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## Identifying opinion leaders and their activity on a local apparel business Facebook fan-page

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IDENTIFYING OPINION LEADERS AND THEIR ACTIVITY ON A LOCAL APPAREL  
BUSINESS FACEBOOK FAN-PAGE

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
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in

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by  
Jennifer Galster  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
LIST OF TABLES .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vi
ABSTRACT .....	vii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	3
1.3 Research Questions .....	4
1.4 Objectives .....	4
1.5 List of Terms .....	5
1.6 Assumptions and Limitations .....	6
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	7
2.1 Social Media: Facebook .....	7
2.1.1 Background.....	7
2.1.2 Facebook Fans and Activities .....	9
2.1.3 Word of Mouth Advertising .....	12
2.1.4 Word of Mouth on Facebook.....	14
2.2 Opinion Leaders .....	17
2.2.1 Opinion Leadership in Traditional Contexts .....	17
2.2.2 Opinion Leadership on Facebook .....	20
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY.....	22
3.1 Sample Tru Colors.....	22
3.2 Data Collection.....	24
3.3 Research Design .....	25
CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS .....	31
4.1 Findings .....	31
4.1.1 Content Analysis Results .....	31
4.1.2 Survey Results .....	40
4.2 Implications .....	41
4.2.1 Future Research .....	43
REFERENCES .....	45
APPENDIX .....	49
A.               2009-2010 FAN COMMENTS.....	49
B.               2010-2011 FAN COMMENTS.....	52

C.	2011-2012 FAN COMMENTS.....	68
D.	OPINION LEADER COMMENTS.....	71
E.	SURVEY COVER LETTER AND EXEMPTION.....	78
F.	SURVEY QUESTIONS.....	83
VITA.....		87

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Profile Criteria .....	27
Table 2: Theme Criteria .....	29

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Tru Colors Facebook Fan-Page Information.....	35
Figure 2. Facebook Statistics.....	32
Figure 3. 2009 Fan-Page Wall Posts .....	33
Figure 4. 2009 OL Comments.....	34
Figure 5. 2010 Fan-Page Wall Posts.....	36
Figure 6. 2010 OL Comments.....	37
Figure 7. 2011 Fan-Page Wall Posts.....	39
Figure 8. 2011 OL Comments.....	40

## **ABSTRACT**

As technology continues to grow, new marketing opportunities arise. Facebook is an online social network that allows companies to understand their consumer base (Shih, 2011). Little research has been conducted to understand how Facebook is used as a marketing tool. Word of mouth advertising is created on Facebook fan-pages, business pages that allow consumers to interact with each other with User-Generated Content (UGC). Identifying opinion leaders on these fan-pages can help businesses understand their customers and help them build relationships with them on Facebook. The current research presents a qualitative approach to profiling users of a Facebook fan-page wall, identifying opinion leaders, and analyzing the documented messages on the wall. The Facebook fan-page used was from Tru Colors Apparel a local apparel business targeting college football fans in the South East region of the United States. The profile identified thirty-three opinion leaders, whose comments were analyzed for themes. Eighteen themes were identified from the fan comments and opinion leader comments. The themes identified were brand/line, styles, excitement, purchase intention, purchase, team spirit, suggestions, pricing, sizing, photos, store/location, website, gratitude, emails, blog referral, recommendations, winners, and articles. The comments were analyzed over a three season period. The three seasons are defined based on the football season from June to February. Each comment from all the fans and from the opinion leaders were compared to identify relationships between themes and to support the identification process of opinion leaders. Purchase intention, Team Spirit, and the Brand/Line were consistently more prevalent when comparing the opinion leader comments to the other fans comments. Implications are presented for small apparel companies with narrow niche markets.



# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

A new age of marketing emerges as a large population grows in the usage of social media. Social networks were developed for the purpose of communicating with other people online using websites such as, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Myspace. These websites continue to grow with over 750 million people worldwide using some form of social networks (Shih, 2011). Because of the large audience, social networks can be a powerful tool for marketing (Matthews, 2010).

Facebook as the dominate social networking site (Lipsman, Mudd, Rich, & Bruich, 2012) has the ability to reach large fan bases, which may in turn increase their customer base. Specifically on Facebook, companies can build fan-pages and invite individuals to “like” the fan-page. These pages, similar to the individual Facebook profiles, can also be used to communicate with photos, comments, and videos.

Word of Mouth(WOM) is an effective marketing tool, which affects consumer attitudes, emotions and purchase intention toward a specific brand through consumer interaction (White, 2010). Research has found that positive WOM can lead to increased sales and also more customer engagement with a brand (Porter, Donthu, MacElroy, & Wydra, 2011; Shu-Chuan & Yoojung, 2011). Facebook users create User-Generated Content (UGC) when they communicate with others about brands or companies (Cole, Long, Chiagouris, & Gopalakrishna, 2011). UGC is documented communication or interactivity between users that can be considered electronic word of mouth. An example of electronic WOM is the ability for consumers to use fan-pages, comment or post photos, and share pages with their friends, which enables exposure to messages displayed by people on the fan-page. In turn, consumers keep creating and spreading

word of mouth. A consumer can engage with the fan-page by writing comments on the wall, posting pictures, or sharing links from the fan-page on their own Facebook profile. Customer engagement occurs when there is interactivity between a fan-page and a fan. As a consumer becomes more engaged with the site they generate more WOM and are more likely to purchase the product (Shu-Chuan & Yoojung, 2011)

Companies, especially small businesses that cannot afford large advertising campaigns, can reach audiences using social networks in order to promote brand awareness and increase customer engagement especially on Facebook (Shih, 2011). Facebook is cost effective because fan-pages are free to build and can be powerful when generating WOM especially in the fast-paced fashion industry.

Opinion leadership plays an important role in online marketing. An Opinion Leader (OL) is an individual, who has been involved with a product, has developed a judgment about a product or brand, and shares their opinion with their friends (Richins & Root-Shaffer, 1988). These individuals with high opinion leadership share their experiences and opinions about products with others through WOM (Brink, Rusinowska, & Steffen, 2011). These people tend to be well trusted by their peers and usually have the most access to updated information (Katz, 1957). Past research has focused on the identification of opinion leaders to understand the facilitation of WOM as they are responsible for the majority of WOM produced. On Facebook electronic WOM is documented for longer periods of time. For example, opinion leaders can use a Facebook fan-page to share their opinions about brands or products, and considering their messages are visible to many different people over longer periods of time, provide more of an impact on the creation of WOM than other traditional environments.

As mentioned earlier, Facebook can be a powerful marketing tool. For instance, Facebook can be used to share trends that influence consumers in their decision making. Facebook fan-pages can allow fashion opinion leaders to share fashion forward brands with their friends. Without much effort, a fan-page provides the perfect platform for the fashion industry in terms of sharing product information and connecting with consumers by creating UGC. UGC occurs when a customer engages with a fan-page by writing comments on the wall, posting pictures, or sharing links from the fan-page on their own Facebook profile. Furthermore, observing and analyzing electronic WOM on Facebook can assist in the understanding of consumer wants and needs in today's dynamic selling environment, which is vital to smaller apparel companies, especially seasonal businesses.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Much research has been conducted identifying opinion leaders in traditional environments such as print, radio, and television media (e.g., (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996; Katz, 1957; Richins & Root-Shaffer, 1988; Shoham & Ruvio, 2008; Summers, 1970; Zingshem, 2012)). Studies have found that opinion leaders do affect the attitudes and intentions of individuals in a traditional environment (Brink, et al., 2011; Prendergast, Ko, & Siu Yin, 2010). However, whether there is a specific group of opinion leaders that can be identified on Facebook and their effects of generating WOM and other outcomes through their Facebook activities have not been fully explored (Viswanath, Mislove, Cha, & Gummadi, 2009).

From a practical perspective, small apparel businesses can take advantage of social networks for long-term competitiveness if they maintain a large fan base of active individuals on their Facebook fan-pages. Keeping users active is a good way to generate positive word of mouth about the brand (Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009). Opinion leaders are generally more

influential because they are more interactive with the brand and products and have more knowledge to share (Iyengar, Van den Bulte, & Valente, 2011). While much research has been conducted regarding word of mouth advertising, and opinion leadership, gaps pertaining to Facebook fan-pages still exist. Little research has been done to understand opinion leaders and their activities on Facebook fan-pages developed by small businesses such as a fashion retailer or designer.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Facebook fan-pages create an environment to allow users to interact with each other and a brand. Fan-pages allow a company to market directly to people who have already chosen or may choose the company by “liking” their fan-page. Active users of a fan-page may spread more WOM through interactivity with the page about products or other related topics to the brand. Identifying the opinion leaders or the users that are highly interactive is crucial in understanding WOM on Facebook and in determining the target market. The current research raises the following questions: 1) How can behavioral patterns on Facebook be observed and analyzed? 2) How do companies identify their opinion leaders on Facebook? 3) How do they use that information to direct customer engagement and WOM to a positive sharing of information? 4) How do consumers’ uses of fan-pages help small apparel businesses to gain a fan-base and create an environment for individuals to become opinion leaders, participate in customer engagement, and generate WOM advertising?

### **1.4 Objectives**

The current research intends to assist in the understanding of Facebook fan-pages and the behavior of users by answering the above research questions. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to (1) profile the fan-page users; (2); identify the opinion leaders that direct WOM and

customer engagement (3) examine behavioral patterns of users on a fan-page during a specified business season (4) compare behavioral patterns of all the users on a fan-page during a specified selling season to the opinion leader behavioral patterns during the same season.

### **1.5 List of Terms**

The following are definitions of key terms used in this study

Customer Engagement	The role of the individual communicating with others to create word of mouth (Shu-Chuan & Yoojung, 2011).
Facebook	A social networking website (Matthews, 2010)
Facebook fan-pages	Business pages created to share information with Facebook users
Facebook profiles	User pages used to share information on a social networking website
Homophily	A phenomenon that occurs when people are influenced by people that have similar attributes such as age, gender, or lifestyle (Gilbert & Karahalios, 2009).
Hypertargeting	The function of Facebook to target certain people within a demographic or people with similar interests based on the information provided on their Facebook profile (Shih, 2011).
“liking”	The action of voluntarily participating in a Facebook fan-page by clicking on the like button on the fan-page (Shih, 2011).
Motivations	The driving force behind why individuals choose to do the things they do instead of choosing another option (Wohlfeil & Whelan, 2006).
Observational Learning	Viewing information presented by others to gain knowledge about

	a product (Chen, Wang, & Xie, 2011).
Opinion leaders	An individual that has been involved in a product and has developed a judgment about the product or brand (Richins & Root-Shaffer, 1988).
Opinion seekers	Individuals that seek information about products from opinion leaders (Flynn, et al., 1996).
Social networks	Websites that allow individuals to communicate through profiles and connections (Shih, 2011).
User Generated Content	Content created on social media by users and not facilitated by professionals (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Smith, Fischer, & Yongjian, 2012)
Word of Mouth	Exchanging marketing information about products or services between individuals without facilitation from the marketers (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955).

## **1.6 Assumptions and Limitations**

The current research will attempt to identify opinion leaders in order to understand activity patterns of Facebook users on fan-pages. This will lead to an understanding about what prompts positive responses and creates positive WOM on the fan-page. Opinion leadership is a key factor that will be examined in this research. The research collected data using a convenience sample, a seasonal apparel business that caters to a niche market of women interested in college sports teams. An assumption is made that the sample business is representative of other seasonal small apparel businesses with narrow niche markets.

## **CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The review of literature examines research within communication, business, and marketing journals to better understand Facebook usage by small businesses and their fans. Research about Facebook, word of mouth advertising, and opinion leadership are discussed to gather an understanding of previous research in these areas.

### **2.1 Social Media: Facebook**

#### **2.1.1 Background**

With almost 800 million active users connecting with approximately 80 community pages, groups and events, Facebook provides a platform for users to interact with each other and with businesses ("Facebook Statistics," 2011). The growing popularity of social networks and Facebook intrigues marketers as they strive to find the best strategy for advertising. The ability to reach large audiences on Facebook is appealing to marketers because of the potential to increase brand awareness and sales. Through marketing efforts on social networks, marketers can create a social shopping experience allowing consumers to discuss products and purchase products through online social networks. Marketers desire a social shopping experience for their consumers because when social needs are met consumer satisfaction increases, which can enhance the consumer relationship with a brand (Kang & Park-Poaps, 2011).

Facebook provides many tools for businesses to utilize and to create a more social shopping experience, one of which is the Facebook wall, where consumers can interact with each other and the brand about product information or other related topics (Harris & Dennis, 2011). Another tool is the ability to upload photos where fans can see pictures of products or share photos of consumers using the products. Consumers may also purchase items through Facebook by being directed to a company website or directly asking for products on the site.

Facebook marketing exercises two strategies, push and pull (Mitchell, 2003). A push strategy tries to gain consumers by infiltrating media with advertising in hopes they will see them. The pull strategy attempts to invite consumers to be involved with the brand (Mitchell, 2003). An example of the push strategy used in Facebook is the hypertargeting feature. The click advertisements used in hypertargeting are pushing products on consumers instead of inspiring interaction between users. Hypertargeting refers to targeting certain people within a demography or people with similar interests based on the information provided on their Facebook profiles (Shih, 2011). Facebook fan-pages display a pull strategy by offering a way for fans to become engaged in the brand and interact with it. Word of mouth advertising, a pull strategy, is a more effective way to conduct advertising on Facebook (Riegner, 2007).

Hypertargeting makes use of click advertisements, which are hyperlinks appearing on the side of a Facebook user's profile, to direct the user to a desired website outside of Facebook. The main function is to provide advertisements that appeal to that specific consumer at the right place and the right time (Shileds, 2007). This approach draws attention to brands through flashy advertisements, where as word of mouth (WOM) occurs when consumers share opinions with their friends about certain products or brands obtained through experiences with the brand or product. Consumers tend to trust product information derived from WOM written by their peers because click advertising or hypertargeting can be misleading by providing information that is exaggerated to get the consumers attention (Prendergast, et al., 2010). Click advertising is also more expensive; therefore, fan-pages are a more cost-effective manor for small businesses to market to their consumers.

When a business' fan-page is "liked", the user has selected to be notified of updates of the page. The updates appear on their news feed where they observe activities of other



individuals on the website. As individuals continue to be active on a fan-page, their friends will see their activities and be exposed to the page. Fans of a specific page get updates from these companies and there is a possibility that users will pass on the information to their friends (Gil-Or, 2010). Small business owners have many statistics available to them from their fan-pages to assist in the understanding of the individuals that are active on their pages. For example, the frequencies of visits and demographic information is available on the site, which is useful for learning more about a target market.

### **2.1.2 Facebook Fans and Activities**

Facebook users can be active in many different ways. Comments on walls and pictures are the main functions fans can use to interact with a page, but they can also show their opinions on a photo or status by clicking the “like” button under the photo or status posted by the owner. Notifications of activities appear on the fan-page owners newsfeed where they can see who is most active on the page. Actually writing comments is more interactive and may boost discussion by others more than merely liking a photo or status. Also, when a company posts more personal information about the owners they may see the fans sharing more information about themselves (Laduque, 2010). The more information companies can gain about their fans the more opportunities they have to increase purchase intention through interaction.

Facebook fan-page activities, such as commenting or liking photos or statuses, are the basis of the social shopping experience and help businesses build their brand awareness and increase customer engagement (Laduque, 2010). Some fans “like” a page; however, they are not active on the page and only observe interactions and view statuses. Observational learning occurs when fans view the contents of the fan-page, but do not participate in fan-page activities or interact with other fans (Chen, Wang, & Xie, 2011). Observational learners act as opinion

seekers gaining information from the opinion leader, which according to the study by Chen, Wang and Xie (2011) does increase sales. Understanding that observational learners are actively seeking information through observing a Facebook fan-page is important to small businesses because opinion leaders are sharing information with observational learners and therefore spreading more brand related UGC and WOM. Observational learners may not be active on the page spreading information, but outside of the page they may be sharing their opinion about brands (Chen, et al., 2011). Facebook does give some access to measuring observational learning; however, the technology, called “impressions” was not put into use until late 2011. Impressions give a number of how many people saw a status or photo posted on the Facebook fan-page. Because the current study observes a three year period starting in 2009, there were not enough impressions to be able to analyze the impact in the current study.

A study by Lipsman, Mudd, Rich and Bruich (2012) used comScore, a marketing company dedicated to measuring online marketing, to directly observe time spent, sites visited, search activity, advertising exposure, and online purchases by participants in the comScore panel. The study segmented Facebook users that were influenced by brand exposure on their personal news feed. By using a marketing tool such as comScore, the researchers were able to gain more information about how the users were exposed to brands. The main findings of this research were that Facebook is effective in consumer engagement with brands because of the high capacity for consumers to share content, news, feedback, and photos with brands. This study also pointed out the importance of using the Facebook impressions to interpret observational learning from the number of people that see statuses or photos posted by the fan-page. Because of the limitations of the current study, only the messages on the Facebook fan-page wall are analyzed. The authors used a segmentation strategy to understand fan exposure to

brands. The segments were: fans, friends of fans, and non-fans (Lipsman, et al., 2012). The current research strives to understand the level of interactions of fans with the brand and other fans in order to properly segment each user into a category. Interactivity is how OLs use WOM on Facebook and by observing behavioral patterns and frequency of interaction, more information can be gained to assist managers to cater to the needs of OLs.

Research by Viswanath et. al. (2009), aimed to understand usage of Facebook users by looking at one network of users in a specific city and following their activity patterns to determine how they created an activity network. An activity network is described as how users interact, the activities they partake in, and how these activities relate to each other (Viswanath, et al., 2009). The research followed the activities of a specific network and found that low-level active participants waited months before initiating contact. The researchers considered low-level participants to be users that interacted only on specific events, such as birthdays. The level of activity is determined by the rate of wall posting, which is determined by the time stamp on the actual wall post. High-level active users are active right away; however their interactions slow down over a period of time. The low-level participants are active over longer periods of time. The main finding of this study was that the minority of users produced the majority of activity (Viswanath, et al., 2009). The current research strives to identify high-active fans by adapting this approach of using frequency as a measure of activity.

Another study by Joinson (2008) observed behavioral patterns of Facebook users and the gratifications gained from using Facebook. The study found that users share identities, content and photographs, and also use the site for social investigations, social network surfing, and status updates (Joinson, 2008). Another study found that looking at profiles, updating personal profiles, searching for someone, emailing someone, writing on someone else's profile, reading

blogs, listening to music, requesting someone's friendship, and looking up someone's status are the main activities conducted by Facebook users (Jansen, Sobel, & Cook, 2011). Business fan-pages also may have many usages, including information gathering, networking, passing time, and entertainment (Barker, 2009; Ju Yeon, J. P, & Kyung Mo, 2011).

Overall previous research has found that Facebook is the dominate social network, which causes the site to be effective in consumer engagement with brands. Customer engagement on Facebook facilitates the desired social shopping experience, which mentioned above increases customer satisfaction as well as sales. Through observing behavioral patterns and understanding opinion leaders, the current research strives to understand the social shopping phenomenon. Observational learning on Facebook occurs when fans see statuses and photos on their newsfeed and this can be measured by looking at impressions (Lipsman, et al., 2012). Active users utilize fan-pages to share information, post photos, and as a form of entertainment. Interactivity on Facebook can be observed by using time stamps and wall posts, which allows the current research to satisfy the first objective of profiling the users of the Facebook fan-page. A hypothetical conclusion can be made that the minority of users will produce the majority of the activity occurring on the Facebook wall and there will likely be very few high-active users.

### **2.1.3 Word of Mouth Advertising**

Word of Mouth (WOM) occurs when consumers discuss a product or service with their peers (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Sun, Youn, Wu, & Kuntaraporn, 2006). In the traditional context, WOM is generated through face-to-face interaction derived from information originally generated from print, radio and television media. This communication produces advertising through face-to-face discussion about a product or service between individuals. An advantage of WOM for companies is to gain exposure to new potential customers through referrals by peers

especially those with stronger relationship ties with their friends (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Cheema & Kaikati, 2010; Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009). At the consumer level, information passed between friends about products is highly trusted, which may translate into increased sales according to the trade article by Bughin, Doogan & Vetvik (2010).

Consumer engagement is the role of an individual communicating with brands to create word of mouth (Shu-Chuan & Yoojung, 2011); it facilitates WOM through the interactions of individuals with a company. These interactions between consumer and brand may be visible to other individuals which is then considered WOM. Also, as a customer engages with a brand they will gain more information about products and are more likely to share that with their peers (Harris & Dennis, 2011). Individuals discuss the product or brand with another individual and begin to translate their perceptions of the brand to the other person (Shu-Chuan & Yoojung, 2011).

Negative WOM can destroy a company's reputation and its success by increasing the number of people that communicate negative information about the company (Sirdeshmukh, Sigh, & Sabol, 2002; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996) Positive WOM can generate constructive communication between the consumer and the company that can lead to a long term relationship with the brand or product (e.g. Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman 1996; Sirdeshmukh et al. 2002). Tie strength is explained by the intensity of a relationship between individuals. Homophily is a phenomenon that occurs when individuals are influenced by people with similar attributes such as age, gender, or lifestyle and is the determining factor for the level of tie strength in a relationship. Individuals that have closer relationships have a stronger tie strength therefore the influence of spreading product information between these individuals is more intense than individuals with a weaker tie strength (Gilbert & Karahalios, 2009). Positive WOM

has been found to be spread more as a result of stronger tie strength through interactivity of relationships with strong ties (Brown & Reingen, 1987).

#### **2.1.4 Word of Mouth on Facebook**

Individuals referring their peers to a Facebook fan-page is very important for Social Networks. These referrals have a strong impact on individuals using a social network from the consumer and the company perspective (Trusov, et al., 2009). WOM can also affect the longevity of an individual staying active with a company fan-page by recommending to friends. Individuals that have been introduced to a brand through WOM in social networks generally are more actively communicating with brands than individuals introduced through traditional marketing channels such as print or television (Villanueva, Yoo, & Hanssens, 2008).

Though there is a possibility for fans to “like” a fan-page and never use it, their news feed on their home page will still display information generated from the fan-page, which they can interact with at their leisure. As they see information generated from the company fan-page they are participating in observational learning as discussed earlier (Chen, et al., 2011). These individuals are also given more opportunity to interact with the brand on the fan-page. Individuals that trust a source will be more likely to be affected by the information provided by that source and pass on the information to others (Bughin, et al., 2010). Visibility is another factor in WOM because messages are displayed almost permanently and can be viewed at later times (Berger & Schwartz, 2011). Facebook provides a place for products and information to become visible to a large network of people, therefore, it is important to study WOM within Facebook fan-pages because information generated on these pages affect the image and the brand. Because many people are exposed to the information generated, many more people see the brand and can generate an opinion about the brand.

User generated content (UGC) is related to WOM but is not exactly the same; when UGC, content created on social media by users and not facilitated by professionals (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Smith, et al., 2012), is brand-related it overlaps the idea of WOM because WOM is brand-related discussion between individuals (Cole, et al., 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Therefore, for the current research both UGC and WOM are used. WOM advertising for small businesses is very effective because people trust their friends and family when discussing brands they trust (Kozinets, de Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010).

Trust is the main reason Facebook is successful as a communication and marketing tool. When users trust a website, they trust the information generated on that site (Harris & Dennis, 2011). When their friends post things about brands or other businesses they are more likely to pay attention to these brands and other businesses because of the trust generated from their friends on Facebook (Shih, 2011). When a Facebook user “likes” a fan page the information is displayed on a users news feed. When the user views the page the user may become curious and click the page to find out more information. As more and more users become fans of a fan-page and continue to use it, content from the interaction is diffused through the news feed feature on other user’s profiles and thus more users see the information and may choose to become a fan through “liking” the fan-page.

Facebook provides a place for WOM to be generated. WOM in this context is different from traditional WOM because the messages are documented on the fan-page wall and visible for longer periods of time. Because messages are documented, fans can see all the positive and negative comments on a page. Negative responses can damage a company’s reputation much faster because of the high volume of users and fans capable of seeing these messages. Likewise, positive messages will have a higher impact as well by helping to build brand image as many

more users can see the messages and spread the word to other users, potentially increasing the fan-base on the Facebook fan-page (e.g. Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman 1996; Sirdeshmukh et al. 2002). Understanding the topics discussed on a fan-page wall can help small businesses tailor their statuses to gain positive responses. The current research aims to understand the popular topics discussed in order to potentially help small businesses tailor their messages to the fan-base to strengthen the tie strength and the brand image.

Gil-Or (2010) conducted a short study of a restaurant using a Facebook fan-page. The experiment created a fan-page for a local restaurant and sent messages to the fans of the page and offered coupons as an incentive. Within a month, 80 people became a fan of the page as a result of the experiment, which was much more than expected. The success of this company using Facebook to attract new fans, gives an example of how powerful Facebook can be as a marketing tool. The Gil-Or (2010) study did not attribute this success to the use of WOM. By understanding WOM, the study could have gathered more information about how the 80 people became fans of the fan-page.

Fans are important to the current study because they can generate more WOM to be seen by other users. In a study by Dholakia & Durham (2010) the effectiveness of Facebook was measured by emailing customers of a café and inviting them to become fans of the Facebook fan-page. The researchers found that fans of the Facebook page generated more sales than non-fans. Because the researchers were able to see interactions between fans and non-fans they were able to gather information about their sales activity. Fans would mention the company much more than non-fans and the fans were shopping in the store more (Dholakia & Durham, 2010). As the fans were mentioning the company they were creating WOM. Though customers did not spend more money on each visit, they were coming more frequently spending money each time, which



in turn increased sales over time. This example exhibits how powerful Facebook can be in marketing when generating WOM.

Because messages are recorded between users on social networks such as Facebook, the effects of WOM are easy to be observed and analyzed. Documenting visible messages can be vital to understanding interactions between users. By observing messages sent to others via the Facebook wall, information can be gathered pertaining to behavioral patterns, how the users interact, the frequency of interactions and the content being discussed (Viswanath, et al., 2009). The method for gathering information, using Facebook interactions on the fan-page wall, is new and exploratory. The current research uses the documented communication to analyze WOM that is generated and to understand what topics are discussed more often. By understanding these topics small businesses can better tailor their messages to their fans.

## **2.2 Opinion Leaders**

### **2.2.1 Opinion Leadership in Traditional Contexts**

Opinion leadership research dates back to the 1950's when radio and print were the main ways of communicating with large audiences. The idea was that opinion leaders (OLs) had the most availability to the media and would disperse the information to the masses through the interaction of a 'two-step flow of communication' (Katz, 1957) or through WOM. The first step of the two step flow model starts with the media. The original concept relied on the media to communicate with the community. The second phase continues with individuals influencing the behavior of the others in society by spreading their opinions about the information gained from the media, otherwise known as OLs (Brink, Rusinowska, & Steffen, 2011). Traditionally, OLs would influence others' behavior by discussing information gained from reading the newspaper or listening to the radio. The information that OLs gain can be about such things as politics, pop

culture, or product brands. The current research focuses on opinion leadership on apparel brands. In the present, OLs gain information from the internet and television about brands. By interacting with their peers and spreading brand and product information, OLs form a relationship with a brand and assist in forming a brand image (Richins & Root-Shaffer, 1988). Modern society and forms of media differ drastically from the original two-step model because OLs use internet and television more so than print and radio. However, the idea of opinion leadership can be used to understand how OLs generate WOM through social media.

There are many different characteristics that affect OLs and how they interact with others in traditional environments. According to Summers (1970), demographics, social, attitudinal, and topical characteristics affect the influence OLs have over others, especially in the apparel industry. Summers (1970) found that opinion leaders see themselves as more innovative with their fashion choices than other non-opinion leaders. Also, OLs tend to be more active in social communities where they will have more influence over the behaviors of others including purchase intention and spreading WOM (Shoham & Ruvio, 2008; Summers, 1970).

In the traditional environment, OLs gain information from traditional media then they reach audiences and spread information. For instance, OLs wearing a design from a new clothing line they read about in a magazine will then go tell their friends of their new discovery (Vernette, 2004).

Opinion leadership describes a consumer that has engaged with a product and has developed a judgment about the product or brand. OLs employ WOM, which is the act of spreading information whether it be physically talking to someone about a brand or product or posting reviews online, and sharing their opinions with others (Riegner, 2007; Samson, 2010). The study by Richins and Root-Shaffer (1988) found that with increased engagement with a

company, consumers gain opinion leadership in communities and thus may be willing to participate in WOM activities by spreading information to their peers. Gaining opinion leadership is important to some individuals, but some prefer to be opinion seekers, observing information presented by OLs (Sun, et al., 2006). WOM and opinion leadership concepts work together to inform others about a product because OLs spread WOM to opinion seekers. When consumers are highly active in a social network related to the brand and use the products diligently, they have more influence over others opinions of said product (Iyengar, Van den Bulte, Eichert, West, & Valente, 2011). According to the study by Chen, Wang, and Xie (2011) the relationship between opinion leadership and WOM, created through OLs spreading WOM, can be facilitated by marketing managers to positively inform others of promotions and product information on websites. The shared information gained from WOM and created by OLs can possibly increase sales when the WOM is positive as discussed earlier. A quasi-experimental design was used to understand how company-generated content will affect OLs and the WOM they share. The results suggest that having company-generated content is a positive reinforcement of the product. Managers that provide positive information for OL's are more likely to generate positive WOM for opinion seekers (Chen, et al., 2011). It is important for managers to be aware of the topics that create more interaction in order to start discussions with OLs and opinion seekers through WOM.

With the internet increasingly becoming more powerful, the impact of OLs becomes more important as well because their audience reach intensifies. The audience of OLs are opinion seekers that are observational learners looking only at the information provided and not interacting, whereas OLs tend to be more active and influential (Chen, et al., 2011). OLs are

more likely to express brand usage or purchases online than opinion seekers (Acar & Polonsky, 2007).

### **2.2.2 Opinion Leadership on Facebook**

While the idea of an OL is similar when referring to non-traditional environments such as social media, the ways in which they reach audiences is different because they are not physically speaking to their audience. They are documenting their opinions on fan-pages through comments or photos where more people have the opportunity to view opinions. Rather than attending a party, an OL could post a link on Facebook to a fan-page, thereby still reaching an outside audience and opinion seekers without actually attending a social event. Other traditional environments where OLs obtain information include gaining information from print, radio or television media as mentioned above. OLs take the time to observe media and spread their opinions to their friends and families, therefore it is assumed they will spend more time on Facebook forming opinions and spreading WOM (Brink, Rusinowska, & Steffen, 2011).

Facebook can facilitate communication between OLs and opinion seekers with fan-pages using UGC. OL's can be exposed to new brands and products and have the ability to share them with their friends quickly (Flynn, et al., 1996). About 30 percent more people will 'like' a fan-page if their friends have 'liked' it (Ang, 2011). OLs in the Facebook environment are similar to those of traditional environments because they lead discussion and share ideas with others. The difference is that the messages are documented and can be influential over longer periods of time. Companies can directly influence the content being generated on their page if they understand how OLs are communicating and what topics peak their interest. Companies have the ability to create discussions on specific topics as well as gather information about the community surrounding their brand (Ang, 2011). Companies can also advertise through adding

statuses that appear on the Facebook newsfeeds of the individuals. Individuals voluntarily receive information when they “like” the fan-page and through their interactions they create WOM.

Identifying OLs can be vital to apparel businesses trying to increase an online network because knowing who the OLs are can help businesses target messages to their fans (Iyengar, et al., 2011). The current study observes how by sharing information on Facebook, OLs may increase the purchase intention of others through positive WOM. Also, based on their involvement on the page, they may be recommending the brand to others in the traditional environment. These individuals, likewise, may be purchasing the product themselves as well as spreading positive WOM related to products. Based on their interaction on Facebook, this study will categorize their activity patterns to better understand their customer engagement.

## **CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY**

This qualitative study was conducted using the content analysis method, which is a standard method for systematically investigating communications (Daniel Riffe, 2005). The method was chosen based on the use of communication to gain information. The data was collected from Tru Colors, a small apparel business Facebook fan-page that targets seasonal niche markets. Using quantitative content analysis allows for an investigation of behavioral patterns from the UGC on the Tru Colors Facebook fan-page wall.

### **3.1 Sample Tru Colors**

A convenience sample was chosen for this study based on access to the Facebook fan-page and the cooperation of the owner of Tru Colors Apparel. The small business was founded in 2008 in New Orleans, LA. The company began as a solution for fashion forward women who wanted to support their team with something more fashionable than the licensed selections. The company launched a line of female sportswear for the fashion savvy fan between the ages of 18 – 45. The consumers follow their local football team and supports them through tailgating or attending games.

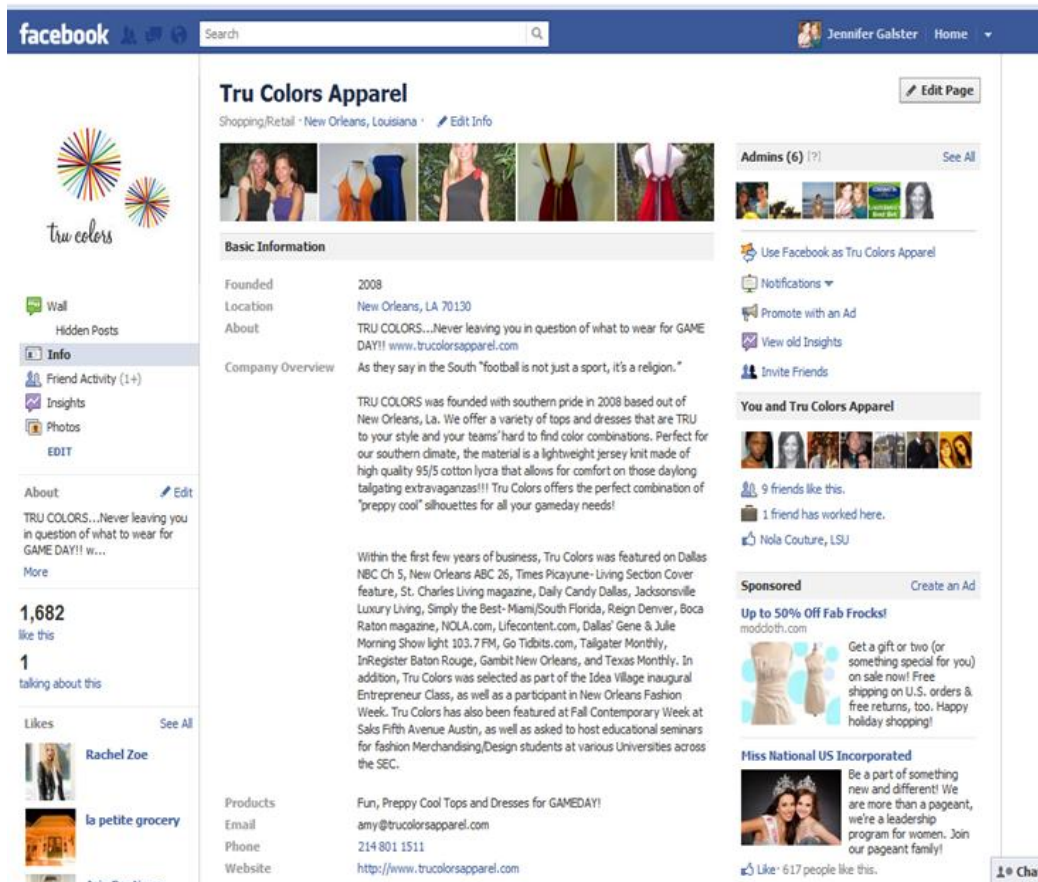
The company's sales gradually grew due to the clearly identified niche market and product quality. Now the company sells to over 100 stores in the Southeastern Conference (SEC) area and is also branching out to the University of Southern California, Vanderbilt, and Oklahoma State. Most sales are obtained through Louisiana State University, Saints, and University of Texas fans. Tru Colors mainly targets stores and fans from these locations. Their primary business is conducted with boutiques at a wholesale price. Online sales are more profitable because the company earns the additional retail mark-up that they do not receive when selling at a wholesale price.

The company is moving forward in the market place as an established source for game-day apparel for women. The business is still in the branding stage but the company is well on its way to being more established in the community. The main competitors of the company are Pigskins and Ponytails out of Florida and Judith March out of Atlanta.

The company advertises the brand mainly through editorials in periodicals and magazines all over the south. These outlets included *St. Charles Ave*, and *Garden and Gun magazine*. Bloggers, writers that blog online, generate traffic to the company's website, and offers and coupons to communities encourage online shopping. Sports events around the area will sometimes invite the owner to host a booth or to promote the brand at the event. The owner has also begun contracts with websites developed for the female sports fan such as Sports Divas. These allow the hosting sites to gain some of the profit from the online sales.

Many of the individual consumers are fans of the company on Facebook. The company began using Facebook in June of 2009, and they gained more than 1600 fans between the time they started and the end of the seasons studied in the current research. Many of the consumers ask questions about style offerings or different color combinations that the company may consider adding in the future. Many inquiries are made through the site and much of the consumer communication is done via Facebook. Tru Colors uses Facebook to post promotional information and information about how the company is doing in the market place. They also communicate with consumers about local events and stores that may carry the styles and color combinations that are available. The company posts photos of new styles and promote the brand through statuses about stock availability. The usage of the Facebook fan page for Tru Colors is a very positive experience for the consumer and for the company. Sales are directly generated from the site as can be seen by posts by consumers and responses from the owner.

Overall the Facebook page is used as a communication tool between the owner and the consumers for ordering purposes. In addition, the site allows the users to interact with other consumers who are actually wearing the clothes. Tru Colors uses Facebook to generate buzz about the company and gain brand awareness. Figure 1 depicts the fan-page information shared with fans. Much of the sales are generated through word of mouth advertising. Facebook is the perfect platform for this type of advertising to take place. .



**Figure 1.** Tru Colors Fan-Page Information

### 3.2 Data Collection

The data, for this study, was collected from the Tru Colors Facebook fan-page. All the comments or UGC from the Tru Colors Facebook fan-page wall were divided into seasons based



on the dates of football season. The data is defined as each fan comment on the fan-page wall. The population are the fans of the Tru Colors fan-page. The context of which the data are analyzed encompasses the communication between fans and the owner of the company . Certain inferences were assumed about the coded theme based on team names, blog names, owner names, and basic conversational wordage. The boundaries of the analysis of data extend only to the comments from fans on the Tru Colors Facebook fan-page wall. These boundaries do not include comments made by Facebook fans outside the scope of this fan-page, although it should be noted that WOM can be spread beyond the fan-page of the small business itself. The target of inference is described by how the Facebook comments were divided by themes inferred from certain keywords to help understand how these comments describe the behavior patterns of the fans. Understanding these patterns can better help business owners to direct conversations on the Facebook wall to topics that may increase user interaction, thereby increasing sales.

### **3.3 Research Design**

The first research objective is related to developing a process to identify opinion leaders on Facebook and then using this method to identify opinion leaders on the Tru Colors Facebook fan-page. The current research uses a process of profiling each user that commented or liked content on the Tru Colors Facebook fan-page during a three year period. Considering the limited amount of research conducted on this topic the current study utilizes a qualitative approach to gain information using the documented Facebook fan-page wall messages. WOM was analyzed in this study to employ a strategy to identify OLs and their interactions to determine how effective these interactions are on the Tru Colors Facebook Fan-Page. By using the UGC visible on the page, OL's can be identified, and their behavioral patterns observed.

In order to accomplish the first objective of developing a method to identify OLs, a user profile was created for each user from comments and likes, posted on the Tru Colors Facebook fan-page. This was used to determine which users were high-active, moderate-active, and non-active. Viswanath, Mislove, Cha & Gummadi (2009) used high-level and low-level measurements in their study of Facebook user behavioral patterns (Viswanath, et al., 2009). Their study observed the activity networks within a network. Because of the varying levels of activity on the Tru Colors fan-page wall the current research adapted the Viswanath approach of splitting them into two categories, but used three rather than two. Because some users are more active than others, level of activity was coded based on the amount of documented interaction on the Facebook wall. The users categorized as high-active were then considered OLs. After developing the process to profile users, identifying OLs was the second research objective of the current research. The user profile assisted in identifying OLs by giving a clear picture of the high-active users.

Table 1. Profile Criteria

User Segment	Criteria	Number of Users
High-Active	2 or more comments	33
Moderate-Active	1 comment	297
Non-Active	Just liking a status or comment	45
Total		375

Any user that had posted a comment on the page two or more times was considered high-active. The users that only posted once were considered moderate-active and users that only “liked” statuses or photos we considered non-active posting users. Profiling the users into

activity level categories allows the researcher to identify the high-active participants. For the current research these high-active participants are considered OLs. The maximum number of posts by any OL was twelve and the minimum number of posts by an OL was two.

The third research objective seeks to examine the behavioral patterns of the users on a fan-page. Understanding the behavioral patterns of the OLs and other fans helps marketers to target topics that increase interaction between OLs and other fans of the page, which will increase WOM and thus sales. In order to analyze behavioral patterns a content analysis of the UGC was conducted.

Because of the seasonal nature of the Tru Colors business the current study divided the three year period into seasons. The three seasons were determined based on when the company began using Facebook in 2009. Season one is June 2009-February 2010, season two is June 2010-February 2011 and season three is June 2011-February 2012. Only the comments written by fans were copied and pasted into excel documents found in Appendices A through C. Statuses posted by the owner were excluded from the analysis except those that fans “liked.” The OL fan comments, determined from the user profile developed for the first objective, were then put into an excel document with information about the date, and type of post. The OL fan comments are listed in Appendix D.

The current research uses content analysis to understand consumer behavior on the Facebook fan-page. Through comparing the OL UGC to all the fan UGC, the researcher will gain information about how OLs are leading discussion and how the owner is interacting with the fans. The OL comments were separated out for comparison, however they were left in the fan group in order to determine whether the patterns were strengthened by OLs. By understanding the UGC occurring on the page, business owners can tailor conversations toward

the interests of the current fans and encourage interaction. Because activity on the site can be seen by non-fans, it is important to know what is driving the conversation and which topics are most effective. Gearing comments towards these topics can encourage non-fans to be more interactive.

The fourth research objective was to compare the behavioral patterns of all the fans including OLs with only the OL behavioral patterns. A quantitative content analysis allows researchers to analyze behavioral patterns through UGC by drawing conclusions about meaning and contexts while creating an organized and replicable examination of communication (Daniel Riffe, 2005).

Each fan comment, from three different seasons, was coded to a theme determined by Table 2 and the themes were counted in order to gain information about activity patterns. The seasons divided according to the football season because the most sales occur during this time of year. The seasons are June 2009 – February 2010, June 2010- February 2011, and June 2011- February 2012. The fourth objective was fulfilled by doing a second content analysis on the OL comments in order to compare behavioral patterns. The high-active users from the user profile were considered OLs. The comments within the seasons by these users were separated into a segmented group. For comparison the OL comments were left in the fan comment content analysis. The themes were determined based on the context and content of the discussion in fan wall posts over the entire three year period. Likes were also considered in the content analysis and coded depending on the content that was “liked”. If a “like” was on a status updated by the owner the status content was counted as a theme, for example “Can't believe our NEW ORLEANS SAINTS are heading to the SUPER BOWL!!! Too bad we're out of BLACK AND GOLD! Just a few pieces left~give us a call!! WHO DAT NATION, let's DO THIS! Wow, this

is exciting!!!!” was coded as excitement, and team spirit based on the caps lock, exclamation points and using the word exciting and the mention of the Saints, black and gold and their motto “who dat”.

Table 2 describes each theme and how it was coded when conducting the study. A Key Word In Context (KWIC) (Stemler, 2001), was also used to search for the consistency of wordage. Specific key words were categorized into the 18 themes identified based on the content in the data. A keyword search was conducted in order to identify the themes from each comment. Not only was KWIC used, but also using the context of which the words were written. Comments such as “want” after a photo was posted of a specific dress were coded as purchase intention because they are stating that they want the item in the photo.

Table 2. Criteria for Coding Themes

Theme	Criteria
Brand/Line	Any mentioning of the line or brand as a whole including congratulations for the company or multiple styles being mentioned.
Styles	Anytime a specific style was mentioned
Excitement	Saying they are excited or saying they “love” it. Also, showing excitement with exclamation points and Cap lock letters.
Purchase intention	Anytime they said I want or I can’t wait to buy.
Purchase	Waiting for their purchase to come in the mail, or mentioning that they wore something they purchased
Team spirit	Any mentioning of a team or team colors
Suggestions	Suggesting styles, color combinations, or store locations
Pricing	Asking about pricing
Sizing	Asking about sizing
Photos	Commenting on or liking a photo, posting a photo, requesting a photo, or promising a photo
Store/Location	Asking about where they can purchase clothing or suggesting where to sell the clothing
Website	Any mention of the website, whether it be asking when it’s going to work or commenting on the fact that it is working.
Gratitude	Saying thank you or thanks

Table Continued

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
Email	Giving their email in order to ask a question or make a purchase
Blog referral	Saying they were referred to the page through a blog
Recommendation	Mentioning that they recommended the page or company to a friend or multiple friends
Winner	Winner of a contest or status about contest
Article	Any mention of an article that was posted or posting other articles as well as liking an article.

A short survey, containing demographic information and purchase intention questions, was sent using the Facebook messaging system to each user considered to be an opinion leader to gain more information about their influence on sales and others' purchasing behavior. The questions were adapted from a study by Prendergast (2010) that observed how WOM affects purchase intention (Prendergast, et al., 2010). Other questions pertaining to demographics and Facebook usage were gathered from the Qualtrics database through which the survey was created. The survey consent form and the survey questions are listed in Appendix E and F. The survey was sent to 80 users on the Tru Colors Facebook fan-page. First the survey was sent to the 33 identified Opinion Leaders and then 47 randomly chosen users from the less interactive categories. They were invited to take the survey with a Facebook message sent by a Tru Colors administrator. Considering privacy controls and settings only 80 could receive the message because some users do not allow messages to be sent to them by users that are not their friends.

## **CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS**

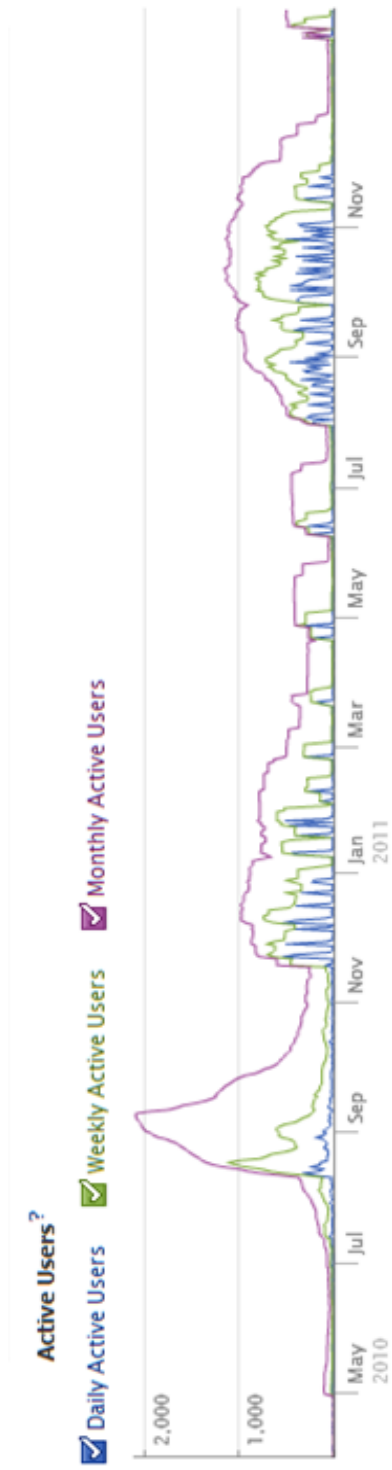
### **4.1 Findings**

The user profile identified 33 opinion leaders out of 1684 fans of the Tru Colors fan-page. This accounts for 1.95% of the fans on the page. There were 298 of the moderate-active fans and 45 of the non-active fans. The user profile allowed for the content analyses to be conducted.

Figure 2 was downloaded from the Facebook insights page from the Tru Colors Facebook. The researcher is an administrator of the page and has access to all the insight information. The table displays the active fans over a 3 year period from 2009 – 2011. Figure 2 shows the distribution of active users on Facebook from 2009 – November 2011. Because of the ever changing statistics on Facebook, this chart only goes until November 2011. Even with the limited amount of information shown, there are still some interesting observations to be made about the graph. During September 2010 there is a large spike in active users as opposed to September and November 2011 where the active users decreased. These bigger spikes are a result of the beginning of football season. Since this business targets football fans, it makes sense that there would be more active fans during this time. During the summer months there are less active fans, which could be because fans are not thinking about football season yet.

#### **4.1.1 Content Analysis Results**

The following pie charts were made using Excel after all the data was entered in an Excel sheet. They are shown in order from 2009-2011 and compare the fan posts to the OL posts accordingly. The findings explain what fans are discussing on the page and how that is important to the current research.



**Figure 2:** Facebook Statistics

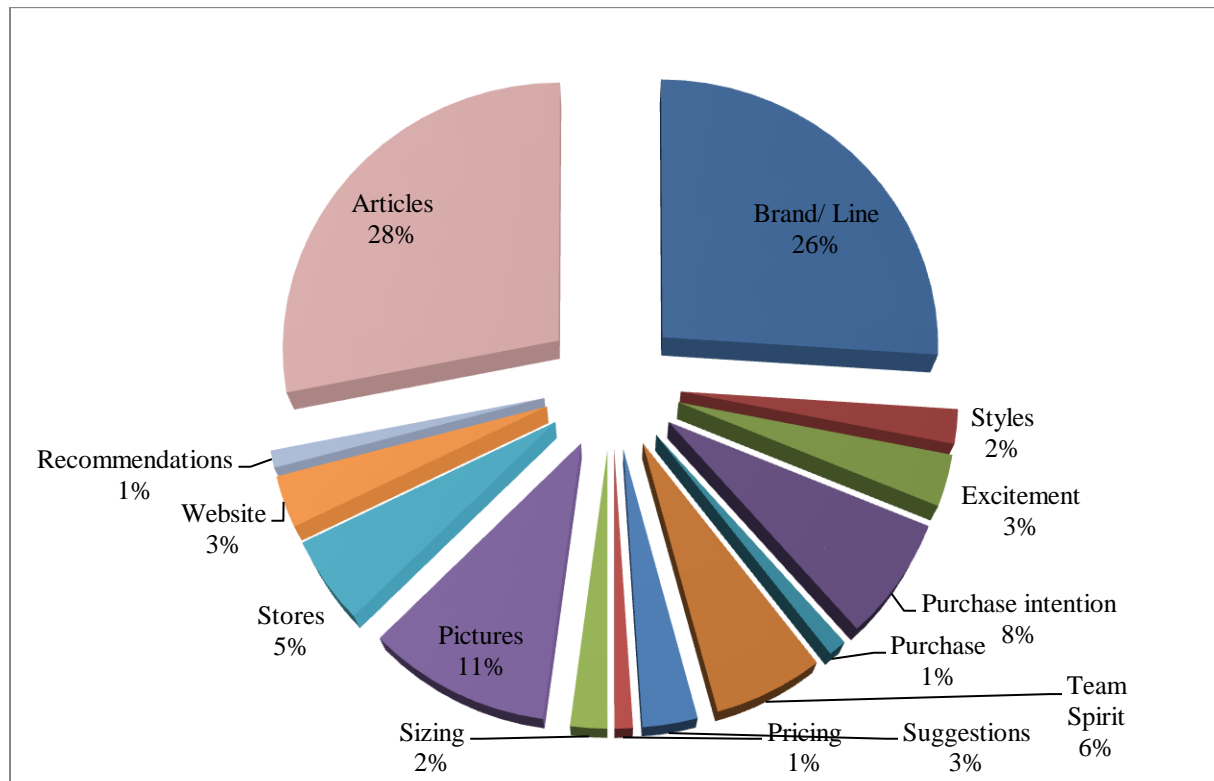


In total there are 18 observed themes throughout the three year period. The fan-page wall post content analysis had 50 total comments and 23 likes analyzed from June 2009-February 2010. There were 63 coded themes discovered within the fan comments. Figures 3 and 4 display the distribution of the themes found within the fan and OL comments. As mentioned before, the OLs were identified through their interaction over the three year period. Because of the extended period of time there were only four OL comments in the 2009 season. There were six themes coded from the four comments.

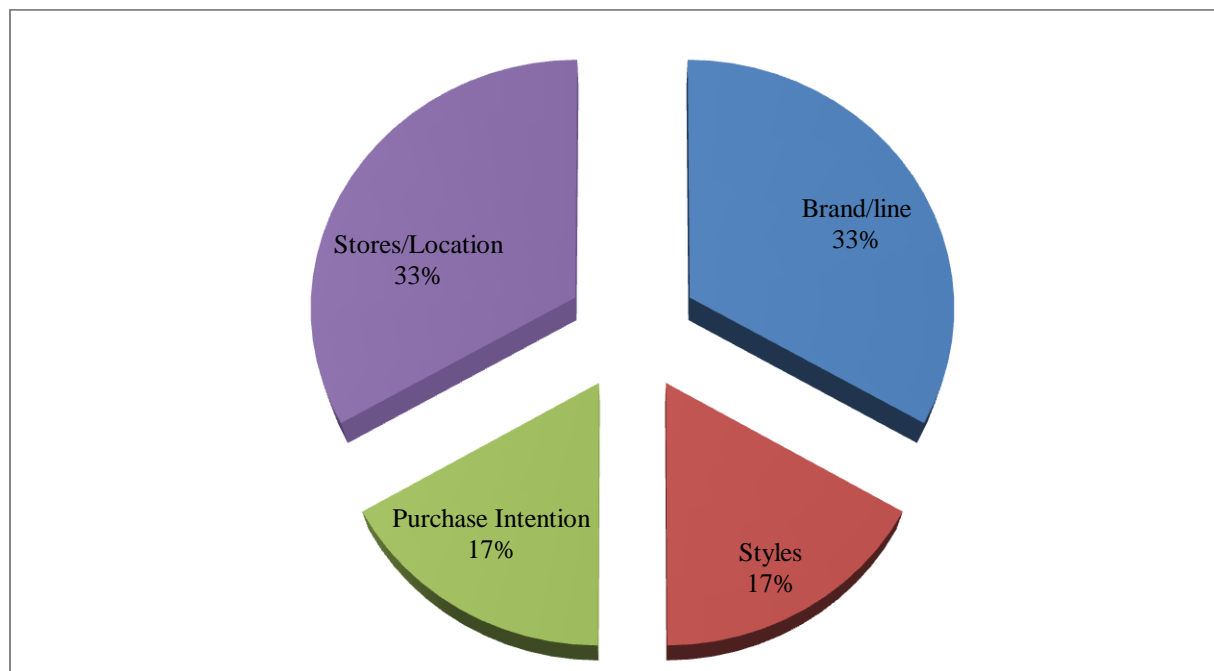
The 2009 football season was the first year Tru Colors used Facebook. The majority of the comments (28%) were commenting or liking articles that were posted by the owner. Brand/Line was the second highest theme (26%). The third largest theme identified was photos (11%) with likes and comments about photos. In 2009, the University of Florida Gators won the national championship and reflects team spirit being the fourth largest theme (6%). Surprisingly the Gators were not a main topic of conversation, but since an SEC school was the top school, a lot of team spirit is expected. Considering the line targets the Southeastern Conference for football, many of the consumers live in the South East region of the United States.

Comparing all the comments to only the OL comments presents some interesting findings. First there were only four comments during this period by the identified OLs; since the OLs were chosen over the entire three year period and not per year, the first OLs started posting during the first season. These four comments included six themes altogether. Within these six themes the main themes were brand/line and stores/location both at 33% which was coded twice. The OL fans did not mention team spirit during the first year, but they discussed the brand itself and the stores/locations. Purchase intention and specific styles each at 17%, were coded once. In this first season the OLs discussed product information, which is important for Tru Colors.

Since OLs are more fashion forward and more knowledgeable about brands, these findings are synonymous with the information found in the literature (Vernette, 2004).



**Figure 3.** 2009 Fan-Page Wall Posts



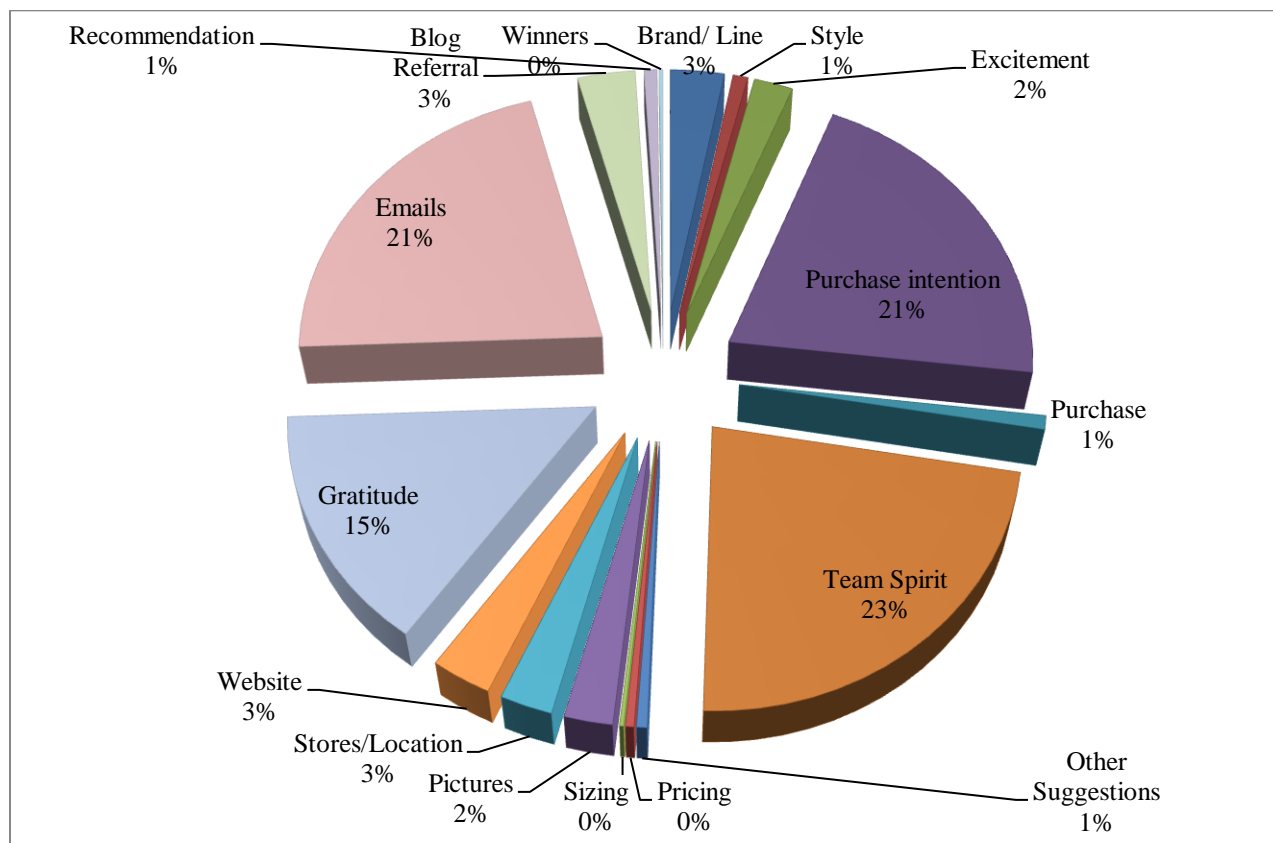
**Figure 4.** 2009 OL Comments

Out of the total 18 themes, in the 2010 season all 18 themes were coded in the fan comments and 16 themes identified in the OL comments. In the June 2010-February 2011 season the company website was down from August to October of that year. Many of the comments from this year were fans sending emails to purchase items since they could not purchase online. The number of active fans jumped into the 1000s range during this season and was over 2000 active users as seen in Figure 2. The active user number also increased in August and September when college football starts the season.

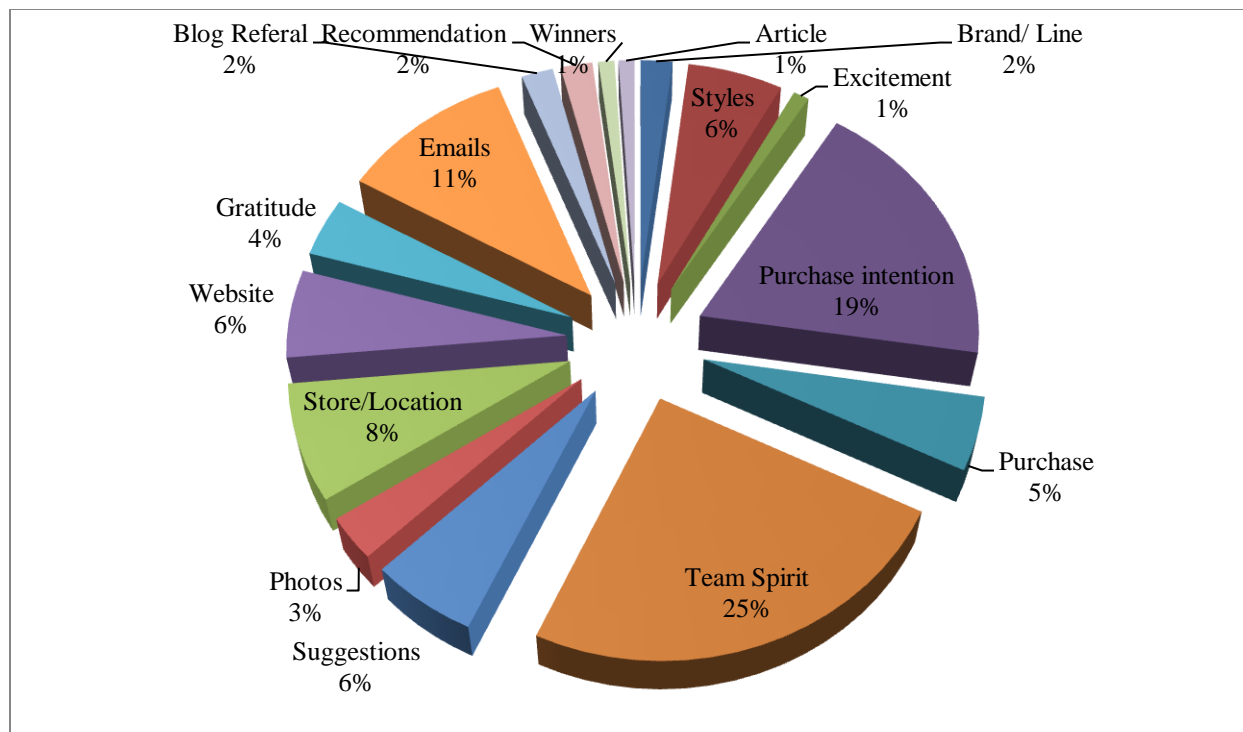
There were 413 comments and 47 likes in the 2010 season drastically more than the 50 comments and 23 likes from the 2009 season. This increase may be due in part to the website crash considering 21% of the comments were fans giving their emails in order to purchase apparel. Out of the 413 comments 956 themes were coded. Team Spirit was the highest at 23%. The second highest coded theme was Purchase Intention, which is 21%. Considering many fans were showing their support for teams along with their need for apparel when giving their email addresses these themes were the highest during the 2010 season. Auburn University won the national championship in 2010, an SEC school. The high percentages of purchase intention, emails, and team spirit themes reflect the strength of SEC teams during football season. Fans want to show their team spirit with Tru Colors Apparel and they are showing their needs on the Facebook fan-page.

Comparing fan comments to OL comments for the 2010 season presents some interesting findings. In support of the idea that OLs lead discussion, the main themes identified from their comments closely match the ones from the fan posts. The top 3 themes identified were team spirit at 25%, purchase intention at 19%, and emails at 11%. Team spirit was the top for the 2010 OLs, which is interesting because in 2009 team spirit was not a topic of discussion between

OLs. As fans get excited about the brand and want to purchase the products they are also becoming more excited about the teams they are purchasing apparel to support. The 2010 season is the only season where fans were referred to the page by blogs. The number for OL referrals from blogs is at 2%, closely tied with the 3% from all the fans. Basically, the majority of fans referred to the page from blogs also became OLs. Fans that read blogs are more likely to be aware of available information similar to the OLs in the traditional environment (Brink, et al., 2011; Prendergast, et al., 2010). The pie chart comparisons of the fan comments and OL comments from the 2010-2011 season can be seen in Figures 5 and 6 below.



**Figure 5.** 2010 Fan-Page Wall Posts



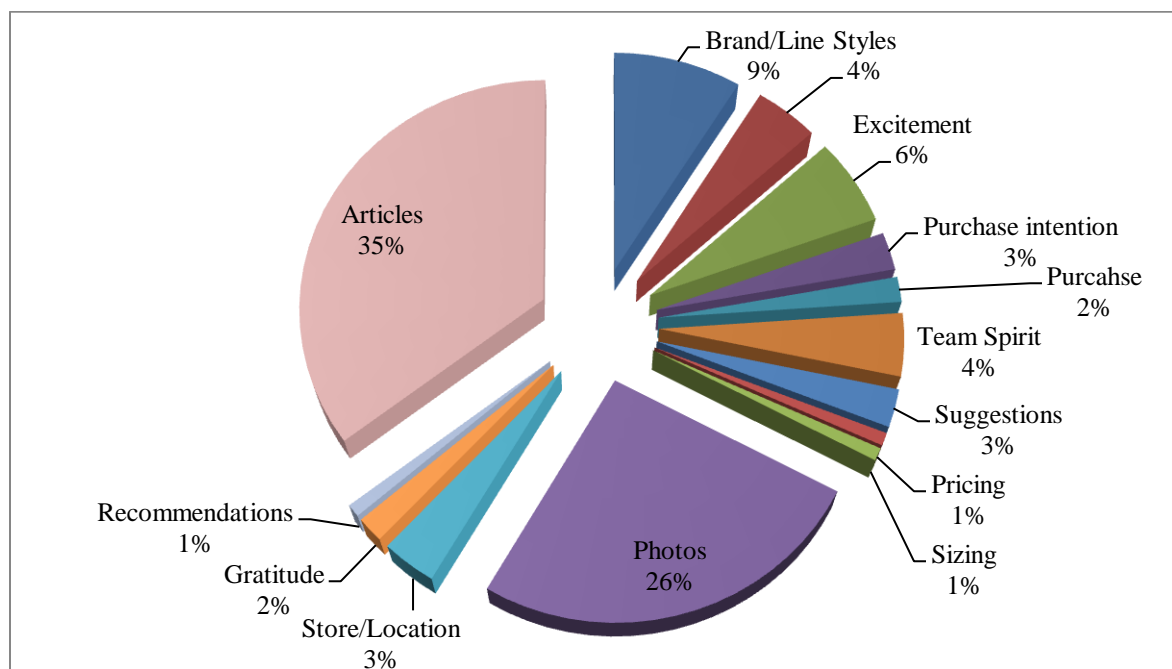
**Figure 6:** 2010 OL comments

In the 2011 season, there were a total of 50 comments and 56 likes by fans with only 20 comments and 13 likes by OLs. Themes were identified 112 times in the fan comments whereas themes were identified 31 times in the OL comments. The same themes were identified in both segments. There was a drastic decrease of comments for this year from the previous 2010 season. Instead of ordering through email and corresponding on Facebook, consumers can now purchase from the website so there were no comments of fans giving their email addresses in order to make a purchase. There was a steady number of active fans reaching just over 1000 from Figure 2. The total number of fans when this study was conducted was 1684. Figures 7 and 8 show the comparison between the fan comments and OL comments in the 2011-2012 season.

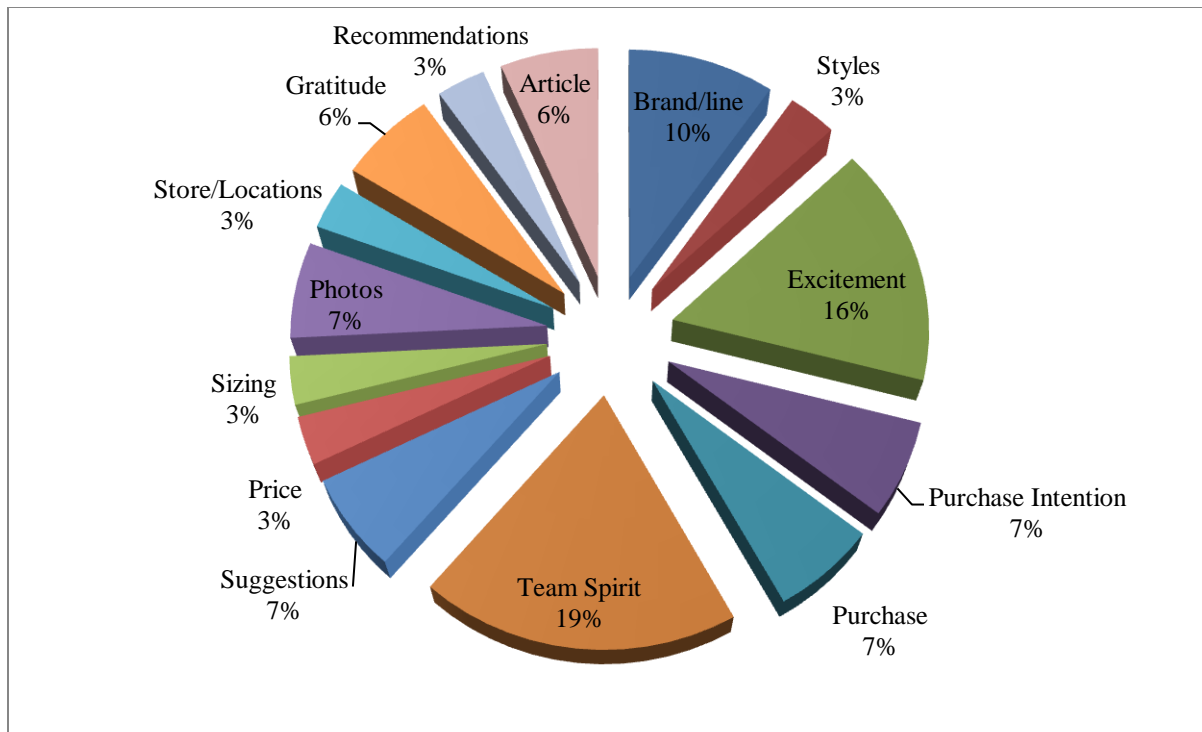
The owner was posting more articles about Tru Colors and the community of New Orleans where the company is based. This is reflected by the 35 % of all the fans that mentioned

articles or responded to articles. Many photos of the new styles were also posted by the owner, much more than in previous years; this finding is reflected by the 26% of comments and likes about photos. Brand was the third popular topic with 9 % and the fourth was excitement with 6%.

The top three themes from the 2011 OL comments were team spirit at 19%, excitement at 16% and brand/line at 10%. This year's OLs were less similar with the fans than in 2010. They are continuing to talk mostly about how they are excited about the brand and also showing their immense team spirit. LSU was the number one team and played in the national championship despite their tragic loss to SEC team Alabama. Considering the company is located in New Orleans much of the business comes from LSU, however many of the SEC schools also show their spirit on the Tru Colors fan-page including Alabama whom ended up beating LSU in the national championship that year.



**Figure 7.** 2011 Fan-Page Wall Posts



**Figure 8.** 2011 OL Comments

Overall, looking at all three years, an interesting trend can be observed. The fans show more interest in the articles and photos with their comments and “likes” but the OL comments show more interest in the brand, team spirit, and excitement. There is a transition in interests when a regular fan becomes an OL and starts commenting more as well as changing the topic of discussion. This is an interesting observation throughout the three year period. The change in interests may be in part to increased purchasing. As OLs are purchasing the apparel they are becoming more excited about the teams they support as well as more excited about the brand. This is reflected by the 2009-2010 season when OLs were discussing brand/line more than team spirit. As time goes on they start mentioning teams more often as well as showing more excitement.

#### **4.1.2 Survey Results**

The survey had 13 responses, which is 16% of the 80 survey recipients. Out of these 13 responses only 7 were usable, which represents 8.7% of the survey sample. The respondents were mainly ages 26-34 and 35 to 54 both with three responses. Only 2 were 18-25. This shows the demographic information of some of the OLs for Tru Colors Apparel. Surprisingly they are mainly older than college age. Out of the respondents 5 either have some college or have graduated from college, but 2 have not attended college. This is interesting because the line targets college students and college football enthusiasts. Apparently they are not one in the same, just because they love college football does not mean they are of college age or have even attended college. Of the respondents 88% check Facebook daily meaning that the assumption that Facebook is a powerful tool for marketing is supported by this data. Only one respondent checks the Tru Colors fan-page once a week, whereas three check it once a month and four check it less than once a month.

Six respondents agree that the Tru Colors fan-page users shared interests similar to their own. This means that they feel the community is a good place to share thoughts about the line and brand, which is also the main themes found from the quantitative content analyses conducted. Concerning whether the Tru Colors fan-page is a powerful tool for WOM to distribute information and affect purchase intention, six agree that the information on the page is convincing and four agree that it's strong, meaning that users feel they can gain good information from the Facebook fan-page where WOM is freely distributed. Also, four agree that the Tru Colors fan-page helps them build relationships with the online community. Purchase intention is also very important to this study, whereas only 1 of respondents had actually



purchased from Tru Colors apparel four agreed they were very likely to purchase the product and four agreed they recommended it to their friends, which supports that their purchase intention is increased by their usage on Facebook and that they are influencing others in a similar manner on Facebook as they are in the traditional environment. The survey further supports the information found in the content analysis.

## **4.2 Implications**

This research has implications for small apparel businesses with similar business models to Tru Colors. Mainly it gives a profile of the users for an understanding of a potential consumer base. With the ever changing demography of customers, managers can use Facebook to understand their customer by keeping up with a profile of OLs. These OLs are the main communicators on the page and are the basis of the loyal customer base. The communication displayed on the page can help small apparel businesses understand the needs of their customers in order to help them improve their products and services.

Identifying the opinion leaders gives a target for specific types of comments to be used to gain more interactions. In the 2009-2010 football season, the fans were talking about how much they love the brand and the line the implications for the company with this information is that fans are excited about the brand and they like the styles being produced. This is the main topic of discussion throughout the seasons and the owner should keep the brand/line fresh and keep talking about it on Facebook to keep the fans excited about it.

In the 2010-2011 season, purchase intention was very obvious across much of the discussion. The company can use this to target to the demographics of the fans showing purchase intention. Since there were a lot of email addresses being exchanged it would be wise for the owner to compile an email database and send out emails periodically to keep consumers updated

with new styles or promotions. Team spirit was very high during this season as well. The owner should start posting more team articles about different SEC teams in order to gain more discussion from the fans that are very passionate about their teams.

Another interesting finding from 2010-2011 was the number of fans brought in from blogs that also became OLs. This is very important for Tru Colors because the owner can start communicating with more blog writers and try to get them to write more blogs about the brand. The research supports that fans are attracted to the page through blogs and they become OLs for Tru Colors after they are fans of the page. Also, the owner should start a blog about the company in order to bring more fans to the Facebook page. Considering much of the discussion is about purchase intention, bringing in more fans and more OLs may increase sales.

From the 2011-2012 football season, much of the discussion was about articles or photos. The implications of this are that the owner should continue to post related articles and photos because they attract more conversation in the more mature years of the business. Watching the progression of the themes, fans are talking less about the brand and more about the community and teams. There is a transition between when a user goes from being a regular user to being an OL. The transition in this study found that when they started discussing team spirit, brand/line, and purchase intention more they were an OL. Managers can try to find the transitions with their own fan-base to figure out how to increase that transition. After they discover who their OLs are they can hire them as a board of directors to assist in decision making for the company. Since OLs are the most excited about the brand and show most interest they have the most insight into what customers want. Also, knowing what general fans are talking about before they become an OL is important to begin the discussion. Once they are becoming active managers can start to

shift the conversation to the things that OLs tend to discuss and try to increase the OL fan-base by tailoring their messages in this manner.

Other managers of small companies can use this approach to take a deeper look at their Facebook wall and fans to understand usage patterns. Because of the nature of the sample company other companies may find different themes related to their business model. Also, small businesses can adapt an approach to mold the interactions on the page toward themes that are most talked about after they identify these themes. Blogs were substantially important in gaining OLs to the Tru Colors page, therefore this may be a good way for small businesses to gain more important people to their Facebook fan-page. By getting bloggers to write about their company more people will hear about the company and start to like the page and be active. These people are in the know about current events and products on the market and are good people to spread WOM on a Facebook fan-page. Much of the interaction was about the brand and styles with Tru Colors. Fortunately for other companies this may also be true for their business model. By posting exciting statuses about new products and things that are related to the brand can spur more interaction on the page.

Companies, using this method, could look at trends over longer periods of time and begin predicting what their consumers are going to be talking about. Keeping up with consumer behavior is important for designers and buyers. Using Facebook in this manner can help them discover what their consumers' need and how to keep ahead of them with the conversation and with new styles.

#### **4.2.1 Future Research**

Impressions are also a tool available to Facebook fan-page owners that was added late 2011. The impression number appears under a status post or photo post and is the number of

fans that saw the post on their newsfeed. The newsfeed is the primary location where branded content is observed (Lipsman, et al., 2012), which is why impressions are important for managers. Since impressions were added to Facebook in 2011 they were not used in this study. For example, on August 1, 2011 the owner posted an article from nola.com about Tru Colors which 328 people saw, but only 1 person liked it. Another example is on August 22, 2011 when the owner posted a photo that 683 people saw, and only 3 commented and 3 liked it. The impressions show the impact of how many people are seeing comments, statuses or photos compared to how many people are actually commenting on or “liking” them. Future researchers could use impressions to better understand the impact of observational learning. Future researchers also could examine other businesses or event driven models using this approach to gain more information about how Facebook is useful as a marketing tool. They would need to observe behavioral patterns before, during, and after the event to understand how their consumer transitions.

Other future research could look at photos that are being posted and which specific design aspects that are being talked about. Looking specifically at the design could help the designer and even buyers identify trends in the clothing and discover their consumer needs.

Also, future research could look at tiers of interactivity further and segment the users into more categories based on different characteristics such as demographics or if there are more levels of interactivity.

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## APPENDIX

### A. 2009-2010 FAN COMMENTS

<b>Fan Comments and Likes</b>
5 photo likes
love it all. Awesome.
1 article like
3 article likes
Gretchen you look fabulous!! So good to see you! Love the clothes!!
Love the photos! So glad you are on here.
How neat! Great to see what you all are up to now!
Nice work Ladies
Gretchen I am so proud of you, too! That is so great, you are going to be so successful with this! Love it!
Hey Gretchen! Had no idea, Love it all! So proud of you! I sent out a ton of Suggest to Friends who I know will also love it too. I can't wait to get something so cute. I am definitely going to go to the Hard Rock and look for it next time I'm there. Good Luck with everything. You look so Beautiful in all the pics, Allure, Cosmo, Lucky, Vogue... they're all calling your name and if you don't try for them soon, I might have to turn in a pic of you myself! Let me know when you want to open up a Tru Colors Apparel store in the Jackson area and I will be Happy to run it for you. I know the perfect place too. See you soon. Tyra
Way to go Gretch! Let's not forget us "plus" chicks - we'd love to wear Tru Colors Apparel too! Southern Miss To The Top!
Any chance of Carolina blue making the lineup??
Gretchen you look fabulous!! Love the clothes! Great to see you!
congrats Gretchen lord knows you have paid your dues!!! I wish you much continued success---oh and can i have your workout regime please!
Gretchen, let me know if you need any help shipping your product, I work for a logistics firm and I am sure that we can save your company some money. Let me know if I can help. My cell is 251-455-7318.
Gretchen, this looks great. Congrats!
1 article like
12 article likes
Great idea, Gretchen! I love it all! Let me know who carries your stuff around here...football season will be here before you know it and I want to be prepared!
taunt at hard rock!!
I like the Tori Top... it's soooo Hawt!
Amy & Gretch, love the new stuff! Can't wait to get it!
Gretchen, you look incredible! Is the line for sale in Atlanta? I could use some new Gator wear:).

Where are your clothes in Baton Rouge? Which stores?
Amy and Gretchen, Any way we can order on line yet? I have some mother friends that would like to order apparel for football season but they're not near a store. Please let me know if and when ya'll go "online"....Thanks!! **clarify, order apparel for their college-age daughters....
1 article like
1 article like
I bought my first piece of Tru Colors clothing yesterday at Fashion House Boutique in Baton Rouge. I LOVE IT! Great job Amy and Grethen!
Come to Houston, TX please... :)
love the collection. any chance of seeing some tulane colors in the mix? i know you're both lsu girls but gotta represent some more right?
Is there something wrong with your website or is it my comp? Maybe it's just overloaded with visitors:)
Great line, Gretchen!
Cute, creative, sassy....you have a wonderful line!!!
5 photo likes
could someone tell me the price ranges and sizes? i am very interested in the LSU things!
congrats on the article :) it was fun walking in the show for you gals!
I wish you guys had a retail location in Charleston, SC!
you guys should start a blog about where you go and everything! On the road!
Hi Amy, I was up super early with sick children and stumbled across a link to your site on a blog I was reading. What an awesome idea for a clothing line!! Next season, I hope to be able to wear one of your dresses to an Auburn football game when I'm not pregnant! Y'all are super talented and I wish you the most success!!
3 article likes
awesome! You are so beautiful
What's next....Donny Deutch? Great job and continued success!
How exciting for the 2 of you. Congrats!
looking good ladies! nice article.
2 article like
Great article! Love it!
Congrats on the big write up!
Nice job Amy!!!!
I love it Amy!
awesome! way to go! x
That is so great!!!!
Must agree purple and gold do rule!
i think purple and gold would be much more flattering on her.
Hey girls its Cassandra from Dallas everything is looking so great i am so proud of all of your achievements!!

Can I order online, want to avoid the stores.
i love the line---i want an entire wardrobe for jazz fest--i wear a new outfit for everyday--i will order soon--awesome cool and smart---jac
Gooooooooo Saints!!!
Who IS that??
of course i will be here! keep me posted on your plans!:) fun around every corner in this city! xxx
awesome girl! you going to miami? i may be in town next weekend for the 'other' celebration. hope to see ya! =) xx
1 article like

#### 2009 – 2010 Owner Posts “liked” by Fans

Number of Likes	Owner Post
1 like	Can't believe our NEW ORLEANS SAINTS are heading to the SUPER BOWL!!! Too bad we're out of BLACK AND GOLD! Just a few pieces left~give us a call!! WHO DAT NATION, let's DO THIS! Wow, this is exciting!!!!

## B. 2010-2011 FAN COMMENTS

Comments and Likes
We want you back this year at the SEC Kickoff Party! Let's chat.
war eagle....waiting to see what's new....
the new collection is so fabulous. you rock!!!
AMY!!! YOU ROCK!!! I can't wait to see ALL of your NEW styles!! And I can't wait to see you SOON!! Misses!!
GO AMY!! Can't wait to see pics.
just realized that I said "you rock" about 50 bazillion times, but you do!
I can't wait to see them! Amy, you rock!!!
5 photo Likes
Congrats on the new styles for this season. Tru Colors for the truly stylish fan! So proud of you and all of your great work!!!!
I can't wait to see the new styles! I love the dress I bought last ftbl season:)
I can't wait to see it! Pics?
just wanna wish you guys with more success in the future.. good luck !!
awesome can't wait to see....i can nnnneeeevvveerrrr find anything cute for games...and we are always there.....so excited!!!!
when will the website have pics of the new collection...i just found out about ya'll and cannot wait to get something for football season!!! geaux tigers
woohoo! thank you!
3 article likes
FSU- Garnet and Gold- I think we have probably have the hardest colors to find! But I'm just saying that because I'm a Nole :) Your designs are great! I showed them to some of my sorority sisters and they loveee them too! Consider doing some FSU dresses? Panhellenic (the sororities collectively) would buy them up :)
I think I could use a halter.
love it!
omg i just found you guys on someones blog i have been waiting for something different than stuff everyone has go gators ! when will your website be ready ?
Is there a catalogue for 2010 apparel yet?
Just found your website and cannot wait to see your stuff. I am a dress girl, in fact that is the only thing i pretty much wear and football season is always hard for me b/c I want to show my spirit but hate wearing pants but especially shorts. So I am ready to get some LSU and Saints dresses!!
6 status likes

Just found your site. I have been looking for hours to find a dress to wear to TN Titan games. Can you order things online or are they only available in stores? I love your dresses and I cannot wait to get something for game day!
I would love to see what you offer for Auburn this year. We are headed to Fan Day this weekend and I realized I have no cute things for the games this year. Is there a way to see the clothes?
That would be great! (email)
I would love it if you emailed me as well. I am looking for burnt orange for University of Texas. HOOK 'EM HORNS! :)
(email)
Can't wait to see your website when it's up and running--hopefully some Clemson stuff on the way?! :)
Hey! My e-mail is: (email) Thanks so much!! :) Can't wait to see everything!
Kelly's Korner...Love it!!! And would love to see some pics...can you sent them through FB mail?
I just saw your info on a blog...will you have UGA stuff??? Can't wait!!!! :)
oh, my email address is(email) Thanks!
Hi! Saw you on Kelly's Korner! Please please email me pricing & pictures of Clemson tiger stuff!
Do you do Alabama Crimson Tide dresses?! Also, could you email me pricing as well.. (email) Thanks so much!!
I second that. Would love to see pictures and pricing on Crimson Tide dresses.(email)
Thanks so much!! :)
Do you do Oklahoma SOONERS apparel? Could you email me some prices as well too? (email) Thanks!
Thank you!
I agree with @aprilchapman! I know a lot of Sooner fans that would buy your cute clothes!
would love to see both saints and lsu tiger pics! cletatoepfer at gmail dot com.
love your stuff! would love to see what you have for Texas and TCU! (email)
super! thanks a bunch!
Saw you on Kelly's Korner, and would love to see what you've got for the SC Gamecocks. Also do you make kid sizes? meredith@sumwaltlaw.com
What are you doing for the number 3 team in the country? Go Gators
Hey! I saw your link on Kelly's Korner too! I would love to see what you have in ECU colors (purple and gold, same as LSU). My email is atlanticbeachbound (at) gmail (dot) (Com!
Saw your link on Kelly's Korner. Would love to see what you have available for us Sooners girls. Crimson and Cream. Go OU! Boomer Sooner.(email)
Hey there...If we see an outfit we want made...can you tell me how to go about getting a price and sizes and such...thank you so much!!! GEAUX TIGERS!!!
yeah that would be great...(email)

I would love to see what you have for Razorbacks...I saw your stuff last year and I am really interested in ordering for this season...my email is (email)
Hey waiting on your website also but wanted to know what you have in LSU!!!!
This Auburn would LOVE to see what you've got! (email)
Please send me a sneak peak for Auburn at(email)
would love a sneak peek for mississippi state and SAINTS!!!! (email)
sounds perfect! (email) ... I'll do a blog post :) for my tennessee friends!
I want a sneak peek of Clemson and Carolina! I know odd but I am overseas now and like to represent the homestate! Although orange runs through my blood! (email)
I'm voting for lots of Tennessee gear!!!
Love me some Carolina Gamecocks!! I would like a peek (email) Thanks Much!!
Love my Texas State dress I got last year:) soo excited about football season!
i would like an ole miss sneak peak! (email)
Can I get an lsu sneak peak!!! (email)
I would love a LSU sneak peek! (email)t Thanks!!!
can't wait!!!
I would love to see your Bama stuff!! Roll Tide!! (email)
Please email me anything blue and white for Kentucky, thanks! (email)
Thanks for the email responses! I've already contacted several retailers in Stillwater. Can't wait to see some of your stuff in black and orange! GO POKES!
UF all the way!!! This has got me so excited for football season thank you so much!
Are we going to be able to order items off of the new site? My Mom got my first TC dress from a boutique that we live nowhere near!
1 photo like
Can't wait to see what you have! I'm a Razorback girl! (email)
sneak peek please! LSU all the way! (email)
would love to see a sneak peak---msu bulldog apparel please--(email)
I would LOVE to get a sneak peak of the Alabama apparel :) (email)
Sneak peek of RAZORBACK things please - (email)
I would love to get a sneak preview of the Bama apparel...ROLL TIDE!! (email) :) Thanks!
I'd love to see a sneak peek of any UT orange you may have...Thanks :)
Forgot to add my email address...(email)
Hoping to see a sneak peak of some OK State! Orange and Black GO POKES! (email)
would love a sneak peak of some LSU... Geaux Tigers! (email)
I would love to see that, as well!
3 photo likes
do you have anything for the UT Vols?(email)
MSU sneak peak for me, too, please! (email)
Any Ole Miss sneak peaks??? (email)
Would love to see and LSU sneak peak! (email)

Would love a UF sneak peek!:(email) Thanks!
Yay! Thanks! I'll be sure to spread the word!!!!
Do you happen to have Oklahoma State? If so can I get a sneak peek? (email) Thanks!!!
Can I get a peek of your Arkansas and Bama stuff? Thanks! (email)
Can I get a peak at UF stuff? (email) Thanks!
Do you have any light blue (carolina blue) items? Would LOVE to see if you do! Thanks!!! (email)
Would love to get a peek at your Bama apparel. (email)- thanks and RTR!!!
1 photo like
me, too!
Could I please get a sneak peek at your UF apparel? Thanks so much! (email)
1 photo like
Would LOVE to get a sneak peek of your University of Georgia apparel! Thanks and GOOO Dawgs! :) (email)
would love to get a sneak peak of University of South Carolina apparel! Thanks! (email)
Would love to get a sneak peak of Auburn apparel!(email)
Could you also send me the OSU styles?? Thank you!(email)
Any Ohio State clothing? Scarlet and Gray, Go Bucks! (email) Thanks!
I would love to get a sneak peak of Auburn apparel!!! thanks (email)
I'd love a sneak peek of some Tennessee Vols apparel! Thank you! (email)
I second that!!
Send my way to please to (email)
Ooh! I'm so excited! My email is (email)
Same here! (email)
I can't wait to see all of the new styles for fall!!
Would love an Auburn preview. (email) Thanks!
OLE MISS PREVIEW! (email) THANKS!
Do you by chance have anything navy and gold? I need something for GA Tech games
1 photo like
Any University of Arkansas apparel? Thanks! (email)
can i get a preview of clemson apparel please? thanks! (email)
Thank you! And I just realized I forgot my email address . . . (email)
I would also love a sneak peak of the Alabama styles, (email) thanks!
yes I will for sure be a repeat customer, can't decide if I'm more excited for football season to start or that it means I can wear my dress again :)
Hi, I'd be interested in a preview of clemson apparel as well.(email) Thanks!
Can I please preview-Razorback and Oklahoma State styles!(email)-thanks!
Hi, Could I please see what you have for Alabama! My email is (email) Thanks
I would also love to see the LSU colors....(email) Thanks!
I'd love to see what you have in LSU colors! (email) Thanks!

UM colors are maize (yellow) and Navy. Wish you had navy/gold for ND! :) Your stuff is adorable!!
Any chance you will be doing Big 10 schools? Would love a UofM dress!
Do you have Texas Longhorns yet?
I would love to see what you have for Texas A&M Aggies in Maroon! If you have a sneak peek I would love to see it! (email)
will u have any gator stuff exlarge?
I can't wait!
I would love to see the Texas apparel, (email) Thanks!
id love to see what you have for auburn. (email)
Would love to see the preview for Tennessee and Clemson. Thanks! (email)
I would love to check out your University of Arkansas line!(email). thanks!
was trying to hold out until your site got back up but.....can I get a preview of UF apparel(email) Thank you in advance!!!
thanks so much!
I would love to see some of the Tennessee Line... Thank you!(email)
hey! can i see your alabama stuff?! my email is (email)..thanks
I am so excited to find you! Can you please send me a preview of your Texas A&M stuff? (I'm not sure if you have any, but if you do, my checkbook is in trouble!) =) my email address is(email)
I'd love to take a peek at what you have for Clemson! (email). Thanks so much!
So you probably don't have any-but if you do could I get a peek at your Miss. State line, oh and Tennessee. Even if I can't get to games still would love to show some school spirit on game (email)
Just found out about you guys! I would love to see a preview of the Razorback stuff! (email)
Thanks!
Hi there! Could you please e-mail me what you have in red & black or for Texas Tech? Thanks so much!! (email)
I would love to see what you guys offer in navy and orange or for Auburn. (email) Thanks!
I broke out my Saints Paige on Friday night. I felt pretty stinking cute!!
Where can I see the clothes in person???? super cute!!!!!!
Hey Kristen! Ophelia is going to have a trunk show for Tru Color soon.
FUN! is that a cowl neck sleeveless dress I saw? and love the hoodies too... awesome for late Fall games!!!
pumped
just shared your page with TONS of fbook friends... :)
Can you please send me anything that you have in Maroon and White? Thanks.
My address is (email)
Can you send me what you have in Purple and Gold for LSU? (email)
could you send me the line that you have for Auburn? (email)



Could you send me the line that you have for Mississippi State?(email)
If you have anything for the University of Oklahoma I would love to see it. Thanks (email)
Fantastic! Thanks so much!
Could you email me those styles as well? (email)
I would love to see Clemson colors (email)
Hi, it didn't come through, can you send Clemson colors again? thanks. (email)
looking for items for UNC Tar Heels and for USC Gamecocks! (email) thanks :)
sounds great, thanks!
looking for items for University of Kentucky Wildcats! (email)- thank you!
: ) I just became the 1000th fan I think! looking for Ole Miss Colors! (email)! thank you!
Roll Tide!! University of Alabama Alumni needing some cute Bama colors for tailgating!! (email)
I am looking for great Alabama stuff! Hope you have larger sizes! (email)
i'd love to see some cute bama stuff too! larger sizes needed. thanks! (email)
Hey there! Going to see LSU play Vandy in Nashville next month. Need some TIGER wear!! ha! (email)
Hey! I would love to see some South Carolina Gamecock wear! you can email me at (email) Thanks!
Got it! Thanks so much! I love them!
Could you please send what you have for Auburn? Thanks!
I guess I could of given you my email address. It is (email)
Do yall do university of texas items? If so, can you send me a sneak preview? (email) thanks so much
May I please also get a sneak preview of Texas items.(email) Thanks so much
looking for mississippi state gear. (email)
I am looking for some cute outfits for Clemson games? My email is (email) Thanks a bunch!!
Looks like your busy! If you get a sec, I would love to see University of Oklahoma things...(email) Thanks!
I would love to see what you have for Alabama...(email)
I keep checking your website, but could you send me an email of some of your Univ. of Oklahoma things? (email) Thanks!
do you have a store in new orleans?
How about your website? When will that be up and I love the shirt with the three straps in the back
could you please e-mail me AL stuff at (email) I keep looking at your website, but its not up yet. Thanks!
THNX!
Is there going to be AR colors this year? Cannot wait to see this season's items! I need to shop!!!
I would LOVE that!!!! (email)

Can you please send me University of Texas and Baylor clothes if you have any?! Thanks!! (email)
Bring back the Tori!!!
I would love to see the UGA and Saints stuff.(email) Thanks so much. I am so excited!
I would love to see what all you have for LSU and Alabama. Thank you!! (email)
Can you please send me what you have for Vanderbilt (black and gold)? Thank you! (email)
thanks so much
Will you please send me what you have in purple/gold! Thank you! (email)
Too cute!! Would you please send me what you have for Texas (burnt orange and white)? Thanks! (email)
So adorable!! Can you please send me what you have that would align with Florida State? (I know they arent SEC :) Garnet and gold) Thank you! (email)!
Can't wait to see the new Mississippi State stuff! GO Dawgs!
Whoo hoo!
Do you have anything in Virginia Tech colors? Thanks!(email)
Will you send me what you have for Auburn? Thanks so much!(email)
Can you please send me the Bama items (and Redskins items if you have them) to (email). Thanks so much!
I am opening a boutique in Tupelo, MS and would love to see your line! I would like to see pictures of the Mississippi State and Ole Miss styles....I am a 2009 grad of Mississippi State and girls are always looking for maroon to wear on gamedays! Thanks! (email)
Hi! Can you send me what you have for Auburn? (email) Thanks!
Would love to see what you have for Texas Tech!(email)
Got it! Thank you. Can't wait for the Web site!
Love your stuff! Could you email what you have for AR? Go Hogs!! (email) Thanks!
Looking forward to seeing some Ole Miss stuff! My email is(email). Thanks!
Can you email me what you have for UGA? I need something for LSU too :)
Hey...it is(email):)
I'd love to see what you have for Mississippi State! (email)
Hi! I would love to see what you have for Texas A&M Aggie Maroon. Thanks! (email)
Hello! Would love to see items for UGA-USC and or Tennessee- This request from a girl from California! ( ♥ UCLA-Go Bruins!) =0)
Thanks so much! => (email)
hello! I heard from a friends blog that you will have North Carolina colors in the new collection- I would love to see any or all dresses! (email)
Hi, could you please send me what you have in Texas A&M Maroon? Thanks! (email)
Hey! Could you please send me what you have for AR? Thank you!! (email)
I'm looking for LSU things. PLEASE!!!

I tried to open the link but it wouldn't let me. I am very interested in what you have. Can you please send it again or to my email address? Thanks so much!
(email)
I'd love to see some Bama and S. Carolina things when you get a chance!(email) Thanks!!
I'm sorry.. it's (email).
Would love to see what you have for Texas Tech! thank you!! (email)
Do you have a catalogue? The website says it is being updated? (email)
Excellent! Thanks!Email above or to FB. Thanks!
Would love to see the Florida gear you have! :) (email)
I saw Kara in Texas Monthly!!! Excited we have her in our Gameday Cloth collection!
Hi!!! Would love to see all you new clothing... UGA style! ;) (email)
I would love to see what you have for Mississippi State! :)(email)
I would love to see some Alabama and Auburn stuff. Please email me at (email)
Do you have anything for UAB??
Too bad, I know a lot of girls who would LOVE to wear stylish game day clothes. Hopefully you will soon! Thanks!
Hi! Is there anyway you could email me the new line? I'm an LSU fan! (email)
Huge LSU and Saints fan....do you have anything available to view by email? If so, I would love to check out the new line.(email)...thanks!
Would love to get the Arkansas pics when you get a chance! (email) Thank you!
I am a Saints and Auburn fan. Would it be possible for you send me an email on the new items you have out for these teams...(email) Thanks!
everything is sooo cute!
Jilly...I need some new gear. Looking forward to seeing what they have.
Could you please send me the UGA line! Thanks so much! (email)
Amy, it was so great to finally meet you yesterday! Brian talks about you all the damn time! I would love to see your Saint's gear for this season. I know you're swamped, but whenever you can.....(email). Thanks!
My friends and I are looking for FSU and UF stuff! All styles and sizes. I bet you're busy, but we would love to see what you have! Whenever you get a free second... (email). Thank you so much!
Thank you Amanda for finding this site :)
Yes, thank you Amanda. When you come for the FSU vs UF game, maybe you can wear your FSU Tru Colors dress and I can wear my UF Tru Colors dress. We'll be celebrities. HA!
Sounds good to me!!!!
Please email what you have for Alabama and for the Saints to (email)!! Can't wait to order some gameday outfits!!
Please send pics of Mississippi State items to (email). Thanks!
Please email me what you have for University of Tennessee, pretty please!(email) Thanks in advance!!!
Where can I get my Tru Colors in Dallas Amy?!?!?! Congrats!!!

Could you send me anything you have for South Carolina? I'm so excited about your dresses!(email)Thank you!
Really excited about your apparel!! We are true lsu tiger fans!! Would love to see this line for myself as well as many of my friends!! (email)
Have you thought about coming out with anything in "women's" sizing? We want to look cute and wear cute dresses too! (Specifically Saints and LSU colors would be great :D)
Can you send me anything you have for us Texas Aggie gals? Its hot the first oh, 10 games. HA! So I need the light and breezy fashions... Thanks!
Here is my email (email)...sorry!!
Do you have anything for Mississippi State?! Can't wait for the website to be up!
Would you please email me anything you have for LSU and the Saints? Thank you very much!(email)
Would you mind sending me what you have for Clemson??! I'm so excited! :) (email)
Would you please send me anything you have for arkansas? thank you! (email)
Could you send me anything that you have for UGA? Thank you so much! My email is (email)
Could you send me everything you have for Arkansas. Thanks. My email is (email)
Could you please send me anything you have for University of Tennessee and the Tennessee Titans? My email is (email). Can't wait!! Your outfits are amazing!!! :)
Anything navy blue or baby blue would work perfect for the Titans! Do you have that?
Oh, I see! Thank you SO much! I love me some Tennessee football! :)
I would love to see what you have in LSU colors!! email: (email) THANKS
Could you send me what you have for the University of Alabama! email: (email)!! Thanks!
I did thanks!
could you send me what you have for the University of Alabama? my email is(email) THANKS!
thank you so much.
Could you please send me what you have for the University of South Carolina? my email is (email) Thank you!
LSU please.... (email)
Thanks!
I need orange please! Auburn for me but need to look cute to accompany hubs to Knoxville as well. Thanks!(email)
Would love to see your Tennessee orange!!!!(email) Thanks!!!!
Can you email what you have for the University of south Carolina please? (email)
Can you send me your Saints and LSU collections? I loved everything from last year! (email)
I would like to see your Auburn apparel, please!! (email)Thanks so much!!
Can you please send me you LSU collection? (email) Thank you!
Can you please send me your Texas Tech collection to(email). Thank you!
any chance you have any ACC colors? garnet and gold?
thanks!(email)
if you have something you could send for saints & uk, my email address is (email)

Would you please send me all your Auburn collection? I'd LOVE to see it! (email) Thanks so much!
I am interested in purchasing some UF colored apparel. I would like to see what you have available and a price sheet. Thanks so much for your time :) (email)
I would like to see your LSU collection as well as Saints, Would this be possible(email)
I would like to see your Auburn apparel, please! (email) Thanks!
Love your dresses! I would love to see your Alabama collection and prices!! Thanks and Rolltide! (email)
I would love to see your SC collection and prices. Thanks(email)
USC kicks off the season on Thrusday. When you expect to have the collection available to preview? I would like some information. Thx (email)
i would love to see all ur alabama stuff. please send to smeachpowo (email)
I would be interested in seeing anything you have for UGA...Georgia Bulldogs. Thanks!(email)
Do you have any University of Texas things? I would LOVE to see them!! (email) **thanks!!
I am also interested in seeing anything University of Texas as well. Thanks.(email)
I am also interested in seeing anything University of Texas - (email). Thanks!!!!
Do you have anything for The University of Oklahoma? I love y'all's stuff and would love to see if you have anything- (email)
Could you send me your LSU pieces? (email) Thank you!
Would love to see what you have available for Clemson. Thanks! (email)Martha
I would love to see your Auburn pieces! My email is (email) Thanks!
Can you send me your University of Texas collection? Saw the ad in Texas Monthly, CUTE STUFF!! (email)Thanks!
do you have any thing that is blue and gold if so can you send it to(email)
Hey there. If you don't mind, can you email your Univ. of Tennessee pieces? Thanks a lot. (email)
Do you have anything for the University of Alabama? If so could you email pictures to (email). Thank you!
When is your website gonna be up and running?
Tru Colors trunk show at Ophelia!! <a href="http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=156620824353219">http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=156620824353219</a>
<a href="http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=14553092&amp;fbid=10150263391050484&amp;id=51987585483">http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=14553092&amp;fbid=10150263391050484&amp;id=51987585483</a>
At Blue Door Boutique!
I would love to see what you have to offer for the University of Tennessee. Email me at(email). Thanks! :-)
Id also like to see the University of Tennessee gameday attire.(email) Thank you :)
Thanks again!

I would love to see what you have to offer for the University of Tennessee. Email me at (email). Thanks! :-)
Can't wait for the website to be live!! I would love to see the Univ. of Alabama pieces!(email)
Yay! So glad to have found you! I would love to see what you have for The Univ of Georgia! When will the website be up? Thanks so much!!! (email)
didnt get an email with pics:( i will try the website later, thanks! ( i have a hidden "c" between rebecca and brown, if that helps:)
got it! thanks!!!!
Will you have any orange/blue attire ...University of VA :-)(email)
Yes ma'am navy blue and orange ...thanks!
Can you send me any LSU items?(email)Thanks!
Could you please send me an e-mail with the University of Tennessee collection!? (email)Thanks so much! : )
Looking through the pictures it seems like you have some black and gold (Wake Forest!) items, but could you send me an email with all/any of it?(email)Thanks!
Please send any Mississippi State University (Maroon & White) items to: (email) Thanks!
Can you tell me where I can find the tru colors items in the Mandeville/covington area? I really would like to get the strapless top in saints colors. Can you also send me any dress pictures that you have for LSU?(email)
Can you send me what you have in Auburn colors? Thanks :) (email)
I would love to see your Alabama pieces! (email)When will your website be live again?
I would love to see your Ole Miss items!! My email is(email) Thanks!!
Hey can you please send me some pics and info on LSU items!! My e-mail is(email) THx!!!!
hey there! any plans to include shots of the back of the garments on the website? Also, will you be stating the fabric and care suggestions? THANKS!
LOVE the NEW website...wish I was going to be in Florida for the event!!
love the new website!
website is great love the new logo! What day will the shop be ready? I'm dying for the Kara!
AUBURN!!!
Tiger Bait
War Eagle!! I'll be there.
I tell you what - that Catie sure is a spicy number! I would like one in black and gold please.
AmY!!! LoVe iT! :)
the website is AMAZING!!!!!! I'm FREAKING OUT OVER HERE!!!! Love it love it. All your designs are phenomenal.
LOVED everything I saw today at Ophelia. Sooo excited to get my dress in AUBURN COLORS!!!! Thanks Amy!
ever thought of doing cotton wraps or loose cardigans in the team colors? reversible...??? could be very cute... hmmm.

Rachel Kennedy, you are our Tru Colors Apparel winner today Thanks so much for coming by and I will contact you about your selection! Thank you!
This is my favorite game day dress ... Albert the Alligator's, too! I think the Caroline romper is next on my Gator apparel shopping list ... so cute!!!
Hi, Amy love Tru Collors
hey amy, need to do some shopping soon!!
hey Amy.... will you email me when u get a sec? I have a quick question! thanks!! (kricketm at gmail dot com)
Sorry. Its kricketm at bellsouth dot net
Hey there!! Just left the website - is the "Amanda" dress still available? Kelly from Kelly's Korner showed the picture on her blog and I just loved it, but I didn't see it listed on the website. If so, could you tell me the length on it?
I was just over at Kelly's Korner trying to find the site and LOOOOOVVVVVEEE the "Amanda" dress. Same question...Is it available? Thanks!
love the sound of that garnet and gold!!! hope that cute little strapless number is one of them! ali
Rockin the Kara today GO Gators!!! Thank you so much Amy!
will def post some later in the season yesterday was too sweaty for good pics haha but i told EVERYONE where to go for great gameday dresses!!!
Was in the Locker Room in Tuscaloosa, Al, trying on the Kara. When I cam out of the dressing room a sweet couple told me that they thought it was so cute they bought one for their daughter! Got so many compliments on it gameday! Thanks
Do you have a list of retailers that sell Tru Colors in Austin?
What about Southlake (suburb between Dallas and Ft. Worth)? Need LSU colors! Thanks!!
I need to get up to Dallas for family visits.
Where can I get an LSU one in Baton Rouge?
Thanks!!
Where's the OSU love? ;)
BOOMER SOONER!!!
SOONERS love Tru Apparel!!!!
Love the look from Tru Colors Apparel-Tiger tailgaiting gets more stylish every week! B KIDS hosts Stella & Dot trunk show from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. with jewelry for mom & daughters. Claire Bella cutting boards at The Keeping Room & more!
Football season... What to wear to the game and still look cute and trendy... Check out SocialDenim Lake Charles for some cute vintage style college tees with a pair of hot skinny jeans, Tru Colors Apparel for fun flirty game day tops and dresses, or spice it up with Mimosa Boutique-Lake Charles 's casual/dressy mix matching pieces.
Wearing my Cecile dress in the Dome now! (Also wore it to SF game in SF and it made an appearance on ESPN as a result!!) :)
hey AMy... can't wait to get my top!
My office is in Snider Plaza...I will come see you today!!!
looking fwd to my hoodie!!!! :)

The way most of all the garments are cut that you advertise is to me the most appealing aspect of your line. Very tasteful yet desireable.
The way most of all the garments are cut that you advertise is to me the most appealing aspect of your line. Very tasteful yet desireable.
Go Tigers!!!!!! War Eagle! Come on down to the plains and have an amazing time with us!
War Eagle!
War Eagle!! Wish I could be there for all the excitement!
What about orange and blue??
What about orange and blue??
The Jackson Five Family Blog sent me!
the jackson five family sent me over :)
like you 'n the Jackson Five Family sent me
LOVE IT!!!!
There are more but this is the teaser
Thanks for the awesome giveaway on the Jackson Family Five blog. My fingers are crossed! I'm loving the Amanda and Dray pieces! :)
THE JACKSON FIVE FAMILY BLOG sent me!
THE JACKSON FIVE FAMILY BLOG sent me!
THE JACKSON FIVE FAMILY BLOG sent me.
Jackson Five Family Blog sent me!
geaux lsu!!
I really like the hoodie in purple and gold. Very cute.
LUV THIS ADORABLE GAME DAY LINE!!!! CHECK IT OUT!!:)
Lyndsie sent me from giveaway blog! Love yalls stuff
Lyndsie Gives Away sent me... love your stuff.. would love to see a purple and white combination too!
Lyndsie Gives Away sent me... love your stuff.. would love to see a purple and white combination too!
Came over through Lyndsie's blog, I love your stuff. Hook'em
Came over from Lyndsie's blog!
Lyndsie sent me!
Beautiful clothes! Thanks to Lyndsie for telling me about you. She sent me here.
Me and Bella sent me! Love your designs
Me and Bella sent me!
me and bella sent me too!



i shouldn't be excited about bama playing ga state on a thursday, but it's my team and my alma mater so i'm happy to be able to watch it on tv from home. i love watching bama play anytime! however, the game i'm looking forward to is bama vs auburn next friday!!! we have rearranged our thanksgiving (we are having it on monday, my birthday) and going to tuscaloosa on thursday to get ready for the big game--tailgating, etc. it's the biggest game of the year and i look forward to giving auburn a good fight! i'd say i'm a pretty dedicated fan, haha! roll tide roll!!!
AMEN ROLLLL TIDE.....RMFT!!!!!!
Aggies v. Nebraska :) Gig em - my Ags fight hard and will do so again this weekend! Whooop!!
MSU v Arkansas--first home game since Nick Bell passed away, last home game of the season, lots of friends going back for the game, AT&T cell tower crashing from the sheer # of people in Starkville---TRUE MAROON, baby!! :)
Texas Tech!!! Go RED Raiders!!!! Wreck 'em Tech!!! Get your guns up!!!
It might not be Hollween but "Hottie Toddie" is coming to town from "The Grove" always a fun get together!!!! Lots of people in Tigertown gonna be yelling Woooohoooo!!! Come Saturday afternoon. :)
Lyndsie's Giveaways sent me! :)
Taylor's Giveaway sent me
yes!!!! thank you! so so excited!!!!
1 photo like
i don't see where i can send you a message. i'll post my address and which one i want on here if you'll delete my info after you get it! can i have it shipped to tuscaloosa, where i'll be from thursday til sunday? do you think it'll get there this week or should i have you send it to my address in mobile? i'll select my choice and give you the info in a few!
ok!
thanks, amy! sent you the email!
Go Razorbacks! ;)
Do you have anything that would correspond to the Indianapolis Colts??
Boomer Sooner
Burnt Orange. I cannot root for either Blow U or Corn, so I will root for JerryWorld to implode or a tie.
How do I go about contacting you all about a donations for the American Cancer Society's Starlight Gala?
Hey I want a Maggie dress- is all black & gold sold or I could get LSU!
ok I will come check it out this week!thx
Crimson Red Dress with Black Elephants Trunks Up...White Dress with Black Elephants Trunks Up. Roll Tide
I would love to see the Alabama crimson/houndstooth Dray top turned into a dress, I love the houndstooth straps and would love to have it with a long sleeve dress!
FleurtyBee Boutique would carry your Bama stuff

Please start doing stuff in Oklahoma Crimson and Cream!!!
I would love to speak with you about featureing your products on my blog The Cartoon Lovin' Mama, if your intersted you can contact me via e-mail at (email)
War Eagle!!!!!!
Love that!
Well the packers use local teams to cheer at home games for them. The steelers and the NY giants I think are the only two left with no cheerleaders.
Yeah I believe it's local high school and colleges. That must be exciting for them
How does the Ashley dress run?

#### 2010-2011 Fan "likes" on Owner Posts

Likes	Owner Post
4 status likes	The new CAROLINE romper is just awesome~ Can't wait to wear it to the first game~ Cecile, Maggie, Catie, Angie, Allie all NEW styles to check out, I wonder which will be your fave?????
6 status likes	Hello friends of TRUCOLORS!!! As I continue to send out the sneak peeks please know all styles are XS-L, 95/5 cotton lycra, and are made with pride in the USA, Texas!! Thank you so much for all the inquiries, I am receiving styles in this week to photograph and PICS will be up soon! Thank you for coming to TRU COLORS to get you to the stadium looking your BEST!
1 status like	If you will be in NEW ORLEANS, join us at the Crescent City SEC KICKOFF PARTY, Friday August 27th! Door prizes from TRU COLORS, NOLA COUTURE and FEET FIRST! More details to come soon! We hope to see you there!!
3 status likes	It's been such a fun week hearing from all of you!! If a spirit award goes out this week...i've got a 3way tie going between BAMA, AUBURN and LSU fans!!! A close second is between RAZORBACK and MISS ST fans, then TENNESSEE and CLEMSON fans are SUPER close behind!!! I love this time of year~ Happy FRIDAY!!
2 status likes	JOIN US this FRIDAY for the 9th Annual Crescent City SEC Kickoff Party, the Chicory, New Orleans! Drink specials, door prizes and silent auction items from FEET FIRST, NOLA COUTURE and TRU COLORS!! We hope to see you there!
1 status like	SO MUCH fun today at OPHELIA, thanks so much to each and every one of you who came by and found their perfect TRU COLORS GAME DAY dress!! Happy Labor Day weekend!
1 status like	RACHEL KENNEDY, you are our Ophelia Swimwear winner today, a TRU COLORS piece of your choice!! Thanks so much for coming by and I will contact you about your selection! Thank you!
2 status likes	Just placed a re-order and have added some new color combos~ Black/orange, blue/white, navy/gold, maroon/gold!! Happy Friday everyone!

1 status like	Alexandria, La TC friends, scoop up your gear for the LSU game this weekend at SHABBY CHIC on Jackson, so glad to have a retail location in my hometown!! PLUS she has the styles that are already on BACK ORDER!!
1 status like	Join us next Friday at GAMEDAY CLOTH, Shops at Legacy, PLano to get decked out for TX/OU weekend! We hope to see you there!
2 status likes	Stop by SAKS AUSTIN this Thursday, Sept 30! Scoop up your outfit for TX/OU weekend and be oh so chic at the State Fair of Texas! BIG TEX, Fletcher's corn dogs, rides on the ferris wheel, can't wait!! Fall is in the air~ I hope to see you there!!
3 status likes	Fall is in the air!! As the weather is cooling down.. football season is starting to heat up!! Game Day is almost here for week 6, let's see what happens next!!
2 status likes	Always a fun one in DEATH VALLEY, this Saturday~BAMA vs LSU!! GEAR up in TRU COLORS and show your team spirit!!
1 status like	AUBURN/SOUTH CAROLINA~~ OKLAHOMA/NEBRASKA..do you know what you're wearing for GAME DAY??
1 status like	Working on NEW STYLES for next season, I have a few ideas up my sleeve but what would you LOVE to see in YOUR TEAM COLORS?! The most exciting idea can have a dress named for them and I'll mail it straight out to you, on me!!
1 status like	Rachel wrap top in Black and Gold shown in this weeks Gambit available at Feet First and Who Dat & Tiger Mania! Only a few left!!!
1 status like	AUBURN~ CONGRATS on that BCS WIN!!!!
1 status like	Meeting with pattern maker on Tuesday for a fitting, can't wait to see how the new styles turn out!! Have a great weekend everyone!!

### C. 2011-2012 FAN COMMENTS

<b>Comments and Likes</b>
War Eagle!
Love that (photo)
I think it's the dress that Amie wanted but she said you never texted her about it.I
1 article like
I had no idea you did this... I'm am going to buy stuff for the upcoming football season!
Very cool!
Congratulations Amy, nice article
Awesome! Congrats
Good job Sis!!! Love it!
Good for you! Fantastic. Geaux Tigers and GO DAWGS!
so awesome and so happy for you!!!! Send me the new styles too, would love to take a peek. Xoxo
congrats Amy love the clotes..
Tiny Amy is a TRU badass
Great article... glad to see you are so successful and doing what you love. As a person with zero fashion sense, even I am impressed!
So proud of you, Amy! Such a great line! Who would've though my little Menard danceline buddy would become famous!!!!!! Wow! I need to order something :)
I'm very happy for you! I knew you had vision. Way to go!
Where can I find it this week near Southlake, Texas? (photo)
Great! Love Snider Plaza! LSU colors. If ordered, may not get here by next weekend, but will be great for October :) I'll make a trip to SP before the Fall! THX!
Thx! Will do!
Great article and great pic Amy! Hope you are kicking off to a great Tru Colors Season!
any chance for a crimson/houndstooth or something of the like combo!?! Adorable (photo)
shut up! On the site? (photo)
I am imagining! Haha! Let me know when you get a pic. Price? (photo)
7 photo likes
hot models! (photo)
No Arkansas? (photo)
Great! I'll take a look! Do you have any stores carrying your line in Augusta?
Okay... but I could order online and return if the fit is not correct?
3 photo likes
and I love this too! Ahhh! (photo)
is this on the site? (Photo)
want! (photo)
Baylor? Thanks
Just let me know! Thanks!

I didn't see the UK colors are they on the website?
I only found on item in purple/gold combo... Does the dray not come in purple gold?
2 article likes
Thanks, will you get more dray?
LOVE your things for my daughters. How about something age appropriate for us mothers?
baylor
Can you dom some styles for that weird weather time in texas... 90 degrees in late Setpember, early October but then could carry it over to more fall type weather with tights or leggings....?? 3/4 Length sleeve dresses, Tunic tops, maybe some ruffle collars or sleeves... Those are my wishes! Everyone always stops me on Campus Corner and asks where I get my dressess?? And I simply say it's Tru Colors, isn't it fabulous!
Ahhh!! Saw the dresses in Avenue yesteray!!! I. Want. Everything. So excited for football season and wearing all my new TC!! Xx
1 photo like
Will you have Cecile in purple and gold this season? I looked online and it shows that it's sold out!
4 photo likes
you know I love the one shoulders!
1 article like
Just curious to when the new line is coming out.
4 article likes
4 article likes
3 photo likes
2 article likes
JoLynn's in Zachary, LA LOVES Tru Colors Dresses! Put them out this morning and have about 5 left! They are the Greatest! Getting a new order together...Thanks Tru Colors!
1 photo like
2 article likes
I'm loving all this new stuff!!! xo
1 photo like
Thank you, thank you Amy! I received my Sassy Sara for the OU game this weekend and I absolutely LOVE it!!! It IS prefect! Pics to follow!!
1 article like
1 article like
2 photo likes
Hello! I was interested in purchasing several dresses, however I did not see a sizing guide on your website. I might have missed it, so I just wanted to double check. Thanks
5 article likes
Do you have anything green and gold? Thanks!
do you show at the Atlanta market ?

Love y'all's line! Just included you in our "What to wear to a super bowl party" post:  
<http://blog.wearevertheweather.com/2012/01/what-to-wear-to-a-super-bowl-party/>

1 article like

5 article likes

### 2011-2012 Fan "likes" on Owner Posts

Likes	Owner Posts
1 like	Thanks so much for all of your inquiries about new styles! About to start our photo shoot now, pics up soon!!! Happy Tuesday!
1 status like	Starting to work on some new styles~Would love to hear any thoughts or input so I can make sure to bring you the best out there for GAMEDAY!!!
1 status like	Kentucky Wildcat fans~Got some big BLUE and white for ya, Emma, Kara and Ashley styles now available for this season in your team colors! ALL SEC team color combos, most TEXAS schools and OU colors too, ready to ship~ amy@trucolorsapparel.com..Happy to help with your order!!
1 article like	Receiving emails & orders from tailgaters all over today has been awesome~ Thanks so much to all of you for spreading the word about TRU COLORS for Gameday!!!!
1 status like	BAMA and AUBURN fans!!! Take \$15 off your purchase for this week only..email me and I can take care of your order amy@trucolorsapparel.com:)! Happy Tuesday!

### D. OPINION LEADER COMMENTS

User Code	Date	Comment	Date	Comment
001	6/21/2009	Amy & Gretch, love the new stuff! Cant' wait to get it!	7/14/2010	Omigoddddd!!! I cannot wait for football season!! I'm going to want every single piece!
	8/2/2011	Ahhh!! Saw the dresses in Avenue yesterday!!! I. Want. Everything. So excited for football season and wearing all my new TC!! xx	8/26/2011	I'm loving all this new stuff!! Xo
002	6/18/2009	I like the Tori Top... it's soooo Hawt!	8/16/2010	I broke out my Saints Paige on Friday night. I felt pretty stinking cute!!
	8/16/2010	Hey Kristen! Ophelia is going to have a trunk show for Tru Color soon.	8/18/2010	Bring back the Tori!!!
	8/30/2010	Tru Colors Trunk show at Ophelia! (website)	9/2/2010	I tell you what - that Catie sure is a spicy number! I would like on ein black and gold please.
	10/14/2010	liked a photo	10/17/2011	liked an article
003	8/16/2010	where can I see the clothes in person? Super cute!	8/17/2010	FUN! is that a cowl neck sleeveless dress I saw? and love the hoodies too... awesome for late Fall games!!!
	8/17/2010	pumped	8/17/2010	just shared your page with TONS of fbook friends... :)
	9/1/2010	hey there! Any plans to include shots of the back of the gamrents on the website? Also, will you be stating the fabric and care suggestions? THANKS!	9/4/2010	LOVED everyhign I saw today at Ophelia. Sooo excited to get my dress in AUBURN COLORS!!!! Thanks Amy!

	9/4/2010	ever thought of doing cotton wraps of loose cardigans in the team colors? Reversible??? Could be very cute... hmmm.	9/9/2010	hey Amy.... Will you email me when u get a sec? I have a quick quesiton! Thanks! (email)
	9/26/2010	hey Amy... can't wait to get my top!	10/7/2010	looking fwd to my hoodie!!!! :)
	10/7/2010	ok!!!	1/10/2011	LIKED: Cheerin for ya AUBURN!!!!
004	9/28/2010	LIKED: Stop by SAKS AUSTIN this Thursday, Sept 30! Scoop up your outfit for TX/OU weekend and be oh so chic at the State Fair of Texas! BIG TEX, Fletcher's corn dogs, rides on the ferris wheel, can't wait!! Fall is in the air~ I hope to see you there!!	10/24/2010	LOVE IT!!!!
	12/6/2010	Hey I want a Maggie dress- is all balck and gold sold or I could get LSU!!	8/3/2011	you know I love the one shoulders!
	8/26/2011	Want!		
005	11/18/2010	i shouldn't be excited about bama playing ga state on a thursday, but it's my team and my alma mater so i'm happy to be able to watch it on tv from home. i love watching bama play anytime! however, the game i'm looking forward to is bama vs auburn next friday!!! we have rearranged our thanksgiving (we are having it on monday, my birthday) and going to tuscaloosa on thursday to get ready for the big game-- tailgating, etc. it's the biggest game of the year and i look forward to giving auburn a good fight! i'd say i'm a pretty dedicated fan, haha! roll tide roll!!!	11/23/2010	yes!!!! thank you! so so excited!!!! i don't see where i can send you a message. i'll post my address and which one i want on here if you'll delete my info after you get it! can i have it shipped to tuscaloosa, where i'll be from thursday til sunday? do you think it'll get there this week or should i have you send it to my address in mobile? i'll select my choice and give you the info in a few!



	5/25/2011	I promised you a pic of my cute crimson and houndstooth top after iron bowl but it was so cold, I wore a coat the whole time! I promise I'll get one to you this season! It's sooooo adorable and will order another dress I have my eye on! You're so awesome!	8/26/2011	any chance for a crimson/houndstooth or something of the like combo?!? Adorable shut up! on the site?am imagining! haha! let me know when you get a pic. price?
	8/26/2011	an I love this too!! Ahhhh!		
006	12/2/2010	how do I go about contacting you all about a donation for the American Cancer Society's Starlight Gala?	2/4/2011	how does the Ashley dress run?
007	8/31/2011	Thank you, thank you Amy! I received my Sassy Sara for the OU game this weekend and I absolutely LOVE it!!!! It IS perfect! Pics to follow!!	2/2/2012	Can you do some styles for that weird weather time in Texas... 90 degrees in late September, early October but then could carry it over to more fall type weather with tights or leggings... ?? 3/4 Length sleeve dresses, Tunic tops, maybe some...e ruffle collars or sleeves... Those are my wishes! Everyone always stops me on Campus Corner and ask where did I get my dresses?? And I simple say it's Tru Colors, isn't it fabulous!
	7/14/2010	Can't wait to see! Already have people asking me about the new collection! :)	8/2/2011	liked a photo
008	8/10/2011	liked an article		
009	8/10/2011	liked an article	8/26/2011	Where can I find it this week near Southlake, Texas? Great! Love Snider Plaza! LSU colors. If ordered, may not get here by next weekend, but will be great for October :-)) I'll make a trip to SP before the Fall! Thx! thx! will do!

	8/26/2011	liked a photo		
010	8/10/2011	liked a link	8/25/2011	Great article and great pic Amy! Hope you are kicking off to a great Tru Colors Season!
	8/25/2011	liked 3 links	liked a photo	
011	10/14/2010	liked a photo	10/21/2010	what about orange and blue?
012	10/13/2010	the way most of all the garmentns are cut that you advertise is to me the most appealing aspect of your line. Very tasteful yet desireable.	11/18/2010	It might not be holloween but "Hottie Toddie" is coming to town from "The Grove" always a fun get together!!!! Lots of people in Tigertown gonna be yelling Wooooohoooo!!! Come Saturday afternoon. :)
013	8/27/2009	Come to Houston, TX please... :)	8/13/2010	would love to see a sneak peak--- msu bulldog apparel please-- (email)
	11/18/2010	MSU v Arkansas--first home game since Nick Bell passed away, last home game of the season, lots of friends going back for the game, AT&T cell tower crashing from the sheer # of people in Starkville---TRUE MAROON, baby!! :)		
014	8/14/2010	I would love to see that, as well!	8/15/2010	Ooh! I'm so excited! My email is TNRepublcn at aol.com
015	8/13/2010	Are we going to be able to order items off of the new site? My Mom got my first TC dress from a boutique that we live nowhere near!	8/16/2010	was trying to hold out until your site got back up but..... can I get a preview of UF apparel (email) Thank you in advance!!
	9/2/2010	website is great love the new logo! What day will the shop be ready? I'm dying for the Kara!	9/11/2010	Rockin the Kara today GO Gators!!! Thank you so much Amy!

	9/12/2010	will def post som later in the season yesterday was too sweaty for good pics haha but I told EVERYONE where to go for great gameday dressess!!!	1/10/2011	LIKED: Cheerin for ya AUBURN!!!!
016	8/14/2010	I can't wait to see all of the new styles for fall!	7/14/2010	AMY!! YOU ROCK!!! I can't wat to see ALL of you NEW styles!! And I can't wait to see you SOON!! Misses!!
017	8/18/2010	Could you email me those styles as well? (email)	8/13/2010	I agree with @aprilchapman! I know a lot of Sooner fans that would buy your cute clothes!!
018	6/18/2009	Great idea, Gretchen! I love it all! Let me know who carries your stuff around here...football season will be here before you know it and I want to be prepared!	8/18/2010	Can't wait to see the new Mississippi State stuff! GO Dawgs!
019	8/25/2010	Would you mind sending me what you have for Clemson??! I'm so excited! :) (email	8/12/2010	Can't wait to see your website when it's up and running- hopefully some clemson stuff on the way!?)
	8/16/2010	Hey! My e-mail is (email) Thanks so much!! :0 Can't wait to see everything!		
020	8/15/2010	I would also love a sneak peak of the alabama styles, (email)	9/1/2010	love the new website!
	9/28/2010	LIKED: Stop by SAKS AUSTIN this Thursday, Sept 30! Scoop up your outfit for TX/OU weekend and be oh so chic at the State Fair of Texas! BIG TEX, Fletcher's corn dogs, rides on the ferris wheel, can't wait!! Fall is in the air~ I hope to see you there!!	12/9/2010	I would love to see the Alabama/ Crimson/ houndstooth dray top turned into a dress. I love the houndstooth straps and would love to have it as a dress
021	9/3/2010	AmY! LoVe iT! :) (email	9/17/2010	liked a photo
	8/22/2011	liked a photo	liked a link	

022	8/12/2010	I would love to see what you offer for Auburn this year. We are headed to Fan Day this weekend and I realized I have no cute things for the games this year. Is there a way to see the clothes?	8/12/2010	That would be great (email
	10/18/2010	Go Tigers!!!!!! War Eagle! Come on		
023	11/18/2010	Texas Tech!!! Go RED Raiders!!!! Wreck 'em Tech!!! Get your guns up!!!	9/9/2010	I was just over at Kelly's Korner trying to find the site and LOOOVVEEE the amanda dress. Same question.... Is it available?? Thanks!
024	11/29/2010	Burnt Orange. I cannot root for either Blow U or Corn, so I will root for JerryWorld to implode or a tie	1/10/2011	LIKED: Cheerin for ya AUBURN!!!!
025	11/19/2010	Taylor's Giveaway Sent me	11/29/2010	Boomer Sooner
	11/29/2010	LIKE:AUBURN/SOUTH CAROLINA~~ OKLAHOMA/NEBRASKA..do you know what you're wearing for GAME DAY??		
026	10/1/2010	My office is in Snider Plaza... I will come see you today!!!	1/12/2011	Love that!
027	1/26/2011	WE the packers use local teams to cheer at home games for them. The steelers and the NY giants I think are the only two left with no cheerleaders.	1/26/2011	Yeah I believe it's local high school and colleges. That must be exciting for them.
	8/28/2010	I would love to see your SC collection and prices. Thanks (email)		

028	8/3/2011	Just curious to when the new line is coming out.	8/25/2010	I am a Satins and Auburn fan. Would it be possible for you to send me an email on the new items you have out for these teams... (email) Thanks!
	8/25/2010	Jilly... I need some new gear. Looking forward to seeing what they have.		
029	8/22/2011	I would like to see those styles also!	8/26/2011	liked a photo
030	10/3/2011	Ummmm, its OU/TX to those of us north of the Red River! You show your alliance by the school you list first in this huge rivalry!	12/9/2010	Please start doing stuff in Oklahome Crimson and Cream!!!
031	2/2/2011	Baylor	8/30/2011	Baylor? Thanks
	8/30/2011	Just let me know! Thanks		
032	8/30/2010	website	8/30/2010	at blue door boutique!
	9/3/2010	the website is AMAZING!!!! I'm FREAKING OUT OVER HERE!!!! Love it lovit. All your designs are phenomenal.		
033	11/18/2010	AMEN ROLLLL TIDE.....RMFT!!!!!!	12/9/2010	Crimson Red dress with Back elephant trunks up... White dress with black elephant trunks up. Roll Tide
	12/9/2010	Fleurty Bee Boutique would carry your bama stuff!		

## **E. SURVEY COVER LETTER AND EXEMPTION**



Dear participant:

Thanks for your input into this research. The purpose of this survey is to gain a better understanding of online word of mouth on Facebook.

In accordance to the LSU institutional Review Board human subject policies, all responses will remain confidential and be used for research purposes only, without identifying individual respondents. You must be 18 years old or older, and your participation is voluntary.

By completing the survey, you are providing your consent to participate in this study. If you have questions about participants' right or other related concerns, you can contact Dr. Robert Matthews, Institution Review Board, LSU, at (225)678-8692. In advance, thank you for participating in this survey.

To compensate your effort, you will get \$15 off your next Tru Colors purchase.

If you have any concern or questions, please contact us.

Jennifer Galster  
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Textile Science, Apparel Design, and Merchandising  
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## Application for Exemption from Institutional Oversight

Unless qualified as meeting the specific criteria for exemption from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight, ALL LSU research/projects using living humans as subjects, or samples or data obtained from humans, directly or indirectly, with or without their consent, must be approved or exempted in advance by the LSU IRB. This Form helps the PI determine if a project may be exempted, and is used to request an exemption.



Institutional Review Board  
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair  
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
P: 225.578.8692  
F: 225.578.6792  
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

- Applicant, Please fill out the application in its entirety and include the completed application as well as parts A-E, listed below, when submitting to the IRB. Once the application is completed, please submit two copies of the completed application to the IRB Office or to a member of the Human Subjects Screening Committee. Members of this committee can be found at [http://appl003.lsu.edu/osp/osp.nsf/\\$Content/Humans+Subject+Committee?OpenDocument](http://appl003.lsu.edu/osp/osp.nsf/$Content/Humans+Subject+Committee?OpenDocument)
- A Complete Application Includes All of the Following:
  - (A) Two copies of this completed form and two copies of parts B thru E.
  - (B) A brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to subjects and to explain your responses to Parts 1 & 2)
  - (C) Copies of all instruments to be used.
    - If this proposal is part of a grant proposal, include a copy of the proposal and all recruitment material.
  - (D) The consent form that you will use in the study (see part 3 for more information.)
  - (E) Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Protection Training for all personnel involved in the project, including students who are involved with testing or handling data, unless already on file with the IRB.  
Training link: (<http://cme.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/learning/humanparticipant-protections.asp>.)

<b>1) Principal Investigator:</b> <u>Jennifer Galster</u> <b>Rank:</b> <u>Masters</u> <b>Student** Y/N</b> <u>Y</u>	
<b>Dept.:</b> <u>Human Ecology</u> <b>Ph:</b> <u>2258108090</u> <b>E-mail:</b> <u>jgalst1@lsu.edu</u>	<b>Study Exempted By:</b> Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman Institutional Review Board Louisiana State University 203 B-1 David Boyd Hall 225-578-8692   <a href="http://www.lsu.edu/irb">www.lsu.edu/irb</a> Exemption Expires: <u>4/16/2015</u>
<b>2) Co Investigator(s):</b> please include department, rank and e-mail for each If student, please identify and name supervising professor in this space <u>Chuanlan Liu Human Ecology Ph.D clliu@lsu.edu</u>	
<b>3) Project Title:</b> <u>User Motivations For "Liking" and Continuing Activity on a Local Business Facebook Fan-Page</u>	
<b>4) LSU Proposal?(yes or no)</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>If Yes, LSU Proposal Number</b> _____ Also, if YES, either <input type="radio"/> This application <u>completely</u> matches the scope of work in the grant <b>OR</b> <input type="radio"/> More IRB Applications will be filed later	
<b>5) Subject pool</b> (e.g. Psychology Students) <u>Facebook Users</u> • Circle any "vulnerable populations" to be used: (children <18; the mentally impaired, pregnant women, the aged, other). Projects with incarcerated persons cannot be exempted.	
<b>6) PI Signature</b> _____ <b>** Date</b> _____ (no per signatures) **I certify my responses are accurate and complete. If the project scope or design is later changed I will resubmit for review. I will obtain written approval from the Authorized Representative of all non-LSU institutions in which the study is conducted. I also understand that it is my responsibility to maintain copies of all consent forms at LSU for three years after completion of the study. If I leave LSU before that time the consent forms should be preserved in the Departmental Office.  ***Effective August 1, 2007, all Exemptions will expire three years from date of approval, unless a continuation report, found on our website, is filed prior to expiration date***	
<b>Screening Committee Action:</b> Exempted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Exempted <input type="checkbox"/> Category/Paragraph <u>2</u>	
<b>Reviewer</b> <u>Mathews</u> <b>Signature</b> <u>[Signature]</u> <b>Date</b> <u>4/17/12</u>	<b>IRB#</b> <u>E5962</u> <b>LSU Proposal#</b> _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Subjects Training

Consent Form

Study Exempted By:  
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman  
Institutional Review Board  
Louisiana State University  
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall  
225-578-8692 | [www.lsu.edu/irb](http://www.lsu.edu/irb)  
Exemption Expires: 4/16/2015

1. Study Title: User Motivations for "Liking" and Continuing Activity on a Local Business Facebook Fan-page

2. Performance Site: Louisiana State University and Agricultural and  
Mechanical College

3. Investigators: The following investigators are available for  
questions about this study, M-F, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30  
p.m.

Dr. Chuanlan Liu 578-2400

Jennifer Galster 225-810-8090

4. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research project is to observe opinion leaders on Facebook and determine their motivations for participating in Facebook Fan-page activities and continuing to be active.

5. Subject Inclusion: Individuals between the ages of 18 and 65 who do  
not report psychological or neurological  
conditions.

6. Number of subjects: 33



7. Study Procedures: The study will be conducted in two phases. In the first

Phase is observational on the Facebook wall. The second phase is a survey sent to users identified as Opinion Leaders.

8. Benefits: Subjects will be given a \$15 coupon for Tru Colors Apparel.

Additionally we will receive information about Tru Colors sales and the effectiveness of word of mouth.

9. Risks: The only study risk is the inadvertent release of sensitive information found in the second questionnaire. However, every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. Files will be kept in secure cabinets to which only the investigator has access.

10. Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

11. Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

12. Signatures:

The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Mathews, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Signature of Subject

Date

## F. SURVEY QUESTIONS

How often do you log into Facebook?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Less than Once a Month
- ☐ Once a Month
- ☐ 2-3 Times a Month
- ☐ Once a Week
- ☐ 2-3 Times a Week
- ☐ Daily

How often do you visit the Tru Color Facebook Fan page?

(<https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Tru-Colors-Apparel/97919490684>)

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Less than Once a Month
- ☐ Once a Month
- ☐ 2-3 Times a Month
- ☐ Once a Week
- ☐ 2-3 Times a Week
- ☐ Daily

**Based on your experiences with Tru Color Facebook fan page, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements using the scale provided.**

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree or Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Tru Colors Facebook fan-page users share similar interests to my own					
I feel the product information given on the fan-page is strong.					
I feel the product information given on the fan-page is convincing					
I feel the product information given on the fan-page is powerful.					

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree or Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
The fan-page makes it easy for me to build a relationship with the online community					
Prior to purchasing apparel, I prefer to talk with my friends that have experience with the brand.					
I'm satisfied with the services provided by the Tru Colors Facebook fan-page					
It is very likely that I will buy the product					
I will purchase the product next time					
I need a product					

Have you purchased from Tru Colors Apparel?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How many seasons have you purchased Tru Colors Apparel? Please click all that apply.

- ☐ 2009-2010 Season
- ☐ 2010-2011 Season
- ☐ 2011-2012 Season
- ☐ Every Season
- ☐ None

Approximately how much money have you spent on Tru Colors Apparel over the last 3 seasons?

- ☐ 50-100
- ☐ 100-150
- ☐ 150 and up
- ☐ None

How often have you recommended Tru Colors Apparel to people you know?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

How old are you?

- ☐ Under 13
- ☐ 13-17
- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26-34
- ☐ 35-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65 or over

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ Less than High School
- ☐ High School / GED
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ 2-year College Degree
- ☐ 4-year College Degree
- ☐ Masters Degree
- ☐ Doctoral Degree
- ☐ Professional Degree (JD, MD)

What is your annual income range?

- ☐ Below \$20,000

- ☐ \$20,000 - \$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000 - \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 - \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 - \$59,999
- ☐ \$60,000 - \$69,999
- ☐ \$70,000 - \$79,999
- ☐ \$80,000 - \$89,999
- ☐ \$90,000 or more

Your valid email address is needed to send you the \$15 off your next Tru Colors purchase for participating in this survey. Your responses will remain anonymous.

## **VITA**

Jennifer Marie Galster was born in Clinton, Iowa, the daughter of Mary Jeanne Galster and David Leonard Galster. After completing her studies at Northeast Community High School in Goose Lake, Iowa she went to pursue a Bachelor's of Science degree in Textiles, Apparel and Merchandising with a minor in Business Administration at Louisiana State University in 2010. She continued her education at Louisiana State University to obtain a Master's of Science in the School of Human Ecology focusing on Textiles, Apparel, and Merchandising. During her time at Louisiana State University, Jennifer worked as a graduate assistant for Dr. Chuanlan Liu. Her assistantship work aided in the research of the Department of Entrepreneurship. She also worked part-time at JC Penney as a customer service representative and a visual specialist. As a customer service representative she improved the customer experience by providing product knowledge and a friendly demeanor. While working as a visual specialist, Jennifer was able to improve her leadership skills through leading teams to implement visual displays at the company standard.