**North Hennepin Community College**

**Promotional Plan**

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**Executive Summary**

The North Hennepin Community College Promotional Plan was designed to enhance brand awareness, increase enrollment, and strengthen NHCC’s position within its communities. The campaign primarily targets prospective students, focusing on more recent high school graduates, but also working adults and people seeking to advance their career. The plan’s goals are to increase enrollment applications, highlight the school’s affordability and its flexible scheduling. The tools used include traditional media like billboards and television commercials, as well as online media like Instagram and TikTok content. We’ll also use various means of public relations and certain sales promotions to connect with people in the community. This is aimed at targeting the audience through multiple areas, making people feel like they belong at North Hennepin.

**Cultural Context**

North Hennepin Community College operates in a diverse cultural environment, with both internal and external factors influencing its promotional efforts. Internally, the college serves a multicultural student body, with a significant number of first-generation college students and non-traditional learners. Faculty and staff diversity also play a role in shaping NHCC’s internal culture, impacting the ways programs and resources are used.

Externally, NHCC must navigate broader societal trends, such as increasing demand for people getting into the workforce with their education, shifting perceptions about the value of a higher education, and economic pressures affecting prospective students. Also, cultural shifts towards digital classes require NHCC to enhance its online presence and social media presence.

**Historical Context**

NHCC has relied on a mix of traditional and digital advertising, including printed marketing, social media campaigns, and partnerships with local high schools. Previous promotional efforts have included open-house events, direct mail campaigns, and outreach initiatives that target underserved communities. While these methods have been effective in getting enrollment, they might require adaptation to align with changing student preferences, such as more personalized digital marketing and virtual experiences.

**Industry Analysis**

The post-secondary education sector is going through a lot of transformations. Key trends include:

* Increased demand for online and hybrid learning – Students seek flexible learning options that accommodate work and family commitments
* Emphasis on career-focused education – There is growing interest in career-focused training, short-term certifications, and industry partnerships
* Declining college enrollment – National enrollment numbers have dropped due to economic uncertainty and alternative education pathways, such as trade programs and online bootcamps
* Rising competition from online education providers – Institutions like Coursera, Udacity, and LinkedIn Learning offer affordable and flexible alternatives to traditional degrees
* Growth in certificate programs – Undergraduate certificate program enrollment has grown by 9.9% in the fall of 2024, and enrollments have grown by 28.5% since 2019. Enrollments in bachelor’s and associate degree programs also increased by 2.9% and 6.3% but are still below pre-COVID levels.

**Market Analysis**

According to NHCC’s 2024 Student Fact Book, the college enrolled 7,229 students, with 85.3% attending part-time. Most students are aged 17-25, and the top declared majors include Liberal Arts, Pre-Nursing, and Computer Science. The institutions’ retention rate for full-time students was 52.5% into the second fall semester, indicating room for improvement in student engagement and support services.

**Competitor Analysis**

NHCC competes with other local community colleges and online education providers. Competitors emphasize affordability, transfer pathways, and specialized career training programs, all like NHCC. NHCC does differentiate itself through strong transfer partnerships and workforce training but must enhance its digital marketing and student retention strategies.

**Target Audience**

**Primary Target Audience**

Demographics: Primarily prospective students aged 18-25, many of whom are first-generation college students, low income, or from under-represented communities. Working adults seeking career advancement and high school students considering dual enrollment may also form key segments.

Psychographics: Value affordability, career readiness, and flexible learning options. They are tech-savvy, socially conscious, and look for programs that align with career aspirations and financial stability.

**Audience Perceptions**

Post Secondary Education: Seen as valuable, but expensive. Many students prefer alternatives like certifications or trade schools or even going straight to the workforce.

NHCC: Viewed positively for its affordability and transfer options, but it is less known for its career services and student support systems.

NHCC’s Services: Popular programs include Nursing and Comp-Sci, but awareness of financial aid options and support services needs more strengthening.

**Promotional Objectives**

The promotional objectives for North Hennepin Community College are designed to see growth in awareness engagement, and enrollment while improving student perceptions and retention at the same time.

1. Increasing Brand Awareness: Raise NHCC’s recognition among students aged 18-25. The goal is to achieve a 60% or higher recognition rate by August 2026.
2. Improving Perception of the Student Support Services: Grow students’ understanding of the various support services offered by NHCC by 40% by September 2025. Services include things like financial aid, course advising, and career counseling.
3. Increase Participation in Events: Increase attendance to campus events by at least 25% in virtual events and at least 30% in in-person events.

**Big Idea and Tone**

“Start Here, Go Anywhere – Building Bright Futures at NHCC”. North Hennepin Community College is the starting point for endless possibilities. We provide an affordable, supportive, and flexible learning environment to help students unlock their potential and achieve their goals.

The campaign's tone aims to be optimistic and motivational, encouraging prospective students to view NHCC as the key to unlocking their full potential. It will be inclusive and welcoming, ensuring that students from all backgrounds feel represented and valued within NHCC’s community. Any messaging should emphasize the college’s commitment to providing support and resources that enable students to succeed both academically and later in their professional careers. Any visuals used in campaigns should feature diverse student success stories, highlight the flexible learning programs, and highlight NHCC’s promise to guide students toward their career goals.

**Promotional Tools**

To reach NHCC’s target audience and hit the IMC objectives from part 3, the plan will use a range of methods from traditional media, social media, public relations and various sales promotions/sponsorships.

Traditional Media:

* Billboards – place by areas with high amounts of traffic, promote deadlines and student resources
* Television – ads on local networks, featuring student stories and the services offered to support students

Social Media:

* Instagram Posts – focuses on more student stories, virtual tours, or deadlines
* Email Marketing – Personalized messages that
* TikTok Posts – focuses on campus life and more student stories

Public Relations:

* Press Releases – announce major events like open houses or scholarship opportunities
* Open House Events – Both virtual and in-person events to showcase the campus and answer any questions about admissions.

Sales Promotions/Sponsorships:

* Early Registration Incentives – get students to apply earlier with things like gift cards for on-campus stores like the café or bookstore
* Direct Mail – send to houses within NHCC’s service area, promote enrollment dates and support services again
* Community Sponsor – Partner with local organizations to sponsor community events and increase NHCC’s visibility within the community

**Schedule**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Traditional Media** | **Social Media** | **Public Relations** | **Sales Promotions** |
| **July 2025** | Radio Ads | Instagram Posts | Newsletter | Community Sponsorship |
| **August** | Billboards | Email Marketing | Open House | Early Registration Gift Card |
| **September** | Television Ads | Instagram Posts | Press Release | Community Sponsorship |
| **October** | Billboards | TikTok Posts | Newsletter | Direct Mail |
| **November** | Television Ads | Email Marketing | Open House | Bookstore Gift Card |
| **December** | Radio Ads | Email Marketing | Press Release | Winter Tuition Discount |
| **January 2026** | Billboards | Instagram Posts | --- | --- |
| **February** | --- | Email Marketing | Newsletter | Direct Mail |
| **March** | Radio Ads | TikTok Posts | --- | Community Sponsorship |
| **April** | Television Ads | TikTok Posts | --- | Direct Mail |
| **May** | Billboards | Email Marketing | Press Release | Early Registration Gift card |
| **June** | Television Ads | Instagram Posts | Open House | Tuition Discount Offer |

**Budget**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Category | Estimated Cost |
| Traditional Media | Billboard - $3,000 x 4 months  Local TV Ads - $10,000 x 4 months  Local Radio Ads – $5,000 x 3 months  Total = $67,000 |
| Online Media | Email Newsletters – $2,500 x 5 months  Content Creation (Instagram, TikTok) - $5,000 x 7 months  Total = $47,500 |
| Public Relations | Press Releases & Newsletters – $5,000 x 6 months  Community Events - $8,000 x 3 months  Total = $54,000 |
| Sales Promotions/Direct Marketing | Contests & Giveaways – $5,000 x 3  Direct Mail Campaigns – $7,000 x 2 months  Discounts – $10,000 x 2 months  Total = $49,000 |
| Community Sponsorships | $3,000 x 3 months  Total = $9,000 |
| Total | $226,500 |

**Measurement & Control**

The plan will be tracked through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Online tracking like website traffic, social media engagement, and email open rates, will be monitored every month. Surveys administered before and after the campaign will measure people’s awareness. Tracking how many people attend events and submitting questions about enrollment and other data will be compared to older data as an indicator of how well the campaign is doing. Can then adjust based on the data we collect to help steer future campaigns in the right direction.

**Appendix**

Instagram Post Concept (Created in Canva)

**A blue background with colorful triangles

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

Billboard Concept (Created in Canva)

**A blue background with a blue triangle and black text

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

Television Commercial Concept: A 30-second commercial featuring a more diverse group of NHCC’s students sharing why they chose North Hennepin. The ad would highlight the affordability, flexible scheduling, and the school’s support services. It should include more upbeat music and shots of students on campus or engaging in community events.

Radio Ad Concept: A 30-second ad with a friendly voice promoting NHCC’s class sizes, support services, and upcoming enrollment deadlines. The message would emphasize the affordable tuition and flexible scheduling.

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