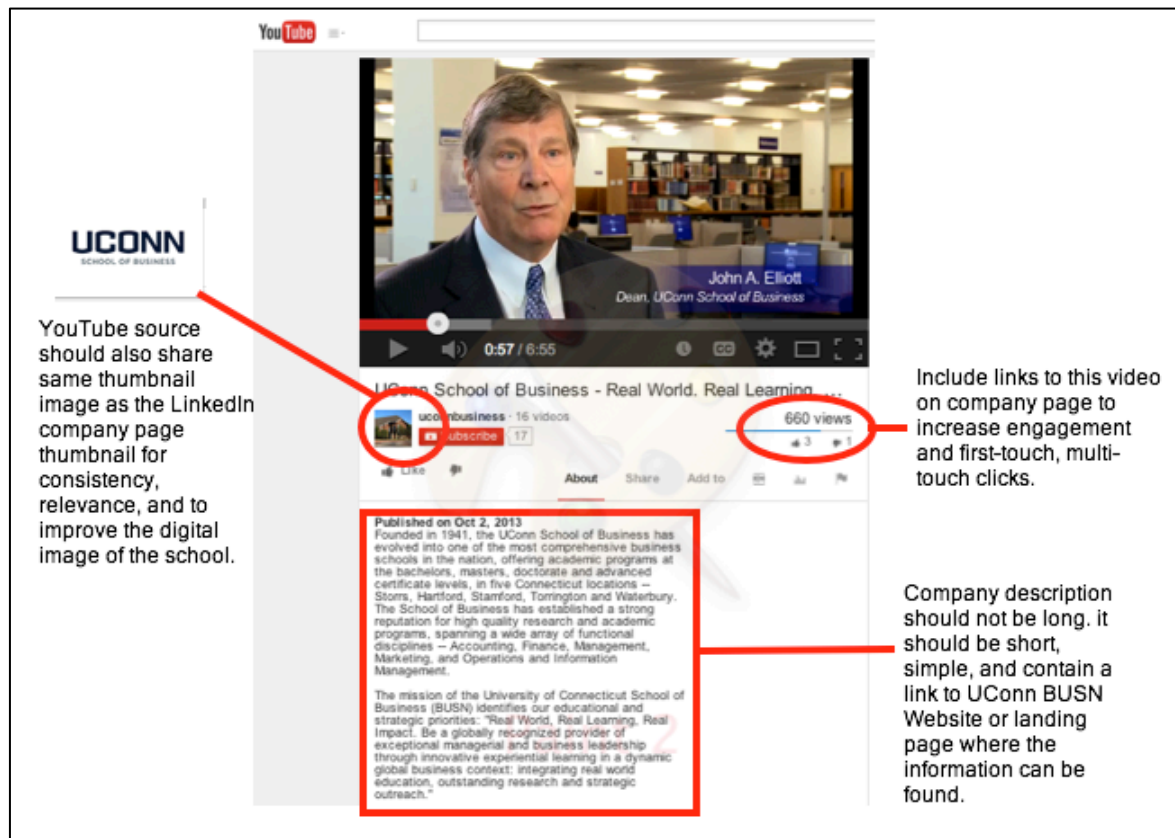
#### v. LinkedIn Rich media: 3

*This data reflects the LinkedIn rich media used during the period of 02/13 – 05/13.*

The School of Business uses links to other pages to create content on its page. First-touch and multi-touch links to external sources lead users to their LinkedIn company page. These updates are not targeted towards a specific audience but UConn Communications uses the LinkedIn Campaign Manager to track CPM and engagement levels. The updates that contain links have been described in the company updates section.

BUSN also ran their five visual ad campaigns during the same time frame, which targeted audiences in the demographic regions of Hartford – Springfield . These ads would rotate around to different LinkedIn individual profiles and pages on the right side.

**Fig. 24.** YouTube clip by the BUSN



### Suggested Improvement

In order to increase their score, BUSN has to increase their use of rich media to other sources such as Youtube videos, slide share presentations, links to info graphics, or inspirational quotes. They should be at least 15 running sponsored updates, ads and targeted updates at the same time. If these posts receive a lot of engagement they will be featured on the “top stories” section of the LinkedIn feed. To receive a score of 5-rich media updates must contain enough company engagement: “comments”, “likes”, and “shares” between corporations and other partner institutions. The only way to drive engagement is to link tags or meta-tags to these rich media. This way people will find the media on other search engine platforms, without having to visit the LinkedIn Company Page. A great example of this is the use of YouTube videos (**see fig. 24**), which can be used to drive engagement if linked

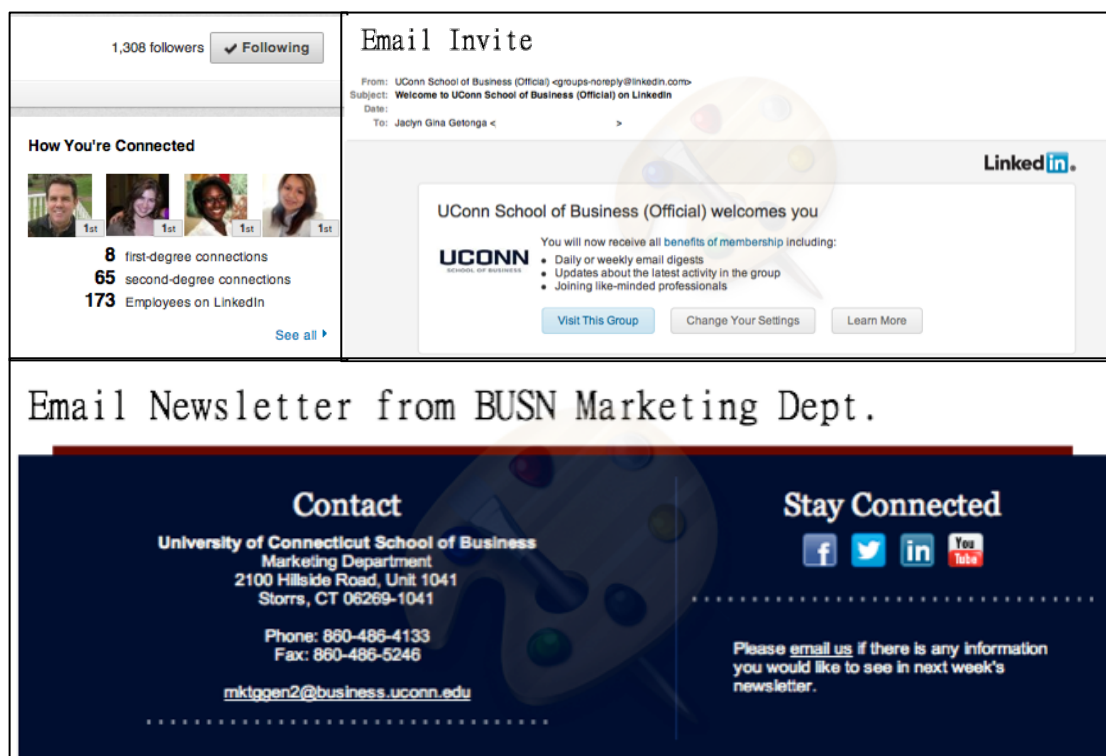
appropriately to the right source: UConn BUSN Website or landing page. The rich media source is an extension of the digital image of the company and therefore, any links to the company should be treated with the same level of criticism i.e. it should reflect positively, be consistent, and up-to-date like the LinkedIn digital image.

## vi. Followers: 4

*This data reflects the current follower numbers as of 04/14/14*

The School of Business LinkedIn page has between 1001 – 5000 followers, this is a fairly good amount consisting of faculty members, staff, alumni, senior level citizens, students, and partners of the company. Included on their page is a list of 1<sup>st</sup> degree and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree connections which is a good indication that the school is not only growing its follower base but also expanding through other people's networks. The follow button is posted in different places so that employees, faculty, students, and alumni can connect, we can view this on Figure 29 where it shows that like and share buttons are plugged in to newsletters and email invitations (**see fig. 25**). BUSN does not have over 500 employees

**Fig. 25.** BUSN LinkedIn Company Page, email invite and email newsletter from the BUSN.

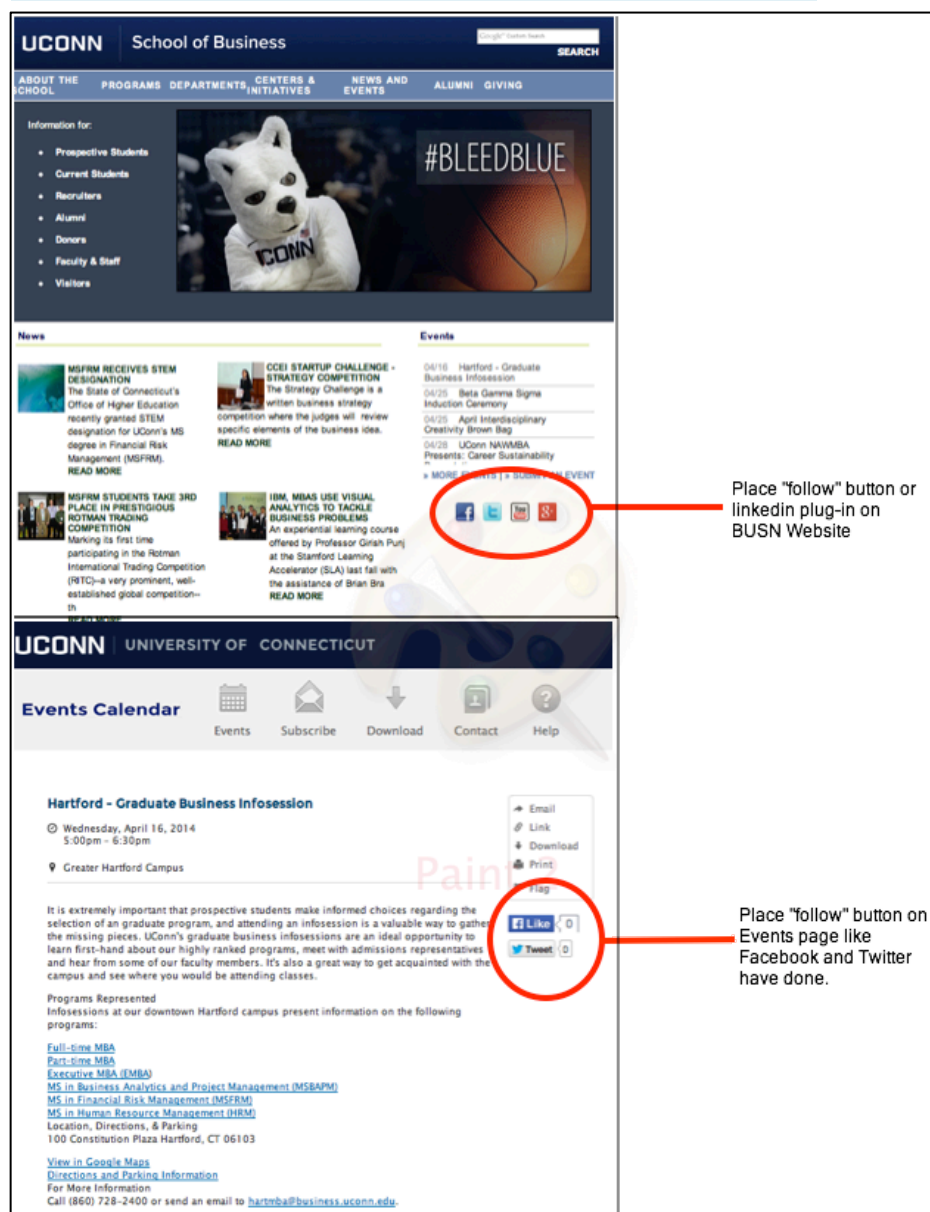


connected on LinkedIn, which prevents this attribute from achieving a straight 5. It is important for the school to get employees to stay connected because that will build their network and connections.

### Suggested Improvement

BUSN could do a lot more posting of the follow button in places where it can be used to increase their reach (see fig. 26). This includes their own website or event calendar where users are redirected when they click event links on their website. Wherever the BUSN first touch or multi-touch clicks are located is where the school should put LinkedIn plugins to increase exposure and networking. The BUSN should also increase the amount of email invites it send its alumni per season to ask them to connect on LinkedIn or promote this at an event. Social events or repetitive requests will convince people to connect.

**Fig. 26.** Suggested Plug-ins on BUSN website or calendar entry.





## vii. Engagement: 2

*These engagement figures have been collected from the period of 02/13 – 05/13.*

The school posted its first company update to the LinkedIn page on 05/01/13 on Geno Auriemma's leadership Conference. Their other two updates also received a lot of impressions, which correspond to the lead generation statistics collected during that time (**see fig. 27**). All the updates were posted in May where the school generated 34 leads; its third highest compared to 41 leads in August and 44 leads in July. In order to calculate an engagement score we will first look at the statistics provided by LinkedIn, score each individual post and collect an average.

1. Posted in 05/01/13: Geno Auriemma UConn Leadership Conference

The company page experienced its highest engagement rate of 2.22percent because the Geno Auriemma Conference is such a popular event amongst faculty/staff, students, alumni, and fans of UConn. Based on its interesting appeal, thought-provoking message, and the popularity of the spokesperson, Geno Auriemma, the update had the most impressions of 1,081, 16 clicks, and 8 interactions: comments, likes, and shares. Engagement would be ranked 3.

2. Posted in 05/09/13: 20th Anniversary Hall of Fame Induction & Awards Celebration 2013

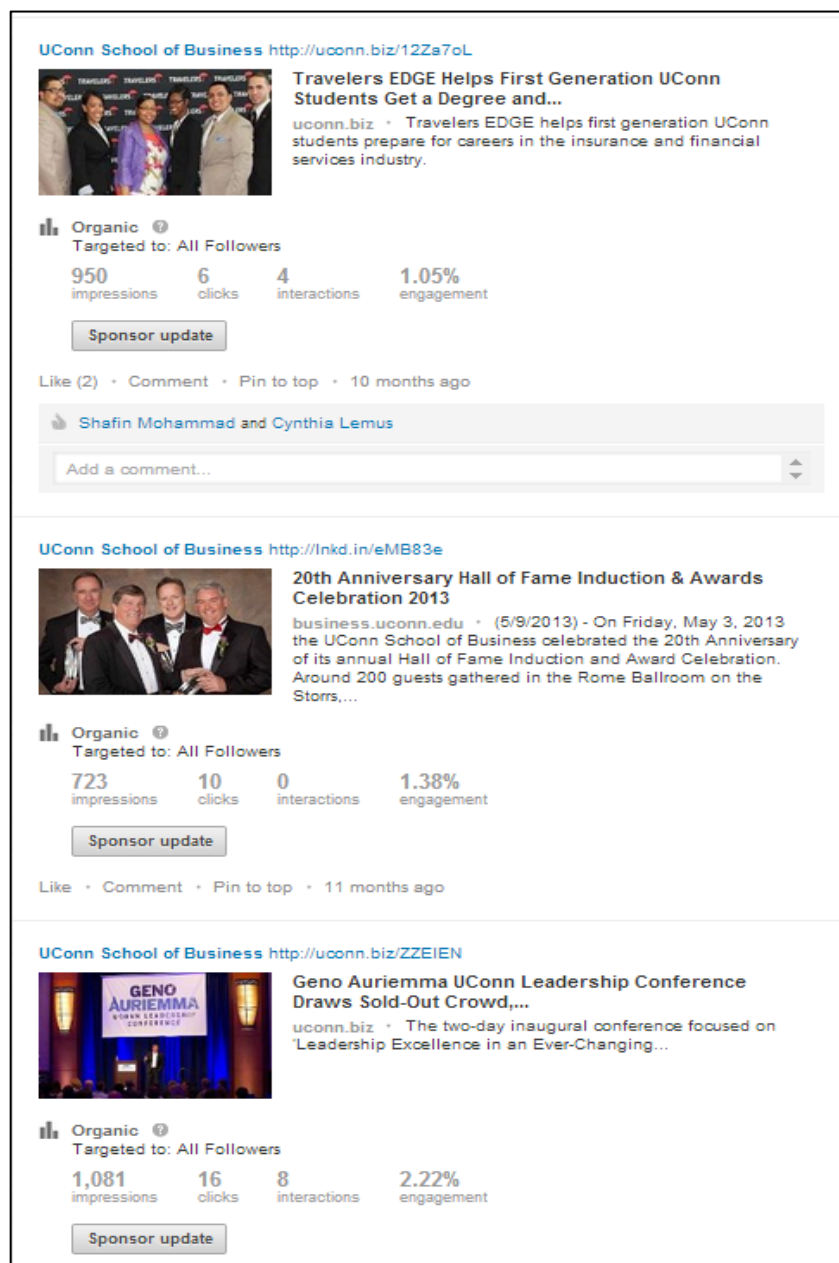
This update had decreased popularity and did not receive any interactions: comments, likes, or shares. As much as this result is disappointing, the engagement rate was still good because most of the new viewers i.e. impressions, clicked on the link. When clicks are received it reflects that the firm was able to transfer its new followers or viewers in to prospective leads; this is a strong attribute that heavily affects the engagement. This is probably because most of the information pertaining to this event could be found on the UConn BUSN Website which increased the level of clicks. Engagement would be ranked at 2.



3. Posted in 05/13 – 06/13: Travelers EDGE Helps First Generation UConn Students with a Degree and a Career

The school had its lowest engagement rate of 1.05percent because it did not generate enough leads out of its impressions. As much as the interaction and clicks were average, the post did not contain information that created a buzz amongst its audience. The post did a good job balancing out its interactions, whereby followers would engage in a discussion about the topic posted which increases the usage of the company page. Engagement was ranked at a 2.

**Fig. 27.** Engagement levels for BUSN Company Page



## **Challenges with Company Pages**

### **Metrics**

1. **The accuracy of ROI:** ROI is a quantitative method that must be done consistently by firms in order to measure lead generation success accurately. In 2013, 34percent of marketers could not calculate ROI or did not calculate it at all (HubSpot, 2014). Firms must also establish concrete metrics to track lead generation campaign and investment. ROI is an important. Marketo explains that firms can make their programs measurable by setting up test and control groups, varying spending levels across markets and measuring impact (Marketo, Inc, 2012). Media sellers who are able to provide relevant brand metrics, and who proactively make improvements to ensure the campaign's effectiveness, will have the upper hand in generating leads consistently throughout the year. 52 percent of advertisers and 66 percent of agencies said a "clear link between social media advertising and sale" would increase their use of PPC advertising. (Voskresensky, 2013).
2. **Faulty Measures of CTR, CTA, MQL:** Numerous marketers are still learning how to adapt to tracking software which will enable them to determine the metrics that they can use for MQLs, CTRs and other actions. Testing eliminates hypothetical discussions about how an audience will respond to information on the internet and replaces that with hard evidence on how to convert visitors, clicks, and impressions into actual leads (HubSpot, 2014). Many companies should train their staff to adjust to new social media tracking applications and ways to attract customers with their information.

### **External Environment**

1. **Increasing Competition:** Considering that the use of social media technologies many firms are scrambling to find out what the best way to engage customers will be. Popular press articles suggests that the best sales professionals are gathering recent news and relevant information about prospects and companies by looking at social media for the sales/competitive intelligence needed to drive conversation (Andzulis et al., 2012). Many firms are trying their best to have the biggest social media presence to compete in their industry and make an

impression on customers. Companies are analyzing each other's strengths and weaknesses through this social media presence too and use the scope of the Internet to leverage their competitive advantage.

2. **More knowledgeable buyers:** The challenge lies in leveraging the most out of a current inbound marketing campaign is dealing with the customer that has already done research on the firm. Firms must be aware that today's buyers are smarter and have done research all over the Internet before landing on a LinkedIn page, or the company website. Luckily a solid lead generation strategy will help build trust and capture the interest of buyers (Marketo, Inc, 2012). Firms will be more effective by creating interactions with the buyer where they are having a two-way conversation that is continuous, relevant, and drives them to your landing page or website. The customers will eventually and ultimately define and demand more from the experience; they will be pushed towards interacting first and evolving the relationship with the seller (Andzulis et al., 2012).

## Internal Environment

1. **Sales technology setbacks:** It is hard to keep up with social media technology because salespeople have to always be on it because of the time difference of different consumers all around the world. Secondly, the salesperson always has to speak as the firm rather than personally giving an opinion over the engagement on their page. The digital image associated with that page should actively communicate itself to audience members so that they can develop a successful relationship with potential leads. Sales relationships are now drive by an immediate sense of open access information which quickens the pace of the transaction and pushes salespeople to adapt to this quick selling environment. Salespeople feel pressured to conform to a culture of immediacy whereby their challenge is connecting faster and for extended periods of time with more than one person (Marshall et. al., 2012). The expectations have been raised and have to be met in order to keep up with more knowledgeable buyers.
2. **Traditional Sales Mentality:** Social media has huge limitations in business because most businesses block social media access internally – spam, junk mail, and some even avoiding

particular social networking sites all together. The B2B buyer mentality may still revolve around the traditional selling aspects (understanding the customer, approach, needs discovery, presentation, close and follow-up) (Andzulis et al., 2012). However, these aspects all have a role to play within the social selling sphere that make them more effective, and create a bigger impact on the audience. By joining and participating in social networking sites, salespeople can access and receive information about their leads and most active clients. They can also continue to build and cultivate the relationship by tracking their interactions and collecting first-hand information through surveys, online polls etc. The portion of the sales funnel coupled with social media, allows for collective learning on a larger, faster scale.

## LinkedIn

1. **LinkedIn Ad Campaign:** LinkedIn does not enable you to switch/change your visual ad campaign messages on a rolling basis. Ads must be kept on a company page for at least a few months i.e. spring or fall session. This has limited the amount of content that a firm can change on a particular ad versus creating a new one. Technically, the BUSN have limited their social media advertising to major events, which aim at creating awareness about the program and increasing attendance at the info-sessions, which happen every month. Most firms run multiple ads and sponsored updates at the same time to increase their exposure and address different messages. A Business Account helps firms separate ads, campaign settings, and billing information for their individual sponsored updates and ads (LinkedIn, 2013). With the addition of showcase pages it has enabled companies to advertise events and news pertaining to a particular product or service. This is a great way for firms to specifically target audiences and stories related to that one aspect. Content would not need to be changed as frequently because the information posted in them would be limited. When creating a showcase page, firms should think of a way to promote one of their key buyer personas, a major event, and one that can run for more than a year (Abaza, 2014).
2. **LinkedIn Copy/Paste results:** LinkedIn metrics still not adaptable, you cannot copy/paste results. Unlike its analytical competitor, Google Analytics, it does not allow administrators to

download a copy of their results. Firms have been using information-collected from LinkedIn's Premium Advertising tool that allows you to reach a more specific audience by seeking insights and information across a wide range of ads and updates. This package also allows companies to view more details about the impact of their particular ad. Currently, B2B marketers are finding ways of viewing the effects of multiple clicks and touches to track these leads and make a record of it for future reference. Therefore, premium packages that allow firms to gain information on their target market is worth investing in. As Matt Johnston said, "50percent of paid inbound leads come from LinkedIn. LinkedIn is our most effective online marketing channel" (LinkedIn, 2013). LinkedIn urges administrators to pay for their packages so they can make a financial profit and also, increase the amount of targeting and lead generation available. Unfortunately, for Small-to-medium firms that do not have the social media budget to invest it creates a challenge and prohibits them from fully gaining insight into the market.

### **Evaluation & Criticism**

Based on the information presented in this study we can deduce that a "healthy" digital image is based on a social media strategy performed before the initial contact is made. The company page attributes make up the LinkedIn digital image of a B2B firm and help us to connect to potential customers and build professional relationships in the space of LinkedIn. We can score the digital image of a firm between any period of time for any company page, however when we measure lead generation success firms must gather lead generation results within the same time frame. This reduces bias and improves the accuracy of our results.

Lead generation results are determined by the actual attendance or online correspondence firms receive before or during the period of time being tested. This correspondence can either be digital R.S.V.P. on websites or landing pages, or hand-written forms from actual events. Another way to measure lead generation results is basing on the number of

<b>Table 11.</b>	
<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Score</b>
Company Updates	2
Header	4
Products/Services	3
Sponsored Updates	5
LinkedIn Rich Media	3
Followers	4
Engagement	2
<b>Total =</b>	<b>23</b>

viewers, Cost-per-impressions (CPM), click-through-rate (CTR), marketing-qualified-leads (MQL) and return-on-investment (ROI) statistics. These information can all be calculated and retrieved by from LinkedIn or Google Analytics. Regardless of the source, these lead generation results reflect the kind of value and relationship firms are attaining in the pre-approach stage with buyers. This could tell us whether the digital image of the firm had a negative or positive impact on them.

In the case of the UConn School of Business (BUSN), we looked at the period of time between 02/13 and 06/13 to determine what impact the company page attributes had on overall lead generation success. During this time, the school achieved a total attendance of 167 people and a digital image score of 23 (**see Table 11**). Despite the fact that the digital image was not within the 25 – 35 “healthy” range, the school achieved significant improvements in its lead generation results and it shows that there is room to keep increasing a digital image and other marketing techniques to grow leads. Compared to previous months where the lead generation was much lower for the school, it has made significant strides in the right direction and its effective use of all company page attributes raised the score. This is only the beginning of BUSN’s visual advertising campaigns and there is a lot more room for them to grow and generate more leads.

By comparing the lead generation results of previous months and a digital image we can gauge how we did relative to other campaigns, promotions, or brand awareness strategies. Individually, I believe that the attributes could have been improved in order to get a closer score to “healthy” but BUSN did ok with its lead generation effort. This result is understandable because the BUSN just began social selling on LinkedIn and the past experience with social media advertising is limited. Also, the BUSN is currently transitioning from being a well known corporate leadership and training center to positioning itself as a part of the universities academic departments. Another possible reason why the score could be lower is because their message, vision, and objectives were not properly stipulated because they are going through a transitioning period at the moment.

The Web 2.0 culture raises questions for some buyers and sellers out there who believe that not all the information we share is authentic, honest, and trustworthy. Based on these beliefs, the culture of social selling has lost its credibility and some firms no longer participate in selling on social media. Critiques might argue that because of this animosity towards digital selling techniques, the

most legitimate way of prospecting or lead generating would be to use face-to-face or cold-calling methods. Some firms have not even created a LinkedIn account because of their resistance to change and communicate with clients traditionally. A digital image may not necessarily represent the company, the industry, or its brand name, because of its limited usage at this point in time.

The application of a “healthy” digital image is uncertain amongst firms who may only have one attribute but lack the right amount of attributes in others. This could be the result of a low social media investment campaign or lack of labor. Another issue with the implementation of a digital image is that the calculation of attributes does not take into account external factors affecting the firm at that period of time such as the financial or managerial factors the firm is facing. These measurements are purely subjective, based on the LinkedIn company page observation and subjective perception of one individual; it could vary depending on who is viewing a LinkedIn company page. Therefore, the digital image-scoring rubric contains a level of bias whereby it does not take into account external and internal challenges the firm may be facing.

## **Conclusion**

Hypothetically speaking, a company’s attributes do affect lead generation results because the BUSN visual ad campaign yielded the most leads whilst it was posted on LinkedIn and immediately after the ad campaign had finished. The levels of attendance during that period of time were the highest they have ever been in all of BUSN - LinkedIn history. Using more attributes at the same time creates the added value that firms can give to their potential leads. A “healthy” digital image will increase the potential client’s trust in a firm and their recall of the products, services, and campaign message. Over time, their decision-making processes will either lead them to contact the firm or increase their engagement levels. This concept is based on the push strategy, which prescribes that buyer power will continue to be a co-created experience where companies and customers can interact. There were higher engagement levels on posts that demonstrated users like sharing and discussing on topics that they are interested in or have more popularity like Geno Aurriemma’s Leadership Conference prove this.

This is an excellent time for B2B sellers to put their clients first so that they can demonstrate

appreciation for what they have to say i.e. user-generated content. By doing so, it will increase a firm's lead generation success because numerous customers will click-through and view information they hadn't known before, thereby increasing attendance at events and the number of forms filled out. It will also improve the digital image score of the LinkedIn Company page because more two-way conversations will be taking place, which will result in higher CPM, and engagement levels. This describes the concept of adding value to a relationship, when a "healthy" digital image keeps the customer interested enough by use of its attributes it will achieve more interactions and engagements.

Currently, a "healthy" digital image is not being measured on LinkedIn or compared against lead generation results because it is a new concept. I hope that this topic will be further explored, particularly in its measurement of company page attributes so that more firms and social networking sites can apply it to their social media strategy too. A majority of salespeople still have a lot of training to go through in order to learn how to fully utilize social media technologies to boost their sales lead generation. Despite the less expensive budget, social media can get expensive if a firm is reaping sales lead generation rewards from LinkedIn PPC advertisements or sponsored updates. Also, a negative digital image does exist out there and this study has not covered how the B2B firm can change consumer's perceptions of their company image to a "healthy" one. In the future, scoring of a "healthy" digital image should take into account the financial and operational attributes that the firm has undergone when weighing out the overall range of a digital image. The measurements used to obtain lead generation results in this thesis did not fully delve into the other statistical undisclosed metrics. Next time, those pieces of data should be made available to test and compare LinkedIn Company Pages within the same industry. The scoring of a digital image should also be made applicable to other facets of an online presence and not just limited to a professional networking environment like other social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, landing pages or websites of the company.

In conclusion, firms should trust in the effects a "healthy" digital image has on the creation of value for B2B firms and their business practices. It must all tie into the goals and meeting the customers' needs in order to be efficient and create leads in order to sustain its positive impact on sales lead generation.



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