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## Social Studies: Belk Bowl's Miller Yoho On Fan Interaction, Staying Relevant In Offseason

By Joe Perez, Assistant Editor

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During college bowl season, it is easy for any game not among the high-profile crowd to get lost in the shuffle. Some games carry enough history or prestige that there is no sleep lost over whether fans will pay attention. But for others, using social media to stand out is as necessary as an appealing matchup on the field. This holds true for Miller Yoho, digital content specialist for Charlotte-based ad agency Luquire George Andrews, who manages the website and social media accounts for the Belk Bowl (@BelkBowl). He has handled these duties first for the Charlotte Sports Foundation and now for LGA. Unlike many bowl games, the Belk Bowl has taken on a cheeky and irreverent personality.

### The Belk Bowl's personality:

I started looking at all the other bowl accounts and the ones that I related to and thought were successful were the ones that had the personality of college football fans. The Belk Bowl is a tier one bowl, which means it is getting good teams. But in September, October, even into November, most fan bases aren't thinking of the Belk Bowl as the destination they want, they want the College Football Playoff. Why would we try to push tickets or force people into a relationship with us when we are not talking about things they care about? It boils down to that college football celebrates when a 300-pound man picks up a fumble. That's the biggest Internet moment, when a fat guy scores a touchdown. Let's celebrate that not many people outside the southeast know what a Belk is. Last year we referred to ourselves as "The Best Dressed Bowl."

### SOCIAL SNAPSHOT

**Must-follow on Twitter:** Moon Pie. I like them because they are so good at what they do in creating a brand voice.

**Favorite app:** Twitter

**Average time per day on social media:** Including work, 8-10 hours.

### Feedback from Belk:

We work with their team. When I came in with a fresh set of eyes, Will Webb, the Executive Director for the bowl, was all for it, and Belk jumped on board and realized connecting with college football fans is why they wanted the sponsorship. It was about finding unique ways to do it. They've seen results just from the impressions which have grown from our accounts.

### Fan base that has interacted best with the Belk Bowl account:

I like to put it in the range of a message board fan base -- a fan base that still sits on message boards and gets angry about certain things. Then you have the more progressive fan bases that are into fan blogs and getting stuff out there. A perfect example is Texas A&M. They have a very strong blog community, who for three years have been playing this cat-and-mouse game of, will we select them. I've developed a really good relationship with a few of their fans.

### Bowl games having separate accounts for game and behind-the-scenes content:

If you look at us during the game, you will not really see us tweet the play-by-play. It's my belief, if people are looking at Twitter, they are either watching it or checking the score somewhere else. Our job is to provide what it feels, looks, sounds like to be at the bowl. What is the emotion of it for people to have a connection with it? Live tweeting doesn't work because it clogs up people's timelines and it really doesn't serve a purpose. As far as insider stuff, I'll never beat Wake Forest. Wake Forest will always have the best insider stuff for Wake Forest.

### Frustration with overall low bowl attendance:

It's very callous for people to paint the negative picture of empty stands when you can look and there are more people there that are happy to be there. There is an impact for the players. I got to watch 3,000 bags made for Charlotte kids in need by our two teams. Now these kids have food and the players give service. It's part of that experience. When it comes to just the game, when there are not as many people as some expect, it discredits that when you look at the empty seats rather than the efforts of the people who work at the game, the experience of the student-athletes and what the game means to the city.

**Bowls that do social media well:**

The Camping World Bowl and the Citrus Bowl are run by a guy named Matt Repchak, who kind of invented bowl social media and its creativity. They deserve all the credit for creating an engaging bowl social media account.

**When the Belk Bowl is not top of mind:**

A lot of internal stuff: recapping, looking at the numbers, looking at what performed well and what didn't. There are a lot of bowls that let things go dormant -- and we'll certainly slow down, but we'll continue and try to stay relevant when possible. That doesn't mean tweeting for the sake of tweeting or posting for the sake of posting. We know we are seasonal, but we want people to be fans of the Belk Bowl, not just fans of the Belk Bowl during football season. It also bleeds into us having Tennessee and West Virginia kicking off the season in Charlotte next season, so we have to start working on that and promoting that game. It's how you plant those seeds in March and April.



**Belk Bowl**  
@belkbowl

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