Client Proposal

Blue Nova Designs LLC

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Table of Contents

Upfront Analysis

Blue Nova Designs LLC based in Franklin, TN has expressed an interest in analyzing their current web presence for the following reasons:

- Structure of the site - The client would like the main website to be more informative to provide valuable and interesting content instead of just a shopping cart.   The nature of their business allows for more custom projects than "canned" products so the current site structure does not seem fitting to their needs.
- Sharing - The client would like to share more photos of project and clients that they work with.   Since Blue Nova Designs is an event-based business, unless someone is at the event, they cannot experience our work. So capturing the photos and stories is key.
- Networking - Would like to connect more with clients on social media as well as connecting with potential clients who are associates of current clients. Since Blue Nova is in business-to-business sales, the broad reach is not as much of a concern as the quality of their network.

Creation, launch, basic format of Bluenovadesigns.com
The Blue Nova Designs main website was created by the owners in 2010 using a template on 3DCartStores.com. The website was designed as a shopping-cart-based website. Its features includes a large image as the header, a menu for the pages and a
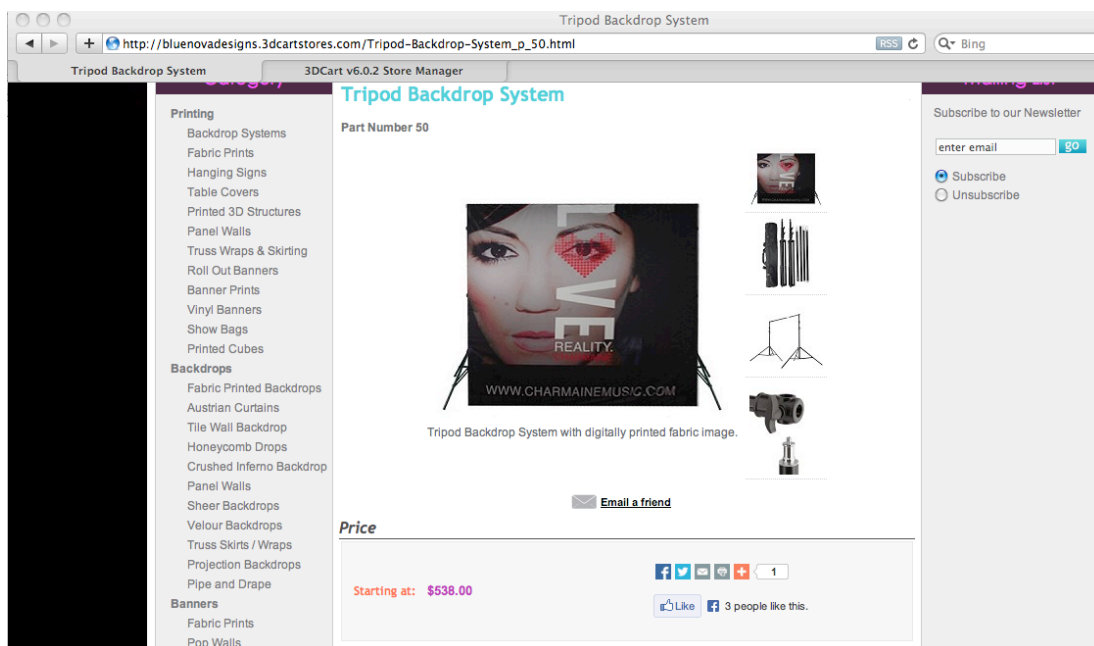
search bar below the header. On the right side bar, there are product categories. There is a mailing list sign up widget on the left side bar. The site is also available as a

mobile site for smart phones and tablets. It has had minimal updates since its launch in 2010.
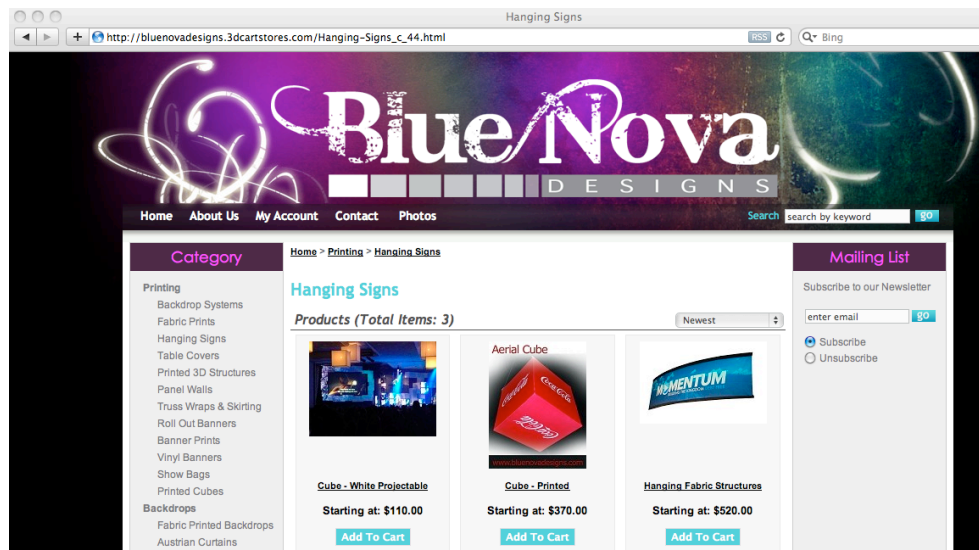
Website Form and Function

As a shopping-cart-based site, customers to sign in with individual accounts where they can place an order online.   There are individual products available to buy with options for each item to include size, color and some custom printing on select items. There are several good photos for every product.   With each product option there are color images and add-on product images. For example, if the drapes are available in 10 colors, all 10 color swatches have been loaded so that the customer would see the actual color. Another example is a product bag add-on, when you select the bag, a photo of the bag pops up, so the customer can see what they are buying. There are many options for each product. Each product page also allows users to interact with the website via social media by providing a widget for Facebook, Twitter, email, and more social media that pops up when the "+" widget is hovered over, including Pinterest and Google+ (see image on next page).

On the back end, the site provides the client with mailing list information collection and customer relationship management. Another notable backend feature is that there are keywords and meta tags integrated into each main page and each product page to help with search engine optimization. Current Social Media Channels As far as online social media, Blue Nova Designs has a Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts that are active. Below are a breakdown of their social media presence.

Facebook

Blue Nova Designs currently has a Facebook profile *and* page. Blue Nova Designs Facebook page is updated roughly 3 times per week.

Here is a snapshot of their Facebook activity:
- Profile - Friends - 422; photos - 168 photos
- Page - 262 Likes;
- Updates - The logo and cover page has been recently updated.

Twitter

      The Blue Nova Designs Twitter account is updated most often. The logos, background and header has been recently changed. A snapshot of their twitter status is below:
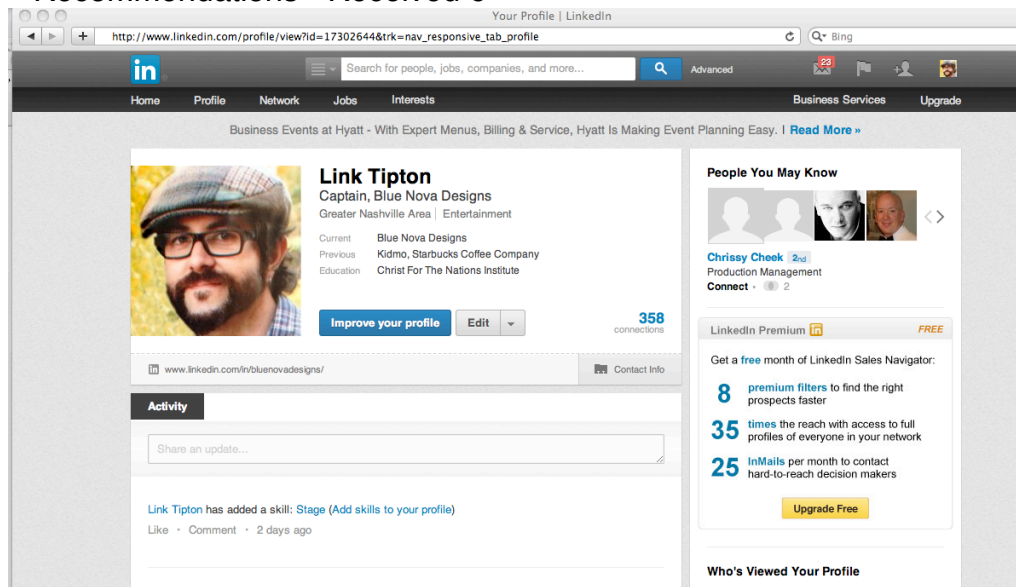• 285 Followers
• 718 Tweets
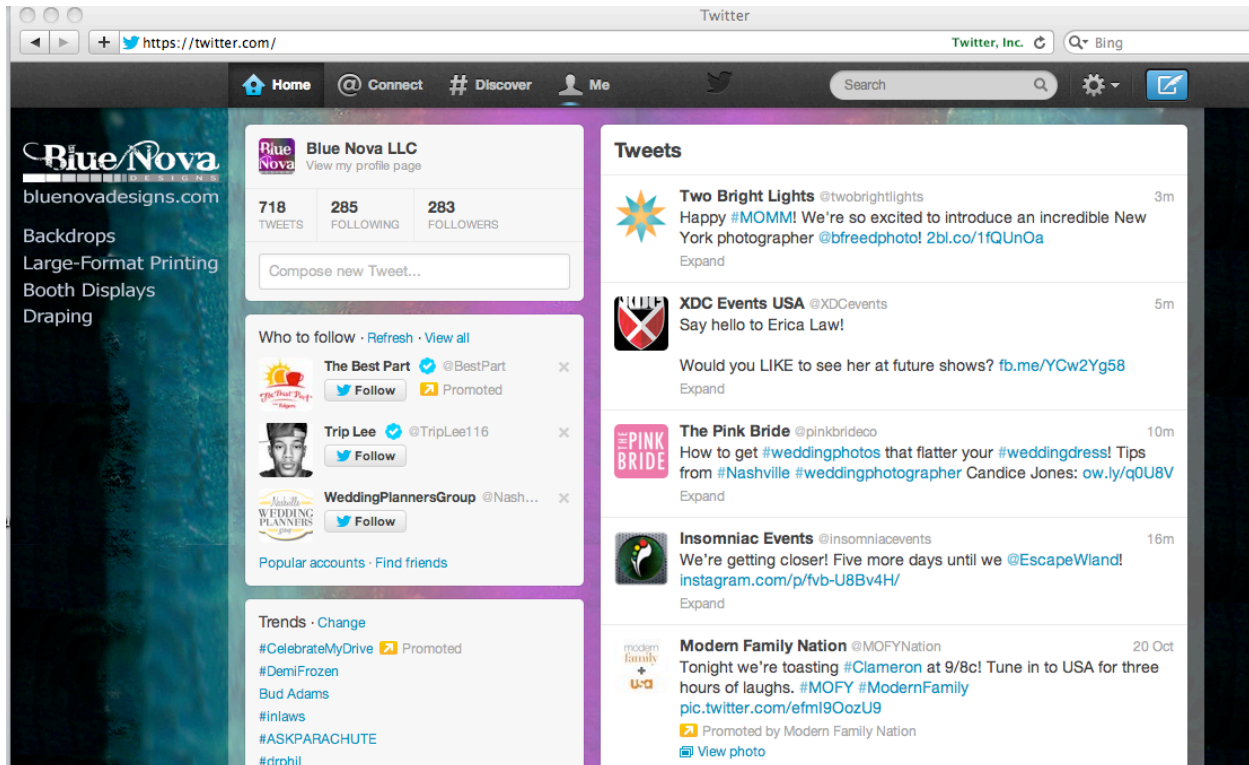
LinkedIn

The operating owner, Link Tipton, keeps his LinkedIn profile to connect with other professionals and clients. The main profile image has been recently updated. Here is a snapshot of LinkedIn activity:

• Connections - 358;
• Groups - 6
• Endorsements - 108 Received
• Recommendations - Received 6

Overall, the social media presence of Blue Nova Designs is up and running, but may not be as effective as they would like into presenting their business services and products as well as they would like. We will explore improvements and offer recommendations for:

• the content of their social media offerings
• the structure of their website
• the interaction of their website with their social media outlets
• improving the quality and reach of their network

Best Practices

Company Analysis
Example One: Atomic Design

Atomic Design: About
Founded in 1994, Atomic Design is a scenic, soft goods and lighting sales and rental company. With over 500 employees in their headquarters, they have 5 locations around the world in the United States, Canada, Australia and Singapore. They have done many high end tours, film and television set designs including: Michael Jackson, The WHo, MTV Unplugged and many, many more. Atomic Design has over 500 employees in its main location in Lititz, PA.

Atomic Design: Website Analysis
Though Atomic Design is one of the top scenic/soft goods company in the world, their website is pretty basic. Their four main departments are listed in a menu in the header. There are multiple categories on the right side bar with many more sub categories. The main idea of their site is to showcase their work. There is little information on pricing and there is no indication of direct sales that occur on their website.
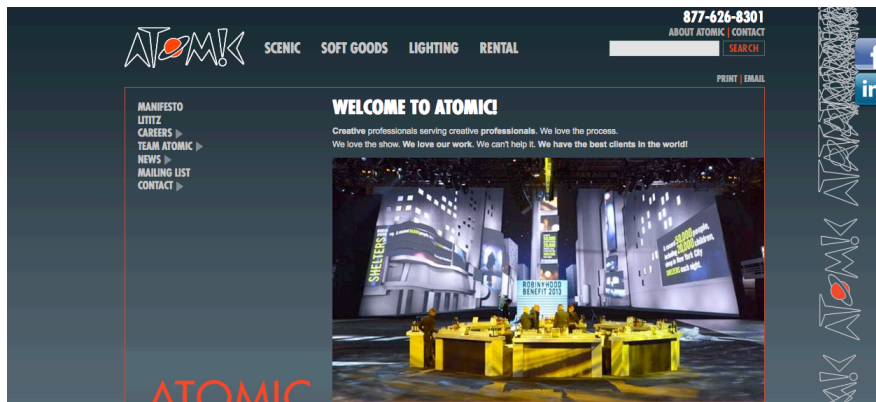

Atomic Design: Social Media Channels Analysis
Their social media presence is limited but effective. On their main page, they have a slide-out widget on the upper-right-hand corner of their site for Facebook and LinkedIn. Facebook and LinkedIn are their only two social media channels linked onto their website. Even though they have only two social media channels, they seem to utilize them well. For each of the categories and subcategories, there are photos and a description.

Atomic Design: Facebook
On their Facebook page, they post 5-6 times per month on a consistent basis. The page has 925 likes, 21 people talking about them and 127 people who checked in. One could deduct that they use google analytics since all their links in their posts are shortened with "http://goo.gl/".
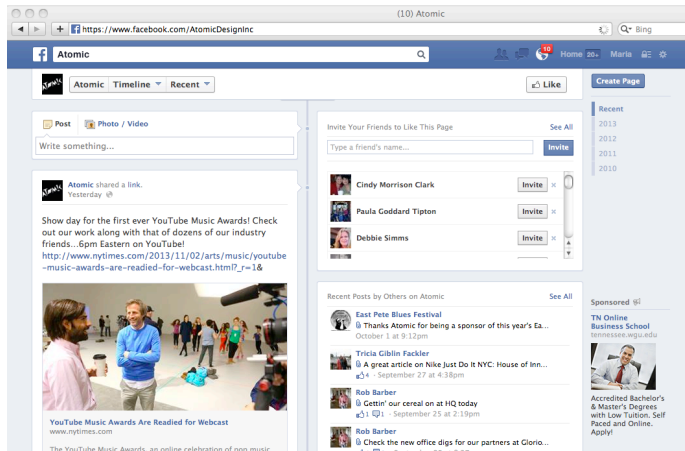
Atomic Design: LinkedIn
Atomic Design LinkedIn site posts their write ups in industry magazines: PSLN Magazine and Event Solutions Magazine. They post a link to the articles and in a couple of instances they urge their followers to vote for them in a contest. Also they mention that one of their employees is going to be on the Board of Advisors for the Parnelli awards, which is an industry awards show. This post highlights their expertise of their employees in the industry. They highlight their nominations for industry awards and encourage followers to vote for them.

They only have 215 followers on their LinkedIn. They have very few likes and fewer comments.
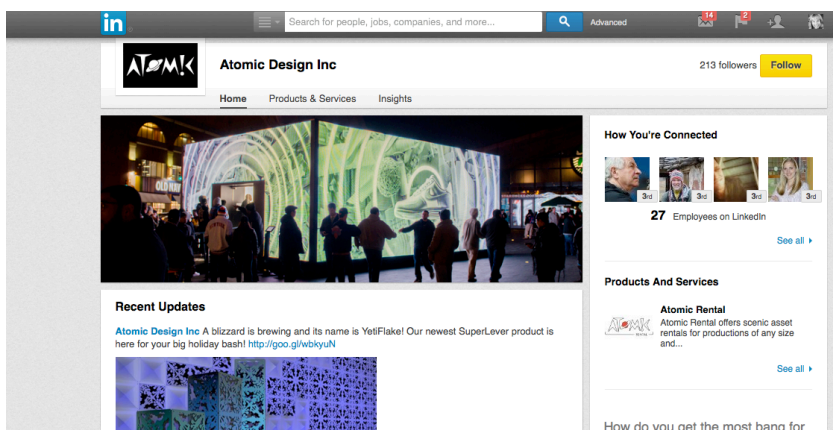
The Products & Services sections of their LinkedIn has the departments of their company that links back to the specific section of their website for that department.

Company Analysis
Example Two: PiNK by Moss

PiNK by Moss: About
PiNK Inc was purchased by Moss tension fabric manufacturing company in 2010. PiNK Inc provides creative fabric solutions for corporate meetings, events, expos, conference and much more. Their products include portable stage decor and meeting space decor, and booth design.

PiNK by Moss: Website Analysis
PiNK by Moss' website has a simple, stylish design. Their logo is above the side bar, which contains a menu to shop by customer need (i.e. "meeting + special events"), rather than by product. The non-traditional category layout speaks to the creative nature of their business, but may be hard for the customer to follow and get real take-aways from the site.
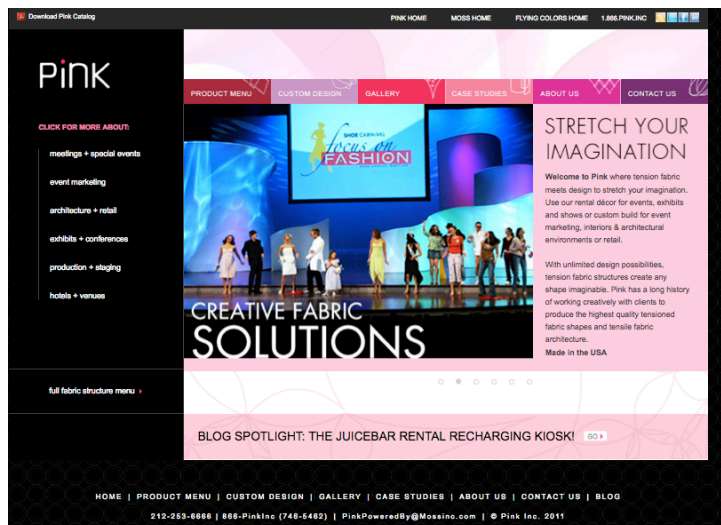

PiNK by Moss: Social Media Analysis
PiNK by Moss has a long social media history with nearly three thousand tweets. Their social media communications suddenly stopped in the summer of 2012. This leaves one to wonder what happened to their company. Were there problems with their merger? Is the company still viable? Can you trust them with your stage design? Many questions come to mind when you see changes in their regular habits on social media. This negative aspect of their long social media history is probably something they didn't expect or anticipate.

PiNK by Moss: Blog
PiNK Inc has their blog listed as their first social media channel.   The link that they have from their website takes you to their blog, but the blog acts like an outside page, looking and feeling completely different from their main website.   It does have some

interesting content and pictures. However, the updates completely stopped the summer of 2012.   Even before the abrupt cessation, the updates were sporadic, sometimes posting for many days or weeks consecutively and then skipping several weeks in a row.
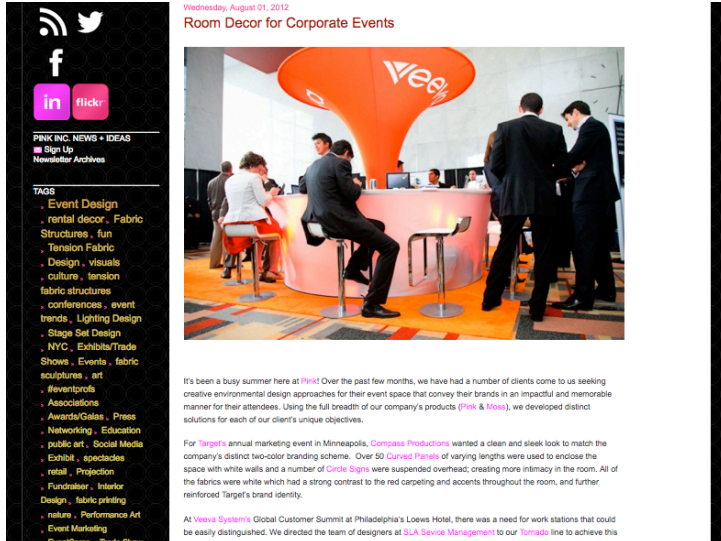
PiNK by Moss: Twitter

The link for Twitter on their website just goes to the main twitter home page. Searching for their Twitter, I found a site "@pinkpoweredbymoss", but it took some searching since that is a very long name and maybe not so intuitive.

They have sent 2,362 tweets and have 2,603 followers and they follow 2,951 users. Looking at the latest tweets from their Twitter page, there were some "test" tweets before they completely quit posting about a year ago. This gives a very "MIA" feeling to their company.

PiNK by Moss: Facebook

The PiNK Facebook link takes you to their page. One also sees an abrupt cessation in posting in the summer of 2012. It has the same content as their blog page, and also was stopped in 2012. They have 239 page likes.

PiNK by Moss: LinkedIn

This link from their website goes to LinkedIn, but their profile cannot be found.

Company Analysis
Example Three: Camelback Displays

Camelback Displays: About

A competitor in the trade show display and exhibit market, Camelback Displays was founded in 1999. They sell trade show exhibits, custom prints, exhibit flooring, signage, booth furniture and much more.

Camelback Displays: Website Analysis

The website is well designed. It is a product-driven shopping cart based site. So there are many products. The header has a sliding gallery of their main product offerings. There is a lot of busyness to this site. There are so many products offered that it can be overwhelming. You can select a product by picture, which is a nice feature. However, each product page has so much information and is so detailed that it may become confusing for the consumer.

Camelback Displays: Social Media Analysis
Right off, its notable that their widget outside the left sidebar of their site is not working. To access their social media, one would scroll to the footer of their main site to find the operating links. So it seems that it is somewhat buried under the rest of their staggering content.

They have eight social media outlets linked at the bottom of their page, which might be a bit excessive unless each of them are done very well.

Camelback Displays: Facebook

Their most successful social media outlet, Camelback Displays has 785 page likes for their Facebook and 64 people are talking about them. The content of their Facebook is mostly new product features and promotions. They do occasionally share a post with articles with an industry related topic. They have several likes on each post and the occasional comment. It seems after further investigation, its the same person commenting each time, so one might assume that an employee has been assigned to comment as part of their job duties.
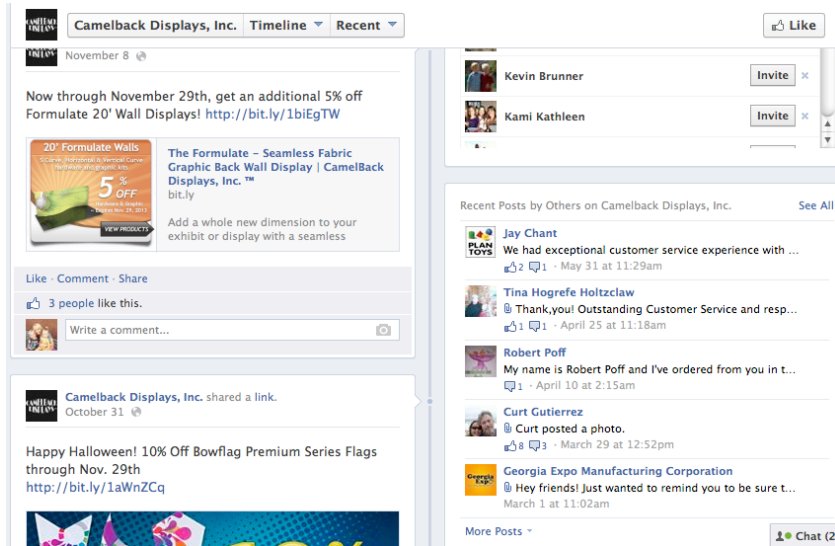
Camelback Displays: Twitter

Camelback Displays Twitter feed looks mostly like their Facebook feed with discounts, product features and some article sharing. They only have 203 tweets and 46 followers. It does not have any special pictures for the background.

Camelback Displays: YouTube

Camelback Displays YouTube account is an extensive video cache of installation instructions. They have 7 subscribers and several views per video. They started the YouTube page 4 years ago, but in the last six months they have uploaded several videos consistently each month.
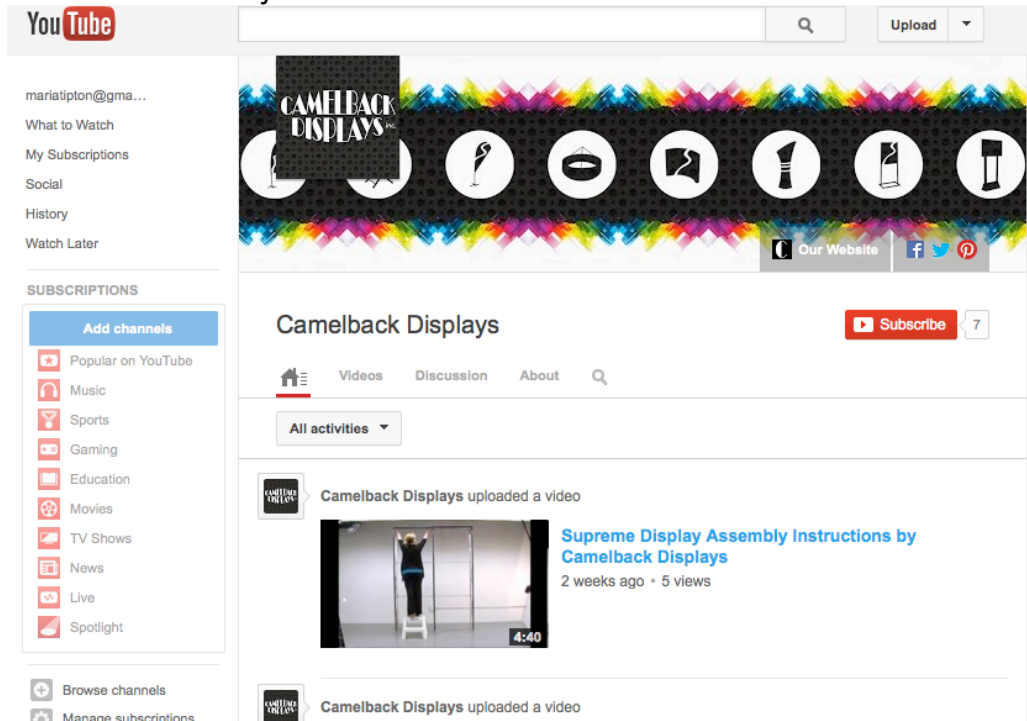
Camelback Displays: Blog

Their blog updated weekly, but archived by month. Is is well organized and seems to have a lot of original content. Each blog post has many key words and gives the reader the ability to easily share it on several social media sites.

Best Practices Analysis

Best Practices: Atomic Designs
The best practices that we can glean from Atomic Designs:

1. There are a lot of good photos and name droping on their website. When you go there, you are sure that they do good work, have longevity and have great clients. They pull off the job. They love their work. That message is communicated well.
2. Updating Facebook with consistent and interesting updates that are consumer focused with photos and links. They have the most Facebook page likes of any of the companies analyzed for this report.
3. Though they don't have as many followers on LinkedIn, they have consistent and interesting updates with many links to industry awards, recommendations, write ups with photos and a call to action. Their accomplishments and good connections are displayed well.

PiNK by Moss: Best Practices
These may not be "Best Practices," but the best take aways from PiNK by Moss are:
1. Make sure all social media links are working and that all the links are to actual functioning social media channels. They have the absolute best Twitter following, but that page is not linked to their website and is hidden by their very long page title.
2. Do not abandon your social media. With nearly three thousand tweets, one can tell that they have been doing social media for a while, so there is some history that speaks, but when a company who has been active in social media completely quits posting, it really makes the company look like its not functioning, maybe having some internal problems.

Camelback Displays: Best Practices
Camelback Displays competently keeps up to date with many social media platforms by:
1. By posting interesting, useful and consistent content, they have acquired 700+ page likes on Facebook, which seems to be quite a lot for this industry.
2. Using media (YouTube) to allow customers to access valuable information. Though this has not caught on with the customer base since it's revival in the past few months, it is a wealth of resources for customers to use for years to come.

Overall, researching these three best-in-class companies has helped me understand the industry standards for social media and see the results of their efforts and acquire a baseline for planning the social media efforts for Blue Nova Designs.

Recommendations

Based on the Upfront Analysis of Blue Nova Designs, the desires of the owners, and the Best Practices research of companies in their industry, here are the recommended strategies for each area of their social media presence.

Shopping Cart

The current website is a shopping cart with a few add-on features. With many of Blue Nova products, this format is fitting. Many of the products sold have a specific color, size and price. Even with custom printing products, the pricing is standard depending on the item being printed. So, for these products a shopping cart should be continued. However since its been several years since the launch of the cart, we would recommend an update to existing products and ensure that the images for products are current.

Image Management

As we can see from the industry leaders in your field that were researched, the more artistic and custom side of Blue Nova Designs cannot sell simply on a shopping cart. There are many things Blue Nova sells that are not as cut-and-dry as to have a specific size and price. For these custom products, Blue Nova must inspire the client to see elements of the set design that could be used for their event. To help clients visualize the possibilities for their event, we need to capitalize on the extensive photo gallery owned by Blue Nova from the thousands of events that they have done over the years.

Instructional Videos

Another thing we can gleam from the best practices of industry leaders is to incorporate instructional videos available on the web as we see from Camelback Displays. It may take some time to shoot and edit video for this recommendation, but it would be a valuable resource for years to come. I would recommend that when a product ships that it have a QR code on the box that links directly to the installation video for that product.   This video that the QR code is linked to should be made in a mobile format so that they can access it on their smartphone. This will enhance the client experience by literally putting help at their fingertips. It is recommended this video be posted to YouTube as a private video to keep trade secrets private. These videos may also be embedded to the main website.

Wordpress.org

To make the shopping cart, the gallery, and the instructional videos work together well, I recommend incorporating them into a WordPress site. Wordpress.org offers a lot of flexibility to use plugins to customize the site, while retaining control of the site on your own hosting.

To build this custom site, we recommend using WordPress.org. WordPress.org will allow control of the site with lots of support through themes and plugins. There are

robust shopping cart plugins that will support the "canned" product offerings, but there are many plugins that can help sell the custom products as well.

an image slider, and an extensive and organized way to display the gallery, valuable content and also provide an easy shopping cart experience for canned products.

Blog Recommendation

Since the event industry is up one day and down the next, unless these events are captured with words and pictures, all the hard work put into the event literally disappears.   With the work that Blue Nova does, it may be beneficial to do a blog to highlight featured products or just provide inspiration by discussing events on which they have worked. The blog posts of these events could provide living portfolio for Blue Nova to which they could refer clients and stay connected with companies and individuals in the industry.

With the photos that are already being taken at the events, the blog posts could be as simple as a few paragraphs describing the event and products used could be described briefly and the decor elements discussed.   A major part of maximizing the impact of your blog would be reaching out to other reputable companies who are working on these events. On each blog post there could be a link to each of the other vendors, the venue and the event planners.

Taking the time to posting your blog on the main website and pumping them out to the social media outlets helps. Having this information show up in all of these locations will boost Blue Nova's networking opportunities online and give them more clout to current and potential clients, plus give them a greater standing in the industry.

Social Media Update Frequency

Since the event industry is by-the-minute, it is all about trends and buzz. Social media channels are a perfect place for capitalizing on trends and buzz. Posting current information and photos is very important to the social media presence created for Blue Nova.

However, for all the current trends and buzz of the industry, social media is about relationships. As we have seen with our research, social media updates need to be consistent and relational. We recommend releasing short interactive posts on a regular basis 1-3 times per week, punctuated by longer blog posts 1-3 times per month.

Be sure to follow up with the interactions you get on social media. If someone comments, return and respond to their comment by "like"-ing their comment or replying to them. This will show that you value their input and their relationship to Blue Nova.

Broadening the Network

We can see from the Best Practices report that Blue Nova doesn't have the following that top industry leaders have. One way of increasing web traffic and social media relationships is through advertising. After you have a few updates under your belt, we would recommend experimenting with Google and Facebook ads. Google ads can help you get into a featured spot when someone searches under the key terms entered for your business.   Advertising on Facebook can increase your page likes.

Another way to increase the quality of the network is to go to industry leaders pages and see who their clients are. Search for their clients on social media, specifically LinkedIn and Facebook, and friend them. That way, your posts will begin showing up in their news feeds. Being in their news feeds will give you an opportunity to showcase your work to potential clients. Even if they never convert to clients, they may "like" a post and then spread to their network.

Facebook

Currently, Blue Nova Designs has a Facebook *profile* and a Facebook *page*. This can be confusing to users and divide the impact you are having on Facebook. I would recommend that the Blue Nova Designs Facebook profile be migrated to the Facebook page.   The Blue Nova profile is more popular than the page, so we need to be careful and provide enough time and opportunity for your friends to make the change. To do this, we should post to Blue Nova friends inviting them to like the Blue Nova page. Do this at several different times a day so as to hit your whole audience.

Hootsuite

One of the very best ways to make updating your social media sites and even your Wordpress blog, would be with Hootsuite.   Hootsuite help you easily manage all of the updates in one place. We connect each of your social media accounts to Hootsuite and you can just post the update once, then Hootsuite communicates with each social media channel and posts in each place.   Your Hootsuite account has already been set up with all of your social media outlets as well as a mobile app, so you can easily update while on the go or even on-site at an event.

Geo-tracking

Blue Nova would like to display visually the venues they have worked in locally, and around the country. There are several ways to accomplish this. Since the geo-tracking on Twitter is not specific, but just by city, one way to geo-track on Twitter, is to always mention the venue and client with a hash tag to make it searchable. For example tweet, "Just finishing up an event for #LexusofNashville at the #OmniNashvilleHotel." On Facebook, the poster of the update can turn on location services and Facebook will post the location along with the message and photos.

After some research into geo-tracking options, I would recommend also putting a pin map widget on the website. One Wordpress plugin that is well reviewed is Leaflet Maps

Marker, http://mapsmarker.com. It will display on your Wordpress page with a google map. Then you can add pins or markers to your map with integrated address search. There is a popup description text and photo for each marker. This would be the perfect place to display photos of the event at that location.

Timeline for changes

1-3 months
Word Press
Start your Wordpress.org site right away. Add to this as with new plugins and features.

Wordpress Gallery
Link this to your current 3D Cart site from the menu bar. This will give you a way to start displaying the photo gallery that you already own.

Facebook Conversion
Start the conversion of your Facebook profile to a Facebook page. The sooner the better. Once you are running full force, you can begin to maximize your page.

Hootsuite
Begin using Hootsuite for right away for your current postings.

Blog
Begin planning your blog. Discuss who will be the primary author, the desire frequency of updates, topics, etc.

Leaflet Maps Marker Plugin
Start imputing markers for the events from here forward. Just start from here, if you try to go back and input all the events and venues you have worked in, it could get overwhelming.

3-6 Months
Begin Blog Posting
Be sure to follow your plan and be consistent. Use the feedback you get from your social network. See how many people are liking your page, liking your post and commenting on your posts to gauge effectiveness.

Shopping Cart Conversion
Begin searching for the shopping cart that is most fitting for your needs. Pay special attention to select a cart that works with your merchant account. Keep it in a draft stage until you are finished putting your products on the site.

6 Months +
Instructional Videos
Instructional videos may not be top on your list. After you build a good social media following and presence, this would make a great addition to your work.

Advertising and Networking
Once you get the best part of your social media presence up and working, you can shift your focus to accumulating a great and quality following. Concentrate on industry professionals and potential clients.

Conclusion
By following these recommendations, Blue Nova will develop the social media presence that is desired. This plan will help to increase clout and standing in the industry, to reach potential new clients, and serve current clients well.

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