

ONE STEP AHEAD

**PREPARED BY RIGHT SIDE
ADVERTISING FOR THE
GVSU CAREER CENTER**

*Kayla Downey, Sarah Dudinetz, Daniel Schmitt, Jacob
McCarthy, Langston Mitchell, Jordan Parry, Katie Smith*

INTRODUCTION

Our client is the Grand Valley State University Career Center.

The Career Center at GVSU serves as a resource for current students and alumni of the university that helps them attain their professional career goals. They offer a variety of services, events, resources, and connections with a variety of employers that help students develop themselves professionally, and allow them to explore different career paths. Their services are always available at no cost to all students and alumni. Through this wide variety of resources and a knowledgeable and caring staff, it is the Career Center's aim to help students feel prepared to enter the professional world upon graduation.

OUR JOB

We were approached by Lisa Knapp, a Career Advisor at the Career Center, for this project. Our assignment was to create an advertising and public relations campaign plan that addressed the helped increase the overall number of underclassmen who engaged with the Career Center.

The Right Side Advertising team has thoroughly enjoyed creating this campaign plan for the Career Center over the course of this semester, and sincerely hope that our campaign can be beneficial to Lisa and her team.

01**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Secondary Research	02
Primary Research	03
Situation Analysis	04
Target Market	06
Positioning	08
Big Idea: Our Brand Essence	09
Messaging	09
Objective	10
Creative Brief	11
Creative Big Idea	12
Strategy overview	12
Strategy 1	13
Strategy 2	15
Strategy 3	17
Strategy 4	19
Strategy 5	21
Media Plan	23
Timeline	25
Budget	27
Evaluation	28

02

SECONDARY RESEARCH

“What do we need to know regarding higher education, career centers, or our target market in order to build this campaign?”

OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Similarly to GVSU, many of the other college and universities researched utilized Handshake. However, many didn't let alumni access their resources for free, something relatively unique to GVSU's Career Center. Some offered different experiences, like corporate spring break trips, 'employer challenges', and more. Most notably, many offered different career advising services online.

TARGET MARKET

Secondary research of our target market - GVSU freshmen- showed that they were mostly female. As Lisa mentioned in our initial in-class discussion, freshmen's attention is divided. For the first time, they are learning how to live on their own, and day by day are making a variety of challenging and emotionally taxing decisions. Research shows that they are heavily influenced by three groups: Their friends, family, and faculty (specifically knowledgeable faculty in their major).

HIGHER EDUCATION

According to the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE), students are starting to prefer online/technological 'on the go' learning as opposed to traditional, in-person learning. This technology is present in every area of life, both educational and recreational. For example, this generation utilizes technology to connect with people via social media, order food, for ride-sharing apps, and so many more.

03

PRIMARY RESEARCH

“What are current perceptions of the career center among GVSU students?”

SURVEY

- Number of survey responses: 82
- 80% of survey respondents said that they would consider making an appointment at the Career Center.
- 33% of survey respondents said that they had previously had an appointment at the Career Center.

FOCUS GROUPS DETAILS

- 3 focus groups were conducted, with a total of 18 participants.
- 66% of them were aware of the Career center, and approximately 33% of them said they had been in.

FOCUS GROUP THEMES

- Students ‘didn’t feel the need to go yet/go again’. Those who had been in before said they didn’t feel the need to go again, since their appointment was successful. Many underclassmen noted that they didn’t feel the need to go as underclassmen.
- Many agreed it’s beneficial to establish a presence and interact with freshman during the first semester, especially during welcome week. Freshman are naturally more open-minded and inclined to learn about services offered by GVSU during this time.
- Students desired more technologically focused and industry-specific help. Some noted that they felt like the Career Center was helpful for basic resume or interview prep, but not when it got to more industry-specific help. They also agreed it would be beneficial to offer digital services, and some asked if it was possible/easy for them to schedule appointments from their phone/an app.

04**SITUATION ANALYSIS****STRENGTHS**

The Career Center has found the most success engaging students by meeting with parents at orientation and creating informational events such as Milkshakes & Handshakes. By being located on campus, the Career Center has the advantage of demonstrating their presence where students spend the majority of their time. A final advantage is the fact that the Career Center has the freedom and autonomy to try different approaches, allowing them the opportunity to gauge which strategies and events are most successful.

WEAKNESSES

The career center resources are not being utilized, which leads to students feeling unprepared for the workforce. Mandatory career readiness classes and meeting sessions have also not been approved (and were previously denied), which would be a good way for the center to get their foot in the door with students. The center also has a budget that limits their campaign options.

05**SITUATION ANALYSIS****OPPORTUNITIES**

Due to GVSU's growth in recent years, the career center has the opportunity to increase their number of employees as well as creating new full time positions, such as a social media manager, to maintain consistent and timely content. RA's can also be utilized to encourage student engagement through their close relationships with students and during the transitions period. Another big opportunity being used at other universities is providing more online resources, which would make the center more accessible to students. The center can also capitalize on anxious times for students in an effort to show students that the center's resources are helpful and can rid them of their anxieties.

THREATS

The biggest threat to the freshman class is the amount of distraction students face with newfound freedom. There is also a huge perception issue with the career center along with a lack of awareness that deters students from making the center a priority. Students are also more likely to use their advisors, faculty, indeed, and career building classes due to the ease of accessibility.

06

TARGET MARKET

Target

GVSU Freshmen; Pro-Active Preventers

Target Description

Freshman at GVSU, 18-19 years old, mainly women, are focused on making friends and transitioning from home life to college.

Their Needs

Convenient, low-cost opportunities to learn about different career paths, direction through multiple channels of guidance

Their Enemy

Distractions, such as living plans, social connections, extra curricular opportunities, part time jobs, the belief that they have yet to worry about what happens after their major

Insights that tell their story

- “I am unsure what career path I want to take, but I have plenty of time to figure it out so I am not worried about choosing a career right now.”
- “I love my major but I don’t know what steps to take to make me a more desirable candidate when I start applying for jobs.”
- “I don’t know if I made my resume the right way.”

07

TARGET MARKET

”What do they think now?

I haven't heard of the Career Center and am unaware of how it can benefit me personally. I don't know if that is an important resource for me to use right now.

How are they influenced?

Most students are influenced by others around them, including friends, staff and parents. Many who do attend the Career Center are encouraged by parents or their supporters to create future plans for themselves by working with the career center.

We want them to think/feel/do:

See: Become aware of the GVSU Career Center and learn about the different services they offer.

Think: Think that the Career Center may offer helpful insight that can help them plan their future.

Do: Attend events the career center holds and/or make an appointment to visit the Career Center.

Feel: Feel motivated to start planning their future as an underclassmen by realizing the importance of learning about different career paths that may interest them.

Whisper: Recommend visiting the career center to their friends and share their positive experience.

08

POSITIONING

Our target audience is...

Freshmen at GVSU

Our brand is the...

Go-to place and one-stop shop for every step of their professional life, from helping figure out what their skills are and what they want to do, to nailing the interview and getting the job.

This is the (benefit):

The Career Center wins by offering more than just resume or interview help. Things like job search strategy, networking, connecting with employers, etc. Helping students with what they don't even realize they need help with yet.

That's because/support points:

We care deeply about our students and want them to be successful post-graduation. We know that college is a challenging time on its own, and having to worry about the future is stressful for students. We make it clear through every interaction that we're passionate about their success and well-being, during their time at Grand Valley and beyond.

09

'BIG IDEA' - OUR BRAND ESSENCE

“

Here to help.

”

'Here to help.' This simple brand essence will resonate with young students who are uncertain about a lot of things: Whether or not they'll make friends at college, what they're going to study and major in, and all of the other regular stressors of college. Knowing that there is someone in their corner who can help them professionally will help put them at ease.

MESSAGING

Our messaging will be specifically designed to help freshmen understand that the Career Center is most beneficial at an early point in their academic career. By utilizing the services that the career center has to offer, underclassmen have the opportunity to get one step ahead on their career path.

Examples of campaign messages:

- "Here to help you get one step ahead."
- "When life pushes you pack, we're here to help you stay one step ahead."
- "It's never too early to get one step ahead."

10

OUR OBJECTIVE:

**"CREATE A POSITIVE PERCEPTION OF THE CAREER
CENTER IN THE MINDS OF GVSU FRESHMEN
THROUGHOUT THEIR FRESHMAN YEAR."**

11

CREATIVE BRIEF

Why Are We Advertising? To build a positive and accurate perception of the Career Center and its services among freshman.

Our Target Audience is 18-19 year old freshmen GVSU students. These students are academically involved, may be undecided in major, and are looking for a sense of direction.

Consumer's Enemy: A lack of confidence/experience, as well as many distractions.

Consumer Insights: Freshmen are bombarded with distractions, difficult choices, and adjustments to college. They are unaware of all the resources available to them.

What Does Our Consumer Think Now? Many students do not know of all the resources the Career Center provides and don't think they need it until they are upperclassmen.

What Do We Want Consumers To Do? Become aware of the high-quality career planning services offered. This will lead to freshmen visiting the Center more frequently, as well as becoming more involved with planning their futures.

Tone We Take w Our Consumers: Helpful and encouraging; We're in their corner.

Main Message: The Career Center can put you one step ahead in your career path.

Support Points: All undergrad students have a career advisor assigned to them from the beginning of their freshmen year. Graduates feel positively about their time spent at the Career Center.

Brand Idea: 'Here to help.' This simple brand essence will resonate with young students who are uncertain about a lot of things: Whether or not they'll make friends at college, what they're going to study and major in, and all of the other regular stressors of college.

12

CREATIVE BIG IDEA

“Be one step ahead.”

Our objective make it clear that we want GVSU students, specifically freshmen and sophomores, to be one step ahead in their career readiness. College is a stressful season, and when you're transitioning as a freshman, there's a lot to think about. This Creative Big Idea can help underclassmen, upperclassmen, and parents/supporters realize that the Career Center is the go-to place for career readiness, which will help them get "one step ahead".

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

- 1) Change the perception GVSU Freshmen have of the Career Center and Career Center events by making events niche, industry-specific, and accessible virtually when possible.
- 2) Creating a student club, such as the Career Club, to help gain interest towards the Career Center.
- 3) Allow for easier, less stressful/ intimidating access to ease underclassmen into the Career Center by adding more online resources
- 4) Engage parents and help them understand what the career center offers and how they can motivate their children to use the center.
- 5) Use social media as a means of communicating with students.

13

STRATEGY 1:

Change the perception GVSU Freshmen have of the Career Center and Career Center events by making events niche, industry-specific, and accessible virtually when possible.

Tactics

- Create social media kits for every event. Send it to a select few relevant departments, clubs, and organizations that it is relevant to so that they can help promote it.
- Have incentives at events, such as a certification or accreditation for completing a program, catering from a popular place, desirable Career Center merchandise, etc.
- Have registration for an event count as a ticket towards a desirable raffle item. Then, offer a 'Bring a friend'/'Refer a friend' reward for in-person and digital events that gets participants extra raffle tickets

Sample social media kit sent to on-campus housing, general education class professors, for freshmen-niche event: "College Majors 101"

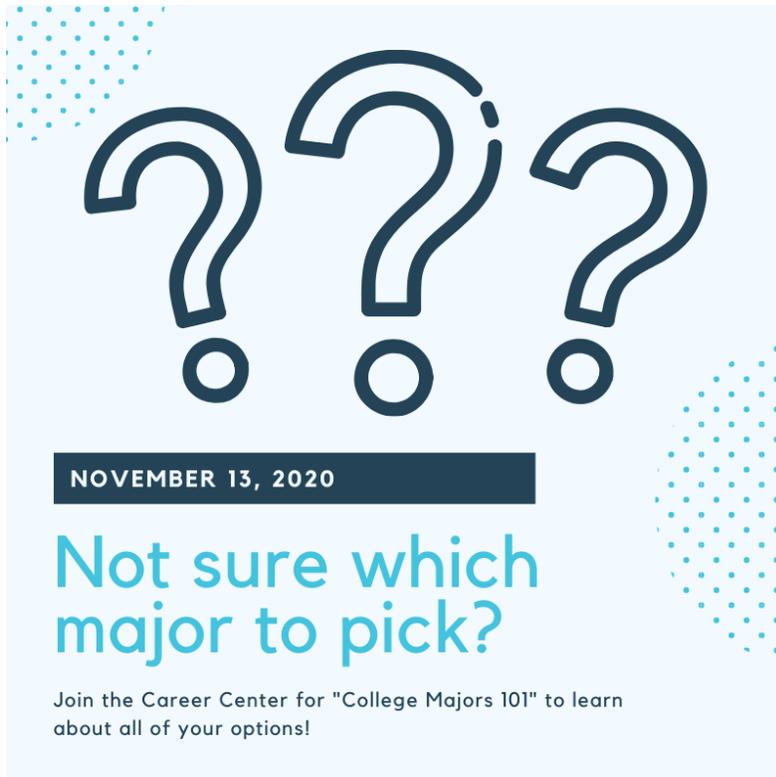
Event details

- Pere Marquette Room, November 13, 5:00-6:30pm
- Event hashtags: #GVSUCareers
- Purpose: To introduce freshmen to majors that they might not even know exist. Participants are automatically entered to win a pair of Apple AirPods, valued at \$199! Bring an extra friend to the event and automatically receive two extra entries!

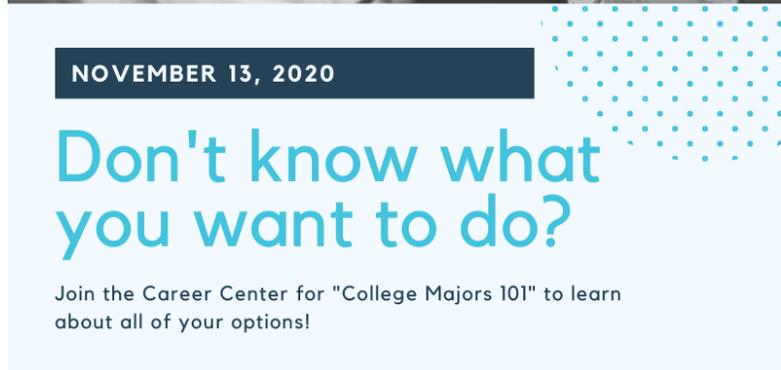
Sample Copy

- "Are you feeling overwhelmed by the number of major choices you have? Join @gvsucareers for "College Majors 101" to learn the basics of majors that you might not even know about! But the best part? You're automatically entered into a raffle for a set of Apple AirPods! Bring a friend and get an additional two additional entries!"

14



Two examples of social media graphics to be sent in a social media kit.



15

STRATEGY 2:

Creating a student club, such as the Career Club, to help gain interest towards the Career Center.

Tactics:

- Table at campus life night and Kirkhof Center to get freshmen to join.
- Post a video showing what exactly the career club does and how you put it on your resume as a school organization.
- Use social media to build a positive perception of the Career Club.

Tactic #2:

Career Club Script

Intro: "Hello Lakers! I would like to introduce you to the brand new student organization called the Career Club!

Who we are? We are a group of students who work tight with the Career Center for the betterment of our careers!

Why Join?The Career Club offers one meeting each week with the Career Center to go over Resumes, Cover Letters, Mock interviews, and a lot more.

The Career Center is a great resume builder because it shows your commitment and dedication to being in a professional organization! Not only that, but it will show employers that you are ready for the next step!

For more information, visit gvsu.edu/careers/club. We'll see you there!"

16



A mock-up of a social media post for the Career Club, which would have its own Instagram Account.



A sample graphic to announce the first meeting of the Career Club.

FIRST MEETING
THE CAREER CLUB
200 STUDENT SERVICES BUILDING
Time: 2pm

17

STRATEGY 3:

Allow for easier, less stressful/ intimidating access to ease underclassmen into the Career Center by adding more online resources.

Tactics:

- Online how-to videos for resumes, cover letters, business cards, etc.
- Advertise the Career Center's online resources in high traffic spots on campus.
- One on one video calls with career center advisors (by appointment)

Online how-to videos could include:

- How to build/create resumes
 - What programs to use, how to sure they're seen in Applicant Tracking Systems.
- How to write effective cover letters
 - What to include in different paragraphs, who to address them to, how to convey your interest and skillset.
- How to create professional business cards
 - What programs to use, how to design them, where to print, what to include.
- How to create a presentable LinkedIn account
 - Why LinkedIn is valuable, what to include on your profile, what NOT to include.
- How to use Handshake
 - What features are often missed by students, how to connect with employers, how to apply for positions, how to set up your account.
- How to prepare for an interview
 - How to research the company, what questions to ask at the end of an interview, how to dress, most common interview questions.
- How to put together a job search strategy
 - What a job search strategy is, why you need one, what to include.

18

**GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY**

THE CAREER CENTER IS HERE TO HELP.

Make an appointment today by calling
(616) 331-3311.



A sample poster that could hang in Kirkhof or another high-traffic area on campus.

19

STRATEGY 4:

Engage parents and help them understand what the career center offers and how they can motivate their children to use the center.

Tactics:

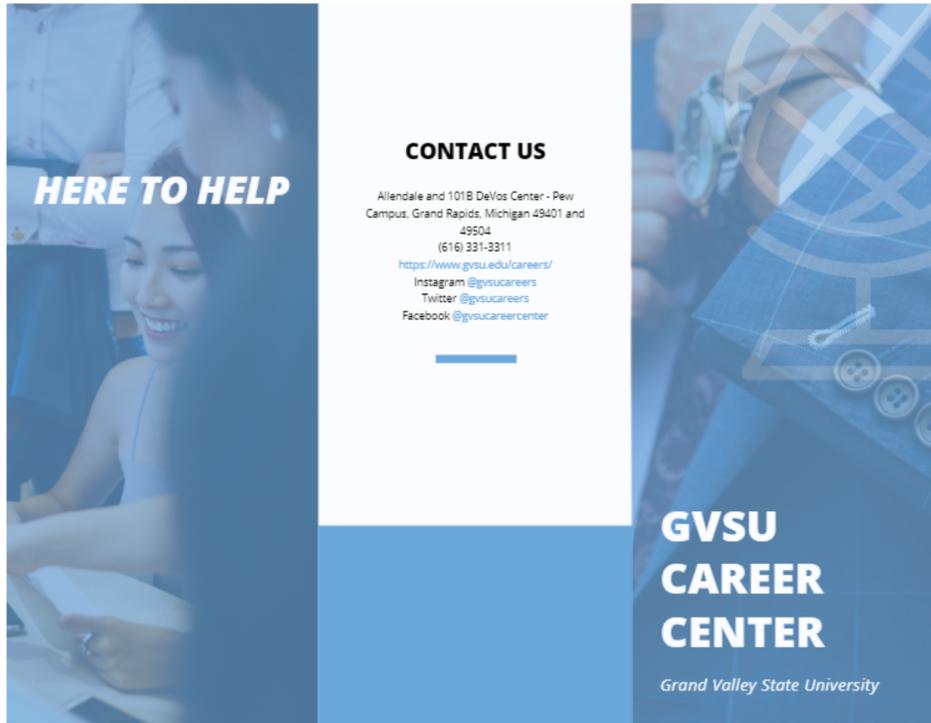
- Send flyers incoming Freshmen in their GVSU welcome package.
- Brochures can be available for Freshman and parents to receive during orientation.
- Students who have received 0-30 credits or more will receive both the flyer and brochure the week before the start of the Winter Semester.



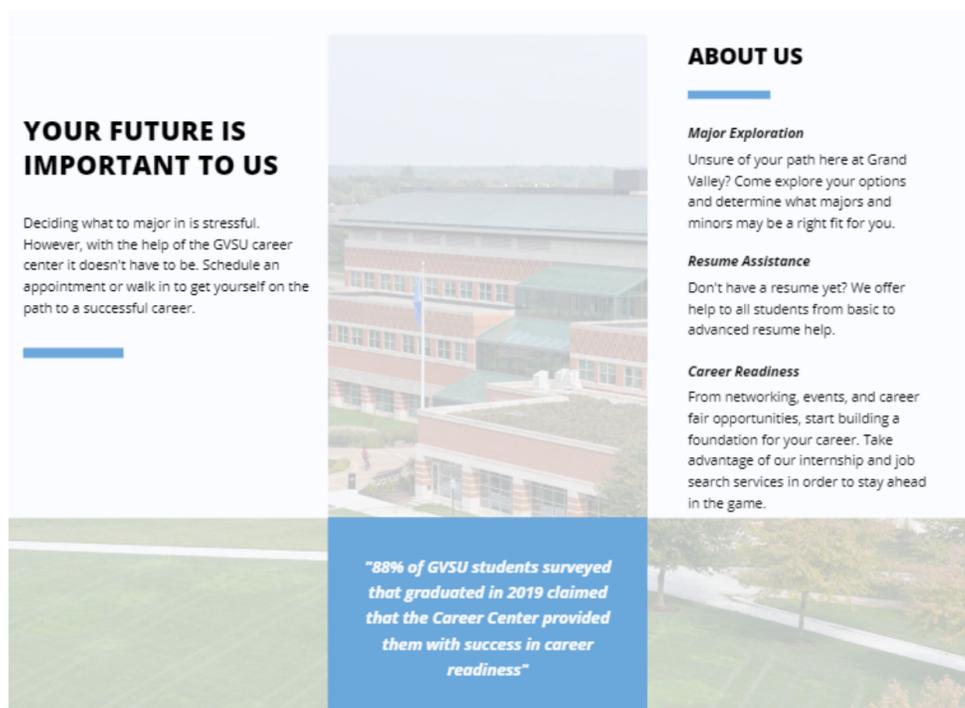
The front and back of a sample flyer to be sent to incoming freshmen in their welcome package.



20



This sample brochure could be provided for freshmen and their parents when they come on campus for orientation.



YOUR FUTURE IS IMPORTANT TO US

Deciding what to major in is stressful. However, with the help of the GVSU career center it doesn't have to be. Schedule an appointment or walk in to get yourself on the path to a successful career.

ABOUT US

Major Exploration

Unsure of your path here at Grand Valley? Come explore your options and determine what majors and minors may be a right fit for you.

Resume Assistance

Don't have a resume yet? We offer help to all students from basic to advanced resume help.

Career Readiness

From networking, events, and career fair opportunities, start building a foundation for your career. Take advantage of our internship and job search services in order to stay ahead in the game.

"88% of GVSU students surveyed that graduated in 2019 claimed that the Career Center provided them with success in career readiness"

21

STRATEGY 5:

Use social media as a means of communicating with students.

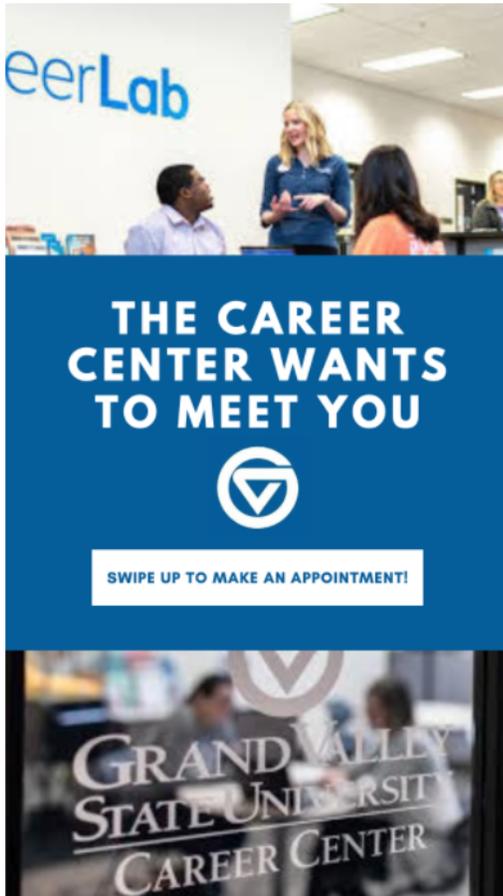
Tactics:

- Use Twitter as a platform to engage with students and spark conversation through responding to student's posts, answering questions, and posing questions that will generate discussion.
- Use Facebook to update students on upcoming events and provide general information about the center to shift student's perception of the career center. Post testimonials from past students to show what they gained from visiting the center.
- Use Instagram to update students on events and opportunities to work with the center. Instagram stories will be used for promoting the general purpose of the career center. Stories can also be used for giveaways to gain more followers and spread awareness through the public.



Twitter's poll feature provides a great opportunity to engage with freshmen, hear their opinion, and generate conversation.

22



Research showed us that freshmen enjoy making appointments from the convenience of their phone. Linking them to your website through Instagram stories aids in this convenience.



GVSU Career Center

Yesterday at 11:01 AM · 🌐

Joss Whedon is a Senior at Grand Valley State University. He has been coming to the Career Center since he was a sophomore and is now graduating with a degree in Advertising and Public Relations. The Career Center helped Joss with his resume and job search strategy to find an internship that fit him perfectly.

An example of how Facebook could be utilized to build the Career Center's credibility as an organization through testimonials from alumni.



"The Career Center helped prepare me with the resources I needed to find an internship that gave me the experience I needed."

Joss Whedon



23

MEDIA PLAN

Media objective:

Reinforce a positive perception of the Career Center in the minds of GVSU freshmen.

Media strategy:

Although all of our media will be active throughout the year, we highlighted certain periods throughout the semesters we believe will be the most effective and will therefore increase activity on set platforms. At the beginning of the first semester (August through October and January through February), we will promote The Career Club through its own Instagram page to increase awareness of the club. The Career Center's own Instagram will be utilized most in the center of each semester (October and February) in order to keep the Center on student's minds mid-semester. Since we have deemed Twitter to be the most beneficial platform to create engagement, we will become more active on breaks, including Fall Break, Winter Break and Spring Break. These periods are a common time students tend to plan their future and generate questions because of the ample time on their hands, combined with pressure from relatives. The Career Center's Facebook page will be most active at the end of the semesters (November through December and March through April). This will be the most influential time for students because students often procrastinate responsibilities such as working with the career center to the end of the semester.

Media rationale:

- Twitter: According to Pew Research Center, 44% of people aged 18-24 use Twitter daily in 2019. It's beneficial for providing quick, constant updates to users due to its layout and its 280-character limit. It's also a beneficial platform for the Career Center to piggyback off of popular hashtags or trends that are emphasized on Twitter.
- Facebook: According to Pew Research Center, 76% of people aged 18-24 use Facebook daily in 2019. Facebook is a trusted platform by users of all ages, and is useful for integration with other

24

MEDIA PLAN, CONT.

platforms, including Instagram or various other apps. The Career Center can capitalize on Facebook’s diverse options, including making events, creating private groups, and more.

- Instagram: According to Pew Research Center, 75% of people aged 18-24 use Instagram daily in 2019. It was also the only platform growing in use by our target audience in recent years, and for that reason, it would receive most of our energy and attention in this campaign. This includes the creation of a page specifically for the Career Club, such as this example by another university’s career club. This platform is unique in that it is visually based, which proves useful in building brand familiarity. Like Facebook, it has its own characteristics, like Instagram Stories, that can be useful during this campaign to promote events or services.

Flowchart:

	Aug. 2020	Sept. 2020	Oct. 2020	Nov. 2020	Dec. 2020	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Apr. 2020
Career Club Instagram	Blue	Blue	Blue			Blue	Blue		
Career Center Instagram			Green				Green		
Career Center Twitter				Red	Red			Red	
Career Center Facebook			Purple	Purple				Purple	Purple

25

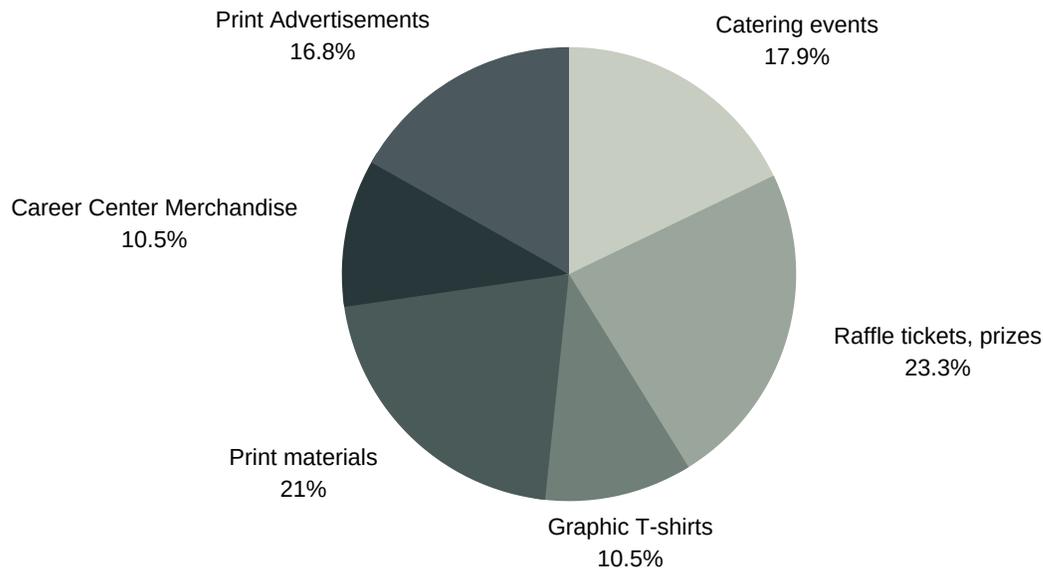
TIMELINE: SEPTEMBER - APRIL

Strategy	September					October				November				December			
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
St. 1: Social media kit		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X					
St. 1: Event, Incentive					X				X				X				
St. 2: Table, CLN		X															
St. 2: Social Media	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
St. 2: Club Meetings		X		X		X		X		X		X		X			
St. 3: Post how-to's	X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		
St. 3: Advertise	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X								
St. 3: Appointments	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
St. 4: Flyers																	
St. 4: Brochures																	
St. 5: All Social Media	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Strategy	January				February					March				April			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
St. 1: Social media kit	X	X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	
St. 1: Event, Incentive				X					X				X				X
St. 2: Table, CLN	X		X		X												
St. 2: Social Media	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
St. 2: Club Meetings		X		X	X		X			X		X		X		X	
St. 3: Post how-to's	X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		
St. 3: Advertise	X	X	X	X									X	X	X	X	X
St. 3: Appointments	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
St. 4: Flyers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
St. 4: Brochures												X	X	X	X	X	X
St. 5: All Social Media	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

27

BUDGET



Catering events- \$850

- Assorted candies, pizza, drinks, and chips for events.

Raffle tickets, prizes- \$1,100

- Physical raffle tickets (\$10)
- AirPods pro (\$250), AirPods (\$199), Apple Watch series 3 (\$199), iPad (\$429).

Graphic T-shirts- \$500

Print materials -\$1000

- Brochure, flyers

Career Center Merchandise -\$500

- Lanyards, can cozies, phone wallets, hand sanitizers, water bottles, phone cases, pens

Print Advertisements -\$800

- Vinyl posters to hang in Kirkhof
- Paper posters to hang across campus

Total spending: \$4,760

EVALUATION

Our overall objective

- Our overall objective evaluation of freshman perception will be measured by a five question survey that will be emailed to all freshmen at the end of the fall semester, and also the end of winter semester.

Social media and online resources

- Social media kits can be evaluated based on website visits, event RSVPs that originate from social media posts. Can be measured by custom short URLs for social media kits. Record how many students watch the online how-to videos. Also, view the feedback that students give to the video to see if it is helpful or not.
- All social media efforts for the Career Center and Career Club can be evaluated through their social media analytics.
- Keep a count of how many students complete an online workshop, how-to video. or discussion with an advisor or peers.
- Keep a count of how many students completed a one on one video call with an advisor.

The Career Club

- For this tactic, record how many students wrote down their name and contact information for their interest in the club.
- Record how many views the video gets. In addition to this, view the comments and shares of the video and determine if there is a positive or negative feedback.
- Evaluate the engagement on social media platforms such as followers, subscribers, etc., as well as use social media analytics.

29

GVSU Career Center Evaluation Survey

Form description

Do you feel you have had adequate guidance in exploring your options for your education and career path here at GVSU?

Yes

No

If you have visited the career center, what resource(s) have you used?

Long answer text

If you have visited the GVSU career center did you have a positive experience? Why or why not?

Long answer text

As a Freshman, do you feel that it is important to start thinking about your career path now?

Yes

No

At this time, how well prepared do you feel with starting to build your career readiness plan?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>				

A survey would be emailed to all freshmen at the end of the fall semester and the end of the winter semester in order to evaluate their perception of the Career Center.