



EAST GEORGIA

COLLEGE

On 7/13/2011, the External Relations Committee adopted the following:

Marketing Plan 2011-12 Academic Year

I. Overview

The Marketing Department has developed this plan to provide a roadmap of East Georgia College's current marketing strategy. As with any plan, this is not a static document but rather one that has been created to reflect the current climate and objectives that guide the College's marketing efforts. This plan is based upon the ongoing contributions and feedback provided by faculty, administration, staff, and the community. It will be fine-tuned and adjusted as necessary to ensure that the marketing activities are well coordinated and continuously improved to create the most impact with the available resources.

II. Our Brand Message – "Education With a Personal Touch."

All marketing efforts reflect first and foremost a commitment to ensure the overarching College Vision of, "Education With a Personal Touch."

In addition to supporting the College Vision, the Marketing and Public Relations Department has the unique task of telling the East Georgia College story in a manner that is compelling and meaningful to the identified target markets. We are confident that we have identified several key messages known to hold broad appeal to these audiences. As a result, the Marketing and Public Relations Department is continuously refining the practice of incorporating the brand message into all communications related to the College. Secondary messages such as "You can Have a Better Life" and "Start with a dream, Finish with a future" have been developed to enhance the primary message and convey the following key benefits:

- A. Accessibility and Affordability**
- B. Opportunity**
- C. Connections**
- D. Enrichment**
- E. Economic Impact**

The distribution of key messages will ultimately strengthen the College Brand. Educating all individuals to coordinate communications on behalf of the College will require ongoing communication and resource investment.

III. History/Background

In 2005, East Georgia College began working with Paskill, Stapleton and Lord with the specific goal of developing a comprehensive plan to guide internal and external communications. This Marketing Plan provides an overview of the initiatives that have been selected as necessary to strengthen the EGC Brand and build long-term support for the College.

IV. Situation Analysis

A. External Environment

East Georgia College is well-respected and enjoys a rich history in Emanuel County. Marketing efforts consistently focus on the distribution of messages associating the College with affordability, accessibility and education critical to the economic viability of the communities we serve.

By strategically positioning EGC as an affordable point of access to higher education and increasing the level of positive awareness in the region, support for the College has increased. Thus, we are in a pivotal position to continue to build upon our successes, secure long-term supporters and strengthen East Georgia College's reputation as a regional asset providing affordable and accessible education to anyone who is willing to work hard to achieve their dreams.

B. Internal Environment

With regard to developing brand awareness on campus, there are a number of factors that inhibit the successful continuity of brand messaging. This plan sees the importance of building internal cohesion to ensure consistent representation and distribution of the College Brand.

Limited staff time has inhibited the ability to infuse consistent brand messaging via all communications and collateral developed on behalf of the College. Now is the time to be more proactive and provide college faculty and staff with the tools that will help them to coordinate communications in keeping with the EGC Brand and specific key messages. It is important that the momentum gained from recent growth be harnessed to continue the important work of strengthening the public perception and brand awareness of EGC.

V. Current Marketing Strategy

Presently the Marketing Department works collaboratively with the Public Relations Department and utilizes a range of communication channels to reach a carefully identified set of target audiences. The activities are prioritized in alignment with available resources and limited primarily to marketing activities required by the College. This plan presents a comprehensive list of the activities identified as important for increasing the impact of the Marketing Department.

A. The Audiences

East Georgia College's internal and external audiences have been identified. They include:

Internal Groups

1. Current EGC Students
2. EGC Faculty and Staff

External Groups

1. High School Students
 - a. Parents of HS Students
 - b. High-School Administrators, Counselors & Teachers
2. Non-High School Students
 - a. Unemployed Workforce
 - b. Underemployed Workforce
 - c. Employees seeking additional career skills
 - d. Seniors
 - e. Community-at-Large
 - i. Businesses
 - ii. Advocacy Groups:
 - EGC Foundation Board and donors
 - Athletic Booster Club
 - Fulford Community Learning Center Advisory Board

B. The Competition

Marketing must remain cognizant of the emerging alternatives to a traditional educational environment and find effective methods of promoting EGC in a climate that is changing rapidly. As expectations for accessing education change to reflect the on-demand 24-hour-a-day access provided by on-line environments, marketing communications would naturally need to convey the benefits of EGC to appeal to these shifting values and preferences.

As we determine how to represent East Georgia College's unique value to prospective students we must remain knowledgeable regarding the strategies and benefits promoted by the following competitors:

1. Two and Four-Year Public Institutions
2. Two and Four-Year Private Institutions
3. Private For-Profit Institutions
4. On-Line Certificate and Degree Programs
5. Technical Colleges

VI. Marketing Objectives/Goals

The Marketing Department has prioritized communication strategies and promotional opportunities for the Public Relations Department related to three primary objectives. Focusing resources in these key areas will allow us to increase the effectiveness of our efforts.

- A. **Increase Enrollment**
 1. Strengthen coordination with recruitment activities.
 2. Develop retention strategies.
 3. Incorporate diversity into East Georgia College's promotional strategy.
- B. **Increase and Strengthen Community Outreach**
 1. Strengthen business and community partnerships.
 2. Improve State and local government relations.
 3. Coordinate with faculty and staff charged with enhancing community relations.
- C. **Strengthen Brand Message Distribution**
 1. Coordinate communications to internal and external audiences.

VII. Marketing Activities/Promotional Strategies

The following methods are integral to achieving the objectives stated above. However, budgetary limitations will likely impact the ability to implement this comprehensive plan.

A. Website Development

The EGC website is the first contact that most prospective students have with the College. Therefore, we believe that this communication channel should be utilized as the College's number one marketing tool.

While EGC has invested in some modest website improvements particularly with regard to the home page, as a whole the site lacks an integrated and engaging format for our target audience. Additionally, we must develop an ongoing process for regularly evaluating the demographic information collected from the website. We need to systematically assess the data regarding the hits per day, how long visitors stay, where they spend time etc. Monitoring this data to track the effectiveness of campaigns and marketing initiatives will help us measure the impact of our efforts. These objectives will be realized with the implementation of our new web portal this year. It will encompass several useful features: Content will be managed by designed users in each department, Google Analytics will be tied to the entire website allowing specific measurable goals to be built into the analytics, and accessibility will be enhanced through ADA compliance and a mobile-ready platform.

B. Community Outreach/Public Relations

1. **EGC Foundation**
 - a. Provide key messages/materials to the Foundation to increase their ability to raise support and advocate for the College. Provide the Foundation with current and relevant stories and information for presentations.
2. **President's Outreach**
 - a. Ensure that the president is visible to the public by establishing an ongoing schedule of community presentations.
 - b. Coordinate electronic communications to individuals identified as key supporters.
 - c. Assess capacity to revitalize Annual Reports for the College (print and/or electronic versions).
3. **Business Partnerships**
 - a. Partner to maximize advertising efforts and communication opportunities that demonstrate the mutually beneficial relationship between the College and the business community.
 - b. Build ongoing relationships with key business leaders to keep them abreast of College activities.

C. Brand Development

Branding begins with the internal structure of the College and extends outward. Educating faculty, staff and students will enable them to effectively share our key messages and improve word of mouth communications.

1. Develop a "Bobcat Brand Toolkit" for faculty and staff. The toolkit can be used as a quick reference for key messages, graphic standards and suggestions for developing written and verbal communications.
2. Develop brand training for staff, faculty and students charged with representing EGC.
3. College Mascot – the Bobcat

D. Collateral Development

The following publications are created by the college. Content, photography, design and editing are provided by the offices of marketing and public relations.

1. **Program Sheets**

Assist the Admissions office with the development of these materials targeted to students planning their coursework.
2. **Catalog**

Assist the Registrar annually with content for this on-line publication.
3. **EGC Brochures and Fliers** (General, Admissions, Financial Aid, Housing, Athletics)
4. **EGC/Foundation Annual Report (New project)**

Publish an annual magazine to promote the College brand, programs and services, effectiveness and success stories. At this juncture in our growth, this can be a useful visual tool to strengthen stakeholder relations.

E. Events

Support the planning and promotion of key campus-related events for the purposes of community outreach and student recruitment including:

1. A Day for EGC
2. EGC Open House
3. Open Tryouts for Athletics
4. Miss EGC Scholarship Pageant
5. Annual Economic Impact Luncheon
6. Celebration of Education
7. PREP Visitations
8. Second Grade Experience
9. Fulford Center Activities
10. Healthy-U Wellness Fair
11. Works In Progress Playwright Contest and Readers Theatre
12. Pine Tree Festival

13. Bicentennial Celebration for Emanuel County

F. Promotional Items

Coordinate the production of branded promotional items for distribution at key events to support recruitment activities. Such items include t-shirts, magnets, key chains, cups, pennants, mugs and pens, etc. Additional promotional items such as bags, blankets, hats and umbrellas are also available as gifts for college guests.

G. Media and Public Relations

1. **Earned Media**

Update PR plan to include editorial opportunities and secure publicity to feature important College events and accomplishments.

2. **Media Planning**

Determine the appropriate media mix for College promotions that targets specific audiences and optimizes our relationship with media.

3. **Media Placement**

Negotiate rates, place media, track and evaluate media placements.

4. **Social Media**

Continue to develop East Georgia College's presence on Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. Utilize social media tools to promote EGC and provide opportunities for students to connect via these tools.

H. Development of Creative

Develop creatives for the different mediums utilized in advertising, including print, on-line, radio, billboards and social media.

I. Research

Using tools to create benchmarks regarding specific marketing initiatives should be considered. For example, utilizing web-based surveys to assess the awareness of East Georgia College's Brand message before and after marketing efforts have been executed.

VIII. Conclusion

This plan provides a detailed description of activities that will create an overall robust marketing initiative for East Georgia College. Activities will be prioritized according to budget and updated to meet the changing needs of the College.

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July 13, 2011