Brandon Chesnutt, 25

Social media director
Identity Marketing & Public Relations L.L.C.,
Bingham Farms

Why he lives in metro Detroit: “Metro Detroit is home to some tough, passionate and charismatic people. They are the reason I stay here. I would feel lost without them.”

Claim to fame: Stimulated and expanded Identity's social media practice group. Also helped to organize more than a dozen informal gatherings, events and conferences designed to connect Detroit's growing interactive community.

Next step: Finish graduate school, continue growing Identity's social media business and show the world why Detroit is home to an active and vibrant digital community.

When Brandon Chesnutt arrived at Bingham Farms-based Identity Marketing & Public Relations L.L.C. in 2007, Identity had very few social media clients.

Now social media is the company's fastest-growing business line, said Tom Nixon, one of three Identity partners.

“I am very passionate about it. I attended conferences and soaked up knowledge like a sponge,” said Chesnutt, who is halfway through a master's degree in business administration at Walsh College.

“We weren't actively seeking social media as an agency, and I saw handwriting on the wall,” Chesnutt said. “Clients are looking for these services as people are flocking to social networks and looking for content.”

Of Identity's more than 50 clients, six are now exclusively social media clients, with another 12 that are both public relations and social media, he said.

“Our client roster is growing by leaps and bounds,” he said.

Identity helps its clients build their social media strategies from the ground up, offering everything from training and executive counsel to strategic planning, content development, media creation and community outreach.

In most cases, clients are using social media to complement their existing marketing strategy, but Identity also works with clients that are using it to boost recruiting and sales efforts.

“I've always loved connecting with people,” Chesnutt said. “Since a big part of the social media world is about making new connections and reinforcing old ones with like-minded individuals, I was immediately drawn to it.”

Chesnutt also is one of six co-founders of iDetroit, an online community that promotes metro Detroit's interactive and technology scene.

— Jay Greene