PERSONALIZING THE
STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE
THROUGH TARGETED DIGITAL OUTREACH

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The IE3 Global partner consortium consists of:
- 18 universities in four states
- Liberal arts, land grant, regional, public, private
- Some offer all or components of our portfolio

Large diversity in the academic interests of students:
- Over 100 majors represented in 2013-2014
- Ranging from Arabic to Wildlife Sciences
Question:

With such a varied group of potential students, how do we connect to their individual needs and interests (academic, professional, personal) via digital marketing and outreach?
Meet “Ellen”

• Ellen’s basics:
  • Oregon State University student
  • Sophomore
  • Biology major, interested in pre-medicine

• Ellen is unsure about what she’s looking for in an international program.
How to Move Ellen from Point A to Point B
The Hook

• “The Hook” can be:
  • Print materials (posters, brochures, etc.)
  • Study abroad fair outreach and other live events
  • Class visits
  • Word of mouth

• However, arguably the most important – and cost effective hook – is:
  • Social media!
  • Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc..
Keys for Effective Social Media Outreach

• Informative, entertaining, or (ideally) a combination of the two.
• Interaction with comments and feedback.
• Consistency in frequency and tone.
• Use to promote both your information and information of likeminded groups (articles, blog posts, the ever-popular “listicle”).
Ellen is Hooked

- Ellen sees a shared post from her friend “Denise” who is a fan of the IE3 Global Facebook page.
- Interested, Ellen clicks on the link and reads a blog post by an IE3 Global student.
Filtering the Engagement

• This site, specific to Ellen, is the only one she’ll need to visit.
• Includes only information pertinent to her – programmatically, financially, etc.
• Encourages her to engage and hone the information at her own pace. We aren’t trying to oversell anything, just keeping the information channels clear.
Checking in on Ellen

• At this point, Ellen gives us valuable data:
  • We learn that she is an OSU student
  • We can measure traffic to each individual school site, which gives us a good idea of what schools are being effectively reached.
Student Stories as a Form of Targeted Marketing

• Targeted marketing has a bad reputation.
• As we are marketing an **experience** not a product, a good way to do this is through presenting student stories in a variety of forms.
• The faster a student can imagine themselves in a peer’s shoes, the faster the experience becomes a reality.
Ellen Watches a Video

- After reading some interviews and blog posts on the site, Ellen watches a video.
- Video can be found at: https://vimeo.com/121684051
- Seeing Daniel’s experience, Ellen decides that she’s interested in exploring Latin America.
Ellen’s Progress

• Deciding she’s interested in Latin America, Ellen now connects with our staff.
• Based on her interests, she is put in touch with an IE₃ Global Student Ambassador
What is a Student Ambassador?

- A student ambassador is a past participant in one of our study abroad or internship programs.
- Ambassadors are housed at five partner campuses.
- Meet “Pete”
  - University of Washington student
  - Senior
  - Chemistry major, recently accepted to medical school
  - Pete is an alum of a pre-med internship in South Africa.
Virtual Advising

- Though OSU doesn’t have a pre-med internship alum to speak with Ellen, she can connect with Pete at UW via Skype or online client.
- Virtual advising makes eight ambassadors available to students.
- Ambassadors come from diverse backgrounds and relay applicable information to the student.
- Students often prefer speaking with other students.
**Time to Apply**

- From her discussion with Pete, Ellen decides to apply for a program in Argentina hosted by the same organization that provided Pete’s internship.
- Now Ellen can review the internship specifics and apply.
- After applying, the advising process becomes more hands on.
- Ellen will work with staff on preparing for her time abroad.
Full Process

- Hooked via Social Media
- Filtered Engagement
- Relatable Student Stories
- Discussion with Peer Advisor
- Complete access to information and application is given
To Keep in Mind...

• Every student’s engagement is different. Ellen is just one “persona”.

• It is helpful to use personas to test how students engage your digital content – from international students, to students from various backgrounds and majors, etc.

• It’s important to keep the flow of information manageable and not to overwhelm the student too quickly.

• Remember, the first look at a digital collateral is likely on a phone. Tailor your content as such.
Answering Our Question

With such a varied group of potential students, how do we connect to their individual needs and interests (academic, professional, personal) via digital marketing and outreach?
Answers

1. Targeted information proves more effective in student engagement.

Ellen was encouraged to visit the a page to find information specific to her university, in turn filtering her engagement and tailoring the information to her.
Answers

2. Personal student stories, in a variety of forms and genres, to which a student can relate, can prove more successful than static information.

Ellen was initially “hooked” by a student blog on Facebook, and further interested by a student video on the website.
3. Students relate well with past participants who can share not only program and campus-specific information, but their personal experiences as well.

Ellen honed her interest based on her discussion with Student Ambassador Pete.
Answers

4. Information should be presented clearly, letting students engage with it at their own pace and interest, allowing them to make discoveries for themselves and avoid “information overload.”

Excited and informed, Ellen was able to dig into the specifics of her program.
Thank You!

Please feel free to contact me:
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