

## **Progress Report**

Date: November 15, 2012  
To: Professor Ronald Mears, Communications Department  
Drexel University  
From: Sunny Patel  
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Subject: Progress Report for Raasadelphia Dance Competition

## **Purpose**

This is a progress report on our research interviews, and observational studies on how to effectively promote a dandiya raas dance competition at Drexel University.

## **Summary**

On November 7, 2012, Professor Mears, communications professor at Drexel University, approved our proposal for a dandiya raas dance competition on the university's campus. Currently we have completed the initial research steps required for the campaign. We met with Disha Patel, a member of the Raasadelphia executive board, who spoke to us about the making the right choices when deciding who will be making your flyers, website, and promotion videos. We also attended a competition that was held by George Washington University (GWU), in Washington, D.C. which helped us observe the crucial elements of the competition promotion. This research gives us great insight about the social media tactics used to attract students, parents, and competitors.

## **Results of research**

### *Interview with Disha Patel.*

We organized some time to speak with Disha Patel, a executive board chair of Raasadelphia. Raasadelphia is a well known dandiya competition in the nation. The competition has succeeded in drawing a significant number of team applicants and predicts a large turnout, indicating that their promotion efforts were a success. With questions prepared well in advance we discussed all the media tools they used to raise awareness for their event. Disha shared her experiences with regards to working with designers, developers, and music artists for the website and promotion video. She goes on to explain the language, planning, and the thought process required to communicate with these individuals. Since a developer's work requires a lot of time, she stressed that it is crucial that everyone understands the task they're assigned. Revisions to be made must be minimal, and time for these revisions should be built into the schedule, with deadlines made accordingly; being overly optimistic about the deadlines will almost always be problematic. She was able to talk about some of her very early stages of starting Raasadelphia, and the many hardships the executive board faced. Since something like this was never done before, they had many trial and error learning curves; here is the four main questions she told us to think about before starting any type of planning for such an event:

- Picking the right teams; who will be competing?
- Where is funding the coming from?
- How many people are you expecting to actually attend?
- How many staff members will be needed to manage the venue?

Once these four particular questions have been answered, we can begin to further prepare for the details. When the application process starts for teams to apply to compete, there are usually around forty teams who will apply. They will submit their audition tape, which is a two to three minute routine, showing that the team is competition worthy. Obviously, since not all forty teams can compete, the top fourteen or fifteen teams are chosen. There is a few extra teams chosen who she called alternative teams. Alternative teams are those who get placed on the waiting list; this is required in case the chosen teams can not attend or decline the offer. Most likely only eight teams will be able to compete since each team has a ten minute routine to perform, and having too many teams would lead to the event being very long and exhausting for the audience. Disha did not have much to say about funding because there is another board member who handles the financing for the show. She advised us to start the planning at least a year in advance since there are many factors involved, which are out of the committee's control, such as venue and hotel availabilities.

#### *Observational study in Washington, D.C*

On Saturday afternoon of November 17, 2012, Jasmine and I drove to Washington D.C. There, we met with a few of the board members of RaasChaos, a competition held by GWU. We followed them throughout the day noting their activities. We were observing the liaison manager, Niraj Maniar, as he dealt with the chaotic preparations leading up to the main event. Due to the hecticness, we were not able to study other members on the committee since they were constantly working to ensure everything from the venue to the hotel rooms for guests was running smoothly, and on schedule. Niraj tended to the needs of the competing teams getting simple things like water bottles, art supplies for props, and snacks. He pointed out the importance of hospitality at these competitions because we want the teams to apply again in the future; afterall, they are the people who make the show what it is. Once the show started Jasmine and I noted the minuscule details of the evening such as the order of performances and promotion commercials. This was an ideal time to observe the competition from an audience's perspective. The lighting and decor were designed to a theme, and contributed to the pathos of the show as a whole. An intermission was due after watching four of the eight teams perform, along with some non-competing exhibition act, giving the audience a break from the emotional environment. The second half of the show carried on similarly to the first half and the awards ceremony, with a few more exhibition acts, concluded the night. Overall, it was a very welcoming and entertaining experience.

## **Future planning and conclusion**

### *Next steps*

While we received great social media advice from our interview candidate, Disha Patel, we will need more information about the financial aspects of the campaign. We have a lunch planned to speak with Farred, who is the financing manager for another competition. Hopefully, he will be helpful with finding sponsors, and raising money to really fuel this project. We also have some time allocated to speak with a few designers and developers who will be making our website and promotional videos. These next two meetings should give us strong traction and help us create a more accurate timeline for the entire campaign.