Consumer Marketing & the Writing Center: Clash of Cultures or Useful Tools?

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Consumer Marketing & the Writing Center: Clash of Cultures or Useful Tools?

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Indiana University-Purdue University at Ft. Wayne (IPFW)
Our Agenda Today:

• Describe our WC at IPFW
  (10 minutes)

• Present some consumer marketing principles
  (10 minutes)

• Share ideas on building WC usage
  (30 minutes)
About IPFW…
Indiana University-Purdue University at Ft. Wayne

• 4 year university
• Student body of over 6,000
• Urban commuter campus
• 45% are part-time students
• About 50% are returning adults
• 9% are ethnic minorities
IPFW WC’s Recent History:

• In 2004: 4,300 individual consultations
• 22 part-time consultants
• 65% of consultations = freshmen
• 35% of consultations = upperclassmen
• 10-15% % growth annually since 20001
IPFW Writing Center Philosophy:

• Writers grow in their thinking and writing abilities by “discussing their ideas, arguments, organization and style with a knowledgeable reader.”
Our Marketing Program to date:

- Our Director’s excellent efforts
- Publicity (posters and emails to students and faculty)
- WC Class Orientations (70 in 2004)
- “Write Away” Workshops
- Discipline-Specific Workshops
- Freshman programs
  - Summer Bridge
  - First Year Experience
- “ReWrite!” (faculty newsletter)
- WC website
- Faculty consultations
“Write Away on Wednesdays”

A Series of 4 Workshops for Beginning Writers:

1) How to read your writing assignments - and meet teacher expectations
2) How to organize your paper using PIE: P = main Point (thesis); I = Inform, E = Explain
3) MLA/APA documentation
4) How to revise, revise, revise
Marketing the Writing Center:

**Mission Statement**
Defines your purpose for internal use only.

**Market Positioning**
Defines your identity, image and benefits for external audiences:

-- Beginning Writers
-- Experienced Writers
-- Faculty
-- Administration
External Audiences

Influencers:
- Administration
- Faculty

IPFW WC

Market Segments:
- Beginning Writers
- Experienced Writers
Our Broad Marketing Goals:

• Increase initial and repeat visits by
  -- beginning writers
  -- experienced writers

• Increase faculty/administration understanding, support, and funding
Benefits versus Features

- Benefits are Results.
- Features are Facts.

**Consumers are motivated by Benefits!**

(Adapted from *Selling to the VP of NO* by Dave Gray)
Benefits Deliver Results Consumers Want.

• Examples:

  – A hamburger’s benefits: it tastes good.

  – Our WC benefits: It helps you write better papers in less time.
Features are Facts.

Features deliver values consumers want.

Examples:

- A hamburger’s features are the all-beef patty, bun, lettuce, pickles, onions.
- Our WC offers appointments, drop-in service, library, faculty consultations etc.

Buyers don’t care about features until they understand benefits!
Feature Management:

• Features are practical because they are facts.
• Products or services usually have far more features than benefits.
• Pick features competitors can’t beat or ONLY we offer. Use the word ONLY!
• Avoid over-featuring!
Marketing Our Benefits:

IPFW Writing Center...

BETTER Papers in LESS Time

Your ONLY campus source for regular, in-depth, personal assistance with your writing
Our Current Poster
Building your business *(more WC visits)*:

Publicity that focuses on BENEFITs…

Your experience? Your ideas?
Changing WC’s image:

The WC is for Experienced Writers too!

Idea: UVA workshops for

- Seniors applying to graduate school
- PhD candidates writing dissertations

….adapt to our/your campus?
Incentives:

1) To increase first time visits
2) To increase repeat visits
3) To reduce WC crowding at peak times
Examples in Business, Research, Education, Non-Profits…

- Money-off coupons for consumer products
- Payment for completing questionnaires
- Raffle ticket for drawing at IPFW basketball game to win Free Books for Semester.
Example of an Incentive:

Pilot incentive program for a specific class:

Bring in a rough draft more than 24 hours before due date and receive a coupon for…..

Money-off coupon at IPFW bookstore, sports or cultural event, or campus restaurant.
Incentives…

Your Experience?
Your Ideas?
Communicate your Benefits:

(May cut this slide…)

• Tide -- “Gets Kids’ Dirt Out”
• JIF Peanut Butter -- “Peanut-y Taste”
• Degree Anti-Perspirant -- “Body-Heat Activated”
• Miller Lite -- “Tastes Great - Less Filling”