

*“Use of social media was critical in proving out the business model...”*

INDUSTRY INTERNET SOCIAL MEDIA



## Now You've Built It; Get Them To Come

### Communications Challenge:

Many great startups begin with a bunch of people around a kitchen table with a vision and a passion. WeArePhotographers.com was no different; its founders wanted to create an online social media destination where photographers could come and learn how to make photographs instead of simply taking a picture. After building the initial site, the company needed to make people aware of its value and existence.

### The assignment

- Build a viral social media plan to attract visitors and members to a new website
- Carve out a unique position in the online photography marketplace
- Generate enough buzz within the industry to attract sponsors for the company's photography competitions
- Create a desirable site for members and guest bloggers and writers to contribute content

*“Use of social media was critical in proving out the business model of WeArePhotographers.com. The site would never have been possible without it.”*

Stephen Terlizzi,  
Founder and CEO,  
WeArePhotographers.com



## Deliverables:

### Using Social Media to Drive Membership

Not having a huge budget, WeArePhotographers relied heavily on social media and value-added content to drive membership to the site. An integrated, reinforcing program of Facebook, Twitter and blogging/articles was used to provide interesting content on a daily basis to the online community. The company used quarterly photography competitions with prestigious Pulitzer-prize winning judges and corporate-sponsored prizes to accelerate membership growth. How-to video content and quarterly email newsletters rounded out the marketing plans.

The activities included:

#### Two Refreshes of the Website

- Quick prototyping website for initial customer discovery phase
- Redesigned site for scalability and reliability
- Use of Drupal CMS and theming to minimize customization costs

#### Daily Twitter Program

- Regular daily tweets of WeArePhotographers and other content
- Listing of Twitter account with multiple services
- Tracking of retweets and direct messages for timely responses
- Secured front page coverage in region's largest daily newspaper and local TV coverage

#### Facebook Like Page

- Built Facebook-like page for daily interaction with followers
- Custom FBML applications for various content departments
- Fully integrated Facebook Box on website to provide interoperability

#### Slideshare Slidecasts and YouTube Videos

- Series of videos and slidecasts on Learn Photography topics
- Delivered as embedded video on WeArePhotographers and other websites
- Typically most popular content on the site

#### Corporate-Sponsored Photography Contests

- Created a series of corporate-sponsored photography contests
- Typically drives 1.5x to 2.0x more traffic than normal
- Integrated social marketing and email marketing program

## Results

### Initial User Base Created with Small Marketing Budget

- Met or exceeded membership objectives and goals with minimal budget
- Validated the need for the service and willingness of photographers to contribute to site
- Proved assumptions of revenue model with initial customer discovery site

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