Executive Summary

Poll Everywhere partakes in a highly competitive industry that revolves around audience interaction. This industry has recently seen an increase in competition due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These times have placed individuals in an (almost) entirely virtual environment. This has provided companies like Poll Everywhere with the opportunity to further expand their company to increase market share. We have identified benefits for Poll Everywhere that would result from implementing a greater educational information platform. In order to accomplish this, we are suggesting asynchronous videos be integrated within the current polling system software. The addition of asynchronous videos would work to enhance teacher to student engagement, differentiate them from competitors and increase overall brand recognition.

The quality of relationship between teacher and student is the driving force behind effective and efficient learning. Under present circumstances, the environmental adjustments that education systems have been forced to undergo have decreased the overall effectiveness of learning. This shift in education has resulted in a rapid decrease in student engagement and their ability to retain course information. In an attempt to address this lack of attentiveness, we believe that Poll Everywhere should integrate guiding information, interactive features, and pop up questions within these videos. These new functions would help instructors interact with their students and provide a platform for commentary and quality feedback. This would ultimately create the important dialogue that has been lacking between student and teacher. The implementation of extra learning tools has the potential to strengthen the student engagement relationship. This works to make the learning experience more linear to that in a classroom setting.

In order for Poll Everywhere to have a bigger presence in the audience response system industry they must work to further differentiate themselves from their competitors. Poll Everywhere would be the first in the industry to incorporate asynchronous videos within their survey software, predominantly increasing market share and pushing them past their competitors.

The recognition of brand presence is crucial when developing company reliability with current and future employees. The trust between company producers and their consumers is the most valued relationship within an industry. This relationship establishment works to further promote the values of a company. In order for Poll Everywhere to be considerably more recognizable, it is crucial that they market to decision makers and influencers. These are the individuals who have the power to increase the overall brand awareness of the company. Educators are the decision makers of the audience response system industry. They must be targeted in order to obtain desirable results. By implementing this service into higher education, a greater brand recognition would be then be formed leading to brand loyalty in the future.

The current demands and expectations from online services have significantly increased. Our solution of implementing and linking asynchronous videos and polls will help address the issues education systems are currently facing. We predict that this addition would result in great success regarding teacher to student engagement, company differentiation and brand recognition.

**Asynchronous Learning Software: Our Proposal**

Due to the current pandemic, learning has shifted to almost all online. According to an article by PR Newswire “the global e-learning market is expected to reach $238 billion by 2024, growing at Compound Annual Growth Rate of 8.5%” (Reportlinker). Clearly, online learning is becoming more prominent, with in person learning during the pandemic becoming increasingly rare. How are students learning outside of the classroom? Teachers may hold live video classes, but also may record videos for students to watch at different times, known as asynchronous learning. Asynchronous learning is helpful for students learning in different time zones, as synchronous e-learning can be cause for many headaches and issues. Additionally, Asynchronous learning videos allow students to learn at their own pace, increasing comprehension. The demand for asynchronous learning services is increasing rapidly and is an opportunity for Poll Everywhere. With the vast change to online learning, asynchronous learning has increased tremendously and holds a significant share of the global e-learning service market. Poll Everywhere can enter the new and upcoming market of asynchronous learning video services. Our recommendation for Poll Everywhere is to integrate a software feature that allows the implementation of questions and polls into asynchronous videos. This new feature will attract the higher education demographic due to the high demand of new virtual learning platforms. The responses of the questions and polls will provide teachers with an opportunity to engage their students and receive helpful feedback. Furthermore, the students will most likely already be familiar with Poll Everywhere’s software from using it at their university or other place of higher education. Transitioning their products and services to better serve the current workplace will help Poll Everywhere increase revenue and gain market share in the e-learning service market. Currently, Poll Everywhere’s threats are competitors with similar technology, such as TopHat and Kahoot. We advise Poll Everywhere to differentiate itself by entering the new and upcoming educational asynchronous video service market. Poll Everywhere should consider this opportunity because the market is premature and less flooded with competition, due to e-learning slow rise to prominence in the recent years. Poll Everywhere has the resources and the technological capabilities to become the leader in supplemental online education software.

**Prevalence of Online Learning**

Online education has recently become more prominent due to the current regulations of social distancing, therefore limiting person-to-person interaction. However, online learning is not a new way of learning. Online learning started to become relevant in the 1990s with the rapid online technology advancements (Kentor). Online learning has continually advanced and by the fall of 2007, 21.4% of students enrolled in higher education were enrolled in a minimum of one online course (Allen and Seaman). As time prevailed and advancements were being developed, by 2012 32.5% of higher education students were enrolled in online courses (Allen and Seaman). Today the world has been forced into social distancing, requiring even more learning to be shifted to the online scope. Online education is on its way to becoming the normal.

**Asynchronous Vs. Synchronous Learning**

***What is asynchronous learning?***

“Asynchronous” means occurring at different times. Asynchronous learning is when you do not have to be with your instructors at the same time. “Asynchronous learning allows you to learn on your own schedule, within a certain timeframe” (Scheiderer). With asynchronous learning, students can participate and learn at their own pace, from any location. Some examples of asynchronous learning include fully online courses, pre-recorded video lessons, reading textbooks, and online discussion boards. Asynchronous learning is the future of online learning programs, due to the current pandemic shifting education to a virtual environment.

***What is synchronous learning?***

In contrast, “Synchronous” means occurring at the same time, and synchronous learning means the instruction is in real time (lawless). Synchronous classes have a set time that students will attend live with the instructor. However, because synchronous learning occurs at the set time virtually, the participants do not have to be in the same location. Examples of synchronous learning would be in the classroom and via Zoom. Synchronous learning has been the norm, however since the pandemic, educational instruction is moving towards a hybrid of synchronous and asynchronous methods.

***Asynchronous Software: Our Plan***

Our recommendation for Poll Everywhere is to implement a new software for asynchronous learning. The new software will have the ability for instructors to implement a combination of questions and polls into asynchronous learning videos. The videos will be pre-recorded, and the instructors can incorporate questions and polls into any period of the video. The video will play until a question or poll stops the video and requires the learner to provide and answer or reply. The pop-up questions can pertain to the video’s learning material to show if the student is fully understanding of the material. The questions will give the students an idea of how well they are comprehending the content, and teachers can subsequently analyze the question responses to better track student performance and help cater their teachings to the needs of the class. Additionally, polls can be directed towards the material or how the material is being presented. If the instructor simply wants to know what the student’s perception of the content is, they can implement a poll. Polls give the students an opportunity to provide the teachers with their feedback. Teachers would receive feedback from the student’s polls and utilize the data given to enhance the learning environment.

**Venturing into Asynchronous Software**

Poll Everywhere is already invested into the synchronous learning market with their surveys and polls that take place synchronously via classrooms or web conferencing. However, synchronous e-learning has its pitfalls such as set schedules with limited flexibility, uncertainty of comprehension, internet capabilities, time constraints to understand content, and time barriers. Students that prefer to learn at their own pace are at times rushed to understand all the material in a short period. Some students have unstable bandwidth and Wi-Fi connections and cannot support a web conference or incur technical difficulties. Additionally, students that are across the globe in different time zones must change their sleep schedules and daily activities to attend live classes. With more and more issues arising during synchronous instruction amid a pandemic, Poll Everywhere would be best suited to expand their operating software to include asynchronous components. Poll Everywhere should venture into the asynchronous learning market to further appeal to their target demographic, higher education. By implementing the asynchronous learning software, Poll Everywhere will be able to market itself as a more complete e-learning service model.

With every upside there is a downside, asynchronous learning has many advantages: students can learn at their own pace and accommodate their needs, the ability to go back and review material, and the flexibility of time zones and location. Asynchronous learning gives students the time they need to comprehend the material with the ability to go back and review. Additionally, time zones and location are not an issue with asynchronous learning, the students are able to participate on their own schedule from their desired location. Disadvantages of asynchronous learning are the lack of instant feedback, comprehension uncertainty, and limited engagement. Poll Everywhere can mitigate the negative aspects of asynchronous learning through the implementation of supplemental asynchronous polling response software. Poll Everywhere’s new software would ask questions created by the instructors to engage the learners with the material and aid their comprehension. Furthermore, the answers to the questions will provide teachers with comprehensive feedback. Poll Everywhere’s implementation of asynchronous learning videos with the incorporation of questions and polls would overcome the negatives and improve the asynchronous learning experience. The opportunity to fulfill a void in asynchronous instruction has presented itself during the pandemic and Poll Everywhere is in great position to act on that need and become an industry leader in supplemental online education software.

**Brand Recognition Among Generation Z**

As we’ve already mentioned, the market share of polling software is DOMINATED by two major companies leaving less than 25% of the market share for smaller companies to scrounge over. We believe that an area of improvement that will allow Poll Everywhere to cut into these larger companies' market share is through marketing. While we’ve talked about how important it is to differentiate Poll Everywhere as a brand, we also need to work on brand recognition as a whole. It is excellent that many educators and fortune 500 companies already use Poll Everywhere already. However, it is crucial that we market ourselves to the next generation of workers. It is time to start marketing and partnering with universities. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, we believe that the asynchronous polling features we plan on implementing will be incredibly appealing to a lot of universities. As students ourselves, we already have plenty of experience with classes that are either partially or completely online. However, until partnering with Poll Everywhere, we were yet to use Poll Everywhere technologies or had even heard of the company. This is honestly a shame, because we believe that the software is great and would be perfect for enhancing our learning. We understand that Poll Everywhere does not want to market towards Gen Z because they are not decision makers, which is why we suggest marketing directly to universities. Marketing towards universities will allow Poll Everywhere to reach an impressionable market of students that already seek new technology to enhance their everyday life. Familiarizing this next generation of workers with Poll Everywhere technology will increase brand recognition and increase the probability that they take this technology with them past graduation and use it in their own professional environment.

**Brand Recognition Among the Current Working Class**

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, online EVERYTHING has skyrocketed in use. We do business over the internet, we go to school over the internet, and pretty soon we will likely even experience the holidays over the internet. However, college students aren’t the only ones returning to school. Because our lives have been forced to be changed so dramatically, the world is adapting with it. Since 1970, adults returning to school has been on the rise with the improvement of technology. At this point in time, statistics relating to how COVID-19 has impacted enrollment in universities among adults, but I think that it would be safe to assume that it has increased during this pandemic. Businessmen and women returning to school to further their education have the opportunity to be exposed to Poll Everywhere technology if we market towards higher education. Using the technology in the classroom, whether it is the asynchronous technology or not, will subject them to the unquestionable improvements that Poll Everywhere brings to a group experience. Because of this, marketing towards higher education will not only impact the future generation of workers, but we will also reach the current one as well. We believe that this target market will eventually allow the likelihood of Poll Everywhere technology to be used at business conferences as well, which we know is a goal of the company. As we stop the spread of the coronavirus, we will be increasing the spread of our brand recognition and brand loyalty.

**Striking While the Iron is Hot**

Even though undergraduate enrollment has decreased an estimated 22% this past year, the usage of technology in classes has skyrocketed as many classes have moved completely or partially online. The market has been busted wide open for Poll Everywhere and it is time to strike while the iron is hot. While developing the asynchronous feature won’t happen overnight, we can agree that Poll Everywhere’s software would be beneficial for all learning environments as it is right now. Overall, student satisfaction is low because of classes no longer being in person. Universities are currently in the hot seat right now as they are providing a less favorable education for the same, if not more expensive, tuition. I believe they would be open to invest in new learning materials such as Poll Everywhere to alleviate the dissatisfaction of students. Educators would also benefit from implementing Poll Everywhere. Our proposed asynchronous technology would make lesson plans easier and allow them to have more control over a teaching environment where they can’t meet with their students every day. Not to mention that they would surely notice a positive difference in how well students retain information.

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**Visuals**

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**Implementing Asynchronous Learning into PollEverywhere’s Strategy**

We understand that adding a new strategy to PollEverywhere’s business will take time and money. On a brighter note, PollEverywhere has an advantage over most companies because the technology needed to implement your service into zoom meetings and other online tools has already been tested and created. We have outlined a plan to help implement our recommendation into your company in an efficient amount of time.

***Quarter 1***

Our recommendation will require PollEverywhere to slightly readjust their technology to conform to our idea. In higher education asynchronous learning today, many professors tend to post their lecture videos via their canvas page for a particular section. It makes it easier for students to find the information they need to succeed and it also keeps them organized because the information is in one place. Therefore, it is critical for PollEverywhere to be able to apply its services into a video that can be posted. The technology to cater synchronous learning is already developed, which we believe is a good stepping stone.

Throughout Quarter 1, it is necessary for PollEverywhere to figure out the technological adjustments required in order for professors to ask their students questions and receive feedback via pre-recorded lectures. PollEverywhere’s services can be improved in a variety of ways, but the most effective and time-efficient way is to avoid having the user leave the page to answer poll questions. Instead, the questions should already appear on the screen at the designated time that the professor wants to ask the question. This implementation makes it less of a hassle for students. In addition, time is money and students don’t have much time to spare when trying to get all of their work done, study, and get to bed at a decent time.

We believe that the technology required to implement our recommendation has already been developed, but there needs to be a few surface level adjustments to make it easier for users. This also takes time and requires tests to be done to make sure the new service is working correctly. We strongly advise that the technological element of our recommendation gets completed by the end of Quarter one to ensure that PollEverywhere is still in a position of success.

***Quarters 2 and 3***

We have thought of a unique way to differentiate PollEverywhere’s marketing tactics from other companies, however, it will take time. In order for a school to buy into PollEverywhere’s services when they are potentially using a competitors’ product, PollEverywhere needs to provide hard data to demonstrate why their service is better. In order to do so, we recommend polling students at the schools you are trying to market to. For example, if PollEverywhere is trying to set up a meeting with Indiana University, we would poll students from that school and ask them about their educational experiences and the aspects that could be improved. This data can then be used to support your new service and demonstrates how it cares for Indiana University and its success.

To begin, make a list of colleges and universities that PollEverywhere wants to target. Then, send representatives to each school and set up advertising booths that markets PollEverywhere’s new service and also polls students on their experience. In order to set up a booth, Poll Everywhere may need to ask permission from the schools. This can be easily done by emailing the school directly, or filling out a form that is on their website. Once the survey results have been collected, be sure to analyze and interpret those results.

It is our understanding that this process can be tedious and very time consuming, however, we believe it is the most efficient way to attract consumers. Those in higher education are the next generation entering the workforce. Therefore, being able to attract their attention now will lead to long-term success in the future.

***Quarter 4***

Quarter 4 is the most important time for PollEverywhere to implement its new solution. We believe that it is vital to get PollEverywhere’s name out through brand awareness and brand loyalty. In order to do so, we advise meeting with colleges and universities to advertise PollEverywhere’s new service and demonstrate how it can help improve education and retention rates. Setting up meetings can entail calling a college/university and arranging a date/time, or emailing them. When emailing large amounts of schools, it is important to create an email template to make sure that all of the information about the service is included. This email should include what PollEverywhere is, what its new service entails, and how it can better help students’ education (Outlined in Appendix B). Once the email is sent, make sure to send follow up emails (Appendix B) to further captivate their interest.

***Quarter 1: The Following Year***

After a year of preparation and asking, it is finally time to start meeting with the higher education schools that PollEverywhere reached out to. When pitching your new service, be sure to provide each school with the research that has been outlined in this report and prove to them why they need your help. This would also be the appropriate time to reflect on the survey results PollEverywhere previously collected. This will ensure a personal connection and make your information more relatable. Poll Everywhere’s main pitch to these schools is for them to implement its service into their education. This could be accomplished through a partnership, in which these schools receive PollEverywhere’s services for a discounted price. There are many possibilities, but the end goal is to get its services implemented into higher education.

***Quarter 2: The Following Year***

By this point, PollEverywhere should be working with schools on implementing their services into colleges and universities. Once integrated, PollEverywhere needs to begin tracking their success. This can entail tracking how many schools are using PollEverywhere, re-polling students in schools that use its services and seeing if it has enhanced their learning experiences, etc. This is an endless cycle of improving your service and continuously marketing it until PollEverywhere becomes the dominant figure in the industry.

***Future for PollEverywhere***

As mentioned throughout this report, targeting to higher education through the enhancement of asynchronous learning will produce a strong brand loyalty between students and your service. Those in higher education will be entering the workforce within the next few years. In addition, companies look to see what the younger generations are doing in order to remain competitive and grow as a whole. Therefore, if students create brand loyalty with PollEverywhere from an early stage, it is more likely that their future jobs will start to integrate its services into their field. Overall, this creates a cycle for long-term success.

**The Next Steps for PollEverywhere**

It is evident that marketing to higher education is the next best move for Poll Everywhere. With the current pandemic presenting new challenges to people all around the world, the demand for online services has significantly increased. Using our solution of implementing polls to asynchronous learning will help keep the audience engaged, as well as providing instant feedback on the audience’s performance. Not only will this feature help the learning process, it can also be used as a differentiation tactic to push themselves above their competitors. By implementing this service into higher education, it will create more brand recognition for Poll Everywhere and will lead to brand loyalty in the future. These students are the future for the workforce and will have a strong influence on how work will be done. We saw a similar trend with the more recent technology revolution, where more businesses have been placing a heavier emphasis on technology and the opportunities it can provide them. Therefore, instilling brand loyalty while these students are still in school will make connection stronger and they will be more willing to encourage these services after graduation. All in all, Poll Everywhere needs to separate themselves from their competitors and the best way to do so is by helping those in higher education get the most out of their education online.

**Appendix B**

***Email Outline***

Dear XXX,

On behalf of PollEverywhere, we hope that your school has been able to stay safe amidst this pandemic. We understand that accommodating every student’s needs can be challenging, especially during pressing times. I would like to offer you a solution to help ease those pressing worries.

After conducting research on this matter, students have found it very difficult to retain the information taught through asynchronous learning. Students feel as though they are “going through the motions” and watching pre-recorded lectures just to “get it over with”.

At PollEverywhere, we work with companies to help them capture powerful feedback during virtual meetings, classes, events, and more. We are looking to take our company to the next level by working with schools to improve the learning styles in higher education. We have developed a polling service that can be directly implemented into asynchronous lecture videos. This will not only give professors instant feedback and demonstrate areas where students are struggling, but it will also test the knowledge of the students to see if they retained the information taught to them.

Therefore, I would like to set up a brief meeting to further discuss our services. (Personalize further to cater your availability.)

Best regards,

XXX

PollEverywhere (Place your position here)

***Follow-Up Email***

Dear XXX,

I hope all is well during these uncertain times. I would like to follow-up on my previous email I sent out regarding setting up a meeting time to discuss the benefits that PollEverywhere’s services could bring to your college/university.

My availability to briefly meet is XXX. Please let me know at your best convenience what date and time would work best for your schedule.

Best regards,

XXX

PollEverywhere (Place your position here)