CASE STUDY:

How German Soccer Team FC Bayern Munich Unearthed Key Insights in Growing a U.S. Fan Base

By:

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Primary Research Question

Increasingly, international sports teams are seeking to develop a strong brand presence in the United States. Over the last decade multiple teams have opened offices in the U.S. aimed at achieving this goal. Teams regularly play multiple games in the U.S. as part of this strategy. Teams also build social media accounts specifically targeted to the U.S. sports fan with content.

FC Bayern Munich, one of the most valuable, well-known professional sports teams in the world, began pursing a U.S. fan base growth strategy several years ago. This study sought to ascertain the success of their efforts. Specifically, this study sought to answer the primary research question of "How is Bayern Munich perceived by U.S. based soccer fans?" With this purpose in mind, Samford University sports marketing students set out to answer the question in two ways: (1) Who in the U.S. follows Bayern Munich on the social media, and (2) What is Bayern Munich's current brand awareness and perception within the U.S. soccer market. The scope of this study was limited to U.S. based soccer fans.
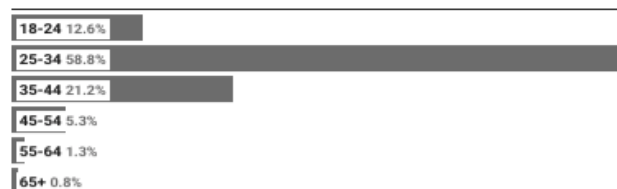
Bayern Munich U.S. Based Social Media Followers' Insights

This study utilized the cutting edge social media analytics tools of Affinio (affinio.com) to derive valuable insights about Bayern Munich's U.S. based social media followers. Affinio (affinio.com) is an advanced marketing intelligence platform that ingests hundreds of millions of social media data points and uses machine learning to develop network graphs of better understand customer segments. Affinio's analysis divides an organization's Twitter followers into interest-based clusters. The Affinio analysis outlined in this study is based on people living in the U.S. that follow the FC Bayern U.S. account or the FC Bayern EN account. There are a total of 21,851 followers included in the analysis. As you can be seen below, most followers of these accounts are males between the ages of 25 to 34.

Gender Breakdown ?

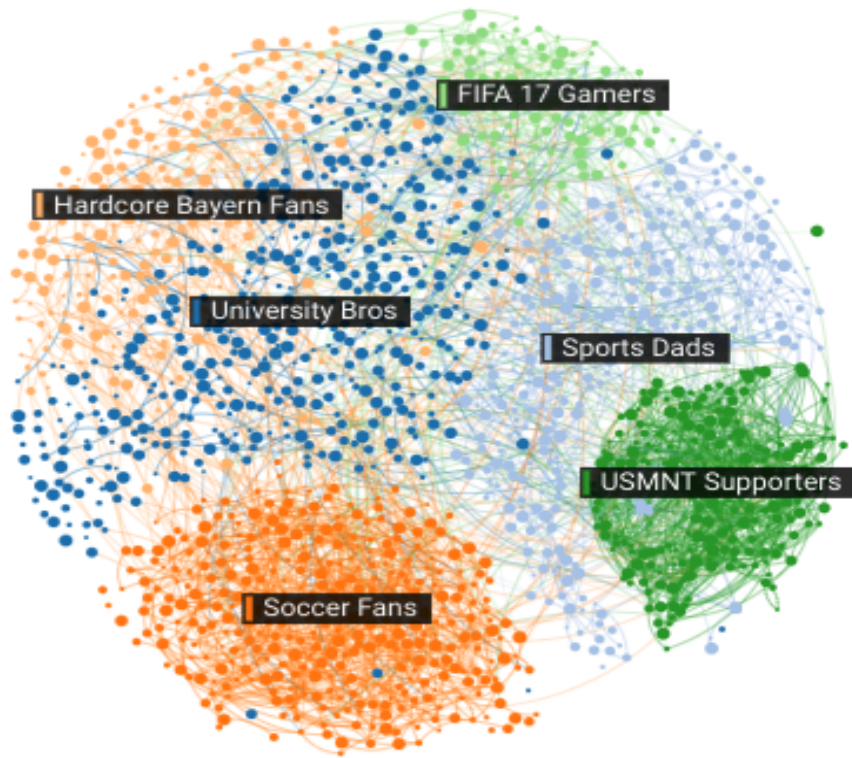Male 74.5%
Female 25.5%

Age Breakdown ?

18-24 12.6%
25-34 58.8%
35-44 21.2%
45-54 5.3%
55-64 1.3%
65+ 0.8%

The Affinio tool discovered six primary interest based clusters within the followers

analyzed. The below network graph demonstrates these clusters.

**Bayern Munich U.S. Based Social Media Follower Network Graph**

These are the 200 social media accounts that U.S. based Bayern Munich followers

have the highest affinity towards.

U.S. Men's National Team Cluster

One of the largest interest based clusters of Bayern Munich followers in the U.S. are fans of the U.S. Men's National Team. Most of these followers live in the Northeast part of the U.S. There are also strong pockets of Bayern Munich supporters in Texas and Southern California. The below heat map demonstrates these findings.

Heat Map of USMNT Cluster Bayern Munich Twitter Followers
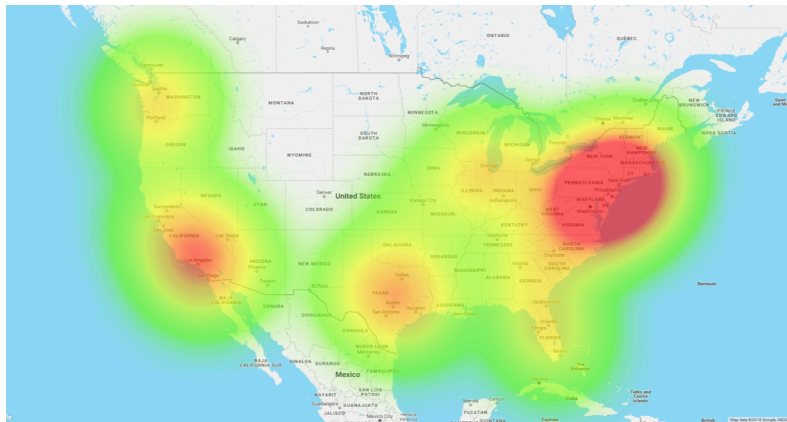
Top Cities for USMNT Cluster Bayern Munich Twitter Followers in the U.S.
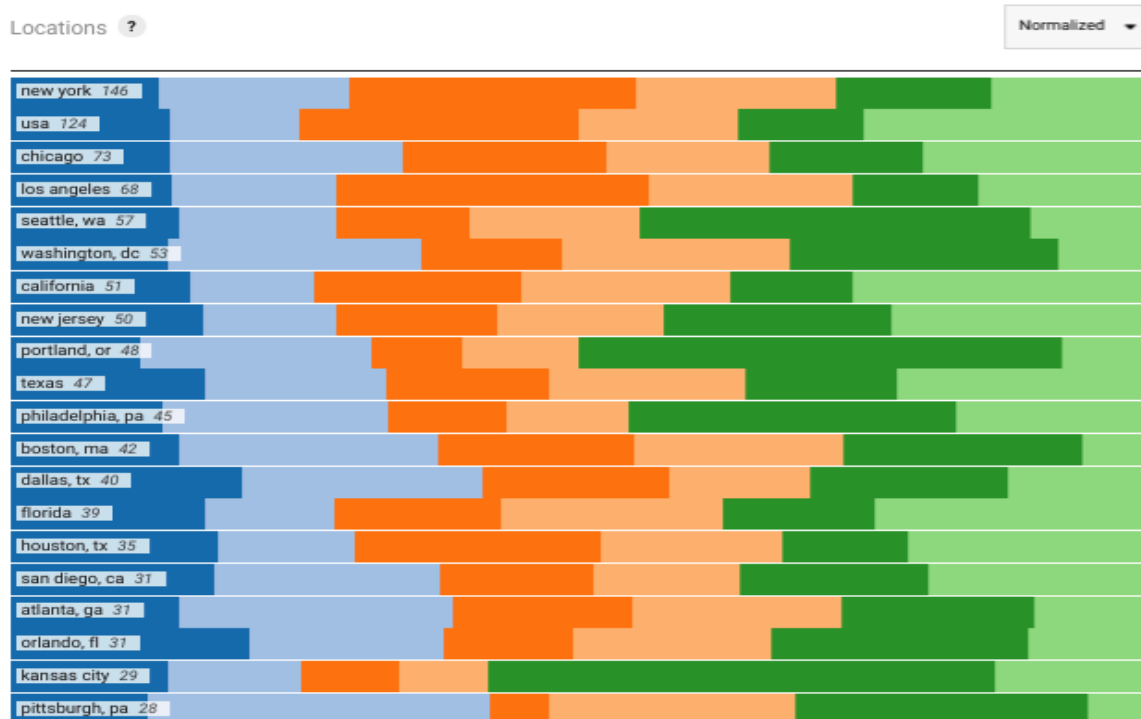
As can be seen in the below chart that lists the top 200 highest affinity Twitter accounts for the USMNT cluster, members of this cluster have a high affinity for the MLS (the official account was the 7th highest affinity account overall). Interestingly, several MLS team accounts including NYFC, LA and Seattle were all ranked higher than Manchester United (the second highest European team account behind Bayern Munich for this cluster).

*Top 200/1000

TOP INTERESTS

Audience Affinities: USMNT Supporters

Based on a detailed analysis of the interests of the USMNT supporters cluster within the Twitter followers of Bayern Munich, we make the following recommendation.

(1) Bayern Munich should leverage young American star and current Bayern Munich player Julian Green to grow their fanbase within the USMNT Supporter segment to convert fans that have yet to choose a club to support. As can be seen from the below chart, people in this segment are 743 times more likely to follow him on Twitter than the general Twitter population.

	FC Bayern English x FC Bayern US	University Bros	Sports Dads	Soccer Fans	Hardcore Bayern Fans	USMNT Supporters	FIFA 17 Gamers
Bundesliga	30.3/100 341x	12.0/100 135x	25.4/100 285x	45.1/100 508x	41.5/100 467x	37.0/100 416x	29.6/100 332x
	25.7/100 64x	3.2/100 8x	17.0/100 43x	42.9/100 108x	57.8/100 145x	18.1/100 45x	27.3/100 68x
	25.5/100 67x	4.3/100 11x	16.7/100 44x	45.4/100 120x	50.6/100 133x	19.3/100 51x	26.8/100 71x
	20.0/100 101x	1.6/100 8x	12.5/100 63x	34.6/100 174x	46.4/100 233x	14.6/100 73x	19.8/100 99x
	17.9/100 127x	2.8/100 20x	9.2/100 65x	31.8/100 225x	39.9/100 282x	12.2/100 86x	21.0/100 149x
	14.1/100 228x	1.5/100 24x	15.1/100 244x	10.0/100 163x	14.6/100 237x	45.8/100 743x	7.9/100 129x

(2) Bayern Munich should consider playing friendlies against MLS teams that the USMNT have the highest affinity toward. Top clubs include NYFC, LA Galaxy, Seattle Sounders, Portland Timbers and Sporting Kansas City.

FIFA 17 Gamers Cluster

Another interest-based cluster of Bayern Munich followers in the U.S. are people who play FIFA 17. Most of these followers live in Southern California or the Northeast part of the U.S. Compared to the USMNT cluster, there appears to be a larger base of FIFA 17 cluster members living in Southern California.

Heat Map of FIFA 17 Cluster Bayern Munich Twitter Followers
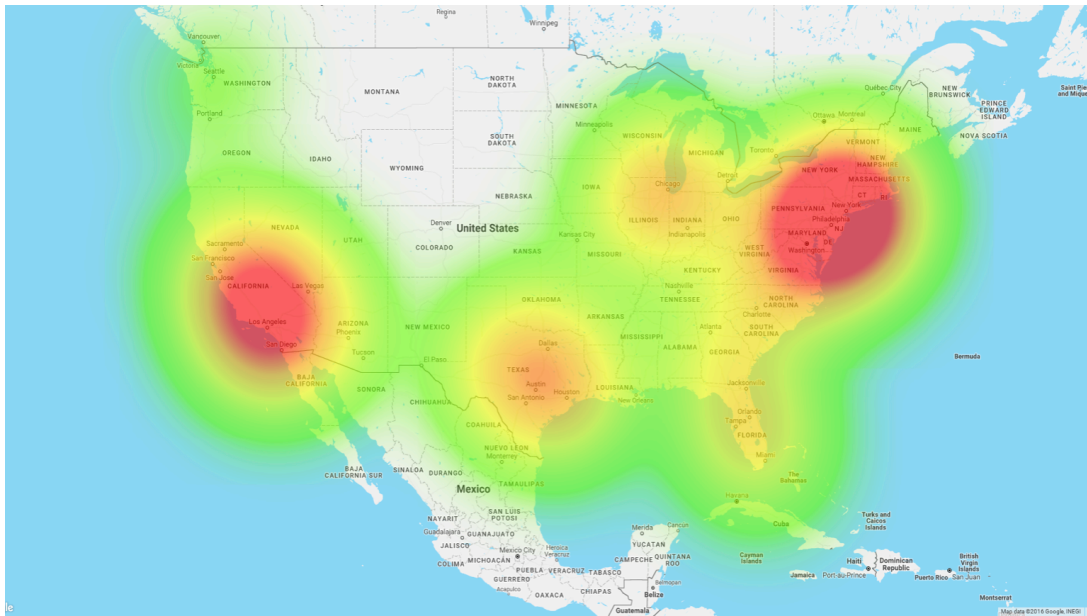
Top Cities for FIFA 17 Bayern Munich Twitter Followers in the U.S.
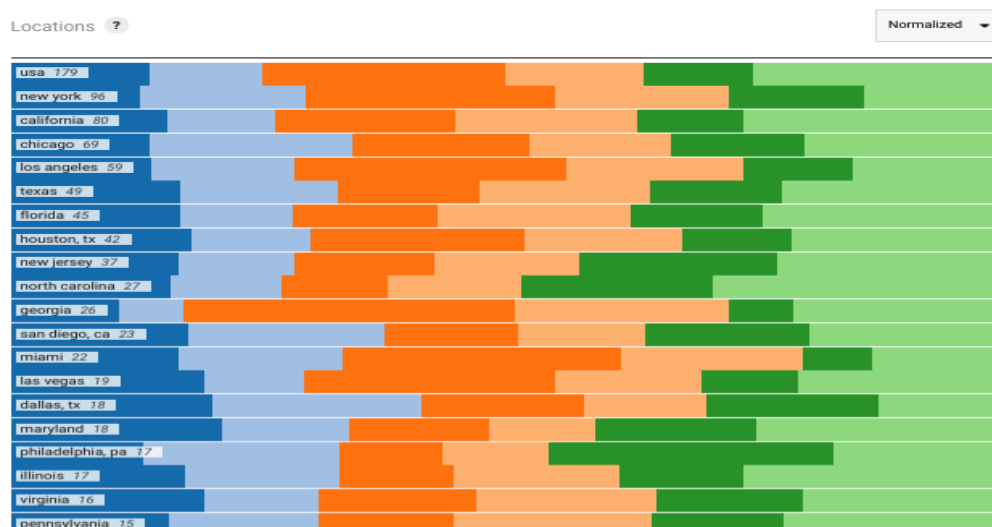
As can be seen in the below chart that lists the top 200 highest affinity Twitter accounts for the FIFA 17 cluster, members of this cluster have a much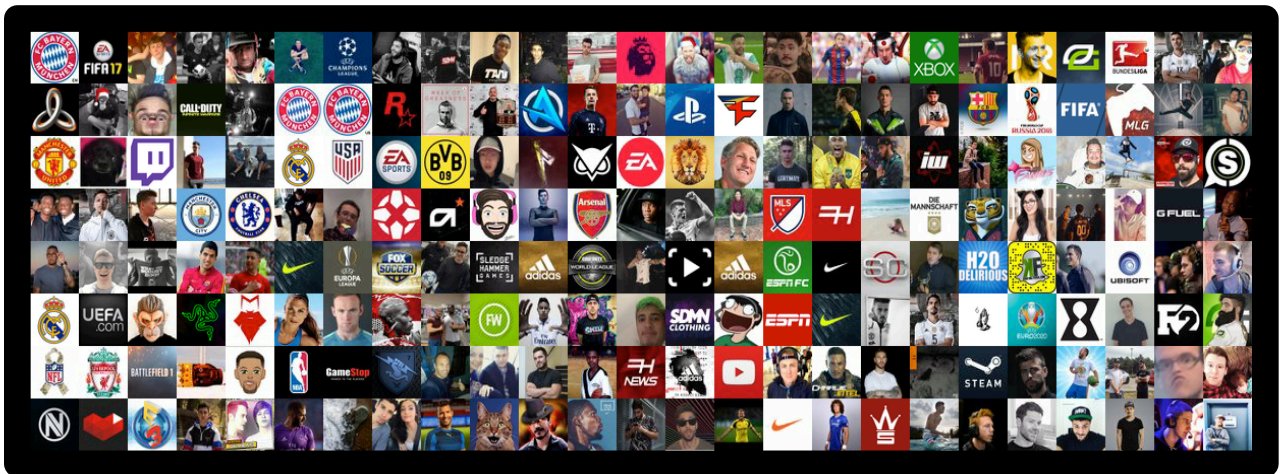 higher affinity for the Champions League, the English Premier League and Bundesliga than they do the MLS. Its also interesting to note that this group has significantly fewer sports oriented accounts than did the USMNT interest chart. This leads us to believe that this group has very different motivations for following Bayern Munich on Twitter.

Based on a detailed analysis of the interests of the FIFA 17 cluster within the Twitter followers of Bayern Munich, we make the following recommendations.

(1) Bayern Munich should consider signing an E-Gamer. Earlier this year MCFC signed Kieran 'Kez' Brown to play FIFA 16 for the team, live streaming on Twitch and making YouTube videos. This would be an excellent way to grow the gamer segment. The Affinio analysis above clearly demonstrates that gamers are far more influential than any celebrities for this clusters.

(2) Bayern Munich should encourage this cluster to share their best FIFA 17 highlights of Bayern Munich. Followers should be incentivized to share content to win tickets, console give-aways or "play a pro" opportunities. The below graphic demonstrates the top brands this cluster follows on social media. Bayern Munich should consider partnering with some of these brand for these contests.
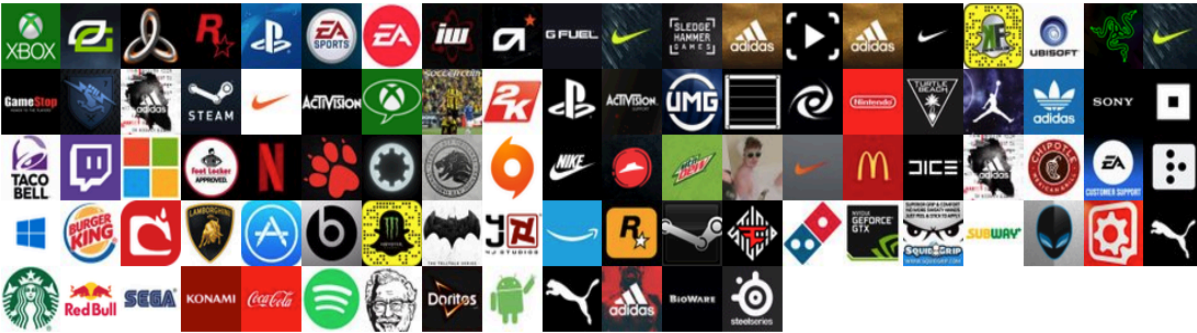
University Bro's Cluster

To final interest-based cluster of Bayern Munich followers in the U.S. that we examined are entitled university bro's. Most of these followers live in Texas, Southern California or the Northeast part of the U.S. Compared to the USMNT and FIFA 17 clusters, there appears to be a larger base of university bro's cluster members living in Florida.

Heat Map of University Bro's Cluster Bayern Munich Twitter Followers
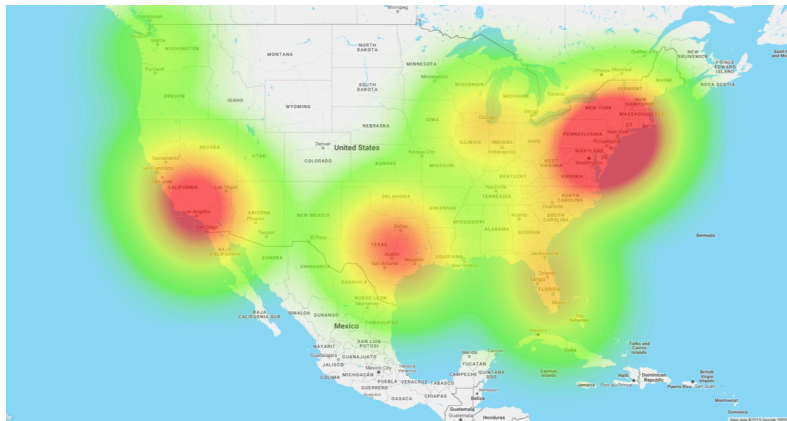
Top Cities for University Bro's Bayern Munich Twitter Followers in the U.S.
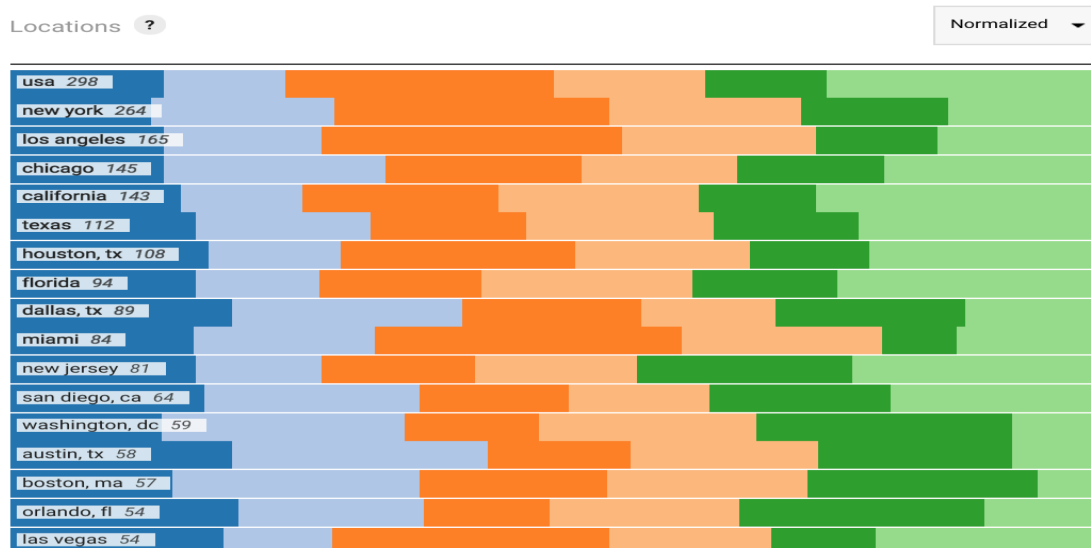
As can be seen in the below chart that lists the top 200 highest affinity Twitter accounts for the university bro's cluster, members of this cluster have a much higher affinity for European soccer teams, leagues and tournaments than they do the MLS. Its also interesting to note that this group has significantly higher affinity towards the NFL and NBA than do the other two groups analyzed.

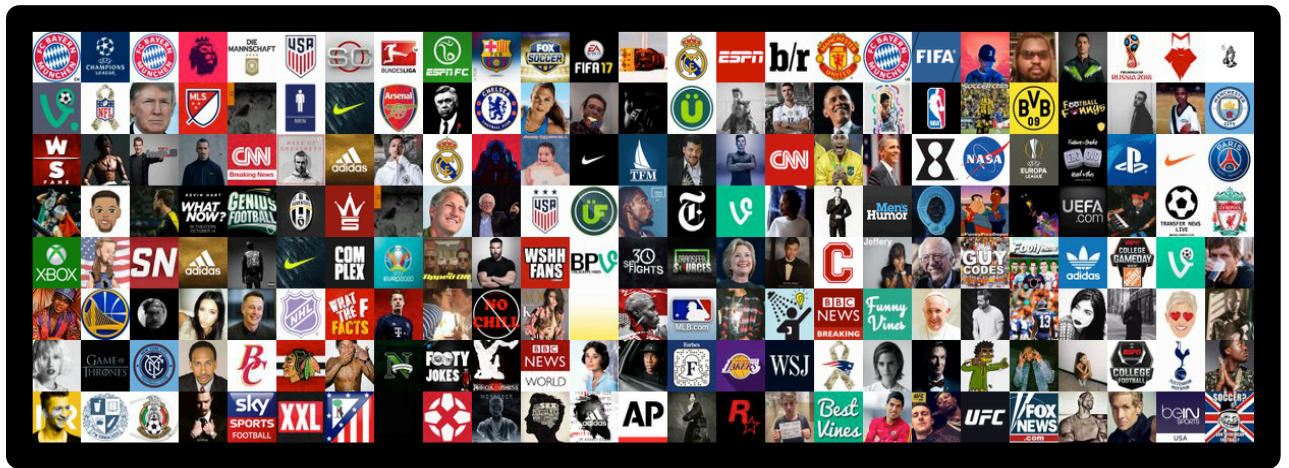Based on a detailed analysis of the interests of the university bro's cluster within the Twitter followers of Bayern Munich, we make the following recommendations.

(1) As can be seen in the below chart, this segment demonstrates the lowest affinity towards the Bundesliga of the six interest based clusters. Thus, the opportunity exists within this segment to strengthen the relationship they have with the Bundesliga. Currently the official Bundesliga Twitter account only holds a 12 (on a 100 point scale) relevance score for this segment. This is significantly lower than the other five interests based clusters and represents an opportunity for growth. Increased loyalty to the Bundesliga might be encouraged by driving students to

attend friendlies in the United States with strategic campaigns or by offering student discounts.

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	25.5/100 67x	4.3/100 11x	16.7/100 44x	45.4/100 120x	50.6/100 133x	19.3/100 51x	26.8/100 71x
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	14.1/100 228x	1.5/100 24x	15.1/100 244x	10.0/100 163x	14.6/100 237x	45.8/100 743x	7.9/100 129x

(2) Bayern Munich should consider strengthening it relationship with the university bro's cluster through strategic partnerships. Based on the Affinio analysis we know that university bro's have strong affinity towards celebrities like Kanye West, Chance the Rapper and Tyler the Creator. Additionally, Bayern Munich should partner with the top media outlets for university bro's which includes Bleacher Report, ESPN and Complex.