Communication Plan for QEP
Shorter University

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Where we are
- Why we are here
- Where we could be
- How we will get there
Where are we?
Background and History

- Founded in 1873
- Four year, Baptist, Liberal Arts Institution
- “A Christian University Committed to Excellence in Education”
- Growing enrollment in the past 20 years
  - 1991 enrollment was 800
  - Current enrollment on main campus is 1542 (Fall 2010)

Source: Factbook
Student Demographics (Percentage)

Communication Plan: QEP Shorter
Accreditation and QEP

- Accredited under Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
  - QEP is a component of reaccreditation through this council

- Shorter’s QEP is “Christ-Centered Critical Thinking”

- QEP was developed due to trends found at Shorter University in the past 5 years:
  - A rise in academic dishonesty
  - A lack of development in critical thinking skills
  - A need for strengthening a Christian worldview
Media Analysis

• Presentations from:
  ◦ Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Sabrena Parton
  ◦ VP of Enrollment Management, Dr. John Head
  ◦ VP of Public Relations, Dawn Tolbert
  ◦ Director of Student Life, Emily Messer
  ◦ SGA President, Cheryl Culp
Media Analysis

- Public Relations explained that most of their communication is external
  - Shorter 2U Alert System for Emergencies
- Admissions Office mostly produces external recruitment materials
- Student Life explained the difficulty in getting information to students
  - No specific way is effective
  - Student email is the official method, but it is not widely utilized
  - Messer explained students responded best to mutually beneficial interactions and activities
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

• **Strengths:**
  - High student-body involvement
  - Close-knit “family” atmosphere.
  - Strong athletic program
  - Many involvement opportunities
  - Student-teacher ratio
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

• Weaknesses:
  ◦ Overcrowding issues on campus
  ◦ Traditional five day week instead of four
  ◦ Multiple new policies concerning the student body
  ◦ External reputation versus actual character
  ◦ Athletic programs that focus less on Shorter’s mission
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

• **Opportunities:**
  - Chance to get out of comfort zone
  - Growth in faith and academics
  - Completion of tasks formerly put on hold
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

• Threats:
  ◦ Not enough real-life exposure
  ◦ School image over importance of students
Why are we here?
Issues

- Rise in academic cheating
- Lack of critical thinking skills
- Promotion of a Christian worldview
Information Gathering and Research Methods

• As a class, we have completed many tasks to gather information and research about the QEP.
  ◦ Situational analysis
  ◦ Focus groups
  ◦ Focus groups analysis
  ◦ Creative strategy
  ◦ Campaign planning
Focus Group Participation

- Students expressed positive support for the QEP theme
  - Beneficial, valuable
  - Gain competitive edge after college
Focus Group Participation

- Lack of knowledge of Christ-Centered Critical Thinking

  “You can look at something one second and know what the answer is, but when you sit there and think about it, you start second-guessing yourself. When you start to critically think about situations, you’ll come up with a more solidified answer. You become more grounded on what you believe.”

  - Focus group student respondent
Where could we be?
Improvements

- Students expressed negative characteristics of Shorter
  - Lack of competitiveness (versus a larger school)
  - Other schools require more critical thinking than Shorter
Christ-Centered Critical Thinking

• Focus on *Christ-centered* critical thinking versus simply critical thinking

• Gain 100% awareness
How are we going to get there?
Creative Strategy

- Most students attend Shorter for reason such as:
  - Small class size
  - Professor/Staff Relationships
  - Community Atmosphere

- Right now, there is no brand position for this initiative:
  - Focus group participants mostly seemed to be in favor of the idea

- Barriers:
  - Lack of consistent involvement
  - Current campus issues

- Motivation:
  - Job Market

- Brand Personality:
  - Adaptive

Communication Plan: QEP Shorter
Creative Strategy

- Desired Consumer Actions:
  - Immediate action
  - Seek more information
  - Recognize brand relevance
  - Increase top of mind awareness
  - Change/reinforce attitudes

- Practical Considerations
  - Timing
  - Available media
  - Other outlets

Communication Plan: QEP Shorter
Creative Exam

• Stopping power
  ◦ Flash mob.
  ◦ Videos of students that encourage more students.
  ◦ Chalking the campus.
  ◦ QEP FESTIVAL!

• Simple idea
  ◦ Teacher announcements at the beginning of class.
  ◦ Toilet Paper

• Brand personality
  ◦ Approachable, interesting, useful course

• Craftsmanship
  ◦ Chalking, advertising, planning debate topics and field trips.
Icons, Favorite Campaigns

- Nike
- Apple
- Allstate: Mayhem
- Macy’s: Justin Bieber
Focus Group Campaign Ideas

- Apple: Think Different
- HWJT?
- Think Outside the Bun
- The More You Know.
- Cross Your Mind.
Think about it.
Think About It.

- Command versus question
- Non-exclusive (non-religious)
- Thought provoking
- Stopping power
- Attention grabber
- Shorter Lexicon
Our Plan

- Traditional methods
  - Flyers, email, TV monitors, SUB 49

- Attention Grabbers
  - Chalking, banners, t-shirts, toilet paper

- New Ideas
  - QEP Day, Commercial, QEP Student team, Essay contest
The Key Benefit

- Students take ownership of the QEP
  - Know Value
  - Excited about participation and outcomes
Summary

• “Think About It” is the proposed communication plan
  ◦ Current status
  ◦ Student Input
  ◦ Communication media and activity ideas

• Goal
  ◦ Positive awareness over 100% of student body
  ◦ Student ownership of QEP
Questions or Comments?

• Thank you!