

Image, Relations, Marketing 2020 Plan

I. Charge

The committee should first review best practices in higher education generally and competitor institutions specifically and compare these practices to our own. Then, the committee should develop recommendations and proposals along with specific, measurable benchmarks over time to ensure College develops and maintains organizational structures, institutional capacity, and strategic marketing initiatives that:

- Increase local, regional, national and international market presence;
- Create and communicate a strong, coherent marketable image of the college;
- Increase demand for all College programs, especially among diverse populations;
- Assure continued relevance given increasing competition and demographic trends;
- Make Prescott College the common-sense source and national/international leaders associated with experiential education for social justice and environmental sustainability, with an underpinning of the liberal arts and with specific areas of faculty scholarship;
- Create a College culture in which all constituents – especially students and alumni –actively publicize the College’s success and distinctive image;
- Integrate market research into all aspects of marketing the college.

II. General Summary

As Prescott College enters the next decade of providing top quality education and services to students, lifelong learners, alumni, donors, community members, as well as various other partners and supporters, it is imperative that a College-wide marketing approach be used to consistently and accurately characterize and/or “sell” the College. Being able to articulate and communicate a clear understanding of who we are and what we provide is an important step to gaining greater support and revenues from external constituents, and improving student success and customer service.

Based on our charge, the Image, Relations, Marketing Strategic Planning Committee has researched best practices in marketing and public relations for colleges and other organizations of our size and scope, consulted with experts in the field of educational marketing and branding, and reviewed past practices at Prescott College to create a strategic marketing direction for this institution that will ensure sustainability and success through 2020.

As a Committee we have identified one recommendation with four goals. Our recommendation is that Prescott College adopts an Integrated Marketing Approach in order to continually improve our programs; elevate our image regionally, nationally and internationally; and enhance our ability to successfully sell the College.

III. Recommendation – Integrated Marketing Approach

A. Goal #1 – Implement Integrated Marketing Work Group

Convene an Integrated Marketing Work Group, mandated by the President to manage the brand identity (image) of Prescott College. The team will guide the College in its integrated marketing efforts, process, structure, and guidelines, as well as setting marketing policy. This team will exist in perpetuity; its membership will be required by those who have a role in marketing the College. The mode of operation will be collaborative, action oriented implementation of the

agreed upon goals for the betterment of the College. Team members must see their job responsibilities and their role within the group as integrated and seamless, not separate. This is not “extra” work; it is their work. We recommend that the job descriptions of these individuals be changed to include “Participation in the Integrated Marketing Work Group” as a primary job responsibility. Collaboration with and/or delegation to specific constituent groups (programs, departments, stakeholders, etc.) is mandated and essential in all activities of the Integrated Marketing Work Group. This includes sub-committee work, studies, trainings, etc.

1. Objectives

- a) Objective 1: Directive from President for the formation of Work Group from cross-college areas with authority and accountability to manage brand across the institution.
- b) Objective 2: Create, implement, and manage ongoing the cross-College Integrated Brand Management Program.
 - i. See goal #2.
- c) Objective 3: Create, implement, and manage ongoing the Integrated Communications Plan and Strategy.
 - i. The Communication Plan must incorporate comprehensive, coordinated, institution-wide efforts to communicate mission-critical messages that internal and external audiences notice, understand, and respond to. This includes both routine communications and emergency protocol.
- d) Objective 4: Create implement, and manage ongoing the marketing guidelines, decision making protocol, study cycle, data (internal/external), and forecasting.
 - i. Marketing guidelines refer to a “brand book” which serves as a manual for marketing requirements in font, colors, logos, phrasing, editorial statements, etc.
 - ii. Decision making protocol as it relates to marketing across the College falls to Work Group members with oversight from the VP of Institutional Advancement and the VP of Enrollment Management.
 - iii. Study cycle is determined by the Work Group as it relates to best practices and new and existing programs (see goal #3).
 - iv. The Work Group is charged with ensuring that decisions are grounded in statistical data and research.
 - v. Forecasting includes identifying additional ongoing marketing opportunities and priorities.
- e) Objective 5: Create, implement, and manage ongoing marketing tools, support systems, training, education, and professional development.
 - i. Work Group will support the College community by supplying tools and training for greater understanding of marketing efforts, incorporation of marketing guidelines, successful marketing campaigns, and encourage clearer communication.

2. Required Resources and Responsibility

- a) It is critical that the team consists of those whose job functions include a primary role in marketing of the College. We suggest the Work Group include:
 - i. VP of Enrollment Management
 - ii. VP of Institutional Advancement
 - iii. Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost (and/or faculty representative)
 - iv. Director of Admissions, Undergraduate

- v. Director of Admissions, Graduate
- vi. Director of Lifelong Learning
- vii. Publications Manager
- viii. Coordinator of Integrated Advancement Communications
- ix. Web Projects Coordinator
- x. An outside marketing professional (volunteer basis)

3. Assessments

- a) Other than immediate implementation of an Integrated Marketing Work Group, assessments and benchmarks for this Work Group would be best designed by the group itself using best practices as a guide and research-driven data from the industry and external marketing consultants wherever possible.

4. Benchmarks

- a) September 2011 – Formation
- b) Annual report of program outcomes submitted to President

B. Goal #2 – Integrated Cross-College Brand Management Program

Brand marketing has a simple goal: to create favorable awareness in the minds of our most important target audiences. Brand marketing/management is concerned with building our image and increasing name recognition among key audiences: customers (the people who pay the bills such as students, parents, and donors) and constituents/stakeholders (faculty, staff, administrators, and others). Brand matters because it:

- Gives a prospective student a reason to choose us over the competition
- Reaffirms alumni pride (which strengthens giving)
- Contributes to student retention
- Builds advocates, ambassadors, and funders
- Enhances recruitment of faculty and staff
- Reinforces lifelong relationships
- Builds community support, participation, and collaboration

Prescott College should create and implement an intentional plan for managing the College's brand (image) including elements of research and assessment, promotion, and active management. In many cases outside consultants with expertise in brand (image) assessment should be engaged to support major research efforts. Understanding our brand's health is essential to identifying threats and opportunities in the market and carving out our ideal position in the marketplace. Brand assessment research measures the current perceptions and associations of a brand in comparison to competitors.

1. Objectives

- a) Objective 1: Implement College-wide brand studies to include – Mission/vision review and update, perception study, image study, editorial evaluation and marketing language study, environmental evaluation, brand promise study, defining target audiences and geographies.
 - i. A brand study quantifies and assesses the identity of a specific product, service, or business. It can take many forms, including name, sign, symbol, color combination, or slogan. Typical components of a larger brand study include: mission/vision review and update, perception study, image study, editorial evaluation and marketing language study, environmental evaluation, brand promise study, defining target audiences and geographies. The definitions of and information regarding these studies can be found in the Appendix.

- ii. It is widely considered a best practice to revisit the mission statement of an organization as part of any major planning initiative, such as strategic planning and brand studies. It is a recommendation from this Committee that the mission and vision for Prescott College undergo review and update as part of a College-wide brand study (every 10 years beginning 2012) and an additional review by the College Board of Trustees and administration every 3-5 years. The current mission statement of Prescott College is considerably longer than might be advisable and includes elements of what might be considered both “goals” and “vision.”
 - b) Objective 2: Develop brand promises and translate promises into editorial statements and visual concepts which becomes a brand book/style guide to be used College-wide.
 - c) Objective 3: Develop and implement Integrated Marketing Plan.
 - i. Presently, a College-wide marketing plan does not exist, although various departments have created a plan for their individual marketing efforts. This silo practice can lead to inefficiencies and confusion in budget expenditures, personnel resources, cross-College communication, and in messaging about the College itself.
2. Required Resources and Responsibility
- a) It is recommended that outside consultants, in collaboration with the Work Group, provide the expertise in and implementation for the integrated cross-College Brand Management Program. The scope of the Program and the negotiations with the individual consultants will determine the overall expense. Individual studies can range from \$10,000 to \$160,000+. The price is negotiated at the time of contracting.
3. Assessments
- a) Prescott College should regularly conduct research with key audiences/customers and constituents/stakeholders to define and support legitimate points of differentiation along three dimensions: 1) How Prescott College is perceived by its primary audiences, 2) How the College projects editorially and environmentally, and 3) How the College compares within its cohort group. Survey methods and instruments should be consistent with each administration over time to establish and track the College’s performance on key indicators. Specific tools may include the Admitted Student Questionnaire, the Student Satisfaction Survey, IPEDs data, etc.
4. Benchmarks
- a) A complete assessment of Prescott College’s image/brand should be conducted as soon as practicable (2012) and repeated once each decade or when major changes in the organization occur.
 - b) The review of the mission and vision should be prioritized in the upcoming year (2011-2012) as it is critical to developing and implementing many of the marketing components addressed in these recommendations. A sound mission that has resiliency and resonance with all constituents of the College is the very heart of any Integrated Marketing Approach.

C. Goal #3 – Program and Product Research and Development

It is vitally important that the College adapt the practice of testing the marketplace for program and product viability. By testing the programs products of the institution the College can ensure

that the services being offered are attractive to the consumer we wish to attract. Effective product research proves to be cost effective, by making the product more desirable, and leads to a higher level of decision-making grounded in factual information about the programs and products being offered by the College.

1. Objectives

- a) Objective 1: Program and product identification College-wide
 - i. Prescott College has not officially defined “products” of the College. An internal assessment of current and potential products is necessary to determine which of the current programs and products being offered by the College have currency in the marketplace (programs and products could include: curriculum, services, merchandise, etc.).
- b) Objective 2: Develop program and product development protocol (to include review, research, testing).
 - i. Work Group develops programs and product development protocol using best practices in collaboration with key constituents within the College.
 - ii. Educate and train all constituents on protocols.
 - iii. All new program and product ideas need to be vetted using established protocol created by the Work Group and evaluated both internally and externally before resources are allocated and implementation occurs.
- c) Objective 3: Cyclical market testing on and updates for existing programs and products.
 - i. Program and product research is best done cyclically with existing programs and should include external/outsourced and internal/in-house collection of data.

2. Required Resources and Responsibility

- a) This is carried out as a charge of the Work Group. If outside consultancy is utilized, the expense would be negotiated at time of contracting. Recent surveys for ADP cost approximately \$60,000.
- b) Any new program or product developed must include budgetary support for promotion, in addition to implementation.

3. Assessments

- a) Other than immediate implementation of program and product research and development protocol, assessments and benchmarks for this goal would best be designed by the Work Group using best practices.

4. Benchmarks

- a) Work Group conducts College-wide program and product identification by 2012.
- b) Work Group develops protocols by 2012 and implements training thereafter. Internal program and product protocol review by Work Group every 5-10 years with updates as necessary.
- c) Targeted assessments by program and product should occur frequently at staggered intervals (determined at time of protocol development).

D. Goal #4 – Resources

Marketing is a “mission critical” process in higher education, worthy of significant investment. The College needs to commit sufficient resources to this important activity. According to a study conducted by Lipman Hearne in 2009, in the corporate world, marketing budgets typically represent 4-12 percent of sales, and in the for-profit education sector, marketing budgets can

approach as much as 40 percent of tuition revenue. It has been recommended that Prescott College invest between 8-12 percent of revenues in marketing activities (exclusive of personnel).

1. Objectives

- a) Objective 1: Appropriately fund Integrated Marketing Approach according to best practices.
- b) Objective 2: Support and funding for necessary internal and external human resources in implementing an Integrated Marketing Approach.
- c) Objective 3: Provide necessary infrastructure for implementing Integrated Marketing Approach.
- d) Objective 4: Support and funding for soft marketing.
 - i. An effective marketing strategy is not exclusively about promotion and should, in fact, be more holistic including elements of traditional communication/promotion with other types of investment in infrastructure and program development such as: career centers, campus improvements, student success, events, certification programs, corporate relations, faculty publications and outreach, Lifelong Learning Center, alumni relations, development, Auxiliary Services, etc.

2. Required Resources and Responsibility

- a) In the current budget year Prescott College committed 2.6% (approx. \$430,000) of revenues to marketing activities, exclusive of personnel. According to Carol Aslanian (a recognized expert in the field of higher education marketing and the consultant for the ADP study) Prescott College should currently be committing a minimum of \$1.5M (8% of projected revenue in FY 11-12) to marketing and image building activities. It is recommended that Prescott College commit 8-12% annually to marketing efforts (exclusive of personnel). The total dollar amount allocated should increase each year in proportion to growth in institutional revenues.
- b) Fully support the Integrated Marketing Work Group formation and allocation of employee time. Fund and support allocation of resources for outside consultancy. As marketing needs arise, support with adequate staffing.
- c) Infrastructure support could include: IT support, software, web-related activities, facilities, etc.
- d) Soft market opportunities and programs should be indentified and funded accordingly as part of the larger College and/or departmental strategic plans and budgets.

3. Assessments:

- a) Successful implementation and evaluation of goals 1-3.

4. Benchmarks

- a) See goals 1-3 for specific benchmarks and timelines.

IV. Glossary

Brand Book

A brand book is a collection of guidelines for presenting/representing a particular organization. This may include color and logo usage guidelines, key phrases used to describe the organization

Brand Promise

Brand promise is what a particular organization/product/service stands for. It is the articulation of the identity of a particular product, service or business, and what it delivers to current and potential customers.

Brand Studies

A brand study quantifies and assesses the identity of a specific product, service or business. It can take many forms, including name, sign, symbol, color combination, or slogan. Typical components of a larger brand study include: mission/vision review and update, perception study, image study, editorial evaluation, and marketing language study. Brand assessment research measures the current perceptions and associations of a brand in comparison to competitors.

Constituents/Stakeholders

Constituents/Stakeholders is used herein to refer to all other persons or organizations who are actively involved with the organization or whose interests may be positively or negatively affected by its performance.

Customers/Audience

Customers/audience is used herein to refer to the end users of an organization's product or service. These are the people that "pay the bills."

Integrated Marketing

A management concept that is designed to make all aspects of marketing communication such as advertising, promotion, public relations, crisis communications, brand and direct marketing, work together as a unified force, rather than permitting each to work in isolation.

Integrated Marketing Plan

An Integrated marketing plan adheres to the concepts of Integrated Marketing, outlining a seamless program that maximizes the impact on customers and other end users.

Market Presence/Reach

As used herein Market Presence/Reach refers to the number of possible customers who are aware of an organization/product/service, and also the actual percentage of possible customers that actually buy that product or service.

Mission

A mission statement talks about the organization's present. It lists broad goals for which the organization is formed. Its prime function is internal, to define the key measure or measures of the organization's success.

Research/Market Research

Market research is the systematic design, collection, analysis, and reporting of data and findings relevant to a specific marketing situation and institution faces. It involves finding information that is used to refine marketing goals and help develop an overall marketing plan by understanding how elements of marketing impact customer behavior.

Soft Marketing

An effective strategy is not exclusively about promotion and should, in fact, be more holistic including elements of traditional communication/promotion with other types of investment in infrastructure and programs. These other investments are referred to as "soft marketing" – the indirect ways that peoples impressions about an institution are formed.

Vision

A vision statement talks about an organization's future. It lists where the organization sees itself some years from now. For employees, it gives direction about how they are expected to behave and inspires them to give their best. It shapes customers' understanding of why they should work with the organization.

V. Committee Membership

A. Full Committee:

- Amylee Thornhill
- Ashley Mains
- Betsy Bolding
- Bridget Reynolds
- Camille Smith
- Cheryl Schwartz
- Dave Richins
- Deb Ford
- Elizabeth Scarborough
- Erin Lotz
- Jeff Schwartz
- Jillian Van Ness
- Margaret "Maggie" Garvey
- Marjory Sente
- Melanie Bishop
- Michelle Tissot
- Mike Rooney
- Tim Robison
- Vance Luke

B. Report Compiled By:

- Ashley Mains
- Bridget Reynolds
- Camille Smith
- Cheryl Schwartz
- Elizabeth Scarborough
- Erin Lotz
- Margaret "Maggie" Garvey
- Marjory Sente
- Michelle Tissot
- Tim Robison

VI. Appendices*

- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #1 Notes
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #1-1 Consultants Best Practices
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #1A Notes
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #2 Notes
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #2A Notes
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #2A-1 CASE

- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #2A-2 Is Image Still Everything
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #2A-3 New Rules in College Choice
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #2A-4 Changing Marketing Mix
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #2A-5 Why Does College Cost So Much
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #2B Notes
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #2B-1 Competitor Schools
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #2B-2 Site Audit
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #2B-3 Perception of Greatness
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #2B-4 PC Identity Standards
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #2C Notes
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #2C-1 Notes
- Image, Relations and Marketing Goal #3 Notes
- Content Based Marketing
- ROI for SUNYCUAD 2010 Elizabeth Scarborough

*Appendices available as individual documents in a zip folder.