



Everyone has heard about Social Media but you might have wondered if it is right for your firm. Traditional marketing methods have ranged from attending your weekly Rotary meeting or Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours to sponsoring non-profit or trade show events or entering award competitions for that third party validation. Social Media marketing does not take the place of your traditional marketing methods....you still need to get out of your office and meet people but Social Media expands your reach. Social media builds communities of people with shared interests with a focus on networking and conversation. Before you start you need to identify precise, measurable objectives to obtain your goal. Identifying your objectives for social media is critical. If you are just on Facebook and Twitter because everyone else is you might have some interesting conversations while you waste a lot of time.

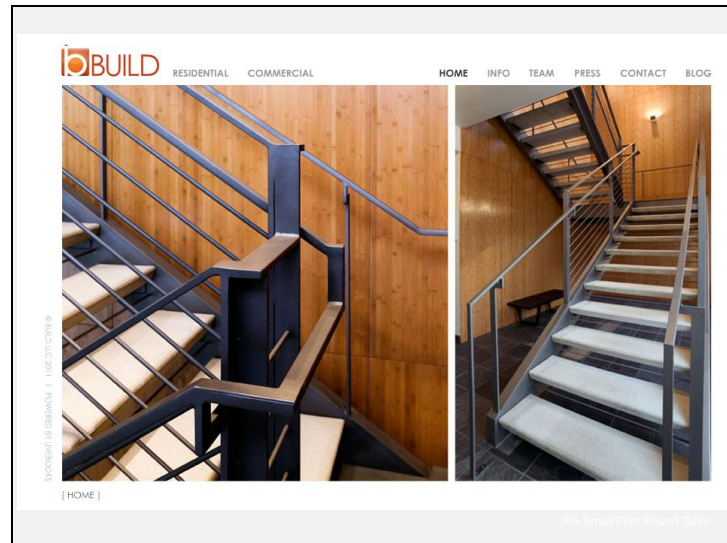
In this presentation through case studies on how some architects are using social media, we will cover identifying your objectives, developing your strategy, finding your audience, measuring your success, and generating content. In developing your marketing plan remember the SMART Rule it should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.



Build, LLC partners, Kevin Eckert and Andrew van Leeuwen – Kevin started Build in 1999 and 2 years later Andrew joined him. They are a 5 person design/build firm in Seattle; their projects are mainly residential and small commercial. They started a blog in 2007. Kevin told me that Andrew spends  $\frac{1}{4}$  of his time (40 hrs per month) on the blog and posts 2 to 3 times a week. They estimate that  $\frac{1}{2}$  of their clients come from their blogging activities. They use Twitter and Facebook to publicize the blog. They receive around 2000 hits a day. The number of hits has steadily increased over the past three years

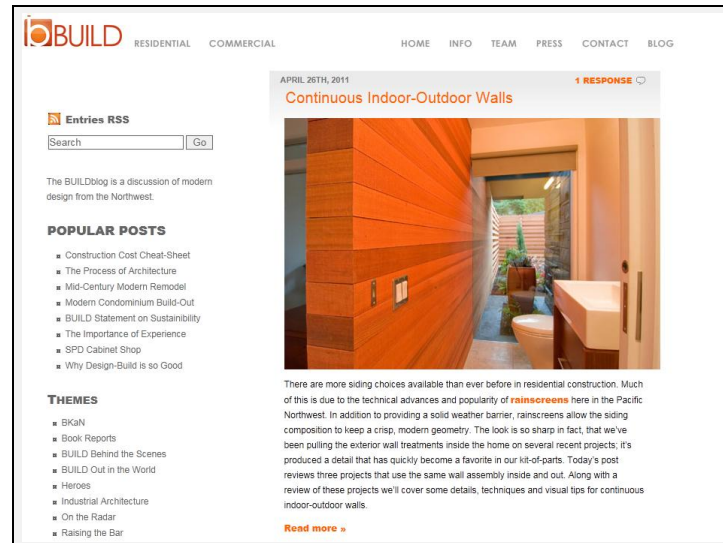
Kevin said the most important aspect was clients who blogged about them and linked to their blog. Seattle residents are very tech savvy and most of Build LLC clients create personal blogs about their building project... and the client blogs have lots of love for the architects! Kevin ranked social media in the following importance #1 clients' blogs, #2 their blog, #3 Facebook # 4 twitter and a distant #5 LinkedIn

Slide 3



The homepage of Build is easy to navigate and has nice clean lines. Notice that the blog is part of the web page.

## Slide 4



Build Blog features post on the company but it doesn't over self-promote. They feature posts on other architects, building techniques, and buildings that they admire. Their goal is to open the "black box" of architecture and create a public dialogue within the design and building fields. They keep a "tickle file" of potential blog ideas. A general rule is that blogs are not used for selling but should contain advice and opinions that readers will find useful.

Some ideas for creating content for your blog include; interviews with interesting relevant people, develop regular features – Build has regular book reviews, invite guest bloggers, create how-to lists, and if you attend an event or visit an significant building write a review of your experience.

## Slide 5



This is Build llc's twitter page. Twitter is a micro blog limited to 140 characters. With twitter you share information (by links using tinyurls <http://tinyurl.com/>) give advice and debate real time issues. In twitter you set up an account and can create your own background to the page. A good way to find people to follow is to look at who people you know are following. It is good to follow a mix of people, other architects, suppliers, local people, client groups, news media and a few comedians.

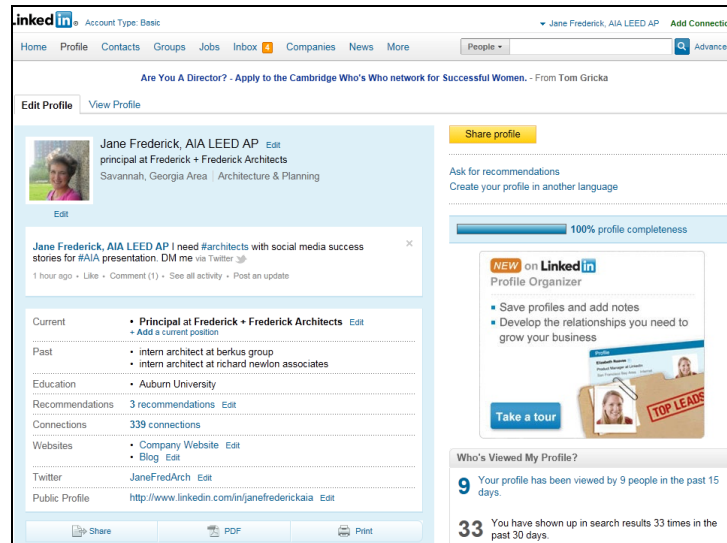
You can see on their twitter feed that they have mentioned the blog post on indoor-outdoor walls. Looking at the dates of the tweets, you can see that they have sent several out in one day. There are programs such as TweetAdder that you can load your days worth of tweets at one time and then schedule them to post throughout the day, but don't do too much or it will become a one-sided conversation.

## Slide 6



Frederick + Frederick Architects is a two person firm located on a barrier island in South Carolina. Their practice focuses on residential architecture that is built with the land. They are specialist in designing for a hot, humid climate. The majority of their clients live somewhere else prior to buying property in Beaufort County therefore, their web presence is essential for potential clients to find them. In addition to their web page, twitter activity, blog and facebook page they have had success with LinkedIn, HARO and Houzz.com

## Slide 7



LinkedIn has been described as facebook for businesses. Create a profile; fill out as much information that you can and be sure to put a link to your website, blog and twitter account. You can also link your twitter feed to LinkedIn so you can post information once and it populates the different sites that you are on. I have found that different people tend to be engaged in different platforms. Your WordPress blog can also be embedded into your LinkedIn profile. Search for people that you know through the people search in the top left corner of the page. To expand your connections look at who people you know are connected to – often you will know many of their connections. The site also will suggest people that you might know.

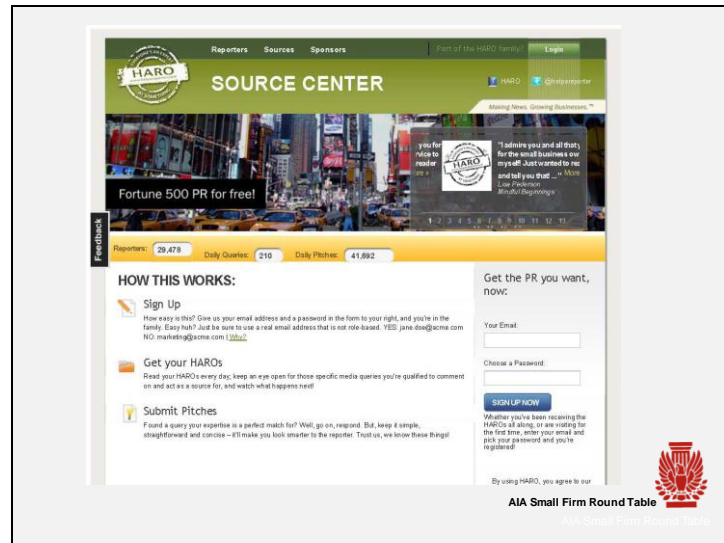
## Slide 8



On LinkedIn you can join Groups. Post and answer business questions to establish yourself as an expert...it might even lead to being published. This conversation is from Residential Architect. Clair Conroy is asking for editorial suggestions and by responding, Jane was quoted in the magazine.

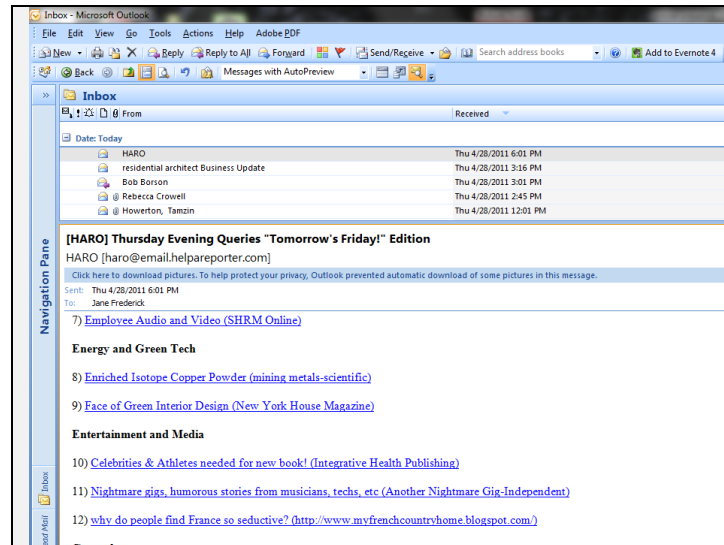


Slide 9



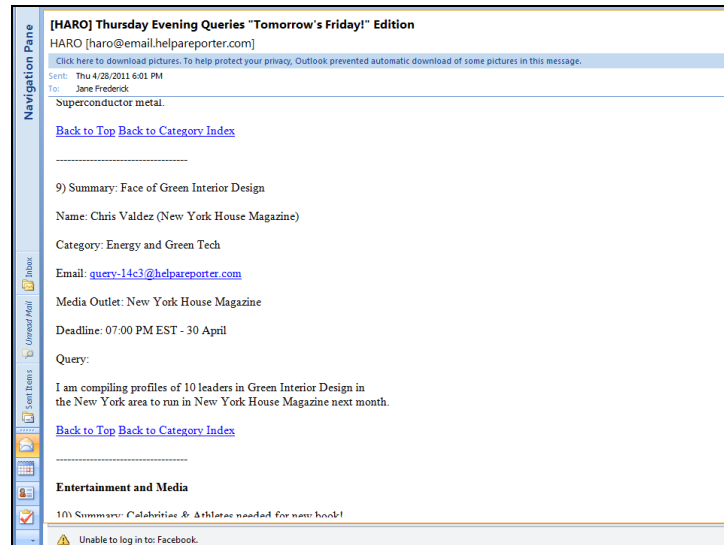
Help a Reporter Out is an opportunity to get quoted as the expert. Reporters request information on a variety of topics. You will receive three emails a day Monday – Friday. It only takes a minute to scroll through the requests. If you are knowledgeable on the requested topic, you respond directly to the reporter. Sign up at [helpareporter.com](http://helpareporter.com)

Slide 10



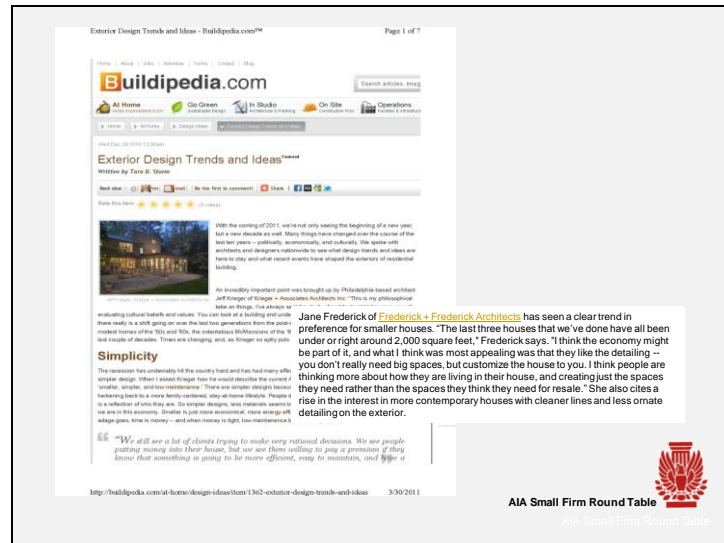
This is a screen shot of a typical email from HARO. There are lots of requests that are plain silly but about twice a week I find one that I can respond to.

## Slide 11



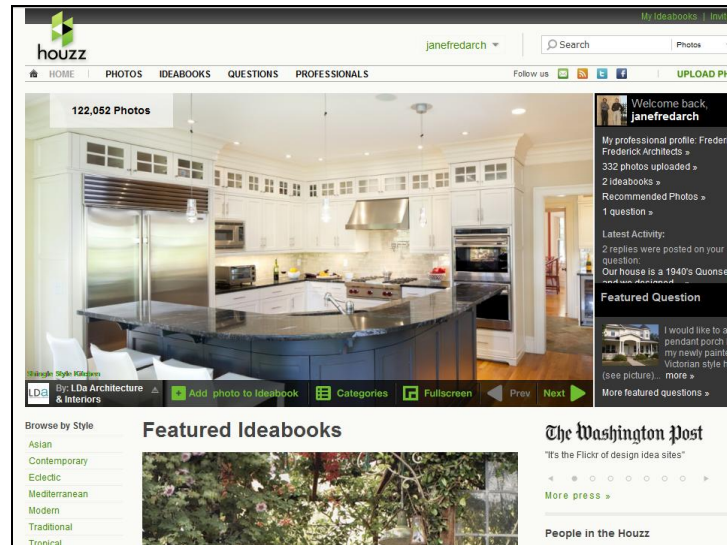
If you are interested in a pitch and click on it this is the information that you will find. Note that the reporter has a deadline so please be timely in responding.

## Slide 12



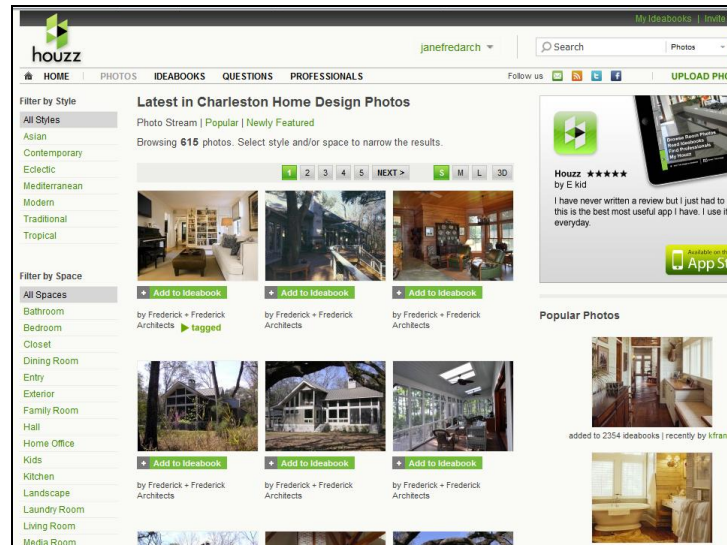
This Buildipedia Article was from a HARO connection. A quote with a live link to your web page is better and cheaper than any paid advertisement. When you are quoted or published in an online and/or print publication, be sure to share the information on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

Slide 13



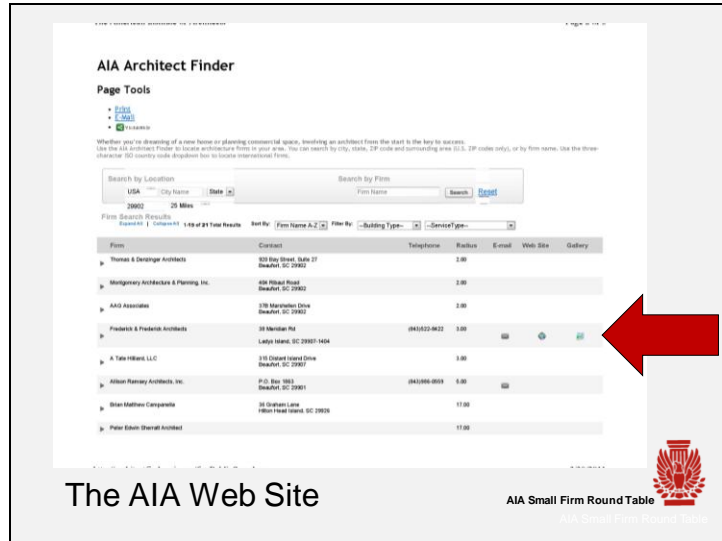
Houzz.com is a huge database of residential design. Any professional can create a profile and upload high quality photographs. You identify the photos by style and room. You can also tag photos with detail notes such as “stone fireplace”. Regular writers for Houzz create the featured ideabooks using the photographs that the professionals have uploaded to the site. Anyone can browse the site and create their own ideabook. When any of your photos are included in a houzz featured ideabook, be sure to tweet about it.

Slide 14



The site is also searchable by cities. The photographs most recently added to ideabooks come up first on the screen. If you search by professionals, the architect with the most photographs uploaded shows up first. So it is good to have more photographs. It is also interesting to see which of your project photos are added to the most ideabooks. Frederick + Frederick has typically been a regional firm with projects in the Carolinas and Georgia. Recently, they received an email from a potential client from Texas who had found the firm on houzz. Jane is now licensed in Texas and has expanded the firms hot, humid expertise to north Texas with the new clients. 12 to 15% of the traffic to the Frederick's web site comes from houzz.com

## Slide 15



**AIA Architect Finder**

Page Tools

Whether you're drawing a new home or planning commercial space, involving an architect from the start is the key to success. Use the AIA Architect Finder to locate architecture firms in your area. You can search by city, state, ZIP code and surrounding area (U.S. ZIP code only), or by firm name. Use the three-character ISO country code dropdown box to locate international firms.

Search by Location: USA [City Name] [State] [25 Miles]

Search by Firm: [Firm Name] [Search]

Firm Search Results: 1 of 21 Total Results

Firm	Contact	Telephone	Radius	Email	Web Site	Gallery
Thomas & Dandridge Architects	500 Bay Street, Suite 27 Greenville, SC 29602		2.00			
Montgomery Architects & Planning, Inc.	400 Wilbur Road Greenville, SC 29602		3.00			
A&D Associates	1700 Washington Drive Greenville, SC 29602		3.00			
Frederick & Frederick Architects	2000 Main St Lafayette, SC 29021-1424	(843) 522-0422	3.00			
A. Tate Hibbard, LLC	1100 Chapel Island Drive Greenville, SC 29607		3.00			
Allison Ramsey Architects, Inc.	P.O. Box 1000 Greenville, SC 29601	(843) 966-0009	6.00			
Orion-Matthews Corporation	30 Graham Lane Hilton Head Island, SC 29929		17.00			
Peter Eckerth Architect			17.00			

The AIA Web Site

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The Fredericks also edited their entry on the AIA website that includes their phone number, email and web site. There is also option of adding photos.

<http://architectfinder.aia.org/>



**Case Study – Bob Borson**  
**Personal Creative Outlet**

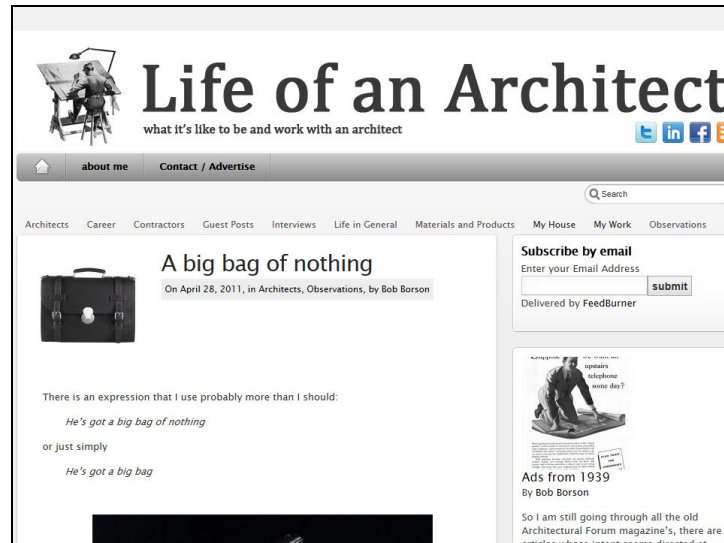
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Bob started his blog Life of an Architect in March 2010. His blog now has 75,000 visitors a month. He blogs from home; it is not associated with his firm. He is an associate partner in a 7 person firm in Dallas that mainly does residential design. He suggests that you should post regularly, at least once a week so that regular readers will not forget about you. Bob posts three times a week on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. He has found that no one is surfing the web on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. We must have better things to do on the weekends. He recommends that you write for the public, not other architects.



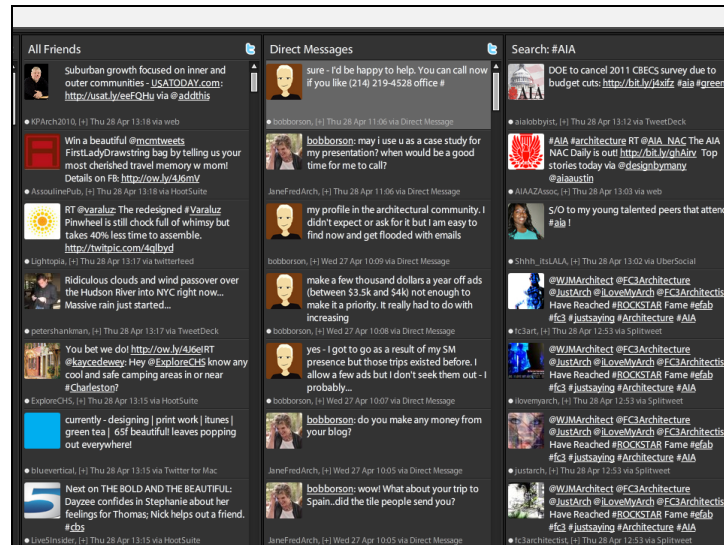
Slide 17



The biggest time commitment for Bob is responding to questions and comments on his blog posts or twitter feed. Bob stressed that social media is social and you need to take the time to interact with people who contact you. Through his blog, he has been recognize as an authority and invited to Brizo Fashion Week in New York City, Reign in Spain sponsored by Spanish Tile Association and guest posts on other blogs. He has been contacted by editors and publishers of Residential Architect, Architect, ArchDaily.com, Fine Homebuilding, Inhabitat.com and Architectural Record. He said that the biggest asset for his firm is that potential and new clients feel like that they already know him because they have followed his blog.

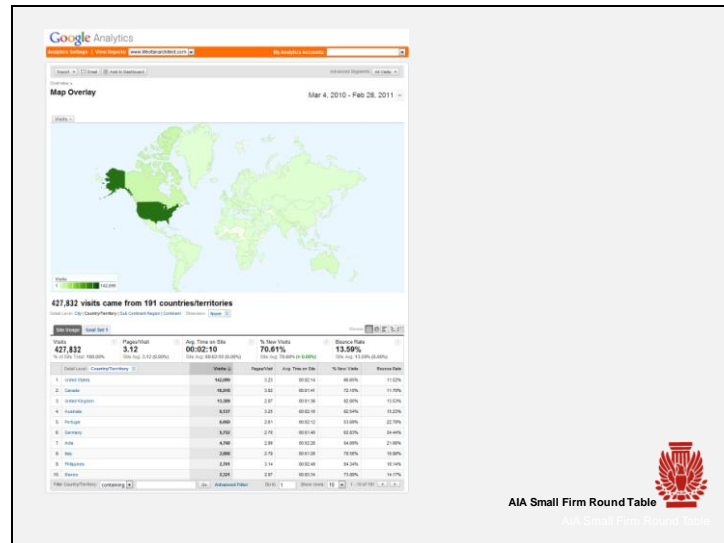
One way to increase readership is to ask other people to write guest posts. Another way to generate content is to curate content form others. To do this you should subscribe to relevant blogs, subscribe to newsletters, twitter search on particular topics and use google alerts.

## Slide 18



There are several tools that are useful for following your twitter stream. This is a screen shot of Tweetdeck which I use. Another is HootSuite. They both are available for your smart phone. You can create columns for different stream lines. The left column is the stream of everyone that I follow. The middle column is a private conversation or “direct message aka DM” that I had with Bob. The right hand column shows how to find the ball in the weeds. When a tweet is written for a particular audience or topic it includes #the topic, such as #AIA, with TweetDeck and HootSuite you can create as many columns as you want. I find it particularly fun when watching Auburn Football Games! #WDE

## Slide 19



Google analytics is one way to measure you social media success. Other methods include the number of twitter followers, facebook fans, and LinkedIn connections, how often you are approached to write guest blogs or articles in trade journals, how often you are approached to speak at events, and most importantly how many new clients found you because of social media!



**Case Study – Beausoleil Architects**

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Christine and Robert Boles a husband and wife architecture firm located in San Francisco.



On March 11, 2011 Beausoleil Architects posted their first ever You-Tube Video and it went viral. On 4/28/2011 it had been viewed 2,494,989 times. **You tube is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most searched site on the internet** - consider having a presence there! Christine told me that it was first posted on their web site and did not receive much attention for the first three weeks. They have an online ad with one of the local newspapers that pick up the story and that is when it went viral. They have had inquiries from several garage door manufacturers, even one in Australia. They received over \$1200 in the first month from you tube ads.


## Slide 22



A Facebook business page is a place where you can share information about pertinent topics and show projects in progress. You notice that they are commenting on the fact that their video had gone viral and had over a million views – five days later it has had almost 2.5 million views! Did I mention that **You Tube is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most searched site on the internet** ! Many of us have a personal facebook page in addition to our business page. It has been recommended that you should personally friend everyone who “likes” your business page – that way they see you as a real person...similar to Bob Borson’s potential clients who feel like they know him from his blog.

## FREE LISTINGS

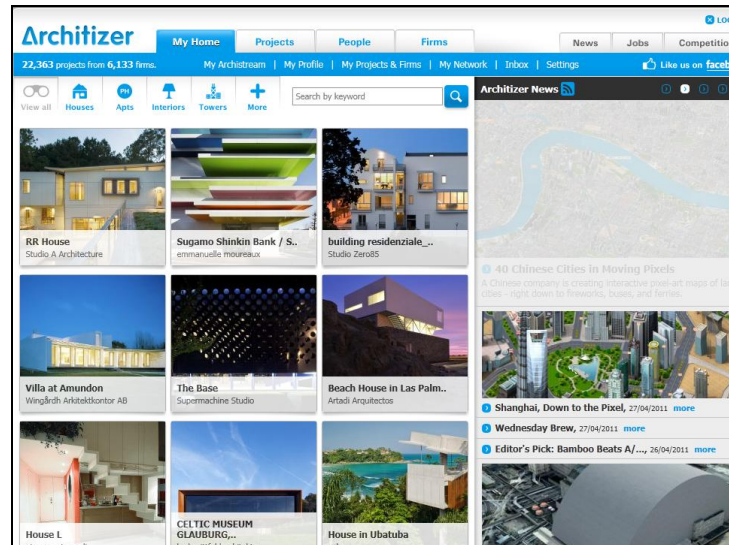
Google.com/local	OrganicConsumer.org
Yahoo.com/local	Renovationexperts.com
MSN.com/local	Houzz.com
AOL.com/local	Citygrid.com
Yellowpages.com	Architectfinder.aia.org/
Kudzu.com	Architizer.com
Yelp.com	american-architects.com
Local.com	
Superpages.com	
MerchantCircle.com	
Topix.com	
Hotfrog.com	
Archiplant.com	
Yippie.biz	
SwitchBoard.com	



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There are a number of websites the either list you automatically or that you can add a profile for free. Most of the sites that automatically list you need to be claimed so that you can edit the information. Several examples follow.

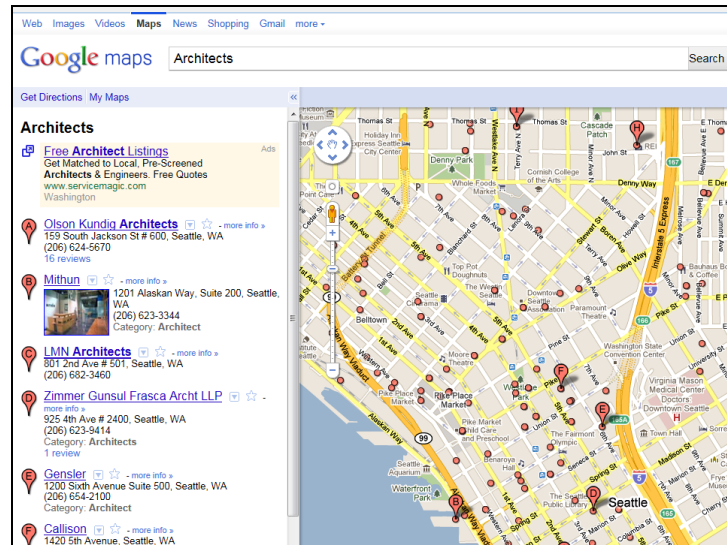
Slide 24



Architizer is a big community of architects looking at each other's work and is similar to houzz.com where potential clients can look for architects. You need to go to Architizer, create a profile and upload photos of your work. Architizer has all building types featured.



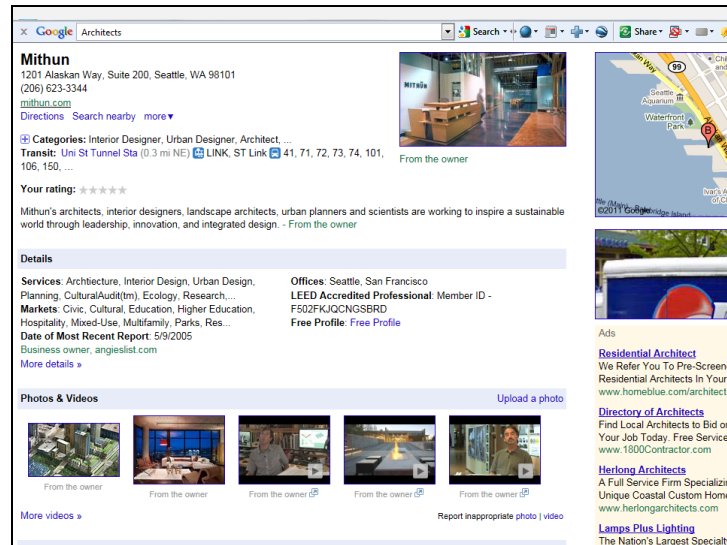
## Slide 25



You will show up on Google Maps but if you “claim your business” you can add additional information and a photo to help catch a potential clients eye. When I googled architects in Seattle, Mithun was the only firm that had edited their page by adding a picture. Click on more information at the Mithun listing...

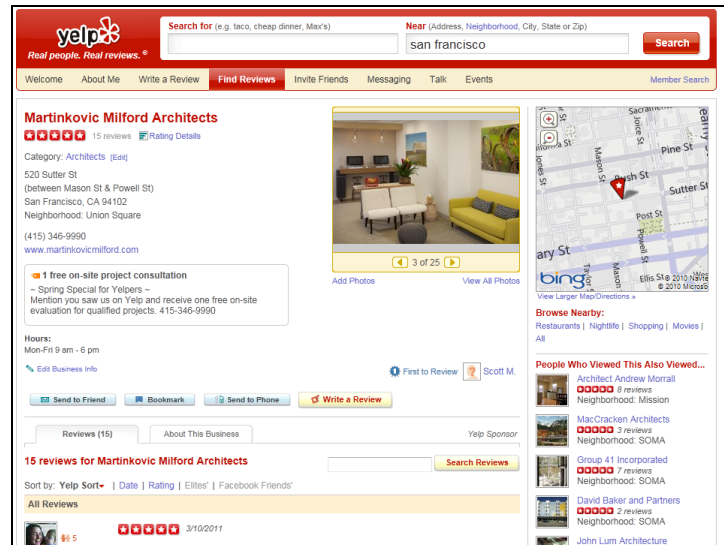
<http://maps.google.com/>

Slide 26



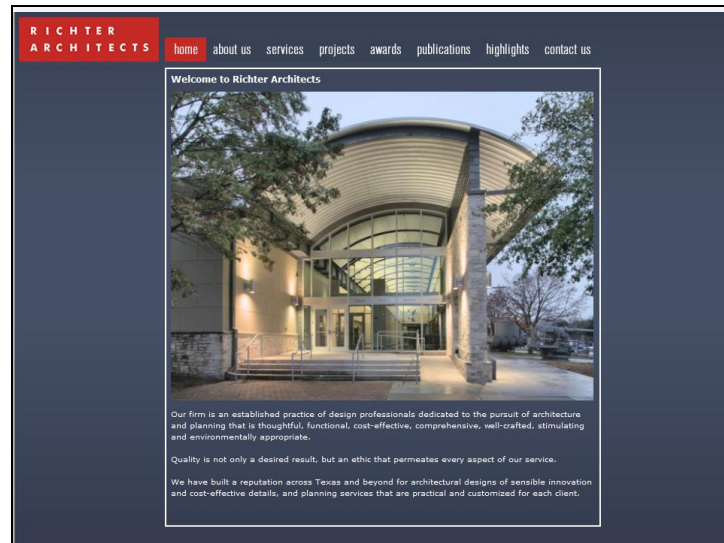
Mithun has added lots of information to their free listing including services, markets, locations, photos and one minute You Tube videos of their design philosophy ...did I mention that **You tube is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most searched site on the internet !**

Slide 27



Yelp is a free listing that you can edit to include one picture. Martinkovic Milford Architect has a paid listing that includes the slide show of their work and the ad for one on-site consultation. Also notice that the firms has 15 -5 star reviews. They don't solicit reviews from their clients but when asked by clients how can we help...

Slide 28



The mother ship of your on-line presence is your web page. It should have easy navigation like Richter Architects home page and filled with solid examples of your firm's work in every business sector.

66% of consumers find what they need online.

Once you have a strong web page showcasing your work and expertise you can expand your network to increase traffic to your site. Creating your own web site is not difficult or expensive.

## Web Pages Dos and Don'ts

Design your website for your potential clients - not other architects

Regularly update your web pages with fresh content

Use correct spelling!

Keep your links current and accurate

Don't force visitors to listen to your music

Don't have visible page counters

Don't have a flash intro

Don't have "this site is under construction" or "last updated Oct. 2002"

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### Create a Web Page in 3 Steps



1. Sign up for a domain name & web hosting  
<http://www.bluehost.com>
2. Download & install Wordpress
3. Select & install a theme

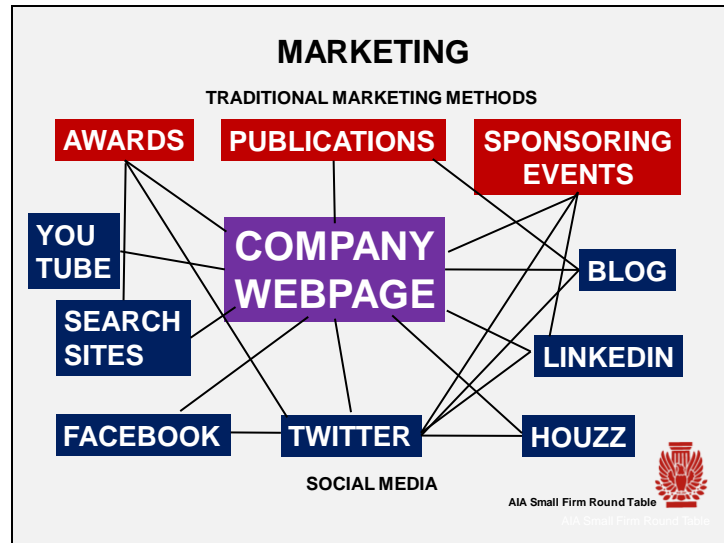
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If you don't have a web site and can't afford to hire someone to create one it is fairly easy to do one yourself with Wordpress. Also if your web site was created 10 years ago and you had to pay someone to make changes you might consider creating your own. Wordpress is very user friendly and has tons of support videos and online help.



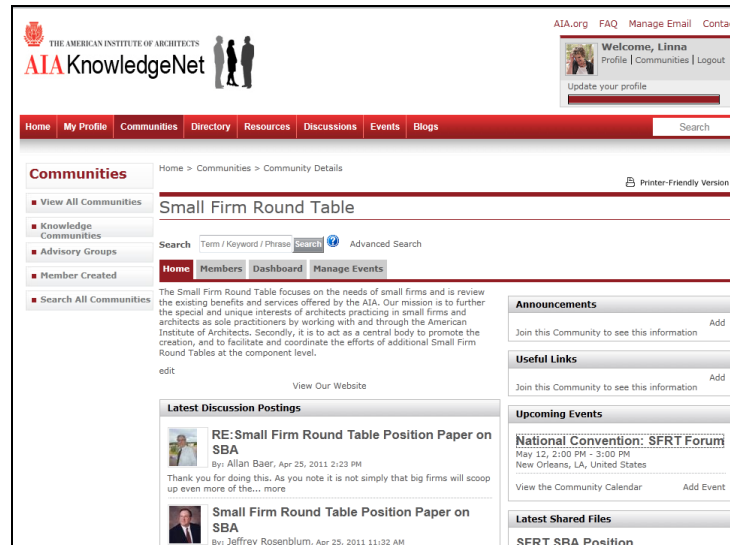
When I saw this job sign I was overwhelmed with the possibilities. The abstract design in the right hand corner is a QR code that you take a picture of with your smart phone. You first need to download a QR code reader for your phone. When you take a photo of the QR code with your smart phone it takes you to a link. You could do a short video on a cool aspect of the project or have a slide show of before shots of a renovation project. It can connect to your website and all of your contact information. As we all know job signs are a inexpensive marketing tool. You can create a QR Code <http://qreateandtrack.com/>



Social Media is about developing relationships with people from other architects to potential clients. You need to discover what works for you and how it fits into your firm's marketing strategy.



Slide 33



Please join the Small Firm Round Table – this talk will be published there for your use. We want you to join the conversation with us – other small firms!