

Innovative Dance Music  
Productions: Social Media  
Marketing Campaign

A Senior Project Presented to  
The Faculty of the Communication Studies Department  
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Arts

By

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We would like to give special thanks to Ryan Fullerton for giving us the wonderful opportunity to partner with Innovative Dance Music Productions for the purpose of this senior project. We not only were able to succeed in our project completion, but we were fortunate enough to work with a unique company that has created such a great and welcoming community.

We would also like to thank all of IDM's volunteers for all of their assistance with event promotion, as well as all artists and concert attendees for helping support and build the IDM community.



## INTRODUCTION

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Music festivals have proven a favorite hobby for millions of young Americans, as more people than ever before are attending these events each year. “Festival season” appears to be more exciting than the holiday season in the eyes of millennials, as nearly 14.7 million of them attended at least one festival in 2014 (Lynch, 2015). So what makes these events so special? Is it the artists, the performances, or the location? In fact, studies show that most individuals cherish the *overall experience* of the festival rather than focusing on aspects such as a specific performer or musical act. To attendees, it is not about just going to a concert. It is about the collective of artists they see, the new people they meet, the anticipation prior to the event and much more. Festivals provide a place where individuals can escape their everyday responsibilities and worries and enjoy an atmosphere that is free of judgement. These events give a sense of community where like-minded people can join together and share a passion for music and radiate good vibes.

As the desire to attend music events increases, there comes a need to provide similar experiences locally to those who are not able to attend large music festivals. Realistically, not every college student can afford to travel to these extravagant events, yet the wish to share their passion for music with others persists. The dance music event company IDM Productions aims to create the same atmosphere and feeling of community that festivals offer here in the San Luis Obispo community, without breaking the bank. Building relationships and finding certain groups of people to identify with is crucial at this point of a college student’s life, as it helps shape an



individual's identity. Companies like IDM are extremely significant as they welcome others to join and become members of their group during a time when individuals need it the most.

We are ecstatic to partner with a company that sends such a positive message to the public and will attempt to relay these messages as we take on IDM's marketing. While music festivals and concerts continue to grow in popularity, the conversations that are sparked about them increase across the globe. Interestingly, most of the conversations about events take place *before* the actual event even occurs. These positive messages include excitement towards individual ticket purchases and lineup announcements (Eventbrite, 2014). Since most of our communication efforts for IDM will take place before events, making sure these conversations remain positive and generate excitement will be the key to maintaining a strong brand reputation for IDM. Overall we believe that by increasing brand awareness, we can positively impact the San Luis Obispo community by allowing every individual the chance to become a part of the IDM family.

Through conducting research and social media marketing campaigns for IDM, we found that the most effective way to build a brand community for an experience-based company is to understand the values and beliefs of the target audience.

This paper first reviews existing communication research that is relevant to the goals of this project. It then provides some background information about the company we worked with, IDM. We then dive into a discussion of our findings and outcomes, and finally offer an evaluation of our marketing efforts throughout the project.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

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The applied portion of our project revolves around sending messages through the media, therefore we will rely on previous research and theories from the field of communication and marketing to help choose the most effective strategies. Due to the rapid growth of social media, many studies have been conducted by marketers and researchers focusing on its effects on brands. One study in particular looked at whether brand communities (groups created around loyalty to a brand or product) that are based on social media have positive effects on the overall elements of the community. These elements included value creation practices, brand trust and brand loyalty. Based off their survey results, researchers found that social media does “enhance feelings of community among members and contribute to creating value for both members and the company” (Laroche, M. et al., 2012, p. 1763). Through creating value, brand loyalty and trust also increase. These findings are meaningful especially because IDM’s mission is fostering a loyal, unique sense of community with its brand, and from this research we see that social media plays a part in creating the brand-consumer relationship.

Interaction between marketers and brand communities is influenced by a number of factors including communication styles. Steinmann, Mau, and Schramm-Klein (2015) studied how the communication style and pictorial representation of a brand through online marketing platforms influence consumer attitudes towards the brand. In their study titled “Brand Communication Success in Online Consumption Communities: An Experimental Analysis of the Effects of Communication Style and Brand Pictorial Representation,” the researchers focused on “online brand communities” on social networking sites, which are online communities focused



on certain “consumption activities” and are therefore connected through brand or product loyalty. Their research found that a brand’s communication style and pictorial representation on social platforms can significantly impact a consumer’s view of the brand and satisfaction with purchases. Additionally, the communication style had the greatest impact on consumer attitudes of the brand when consumers had been a part of an online brand community for a long period of time.

The communication styles used were either personalized or nonpersonalized and the brand pictorial representations used were either a brand logo or an avatar. The results of this study found that using avatars resulted in a greater satisfaction than using brand logos. Results indicated that participants had higher satisfaction with the community when presented with nonpersonalized communication. While the exact reasons behind this have not been researched, it may imply that consumers dislike when brands know too much about their personal information. As Walker (2016) discusses, consumers lack trust for a brand when they feel their personal information is made available without their permission. A sense of transparency and authenticity must be established in brand marketing in order to successfully develop relationships with consumers.

Steinman, Mau, and Schramm-Klein suggest that brands must be aware of consumer expectations when developing their online image. They also argue that increased communication between the brand and individual consumers within the online brand community, and adjusting communication styles as appropriate, can positively influence brand image. This research connects closely with the communication theory of symbolic interactionism, as communication between a brand and consumers is based on their shared sense of reality. The associations created



through this communication establish the brand's reputation. Based on this research, the content shared and language used on social media should hone in on shared meanings that exist between the brand and the target audience. We can take advantage of this concept by utilizing words and images that have shared meanings in the dance music community and more specifically the IDM community that we hope to create.

As the use of social media marketing increases, it is important to keep in mind that successful marketing campaigns utilize a variety of platforms to promote a product or brand. A combination of traditional marketing along with social media and word of mouth marketing are vital to spread a message. Mixtures of various techniques have been utilized, depending on where the target market is most receptive. A study by Inyoung Chae, Andrew T. Stephen, Yakov Bart, and Dai Yao (2017) titled "Spillover Effects in Seeded Word-of-Mouth Marketing Campaigns" explores the impact of seeded marketing campaigns (SMCs) on consumer-to-consumer word-of-mouth marketing. SMCs are generally created by sending sample products to select consumers and asking those consumers to act as representatives for the company, often through social media and word of mouth content. This particular study researched this phenomenon with a cosmetics company to find the impact of product perceptions. The researchers concluded that SMCs influence consumer word-of-mouth greatly for product specific promotion, which may influence consumers' pre-existing attitudes towards the brand as a whole or towards related products. The authors argue that this may be beneficial to companies at times, depending on consumer views towards the brand or related products. They suggest that using SMCs may be particularly helpful for new product launches or for improving perceptions of a brand by having SMCs promote the highest quality products.



Although IDM promotes events as a service rather than a tangible product, the idea of brand representatives is useful for target markets that have a close-knit community, as the dance music world does. Instead of receiving sample products, brand representatives may spread photos, videos, or music recordings to promote “sample experiences” of IDM. In addition, representing the IDM identity through wearing merchandise and distributing marketing collateral have similar potential to positively influence brand perception like SMCs. Also, the concept of using brand representatives as “trend setters” goes hand in hand with social influence theories, especially in relation to conformity and obedience. Members of a target market may change their behavior based on the actions of brand representatives if they are seen as authority figures in a “celebrity” sort of light, or to conform to the norms of the IDM community as a group. This implies that consumers will listen to the referrals of their peers regarding attending IDM events or interacting with IDM social media accounts.

However, some research on social media marketing argues this influence of individual representatives as the creators of trends. Zhang, Zhao, and Xu (2016) explored the different roles that individuals hold on social media in relation to the creation of popular content in their study titled “Who creates Trends in Online Social Media: The Crowd or Opinion Leaders?” While previous research exists on the topics of popularity trends of content, this study aims to fill the gap in research by discussing the roles of social media users in creation and promotion of such content. Through analyzing Tweets and popular Internet slang words, the researchers concluded that the “crowd plays a decisive role” in the early stages of popular online content. “Opinion leaders” do not have as large of an impact as early adopters that fall in the category of the general public of users. SMCs can target both opinion leaders and early adopters; celebrity-esque





leaders often make SMCs successful in a more traditional sense, but early adopters can be used as SMCs amongst their peers. SMCs by early adopters are often seen on Facebook when individuals share that they are “Interested” or “Going” to events, as this prompts the interest of their peers. Essentially, trends gain momentum at the early stages through popularity amongst ordinary users, more so than they would through promotion by opinion leaders.

However, opinion leaders still have a large influence on these trends, but they may be more influential once a trend has become somewhat established. The authors argue that because of this, social media marketing strategies should focus more on the “crowd.” This research is very important to take into consideration because IDM is a very new and small company. While the concept of opinion leaders may have a large influence when the company is older and more developed, this study suggests that companies like IDM, as it is currently, may benefit more from trends created for and from the “crowd.” This is especially relevant in the dance music community because of the sense of friendship and equality that is often created in these event environments. Based on this research, it may be beneficial for our marketing campaigns to focus on the entire target audience as a “crowd” rather than having “opinion leaders” as individuals try and impact the rest of the target audience.

In order to target our social media marketing campaigns to the crowd of our target audience, it is vital to understand the psychographics and values of this target market. Our market campaign’s focus is on social media, not only because it is what Ryan seeks help with most for IDM currently, but also because it is the best way to reach the company’s target audience of millennials. Currently over 80% of companies use social media as a marketing tool because millennials are the largest and most influential group of consumers in today’s economy



(Ritcher 2017). In a 2017 Statista survey, millennials ranked Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook sequentially as their favorite social media platforms. Based on this information, we will focus on building IDM's social media presence on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook because the company has pre-existing accounts on these platforms. However, we may create a Snapchat account for IDM if we feel it is appropriate for the company goals because Snapchat is continuously the highest ranked platform among millennials in 2017.

It is crucial to analyze the online relationships that are built between companies and those of the millennial demographic and determine their motivations. When asked why they follow or interact with brands on social media platforms, millennials answered with: (1) to support the brand, (2) to receive regular updates from brands, (3) to get a coupon or discount, (4) to research brands when I was looking for specific products/services, (5) seeing my friends are already fans, followers or have a board, (6) to share my interest/lifestyle with others, (7) to participate in contests, (8) a brand ad on TV, online or print led me to like the brand, (9) someone recommended me to like, follow or pin the brand, and (10) to share my personal experiences (University of Massachusetts 2014). Overall, millennials tend to follow brands on social media to stay up to date with trends and events, to share experiences with other fans, and to receive benefits or rewards. Taking these motivations into consideration will be vital to our overall social media presence and campaign plans. The messages sent to IDM followers through social media will aim to increase their involvement with the brand, spread awareness about events, and encourage interaction between members of the audience.

Within this target market of millennials is a more specific target audience for IDM's marketing efforts. As a dance music events company, IDM's particular target audience is a



subculture often referred to as “rave culture.” Goulding, Shankar, and Elliot (2002) argue that subcultures are symbolically based in society and are a result of consumer choices, making self-identity a large component in the creation of such subcultures. This importance of one’s concept of self heavily relates to social identity theory, which posits that humans have a tendency to label themselves and others based on individual and group identity (Allen, 2011, p.14). As our goal is to encourage people to join the IDM community, it is crucial to convey a welcoming and positive message to influence their choice to attend events and be associated with the brand. It is predicted that increased and repeated event attendance by an individual will lead to a willingness to label themselves members of IDM. As the media plays a large role in projecting subcultures to society, maintaining a good image to the public through social media platforms will foster a desire to share this group identity.

Furthermore, Goulding, Shankar, and Elliot (2002) researched the motivations behind dance music concert attendees at “super clubs,” or well established rave venues that host famous DJs on a regular basis. The researchers used both observational and interview methods to understand the consumers’ experiences at rave-like events. Their findings suggest that rave-goers attend dance music events to fulfil the needs of “identity and narcissistic expression, emergence of new communities, the need to escape, engagement, and prolonged hedonism” (Goulding, et. al. 2002). Based on the qualitative data gathered, the authors argue that members of this subculture find a sense of identity in the rave environment. Differences in specific music genres result in an “emergence of sub-cultures within subcultures each with their own symbols, dance and identities.” Raves promote this sense of identity because of their congregation-like environment, where many become friends with others whom they had not known before



attending the event. This sense of community is vital to the dance music experience and the subculture's values (Goulding, et. al. 2002). Individuals are also motivated by opportunities to increase their “sub-cultural capital” or overall “hipness” or “coolness” by listening to specific music or attending specific events. The findings of this study argue that members of this subculture create differentiating identities between their “weekday” and “weekend” selves; the needs for escape and hedonism are met by this “weekend” identity that is developed at dance music events. The pressures of everyday responsibilities are lifted in the euphoric environment of these events that often last until the early hours of the morning.



## **BACKGROUND & CONTEXT**

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As the culture of music festival and concert-goers has steadily increased in popularity amongst millennials, our project is significant in that it explores the values and desires of this demographic in the San Luis Obispo community. In particular, Cal Poly students continue to reproduce this trend as they are predominantly millennials themselves. Students enjoy attending live music events whether they are large festivals or smaller, local shows. There are a few event



companies in the area, and Cal Poly hosts live music shows for students as well. As it seems millennials highly value and seek the overall experiences of music events, a fellow Cal Poly student recognized the need to provide similar, more affordable experiences to the local community. He started his own event company, IDM Productions, which we partnered with to take on all social media marketing communications throughout the quarter.

### **About**

IDM (Innovative Dance Music) Productions is based in San Luis Obispo, striving to host unique and exciting concert experiences in the area. These events include indoor concerts, multiple-day outdoor festivals, and fundraising programs. Primarily, it is focused on featuring electronic music acts yet also include visual arts, performing arts and philanthropic activities. A recent large event was a concert held in Avila at the Old Port Inn, featuring DJs from the local area as well as different parts of California. The founder, Ryan Fullerton, is a fourth year Cal Poly student studying Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration. Ryan's company is heavily supported by his friends, which currently has over 190 volunteers.

### ***Vision***

“To bring like-minded people together around music while positively impacting society,”

### ***Mission***

“To create unique event scapes, music lineups, and workshops that benefit those attending while fostering a community of forward-thinking individuals.”



## Goals

As Ryan's company is just getting started, his overall goal is to promote growth and expansion. He hopes to establish a new music scene in the San Luis Obispo area, focusing on the electronic dance music genres of house, techno and bass. With this focus, his goal is to expose local art and artists to the community as well as raise over \$1,000 every year for various charities. Right now the events are held within the San Luis Obispo country, yet by 2018 Ryan hopes to expand event locations throughout California. In addition, he wants to increase the frequency of his events. Specifically, he hopes to host local events every month and large outdoor events every three months.

Ryan aims to increase and strengthen IDM's overall brand awareness and online presence. Since he currently has no permanent marketing team, he hopes we can help raise awareness of IDM through the efforts of our senior project. Our focus for this project is to increase brand awareness of IDM through social media marketing by increasing the online presence of the company on various social media platforms. Specifically, we aim to increase consumer engagement amongst the target market in the San Luis Obispo area. IDM's events tend to attract two main age groups: college students from both Cal Poly and Cuesta and recent graduates (age 22-26). Both of these target audiences share an interest in dance music and live music events, and we plan to capitalize on this shared interest for our social media strategy.

Millennials are proven to be the dominant cohort generating the most amount of social conversation about music festivals. A study conducted by the national ticket-selling and event promotion company Eventbrite revealed that about 75% of people discussing music festivals are



between the ages of 17 and 34. In particular, this age group has established a strong liking for music festivals that are exclusively electronic. In fact, studies show electronic music is currently the hottest new trend, with 8 out of the top 25 music festivals being *exclusively* electronic (Eventbrite, 2014). This data is favorable for the purpose of appealing to our target audience since there is already support for dance music by this age group. In addition, social media marketing has been demonstrated to be the most effective way to reach music festival audiences and understand their wants and needs. This information is beneficial as we will be exclusively marketing to our target audience through social media platforms.

As far as campaign development, we will focus on executing campaigns that support Ryan's company vision and mission statements, in order to convey the desired message of his company to our audience. We will also be heavily focusing on pre-event communication, in order to boost ticket sales and build public excitement. According to a study conducted by Eventbrite in 2014, pre-event discussions are extremely vital as they represent nearly 54% of music event conversations, making them the most scalable pool of conversations to target. For example we will shape our social media marketing strategies, such as forming branded hashtags, to monitor where these conversations are being held and create buzz. Ryan also wants to maintain a constant web and social media presence, meaning we must increase the frequency of posts from the current rate. This will involve strategizing other kinds of outreach, beyond simply promoting upcoming events. In order to keep up IDM's brand image, it has been suggested that we create unique and captivating brand awareness campaigns. Ryan will also be acquiring more merchandise and marketing collateral, which will strengthen his brand community as people willingly represent IDM. In addition, IDM has a large group of volunteers who assist with event



production, graphic design, web design, and general promotion. With the help of these volunteers, we will be able to execute our campaigns with little to no cost. However, we will have a small budget to utilize tools like Hootsuite and Facebook advertising for our social media planning.

Our marketing efforts will begin by increasing the presence of IDM's already existing social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. While IDM's Facebook page is currently followed by most concert attendees, the Instagram and Twitter pages lack consumer engagement. By utilizing our knowledge of social media marketing strategies and communication theories, we will help Ryan reach his goal of a stronger social media presence for IDM.

## **FINDINGS & OUTCOMES**

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In the beginning phases of our project, we met with Ryan to discuss the marketing goals he had for IDM. Since the company had no existing marketing team, he did not have many specific requirements and gave us the freedom to create our own strategy. Prior to the actual brainstorming phase, we attended one of IDM's events to experience the atmosphere. We asked attendees how they heard about the event. Most people we asked identified Facebook or word of mouth as their source. This revealed that we would need to focus more on building IDM's social media presence on other platforms.

After meeting with Ryan and talking over our initial thoughts, we decided to focus our marketing efforts on increasing overall awareness of the brand. We chose to do this through the social media platforms of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, as these are most frequently used by





our target audience. In order to increase brand awareness and event attendance, we used our research from our literature review to come up with a strategy that would boost IDM's social media presence.

## **Social Media Plan**

To create our social media marketing strategy based on the company needs, our research and prior knowledge, we created the following goals and strategies to guide our campaigns:

### ***Goal***

Increase IDM's social media presence by increasing frequency of shared content and interaction on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

### ***Strategies***

1. Create a cohesive brand image that encompasses IDM's mission and vision, emphasizing the sense of community, love of music, and the fun, energetic atmosphere of the events.
  - a. Maintain this brand image by using a genuine voice that promotes events without "hard selling" and rather connects to the audience personally and in a transparent manner. Content should be of the highest quality possible (for photos and videos) and captions should use hashtags and emoticons sparingly. Content should connect to the audience's shared experiences and should utilize language that builds a sense of the IDM community.
2. Increase frequency of content on all platforms by posting four times per week as well as liking and sharing other users' content when appropriate.



- a. Content shared should use images and videos whenever possible, as this type of content has higher engagement. Images shared should be from IDM events or occasionally may be graphics with event information.
3. Increase following and interaction on all platforms by following members of the target audience, liking and sharing others' content, and encouraging the audience to share content from IDM events and tag IDM pages in their posts.
4. Differentiate content on each platform; content should differ on each platform whenever possible in order to gain and maintain audience interest. However, this content can have the same goals and should adhere to IDM's brand image.

### ***Tactics***

1. Monitor growth and evaluate success by updating analytics for each platform every two weeks on a spreadsheet (see appendix).
2. Share all posts during peak times of day when most followers are online, based on the analytics from each specific platform (see appendix). This will ensure posts have maximum potential reach and engagement.
3. Focus primarily on event promotion: Based on our initial research, we found that a majority of event conversations are generated prior to the actual event. As we strive to have the most people possible talking about our events, we focused a majority of our marketing on pre-event promotion.
  - a. Pre-event Promotion
    - i. Facebook
      1. Share the event page, differentiating the text so each post is unique



2. Encourage users to mark “Interested” or “Going” on the event page as well as share the event page to their personal timeline. Most audience members find out about events through seeing their Facebook friends’ events.
3. Include links to purchase tickets, making the process quick and easy for audience members.
4. Share links to featured DJs’ soundcloud pages so people can preview the music that will be heard at the event and increase excitement.

ii. Instagram

1. Share photos and videos from past events to give followers a preview of what the atmosphere is like, in order to persuade them to purchase tickets.

iii. Twitter

1. Post tweets to excite followers about the upcoming events, and directly include the link to buy tickets.

b. Post-event Promotion

i. Facebook

1. Create photo albums from the event where photos taken by the various event photographers can be shared to the page followers.
2. Share recap videos of the events and/or live stream videos of the event when possible. This will encourage attendees to remember



their shared experience at the event and share this content with others. If followers were unable to attend the event, they can get a glimpse of what they missed and will be motivated to attend the next event.

3. Create thank-you posts the day after the event to show IDM's gratitude and care for the community.

ii. Instagram / Twitter

1. Post photos taken from the event and thank attendees for coming, to show genuine appreciation for their support.
2. Feature content that has been taken by attendees to increase brand engagement.

c. IDM Community Building : Besides event promotion, we found it important to promote IDM's brand message in other ways to maintain our social media presence.

i. Facebook

1. Encourage people to invite others to "like" and view our page.
2. Engage with others through liking their posts and responding to messages.
3. Promote other local companies/music artists who support IDM and align with its message in order to expand the IDM community.

ii. Instagram



1. Maintain IDM's Instagram presence and brand image through posting content from past events. This will remind the target audience of what IDM is all about.
2. "Like" the posts of our followers to show authentic interest and care for them.

iii. Twitter

1. Retweet posts from users that are similar to IDM and align with its brand message.
2. Engage with followers/IDM's direct target audience through likes, retweets and mentions.

## *Campaigns*

### 1. Bass Waves Giveaway Contest

- a. In order to increase interaction and following on IDM's social media platforms while promoting the Bass Waves event, we created a ticket giveaway contest on Facebook and Instagram. Based on our prior research, members of our target audience follow brands on social media to keep up with news and events and to participate in giveaways and contests to win prizes. We provided an incentive of free tickets to the Bass Waves concert in order to encourage individuals to share their IDM event photos and the Bass Waves event page. The contest differed on Facebook and Instagram based on how our audience members utilize and interact on each platform. We promoted the contest while promoting the Bass Waves event on all platforms, sharing promotional content along with instructions on



how to enter to win free tickets (see appendix). The contest began two weeks before the event and winners were announced the Wednesday before the event. The winners' names were added to the event guest list so that they could enter without paying for a ticket.

- i. Facebook Contest: To enter the Facebook contest, individuals had to “like” the IDM Facebook page and share the Bass Waves event page to their timeline (therefore sharing it to their Facebook friends). We chose to run the Facebook contest in this manner based on how other brands have previously run similar contests successfully. This also encouraged individuals to “like” and therefore follow IDM’s Facebook page, as well as sharing the Bass Waves event with their friends and thus spreading awareness of both the brand and the event.
- ii. Instagram Contest: To enter the Instagram contest, individuals had to post a photo from a previous IDM event (the Pier Party had recently occurred, so many attendees had photos from this event), and tag @IDMproductions and #IDMBassWaves in their post. Including a hashtag made it easy for us to track contest entries. This contest encouraged followers to share moments from their previous experiences with IDM and therefore spread awareness of the brand and upcoming event to their own followers.

## 2. Underground Nights Promotion

- a. IDM has recently partnered with Metro Brew Co. to hold weekly events on Saturday nights featuring local artists. These events are free and take place



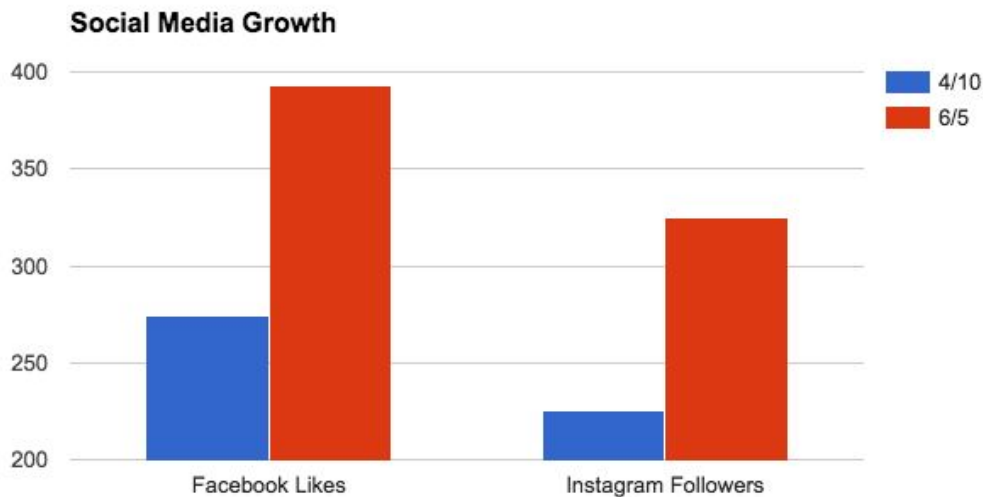
downtown San Luis Obispo, making them extremely accessible to Cal Poly and Cuesta students. While ticket sales are not relevant to these events, our promotion of them will increase brand awareness and help to strengthen the sense of community that IDM encompasses. The regularity and accessibility of these events is a great opportunity to build brand loyalty, emphasizing the IDM community. Our promotional content focuses on the excitement leading up to the event and sharing memories and experiences from the events in days following. For the first couple events, we emphasized event promotion to spread awareness about this new partnership. Our content focuses on IDM's cohesive brand message, highlighting the sense of community surrounding the dance music culture as well as the affordability of the events. As the events become more regular, our content will continue to remind our audience about events and will focus on sharing photos and videos from previous Underground Nights events. We will encourage the target audience to share their own content from events, therefore continually spreading awareness and increasing interaction. This combination of our own content and the audience's shared content will highlight these shared experiences and develop a sense of community and brand loyalty for IDM.



## EVALUATION

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Our overall event promotion through social media emphasized two parts of IDM's brand: the events themselves and the brand community. In order to market these aspects of the company to the target audience, our campaigns focused on emphasizing the overall brand experience. Our content differed on each platform based on how the target audience utilizes and interacts with other users and brands.



*Increase in Facebook likes and Instagram followers from April to June*

### Facebook

IDM's Facebook page was fairly well established prior to our campaigns because of the popularity of event pages. However, many members of the target audience had joined event pages without having liked the IDM page. By inviting members of the target audience to like the page as well as posting content more regularly, we were able to increase following and





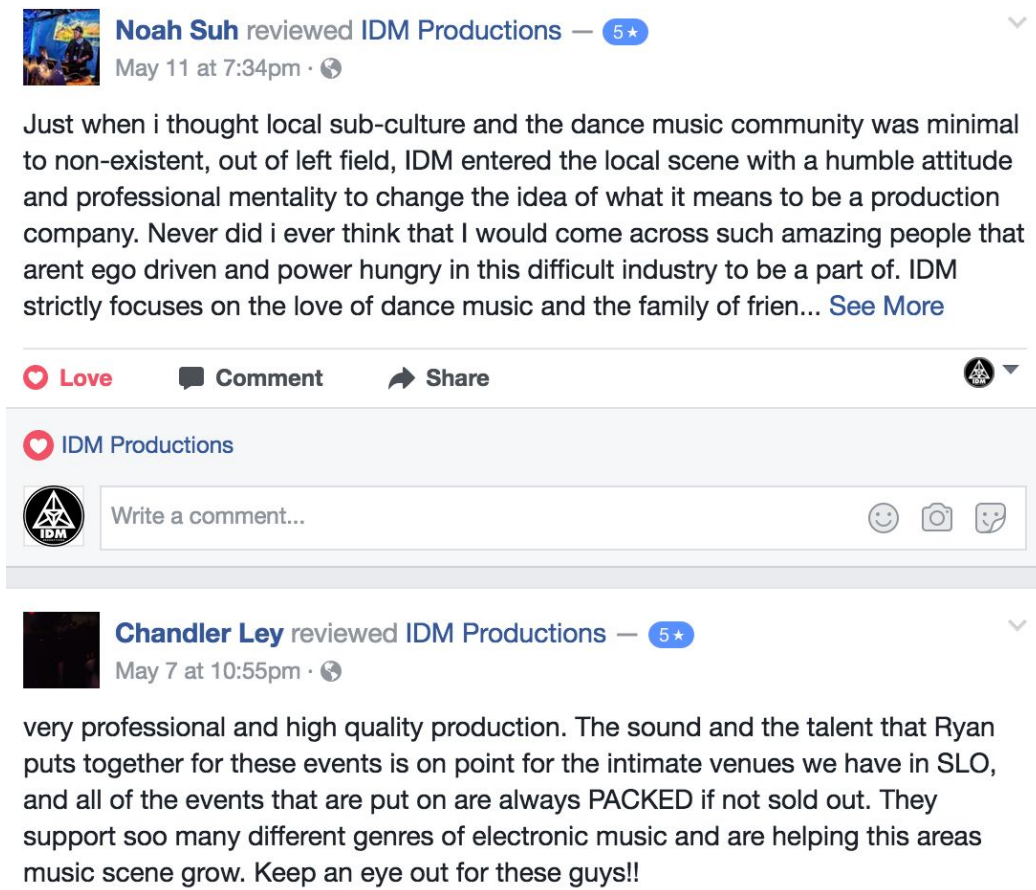
engagement on the Facebook page. While the Facebook page was utilized to create event pages, content was not shared on the page very regularly. Our marketing efforts increased the quantity and quality of content by sharing event photos and videos on a regular basis as well as sharing event details and information. Increasing the amount of content shared on the Facebook page and focusing it around upcoming events increased the page's value for the target audience. It became a place where they could find key event information while feeling connected to the brand community.

By the end of May, the Facebook page likes had increased by 103; following the Bass Waves event, reach increased by 23%, engagement was up 12%, and page views increased by 119. With the increase in page likes and followers, more event attendees wrote reviews for IDM through the Facebook page. By the end of our campaigns, the page had a number of reviews with an average rating of five stars. These positive reviews are vital to maintaining a positive brand image for IDM, as they are public to anyone who views the Facebook page. However, we found that Facebook interaction was highest directly following the Bass Waves event. Because the target audience uses Facebook primarily to find event information, interaction decreased slightly during the “downtime” in between events. Once we began promoting the Underground Nights events, there was more exciting content for followers to see and overall interaction increased. With an events based company, we found that Facebook interaction is highest directly before and after events. It is important to maintain the interest of the audience in between events as to not lose followers, so creating community building content that reminds them of these shared experiences can help to do so.





*Example of IDM's Facebook layout*

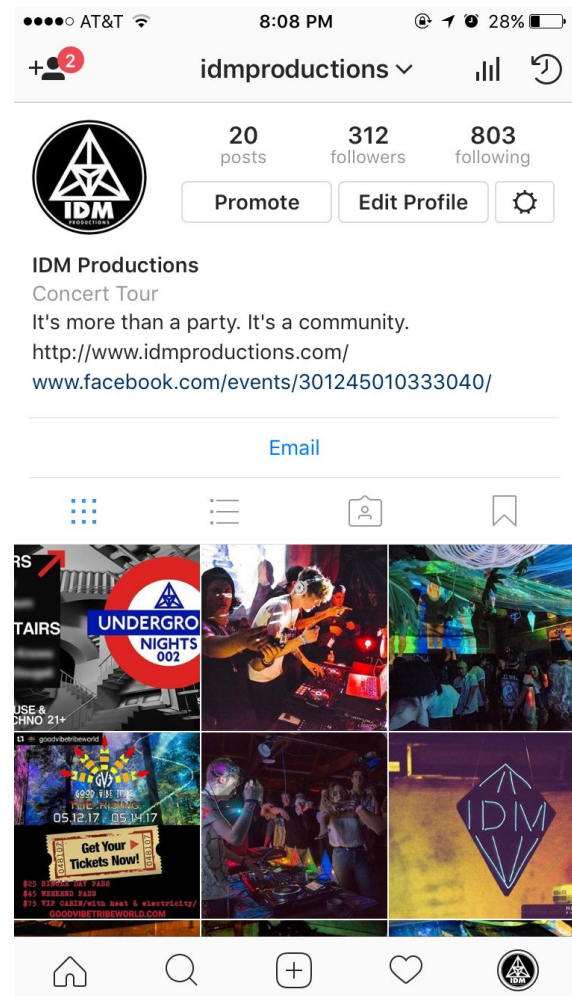


*A few IDM Productions Facebook reviews*



## Instagram

Instagram is one of the most used social media platforms by millennials today, so creating a strong Instagram presence for IDM was vital to our marketing efforts. Increasing the frequency of posts was one of our first steps; the IDM Instagram page now has more than twice as many posts as it did when we began managing the page. Quality is equally as important as quantity, especially for an image-based platform, so we were somewhat limited by the lack of available photos or videos from IDM events when we got started. After more events took place, it became easier to find good content to share that would reach our audience appropriately. While our posts ultimately aimed to promote the events, they did so through emphasizing the community building aspect of IDM. We utilized hashtags with event names and music genres in order to make content easy to find and build a cohesive brand message. Our marketing efforts have increased the page followers, number of likes per photo, reach, impressions, profile views, and tagged photos. Especially following Bass Waves, the number of followers and tagged photos increased greatly as more of the concert attendees became aware of the brand through their experience at the event. The sharing of photos before and after the event spread awareness of the event and of the brand as



individuals' friends saw the content shared by them. Because Instagram is centered around sharing images, it is a great place for brand communities to build excitement leading up to events and share experiences after events.



*A few of IDM's most successful posts*



## Twitter

While we utilized Twitter to spread event information and interact with similar accounts, we found that Twitter was not as effective in reaching our target audience. The account followers increased from 12 to 32, but the presence was still not as strong as that of Facebook or Instagram. We used the Twitter page to promote the giveaway contest by linking it to the Facebook and Instagram pages, as well as linking the event page information to tweets. Twitter was also useful for interacting with artists, music festivals, venues, and other pages that our target audience would find interesting. However, it was much harder to create compelling content on Twitter that was different enough from the content on other platforms. In the future, using a planning tool like Hootsuite or TweetDeck may be useful in maintaining more consistency with Twitter posts. While Twitter may not reach our target audience as successfully as other platforms, this may change as the company grows and brand awareness becomes stronger. Twitter does not have to be the main focus of social media marketing efforts for the time being, but it should not be ignored as it is still an outlet to reach consumers.







**IDM Productions** @IDMproductions · May 19

TOMORROW NIGHT! Can't wait to see you all there! #UndergroundNights



**IDM Productions** @IDMproductions · Apr 29

#BassWaves was INSANE! Thanks IDM fam for coming out, you made last night amazing! We love you all!



*Examples of typical IDM tweets*

## Giveaway Contest

The giveaway contest encouraged users to like the Facebook page, share the Bass Waves event page, and interact with the Instagram page by tagging photos and using the event hashtag. Leading up to the event, there was an increase in interaction on all platforms. In addition, the winners were all extremely excited about their free tickets, and this encouraged word of mouth promotion for the event. The Bass Waves event sold out just in time for us to announce the free ticket winners, and it was clear that awareness of the event had increased by the number of



individuals posting on the page that they were seeking tickets. While the Facebook contest had significantly more entries than the Instagram contest, the influence of the Instagram contest campaign was most visible after the event took place. In the couple days following the Bass Waves event, IDM was tagged in a number of photos from the event by attendees. While engagement was highest immediately after the event, users tagged IDM in their Bass Waves photos and videos throughout the week after the event. The number of tagged photos increased by 18, and IDM was mentioned in a number of comments and captions by followers.

This engagement inherently influences brand awareness, as the followers of IDM's followers could see their experiences from the event. The giveaway contest encouraged followers to share their event experiences before Bass Waves, and they continued to do so after the event. The sharing of content related to IDM events sparks conversation about the brand, leading to earned media promotion for upcoming events and the brand community as a whole.

For future events, we plan to hold similar giveaway contests in order to promote the upcoming event while encouraging users to engage with and share the IDM social media pages. While the Instagram contest did not have as much initial success, we hope to run a similar contest again. The Instagram contest will likely have more success in the future since many followers have more content to share from the Bass Waves event. Since so many users tagged IDM in their event photos after Bass Waves, their peers will see these posts and will be motivated to do the same, especially when a monetary reward is at stake. However, these contests both may have been more successful if they had started earlier. Our previous campaign began only two weeks before the event, but if we had started promoting the contest earlier, individuals would have had more time to like, share, and tag posts in order to enter. For the next



event, we hope to start the campaign three weeks in advance in order to encourage Bass Waves attendees to share their event photos, and to allow more time for entries and interaction on both Facebook and Instagram.



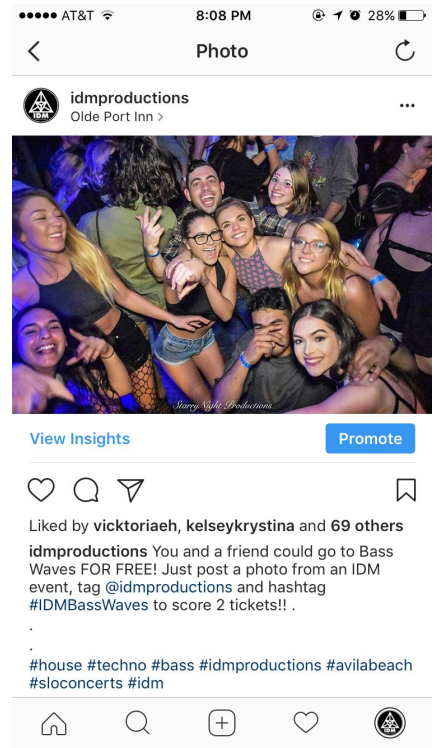
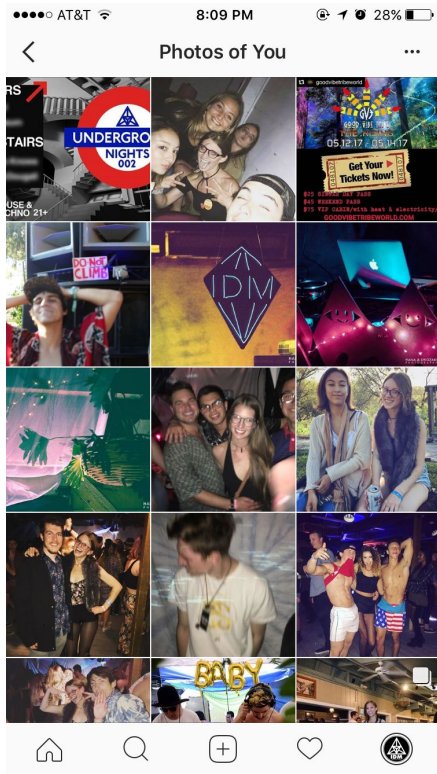
The image shows a Facebook event post. At the top left is the IDM Productions logo, a triangle with 'IDM' inside. To its right, the text reads 'IDM Productions shared their event.' Below this, it says 'Published by Savannah Smith [?] · April 11 ·'. The main text of the post says: 'Want to go to Bass Waves for free?! Like IDM on Facebook and share the event page with your friends for a chance to win a FREE TICKET!! Also check out our Instagram (@idmproductions) for more opportunities to win!' followed by a URL: 'https://www.facebook.com/events/109526552927599/'. Below the text is a large event banner with a dark background and white text. The banner says 'APRIL 28th 9 PM - 2am' on the left, 'BASS WAVES' in large letters in the center, and 'HOUSE - TECHNO - BASS' below it. On the right, it says 'OLDE PORT 3993 Avila Beach' and '\$10'. Below the banner, the event details are listed: 'APR 28 Bass Waves', 'Fri 9 PM · Olde Port Inn · Avila Beach Savannah, Ryan and 14 friends', and a 'Going' button with a dropdown arrow.

*Giveaway contest announcement post on Facebook*





Examples of tagged photos from IDM supporters



## **Ryan's Letter of Evaluation**

“Savannah Smith and Julia Melmon did a wonderful job managing IDM Productions’ marketing for the last several months. When they began their marketing campaign for IDM Productions our social media reach and content was very limited. They brought so much insight to the table and had so many great approaches to improving IDM’s marketing. I gave them a lot of creative control over their various campaigns for upcoming events and building up our fan base. The wording they used on IDM’s posts were spot on, not overly pushing or cheesy as many event companies tend to be. They utilized unique forms of promotion to build excitement around upcoming events and get people to engage with our various social media platforms. One of their great ideas was to implement social media competitions. This was great for several reasons, it built excitement for the upcoming event, Bass Waves, as well as supplied us with more fan generated media which we desperately needed for future marketing materials. Julia and Savannah maintained a consistent social media presence; I am beyond grateful for this as it was something I did not have time to manage independently. Through their hard work, creativity, and consistent work ethic they were able to rapidly increasing IDM’s social reach. They greatly improved the number of followers on all our social media platforms. They established our previously nonexistent Twitter and Snapchat. Their work not only helped further IDM’s brand awareness but also develop our online personality for our customers to connect with. Without hesitation, I would recommend Julia and Savannah’s employment to any company seeking assistance with their marketing. I hope to continue working with Savannah and Julia on IDM Productions’ marketing after they graduate.” -*Ryan Fullerton*



## DISCUSSION

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Throughout our project, we came to valuable conclusions regarding how communication research can be beneficial in the development of marketing plans. The research that we conducted ourselves was extremely useful during our brainstorming phase, as it helped guide our focus and overall marketing goals. The major underlying conclusion we came to was the importance of truly understanding and connecting with a target audience. This is vital in order to clearly communicate a brand's desired image and messages. Upon carrying out our marketing strategies from the standpoint of communication researchers, we found that the two fields can learn a lot from one another in order to bring a company great success. These include social media's role in building brand communities, the importance of communication styles in marketing, and the importance of a target audience's self-concept.

In the early stages of our brainstorming we needed to make sure that our efforts would align with the goals of Ryan, along with the values of IDM and its target audience. One of the main focuses was maintaining a consistent and desirable image of brand community that would encourage others to join. This goal of having people want to become a part of IDM's community related to our early research of social identity theory, in that humans tend to label themselves and others based on the groups they identify with. Therefore we learned that marketers must make sure that they target individuals who truly match up with a brand's image. Specifically in the music industry, our research revealed that different music genres promote different symbols and meanings of identity. Since IDM is focused on the genres of House, Bass and Techno music this narrowed down our target audience and we made sure that it was clear that the events would hold



these genres. This attracted certain types of people, who showed up because they genuinely want to be a part of this group. In addition, we also related brand community formation to Social Influence Theory, which theorizes that individuals change behavior (intentionally or unintentionally) based on their perceived relationship to others. People change behaviors to be more like others to meet needs of belonging and esteem from approval from others. Social media is often an outlet for meeting these needs; individuals use social media to connect with others and behavior is influenced by what others share. This highlights the importance of having excellent marketing strategies when attempting to create a sense of brand community.

Our recognition of the vital role social media has with a brand's image and message certainly affected how we marketed on social media. A few studies we looked at had stressed the positive role social media has in maintaining brand loyalty, therefore we strictly marketed IDM through social media platforms. Since our research confirmed that people align with brands that create community we needed to maintain our social media presence besides event promotion. A few examples of our posts included featuring artists, art, and thanking the IDM "family" for their support in order to keep them involved and interested. As far as which social media platforms to use, we researched which platforms our target audience used the most and compared them to IDM's existing platforms. As a marketer, it is key to select the proper medium for reaching your target audience in the first place before even considering *what* to say to them. In our case, we ultimately found that using Facebook and Instagram were the most effective ways to communicate messages to potential and existing IDM members.

Furthermore, once we understood where we could find our target audience online, we realized how important the role of communication styles is in marketing. Our early research



stressed that a brand's communication style on social media significantly impacts others' views and satisfaction level of a brand. In addition, making sure to be transparent and authentic was found to more successfully develop relationships with consumers. Marketers can take into account the communication theory of symbolic interactionism and adjust their communication styles as appropriate, in order to positively influence their brand image. We took this into account and used words and images that have shared meanings in the dance music community, in order for our target audience to understand. Therefore we were able to create a more consistent and open brand-consumer relationship to welcome others to become a part of IDM.

Overall, marketers need to take into account the importance of understanding the values and behaviors of their target audience and use this to adapt their communication styles and strategies. Especially in the event industry, it is not only important to promote prior to specific events to get the conversation started amongst their targeted group of individuals, it also is important to focus on building the brand community. We found that overlapping research and methods from the two fields of communication and marketing can certainly work together to achieve great success for companies.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Completing this senior project allowed us to gain valuable insight and skills which we can apply to our future careers. In addition, our research and analysis can be useful for marketers in similar situations who are trying to reach an alike target audience. Especially with the growing popularity of music festivals and events-based companies in general, our findings can help influence the way marketers create their strategies. Our target audience was extremely similar to



those of musical festival goers today; therefore, we hope to use the knowledge we acquired to help another company in the future. This experience has been relevant to current times, as music events consistently gain popularity and give others a sense of belonging. Although our impact was felt only in the small San Luis Obispo community, we hope that IDM continues to grow and make a positive impact on others. We were extremely grateful to work with such an inspiring company.



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# APPENDIX

## Appendix A: Facebook Analytics

Figure 1: Hourly Facebook Follower Activity

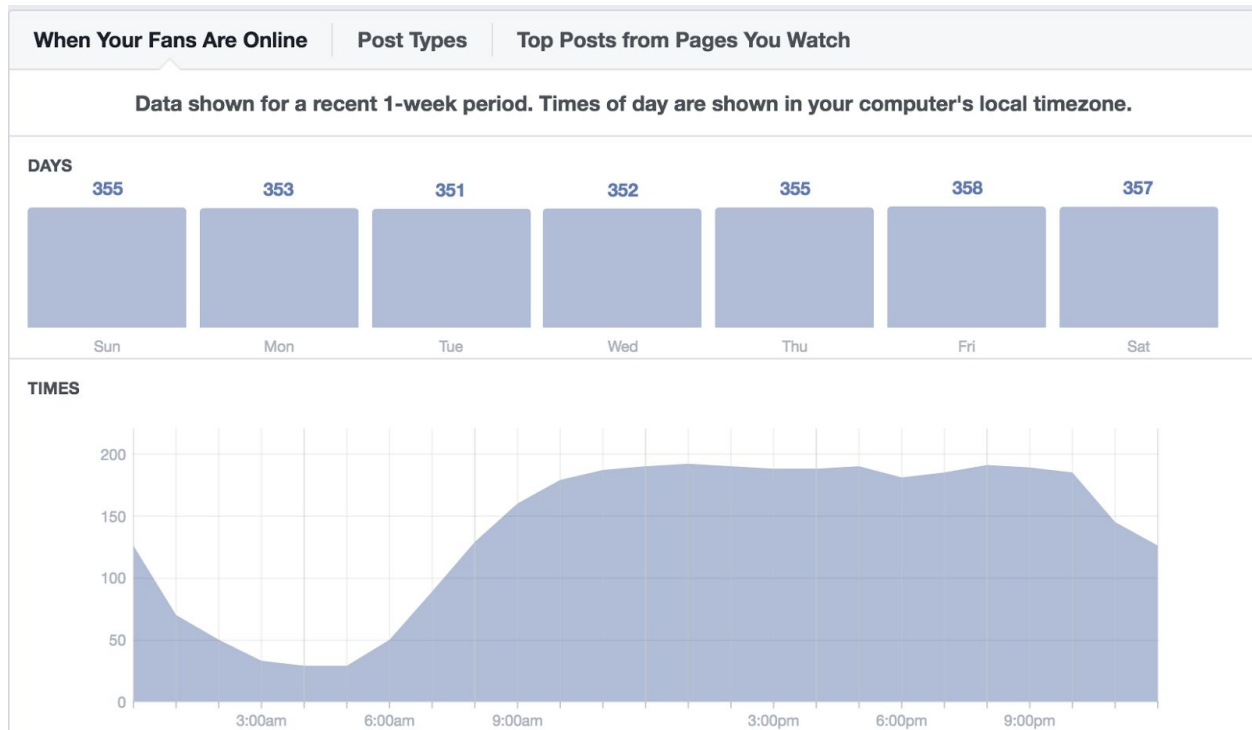
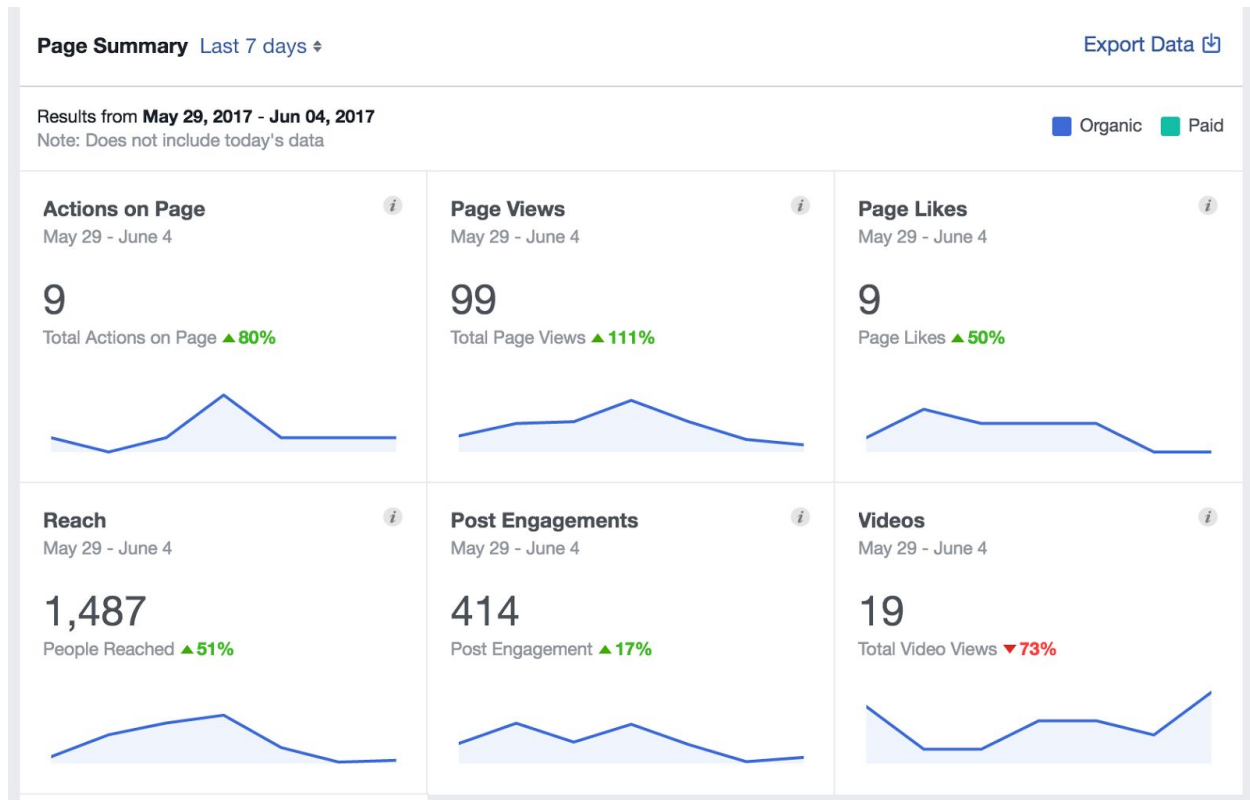


Figure 2: Facebook Analytics Bi-Weekly

	4/10/2017	4/26/17	5/8/17	5/22/17	6/5/17
<b>Facebook</b>					
Page Likes	274	322	354	377	393
Page Follows	282	331	368	392	409
Rating	4.3	4.5	5	5	5
Reviews	6	8	9	11	11
Page Views (last 7 days)	78	92	197	95	99
Best Time of Day to Post	11AM-1PM	5-6PM	8-9PM (weds)		Reach +23%
Highest Reach	Video				Engagement +12%
Highest Post Clicks	Photos				
Fan Location	1. SLO (106)	2. LA	3. SD	4. SF	
Fan Gender	Men (63%)	Women (36%)			



Figure 3: Facebook Insights Summary



## Appendix B: Instagram Analytics

Figure 1: Instagram Analytics Bi-Weekly

Instagram	4/10/2017	4/26/17	5/8/17	5/22/17	6/5/17
Followers	225	237	278	310	326
Following	731	760	785	802	811
Total Posts	9	13	17	19	21
<i>Photos</i>	7	11	15	17	19
<i>Videos</i>	2	2	2	2	2
Tagged Photos	26	31	44	44	45
Most likes on a photo	48	50	60	94	98
Average video views	194	200	200		
Impressions	424	772	1652	664	539
Reach	242	245	316	309	248
Profile views (weekly)		101	200	76	123



Figure 2: Instagram Follower Demographics

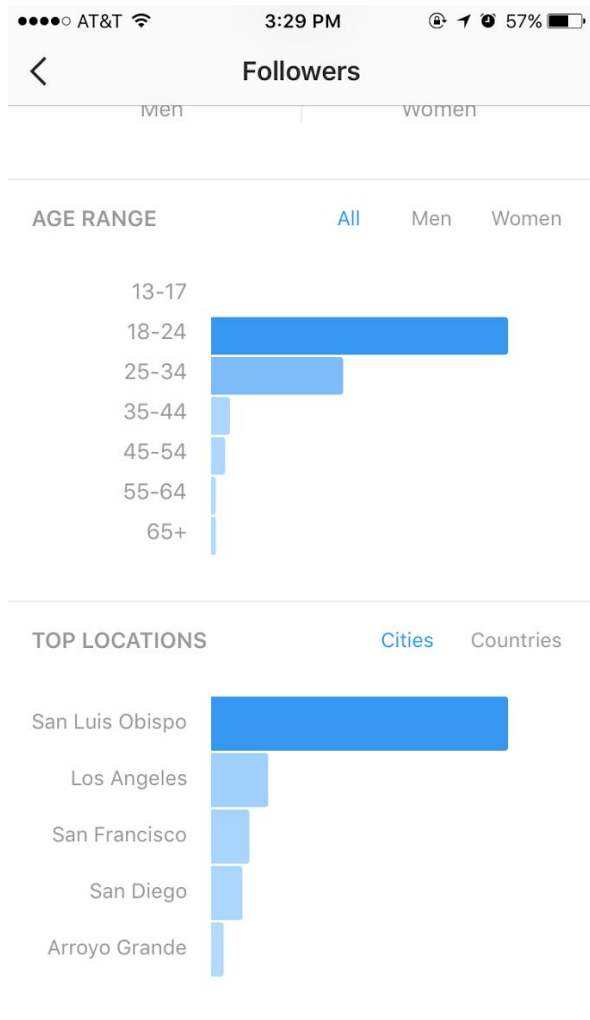
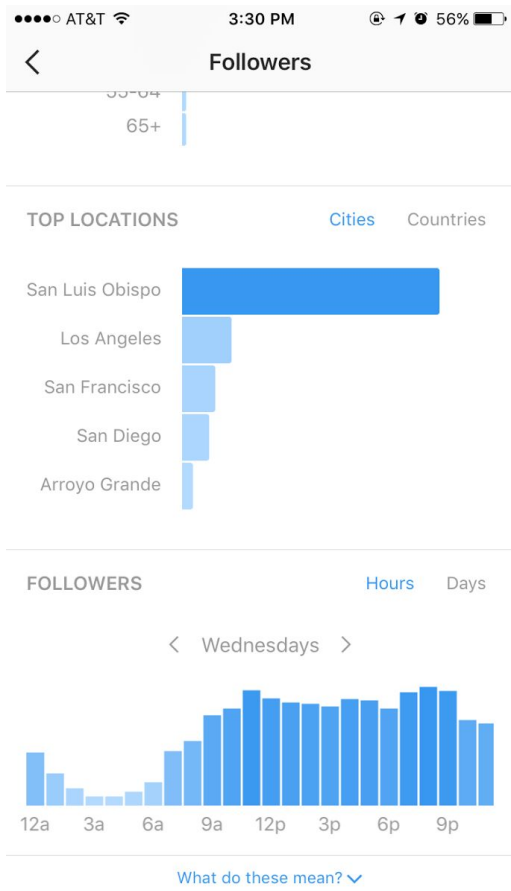


Figure 3: Instagram Follower Daily Activity



Figure 4: Instagram Follower Hourly Activity



### Appendix C: Twitter Analytics

Figure 1: Twitter Analytics Bi-Weekly

Twitter	4/10/2017	4/26/17	5/8/17	5/22/17	6/5/17
Tweets	9	17	22	24	27
Followers	12	39	34	31	33
Likes	9	14	14	14	14

