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2013-2014 Mandate Report

Engineering and Computer Science Association

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1. Introduction

This report both has conflicting purposes of entertaining council and not leaving upcoming execs in the dark, which leads to retardedness in its structure. To prevent that, I decided to make this more of an account of what happened and how we responded to events, while I also wrote a second document "How to be a badass VP Marketing".

The second document addresses a broader approach to marketing – not limited to this year. I explain some of the decisions I made and why they are the best practice, this certainly will be more useful for all upcoming VP Marketings[1], in the ECA and societies. There's going to be a lot of "marketing" lingo coming up, it is explained in detail in this other document as well.

Fun facts: My mandate resulted in:

- 47 photoshop documents;
- 23 posters;
- 15 Facebook covers;
- 47 newsletters sent;
- and 101 hours, 4 minutes, and 40 seconds on photoshop[2].

2. Career Fair

Marketing: When I started my mandate, most of the promotion and visuals were already done for the fall Career Fair, so I mostly promoted the event using the T.V.s, social media, and the newsletter. In the winter, in only applied minor changes (i.e. colour scheme) to the poster and followed the same strategy.

Booklets:

In fall, because the companies' information were completed late, the booklets were printed last minute in the office, we didn't take into account the time the office printer would take[3] so they were still printing during the event. This led to chaos in the office and execs doing too much cardio running up and down the stairs, restocking the booklets. For the second day, we had them printed at Rubik's, that was a far better quality and not that expensive[4]. During the winter, we set early deadlines for the companies' information and had the booklet completed at Rubik's a day before.

With regards to the booklet's form, consult a previous booklet to see the information included, the design was completed using inDesign, the document can be used again. To reduce the paper waste, we added on the booklet a qrcode linking to its online version and printed a poster with the same qrcode that was displayed on site. We printed 400 booklets for each day, this was a good amount.

Recommendations: Get rid of the notes section – people prefer scribbling on the margins of the pages – and continue to market the ECA's upcoming events in the last pages.

Name tags: We made name tags for the volunteers and the employers. They both included free space for the handwritten name and they were given with a plastic holders attached strings.

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[1] You should still read this report.

[2] I'm the kind of nerd who has a time tracker on her computer.

[3] 1 minute per booklet.

[4] 0.44$/booklet in the office, 0.63$/booklet at Rubik's.

Recommendations: Because it didn't look very professional, get the plastic holders with safety pin for the volunteers and ECA lanyards for the companies (note that some companies bring their own name tags) instead.

Signage: To help students orient themselves, we printed two floor plans including the companies' names. This ended up changing on the day and would be better if we only displayed a list of companies present in each room and their targeted majors[5]. In addition, we had a colour system to differentiate the faculties – this is highly appreciated by the companies and the students – using stickers[6] placed people's chests. They were a better option, easier to implement and cheaper. Moreover, the employers had on their table coloured circles matching the stickers, this shouldn't be used again as they most often were buried under promotional items and can't be seen easily.

3. Iron Ring Ceremony

Tickets: In the fall I designed 2 tickets, one for the cocktail and one for the ceremony. In the winter, we had three different tickets: for the cocktail, the ceremony, and mentors. Because we had two ceremonies in winter, we used two different colours to differentiate them, they also had to have different times printed on them. So a total of 6 tickets for the winter. The tickets were, both times, numbered by hand, printed on cardboard paper, and cut with the finger slicer in the office. Because of the large number of tickets, this ended up taking a lot of time, the tickets didn't look great (office printer quality), and they were difficult to track for office managers.

Recommendations: Use a simple template and have them printed by professionals as we would get a better quality for not much more expensive. Or implement an online ticket sale (e.g. Eventbrite) and avoid the line-ups in front of the office.

Communication: I also advertised a lot the volunteering opportunities on the website, the newsletter, and social media, and made a Google Form for people to register. I sent out both times an email to a list of involved students that we have, that is where we had the best response rate. We also posted the Iron Ring information in the general newsletter (all ENCS students) for convenience.

Recommendations: Keep using this involved students list and allow people to subscribe on the website. It is also better to target involved students because they have more experience in volunteering and are more reliable. The updates about Iron Ring should be only sent out to the students confirmed for the ceremony in stand alone emails.

General: To help people find their way during the event, I designed a big poster that we hung outside the location (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts). We also made a series of posters with arrows in different directions, they are currently stored in the B-Annex and can be used again for the upcoming years.

4. Crash Courses

Marketing: The Crash Courses in the Fall were marketed using the newsletter, website, posters, and flyers that were placed inside classrooms. They advertised the different courses we were offering and the cheap price. They ended up being quite successful even though some had to be cancelled last minute due to a general lack of students enrolled in the tutorial.

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[5] Once in the rooms, there is no need for a floor plan as it's easy to locate the companies with their big displays.

[6] We originally planned on using pin-back buttons but making them ended up being a time and energy investment not worthwhile.

Recommendations: Having slightly different posters for each department (e.g. changing the colours) and targeting the same classrooms the lectures are happening in. Moreover, the exam bank could be advertised on the flyers and posters.

5. Lizard Lounges

The advertising for the Lizard Lounges were mostly done by the societies themselves, promoting for their activities. Sometimes, when the societies didn't have a banner or a blurb for the newsletter, I included a generic banner that can be found on the Drive.

6. B-Annex Parties

A. Halloween

Because we had planned everything a long time in advance (theme, date, etc.), I was able to start marketing the event more than a month before using posters, the newsletter, and social media. The theme chosen was "Throwback Thursday to that Halloween Shitshow".

We collaborated with the Concordia International Student Association (CISA) by making their event our official after-party while they were marketing our event as their pre-drink. We ended up having a great attendance despite the numerous parties happening the same night.

B. Movember

Marketing: The following was used:

- cover advertising the movement for the entire month;
- poster and cover specific for the Bake Sale;
- poster and cover specific for the B-Annex Party.

Recommendations: After the very successful Halloween, there was a loss of momentum and a lack of plan for raising funds, in the future, we should have specific events with goals and activities to raise money and not just jump on the Movember theme for the month.

C. Valentine's Day

Marketing: I created a cover and Facebook event. We made decision to host the event a day before the actual date of event, this made it almost impossible to market and led to a poor attendance.

D. Irish Annex

All the marketing for the event was done by CSCE.

7. Ski Trip

Marketing: The following was used:

- poster and cover;
- poster and cover with the early-bird promotion;
- poster for Varcity515 (a private student residence where we put out posters targeted for them);
- flyer.

The event was really pushed everywhere in terms of promotion because we feared we wouldn't have enough people. Everyone ended up registering the last day.

Recommendations: Continue to market the event a lot, because the ECA would take a huge hit if the event was a failure in attendance, even if people wait until the last possible second to register we should stay on the safe side and not rely on that.

8. EngWeek

Marketing: The following was used:

- t-shirt (worn by student leaders and sometimes given out);
- sponsorship package;
- poster with the schedule for the week, newsletter header, and cover;
- poster and flyer specific for the Bob MacDonald talk;
- poster in front of the K'NEX with information on the structure;
- poster specific for society day;
- poster created by the venue;
- specific page on the website;
- special theme for the newsletters that were sent out every day during the week.

General volunteering calls were also made for the K'NEX.

9. Wine & Cheese

Marketing: The following was used:

- poster and cover;
- tickets for company reps and students.

10. Competitions

Troitsky: Vectorized the drawing by Kimberly Yeung[7] to design the t-shirt.

CQI: Vectorized the drawing by Kimberly Yeung to design the t-shirt and make a patch.

11. Elections

Marketing: Made a cover and sent out newsletter advertising the positions. I closely followed the CEO's[8] instructions.

Recommendations: Create a "get involved campaign" where previous student leaders would share their leadership experience to encourage people to run in the elections.

12. Clothing Line and Promotional Items

Marketing: Added a blurb on the clothing line every now and then at the end of the newsletter.

Renewing the apparel: I didn't create or order anything new as we already had a lot of stock and didn't have any design idea in mind either.

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[7] ECA Sports and Competitions Director.

[8] Chief Electoral Officer.

13. T.V.

Because of the poor state of the computer and excruciatingly annoying software that would run the T.V., we stopped using them.

Recommendations: Change the computer and get a better software that displays an RSS-like feed with our latests Facebook posts, content from the newsletter, and would advertise events.

14. Newsletter

When I took over, the open-rate[9] and click-rate[10] were decreasing, I decided to use the simplest layout first, then add, test, and refine elements on top of it.

The current layout that I found to be working is:

1. Featured event (optional)
2. This week's events, in chronological order, with small blurbs (2/3 sentences), a picture, and a link
3. Upcoming events, in chronological order, with only the title and a link
4. Opportunities

Academic related events are incredibly popular, when promoting the exam bank and the crash courses, both the open-rate and the click-rate rocketed.

It was a challenge to keep it consistent throughout the semester, especially because of exceptions due to late marketing or greater significance of other events, and the large amount of content in the newsletter – especially compared to other student association's newsletter. The lack of consistency leads to students not reading it anymore and destroys one of our only ways of communicating with a part of the student body we don't see at our events.

Even though we're not quite Buzzfeed yet, we nevertheless managed to have great statistics:

• open-rate went from an average of 25% to 40% (100% increase), the industry standard being 22.53%;

• click-rate went from an average of 2% to 5% (150% increase), the industry standard being 3.42%.

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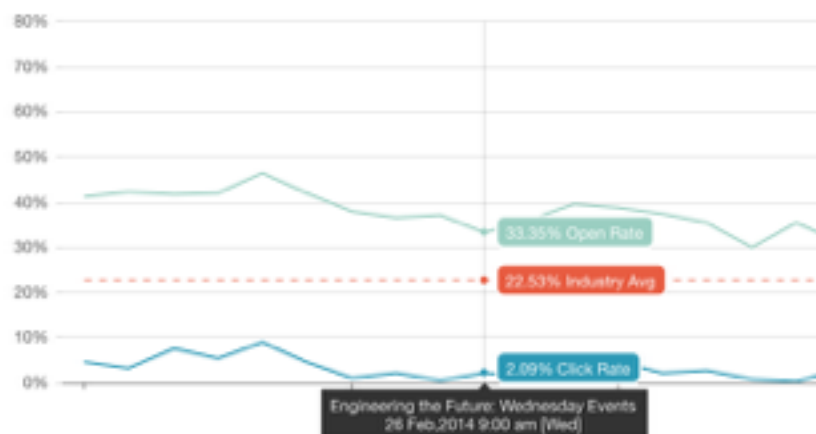
[9] The percentage of emails that were opened by students.

[10] The percentage of emails that registered at least one click.

Recommendations: as stated in 3. recommendations, create a separate mailing list for volunteers/student leaders where people can opt-in on the website.

15. Website

I tried to revamp the website to make it more informational, the lack of time made it impossible. I also stopped using the website after some time as it was tedious to manually create every event on the website and it didn't prove to be more efficient than when just using a Facebook event.

Recommendations:

- create a donation thermometer;

- link the calendar to the ECA's Google Calendar and our Facebook events;

- make a resources section for students (include exam bank, crash tutorials info, etc.);

- make a governance section for student leaders (include minutes, ruling documents, reports, etc.);

- have better information written up on events the ECA annually hosts and the services we offer;

- consider abandoning Wordpress as it is a platform that is slow and doesn't fit our needs anymore;

- make the general goal of the website to be as informational as possible, using mostly static content and integrating other web services for everything dynamic (e.g. Facebook, Google Calendar).

16. General Recommendations

- Be a fucking perfectionist, yes, it's bad and it's going to cause a lot of sleepless nights, but at the end of the day, it is what you do that students get to see and makes them decide whether the ECA is meh or yay.