

Spotlight on Facebook Pages & Encompass

Ithaca College



With over 100 million users worldwide and 31 million users in the U.S., Facebook is currently one of the hottest ways to connect with young alumni. When used as part of your overall marketing strategy, integrating Facebook and Encompass can serve as a great way to drive incremental traffic to your site while increasing member participation among younger alumni.

Just look at Ithaca College ...

Ithaca College, a co-educational liberal arts college located in Ithaca, New York, recently integrated its existing iModules-hosted alumni web site with its Facebook presence to boost alumni communication and participation. Ithaca had been considering creating a Facebook Group for some time but determined a Facebook Page was probably a better fit for its objectives.

Building a Page on Facebook

One goal of Ithaca's Facebook Page effort was to drive incremental traffic back to its alumni site. For example, by using the Simply RSS application, Ithaca is able to pull all of the current events already posted on its iModules-hosted site directly into its Facebook Page and link back to the community for full details and registration. Using the FBML application, Ithaca includes customized areas such as "Stay in Touch" (requesting updated information from alumni), "Give to IC" (outlining their current donation campaign), and "Email Forwarding", which all link back to the appropriate areas of its web site. Use of the Posted Items application allows Ithaca to easily post a community-linked message: "Join the online community!"

Initially Julie Doherty in alumni relations chose a limited viral marketing strategy to promote the Ithaca Page on Facebook. Alumni office staff became "fans" of the Page and encouraged their personal network of friends to join. In two weeks the Ithaca Page on Facebook had around one hundred "fans." While Julie was happy with the results, she decided she would promote the Page using e-mail marketing from Encompass.

"We're on Facebook!"

Using a targeted e-mail from Encompass, Ithaca sent an e-mail announcing, "We're on Facebook!" and linked alumni directly to the Facebook Page. The results were outstanding. Starting with a base of one hundred fans, the Page had **more than 1,600 new "fans"** join and over 6,000 page views – all **within the first 24 hours**. Today Ithaca is still averaging nearly 500 page views per day on Facebook.

Going forward, Ithaca plans to take advantage of more Facebook offerings to enhance its alumni community success. Ithaca intends to send an annual e-mail to recently graduated seniors informing them of the Facebook Page. Ithaca also will be utilizing the "Updates" feature, which allows them to inform all of its Facebook fans of new events and easily connects them to the online community for details and registration.

"The main reason I decided to create a Facebook Page was because of all the talk about social networking at this year's iModules User Conference. I was really intrigued with the ideas shared in the social networking idea exchange session."

*Julie Doherty
Ithaca Alumni Relations*

- Facebook Pages allow institutions to create an interactive, viral, and free official presence on the popular social utility site. Integrating Encompass and a Facebook Page allows institutions to target their messaging while including content that already exists on their Web site without duplicating efforts.
- Integration of Page activity leverages viral features of Facebook and greatly increases the velocity and impact of messages to young alumni.
- Just like Facebook users can become "friends" with other users, they can "join" a Facebook Page created by an institution. When people join a page, they are known on Facebook as "fans."