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University of Northern Colorado

Monfort College of Business

Fall 2021

Introduction

This report will be an all-inclusive look at my work in social media management this past semester. The corresponding class was Social Media Marketing at the Monfort College of Business here at the University of Northern Colorado. My professor for this course was Dr. Denny McCorkle, professor of Marketing. The overall goal of this project was to give me real-world experience planning and strategizing the use of social media. To do so, we had to completely optimize our own personal brand across our social media, including LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook for business. By learning the proper techniques to market and manage my own brand, I've been given the opportunity to transfer those skills into a business. This project also served as a great job search tool, teaching me how to advertise myself to companies past the typical job applications, and access the hidden job market.

(1) Personal Name SEO Audit.

The first part of this project was a personal name SEO (Search Engine Optimization) audit. This basically means optimizing your online presence to match your resume name and the overall brand that you're trying to achieve. Thus, I made sure Cristian Cardoza was the name on all my new sites, including Twitter and Facebook business. The audit involved doing a google search of my name. Google often links your personal accounts to your searches so when you do this you have to go into incognito mode and use quotations to get the most natural results. The results were not very promising, most of my prior social media accounts were under the name Alex, so nothing really showed up for myself when I Looked up Cristian. Unfortunately, I didn't get a screenshot of the before search but the search after SEO is included below.

a. Before/after screenshots.

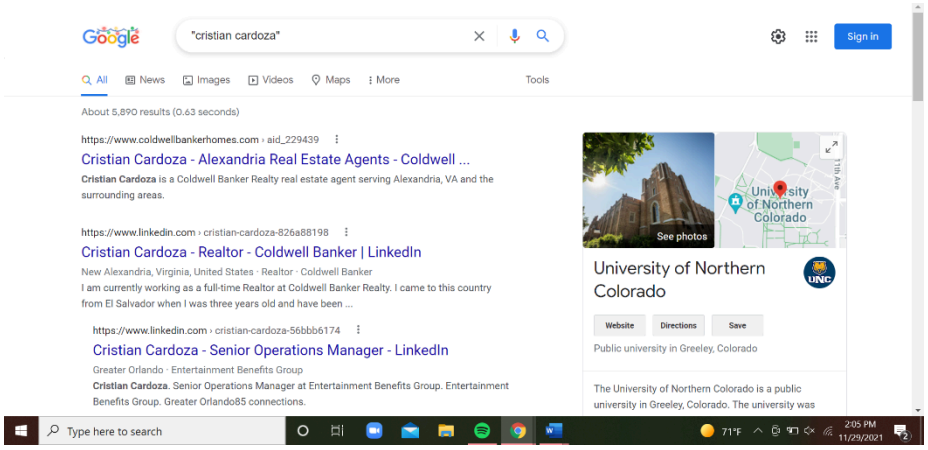


Figure 1. “After” screenshot of google search

b. Comments.

It appears it will be very difficult to get my name to the top of the results because a couple of other Cristian’s have established a presence already. Especially with LinkedIn since these other people have more connections and history behind their accounts they show up closer to the top. I’ll still use Cristian Cardoza for my resume name, I’ll just need to be even more active with my online presence. My rank on LinkedIn did move from the rookie status to all-star over the course of the semester thanks to a complete and detailed profile.

(2) Career-Focus

a. Career-field/focus.

My Career Focus is business administration with an emphasis in digital/social media marketing. To find this out I had to conduct some self-exploration. This included asking my friends and family what they thought my best skills and talents are and what strengths and weaknesses are. Most said that I was intelligent, leader-oriented, and entrepreneurial. This works because the overall goal is to own my own business, but I think advertising and marketing is one of the biggest factors affecting the success of a business so I figured it would be best to learn this as well. One of the factors affecting my decision for my career focus was the national average salary for marketers, which is around $75k (ref). Also, given the valuable tools I will gain as a marketer, it’ll only help me in my quest to own my own business

b. Subject matter subtopics for your career-focus.

To research subtopics on marketing I chose LinkedIn and Twitter that make it easy to find topics related to what you’re already into. The Initial search was marketing, and I was able to garner these subtopics:

- Digital Marketing
- Content Marketing
- Inbound Marketing
- Marketing Campaign Planning

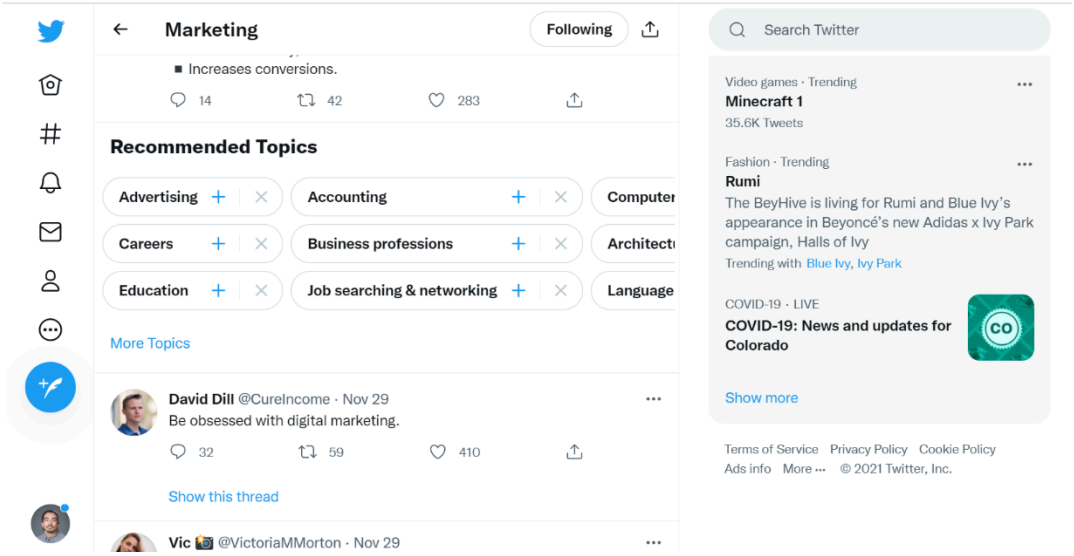


Figure 1.1 Twitter subtopics

c. Career-related skills needed for my career-focus.

To find the proper skills, I'll need for a job in marketing, I did a basic google search for skills associated with marketing and this is what I found:

- Communication
- Creativity and Problem-Solving
- Data analysis and analytics
- Project Management
- SEO

Past job experiences and group projects here at the University of Northern Colorado have given me a plethora of experiences in communication and problem solving. I also took an interpersonal communication class at Aims community to further these skills. The other skills listed have all been included in my curriculum at the UNCo. Of course, I'm no expert in these fields but I can still use my PLN's to further advance my knowledge in these fields.

d. Career-related subject matter hashtags most used for my career-focus.

LinkedIn and twitter offer suggested hashtags when making a post which makes it easy to see what small topics can be related to what you're writing about. Some of the most used ones across all my posts are:

- #Digitalmarketing
- #Marketing
- #SEO

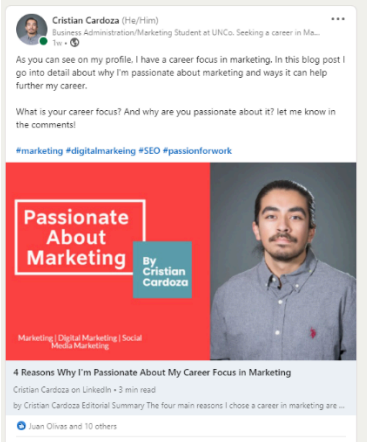


Figure 1.3 Hashtags

(3) Target Market Groups/Connection Strategies.

a. Like-minded social media micro-influencers for my career-focus

For social media micro-influencers, I wanted to focus on influencers that are focusing on my keyword subtopics such as Digital Marketing and SEO. Even micro-influencers can be hard to reach if you're not an established influencer yourself or a company offering a partnership. So, I don't have too many connections with this group, but twitter has proven to be the best place to access these influencers. To find these groups of people I just searched for my keyword subtopics.



Figure 1.4 micro influencers

b. Like-minded advocates for learning and engagement

This group mainly consists of my fellow students and peers that are also majoring in business or marketing. I have over 20 connections with this group on twitter and about 50 of them on LinkedIn. To find this group I looked the University of Northern Colorado and more specifically,

the Monfort College of Business. I used keywords like student, digital marketing, SEO, content creation, etc.

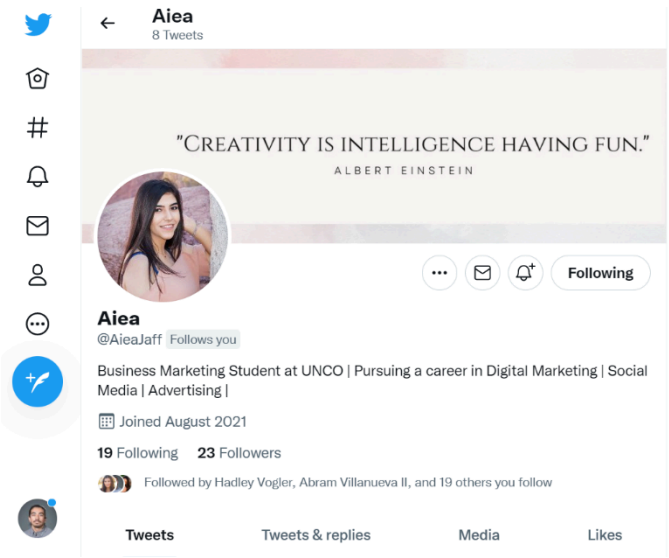


Figure 1.5 Like-Minded Advocates

c. Career stakeholders that know your qualifications and can support your job search and career

This group has proven to be a little bit smaller than the rest just because of the difficulty of creating these meaningful relationships. One of these is my professor Denny McCorkle who has been witnessing the growth of my marketing expertise and knowledge. He has a plethora of connections in the marketing industry, more specifically, digital, and social media marketing, and will be essential in my job search and career.



Figure 1.6 Career Stakeholder

Another career stakeholder I've managed to develop has been with my supervisor at Marcos Pizza. She's also going to school for business administration and has recognized my skills in marketing applying to our job at Marcos. Mostly Inbound marketing where you are creating a relationship with the customer.

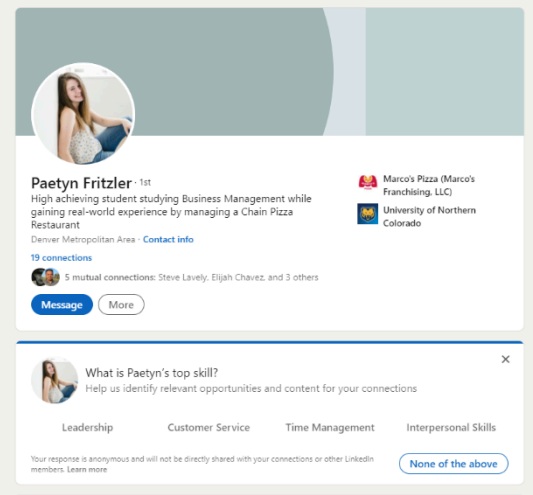


Figure 1.7 Career Stakeholder

d. Potential employers for a job in your career focus.

For this group I wanted to find some businesses and employees of businesses that were tailored around marketing or that may need help in their marketing efforts. I Searched for companies using keywords like Digital marketing, social media marketing, advertising campaigns etc. I was able to make a few connections with some companies and people in this area and surprisingly, they contacted me for positions in their companies. Having a properly setup LinkedIn account has been proven to be effective because all of the offers I have received have been primarily centered around my career-focus of marketing.

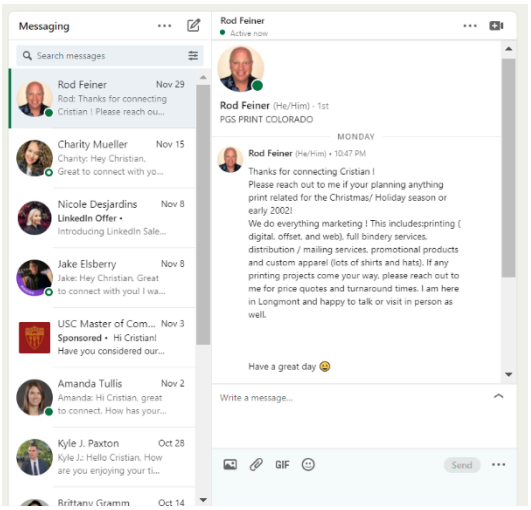


Figure 1.8 Potential Employers

e. Choose and explain fifth target group.

A fifth target group I chose to explore was entrepreneurs. Like I mentioned before, I would love to own my own business one day and having entrepreneurs in my personal learning networks will be beneficial. Some keywords for this group included small business, startups, entrepreneurship, and networking. Some of these people are influencers while others are people I've gone to high school with and are starting their own businesses!



Figure 1.8 Entrepreneurs

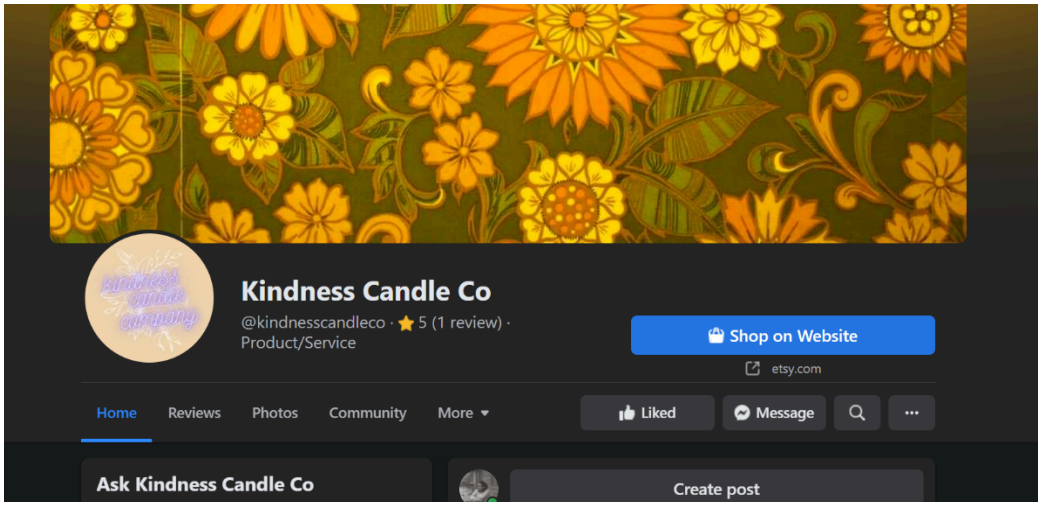


Figure 1.9 Friends Business Page

f. Choose and explain sixth target group.

The final target group I wanted was people and companies currently hiring. Given that LinkedIn can be one of the best places to access the hidden job market, I figured it is also one of the best places to find regular job postings and recruiters. To find these people I searched up recruiting, hiring, looking, etc. and then focused my target on companies and people hiring for marketing and management.

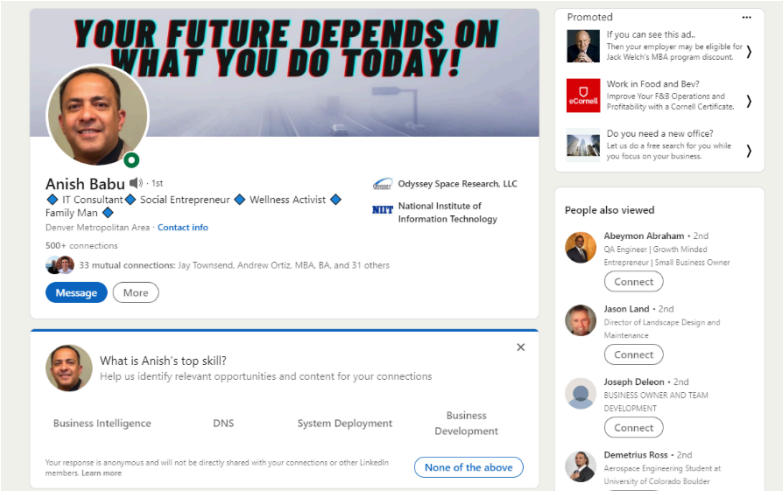


Figure 1.9 Recruiters

Connection strategies (for a targeted group):

a. Proactive

Being proactive in my connection strategy has been to be the most effective. Being proactive means optimizing your digital brand to grant the greatest exposure to recruiters and others in a targeted group. For example, in LinkedIn I optimized my profile to be centered around digital marketing showing my authority and authenticity in the field. Being proactive also means actively seeking out new connections. First I found people that are looking for marketing specialists or companies and then made sure they are in the surrounding area to give myself the best chances. Another way I was able to actively search was by joining groups on LinkedIn centered around my target group. One of these was recruiting, in which there are a plethora of groups to choose from. One of the largest being shown below.

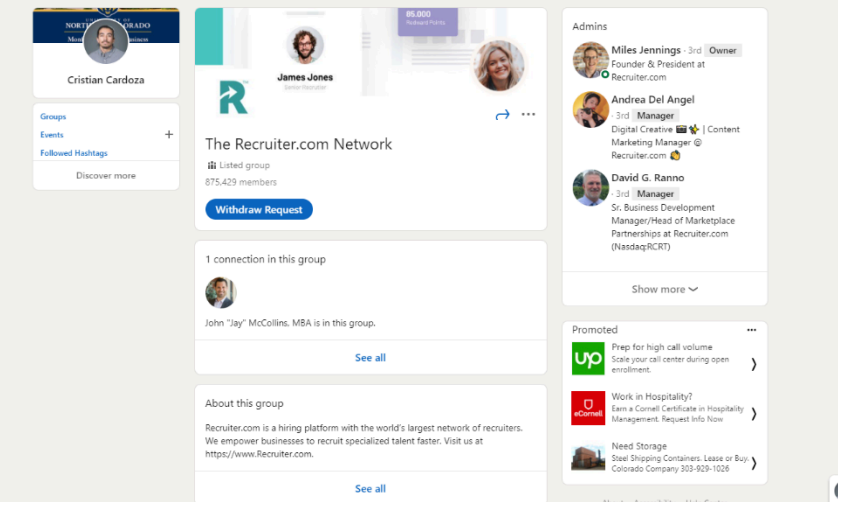


Figure 2. Target groups

To create meaningful and lasting connections it's also best to send a message to your new connections outlining gratitude for the connection, and the reason for the connection whether it be for an employment opportunity or something else.

Below is an example of a sample script that can be used for a new connection:

"Hello (name), It's great to connect with you! I'm currently looking for a job in Marketing and I noticed that your company is currently hiring. Is there any way I could speak to you about these opportunities?"

b. Reactive

Reactive is more of a short-term plan when it comes to connections and usually isn't favorable. Being reactive means simply accepting new connections that may come your way and waiting for their message to you. On LinkedIn you want to optimize your connections so that they're

centered around your career focus. So, to ensure my feed and PLNs are effective I make sure to only accept new connections that are included in one my target groups whether they are marketing students or recruiters.

(4) Personal Branding Statement.

Hello, my name is Cristian Cardoza, and I am currently a student at the University of Northern Colorado, studying business administration and marketing at the Monfort College of Business. I'm currently senior here and looking to enter the workforce soon. Through diligent research and self-discovery, I've found myself to be passionate about a career in digital marketing and business management.

I've worked Front of house, and back of house in a popular restaurant, I've worked retail, and I've been a delivery driver. All these experiences and more have given me a wide variety of skills and tools to be successful in marketing and management. Having a unique view of multiple aspects of running a business gives me a competitive advantage over my peers when it comes to real-world experience.

Through my work alone I've been able to develop communication skills, interpersonal and for business, creativity and problem-solving skills, and teamwork. Through my education I've been able to develop harder skills like SEO, digital marketing, small business management, and content creation with simulations and exercises modeling real-world experiences.

As I become a business professional I am continuously learning about new techniques and skills in marketing to help keep a competitive edge on other applicants. By establishing personal learning networks and connecting with other industry experts I am always striving to be a better me!

b. Marketable point of difference.

To make myself stand out against the thousands of business majors currently looking to enter the job market, I made sure to show that I'm constantly trying to learn more about marketing past the simple classes. This includes sharing interesting articles, writing blog posts about my career-focus taking extra courses and much more.

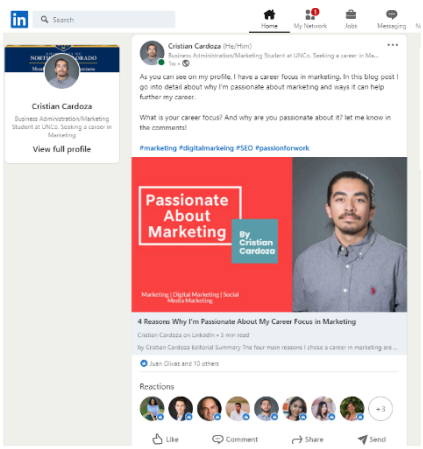


Figure 2.1 Marketable Point of Difference

c. Identify your most career-influencing extracurriculars.

Since I was young, I've always been trying to sell; whether it was small plays for my family that I charged $1 for, or the backpack full of snacks I would sell to my friends at recess. My mindset has always been an entrepreneurial one and now that I have the proper skills to utilize this mindset, I'm excited to see where my career takes me.

d. 3-keywords personal brand mantra

My 3-keywords personal brand mantra is as follows: **Passionate, experienced, marketer**. In my personal branding statement, I emphasize how I've been passionate selling and marketing since a young age. For experience I explained my work history and education history. And then finally marketing to showcase what my actual career-focus is.

e. Favorite career-related or personal quote

"If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door"

(5) Personal Learning Network.

a. Feedly Folder organization for career-focus, sources/process for finding more RSS feeds, and screenshots for folders/RSS feeds.

Feedly is a great resource for a PLN (Personal Learning Network). It allows you to create separate media feeds based on a certain topic or idea, for example, marketing. The first feed I created is PB&J which is centered around career readiness and preparation. This ranges from interviewing techniques to trends in hiring and has proven vital. The next is much more tailored and is labeled as SMM (Social Media Management). It's self-explanatory but this section focuses on trends and changes in social media. Feedly makes it easy to find more sources to add to your feed, you simply search the topic you want to focus on and then it gives you a wide range of sources to choose from. Thankfully Feedly's vetting process is quite efficient because most articles and websites you find are professional.

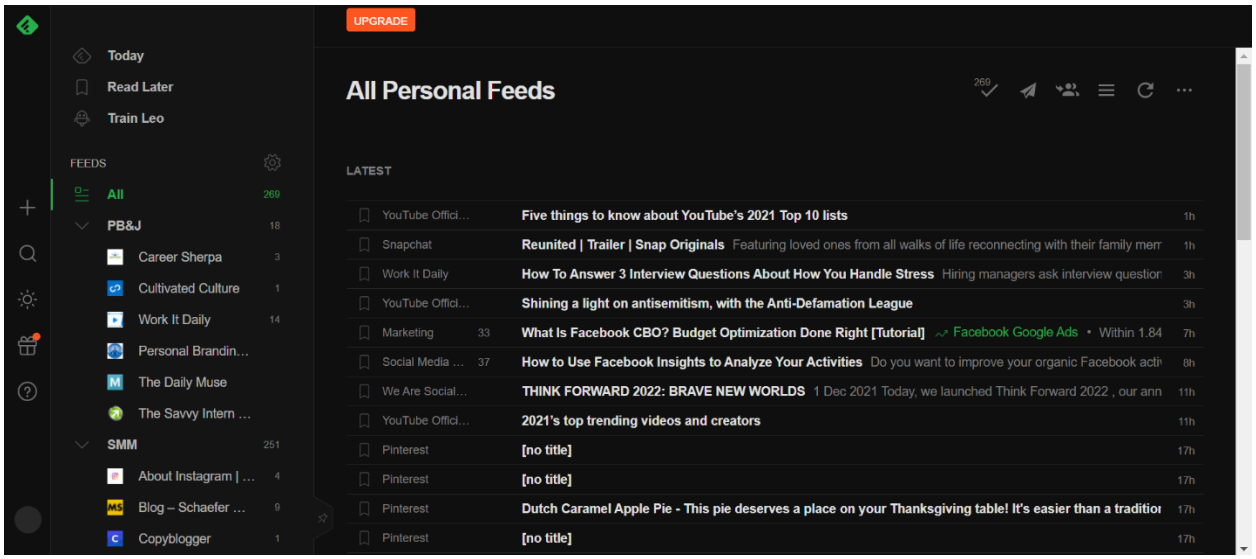


Figure 2.2 Feedly

b. Twitter Lists organization for career-focus, sources/process for finding more Twitter list members, and screenshots of Twitter Lists.

Much like how Facebook offers groups in their site, twitter has begun doing the same thing. Except these are called lists. Essentially, they are the same. They are groups of people posting content related to the group focus. All my lists currently are on social media marketing and digital marketing. Twitter offers suggestions for new lists to follow and most of the time they are related to lists you're already in making finding new content easy.

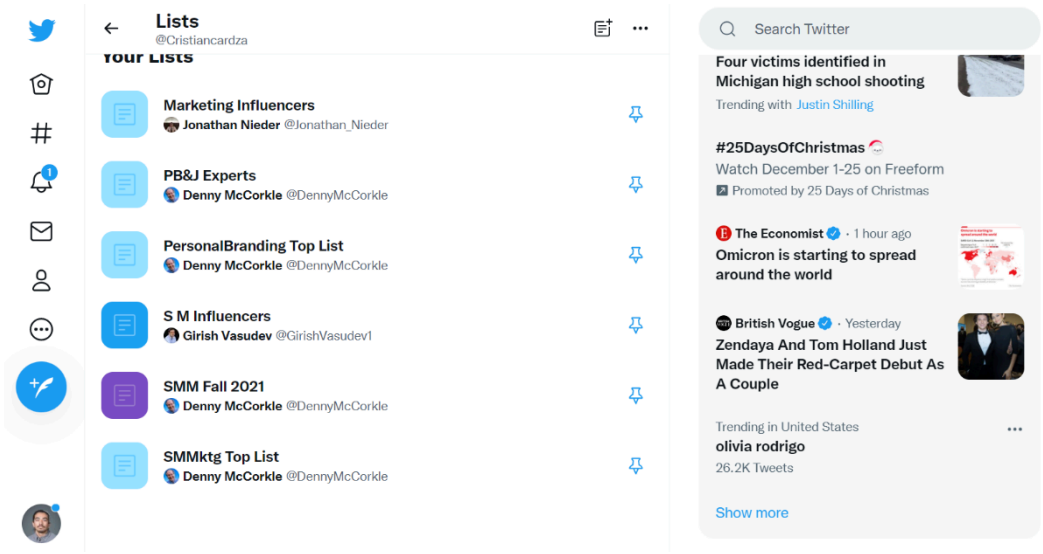


Figure 2.3 Twitter Lists

c. Use of a third PLN and screenshots.

My third PLN I decided to use was Flipboard. Flipboard is like Feedly, in that it shows articles centered around a single topic like digital marketing. You just add hashtags of topics you'd like to follow and then it shows you articles based on that.

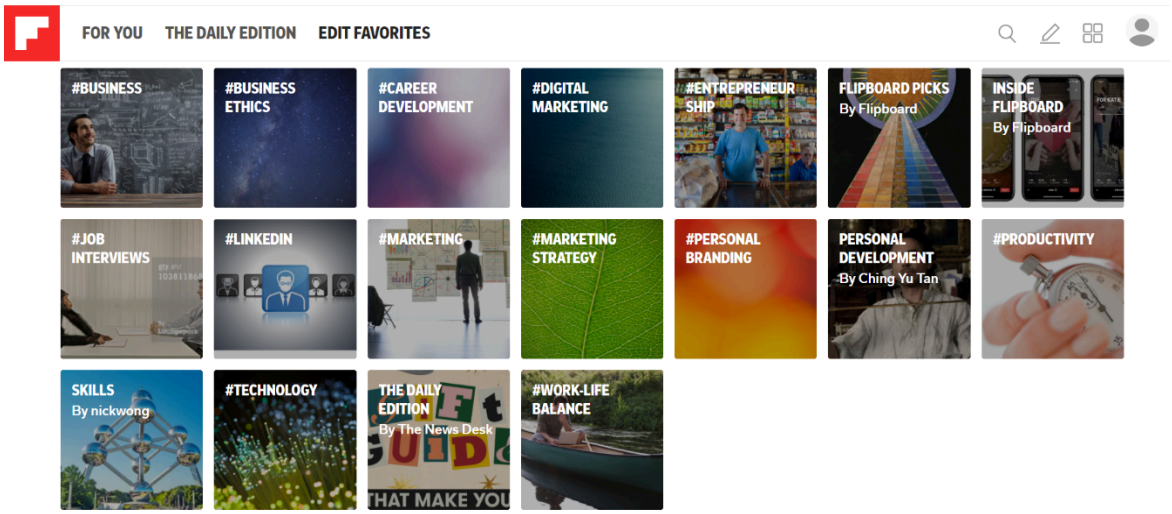


Figure 2.4 Flipboard

(6) LinkedIn Profile.

LinkedIn public profile link: https://www.linkedin.com/in/cristian-cardoza/

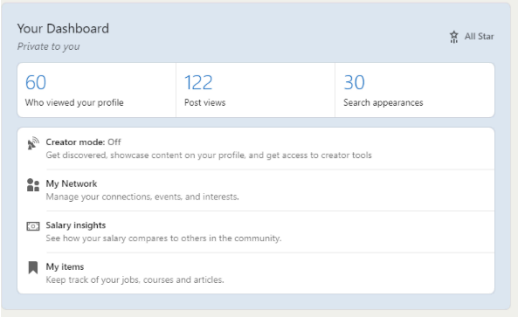


Figure 2.5 Dashboard/All Star Status

The Introduction Sections:

(a) Display name and profile link.

I used only my resume name and made sure there's no extra numbers or letters at the end of the profile link for SEO.

(b) Profile Photo

Use of a professional, high-quality headshot done by the university. It is shoulders up with a positive and smiling face.

(c) Banner Header

Clearly connects to my personal brand by showing the Monfort College of Business, highlighting my marketing emphasis, and displaying my gained knowledge in these fields.

(d) Headline

This had to be easy and quick to digest while still getting the most important information out. LinkedIn is often used as a more in-depth resume, so I made sure to put that I'm seeking a career in marketing to advertise to future employers.

(e) Location

For right now it's set in Greeley Colorado just because I am going to the university, and I want to show up on searches that recruiters may be doing in the area. Once I'm out of college ill be living in the Commerce City area and will change it then for the same reason.

(f) Industry

The industry I chose is Marketing/Advertising. Although this metric is visibly hidden it still applies when people are doing searches for new candidates. Thus, I had to make sure the

industry was the closest I could get to my career-focus.

(g) Contact Information

For this section I made sure to only include the professional social media sites that I have been developing for this class. They adhere strictly to my personal brand and focus on building my authority and authenticity.

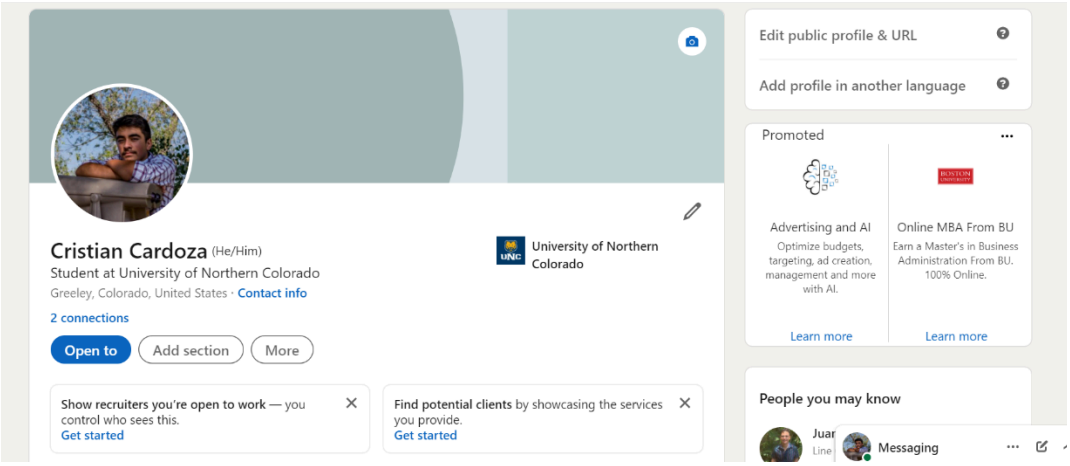


Figure 2.4 Before Screenshot

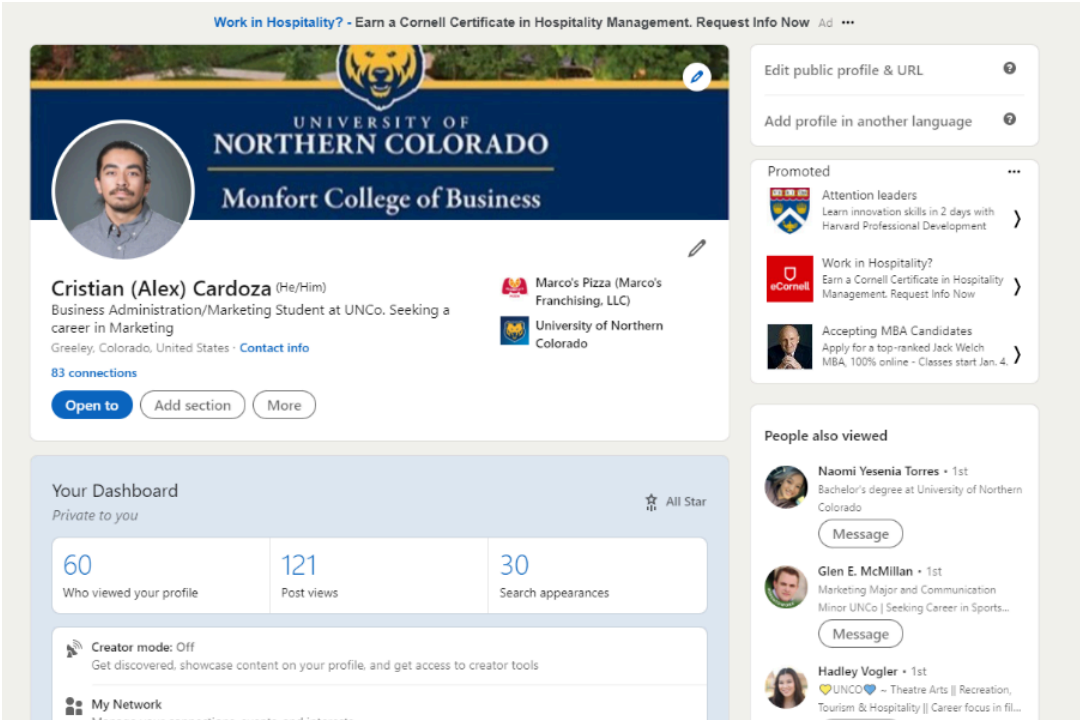


Figure 2.5 After Screenshot

The Resume Plus Sections:

(a) About

This section is essentially a more detailed version of my headline. The first section is an attention getter/summary of the benefits I can offer a future employee. I go into detail about my career and education history and where I'd like my career to go in the future. The use of keywords like marketing and digital marketing are essential for SEO and recruiter recognition. I also included a call to action at the end to spur more engagement.

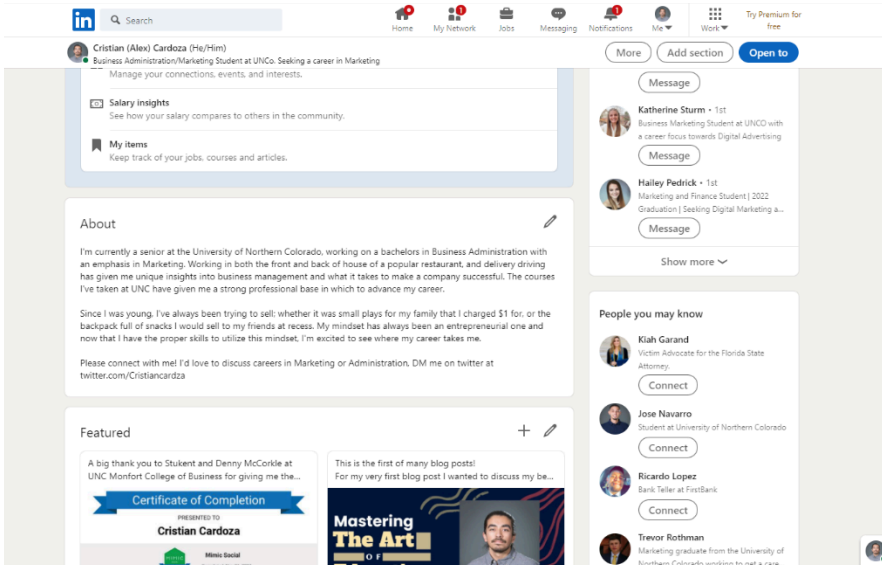


Figure 2.6 About Section

(b) Featured (and use of Rich Media)

For this section I have my best performing blog post that showcases my life-long learning and passion. To keep increasing my authority I also included a certification from Stukent for social media management.

(c) Education (including major/minor degree programs and professional training/development; use of CARS)

Right now, All I have is my bachelors I'm receiving from the University of Northern Colorado. However, once I'm graduated I will also have a digital marketing certificate from the university which will be included then.

(d) Experience

Unfortunately, I don't have any internships or side gigs to include, only my part-time jobs that I've had while in college. I did make sure to highlight the career-relevant skills I acquired working these jobs. I was able to move up into a management position in both part-time jobs and that should be notable.

(f) Courses

Although I've taken a plethora of classes at UNCo, I made sure to only include the courses that are relevant to my career-focus. This included global marketing, social media marketing, marketing analysis and research, etc.

(g) Organizations

All the organizations I've been a part of thus far don't add any value to my career-focus, so I decided not to include them.

(h) Projects

For this section I made sure to include all my school projects that have been tailored around marketing thus far. One of them being this one. Which will be added once its complete. There's also a couple more marketing projects that won't be completed till the end of the semester so I can't add them quite yet.

(i) Interests

Being a full-time student and working part-time to afford my schooling and rent, I practically don't have any time for a lot of extracurriculars however, just to make sure this field was populated I chose UNCo and Marcos Pizza.

The Social Proof Sections:

(a) Licenses & Certifications

This section is a great way to show my extracurriculars that I've taken part in during my education at university. All the certifications are from different organizations, but all apply to

marketing and digital marketing. This shows my commitment to life-long learning and my dedication to my career.

(b) Skills & Endorsements

The skills including here had to be synonymous with the keywords used throughout my brand. This includes Digital marketing, SEO, Management, and teamwork. No endorsements have been made so far.

(c) Recommendations

N/A

(d) Honors & Awards

N/A

(7) LinkedIn Articles/Blogging.

Articles link: https://www.linkedin.com/in/cristian-cardoza/detail/recent-activity/posts/

Blogging is a great way to increase authority and authenticity within my brand. For my writing I wanted to make sure I was discussing things I had a decent amount of exposure and experience in. Thus, for my first blog post I wrote about how to be a successful student. Being that I'm now 3 years into university, I felt I had enough expertise to speak on the subject. This article was more personal and less career-focused but still connects through my brand of life-long learning. To keep this blog alive, I made sure to post it again about a week after it was initially released with a quote from the blog itself. The initial posts and cross-promotional posts were done on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook business. For SEO I made sure to include my professional headshot and resume name wherever applicable and use keywords like marketing and digital marketing.



Figure 2.7 First blog post

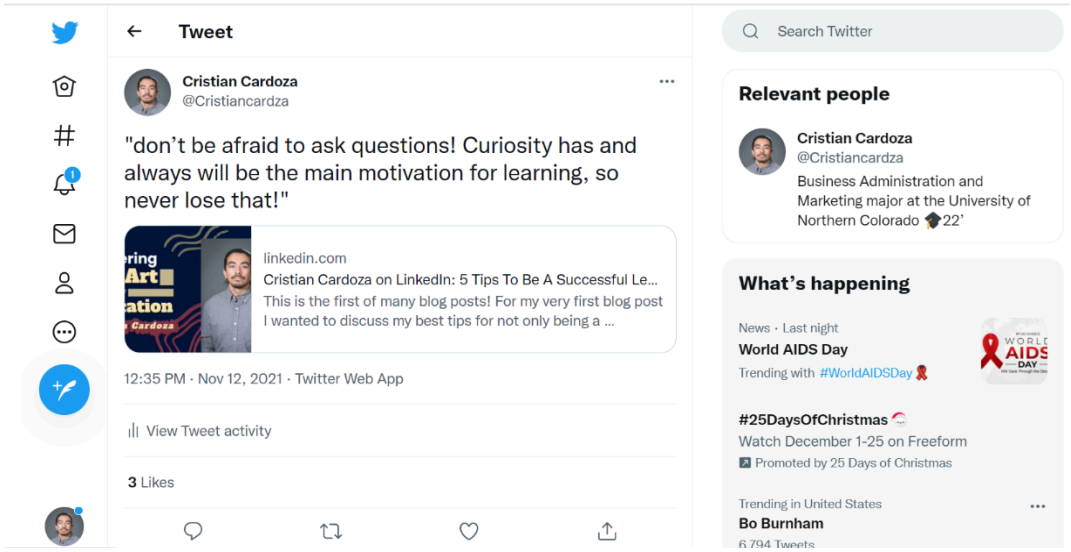


Figure 2.7 Cross promotion

(8) LinkedIn Social Activities and Content Marketing Strategies.

All activity link: https://www.linkedin.com/in/cristian-cardoza/detail/recent-activity/

(a) Content consumption.

By optimizing who I allow connections with, my feed has become much more efficient at only showing me career-focused content. Most of the media I see are articles about marketing and social media marketing which only further my education and authority in the field.

(b) Content conversations.

To really make the most out of my content conversations its crucial to be as authentic as possible when making comments. This means reading the articles being shared and adding some value to the conversation. Comments that are too robotic and unauthentic do nothing for my personal brand or interpersonal relationships. I regularly try to ask questions that are related to the content and add something to the conversation. I also tried to branch out from my typical connections by commenting on organizations posts and creating possibilities for new connections.

(c) Content curation.

For content curation I utilized my PLNs discussed earlier to find the best career-focused articles. Typically, these articles would come from Feedly and Flipboard, so I didn't have to go searching for the content. Then once I found an added-value article I simply added my own personal thoughts and keyword hashtags.

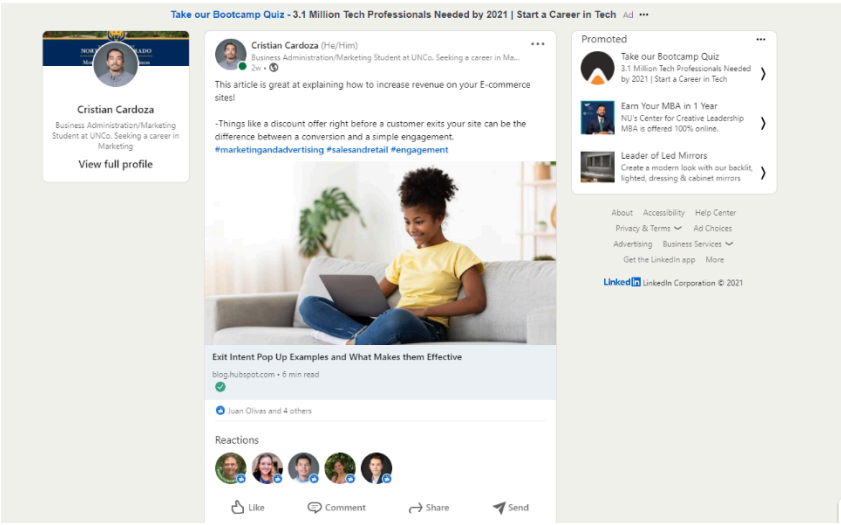


Figure 2.7 Content Curation

(d) Content creation.

For the most part the only content I created myself were the two blog posts mentioned earlier.

(e) Content cross-promotion (within and outside of LinkedIn).

Like mentioned earlier, after the initial posting of the article itself, I waited about a week and then posted the same article with a different caption across my professional social media sites.

(9) Other Social Platforms for Your Personal Brand.

For Twitter:

a. Screenshot and profile web link.

https://twitter.com/Cristiancardza



Figure 2.8 Twitter Profile

b. Your career-focus confirmation.

As you can see in the header I included my major which does have marketing in it. All the posts and retweets on this profile strictly adhere to my planned personal brand. Multiple posts are almost identical to LinkedIn and focus solely on digital marketing and Content marketing.



Figure 2.9 Twitter Posts

c. Content marketing strategies.

For Twitter I used a plethora of different content types to keep it fresh and differentiated. This included retweets, quotes, articles, my own blogs, etc. For the blog posts I also did the continued promotions waiting weekly after the initial posts to post it again with a different title. When retweeting I made sure to add value to the retweets by leaving an authentic comment underneath it that ties into the content being shared.



Figure 3. Twitter Posts

d. Connection strategies.

Twitter lists were essential for finding people in my career-focus. Lists allow you to essentially join a group of individuals all posting and focusing on content centered around a single subject. There are tons of different groups from digital marketing to small business management, all of

which I have followed and received followers from. Coming from the same group it makes it easy to find a common ground to mutually connect from.

e. Engagement strategies.

Essentially, the best way to create authentic engagement is to be authentic yourself. The posts where I included the most of my own thoughts always performed the best. People don't get on twitter just to see meaningless retweets over and over. They want new information that they haven't seen before, and it must be real enough and exciting enough to capture attention.



Figure 3.1 Twitter Posts

For Facebook Business:

a. Screenshot and profile web link.

https://www.facebook.com/cristian_cardoza_1



Figure 3.2 Facebook Business

b. Your career-focus confirmation.

Where have you confirmed your career focus on this social platform?

Keeping in line with my personal brand and other social media, I made sure to use the same headshot and profile banner. Under the bio section I made sure to say advertising/marketing to confirm my career focus. I also posted multiple posts showcasing my dedication to marketing and digital marketing.

c. Content marketing strategies.

For Facebook I focused mostly on the same types of content that I utilized on the other social media platforms. This included quotes, articles, my blogs etc. I also wanted to include some extra content that wasn't necessarily career-focused but was still educational and entertaining to increase engagement.



Figure 3.3 Facebook Business Post

d. Connection strategies.

Unfortunately, there is not a huge market of digital marketers that I could find on Facebook. Facebook has groups as well and I searched for marketing groups, digital marketing groups and social media management groups with little luck. Thus, I simply searched for my colleagues that I had previously connected with on other platforms and was able to find some success.

e. Engagement strategies.

What did you do to get engagement/interaction with this social media platform?

Like Mentioned earlier, I wanted to add some more entertaining and less career-focused content to try and spur engagement. This included quotes from twitter. Keeping a professional and positive tone throughout my site also increases the chances of engagement amongst business professionals.



Figure 3.4 Facebook Business Post

(10) Metrics for Your Personal Brand.

LinkedIn activity: I was most active on this platform and tried my best to engage with my audience. Posts were a variety of different content types and aimed to increase my authority throughout.

LinkedIn Activity	Posts made	reshares given	comments given	likes given	Invites sent
	10	2	3	35	45

LinkedIn posts performance: Although I didn't have many comments or reshares, engagement overall was great for LinkedIn. Going from 2 connections to 84 over the course of a couple months is quite staggering. The post views don't total 100, that is the average amount of views I received per post.

LinkedIn Performance	Post views	comments	reshares	likes	connection growth	prof
	100	0	0	57	82	60

LI article/blogging activity: Only two blog posts were required for the class, however I made sure that they were career-focused and authentic to increase engagement.

LI Blogpost activity	posts	word count (average)
	2	600

LI article/blogging performance: Much like the overall activity, there were not any comments or reshares on my blogposts however it should be noted that I gained new connections every time I would post or repost a blog. Many of the blog views were from business professionals perhaps even recruiters.

LI Blogpost Performance	Post views	comments	reshares	likes
	34	0	0	23

Twitter activity: Twitter proved to be much easier to find and share content thanks to the advanced algorithm hence the retweets, however I made to include my own added -value thoughts to the posts I was retweeting.

Twitter Activity	tweets	followers	retweeted
	11	30	5

Twitter performance: The performance of twitter matched what I saw in the social media management simulation I completed earlier in this course. Twitter is great for impressions and brand awareness but the actual metrics like retweets and comments were low.

Twitter Performance	views	retweets	mentions	likes	comments
	1013	1	2	17	1

Facebook activity: Facebook Business doesn't seem to be the most ideal platform when trying to build a public brand. Most of the site was centered around boosting posts and selling products, there wasn't a lot of opportunity for personal brand management.

Facebook Activity	Posts	Comments	Likes
	7	0	0

Facebook performance: Like mentioned above, Facebook seems to be a place for buying and selling at this point. Natural posts like articles shares and pictures don't do much for engagement or impressions.

Facebook Performance	post views	comments	likes	shares
	59	0	2	0

(11) Best Successes.



Figure 3.5 Best Success

This Article was one of the most highly liked posts I made on LinkedIn. This is most likely because it is a completely original work that is authentic and engaging. Use of proper formatting on the post itself and blog increased the likelihood of engagement.

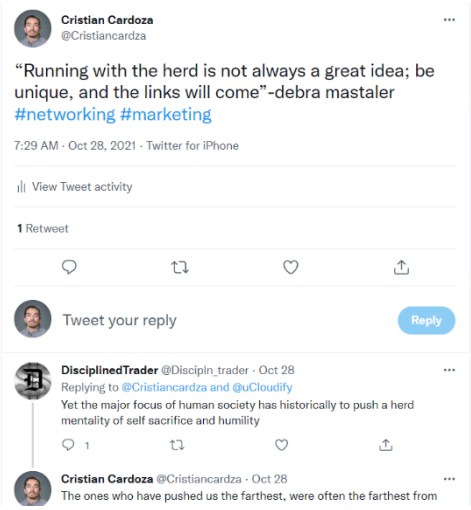


Figure 3.6 Best Successes

I consider this tweet to be one of my great successes because it was engaging enough for someone to comment on it. This comment resulted in a great discussion and although it wasn't a career-focused discussion it still adds to my authenticity and engagement.

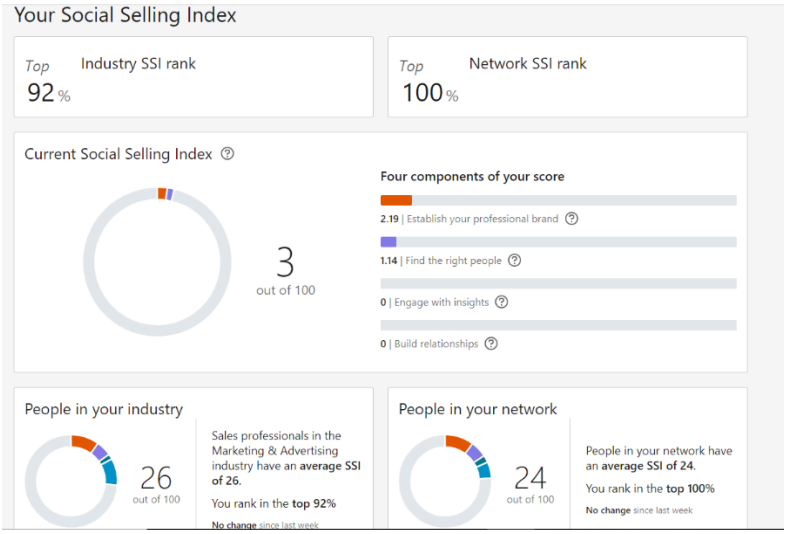


Figure 3.7 Before

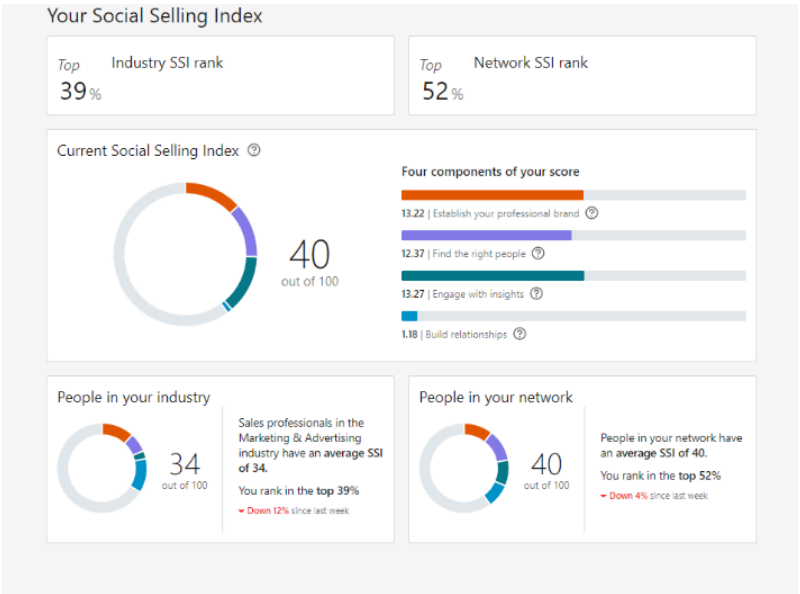


Figure 3.8 After

Going from the very bottom of the SSI to pretty much the industry average has been a great success of mine. Over the course of only a couple months I've managed to solidify myself as, at least, competent amongst my marketing peers.

c. HubSpot Social Media Marketing Certificate.

https://app.hubspot.com/academy/achievements/lp4k2y01/en/1/cristian-cardoza/social-media-marketing-certification-course

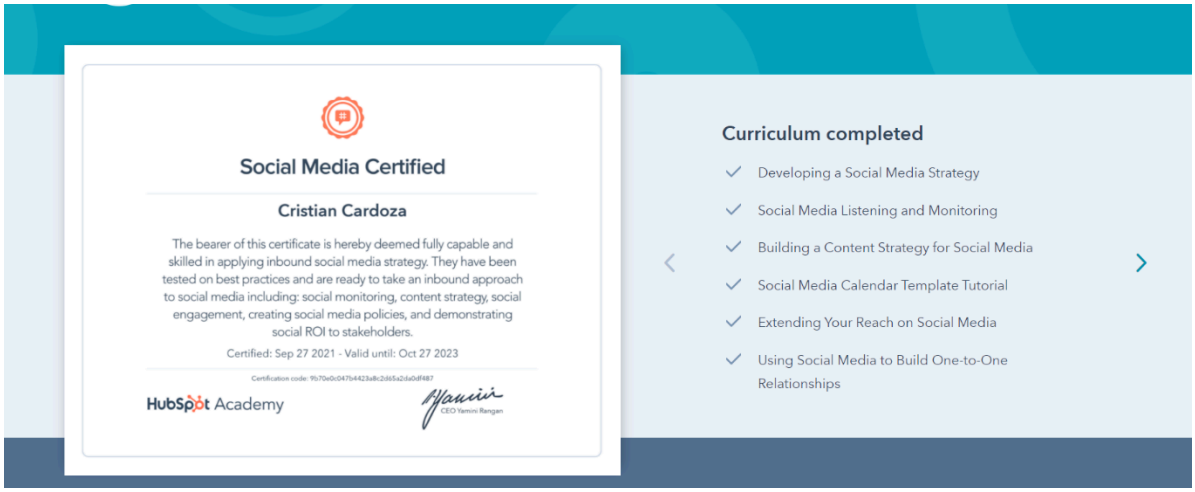


Figure 3.9 Hubspot Certification

This certification took me through the process of learning the fundamentals of social media management. After about 6 hours of studying and preparation there was a 70-question test in which I got a 96% and earned the certification.

(12) Obstacles.

The first obstacle I faced over the course of this project was deciding what I wanted my career focus to be. Being so young in a world that is ever-changing, it's hard to decide just what path might be the best for me. To overcome this, I looked for guidance from my professors and family members that have faced the same obstacles. After Denny McCorkle introduced us to some career analysis and matching websites I found that Digital Marketing was the best avenue for me.

The second obstacle I face was choosing a third platform to begin building my personal brand. In today's day and age there's hundreds of different social media sites that are just as developed and professional as the last. When thinking about building a personal brand it's even harder to decide what platform may work the best. I've been on Facebook since 2008 so I figured it would be the simplest site to try and figure out in a professional business setting.

A third obstacle I faced was setting up the social media accounts in general. Being apart of Gen Z, we were raised around technology and social media. It is much too common for people my age to think that they are experts at social media just because they've been on them since childhood. The reality is that social media marketing is much more intricate and complicated than meets the eye. Thankfully, this course on social media marketing gave me all the tools I needed to make my accounts stand out.

The fourth obstacle in my way was writing blog posts. I had never written a blog post prior to this class, and I had no idea what to write about. I wasn't an expert in anything and who would want to read my thoughts anyways? This thinking was arbitrary and based on negative perceptions of self. It turns out I know a lot about a lot of things. After some constructive criticism and reflection, I realized that I've been a student practically my whole life, what better subject to write about then that. And thus, my first blog post was born, "Mastering the Art of Education".

The final obstacle in my way for this project was finding the time to post every day. In my earlier life you couldn't get my nose out of my phone. I was constantly scrolling, liking, retweeting every second I had. Just a couple years ago I had an epiphany about my social media usage and decided to limit it heavily. This proved to be problematic for this project where I was expected to be posting every day on multiple platforms with thoughtful and engaging content. It was too much. To remedy this, I found it was extremely helpful to create a timeline for posting. By setting aside time to post on my social media, I was able to mentally prepare and dedicate time to my work. Instead of trying to constantly be on social media looking for new content and creating new content, I set aside an hour every week at least in which I would post on all my social media platforms.

(13) Lessons Learned.

a. From this semester experience, what are the five most important lessons about using social media and/or personal branding that are applicable for your future career?

One of the most important lessons I learned about using social media was to make your own graphics for banners, blogs etc. I never realized the implications of using an image off google that may be copyrighted. The graphic design element needed for digital marketing is severely under emphasized and I learned this the hard way. Thankfully websites like Canva and Pixelied make it easy to create your own original and free-to-use images for all your content needs.

The next lesson I learned over the course of this project was that authenticity is the greatest way to increase engagement. People are not robots and simple templates, and standards aren't enough to drive engagement. You must be real, authentic, and really add some value to your audience's timeline.

The third lesson I learned was to utilize PLNs. Before this class I didn't even know what a PLN was, and I had no real sources for professional content. Learning how to fully utilize Feedly and Flipboard have been crucial to populating my own platforms and increasing my own knowledge past the classroom.

Another lesson I learned was that twitter is great for brand awareness and not actual engagements. On twitter people are usually mindlessly swiping, passing the time, not focused on adding a lot of content or engaging with profiles. I had over a thousand views on my twitter profile, but the likes and retweets were severely lacking.

The final lesson I'll take with me into my future career is that not all social media platforms are built the same. What you post on LinkedIn you can't necessarily post on twitter. The targeting strategy is different, and post requirements are often different. I learned this the hard way trying to cross post on different platforms with little success. Twitter often needs a shorter more digestible post to garner engagement and LinkedIn needs specific guidelines to remain engaging and professional.