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Public Relations Plan

Objectives

- To increase awareness about the benefits of studying abroad to the University of Ottawa students by 10% in a 8 month campaign period starting from January.
- To increase the number of outbound international students.
- To increase student interest in choosing emerging countries as destinations for their exchange.

Messages

- The University of Ottawa supports students to pursue an education abroad as there are many benefits to be attained through the experience.
- Student mobility is a matter of great concern to the University as it prepares students for a work environment of emerging economies and intolerance.
- Studying abroad in non developed countries promotes a diversity, a broader mindset and unique skills.

Target Audiences

- The student body of the University of Ottawa
- Future university students
- The family of current or possible students
- The general public

Public Environment

- Analysis of data released by the Canadian Bureau for International Education reveals that 86% of students express interest in participating in studying abroad
- 54% of the aforementioned group recorded very high levels of interest.
- The top 3 recorded benefits and reasons of studying abroad provided by students include: a chance to travel (56%), benefits my career (48%), and helps me learn to live and work in different cultures/countries (37%).
- Women reportedly show a higher level of interest (57%) versus men (50%).
- The top 3 countries of interest are Australia (37%), The U.K. (29%), and France (23%).
- Almost 7 out of 10 students would be somewhat (40%) or very likely (26%) to go to a country where their native language (French or English) is not widely spoken.
- Despite high levels of interest, only 1.5% of undergraduate students at U of O actually participate in studying abroad per year.
- Only 11% of undergrad students take up the experience of international mobility over the course of their program.
- 13% of participants of the survey are required or highly encouraged to pursue education abroad by their programs.
- Of the participating students, only 0.2% decide to go to emerging countries like China, India, Brazil, and Mexico.

Internal environment

- The international office struggles to raise awareness on the benefits of studying abroad due to the absence of an director and low staff availability.
- Professors and the University of Ottawa as an whole have shown support towards students pursuing an education abroad.
- Over 90% of professors think that studying abroad will enhance students's skills.
- Encouragement to participate in exchanges at emerging countries (i.e. China), have been encouraged by the university through scholarships funded by wealthy U of O Alumnus.

Strategic Considerations

- Students who are made aware of the benefits of an international education will become more active within the University in order to further explore other opportunities and experiences provided by the administration.
- Students within the campus will learn to diversify their friend groups and expand their social circles.
- Topics regarding race and culture will be more widely discussed on campus due to the rise of outbound exchange students.
- An increase in the amount of outbound international students would create more worldly and prepared students for today's cross cultural work environment.
- Students studying in emerging countries rather than developed ones have a chance to witness or even participate in change within their chosen destination.

- By raising awareness on the benefits of studying abroad, students can understand the importance of studying in foreign countries to broaden their mindset and acquire additional skills.
- Students may become disinterested or unimpressed with the U of O campus after experiencing other foreign universities.
- Students may use studying abroad as an excuse to escape responsibilities and fraternize in foreign countries.
- Lack of disposable staff to actively promote the benefits of studying abroad could lead to failure in obtaining the 10% raise of awareness within the student population.
- Providing possible financial assistance to an high amount of participating students could cause the University issues.
- Lack of preparation within the organization could cause students to not be well adjusted in particular foreign countries; causing unwanted mishaps or even dangerous accidents.
- Students may have a lapse of judgement due to excitement of being away from their native land and commit a crime; this is an especially prevalent issue if they are unfamiliar with foreign law.

Tactics

- Facebook was proven by an study conducted by the International Office of Education to be the most broadly used platform of social media. In account to this information, the firm will use Facebook as the dominating medium to interact with the student body.

- Ads on Facebook will be placed for consecutive weeks in order to get the initial word out to raise awareness.
- All other platforms of social media will also be opened and put to use in order to raise awareness and interaction between the organization and student body.
- Provide free coffee and other snack options for students who follow the International Office on any social media account and attend the information sessions on studying abroad.
- Demand professors who highly encourage student mobility to let previous students with abroad experience to discuss the benefits of studying abroad for 5-10 mins before they begin their lecture.
- Half a page on the Ottawa Citizen weekend edition (\$1000), announcing the start of contest for an all expenses paid semester abroad.
- Announcement of the contest on 89.9fm (\$3000) for a few weeks will also assist in raising more attention towards the objective and the competition.
- Only students within the University of Ottawa are eligible and they are required to follow the International Office on at least one of the Official accounts.
- In forcing students to follow at least one social media platform, the audience that will receive information regarding exchanges in general will grow significantly.
- Required information for all contestants would be their personal info, the reason as to why they wish to study abroad, and the country they wish to pursue their exchange in.
- In gathering this information, the International Office can construct effective campaigns in the future as well.

- There will also be an extra \$1000 gift to the winning student if they decide to pursue an international education in a emerging country.

Consultations/partnerships

- The University of Ottawa and the International Office
- Participating foreign universities
- Interested Alumnus who want to sponsor a “challenge fund”

Resources

- \$30,000 provided by the administration for the initiative.
- Cost of full scholarship: \$7,500
- Total media placement costs: \$5,200
- Cost of free coffee and snacks for promotion: \$250

Evaluation

- Analysis of data before and after promotion campaign.
- Evaluating data collected from participants.
- Monitoring social media accounts to provide additional information to students and maintain interest.

Risk assessment

- Possible risks of a heightened awareness and participation in foreign exchanges are close to non-existent; the only true risk is in students being unprepared for foreign culture.

Rationale

Objectives:

The reason as to why I chose my prospective objectives was due to the fact that I aimed to represent the many different goals within a single campaign. To start out with my first objective, it was essential to provide the repeatedly taught structure of a principle objective; i.e. the goal is to reach an increase of X over the period of y. My second objective was yet another evident choice as the previous one only took into context the notion of raising *awareness* and not the actual number of outbound international students. In contrast to my previously mentioned objectives, my last stated objective was one that was not as strongly stressed but held equal impact and weight to the overall concept of the campaign. The importance of the last objective lays in the fact that it is an example of a values driven approach; it is constructed in a sense that aligns with the values truly appreciated and important within the International Office.

Messages

The messages displayed reflect the true ideas behind the S.M.A.R.T. theory discussed in class as it respects every element of the concept. The goal is specific in the sense that there is a set target and a time frame to achieve it. It is also measurable as in the end of the campaign, a noticeable rise in following on all social media accounts can be held as evidence of success. The goal set is also attainable as it is not demanding an unreasonable jump of interest within the student body in a compressed space of time. The messages are relevant to the objectives as they serve as supporting points to the initial statements. Lastly, it is also timely as it sets a time frame of 8 months to achieve desired results.

Target Audiences

The chosen audiences were obvious as the administration and the International Office aimed to target those who would be eligible to participate in studying abroad. I also chose the families and possible students as raising awareness in a related public could result to a rise of interest in the foreseeable future. I also picked this audience because they are primary, aware, and active.

Public environment

Students were chosen as part of the public environment as they are a primary audience but still an external audience. The data was provided officially by the bureau of International Education, making it an reliable and credible source to base an campaign and a PR plan upon.

Internal environment

The internal environment provided in the plan was accurate as it demonstrated the faults and weaknesses the International Office was displaying. Despite support from many staff and professors, there was no active movement on their part to ensure a rise in interest for studying abroad.

Strategic Considerations

My approach to the strategic considerations part of the PR plan was heavily based upon the concept of the SWOT analysis. The reason as to why I had specifically chosen to use this particular approach lies in the fact that I highly respect the notion that it evaluates objectives and goals through both internal and external lenses; it observes both the negative and positive as

well. I fully believe that a comprehensive PR plan can not be made without the presence of an SWOT analysis as it truly discusses the many aspects of an objective.

Tactics

My tactics were chosen upon the idea that in order to fully have a successful campaign, one must incorporate all mediums disposable to them. That is why I used almost every platform disposable to me in order to raise awareness on the programs and opportunities available at the University. Most importantly however, was the creation of the contest as it truly gains public interest as there is an evident prize for those who choose to participate. The prize of an paid scholarship raises the stakes as well as interest; it acts as an motivation to attract participants and make them more active. Also in gathering data of participants, the organization will majorly benefit in the future as they now have highly valuable data available to them for future use. They also have an increased following on their platform due to the attention drawn in by the contest, this will allow them to increase student exposure and awareness to future opportunities.

Consultations/partnerships

The chosen partnerships include the obvious main contributors, the University and the International Office however it also includes a much smaller party- alumnus. In the sources provided, there was mention of a wealthy alumni located in China that was willing to provide an “Challenge Fund”, for students who wish to study in Beijing. This occurrence brought into question other possible alumnus with similar interests. Lastly, another mentioned partnership was participating foreign Universities; an successful exchange program can only be created through the cooperation of credible institutions throughout the globe. An similar set of interests

and goals throughout participating universities are highly valued and important as problems can arise if objectives contradict.

Resources

The chosen resources displayed the essential ideas of mediums needed for integrated marketing. There was the use of promotion tactics, advertisements, and marketing within the campaign and it was all achieved in a somewhat low price range. The reason as to why not *more* advertisement platforms were not used is due to the fact that the most effective advertisement nowadays is online and through the word of mouth. In the early stages of the campaign it was essential to get the word out through Facebook and build momentum from there on. As word of a contest and a paid scholarship to travel abroad reaches the ears of the student population, words spread fast and social media will share the event to possible candidates with next to no effort. In other words, this is free promotion and marketing.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the effectiveness of an campaign can be measured in results and heightened awareness to the cause. In this case, due to the processions of the contest and other marketing strategies used, there is an increased following which in itself is considered an success. A increase in social media following displays a clear rise in awareness on studying abroad.

Risk assessment

There is no major risk in studying abroad, that is why I simply mentioned that some students might face difficulties as the sole real risk. As an institution, the risk in sending a large amount of

students abroad could be a financial crisis however in one of stated sources, it is said that the rise of student exchanges will be funded by the government.