

CASE STUDY

HPD Architecture gets it. Plain and simple.



This 3-person, Dallas-based design and remodeling firm has made progress in the social media world that you just don't see every day in a professional services firm.

By blogging, podcasting, and interacting with the design community online via Twitter, the firm has raised its visibility to a national level. And in a world of referrals and word-of-mouth marketing, they are driving considerable traffic to their website and generating targeted, qualified leads online.

How can three busy people accomplish so much? We spoke with HPD vice presidents Laura Davis (@hpdArchitecture) and Larry Paschall (@ArchHappyHour) to find out.

Embrace it, Commit to it, and Don't Look Back

HPD started their quest for online success two and a half years ago. Like many firms new to the digital space, the team was unsure where to begin. Eager to find a new marketing channel in a challenging economy, they turned to social media to increase market exposure and lessen their dependence on referrals.

"Our original goal was brand awareness," said Davis. "Nobody knew who we were, and it was important to increase visibility in order to survive in the rough economy."

CONNECT WITH HPD ARCHITECTURE

www.hpdarch.com

Blog: netoffer.com/dallas-architect/blog/

Twitter: [@hpdArchitecture](https://twitter.com/hpdArchitecture)

Facebook: [hpdArchitecture](https://www.facebook.com/hpdArchitecture)

At the time, the firm had no website. So Davis set up Facebook and Twitter pages and began exploring their possibilities. Before long, HPD became convinced that social media was a legitimate long-term marketing channel that would increase awareness of the firm in their local community.

Find Your Position Before You Start Running

Before HPD began spreading the word online, they realized it was necessary to have a concrete brand strategy. In working sessions the team hashed out a range of critical issues, such as:

- Who is HPD?
- What do we stand for?
- Who are our target clients and how do we reach them?
- What is our position in the marketplace and what are our messages?

These fundamental working sessions proved to be crucial. The firm's positioning as an architecture and design resource allowed them to gain traction in noise-flooded channels such as Twitter. In fact, their positioning is largely why they are so well known online today.

Why Use One Weapon When You Have Many?

Once HPD's brand strategy was in place, they took advantage of several online marketing platforms:

- **Twitter** – Davis and her team began following people relevant to their community. They invested a significant amount of time meeting design community members and finding ways to add value to discussions. Initially they interacted with the local community, but over time their reach expanded geographically. The network grew as Davis shared links to interesting content on other design websites, gradually building trust and credibility.

- **Facebook** – The firm uses their Facebook page as a place to post interesting articles. Again, the goal was to build a reputation as a resource for the architecture and design community. By talking about the industry and not directly promoting HPD itself, they've created a high-quality educational resource where people can find and retrieve information.
- **Podcasts** – After seeing other companies have success with webinars, HPD decided to try their hand at a similar media format: audio podcasts. Their branded series, *The Architecture Happy Hour*, is a monthly audio recording in which Davis and Paschall talk about a wide range of topics, from home owner tips to gays in architecture. The team uses social media to promote the podcast, and over time they have built a following of loyal subscribers.
- **Blog** – Some companies use their blog to talk about their firm's latest and greatest accomplishments. In contrast, HPD uses its blog to spotlight innovative and interesting happenings within its community. It also uses this space to summarize podcasts and republish interesting discussions. The blog is another place for the team to share expertise, interact, and develop trust.

Kindergarten Basics – Sharing is Good

In a world filled with spam and promotions, the last thing community members want to see in their twitter feed is an advertisement or press release. HPD understands this, and from day one they have built relationships — and their reputation — on the quality of the content they share.

Their thinking goes like this: people who share carefully selected industry news, photos and articles will be respected and followed. Before HPD had any content of their own to contribute, they were promoting other websites and influencers. And once they had a podcast to share, followers were all ears.

A One-Hour-Per-Day Workout

The HPD team dedicates about an hour per day to social media activities. This includes:

- Recording and editing podcasts once a month
- Interacting, responding, and sharing on Twitter
- Sharing content on Facebook
- Writing blog posts once a month

One tool HPD has found useful is Hootsuite. This software allows a person to manage multiple accounts and platforms from a single computer screen. If Davis wants to share an article on two Twitter accounts, a Facebook page, and a LinkedIn profile, she can do it quickly and efficiently with Hootsuite.

Yes, You Still Have to Get Off Your Butt

It's important to note that all three HPD team members still go out and network at live events. But they supplement traditional marketing tactics with social media.

Meeting someone digitally is no replacement for shaking a live hand, especially in a field such as architecture where relationships still matter. In Hinge's online marketing research study we found that the fastest growing companies are employing both traditional and digital forms of marketing. So before you allocate all of next year's marketing budget to social media, remember that a good old fashioned cocktail can still be an effective way to start a business relationship.



Is It Worth It?

Most marketing companies will say you need social media. But what does a firm that's actually been doing it for two and a half years have to say?

"So far it's working," says Davis. "New people are reaching out to us, and they are finding us online. We've gotten exposure from architecture blogs that want to interview us, we've gotten speaking engagements that we would not have gotten otherwise, and our website traffic has increased significantly."

Google has noticed the online activity. HPD's website and blog are being indexed regularly and qualified leads are coming to the site from valuable search terms, such as "home design in Dallas." These qualified leads are a direct indicator that their online efforts are paying off.

HPD started with a goal to increase visibility in the marketplace. Their strategy is working. And things are only going to get better for these hard working architects.

CASE STUDY

Architecture Firm Finds 90% of Leads Online



If you've ever doubted the power of a website as a lead generation tool, look no further than Modative Architects. During a recent conversation with their co-founder, Derek Leavitt, we uncovered some striking statistics:

- Approximately 90% of the firm's leads come through its website
- They receive around 4 warm leads per week online
- The firm's web traffic increased from 10 visits a week to 400 per day in a short period of time

How were they able to achieve such results so quickly?

Finding the Right Keyword Opportunity

Derek and his business partners, Christian Návar and Michael Scott, were able to use search engine data to find great keyword opportunities. They were careful to select terms that receive heavy search traffic but which don't appear on many websites. Often these are highly specific keyword phrases, such as "small lot subdivisions."

This is a niche keyword that they felt they could own. It accurately describes one of their core services, so it was ripe for the taking. Okay, now what?

CONNECT WITH MODATIVE

www.modative.com

Twitter: @modative

Blog: www.modative.com/modern-architects-blog

Facebook: [Modative-Architecture](https://www.facebook.com/Modative-Architecture)

Creating a Quality Content Piece with a Conversion Action

The Modative team then wrote several pieces of educational content on the topic of small lot subdivisions. They packaged these pieces as “guides” and “packets” and posted them in the Resources section of their website for download.

These helpful content pieces are free, but they require an email address to download. The idea here is that when someone searches on a specific keyword phrase, they will click through to this resource page. If the content on the page is relevant, a visitor will supply their email address and download the piece. Each visitor who takes this action is then added to the firm’s list of leads and enters their sales pipeline.

After some initial success, Modative has taken this approach to heart and transformed its website into a lead generation machine. Check out their resources to see other examples of content they offer to prospective clients.