



Another California firm moving to Austin

Main Street Hub seeks HQ downtown for 29

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A young San Francisco company plans to be the latest in a series of social media companies to set up operations in Austin.

Main Street Hub Inc. provides a service that helps small and midsize businesses manage their online reputations. The company, founded in late 2009, is now looking to move its headquarters to downtown Austin. It plans to open an office in June with 29 workers and subsequently employ hundreds of workers, CEO Andrew Allison said.

The company is looking for a 4,000- to 6,000-square-foot office; [Aquila Commercial](#) LLC is its local real estate broker, he said.

Social media is growing quickly because businesses are realizing they can reach customers, partners, employees and future employees directly using such online tools rather than indirectly through advertising and marketing campaigns.

At the same time, small and medium-sized business owners who don't have time to manage information posted on the Internet related to their businesses can enlist a service such as Main Street Hub. The company monitors and manages online reputations for \$200 to \$300 per month.

"Productivity tools miss the point because business owners don't have the time to use them," Allison said.

Meanwhile, social media continues to grow in influence. Online reputations are mostly generated through reviews posted on websites such as Twitter, TripAdvisor and Yelp.com.

And while online postings can play an important role in how businesses are perceived by prospective customers, Austin is quickly becoming an attractive location for social media companies.

In March, social media startup Mass Relevance Inc. received \$2.2 million of a planned \$2.5 million round of financing from nine investors.

Mass Relevance, which manages Twitter messages for clients, was launched last year by **Sam Decker**, the former chief marketing officer of Austin-based [Bazaarvoice Inc.](#)

Bazaarvoice, which manages online customer communities for clients such as Wal-Mart Stores Inc. (NYSE: WMT), has grown so quickly that industry observers are picking it as a likely contender to complete an initial public offering.

Last year, **Andy Sernovitz**, CEO of the Social Media Business Council, moved his organization from Chicago to Austin. Also, [Facebook Inc.](#), the world's largest online social network with 500 million active users, opened in Austin its first office outside California. The company eventually plans to employ about 200 local workers.

Meanwhile, Socialware Inc., which was founded in 2008 by two former Bazaarvoice executives, is developing social middleware — software that's layered between a company's network and social networking websites used by workers. Two location-based social networking companies, Gowalla Inc. and SocialSmack Inc., are also operating locally.

Sernovitz said social media has become an integral part of marketing a business rather than an alternative approach.

“For a smart company, this is standard operating procedure,” he said. “People are learning that this is how we talk to our customers.”

Courtesy of JB Goodwin