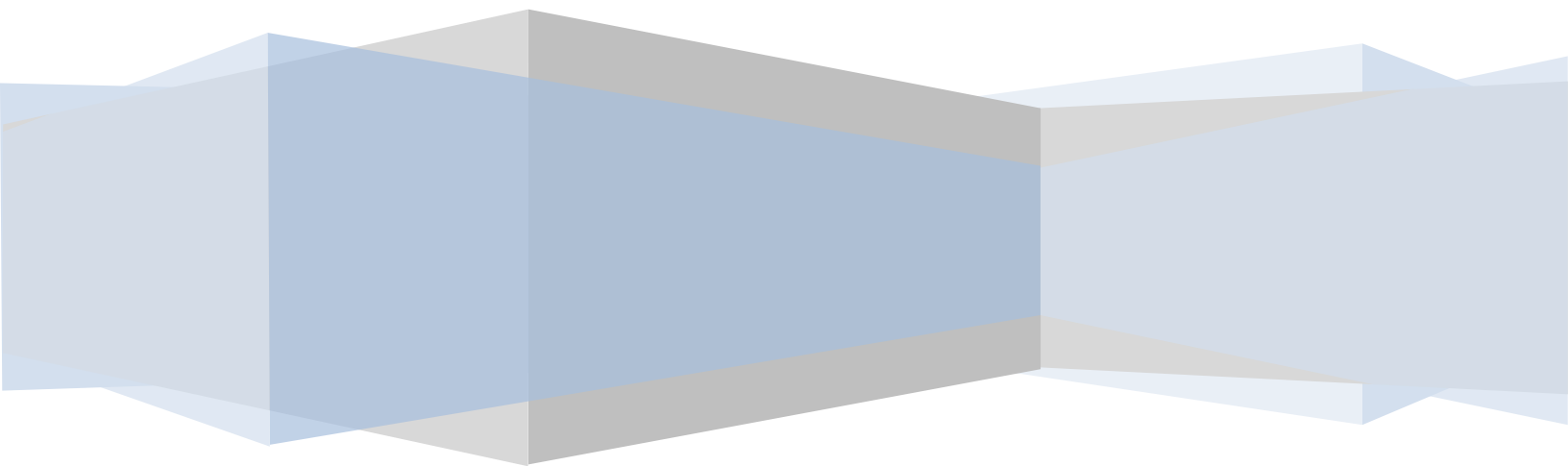




Fitness Together Middleton

Case Study: Business Facebook Page

John Maver, Thought Labs, LLC.



Overview and Objectives

Fitness Together Middleton (FT Middleton) launched a dynamic Facebook page created by Thought Labs to help increase their membership and their member's usage of facilities and offerings. FT Middleton, located in Middleton, MA, is a franchise of Fitness Together. Their business is to provide one-on-one training and fitness coaching to their members, which tends to be middle-aged women. All existing advertising has been done by direct mail, and they do not currently have an external website.

FT Middleton had two objectives for their Facebook efforts:

1. Attract new members to their gym that weren't being reached by direct mail
2. Enhance retention of existing members by providing a community of support beyond their time at the gym

The result was a Facebook Page with several interactive applications designed to give their members useful tools, a forum for community discussions, and the visual appeal to attract new members. The launch was successful, leading into a round of advertising using Facebook's Social Ads.

Actions

Thought Labs created and released the [Facebook Page for FT Middleton](#) on February 28th, 2008. It contained both graphical design elements and interactive elements.

Visual design

The page's visual design included colorful graphical elements such as a large main picture, a quote about their philosophy, and a Flash video showing their formula for success.



Custom Applications

Two custom interactive applications were built - a health quiz and an interactive food journal.



The quiz was designed to let non-members learn something and become attracted to the Page as a source of useful information. The food journal allowed members to enter their daily food content and exercise results and produced weekly reports for the trainers to go over with the clients.

Facebook Built-in Applications

The page had the community forum application, set up with an *Ask the Trainer* topic and a *Healthy Eating Options in Middleton* topic. The goal for this forum was to help clients interact with the trainers, get tips, and to show new potential clients that FT Middleton was more than just a gym.

The reviews section provided satisfied users with an opportunity to express their appreciation of the service. One member posted a 5-star review within the first few weeks. This provides another opportunity to entice new clients.

The testimonials application showcased a single user's great experience at FT Middleton. These testimonials would be rotated over time.

Challenges

Seeding the Page with Fans

To get the Page started, it was decided to get a large Fan base right away. This served three purposes – to start to build an active user community, to generate the viral news stories from each user becoming a Fan, and to make the page look active for any new viewers. Friends and family were initially recruited. In-gym signs were put up giving away a free session to existing members who became fans. These actions resulted in 16 Fans for the page.

Current members weren't on Facebook

Only a few of the existing members were currently Facebook members. The rest had heard of Facebook, but didn't understand its new older demographic growth or how it could help them. Education about Facebook in general and the new Pages features was provided in the form of a newsletter, describing how to create a new Facebook account and use each application.

Getting new, Facebook-savvy users and Fans

Since the existing FT Middleton membership was not yet active on Facebook, new well-connected Facebook users were needed. Facebook Social Ads were determined to be the best vehicle to achieve this; however, there were unexpected limitations on which towns could be targeted. For example, the towns of Boxford and Topsfield, Massachusetts, while having hundreds of Facebook users, did not even show up in the Social Ads location targeting list. Thought Labs is currently trying to work with Facebook to fix this situation. In the meantime, a new Social Ads campaign is being worked on to target all towns in the surrounding area.

Page Management time

Right after the release of the Page, there was an unexpected loss of a trainer by FT Middleton. This unfortunately prevented FT Middleton from being able to actively participate on the site with new discussion topics and tips and tricks. With the hiring of a new trainer, these activities should start to take place in the near future.

Results and Future Actions

Facebook Social Ads will be used to increase the Fan base

Seeding is critical and there were not enough active seeds in the first set of fans. The existing membership was not active online or on Facebook. The first set of fans was made up of friends and family, many of whom already attended the gym. The number of active seeds could be increased by using in-Facebook advertising. Responders to these ads would be most likely to use and appreciate the interactive page. Once a critical mass of Fans or users is reached, the Page could become self-sustaining.

FT Middleton will become more involved in the Page

Company involvement is essential in the early stages to cultivate the Community. Due to the loss of the trainer, cultivation of the community by FT Middleton was not sufficient to capitalize fully. This can be rectified through some of the following actions:

1. Encourage existing members to switch from their current paper-based journal to the online food journal. Regular use of this application would establish regular viewing of the page.
2. Offering on-Page only content and tips either as Notes. By telling members about this new source of information, more members would be likely to visit the page.
3. Create or participate in forum topics, such as Ask the Trainer or local healthy eating. By getting members to interact with the page, and having them help each other, it would increase the value of the services, and also provide an enticing site for new users.

Thought Labs continues to work with Fitness Together Middleton on their Social Ads program, as well as providing support for developing the Page's community. We expect an increase in Page participation within the near future, and will provide updates as the new data becomes available.

About Thought Labs

Thought Labs provides custom software development and consulting services with a specialization in Social Network technologies. We build branded Facebook Pages for your company or multiple Pages for your various products. In addition, we create rich interactive applications on your Page to help users find your products and services. Thought Labs can also create custom Facebook, Bebo or OpenSocial applications carrying your message and your brand with them.

We pride ourselves on the quality of our work. We employ top application developers who are creative, highly skilled, up-to-date on Facebook's constantly changing API, and excellent at project management. We set high standards for ourselves and we meet them. In this new world of social marketing, Thought Labs delivers extremely innovative, high-quality work on time and on budget.