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Nike, HBO, Sony Tap FMYI For Collaboration

(page 2 of 2)

The \$275 million [enterprise social media space](#) (GigaOM Pro subscription required) is growing rapidly, as the success of consumer social networking sites has begun to filter into the business world, with heavyweights like Microsoft [[MSFT](#)] SharePoint and smaller companies like [Jive](#) all after a piece of the pie. But Yuen says he's not feeling pressure from the influx of new competitors: The company's revenues for the first half of 2009 have already exceeded all of those from 2008, despite the economic downturn.

While the market's growth has helped make potential customers more aware of the ways such solutions can improve productivity and solve workflow problems, Yuen's quick to point out that it's not just overall market growth driving fmyi's success. There are many solutions on the market, but "no one has really done it well and cracked the code," says Yuen. From his perspective, fmyi's main selling point is that its social tools are all organized within workflow, allowing companies to reap significant productivity benefits. (For example, the MTV [[VIA](#)] show *Room Raiders*, which uses the system for casting management, reportedly was able to cut the length of an average workday to 9 hours from 14 hours after adopting the tool.)

MONITORING PROGRESS

Yuen is also experimenting with using social media as a way to launch and monitor sustainability projects. Through a partnership with the [Northwest Earth Institute](#), fmyi will offer an online discussion course around workplace sustainability within its platform and offer tools for tracking sustainability projects that emerge from the course. Yuen says the company will begin a pilot with two companies "soon" and launch the template for more widespread use later this summer.

The Portland (Ore.) company, which has been profitable since 2006 without any external investment, currently hosts 6,000 sites. Clients include HBO, Sony ([SNE](#)), Nike (although it's using fmyi for product groups, not sustainability efforts these days), and AFLAC ([AFL](#)) (field agents use it for tracking customer relationships). Hyatt is one large company leveraging the company's sustainability expertise; the hotel chain uses fmyi to coordinate its Global Sustainability Initiative. As far as Yuen is concerned, fmyi's roots in the sustainability movement may help it work with clients more successfully than its competitors: "Social media and sustainability are both about culture change," he says.

Provided by [GigaOm](#)—

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Nike, HBO, Sony Tap FMYI For Collaboration

A Portland startup blends elements of Facebook, Friendfeed and other social tools to help business people work together better

By Celeste LeCompte



Nike's ([NKE](#)) [Shambhala initiative](#), which kicked off in 1999, aimed to

transform Nike's approach to social and environmental issues. A series of workshops brought together sustainability gurus, speakers, and more than 50 managers from across Nike's many divisions to discuss ways to push the envelope on internal and product-focused sustainability. The events were hugely successful, but the challenge, says Justin Yuen, a former intranet developer turned corporate social responsibility manager at Nike, was finding a way to keep that sense of community and engagement among individual participants after they returned to their teams.

Traditionally, employees had two methods of communicating with one another: e-mail and the company intranet. The former, while dynamic enough to support actual work, lacked transparency, longevity, and opportunities for collaboration. The intranet, on the other hand, was great for sharing static information across teams and individuals. Neither, however, reflected how people actually worked together. So in 2004, Yuen left his position in Nike's corporate social responsibility team and set out on his own to develop a product that could do better. The result was [fmyi](#)—as in, "for my information"—and it's a rare success story in the Web 2.0 landscape: a social media-infused enterprise collaboration tool that has been profitable since two years after its founding.

Fmyi, which is billed as an "online social workspace," blends elements of [Basecamp](#), [Highrise](#), [Facebook](#), and [Friendfeed](#) to create a remarkably flexible, natural system for enterprise collaboration. Unlike Basecamp, for example, which creates rigid buckets for projects and teams, fmyi recognizes that users belong to multiple groups, and not only need different access to different individual projects but may also need to share discussions across parallel projects. The site's organization and architecture support this, with filters for how information is shared, profile pages, featured content items controlled by the site admin, and different ways of sorting and organizing the same pieces of content. The system also indexes documents uploaded to the site so the contents—not just file names and associated messages—are easily searchable.

AD HOC, DYNAMIC SUPPORT

As a longtime Facebook user and Basecamp advocate, I was impressed with fmyi's tool set, which seems to reflect the way many of my friends and colleagues have become used to collaborating—in an ad hoc, dynamic way, with an emphasis on transparency. At the same time, it's devoid of some of the weaknesses of other systems I've tried, such as a lack of security or robust permissions and a constant tug-of-war between information overload from a firehose-like stream of content and overly segmented pockets that restrict sharing. The question of social context for content is one that Facebook has been trying to answer with [new privacy filters](#)—perhaps the team should ask Yuen for some pointers. (The two sites speak a similar design language already, and fmyi users can expect a new user interface even more reminiscent of Facebook later this summer.)

In some ways, it's this relationship to consumer social networking tools that's driving growth for

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fmyi. Yuen says he's seen an uptick of interest in the social media-like aspects of fmyi's solution, and the company is tweaking its marketing and development priorities in response.