

ARBUS 300 / KATHLEEN O'HARA



SLTP FINAL REPORT

UW CLUB CONNECT

TEAM 5 - SECTION 2

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UW
CLUB
CONNECT

MARCH 12 2017

PREPARED BY THE UW CLUB CONNECT TEAM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DESCRIPTION & PROJECT OBJECTIVES	1
OVERVIEW	1
OBJECTIVES	2
ELEMENTS OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT	3
SCOPE	3
TIME	3
COST	5
IDENTIFICATION & ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES	6
CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED	7
RISKS INVOLVED	9
RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS	12
APPENDIX	14
ITEM A	14
ITEM B	15
ITEM C	16
ITEM D	17

DESCRIPTION & PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1

OVERVIEW

For the Service Learning Team Project, our team decided to tackle the issue surrounding the disconnect of students on campus and with clubs. Through our team's field market research, we found that Waterloo clubs have difficulty retaining and attracting members. When asked, most clubs were eager to find more ways to reach out to students on campus. Additionally, our end goal was to stimulate further student involvement throughout the university, which would ultimately strengthen UW's student community. This would be done by marketing and promoting for Waterloo clubs that wanted better engagement with students. Students only have one opportunity near the beginning of each term to find out more information regarding the clubs on campus, after this small window of time, it can be difficult to find out about clubs' events.

Our project focused on pioneering a student-run marketing and promotion team that would strive to increase UW clubs' membership, engagement, and popularity - as a result, we created UW Club Connect. At UW Club Connect, we aim to bridge the gap between students and clubs to encourage an environment that was more than just academics. We wanted to use our entrepreneurial and marketing skills alongside our personal social networks to help clubs get their events and activities known to students. To post our social media messages, we would use a content management system (CMS) called Hootsuite. This CMS tool allows you to post to multiple social media accounts at once, and it gives you in-depth analytics which would contribute to the measurement of our success.

While we ran this project, we developed an understanding of what goals were realistic and which ones were out of our time frame for the two month period that we had to develop this service. Our initial idea did get a few clubs interested and eager to use our services, however, we found that it was quite challenging as we continually needed more content so that we could post on a regular basis. For this reason, our team began to run into service output challenges that ultimately weakened the project's overall success. To try and maximize our chances with gauging club interest and attracting student attention, we used a vast variety of resources including, collaborating with the FEDS Clubs Master, using online social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, Hootsuite, FEDS information database and conducting direct field market research at UW clubs day (see Appendix B).

OBJECTIVES

- 1** — Help clubs achieve a desired number of members through advertising and marketing creative social media posts on various platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter).
- 2** — Provide students with meaningful ways they can get involved within Waterloo's campus and club community.
- 3** — Contingency adjusted: Guide clubs in understanding how to advertise for their club via a how-to, informative, advertising video. Created as the idea that clubs were for the majority were unwilling to let an external source continuously advertise for them.

ELEMENTS OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT

3

SCOPE

Our initial goal was to get a minimum of four clubs on board with our service. To ensure that we were maintaining a good social media presence, we aimed to achieve a minimum of 50 followers for our social media accounts. Our goal was to observe a 10% boost in engagement for the clubs we have committed to advertise for. We ultimately hoped to mend the disconnect between students and clubs on campus. While other criteria was met, we saw a change in plans of acquiring four clubs for our service. Due to changing circumstances, we acknowledged that most clubs were becoming unresponsive and less eager than anticipated to work directly with UW Connect for their promotional needs. This led us to develop a new concept of a video tutorial to new or less established clubs, with tips and guidance to become successful on campus. We already obtained many clubs emails, therefore we still had an outlet to reach the clubs and connect with them by providing them with a video as a tool to increase engagement with students on campus. At the beginning of our project, we anticipated the three months working to complete the project would be sufficient for us to reach all our targets. This however has changed as we recognized we would need more time to develop new methods of connecting with our target clubs to continue establishing our service.

TIME

For the beginning half of the project we found ourselves on schedule, meeting all deliverables efficiently. We were able to build a relationship with MUN through personal networks and began building content for our service. Mid-way after February, we realized we were not gaining enough attraction from clubs therefore not gaining any extra content to execute our service. Our initial contingency plan changed from a booth in SLC to a video tutorial that we could create to be a tool for guiding new start up clubs who could benefit from our knowledge without having to directly work with UW Connect. This would become a resource for clubs to enhance their relationship with students on campus and increase or maintain student retention throughout the course of the semester. (See next page for time chart)

TIME CHART

Milestone / Deliverable	Planned	Forecasted	Actual	Status
Met as group to decide on project idea and discuss project operations, deadlines, and other specifics.	10/01/2017	10/01/2017	10/01/2017	Done
Finalize promoting deal with UW MUN Club.	23/01/2017	25/01/2017	25/01/2017	Done
Begin promoting UW MUN to FB, Instagram, and Twitter.	30/01/2017	01/02/2017	02/02/2017	Done
Meet with UW Feds Clubs manager to become vetted into the association.	01/02/2017	01/02/2017	01/02/2017	Done
Send merge email to mass amount of UW clubs in attempt to acquire more clubs looking to promote.	08/02/2017	09/02/2017	08/02/2017	Done
Began deal and immediately starting promoting for the ISAW Club.	09/02/2017	09/02/2017	09/02/2017	Done
Finalize deal and begin promoting content for Meditation Explorers Club	20/02/2017	09/02/2017	09/02/2017	Done
Reaching out to Model G20, Young Liberals and UW BASE- set up meetings and establish more interest.	21/02/2017	11/02/2017	12/02/2017	Done
Send out surveys to check up on club appreciation of our efforts (Aware of how we are helping them, club attendance stats, strengths, weaknesses, club member response to our project)	01/03/2017	04/03/2017	07/03/2017	Done
Contingency Plan (changed): Initially, we wanted to host a booth in the Student Life Centre of UW that markets our team UW Club Connect along with the clubs that we are partnering/in association with. Our goal is to drive interest and provide small incentives for students who engage with our booth by "Following or Liking" our social media pages. As time elapsed, we acknowledged that a better way to approach clubs would be an alternative such as a video tutorial. We would create the content and send it to our mailing list in hopes to keep clubs engaged.	02/27/17	04/04/17	04/04/17	Done

5

COST

Our budget was broken down based on tasks that needed to be completed to sufficiently reach our goals. All the equipment we needed we already owned, thus there were no costs involving materials or tools. On the other hand, the team consists of 5 team members and each person will be billed \$100 an hour for their time completing work. Below was the rough estimate and breakdown of how our team would charge for our services. Hence below was our projected budget:

Event	People	Hours	Cost (\$)
Club Day meet up	4	1	400
Creating social media pages	2	1	200
Emailing interested clubs	2	0.5	100
Weekly updates on social media platforms	5	1 (x 7 weeks)	3,500
Promotional booth in SLC (contingency) preparation / execution	5	2	1,000
Follow up with clubs (ensuring customer satisfaction)	2	1 (x 7 weeks)	1,400
Total anticipated costs	\$6,600		

As our project came to a close we were surprised by the great difference in the total cost. Based on our event journal we calculated that the total cost would be \$9,235 (see Appendix D). We believe that the reason for this discrepancy in the total costs is the many obstacles that the team had to overcome during the project. For every barrier we came across we had to spend more time and resources in dealing with it and making adjustments. We honestly did not anticipate so many obstacles. This is probably due to our lesser amount of experience in project management, where we just did not have the collective experience to foresee all possible drawbacks.

IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES

6

One of the biggest barriers our project saw in the early portion of this term was multiple clubs not following back up to our onboarding emails. One of our team members went out to clubs day and spoke with many club execs in person, getting close to a 50% success rate of people admitting they would be interested in the service we are offering. However, this did not show in the our email response rate - many clubs initially reached back out to us but then made no further contact (see Appendix C). After discovering this issue, we had to act fast, so we decided to reform our approach by reaching out to our personal network of club connections in order to ensure our project's early growth. This allowed us to keep our initial momentum going, as well as create a name and reputation for ourselves. Having a large amount of content and credibility made it more likely for clubs to jump on board with us, however, as time went on we found that this back up plan was not as strong as intended. We ultimately failed to achieve our initial goal of promoting for a minimum of four UW clubs on a regular basis, as a result, our content level of production deteriorated and ultimately suffered. We began to see that the project scope and overall mission did not balance out with the amount of time that was given for this project.

Our initial clubs had great diversity, which was imperative for targeting large audiences. We had one academic/event-based club, one student society that promotes inclusive events, and worked with two smaller clubs in a partnership with our team for promoting interests in a hobby (in this case, meditation and poker). As we developed a strong connection with these clubs, and got into a smooth schedule of promotion / student engagement, we expected to see much more growth. After time had went on, the meditation and poker club failed to establish consistent contact with us and as a result, we were unable to incorporate them into our project's advertising services. This left our team behind our initial target of intended clubs to promote for and attributed to the lack of content and further success. It was at this point of realization when we knew that introducing our original contingency plan of holding a promotional booth in the Student Life Centre would serve little to no purpose - we had to shift focus onto something more creative and effective. This is when our team developed the idea of creating an informative, tutorial-like video that aimed to teach new and existing UW clubs how to self promote when they found themselves in need of more student membership and overall awareness. As of right now, our group is finishing off the filming of this video.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

1. Low Customer Base

Currently, our group has worked with a limited number of clubs (3 to be exact) that consistently sought promotional assistance.. Although we have been contacted by two additional clubs, their communication ended up fizzling. Our team had a goal to incorporate 5 clubs to be actively partnering with us so that we could portion the project work to one group member per club. This however, did not work out and hindered our overall performance as a team. After failing to adjust this continuous issue by countering it with different ideas, our group finally concluded it would be best to develop and how-to video on club advertising. This would be useful for the large majority of clubs who initially admitted to needing our services and then later failing to actually incorporate our help.

2. Slow Response from Clubs

Even though some clubs were in initial contact with us, as mentioned, communication was slow and continued to wither. Only two clubs (the MUN club and ISAW) had been timely in their responses. This issue was thought to be overcome by contacting the FEDs Clubs Manager and requesting assistance in contacting clubs. His authoritative reach was anticipated to stimulate incentive for clubs to respond in a more timely fashion. In the end, this hope did not plan out and we were unable to gauge any further interest, or even receive follow up responses, from UW clubs (see Appendix C).

We have also begun following up with clubs who have yet to respond whether or not they are interested in our project, as well as clubs who have initially responded with interest but have been slow at replying back to us. As inconvenient of a situation as it may seem, consistently reaching back out and following up is an imperative technique for groups (and organizations as a whole) to acquire additional business and force responses from people (or clubs in this case) who have not made the time to do so yet.

3. Lack of Responses from Mass Emails

In order to reach out to more potential customers, our group utilized a shotgun strategy of a mass merge email. However, out of 109 emails sent on our project's behalf, only three clubs had responded - two of which were relatively slow in their response time.

The solution to overcome this issue was to focus on expanding our club intel and find more clubs from personal networks of peers, friends, and acquaintances throughout the entire University of Waterloo. As our team ideally wanted 5 clubs to partner with our project and so far the mass email approach has not proven to be as efficient as anticipated, the new solution was critical for our project's further success (given the amount of time that was left to complete the project) but ultimately, failed to be successful given our timeframe. Our contingency plan, as earlier touched upon, was another solution that we plan to incorporate within the next couple of weeks to further ensure we meet our group target of 5 partnering clubs. This plan of hosting a promotional SLC booth was recently changed as our team realized it would serve no greater purpose with the amount of time left. That is why we decided to change our focus towards a promotional video for clubs to utilize after our team has evaporated and UW Club Connect is gone.

4. Not Enough Club Content for Posts

Our group required more information and content for posts on our various social media platforms in order to physically prove to clubs just how valuable our marketing and promotion initiatives were. Ultimately, the more content that our team could gain access to, the more engagement and interest our posts would've exhibited and produced. However, the low number of active clubs/customers engaged with our project made this difficult to achieve. This challenge was never remedied throughout our continuous efforts to establish a more solid club and student customer base. In this aspect of our project, our team has felt as if we failed in retrospect. After reflecting on reasons for not being able to gauge club interest, we concluded that many clubs were open to the possibility of enhancing their club advertising, but did not feel comfortable with entrusting this mission with a new, external organization such as UW Club Connect. This stimulated our final group mission to create a how-to video for clubs that wished to seek more engagement through their own resources.

5. Broken Email Addresses / Undelivered Messages

One of our team's techniques for obtaining clubs' interest in our project is through the use of sending out mass emails to various UW club email addresses (as noted earlier). There was an accompanying inconvenience with this, specifically when emails are bounced back to us due to incorrect, outdated, or misspelled email addresses. Often times when our group will send mass merge emails, there can be anywhere from 5-10 bounced emails, which serves only to slow our project's overall growth while stunting our estimated project goal deadlines.

This challenge proved to have a lasting effect even though we had planned to overcome this issue by cross-referencing our club information that has been obtained through project research and marketing initiatives, with the FEDs clubs database in order to ensure data accuracy and find additional contact information for the clubs whose email addresses do not work. Since beginning to implement this solution, our group has noticed that less emails are bouncing back which assures us that our efforts are starting to payoff. Overall, there was still no significant progress in fixing this challenge as we did not acquire additional clubs.

RISKS INVOLVED

This section is similar to the challenges above, but were main risks that have been identified from the very beginning of the project and ultimately proved fatal to our team's success. As such, they have been further elaborated on with a detailed explanation as to how they contributed to our project's demise.

1. Weak Effectiveness of the Service in Assisting the Clubs

Our plan was to utilize different social media platforms to assist the customers, even though we have reached our original targets and goals for total audience engagement and student reach. There is the potential of receiving feedback from clubs and learning that they found no positive correlation from using our group's promotional services or an increased amount of club membership along with overall engagement.

Our team had the contingency plan of creating a booth inside the Student Life Center, as mentioned earlier in the report. This booth was determined to be an insignificant approach given our short timeframe, so instead of wasting group time and resources, a new contingency plan was engineered and unanimously approved by our team. This new contingency, being a tutorial style how-to video which will outline how clubs who do not wish to use external advertising help can effectively promote their clubs, will summarize all of the useful tips and information that our group has discovered and deemed successful throughout our project. While this contingency obviously won't fix the risk of weak effectiveness on our team's part, it will still be a useful reference point for clubs that did find our services beneficial and wish to incorporate our strategies well after the end of this project.

2. Limited Amount of Content on Social Media

At the end of this project, due to the low number of customers/clubs who have partnered with us, there is limited content on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram platforms. Facebook ended up being our most successful social media platform (see Appendix A). This greatly hindered our capability to develop recognition for ourselves and ended up disrupting various project deadlines. This resulted in echoing a negative effect for clubs' interest and desire for our service. The fact that we only advertised for a couple clubs obviously gave little confidence to clubs that were potentially considering using our services to benefit them. This primary risk ended up mainly contributing in our group's failure to succeed with the original targets and plans that had been set at the start of this term.

The contingency plan for this risk was to set up more meetings and request for additional content from existing customers. For example: creating more Instagram and Twitter posts for the MUN club. Due to the strong relationship that our group currently has with this club, we thought that it would be fairly easy to acquire and post more content while not having to vigorously search for new or more customers/clubs. However, the matter of the fact was that only partnering with two clubs did not provide enough content for our project success, as realistically a UW club only has so much that they can host.

3. The Slow Response Times Will Affect Our Time Table

Consistently, clubs were too slow in their responses to our emails. If the average response time did not improve, the team would continue to adjust our time table in order to meet our project goals - which ended up being the case in our situation. Considering the limited period of time we had before meeting hard deadlines, such as the final presentation, this became an ultimate risk for our team.

A contingency plan for this was to set up more physical meetings, where our group can get all of the content we need in one session with a given club. This method would have allowed us to precisely plan out what posts will be executed and specifically when, which will serve to solve the problem of slow response times from clubs as well as relying on these responses to proceed with our project. Unfortunately, we were not able to significantly improve or host additional physical meetings at all. This largely shaped our conception that the majority of UW clubs, for whatever reason, did not see it ideal for an external group such as ourselves to obtain club information and promote it to students around the university. Perhaps it was that they were time crunched, or resistant to change, the fact of the matter was we were unsuccessful in attracting clubs to partner with our team project.

RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS

The overall response that UW Club Connect received was positive. The clubs we worked with were pleased with the value we added to their campus presence, and our post metrics show hard numbers for how many people we actually reached out to and engaged with (see Appendix A). However, at the end of the day, we did not have as much of an impact as we thought we would.

Our idea was centered around an inherent desire that we assumed many clubs had. We conducted market research to confirm our suspicions, and discovered that we weren't too far off. Most club reps agreed that lack of student engagement as the term went on is indeed a problem, and many of them said they would potentially be interested in a service like ours. We had hypothesized that because these clubs were on the same page as us, they would be eager for support in helping them advertise events and content, and even if they weren't, they wouldn't say no to a helping hand. However, we were wrong. We failed to realize that students running these clubs are usually just doing it for fun, and in most cases they are happy with the usual turnout they receive because it's easy to manage.

























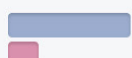
Clubs are run by students, for students -- they all have academics to worry about and other things going on in their lives. It was wrong to assume their operation was analogous to a company that's continually looking to grow and expand into new markets. By the time our group had come to this realization, it was too late to change our project plan. Instead, we decided as a team to readjust our scope by instead providing curated materials that encapsulated all of the things we were trying to do for the clubs. The first piece of content to come out of this new offering is a captivating and informative video on how to successfully advertise and promote a club at the University of Waterloo. This video would highlight the problems we saw, and explore strategies on addressing it on your own time, at your own pace. We figured this would be the ideal way to end our team project -- most clubs preferred autonomy in advertising initiatives, so setting them up for success with these easy to digest reference materials seemed like a good approach.

Further reflecting on our initial approach, we realized that our idea of multi-platform advertising was unnecessary. The primary source of club information is on Facebook. Twitter and Instagram were creative tools that we could use but the idea did not grab the amount of views that we would have hoped to achieve. Something like instagram would be useful in the future should UW Club Connect get a larger social following, but it's presence was not necessary in our startup phase. It has a the potential to keep people interested through our "club spotlight" proposals, but doesn't have much to offer for bringing people on board.

Moving forward, UW Club Connect would see the most success by narrowing its social scope to only facebook, and refocus main efforts to providing support materials for clubs. Organic growth will come, and once we develop a significant following coupled with the trust of UW clubs, this student network can truly flourish.

APPENDIX

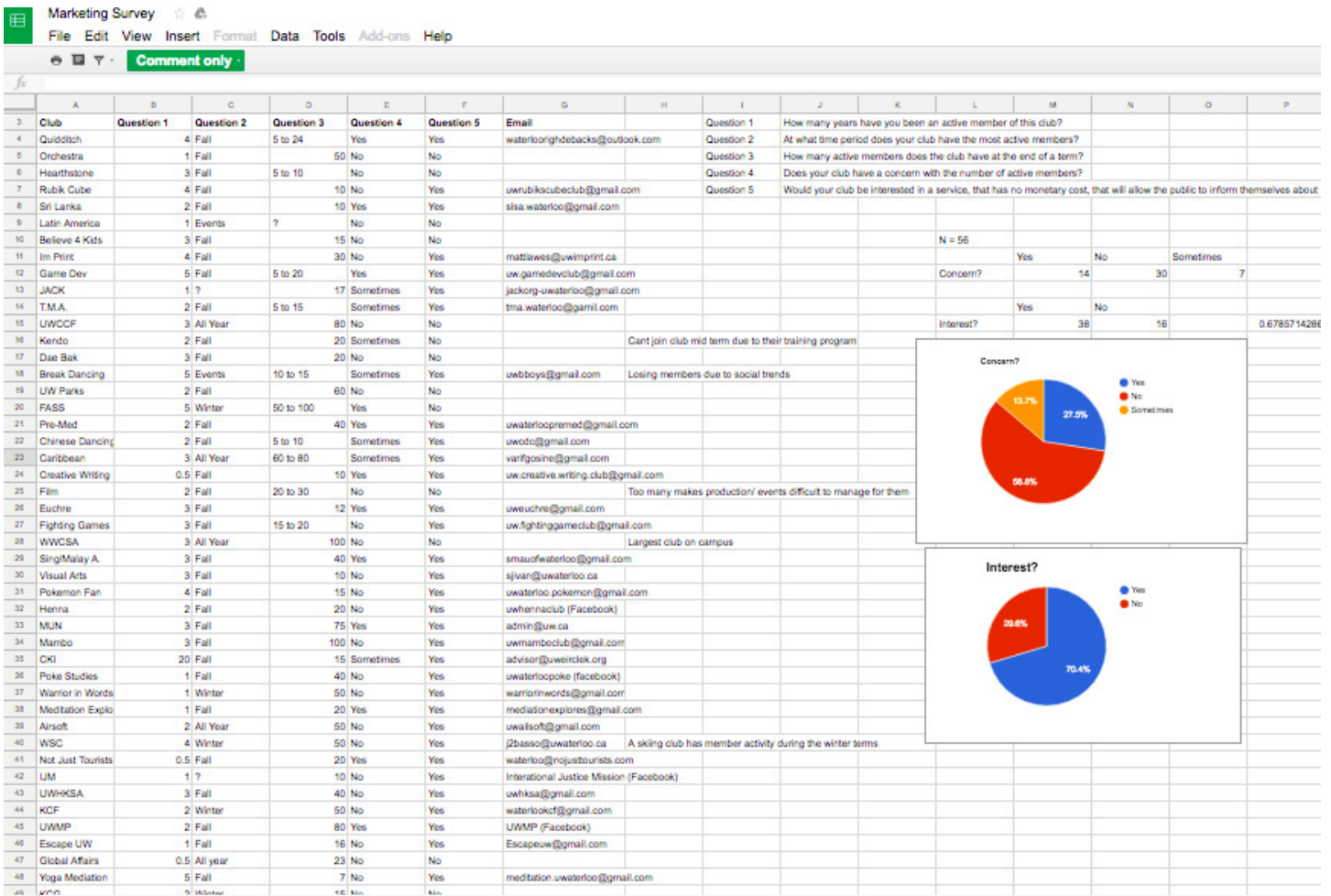
ITEM A

Published	Post	Type	Targeting	Reach	Engagement
02/28/2017 5:00 pm	 Hey UW students! If you were interested in attending Model United N			921 	29 18 
02/23/2017 4:44 pm	 The UW Nail Salon is hosting a fundraiser for their club on March 2n			647 	36 5 
02/13/2017 4:58 pm	 UW Students! The Iranian Student s Association of Waterloo is hostin			46 	4 4 
02/09/2017 6:58 pm	 UW Students! Join us with the Iranian Students Association of Waterl			943 	99 11 
02/06/2017 1:18 pm	 Check out our new Spotlight feature on Instagram! We introduce Nat			1.7K 	175 43 

The image above is the summary statistics page from our UW Club Connect facebook page.

Our group used information like to gauge how successful we were in assisting clubs.

ITEM B









This figure was taken as a screen shot from our team's market research during Club Day,

From this we were given a fairly good idea that UW clubs had a desire for an advertising service independent of their control, in which they could consistently rely on to continuously post and promote various club events and activities (or so we thought).


ITEM C


TMA











TMA Waterloo
 Hi guys, We're interested in improving our reach throughout the university. Yours Kumail (TMA Secretary)

9 Feb 



me to TMA 
 Hi Kumail,

9 Feb 

We're very excited to hear this! All that we really ask for in return is to provide us with various information about your club (events, features, etc) and to let us know things such as whether or not your club had a rise in membership, or if there were any correlation between our services and boosted club engagement.

We have already spoke with Jake Riesenkonig, the Feds Clubs Manager, and have been vetted and granted access to freely promote for clubs such as TMA.

Our Facebook page provides UW students and audiences with information like upcoming club events and club bios (why students should come out and join your club). We also post events and club activities to our Twitter page, while our Instagram account serves as a UW club spotlight hub - similar to an account like "Humans of New York" except UW style.

Let us know what we can specifically promote for your club and we will begin right away!

- The UW Club Connect Team

...

The image above is an example of a common issue we experienced while working with clubs.

Where they expressed interest in our assistance but don't do anything beyond that.

In this example, we were contacted by the Thaqaalayn Muslim Association and immediately responded to their inquiry but to this day they have yet to get back to us.

ITEM D

	Hours	Minutes	People	Cost		Hours	Minutes	People	Cost
	0.5	30	1	50		1	60	2	200
	1.5	90	4	600		0.5	30	1	50
	2.5	270	1	250		0.5	30	1	50
	0.75	45	1	75		0.5	30	1	50
	0.5	30	3	150		1	60	4	400
	1	60	2	200		0.5	30	1	50
	1	60	1	100		1	60	1	100
	3	360	5	1500		0.5	30	1	50
	2	240	1	200		0.5	30	1	50
	0.5	30	5	200		0.5	30	1	50
	1	60	5	500		0.5	30	1	50
	0.5	30	5	250		0.5	30	1	50
	0.5	30	1	50		2	120	5	1000
	1	60	2	200		1	60	4	400
	1.5	90	1	150		2	120	3	600
	0.5	30	3	150		3	240	5	1500
Total						33.75	2505	-	9325

This is the table used to calculate the total cost for our services in completing this project. Based on the assumed cost of \$100 per hour. Each person would charge \$100 for an hour of their time, and we based the calculations on the data from the Event Journal.