

# Missouri State University Response to Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods (CJRW) Marketing Recommendations

## Implementation

### Ongoing/continue

#### Messaging

##### Build the brand through the success of academic programs

- Utilize spotlight database to successfully communicate far-reaching opportunities enjoyed by students and alumni
- Provide information in a format that will turn a casual reader into an engaged reader (visual elements such as photography and short videos; shorter text, more graphics)
- Showcase new graduates who have accomplished notable successes within a year or two after graduation
- Focus on current student “Spotlights”
  - Students should experience the story in a multimedia format that is short and delivered in a current format
  - Messaging strategy should be directly correlated to unique programs with successful placement rates
  - Messaging should illustrate how students have access to affordable excellence, while enjoying the complete college experience
  - Highlight programs where current students and new graduates have benefited from MSU’s leadership in a given field
  - Demonstrate experience beyond the classroom

#### Propagation

##### Grow the brand organically through the campus

- Continue social media presence and establish a goal of posting at least two stories per week via Facebook and Twitter link
- Include branding in short interview videos with students about their stories and experiences on a regular basis
- Continue sharing blog post links to Facebook and Twitter on a regular basis
- Ensure all future YouTube Channel postings like concert videos, media appearances, etc., are branded with the new look and messaging strategy.

- Continue using this material to share across other social media platforms
- Maintain promotion of social sharing on website pages, blog posts, and other online content
- Make more use of direct fan/follower engagement by asking questions and requesting shares and comments
- Add regular “Guess the Location” photo postings to both Facebook and Instagram feeds, highlighting close-up shots of various campus locations
- Explore more use of live webcasts of campus activities, events, and meetings that could be shared and promoted via social media, thereby showing a more “open” attitude to the public and students

## Paid Media

- Outdoor
  - Advertising throughout the state reaches in-state market

### *Unique academics*

- Avoid positioning strategies that compete with other in-state universities primarily known for athletics
- Be positioned as the university that offers unique, nationally recognized programs
- Research the top five programs attracting students from St. Louis and Kansas City
  - Promote those programs and the different success stories

### **Guerrilla marketing**

#### *School pride*

- Highlight the Bear branding or utilize Boomer the Bear

## Publications

### **Change to a large-imagery-less-copy format**

- Use high-quality photography as the main tool to tell the story of each page
  - Copy plays a supportive role to the image
  - Amount of (current) copy is reduced significantly

### **Concentrate on providing the right visuals**

- Highlight traditions
- Show reach of academic programs available
- Show innovation taking place inside and outside the classroom
- Show maroon and white pride that defines the culture

### **Build the academic reputation through the colleges**

- Highlight specific programs of study

- Include spreads for every college in the Viewbook
  - Group information to showcase excellence in different disciplines
- Showcase short testimonial stories
- Point to longer versions of stories on Web

### Revise websites

- Develop a mobile-responsive website that adapts to screen sizes of devices such as smartphones and tablet computers
- Revise websites for colleges and academic programs to follow the new look of the brand
  - Provide freedom to include design elements that help achieve a look that follows the brand but is still unique to their discipline

## Immediate attention

### Branding

#### Rejuvenate the look of the brand

- Form an advisory committee that represents different constituencies and academic departments
- Recruit design professionals from the campus community
- Develop a five-to-seven-question survey for representatives from each constituency to use to gather feedback from their respective groups
- Develop a creative brief that merges research findings and preliminary qualitative research from internal groups
- Create a word farm with the results from the surveys
- Develop layout options that would be reviewed and revised by the committee

### Messaging

#### Share the origin of the brand

- Providing background will add another layer of meaning to the tagline

#### Redefine “Follow Your Passion. Find Your Place.”

- Avoid defining brand based solely on the target audience’s perspective: location, affordability, value, campus offerings and facilities
- Incorporate messaging that includes the institution’s competitive advantages
- Tie core communication efforts to unique academic opportunities:
  - programs not offered anywhere else in the region
  - highly ranked programs
  - job placement rates
- Lead all messaging with academic programs; follow with value and campus offerings talking points

### **Build the brand through the success of academic programs**

- Consider this approach on mass media executions
  - Recruitment campaigns should highlight current student success stories in the format previously described
  - Students highlighted should have experience that can be shared in 30-second radio spots, print ads and online ads
  - To extend the messaging, develop a website to expand each story
  - The website would provide links toward any relevant content within the main site and be an extension of mass communication efforts

## **Propagation**

### **Access the brand for day-to-day needs**

- Consider adding a Brand Manager position to the university's communications team

## **Recruitment events**

### **Increase Showcase events**

- Consider expanding the number of Showcase events to 5-7 a year
  - First year, increase the number of events from two to four
  - Assess the success in attendance and satisfaction with the experience

### **Enhance campus tours**

- Consider adding interactive elements to the tour
- Explore adding a social media component to the tour
- Ensure integrated talking points reflect the same messaging points that individual colleges want to convey and highlight the same competitive advantages colleges want to highlight

## **Publications**

### **Provide facts, statistics and points of reference**

- Build communication strategies around factual and measurable information
  - Emotion, visuals, and compelling narratives still important components of a communication piece
- Utilize data to position key programs of study as leaders in the regional and national playing field
- Emphasize the importance that this information be gathered and provided by each college
- Give emphasis to importance that all colleges improve collection of measurable data that can be use as supporting facts for any pride points

## 2014-15 (July 1, 2014)

### Branding

#### Let qualitative research guide the final decision

- Narrow layout options to two or three
- Test options through focus groups of different target audiences
- Make a decision based on findings

### Messaging

#### Taglines

- Alternate taglines used by colleges should be minimized to “welcome headlines” or “sign off statements.” These taglines should not be as prominent as the one attributed to the university.

### Propagation

#### Roll out the final product

- Hold a campus-wide assembly where the refreshed brand and its different executions are introduced

#### Access the brand for day-to-day needs

- Provide tools that allow the campus community to integrate the campaign into different materials
  - New standard templates should provide more opportunities for individualization
  - In addition to the templates, departments working with publication services could be part of the development process of the look and template for their respective departments
  - Options available for people with basic design knowledge and no access to professional software
- Secure support from senior leadership on the implementation and propagation of the new image. MSU's president would issue a memo outlining the importance of new guidelines and the tools that will be available to help different departments achieve consistency.
- Hold marketing workshops with relevant representatives from different departments. Attendance by staff and faculty members responsible for marketing and communications would be mandatory. The invitation to these workshops would come from the president. Several time-and-date options should be available. Key leaders and department heads could also be invited to the workshops on an informational capacity.

- Provide a reasonable timeline to transition to the new look
- Hold one-on-one meetings with staff members who develop communication materials in order to achieve progress

### Grow the brand organically through the campus

- Create a Propagation Plan to guide regular social media posting in the initial months of the new marketing campaign and ensure that campaign messaging is woven into social messaging
- Launch a regular “Department Focus” feature via Facebook and Instagram. On Facebook, this execution would involve stories from students in a particular department discipline, short video interviews or scripted statements from department leaders, and images of activities within the department. For Instagram, the focus would be the images of activities within departments, classrooms, and the facilities themselves.
- Make traditional propagation strategy part of the rollout and brand maintenance process. Many of these executions are currently being used by MSU.
  - Include new look on campus banners, public space signage, posters, and flyers, among others
  - Implement new look and messaging strategy on executions for different communication channels: video, Web, brochures, programs for public events, email signatures, and talking points used during presentations or speeches given by university officials

## Paid Media

### Undergraduate recruitment

- Target markets
  - St. Louis
  - Southwest Missouri
    - Springfield
- Radio
  - All markets
  - Run mid-October thru March (2-week flights- see recruitment campaign chart)
  - Utilize Arbitron ratings to select stations
  - Negotiate “bonus” radio schedule to run 2 weeks following each paid flight
- Online and Mobile ads
  - Run November-March
  - Internet streaming radio
    - Pandora Audio Everywhere pairs audio and visual platforms
    - Allows inclusion of KC market with others previously listed
- Outdoor
  - Move current focus to undergrad recruiting if funding remains

- Explore areas of growth if new funding available

#### Online programs

- Utilize an ad network to place Google Search advertising; maximizes media buy optimization based on search results and popular terms
- Avoid doing spot placement on specific local websites or apps
- Consider geo-targeted placement on national websites and popular apps through ad networks
- Utilize dynamic creative by switching to a media placement focused on online and mobile pre-roll video accompanied with banner ads
- Consider placement on online radio outlets such as Pandora Audio Everywhere

#### Transfer students

- Outdoor (billboards)
- Place near key, two-year colleges
- Creative elements should specifically target transfer students

#### Other paid media

- Move to centralized paid media placement strategy
- Large media markets (St. Louis/KC) represent growth opportunities for the university and should be pursued
- Spot placement in large markets could be considered an awareness effort rather than a results-driven effort
- Large media markets require robust paid media strategies to create an impact

#### Student bloggers

- Recruit (4-6) freshman students from the St. Louis and Kansas City markets as student bloggers
- Develop approval process for the review and publishing of the student-generated content
- Encourage a weekly blog post per student, with topics being assigned by the university based on relevant recruiting data in the target areas
- Utilize a microblogging tool such as a Tumblr page
- Ensure blog entries are short and driven by visual elements such as photography, video, or animated such as GIFs
- Capture content with mobile devices such as cell phones and tablets
- Have students promote blogs through their Twitter feeds and Facebook

### Recruitment events

#### Enhance campus tours

- Develop “Quick Facts” booklet based on points of pride for the different academic disciplines (provided by colleges during June 26-27, 2013, meetings)

## Publications

### Assemble a communications committee

- Include staff members who represent different levels of the communication process (writing, design, video)
- Meet bimonthly to assess how brand is being represented

### Revise websites

- Follow approach recommended for other elements such as mass communication materials and publications

## Consider in the future

## Messaging

### Redefine “Follow Your Passion. Find Your Place.”

- Implement a better tracking system for colleges to provide outstanding job placement rates or acceptance rates into prestigious graduate programs

## Propagation

### Grow the brand organically through the campus

- Make more use of direct fan/follower engagement by asking questions and requesting shares and comments
- Host regular “Twitter chats” with leaders and faculty, promoting it as a chance for students and potential students to have questions answered and connect with leaders in their disciplines (using hashtags such as #AskMSU or #MSUChat)

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## Publications

### Revise websites



- The mobile design should also follow the new approved look for the brand

## **Not worth considering**

### Propagation

#### **Roll out the final product**

- Deliver through a video (if possible), where the university shares the following points:
  - Goal of the advisory committee referenced in “Rejuvenate the Brand” tactics
  - Introduce members of the advisory committee to showcase campus-wide representation
  - Discuss the different concepts tested during the focus group study; avoid showing visuals for any concepts not selected
  - Present focus group study results
  - Showcase final branding and how research findings impacted it
  - Demonstrate how the new brand will be used in tactical executions such as radio spots, print ads, brochure mock-ups, etc.
  - Present the overall marketing strategy for the university including paid media, earned media and social media
  - Discuss how the university will work with different departments/colleges to create unique layouts that fit within the new brand look
  - Outline what tools will be used to measure the effectiveness of the new branding strategy internally and externally

#### **Grow the brand organically through the campus**

- Establish “Story of the Month” contest to award followers who have shared their stories via the website or through video interviews and other submission methods. Giveaway T-shirts and paraphernalia
- Launch and promote a contest pitting different departments, campus organizations and clubs, and so forth against each other to see who can gather the most student stories. Highlight the winner in social media and the stories that were gather.

### Paid Media

#### **Undergraduate recruitment**

- Target markets
  - Joplin

#### **Guerrilla marketing**

### *School pride*

- Create awareness of MSU's community
- Include a campus/student life approach
- Communicate how MSU offers the complete college experience in an affordable academic excellence setting
  - Posters
  - stealth product placement in public transportation
  - sidewalk takeovers
  - knit bombing
  - unexpected outdoor displays

### **Blogger outreach**

- Locate 3-5 prominent bloggers (in St. Louis/KC areas) with children who are currently juniors or seniors in high school
- Offer him/her and immediate families the opportunity to visit the campus (ideally during Showcase)
- Arrange travel for this visit with the agreement that the influencer would document his/her experience

## Marketing Plan Inventory

### Branding

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