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Wanted: Creative types in Austin

Several Web-oriented firms in hiring mode

Austin Business Journal - by [Sandra Zaragoza](#)

Frog Design is making room for about 20 more employees at its downtown office in the Scarborough Building at Sixth Street and Congress Avenue.

Frog is just one of Austin's creative companies in a hiring mode, indicating that clients are loosening their purse strings, at least when it comes to interactive, Web development and social media services.

Razorfish Inc., nFusion Group LLC and Tocquigny are also among the interactive agencies adding to or replenishing their ranks after a tough few years.

Frog, a San Francisco-based product and Web design and consulting firm with 150 employees, moved into the downtown office about a year ago. The space was occupied by **Google** for four months before it closed in January during a cost-cutting consolidation.

While some interactive and design companies downsized during the downturn, Frog maintained steady business and hiring, General Manager Dave Kramer said.

"We may have slowed, but we really didn't downsize during the tough times," Kramer said. "We've really just grown year-over-year. We've doubled in size from four years ago."

The agency counts **Walt Disney Co.**, **Intel Corp.** and **Hewlett-Packard Co.** as clients. Its clients also come from the telecom, health care and automotive industries.

"We've been very fortunate that our business is innovation," Kramer said. "And our clients that have been struggling see that it is critical to innovate their way out, to improve market share and get a competitive advantage."

Frog also helped design electric vehicle charging stations through a partnership with ECotality.

Razorfish, a Seattle-based interactive agency, has added more than 30 new staffers this year, and has 10 or more openings in creative, user experience and social media, said Shawn Rooney, recruiter for Razorfish's central region.

Rooney said the Austin office has been adding employees to accommodate growth from existing and new clients. She did not disclose new clients, but Razorfish's key industries are automotive, health care, retail and technology.

Likewise, John Ellett, CEO of nFusion, said his company has seen an increase in activity from existing and new clients that are more willing to invest in digital marketing activities than they were in 2008 and 2009.

"This year, there is the sense that we found the bottom, and now we have to start marketing activity. The first place many clients are going to focus is on highly efficient digital marketing," Ellett said.

nFusion, which downsized in the last few years, has about 50 employees. It recently hired five staffers and plans to hire about five more.

By opening hiring to job hunters outside Austin, Ellett said, nFusion hasn't had trouble filling positions.

"We are actually finding our talent from all over the country," Ellett said. "Several people have moved to Austin to join the firm, and I think the trend will continue as Austin gains a reputation as a great digital market."

In the last year, nFusion has added eight new clients, which include companies in health care, technology, restaurants and retail.

Steve Golab, CEO of FG Squared Interactive Marketing, said his company downsized by half as its business took a hit during the recession. It now has 15 employees.

But Golab said FG Squared — and the economy — are turning a corner.

"We've added four clients in the last two months. Arguably, we will add six to 12 in the next six months," said Golab, who hopes to add one to two employees.

Golab said FG Squared is seeing pent-up demand from clients, and he believes his company is starting to reap the benefits from investments it made in new product development and business acquisition.

FeedMagnet, launched a little over a year ago, is having to keep up with client demand. A few new faces will be hired by the end of the year, CEO Jason Ford said.

The software startup — its technology focuses on aggregating content from social media for website marketing — went from one to four employees in the last 12 months. It now counts **Advanced Micro Devices Inc.**, WETv, **Bazaarvoice Inc.** and **Kendall-Jackson Wine Estates** as clients, as well as advertising and marketing agencies.

Jason Ford, founder and CEO of FeedMagnet, said the company, which added about 10 accounts in the last three months, expects to add one employee every other month through the end of the year. Ford said he hopes to hire a few software developers and business account associates.

Ford believes that coming out of a recession, companies are looking for social media technology services. At least one new client, Kendall-Jackson sought FeedMagnet out.

"Social Media is becoming a mainstay of business now," Ford said. Agencies "have to build a practice around it. We are helping them do that."

Who's hiring on Indeed.com?

Frog Design: 15 to 20 jobs

Razorfish: About 10 jobs

nFusion: About 5 jobs

Tocquigny: About 11 jobs

Courtesy of JB Goodwin