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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?

Barbara Frank & Colin Brown

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 2000

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

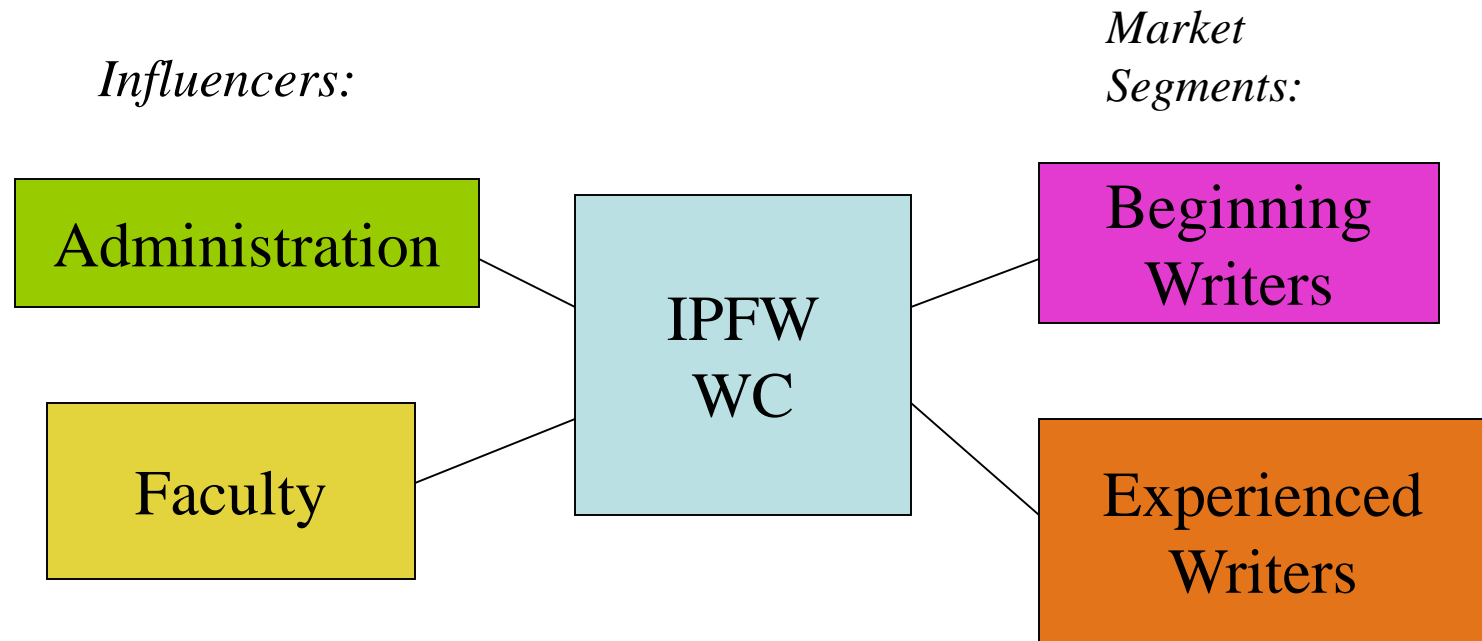
Defines your purpose for internal use only.

Market Positioning

Defines your identity, image and benefits for external audiences:

- Beginning Writers
- Experienced Writers
- Faculty
- Administration

External Audiences



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?

Consumer Marketing Idea.....

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”