

Spreading the Mojo – Building a viral and traditional marketing machine for [MojoPages](#)

Case Presentation presented by MITEF-San Diego

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On October 21, 2009, a large, near capacity audience (277 attendees) in the Salk Institute Auditorium in La Jolla watched the MIT Enterprise Forum of San Diego case presentation by Jon Carder, the Founder and CEO of MojoPages.

MojoPages is a combination of a local business search engine with a social networking feature. The website enables a local search for any business and also contains a relative ranking of the business (Mojo Rank) that is provided by reviewers/business customers. MojoPages aims to partner with one media outlet in metropolitan areas to provide local search services through the local media company's web site. In monetary terms, the current market nationally for local search was \$7B and is projected to grow to \$15B by 2012. This creates a considerable opportunity for MojoPages and one they have begun to take advantage of, beginning in San Diego with KFMB/Channel 8. They have other agreements either in the works or completed with a large number of media companies around the US. The media partners supply the advertising for the search site, with MojoPages concentrating on optimizing the search engine, gathering reviews and data on the reviewers as well as creating the environment for users to continue contributing reviews.

MojoPages was started in 2006 after Jon had sold the previous business he had started, Client Shop to Internet Brands. The first MojoPages website was programmed by developers in India and went live in 2007. Jon and his team raised \$5M in venture capital this past summer and are in the process of revamping their website, which they plan to launch before the end of 2009.

The two major issues that Jon felt his company needed help with were:

1. How to obtain the maximum number of users from the hundreds of millions of dollars that media companies will devote to advertising MojoPages. MojoPages has no experience with offline marketing or brand building and has a very small marketing staff (1 person).
2. How to properly attract and retain online community members that will contribute reviews and spread the "gospel of Mojo." This is not a strength of MojoPages and they currently do not have staff devoted to this effort.

The moderator was Marco Thompson of Express Ventures, and the three panelists were Reid Carr of Red Door Interactive, Susan Huberman of MOD Consulting and Jason Knapp of Fox Audience Network. Marco has broad technology expertise across the software, hardware, wireless and networking fields, and extensive business experience founding and running diverse technology companies. Red Door Interactive is a marketing and advertising firm and Reid has focused on the interactive/web development space for more than ten years. Susan is the founder of MOD Consulting, which is an outsourced strategic marketing consultancy. She has more than 20 years of strategic marketing experience. Jason is the Vice President of Integrated Solutions for the Fox Audience Network, which is a division of News Corp. The Audience Network manages all of the display advertising for MySpace and its 700 independent websites.

Marco began the panel discussion with Issue #2: how to attract and retain online community members. Jon admitted that he and the staff at MojoPages have not been paying any attention to the overall end user experience at this time, as they have been focusing on the search engine optimization and signing up media partners. The suggestions from the panel included better understanding the type of person that comes to the site, especially those that are the most frequent visitors. The panelists felt that MojoPages needs to really market to this installed base and personalize their experience. This can begin with a simple thank you email when they contribute a review and perhaps coupons from businesses similar to the one the person reviewed. Also, the follow up email should include a request to spread the word about MojoPages.

Businesses (who are reviewed and ranked) can also be partners for attracting users to the site. Jon gave one example where this has already happened with a beauty salon in Tulsa, OK. The owner encouraged her customers to write a review of the service provided so that the salon would get a higher ranking and be featured more prominently on local searches. This would set up a cycle where a business encourages customers to write reviews for MojoPages and MojoPages will capture these reviewers through targeted marketing (coupons, price reductions, etc). The reviewer's experience needs to be positive so that they are left with the feeling that their review is respected. This will transition the focus of MojoPages from enlisting businesses to obtaining users (business viral) and getting them to spread the word (consumer viral).

Issue #1 revolved around how best to make use of the media dollars that the partners will make available to the co-branded local search service. There was general agreement between the panelists that MojoPages needs to proactively manage the co-branding process to protect their brand. Co-branding arrangements can work as long as the MojoPages retains control over the communication of their brand and core brand message. Once the structure of a

deal is worked out, they should work closely with their media partners to create brand awareness.

The panel discussion was followed by questions and comments from the audience, which included many guests with marketing experience. Their input generated rich discussion among the panelists and provided Jon with additional suggestions. Jon was very open to the advice that he received from both the panelists and the audience. Prior to the presentation during the networking reception, information tables were set up by MojoPages, Cloud Harbor, and Knobbe Martens Olson & Bear LLP, the evening's presenting sponsor.

The [MIT Enterprise Forum](#) is a non-profit educational organization with 25 chapters worldwide. The San Diego chapter seeks to educate entrepreneurs in an informative and entertaining environment in front of a diverse audience of San Diego business leaders and technologists, as well as capital and service providers. The local programs are managed by [CONNECT](#).