

Leveraging the Facebook Opportunity for Medill

Medill Facebook Page Analysis

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Executive Summary

Established in 1921, Medill is a leader in education and offers programs in journalism and integrated marketing communications that combine enduring skills and values with new techniques and knowledge that are essential to thrive in today's digital world. Housed on the campus of Northwestern University, this program has more than 15,000 alumni putting their Medill training and values to work around the globe each day.

Individuals can access information about the Medill's program through their website and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Currently, the assistant director of marketing and communications, Kaitlyn Thompson, is the only person who manages the social media accounts with 15% of her time dedicated to creating content for each platform. Outside of her work commitment to the upkeep of social media, there are zero dollars from the budget dedicated to managing it. Kaitlyn is looking for ways to help leadership and other stakeholders understand the importance of social media so that more resources are allocated to it.

Four objectives have been identified to accomplish Kaitlyn's goals leveraging Facebook data:

1. Increase the Medill School of Journalism, Media and Integrated Marketing Communications brand awareness to the general public
2. Make Facebook a top referral to Medill's website: www.medill.northwestern.edu
3. Increase prospective student engagement on the Facebook platform
4. Receive more financial resources from leadership and other stakeholders

Research Question

Based on information from Kaitlyn, class learnings and project requirements, our team has agreed upon the following research question to identify a solution for Kaitlyn's challenge: *How can Medill's Facebook page improve its performance to receive more financial support from leadership?*

Methods

To begin the journey of helping Kaitlyn address her challenge our team requested insight and API data from the Facebook platform. The insight data provided both page and post data for the past two years while the API data provided another dimension of user-generated content (UGC) in addition to post information for the same timeframe. From the data, our team was able to perform an overall audit on Facebook's performance and compare it to competitive journalism programs such as Colombia and Newhouse.

Going deeper than the surface, we completed a detailed analysis on engagement. Our methods included a text analysis that allowed us to explore sentiment, hashtags, keyword groups and links which provided us with insight on Facebook interactions between Medill and fans.

To perform a social listening audit, we measured volume and sentiment of a list of 169 user-generated content as well as 211 comments. By exploring users' comments, sentiment polarity and frequently mentioned topics, we hoped to address key business questions such as what are the Facebook fans' overall brand perception of Medill?

All of the hashtags contained in Medill's posts and UGC were extracted from the raw data and analyzed. Keyword groups with their corresponding keyword list were developed as follows:

1. IMC VS. MSJ/BSJ

1. IMC: imc, integrated marketing communication, integrated marketing, medillimc, advertising, marketing, marketing communication
2. MSJ/BSJ: msj, bsj, journalism, journalist
2. Alum: alum, alums, alumni, alumna, medillalum, alumnus
3. Students: student, students
4. Faculty: faculty, professor, professors, staff, doctor, dr.
5. Congratulations: congratulation, congratulations, congrats, awards, award
6. Links: all links starts with bit.ly/ and www.

Other dimensions that we analyzed included post types (i.e. video, status, link, picture), post timing (i.e. time of day, academic quarter) and key influencers (i.e. fans who shared the most or received the most likes or comments). The information we derived from these sources will allow us to identify opportunities to increase engagement with fans.

In order to capture the Facebook data, we leveraged tools such as Tableau (a data visualization software), Tegxedo (a word cloud software) and R (a statistical computing software). These tools allowed us to explore the data and make recommendations.

Findings

From April 2014 to the end of April 2016, the total page likes steadily increased from 6313 to 8319. As shown in the graph below, no seasonal pattern was found and there are no tipping points or spikes. Comparing our page data with some other famous journalism and communication schools, we found that there is an opportunity to grow. The Facebook page for the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism had 11,145 likes, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism had 73,018 likes while Syracuse University's Newhouse School of Journalism had 7,438 likes.

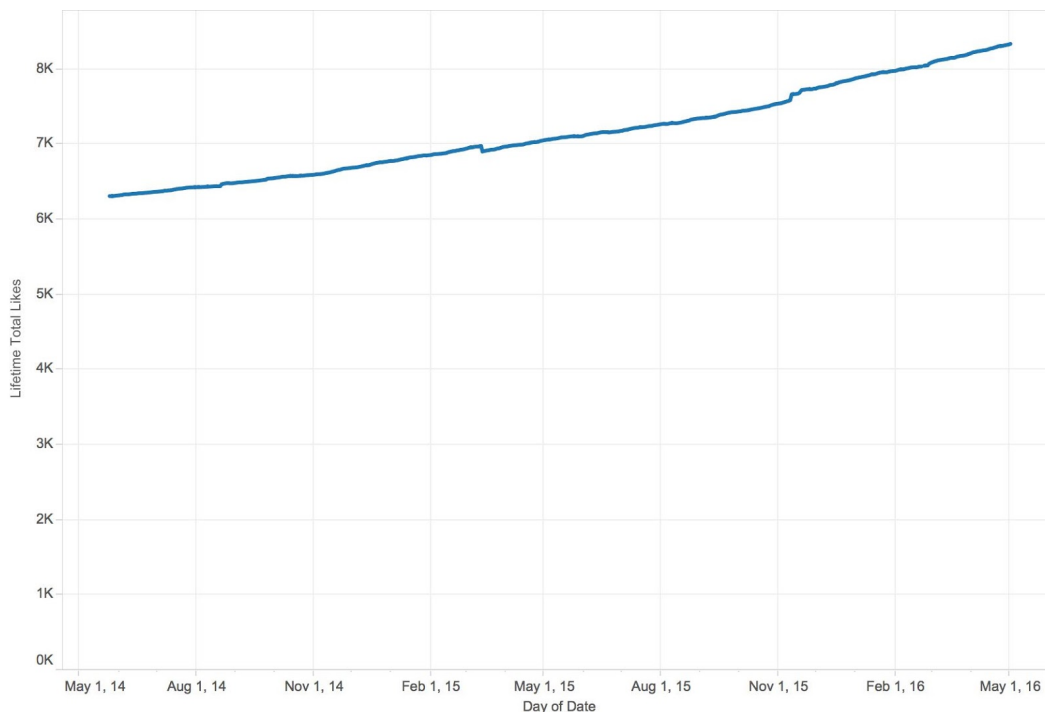


Exhibit 1

Sentiment Analysis:

Our team completed a social listening audit over the two-year time span to grasp a better understanding of how Medill's target audience of current and prospective students, alumni and the generally interested public perceived the brand.

Both UGC and comments are key components of brand conversation, which are also important indicators of brand perception. We coded a combination of nearly 400 UGC and post comments and found out that only 8% of the post comments and 8% of UGC indicate negative sentiment, meaning the overall brand perception of Medill is positive among its Facebook fans. This result also implies that Medill is on the right track in terms of creating good content and effectively engaging fans in conversation.

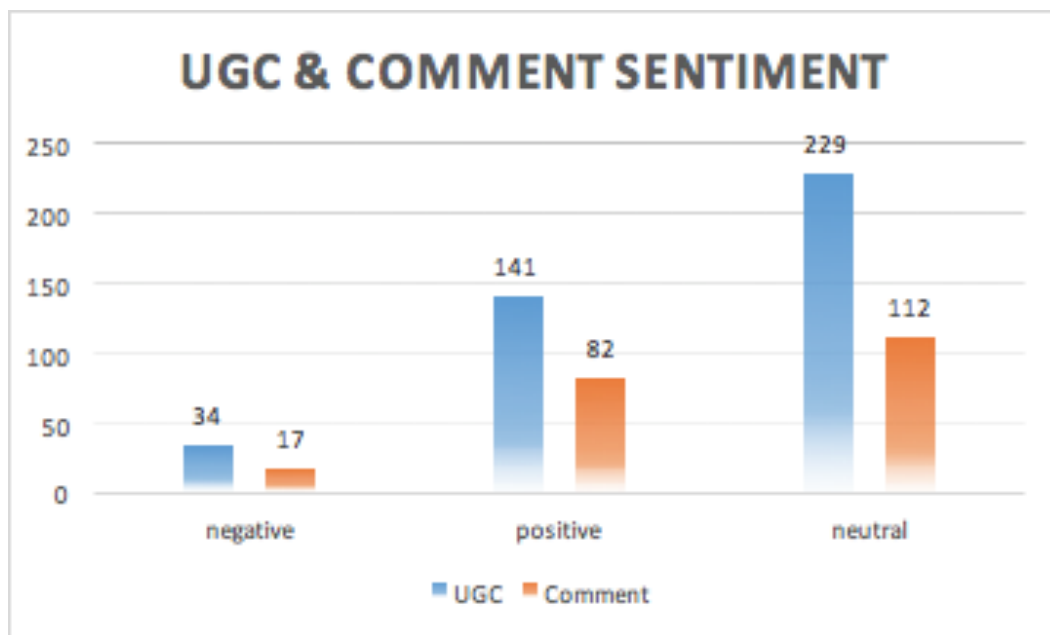


Exhibit 2

To dive deeper into what our fans are talking about around Medill's brand and how they actively associate themselves with Medill, we generated word clouds (as pictured in Exhibit 3) based on the frequency of words mentioned. To get a more meaningful picture of the buzzing topics, we filtered out words and expressions that were only conversationally meaningful or semantically functional such as pronouns and propositions. Next, we created word clouds for positive comments and discovered that the top 10 frequently appeared keywords in comments included congratulations, communication, Medill, great, professor, love, Northwestern, students, class, and course (as pictured in Exhibit 4). The appearance of Medill as the third most frequently mentioned keyword indicates that Medill as a brand has a very strong presence and an outstanding identity in social conversation. Positive comments topics were mostly associated with students expressing congratulations upon successful enrollment or graduation, gratitude towards **professors**, what was learned during the school year, satisfaction with **courses** and reflections on their time at **Medill**. Words such as "favorite", "inspirational", "great" and "love" are frequently used, reaffirming positive attitudes towards the educational environment and resources at Medill.

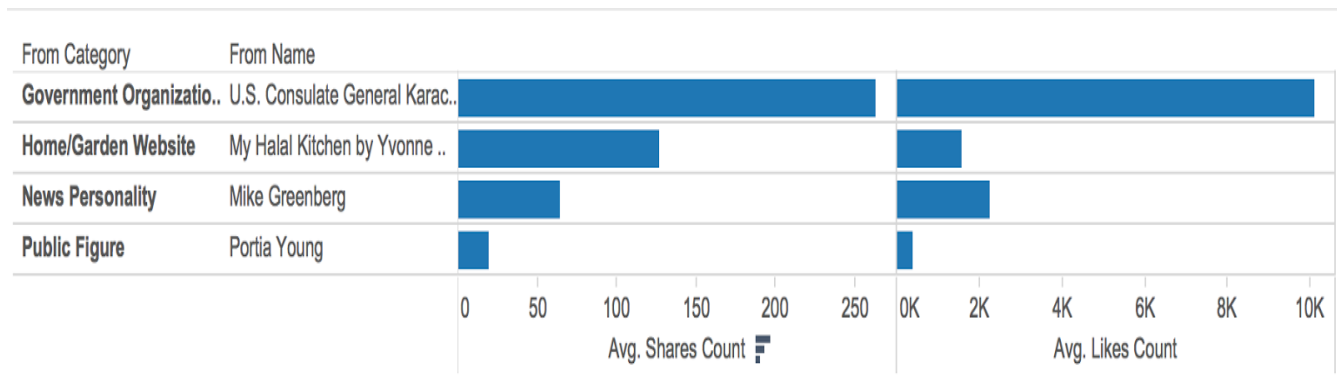
*Note: Our analysis found 17 negative comments. However, the content is biased because the topic was irrelevant and was mainly surrounding around sexual abuse. Therefore, we disregarded the comments centered around that topic while completing our analysis.



keyword	frequency
congratulations	277
communication	199
Medill	318
great	336
professor	212
love	297
Northwestern	130
students	158
class	177
course	136

Influencer Analysis:

To understand which fans have the most influence in spreading positive word of mouth, we completed an influencer analysis. Ranking the user generated content by the average number of shares and likes, we identified the top four influencers whose actions increased Medill's page post impressions. Some key individuals included government organizations and websites as well as successful alumnus such as Mike Greenberg, a popular host from ESPN.



Hashtags Analysis:

For Medill's content, 42 hashtags in total were used. As shown below, except for the "#medill", most hashtags were not used often. In fact, 64% of hashtags were only used once. There were no distinctly well-developed hashtags. For UGC, 38 hashtags were used, in which 35 of them only appeared once. Among all the hashtags, 5 were used in common by both Medill's content and UGC, which are "#medill", "#b1gcats", "#imcvisitday", "#medillhoa" and "nucollins".

Medill's Content	Frequency						
null	118	#medillsoccareerfair	2	#nytimes	1	#imcleadership	1
#medill	19	#medillmedal	2	#nuobama	1	#imc14	1
#imc	4	#medillgrads	2	#northwestern	1	#got	1
#meetmedillstudents	3	#medillhoa	2	#nfldraft	1	#frameyourstory	1
#medillchicago	3	#wtfthemovie	1	#more	1	#divvy	1
#grrmatmedill	3	#ufcchicago	1	#meetmedill	1	#atmedill	1
#imcvisitday	3	#tennisracket	1	#medilltalentq	1	#als	1
#socialmktg	2	#purplepride	1	#medillsports	1	#nucollins	1
#numooc	2	#pulitzer100	1	#medillimc	1	#b1gcats	1
#nuhomecoming	2	#pressfreedom	1	#medillcareers	1		
#msjdays	2	#ona14	1	#jbmaward	1		

Exhibit 5

UGC Content	Frequency						
null	122	#text	1	#nuloyal	1	#gcyc	1
#contentstrategy	7	#takenutoworkday	1	#northwesterndirection	1	#fairtrade	1
#b1gcats	3	#spotlight	1	#missionovereverything	1	#equality	1
#socialmedia	2	#smiling	1	#medimanagement	1	#democracy	1
#wildcatdays2016	1	#smarstalk	1	#medillthanksmccormick	1	#chicago	1
#whynewsmatters	1	#rrmfengage	1	#learnfromthebest	1	#nucollins	1
#whatamuslimlookslike	1	#qatar	1	#journalism	1	#medillhoa	1
#throwbackthursday	1	#pulitzer	1	#halal	1	#imcvisitday	1
#thfreclists	1	#parisattacks	1	#grammycamp	1	#medill	1
#textanalytics	1	#ovaloffice	1	#gowildcats	1		

Exhibit 6

Keywords Group Analysis:

After comparing the frequency of posts that contain IMC related versus journalism related content, we found that IMC related content was posted less than journalism related content. As shown in the table below, Medill's postings included 30 IMC related content and 62 journalism related content. For UGC, the respective numbers are 4 and 48, a much more extreme picture. Meanwhile, the engagement is also much less overall regarding IMC related content. We suspect the reason could be that the audience of the page are skewed towards people who are more interested in journalism related content, as the current content posted is more intriguing to them.

MSJ/BSJ			MSJ/BSJ		
IMC	0	1	IMC	0	1
0	95	62	0	117	48
1	30	9	1	4	

Exhibit 7

Table contains the frequency of posts that contain IMC related or journalism related content. IMC stands for Integrated Marketing Communication; MSJ stands for Master of Science in Journalism; BSJ stands Bachelor of Science in Journalism. The table on the left represents Medill's posting and the table on the right represents UGC. 1 or 0 means whether the certain keyword list for IMC or journalism is included in a post or not - 1 means yes and 0 means no.

Measure Names	MSJ/BSJ Related Posts	IMC Related Posts
Number of Records	110	34
Avg. Shares Count	13	8
Avg. Organic Impressions	5055	2070
Avg. Organic Reach	2741	1107
Avg. Likes Count	143	26
Avg. Comments	1	1

Exhibit 8

We also compared the engagement regarding Medill's posts that contain words such as alum, students and/or faculty related content. As shown in the table below, all posts that are related to the word faculty have higher engagement. Posts that are related to the word students have much lower engagement than posts that contain only faculty related content or only alum related content.

Alum	Students	Faculty	Avg. Com ments	Avg. Likes Count	Avg. Shares Count	Avg. Organic Reach	Avg. Orga nic Impre ssions	Number of Records
0	0	0	1	46	7	2,676	4,775	93
		1	3	46	20	2,396	4,050	10
	1	0	1	14	3	1,428	2,937	36
		1	1	27	5	2,199	5,594	15
1	0	0	0	23	5	2,069	4,710	28
		1	1	20	4	3,574	5,827	4
	1	0	0	10	1	455	893	6
		1	6	102	87	33,318	72,472	4

Exhibit 9

After reading some of the posts, we realized a lot of posts mentioned “congratulations” and related keywords, including 37 of Medill’s own posts (196 in total), thus we want to see whether these positive posts would have higher engagement. The results showed that the content, surprisingly, had similar engagement and lower reach and impressions compared to that non-congratulations related content.

Congrats	Avg. Comments Count	Avg. Likes Count	Avg. Shares Count	Avg. Negative feedback	Avg. Organic Reach	Avg. Organic Impressions	Number of Records
0	1	35	11	1	3,040	6,200	159
1	1	34	6	1	2,524	4,455	37

Exhibit 10

Post Type Analysis:

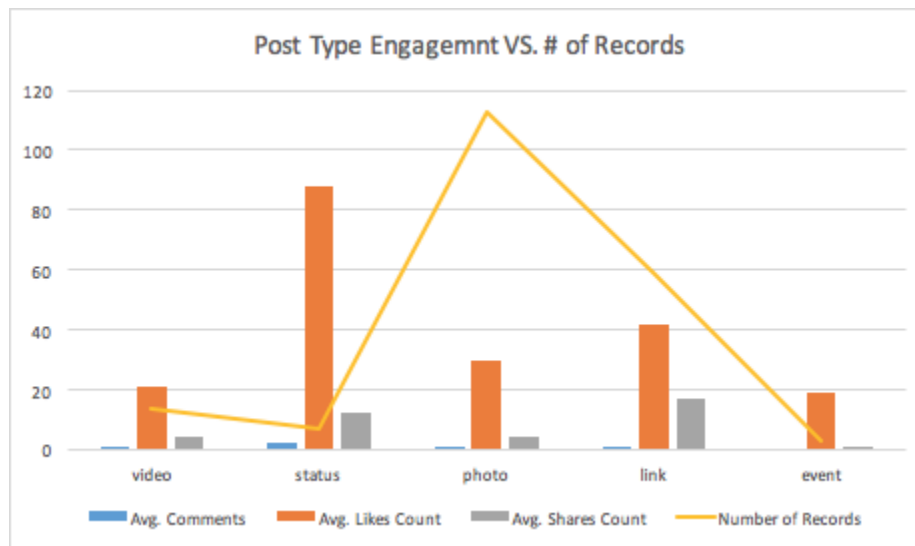


Exhibit 11

Even though Medill posts photos the most, links get more shares, likes and comments on average. The engagement of status (only text posts) is high, but with only 7 records we disregarded this post type because there aren’t enough records to generate reliable results. In order to analyze the effect of status postings in the future, Medill can post more of these post types.

Out of all posts about 45% of them do not have a link attached. Among the posts with links 37% of them were shortened into the format like “bit.ly/xxx”, so we couldn’t analyze how many of them were linked to Medill’s website as the Bitly links expired. However, 63% of links started with “www.”, thus we took a further look on what websites they linked to and found that 13 of them were linked to Medill’s website.

Quarterly Engagement Analysis:

On Facebook, people mainly engage with Medill in Q1(Oct-Dec) and Q2(Jan-Mar). However, Medill posts the most in Q3(Apr-Jun) and the number of average like and comments are the lowest. Overall, we found that people tend to engage more in October through March, which is aligned to the academic quarters. We speculate that new students are engaging more in the first quarter and prospective students are more active from January to March because of the application season.

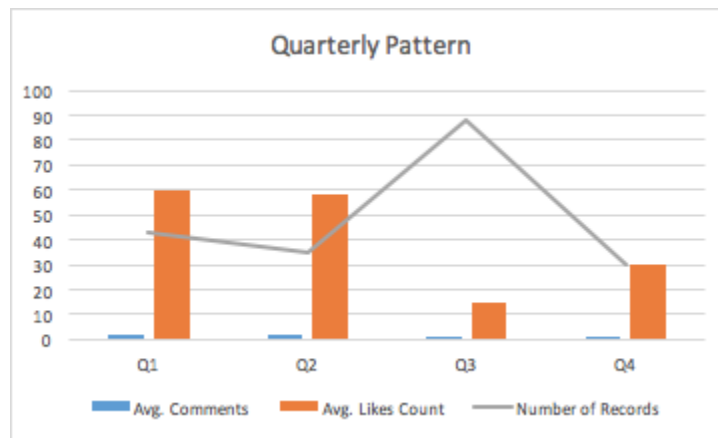


Exhibit 12

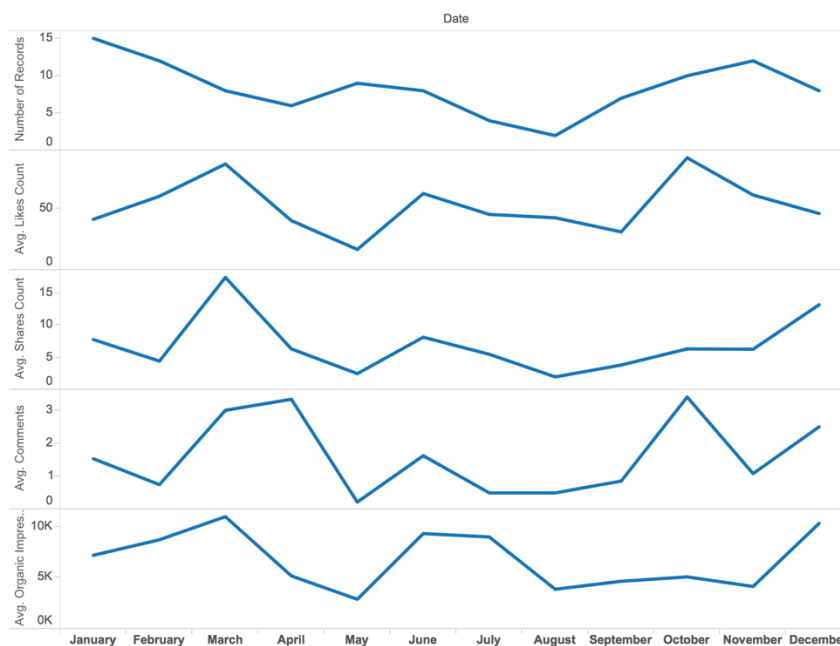


Exhibit 13

Recommendations

Increasing Reach & Engagement Recommendation:

There is an opportunity to extend reach and increase engagement amongst current and prospective students, alumni and the general public. We have summarized our recommendations by segment.

Current Students & Alumni: Since students are more engaged in Q1 and Q2, more resources and posts should be allocated for those two quarters. From the keywords analysis, we saw that content that only mentioned students and did not mention faculty or alum have a very low level of engagement. Thus, we suspect there are not many of them on our page already, just like the lack of the IMC audience. More content could be tailored to students, like information about campus life, recent activities, student clubs and so on. One idea could be posting faculty quotes. An image of a popular faculty member with a meaningful could be a great post, as current students will find it very relevant. This is also an opportunity to leverage offline marketing to direct students to like and engage with Medill's Facebook page.

General Public: In order to increase awareness of Medill's Facebook page, engagement and impressions amongst the general public, we recommend leveraging influencers. As seen from previous data social sharing is the key in growing impression and reach. When influential accounts, such as Mike Greenburg, post on Medill's Facebook page and share content, the number of impressions and reach spike. There are many resources in the Medill community and alum network that could be leverage on the Facebook page. For example, guest bloggers could be invited to post and share information.

Prospective Students: For students who are in the decision-making stage, we hope to encourage them to like Medill's Facebook page visit Medill's website via Facebook. There is an opportunity to post more about Northwestern University, Medill and each program's details, the program's culture and content surrounding famous alumni in order to deepen their understanding and build a better connection with them. On relevant posts, we suggest linking back to the Medill's website. Also, producing high quality and attractive videos would catch their eyes and increase engagement. We understand video production can be expensive, however, there is an opportunity for Medill to collaborate with some classes taught in the IMC/Journalism program as a client in class projects. The Medill marketing department could get input from students and professors. For example, there is a Content Marketing class in Medill taught by Candy Lee where multi-media marketing materials are developed by students. Medill's Facebook page could be a choice in their client's portfolio. Some other recommendations include:

Hashtag Recommendation:

As most of the hashtags were unique, we think it's better to develop several key hashtags that can put the posts into categories. It can cultivate readers' expectation and can also be used to encourage users to post with the hashtags, provoking more interaction between Medill's page and its fans. For example, Choose Chicago's Instagram page, one of the top official city pages in the US, has a signature hashtag "mychicagopix". Both the official page and users post with this hashtag and then some of the UGC gets featured on Choose Chicago's Instagram page. It developed a whole category of content, which makes the hashtag meaningful and relevant.

Post Type Recommendation:

In regards to content themes, we think IMC and marketing related content should be posted more often. There is an opportunity to attract a larger audience who are interested in IMC and marketing but are under-served in content on Medill's Facebook page.

Increasing Website Referrals via Facebook Recommendation:

Since one of the objectives is to make the Facebook page to be the first referral source to Medill's website, more posts should be linked to the website. We understand that not all posts require a link, but when relevant content can be housed on Medill's website and promoted on Facebook, there is an opportunity to increase the number of visitors to your site by providing a link in a post that redirects them to Medill's website.