

Marketing and Communication

Strategic Plan

Executive Summary

Mission

Drake University Office of Marketing and Communication advances the mission and vision of all University constituents and their individual strategic plans. The department does this by

- partnering and quality strategic consultation and service
- providing innovative and inspirational communication and marketing tools
- assessing the needs and communications wants of target audiences
- basing implementation on a branding and integrated communications platform that is shared by all
- advancing the university through donor, alumni, community and media relationships

This effort ultimately supports the University mission and vision through unit-level support of the strategic plan.

Narrative

“You can not build reputation for excellence just by building quality. Your constituents – students, faculty, donors, alumni, city and state leaders and even your neighbors--must know about your quality and believe and be passionate about it.” Sally Savage, Washington State University

The Office of Marketing and Communications has worked for the past three years to reframe its approach and services to meet the needs of all campus constituencies reflected by their strategic plans. It is imperative that further growth and refinement be based on an integrated marketing communications approach. Such an approach calls for in-depth analysis of the University’s program strengths, target markets, and communications practices. Much of this will be accomplished as part of the self-study processes the University is currently developing.

Now in its second year, the reformulation of communications with one university magazine of quality indicative of Drake’s passion for excellence has been punctuated by similar electronic components. By putting into place a process for meeting the needs of schools and colleges and meeting with Deans and key administrators on a monthly basis, we are supplying information for more than editorial direction of the magazine but to allow these constituents to plan ahead and utilize marketing and communications in all facets of their programs – from advertising to public relations to web communications.

The department has benefited from a positive, can-do attitude but is still challenged by client attitudes about collaboration and exactly what authority the department does have when guiding the content, the voice if you will, as well as the look and feel of information that is destined to be distributed to external audiences. Often clients resort to “because I said so” as a reason for supporting an approach rather than realizing the value of an approach that is consultative and resource considerate.

Department management continues to refine staffing and the needs for staffing based on approach. One example was removing a single person who serviced the Law School and replacing the position with service by the topical experts by project. This change not only improved the product the Law School received but the service and satisfaction with the service as well.

Services

The department provides a critical series services including but not limited to:

Management

- Marketing
- Media relations
- Public relations
- News conferences and briefings
- Creating and placing paid advertising
- Crisis management
- Issues management
- Direct mail program management
- Electronic newsletter program management
- Constituent contact management
- Brand management
- Trademark management and registration
- Event development and support
- Time element content management
- Drake.edu management
- BlueView portal management
- Print procurement management

Strategic services

- Marketing and communications to both external and internal audiences
- Development of long-term strategies for marketing and communications
- Development of campaign platforms for alumni, fundraising and admission
- Image marketing development
- Marketing strategies for individual programs and services
- Consultation on approach, media and message to any university constituent
- Web architecture

Research and tracking services

- Media hits and mentions
- Communications audits
- Competitive audits
- Survey development and deployment
- Focus group development and deployment

Creative services

- Speechwriting
- Event approach and structure as well as timetables
- Brochure copy
- New releases and alerts
- Publication budgets and content –both hard copy and electronic
- Campus announcements and alerts
- Advertising creative and copy
- Web site template development
- Sub-brand development
- Development and execution of advancement publications and related e-based communication for alumni, friends and donors
- Review of University publications slated for distribution to external publics to ensure accuracy and compliance with University style and standard when possible.
- Admission materials and programs components
- Commemorative logos and event components
- Brainstorming and resource identification

Assumptions

- Drake University must develop and implement a comprehensive communication and marketing strategy to succeed in its mission.
- Admissions' planning places a high priority on increasing market presence beyond Iowa to attract and retain quality students, staff and faculty.
- Demands on Marketing and Communications for communication and marketing strategies, action plan implementation and evaluation will increase as the University more aggressively positions itself in the marketplace.
- The demand for creative services (advertising, print, and multimedia) provided by Marketing and Communications will increase as new projects are proposed and implemented.
- Marketing the University through the World Wide Web and other electronic means is not only necessary, but also critical to the support of Drake's mission.
- Higher education is a competitive marketplace and other regional institutions will increase their efforts to recruit students, gain media attention, vie for funding resources and attract quality employees.
- Target audiences are more discerning and more critical than ever when regarding the University's messages and marketing methods, insisting upon high quality imagery and language.
- More diverse target audiences, i.e., those defined by socioeconomic factors, require specific publications and marketing strategies.
- Quality interpersonal contacts and relationships based on mutual respect with colleagues are vital for effective programs and creation of a campus community.
- Internal communication is a critical factor in the development and execution of any strategic plan or program.
- Strategic plans are inherently evolving and ever changing documents.

Strengths

- The department provides a quality approach to strategic marketing and communications planning.
- Department has been recognized by peer and professional groups as producing quality product based on sound communications and marketing strategies.
- The office is staffed by quality, committed and skilled personnel.
- Each and every university department, school and college represents a client opportunity.
- There is a strong commitment to understanding and meeting the client's goals while leveraging resources.
- External groups have benefit from the department's professionalism and commitment – including media, city police and administration and neighborhood groups.
- Passion for seeing the university develop to its full potential is shared by all staff.
- Department's best work is accomplished through proactive, consultative approach.

Weaknesses

- Difficulty in retaining quality and seasoned employees due to market pressure and less than market compensation.
- Difficulty in attracting alumni as job applicants.
- Some campus clients act independently and develop and execute communications materials and programs not in line with overall strategies.
- Some clients don't desire consultative, proactive approach
- Clients often disregard timelines and processes put in place to guarantee quality product and still expect project completion based on original timelines.
- Segmented understanding and appreciation of the role of marketing and communications in furthering the university, its faculty and its mission.
- Considerable investment of time to work to rebuild relationships with clients who say they are dissatisfied.
- Lack of structure that provides realistic picture of performance of department versus perceptions that are perpetuated.
- Lack of support by some faculty who do not see the value of media placements and relationships as they relate to building Drake's reputation on a local, regional and national scale.
- Key message and approach development is often based on opinions of client's rather than research and target audience opinion – we often talk to ourselves rather than who we need to talk to.

Marketing and Communication Strategic Goals

Beginning 2006-2007

Establish Drake's preeminence as an educational leader and public resource in shaping greater Des Moines, Iowa and the region, recognized and accessible to the global community.

- Explore the disposition of faculty and staff regarding the extension of policy formation and services reflective of their scholarship and disciplines beyond the boundaries of the university.
- Initiate positioning program to elevate public understand of Drake's vision and vital role in leading the region.
- Audit and evaluate the current public service engagement of the University and its key constituents.
- Provide additional information to national ranking publications through story pitches and face-to-face meetings with editors by key administration.
- Demonstrate value of and partnership of Drake University to local and statewide audiences as opportunities arise.

Sustain and improve the brand delivery of the University's web site and publications through the Continue to define and advance Drake University's brand and its brand promise.

- Finalize and distribute with clear support of the administration, the University's Brand Tool Box – defining the University's message and guidelines for use of the University's new graphic image.
- Sustain and improve the brand delivery of the University's web site and publications through the look, feel and content.
- Use key messages and branding to support the delivery of message to prospects, current students, parents, alumni, donors and key influencers locally, regionally and nationally.
- Provide consultation and training to campus community regarding both the use of the graphic identity and the branding messages and approaches being using to present the University to outside groups.
- Help campus community segments identify touch points and stakeholders for their particular operation and how to affect them positively.

Extend Drake University's reputation for academic excellence as a quality comprehensive university.

- Support the celebration of the university's 125th birthday by executing the year two plan elements.
- Tap the topical expertise of faculty and staff and promote them as sources to national media outlets.
- Provide Iowa media quality, ethical and timely support for editorial development in arenas in which Drake is a clearly leader.
- Research and leverage Midwest source status for stories of national significance, published by national media.
- Leverage Drake University's location in Iowa as a place of conversation and resource for the country's political agenda as the 2008 election comes into play.

- Capitalize on events of the day by providing information to the public about the events and their outcomes as well.
- Coordinate media placements, support survey response and message distribution to prominently position Drake University on the regional and national stage.
- Provide leadership in promoting and publicizing Drake's commitment to diversity.

Strengthen internal communications while securing buy-in to messaging and branding that depicts Drake University's commitment to academic excellence and personal development.

- Provide timely, quality communication to the campus community about issues of note both positive and negative so community members can represent the University to constituents under their influence.
- Support the University commitment to professional development for faculty and staff by providing and delivering curriculum that educates the campus community in regards to Drake's mission, vision and brand promise.
- Provide leadership, education and support of the implementation and development of the portal project, honing the message by internal constituent, honoring time investments in communications and addressing the needs of audiences.

Develop enthusiasm and loyalty to Drake University among alumni and friends.

- Provide quality information in a timely manner in media based on audience preference as part of the *blue* communications platforms.
- Continue to research and collect data that allows for further segmentation of messages in both print and electronic media.
- Provide inspirational creative platforms that allow institutional advancement programs to improve participation and perception of alumni and donor-based events and programs.
- Focus on clear communication of the outcomes of staying connected with the university as well as the results of support both financial and in-kind.

Further develop the award-winning publications and vehicles that communicate the values and character of Drake University.

- Continue development of relationships with deans and key staff that allow for the timely development of quality information and sharing of aspirations not just history.
- Provide deans and key staff with evidence and analysis of results of their collaboration with marketing and communications.
- Investigate and assess the value of new technologies and apply them as opportunities arise and are cost-effective.
- Continue to provide leadership and support for the implementation of state-of-the-art Web-based technology and platforms that support both communications and marketing goals.
- Provide counsel and staffing to the University on communication strategies for crisis issues.
- Monitor and analyze the purchase and use of printing services by the campus with the goal of providing strategies for efficient and effective printed communications.

- Increase the level of quality by constantly and methodically reevaluating and inventing approaches to projects.

Communicate the case for philanthropy and the development of Drake while conveying the University's record of effectiveness and a position of leadership for the future.

- Develop key messages surrounding the growth and sustaining needs of the university community. These messages include both bricks and mortar as well as operational and programming needs.
- Provide clear communication of the operations and results of programs that currently exist through the University that immortalize the contribution of the school in both public service and legislative arenas.
- Increase the direct communication of outcomes and the donors that made them possible to the university community, the local community and the peer institutions.
- Improve the consistent delivery of university-wide messages by administrators as well as deans of schools by providing them in concise format for use in individualized efforts. Further develop key messages by schools and college and provide those to development and admission officers as well as faculty and staff.
- Further university-wide messages by providing them to Board of Trustees and other influencers to support accurate and concise communications of Drake's attributes and aspirations.
- Continue to address niche opportunities for engagement, i.e. the RaySociety, which provides clear evidence of Drake's value while cultivating further loyalty and support for the university.
- Develop and execute solicitation strategies that are based on sound practices while furthering the Drake brand.

Further the position of a culture of evidence by developing marketing and communications platforms based on research, analysis and critical thinking.

- Develop a benchmark for the University's reputation through initial research.
- Develop a three-year cycle of research initiatives that provides benchmarking and trending information from audiences that are not currently surveyed – alumni, corporate influencers and prospective students – both undergraduate and graduate.
- Provide consultation for those who wish to undertake their own research and provide the platforms to execute primary data collection.
- Focus on collection of secondary research that supports university functions that benefit from it.

Support the reaccreditation and self-study process Drake University is executing by providing leadership in communications to all constituents.

- Continue to develop, execute and assess communication platforms that support the higher education accreditation requirements.

- Leverage short-term accreditation communications programs into long-term programs that will sustain the mission-driving institution.
- Provide meaningful communication about the process and its outcomes while supporting the expectation of meaningful, on-going self-study.

Increase Drake University's applicant pool of qualified, diverse prospects and enrollment of first-year students from outside the state of Iowa at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

- Based on research and partner recommendations, expand or redevelop search communication tools to deliver qualified students to the search pool earlier in the process.
- Develop prospect communication that provides clear vision of the outcomes of a Drake education.
- Develop and enhance communications that provide a positive image of Des Moines and Iowa in order to increase out-of-state recruiting for both graduate and undergraduate students.
- Continue to meet the unique needs of Drake University School of Law by facilitating innovation, research and dialogue, then activating plans for admission and national reputation building.
- Use media relations to extend the reach of faculty and their reputation to markets that provide admission pool candidates to further increase applications.
- Provide leadership in monitoring how the higher education market is changing, tracking and anticipating trends, providing information in a collaborative way.