

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



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Developing and Executing an Integrated Marketing Campaign

Custom Research Brief • August 9, 2011

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**THE ADVISORY BOARD COMPANY
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I. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Project Challenge

A member institution approached the Council with the following questions about integrated marketing campaigns:

- **Developing a Marketing Campaign:** *What is integrated marketing and how is it distinct from other models of managing communications and marketing? How have institutions developed coordinated marketing campaigns? Who was involved in developing the marketing campaign and how is it executed? How do other institutions mitigate tensions between staff who are accustomed to decentralized marketing models?*
- **Coordinating across Departments:** *How do other institutions maximize opportunities for synergies and coordination of marketing and public relations/communications efforts? If these functions are administratively separate, how is coordination and collaboration achieved?*
- **Measuring Effectiveness:** *How is the effectiveness of marketing campaigns evaluated? What metrics do other institutions collect and track to benchmark performance and measure impact of marketing efforts?*

Sources

- ❖ National Center for Education Statistics: <http://nces.ed.gov/>
- ❖ Sevier, Robert A. "The Direct Results of Integrated Marketing." *Trusteeship* March/April (2004). *University of Rhode Island*. Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. Web. 22 July 2011. <http://www.uri.edu/uribrand/media/direct_marketing.pdf>.
- ❖ Black, Jim. "The Enrollment Management and Marketing Nexus (Part I)." *SEM Works*. Jan. 2009. Web. 22 July 2011. <http://www.semworks.net/papers/wp_Enrollment-Management_Marketing-Nexus_part1.php>.

Methodology

The Council interviewed directors of communications and marketing at small private institutions.

A Guide to the Institutions Profiled in this Brief				
Institution	Geographic Location	Carnegie Classification	Approximate Total Enrollment (undergraduate)	Urbanicity
College A	Midwest	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	2,900 (900)	City: Large
University B	West	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	3,500 (2,500)	City: Large
University C	Mid-Atlantic	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	4,000 (3,500)	City: Large
College D	Northeast	Baccalaureate Colleges—arts and sciences	3,500 (3,500)	Suburb: Large

II. EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Key Observations:

- ❖ **Expert Dr. Robert Sevier defines integrated marketing as, “a comprehensive, coordinated, institution-wide effort to communicate mission-critical messages in ways that target audiences notice, understand, and respond to.”** Integrated marketing communications (IMC) plans are comprised of brand marketing and direct marketing components (i.e., efforts intended to create awareness and generate a response, respectively).
- ❖ **A university IMC team should include representation from all relevant parties, which include but are not limited to admissions, advancement, recruiting, enrollment management, and marketing and communications.** The first task of the team generally involves completing the requisite research to develop an institutional brand. The IMC team must then launch a wide-scale implementation that saturates the physical campus and surrounding community.
- ❖ **The primary body responsible for managing plan implementation is the marketing and communications office, which can be organized across a spectrum of centralization:**
 - **Decentralized:** Individual units manage their own marketing and communications. Contacts note that this often led to a lack of cohesive and/or compelling messaging.
 - **Hybrid:** One office is the owner of the university’s message, identity, graphic standards, and promotional efforts. That office works with units across campus to deliver materials that align with the plan. Each unit may maintain a budget for marketing.
 - **Centralized:** The marketing and communications office manages all internal and external communications, marketing, advertising, and collateral development. The centralized office oversees the budget for all marketing and communications activities. Contacts recommend the hybrid and centralized models, most having transitioned from a decentralized model.
- ❖ **Anywhere from seven to 11 writers, web-content developers, e-communications specialists, and designers staff marketing and communications offices at contact institutions.** Offices have a budget of \$700,000 or more (including human resource costs). However, at most institutions, other units, such as admissions and recruiting, maintain their own marketing budgets.
- ❖ **Contacts identify key considerations for transitioning to a central marketing function that are organized by four categories: staffing, campus interactions, office workflow, and alleviating pushback.**
- ❖ **Even after the IMC plan is developed, contacts report collaborating with colleagues in recruiting, admissions, advancement, enrollment management and academic affairs in order to customize the plan and collect data to demonstrate success.** Standing meetings, continued inclusion on the planning team, avenues for material-screening and testing, and presentations are all strategies for communications and marketing to with its counterparts across campus.
- ❖ **All contact institutions remark that print materials and social media are among their top marketing-modality priorities;** most also updated their website. Contacts comment that electronic sources are by far the most common way of engaging with constituent bases, especially the prospective student audience.

III. INTEGRATED MARKETING: THE THEORY

According to postsecondary education integrated marketing expert Dr. Robert Sevier, integrated marketing communication (IMC) refers to “a comprehensive, coordinated, institution-wide effort to communicate mission-critical messages in ways that target audiences notice, understand, and respond to.”¹ Enrollment management expert Dr. Jim Black adds that at institutions where enrollment management and marketing do not work synergistically through organizational alignment, integrated planning, coordinated implementation of similar efforts, and effective evaluation of those efforts, the result is “counterproductive chaos”².

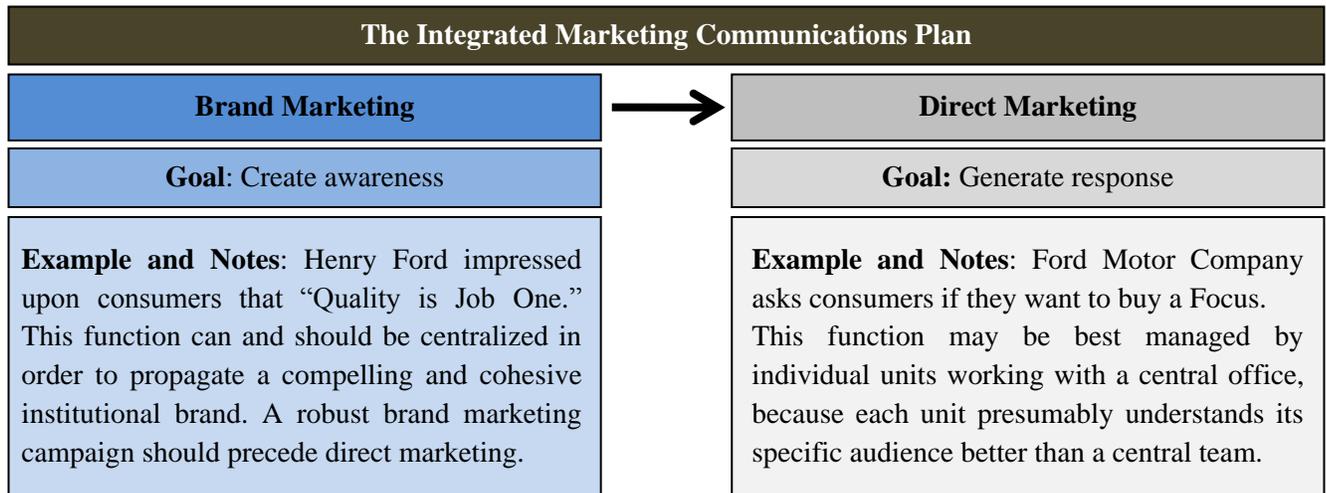
Components of Integrated Marketing

According to Sevier, IMC consists of two related components: *brand marketing* and *direct marketing*:

The Negative Effects of Decentralized Marketing and Communication

Lack of synergy between marketing and enrollment management compounded by independent marketing, recruiting, and retention efforts by other administrative and academic units can lead to:

- ✗ Blurred institutional image
- ✗ Lackluster enrollment
- ✗ Redundant efforts
- ✗ Inefficient use of resources
- ✗ An external perception of mismanagement and disorganization



¹ Sevier, Robert A. "The Direct Results of Integrated Marketing." *Trusteeship* March/April (2004). *University of Rhode Island*. Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. Web. 22 July 2011. <http://www.uri.edu/uribrand/media/direct_marketing.pdf>.

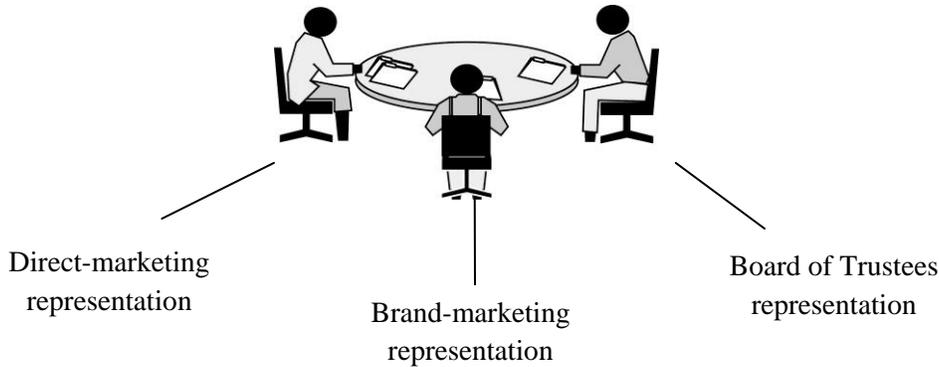
² Black, Jim. "The Enrollment Management and Marketing Nexus (Part I)." *SEM Works*. Jan. 2009. Web. 22 July 2011. <http://www.semworks.net/papers/wp_Enrollment-Management_Marketing-Nexus_part1.php>.

III. INTEGRATED MARKETING: THE THEORY

Building a Team

Eric Forseth, Vice President for Enrollment Services and Marketing at Northwest Nazarene University in Idaho explains that the integrated marketing team provides direct oversight of the institution’s brand-marketing strategy and for coordinating efforts with direct-marketing functions like admissions and advancement³. Sevier stresses that IMC efforts should be led by a team rather than a committee due to the latter’s frequent inability to work in a timely, coordinated, and convincing manner due to divergent goals, methods, and attitudes.³

Members of an Integrated Marketing Communications Team



The team, instead, should consist of representatives from both the brand-marketing (centralized office) and direct-marketing (various units) areas of the institution. Sevier also suggests the inclusion of trustees on the team due to the experience, insight, and legitimacy such representatives bring to the table. If board members are involved, Sevier recommends they remain separate from tactical discussions about how to accomplish goals due to the disproportionate weight they may bring to such decision-making.

Preparing for Marketing Campaigns

Before an institution can launch brand marketing and direct marketing campaigns, the leadership team must first develop an institutional brand. Black enumerates the following steps:

Brand Development	1. Understanding constituent needs	Brand Deployment	4. Positioning the brand
	2. Segmenting the institution’s market		5. Communicating the brand to each market segment
	3. Identifying brand attributes		

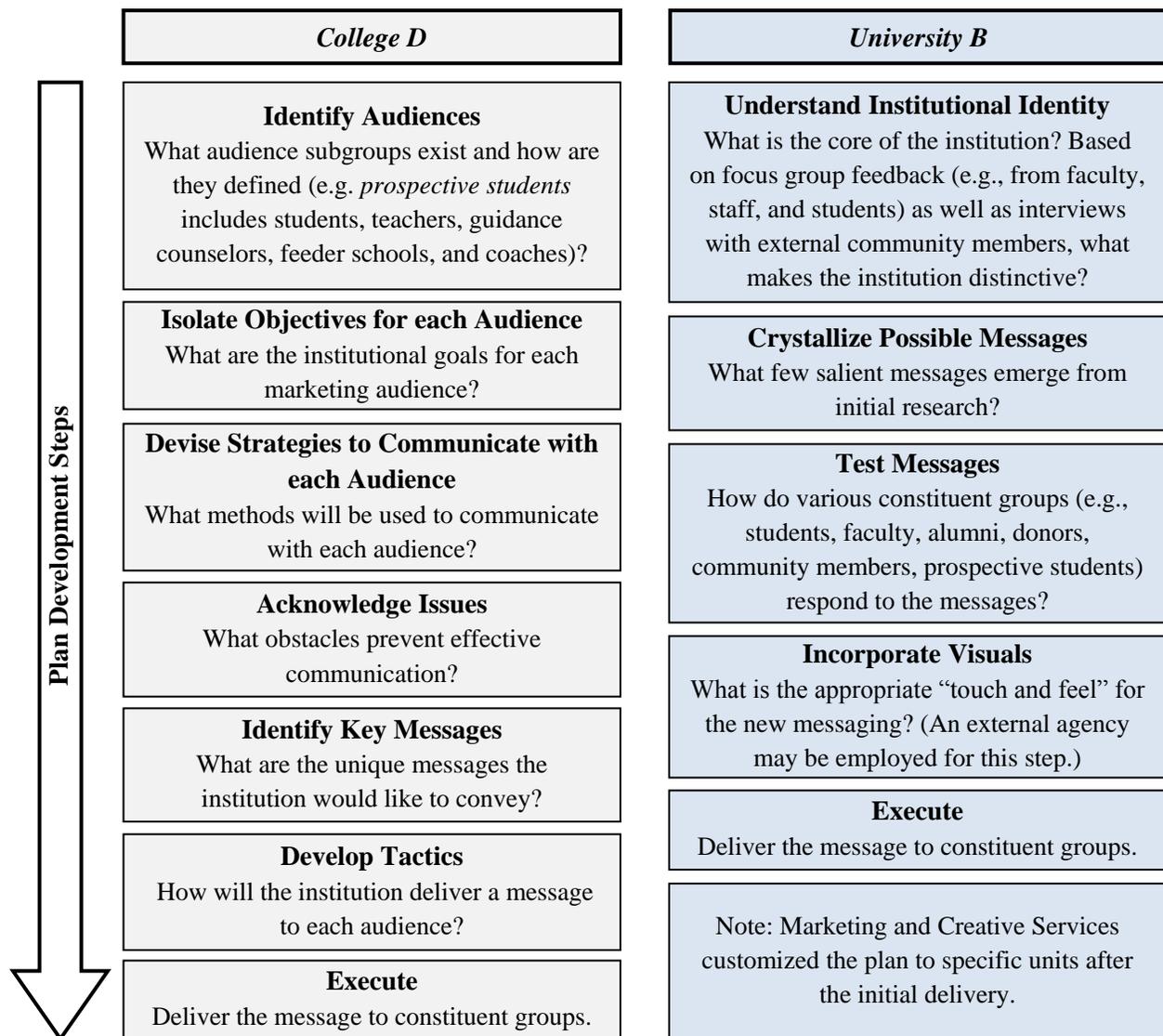
Perception or image studies, market opportunity analyses, demand analyses, and needs assessments are methods of collecting the data requisite for accomplishing steps one through three. All of these methodologies must seek to determine who an institution serves; what their learning needs and education objectives are; and when, where, and how an institution can best meet those needs.

³ Sevier, Robert A. "The Direct Results of Integrated Marketing." *Trusteeship* March/April (2004). *University of Rhode Island*. Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. Web. 22 July 2011. <http://www.uri.edu/uribrand/media/direct_marketing.pdf>.

IV. INTEGRATED MARKETING: THE PRACTICE

Developing a Plan: Launching IMC Efforts at Two Contact Institutions

Contacts describe IMC teams that completed the following steps to develop marketing plans:



Leadership

- The marketing plan was presented to the President’s cabinet, modified as necessary, then presented to the Board of Trustees.

Strengths

- Contacts explain that the plan was thorough yet timely, and took about a year to develop.

Weaknesses

- The process did not include many constituents outside the marketing department.

- Senior leadership was involved throughout, providing valuable insight into what strategies would be successful internally.

- Use of a consultant brought unique experience and expertise to the process.

- Contacts feel they did not adequately collaborate with academic affairs

IV. INTEGRATED MARKETING: THE PRACTICE

Highlight: the Branding Statement

Whether with the assistance and expertise of an external consultant or not, the centerpiece of a strong branding campaign is the branding statement. Defined by one contact, the branding statement is the simple message that communicates the essence of the “product”. Some examples of such brand statements are provided by branding consultant Mark Edwards, who was instrumental in the integrated marketing efforts of **University B**. Edwards refers to these branding statements, at their simplest, the “One Simple Thing” or “OST”:

Grinnell College: “Grinnell College. No Limits.”

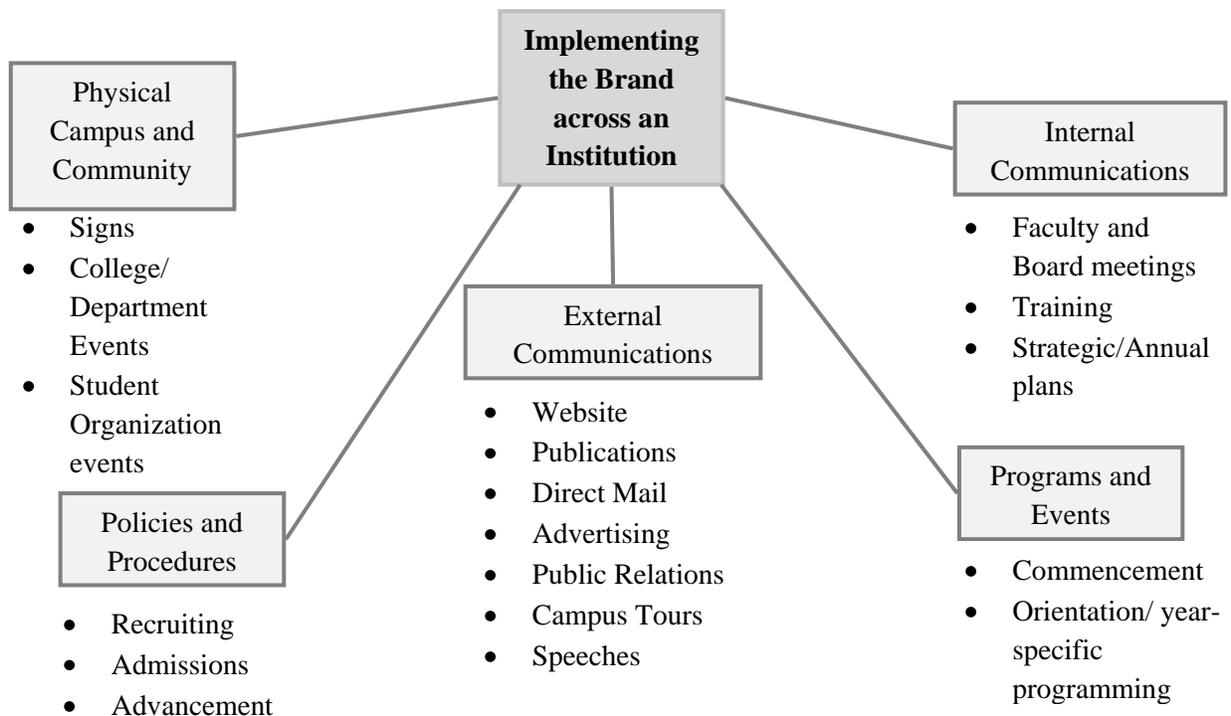
Oberlin: “We are Oberlin. Fearless.”

Skidmore: “Skidmore. Creative thought matters.”

For the full branding statements associated with these Simple Thoughts, please see the Appendix.

Executing a Plan

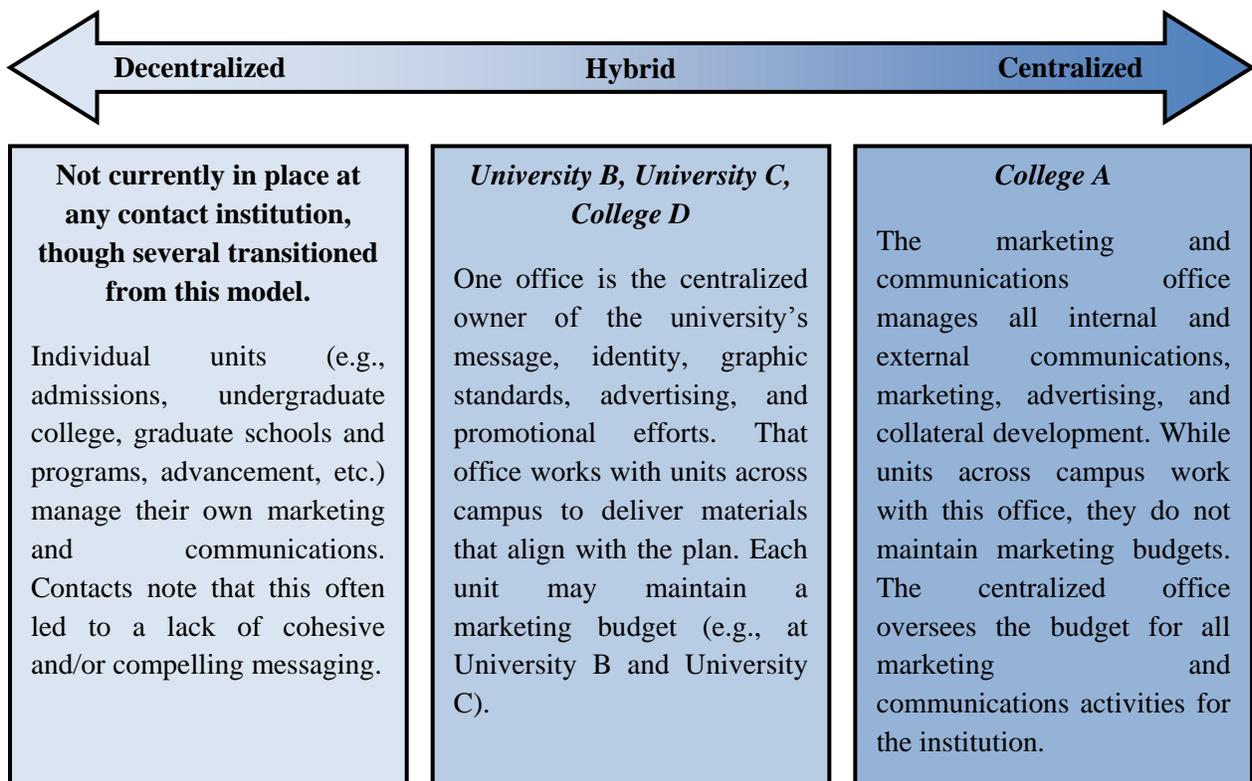
Contacts explain that an integrated marketing plan must saturate an institution and offer the following opportunities to do so:



V. ORGANIZING AN INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING OFFICE

Models of Organizing an Office: Degrees of Centralization

Most contact institutions employ hybrid models of organizing their marketing and communications functions: while one office is in charge of developing and implementing a centralized message, some responsibilities and financial resources are left with units that are generally at the forefront of institutional interaction with external parties (e.g., admissions, advancement, etc.). However, contacts from **College A** observe that providing one office with a budget that funds all marketing and communications for the institution can effectively halt most rogue behavior among individual units.



V. ORGANIZING AN INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING OFFICE

Staffing and Budgeting a Marketing and Communications Office

Contact institutions maintain offices of no more than eight individuals, as described below. In order to use sparse financial resources efficiently, most contacts describe a process of identifying functions a small staff could feasibly support and then identifying functions should be outsourced. Staff member strengths, strategic goals, and available resources all influenced this determination.

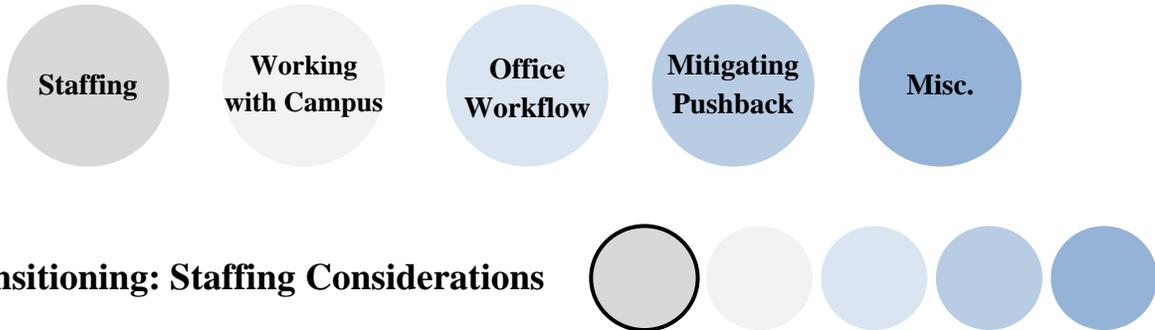
<p style="text-align: center;">University C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Director, Marketing and Communications • Managing Director of Online Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two web content developers, each assigned to two schools ○ Web services administrators ○ Director of Social and Digital Media • Managing Director of Communications and Client Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Director of Organizational Identity and Photography ○ Two graphic designers ○ Managing editor/writer for the alumni and friends magazine • Print Shop: Three staff members • Third party: A marketing agency helped develop the plan, particularly the website and social media strategy; the agency also manages media buys and data analysis. 	<p style="text-align: center;">College D</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Strategic Communication and Integrated Marketing • Associate Director of E-Communication • Web Writer • Media Relations Specialist • Associate Director of Communication • Assistant Director of Communication • Art Director 		
<p style="text-align: center;">University B</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Marketing and Creative Services • Two graphic designers • Two writers • Web/online marketing manager • Videographer </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office manager • Third party: A branding consultant contributed to the development of the IMC plan; a local branding agency managed the “look and feel” of the new brand. </td> </tr> </table>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Marketing and Creative Services • Two graphic designers • Two writers • Web/online marketing manager • Videographer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office manager • Third party: A branding consultant contributed to the development of the IMC plan; a local branding agency managed the “look and feel” of the new brand.
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<p style="text-align: center;">College A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director, Communications and Marketing • Two graphic designers • Two writers • Web designer • Video designer • Office manager • Third party: An agency assisted with the original website re-build and is currently writing and designing marketing materials. 			

V. ORGANIZING AN INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING OFFICE

Marketing and Communications Office Budgets at Contact Institutions		
Institution	Budget	Notes
College A	\$700,000	This represents the total budget; human resources costs comprise approximately 28 percent (\$196,000) of this amount.
University C	\$900,000 to \$1.2 million	This represents the total budget for the office, but it does not account for marketing funds from the budgets of other units (i.e., some units, such as admissions, have dedicated budgets for marketing materials). Staff costs account for \$400,000 to \$500,000.
University B	Staffing Budget: Approx. \$350,000	Contacts are uncertain of total budget because much of the office's work is funded by other units. External work accounts for the following: Branding consultant: \$150,000 Design company: \$30,000 Custom web content management system: \$75,000

VI. TRANSITIONING TO A CENTRALIZED COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING FUNCTION

Contacts convey a variety of advice for streamlining the transition from decentralized to primarily centralized marketing and communications; their suggestions are classified into the following functional categories:



Transitioning: Staffing Considerations

Reassign Current Staff	<p>Contacts at College D and University C recognized some of the skills required for the new centralized office of communications and marketing in other staff across campus. Individuals in support roles in admissions, for example, demonstrated strong communication skills and knowledge of the institution. Contacts were able to reassign staff to marketing roles, thereby diminishing new staff on-boarding time as well as enhancing the office’s institutional familiarity and professional network.</p>
Fill Key Positions Early	<p>Assembling a new marketing team can be a slow process. Contacts from University C urge that several key positions be filled before a plan is executed. The web developer, publications manager, and social media manager should all be involved in shaping the plan. Contacts warn that attempting to move forward with the plan before these positions are filled may lead to disorganization, poorly thought-out and executed plans, and additional work in the future.</p>
Build Collaboration into Staffing Model	<p>The new team’s staffing model is an opportunity to build collaboration into the office organizational structure. At University C, the office’s two web-editors are assigned to the university’s four schools. Web editors split their time between the two schools whose websites they manage and dually report to both the dean of the school and the communications and marketing office. Through this model, web editors work closely with deans, faculty, and staff. College D uses a marketing-communications agency structure, with account managers handling interactions with units across campus in order to make the office more outward-facing.</p>

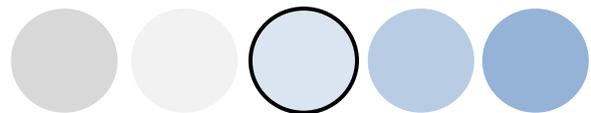
VI. TRANSITIONING TO A CENTRALIZED COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING FUNCTION

Transitioning: Working with Campus



<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Include Stakeholders from the Outset</p>	<p>Several contacts acknowledge that moving to centralized marketing and communications should constitute a cultural shift for an institution—the new branding messages should saturate the entire campus to be optimally effective. Therefore contacts at College D recommend that plan development include campus stakeholders from the outset. Spending time to foster buy-in at the early stages will save considerable time when implementing a plan, resulting in a smoother, faster overall process. Contacts at College D hosted educational sessions with all department leaders to dissipate the message across campus. University C convened a marketing committee, comprised of representation from relevant units across campus, involved throughout the centralization process, from the selection of a third-party consultant to the development of the integrated marketing plan.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Incorporate Senior Leadership</p>	<p>At College A, the senior leadership team led the planning process. Contacts from College A appreciated the guidance and perspective on institutional history and internal climate that senior leadership provided, though they would advise including at least one member of the marketing and communications division on the leadership team.</p> <p>Contacts note that senior leadership can and should also vocally support the centralized marketing and communications office. At College A, this support helped encourage buy-in from the rest of the institution: support from senior leadership effectively communicates the importance of an integrated marketing function.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Guide Colleagues</p>	<p>When a new marketing plan is launched, contacts suggest working with campus “clients” to help them understand the new culture by explaining a more holistic design and production process. At College D, contacts explain the integrated marketing plan and their role in communicating it to colleagues across campus when individuals request assistance with marketing materials.</p>

Transitioning: Managing Office Workflow



<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Prioritize Audiences</p>	<p>A centralized office for marketing and communications must manage relationships with a variety of constituencies including the campus community, alumni, donors, and prospective students. All contacts stress that the new centralized office must prioritize these audiences; most place internal units at or near the bottom of that list. Several institutions provide the internal community with extensive branding guides in order to guide and assist marketing efforts without expending extensive staff time.</p>
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VI. TRANSITIONING TO A CENTRALIZED COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING FUNCTION

Set a Realistic Timeline

Similarly crucial to setting a manageable and sustainable office workflow and workload is the plan development and execution timeline. Contacts from **University C** accommodated an accelerated schedule of six months, from plan development to the launch of a new print collateral campaign and university website. This timeline resulted in poor communication with the rest of the institution, lack of adequate research, and the absence of critical personnel which has led to considerable backtracking to correct or replace old work that was carried over to the new material (especially on the website). Despite this, University C's plan has still been quite successful, but contacts suggest allowing a full year to develop and launch a plan. Contacts from **University B** agree; their process included four months for research, two months to establish the look and feel of the new message; and one year for execution.

Identify Tasks that Should Remain Decentralized

As integrated marketing specialist Dr. Mark Sevier points out, some aspects of the marketing endeavor, namely the direct-marketing work, should remain decentralized. Admissions, recruiting, advancement, and alumni offices all understand their audiences and better than the centralized marketing office may. Extensive collaboration to incorporate this experience and insight from decentralized units to the central office can become time consuming. Additionally, the central office is likely not staffed adequately to shepherd individual unit projects from message development to material delivery. Therefore, some tasks should remain the responsibility of individual units. At **University C**, the admissions office crafts the institution's online profiles for Peterson's and other college information repositories; the central marketing office advises this process. Similarly, though the central office designs and prints hardcopy marketing materials, individual units are responsible for fulfillment.

Transitioning: Mitigating Pushback



Appoint a Strong Leader

The prospect of fundamentally changing institutional marketing and communication with external and internal communities can be daunting to constituents across the campus. Contacts offer advice for alleviating pushback from a variety of audiences; contacts from **College A** stress that in order to achieve success, the campus community must identify one individual as the leader of the transition. In addition to lending a face and a name to integration efforts, having one person in charge also minimizes confusion and conflicting messaging. While the leader's staff, the institution's senior leadership, and other individuals across campus may help dissipate the plan and its implications, they should also make clear that questions and concerns are ultimately received by the plan leader.

VI. TRANSITIONING TO A CENTRALIZED COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING FUNCTION

<p>Advertise Team Input</p>	<p>While a strong leader is important, contacts note that a plan should be presented as the product of the experience and insight of a team. Particularly if the leader is new to the institution, failure to recognize the support from an integrated marketing communications team can lead to the perception that the leader is functioning without proper consideration of the institutional history and interests of the faculty and staff.</p>
<p>Use Teachable Moments</p>	<p>When encouraging the university community to adopt new practices and policies, contacts from College A made successful use of and teachable moments. For example, when an individual bypassed the media-interaction policies, contacts showed their colleagues how the marketing and communications office had to amend the situation. This became an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of the policies and the marketing and communications office in general.</p>
<p>Compromise with Relevant Units</p>	<p>Contacts note that pushback will most likely emerge from units who previously managed their own marketing and communications and who resist losing oversight for these activities. Contacts from University B used a combination of compromise and a firm hand to manage these relationships. Before the central office was launched, many units were used to working with consultants to manage their own marketing. Contacts compromised by allowing units to maintain their individual consulting engagements if they also worked through the central office. When the next marketing redesign began, units were comfortable working without consultants.</p>
<p>Address Quality Improvement First</p>	<p>To foster buy-in within the central office, contacts from University B addressed issues of quality improvement before re-inventing or re-creating marketing materials. These projects were an opportunity to show the campus community (including arbiters of central funds) the capabilities of the office while acknowledging to the office staff the value of the materials they had created in the past</p>

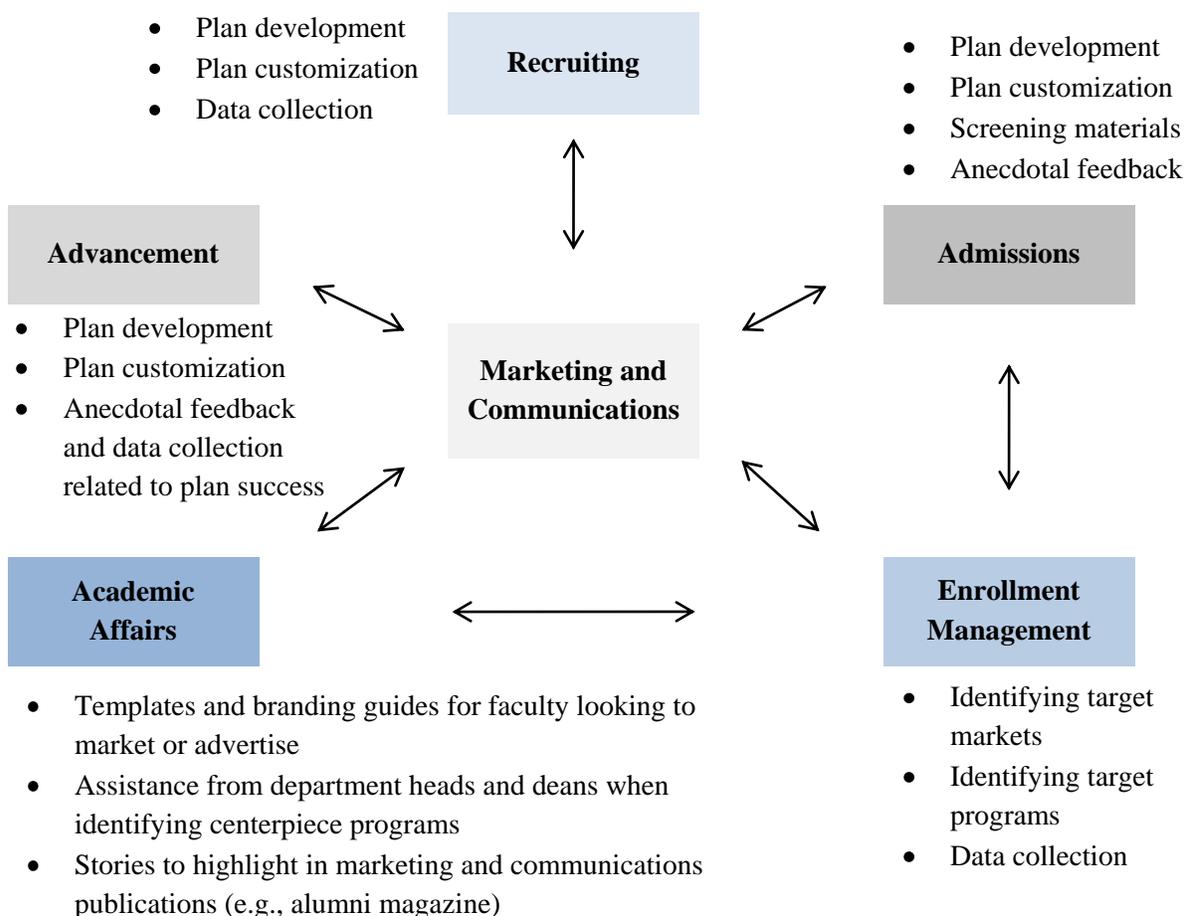
Transitioning: Miscellaneous



<p>Leverage Strong Programs</p>	<p>At College A, one of the master's programs is significantly more successful than other programs. It enrolls more students and has a larger budget. The program manages much of its own marketing, but contacts have used this to the benefit of the overall marketing function by learning from it. Because of its larger budget, the program functions as a vanguard implementer of novel marketing modalities and strategies. Similarly, at University B, strong programs co-brand with the central office.</p>
<p>AMA's Meeting</p>	<p>Contacts from College D highly recommend attending the American Marketing Association's (AMA) Symposium for the Marketing of Higher Education. The Symposium is an excellent way to meet with colleagues from across the country and discuss successes, challenges, and questions.</p>

VII. ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATED MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Collaboration across Divisions



All contact institutions report frequent interaction among the marketing and communications office and several other units across campus, most notably: the Office of Advancement, Admissions, Recruiting, Enrollment Management, and Academic Affairs. All of these units can be involved in several ways but most contacts stress their role in developing the plan, customizing the plan to the specific unit, and collecting data that demonstrates plan success. Individual units are best suited to participate through these avenues because they have the greatest insight into the salient characteristics of their constituencies and because they will ultimately be closest to the results of the plan. As described above, contacts recommend enrollment management be particularly involved with marketing and communications because the department typically sits at the strategic nexus of admissions and program growth.

The most common methods of encouraging collaboration are standing meetings and informational sessions with faculty. At some institutions like **University C**, the office organizational structure encourages collaboration: by situating web designers within each of the four schools, contacts maximize the marketing team's collaboration with and insight into individual schools.

VII. ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATED MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Successful Marketing Modalities

Most contacts highlight three areas of primary concern as modes of communication: the institutional website, social media, and print materials (primarily for undergraduate admissions and recruiting):

Mode of Communication		College A	University B	University C	College D
Web-based	Website	✓	✓	✓	
	Social media	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Advertisements on other websites			✓ (Yahoo!, Business Times)	
Print-based	Alumni magazine		✓		✓
	School magazines				✓
	General print pieces (undergraduate primarily)	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Annual reports				✓ The annual report outlines institutional successes and growth.
External community-based Advertisements	Buses	✓ Contacts report success.			
	Billboards	✓			
	Television			✓ Contacts report moderate success.	
	Radio			✓ Contacts report moderate success.	

VII. ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATED MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Measuring Success: an Ongoing Effort

Contacts report that establishing formal protocols for collecting data demonstrating success is one of the most challenging aspects of integrated marketing. The process involves considerable collaboration with several units including admissions, enrollment management, and advancement. All contacts are currently working to improve this aspect of office operations. Currently, contacts use landing pages to measure the success of print materials, billboards, television, and radio. Web analytics allows contacts to track from where website visitors are coming, what links they are exploring on the website, and how long they are staying.

APPENDIX

Complete Branding Statements of Select Institutions

Grinnell College

At Grinnell College there are no limits for intellectually curious students. Ours is an environment of open ended possibilities and incredible learning experiences. A place where risk innovation is fostered, inquiry-based learning is encouraged, and independence of thought and social conscience are instilled. No limits is about Grinnell's resources, commitment to excellence in education, and learning culture. Grounded in respect and responsibility, Grinnell is a place for students in search of truth, understanding, and shared endeavors. It is a place of unlimited opportunity.

Grinnell College. No Limits.

Oberlin College

We challenge the conventions that limit the evolution of understanding and social progress. We build bold bridges between music, the arts and sciences that lead us to profound intellectual destinations. We are intellectual risk takers, students for whom learning is measured by the intensity of the engagement. We embrace differences and are not afraid to take on the complex, the difficult, the taboo. We create firsts to better our world and each other.

We are Oberlin. Fearless.

Skidmore College

Creative Thought Matters. Every life, every career, every endeavor is made more profound with creative ability at its core. We believe that a key purpose of a liberal arts education is to encourage, challenge and explore creative thought. We accomplish this through everything we do. If you believe that your life and success will be shaped by your ability to think, create, and communicate, if you believe that Creative Thought Matters, join Skidmore.

Skidmore. Creative thought matters.

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