



# Carman-Ainsworth

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CASE STUDY:  
Social Media Service

# Improve Communications

## Decrease Costs

In a nutshell this is what the scope of our engagement with Carman-Aisworth was all about. The school district was looking at all of their costs of communication from internal resources to print costs to mailing expenses.

## Increase Efficiencies

Parents are busier and consume their information in more places making the job of a school district to effectively communicate more difficult than ever before.

# Background

## This Study

This study will take a close look at a school district that made the shift from paper communication to online communication. They realized that their students, faculty, parents and alumni were all using the internet to communicate and wanted to be more accessible and to be more efficient all while reducing their communication costs.

## About Carman-Ainsworth

Carman-Ainsworth is a school district in Genesee County, Michigan. This district has four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. The district serves a vast variety of students from different ethnicities, income levels and home dynamics. Carman-Ainsworth is committed to educating and bringing the community together to help students succeed.

## The Situation

Carman-Ainsworth was looking for a way to reduce communication costs, but still effectively and efficiently inform students, parents and faculty about upcoming events and new developments that occur daily. Carman-Ainsworth printed all school news announcements in a newsletter that went out monthly. They spent money on printing, advertisements for upcoming and student activities, and the distribution of these advertisements to the whole community.

# The Objectives

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The goal was to improve Carman-Ainsworth's communications with their community by shifting their communications from print to online, efficiently and effectively. We wanted to engage more parents, make the communication process between faculty and parents much easier, and more timely. We wanted to give parents a place they could go to when they have questions that was easily accessible and would provide a quick response. We also wanted to create a community that allowed parents to come together and discuss C-A schools, share information, share student accomplishments and feel a connection to the community.

The online world allows people to come together and engage with each other about various topics from the comfort of their home, office or even on the go with their smartphone. Knowing this, we decided that building an online com-

munity that engaged parents, staff, students and alumni would be the best route to take to reach our goal of improving communication.

To achieve our goal we developed a Facebook page for the district, Twitter page and an online blog for the district allowing parents, students, faculty and alumni to stay connected and receive information in a timely manner. Additionally, 3Sixty worked closely with C-A by planning out the process that eliminated the printed monthly newsletter, and to now produce a biweekly e-mail newsletter. This newsletter is sent out to over 4,000 recipients in the CA district with updates about student accomplishments, community activities, district updates and more. These changes to the way C-A communicates with their district has saved them money, and kept community members informed about important happenings around the Carman-Ainsworth district much faster than ever before.





## The Strategy

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To accomplish the objectives that Carman-Ainsworth Schools had we developed these primary strategic elements.

The first element was the transmission of the messages. It may seem obvious, but making sure that the right communication gets in front of the right school audience segment (parent, student, supporter, etc.) is the bedrock to creating a best practice. In creating this best practice multiple online channels are used from social media to e-mail.

The second strategic elements is relevancy. To increase engagement the message must be relevant to the audience. The content of all messaging for Carman-Ainsworth Schools

is written specifically for the audience segment that is receiving it.

Relevancy isn't just limited to the content. The timing of the communication also has to be relevant. Here we have identified the most relevant times that the audience segments will be most likely to be receptive to the message and the urgency of the message and then we communicate with each segment accordingly.

Finally, governance. Every strategy needs to have a governance plan. This is when we review what is happening, make adjustments and ensure that the good work that is being done continues and improves.



## The Results

As a result of our work, Carman-Ainsworth was able to save nearly \$15,000 from their previous year's communication budget, and keep the community informed much faster and easier than ever before. We have also helped build and nurture a relationship between the district and the parents that allows for open communication.. **David Swierpel**, Director of Professional Learning and Community Services, had this to say about our work with the Carman-Ainsworth School District, *"During the 2012-13 school year, Carman-Ainsworth Community Schools made a shift from primarily relying on print communication with our community to a blend of social media and print. We had three goals in mind when we made this shift; reduce costs, increase the frequency and timeliness of our communication, and find*

*someone who could help us manage the transition. Our interviews with prospective providers led us to contract with 3Sixty Interactive to accomplish our goals.*

*Working with 3Sixty, we have developed a very active Facebook and Twitter presence as well as a biweekly e-newsletter that is e-mailed to over 4,000 recipients. 3Sixty Interactive held our hand through the transition including notifying our community about the change, collecting and entering e-mail addresses, creating a consistent design and format for social media and our e-newsletter, as well as weekly telephone chats that help to keep our communication flowing. The bottom line is that our community is better informed and we're saving money."*

The logo features a large blue circle on the left containing a white number '3'. To its right, the word 'SIXTY' is written in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. Below 'SIXTY', the word 'Interactive' is written in a thin, white, lowercase, sans-serif font. A small registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the 'Y' in 'SIXTY'.

# 3 SIXTY<sup>®</sup> Interactive



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