

# INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PROPOSAL

## MASTER'S IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



**DRURY**  
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF  
GRADUATE STUDIES

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Drury University is an institution providing education at an affordable cost to a breadth of students from a variety of backgrounds. The name Drury is considered a brand ambassador by Drury also, so any actions performed under the university name need to be cohesive with the rest of the university's mission. Drury explicitly states the importance of a unified approach to messaging to ensure the cohesive value of the brand is represented at all times (Drury, n.d). Drury is a smaller sized school compared to others nationally, but they use this to their strength to ensure that every student receives the necessary level of support for them to succeed. This smaller-than-others community strives to form a cohesive, creative, and aspirational student through their time at the school (Drury, n.d.). One stand-out brand value to consider at this current time is 'service to the community (Drury, n.d.). This notion is tied in throughout this Integrated Marketing Communications plan for the MBA graduate program of Drury.

This IMC plan is focused on increasing the number of full-fee-paying students enrolled on the MBA program at Drury's graduate school. The MBA program at Drury seeks to increase the professional skills of the individual participating but is not necessarily a requirement of the business profession. However, an MBA does become essential for individuals who desire to progress the career ladder to management roles. With a projection of close to 500,000 vacancies becoming available in business and finance over the coming year (Raymond A. School of Business, 2020), it would be prudent to assume the demand for MBA qualifications is likely to increase as some of these positions will inevitably be in management. This is matched with a general increase in graduate enrolments since 2010, year on year.

An influential factor for a student deciding on a post-secondary degree of any level is cost (Gilbert, 2022). This is where Drury's brand and MBA course comes into its own. The course has a number of strengths in general including small class sizes, a boot camp option for access, and available discounts to name a few. A downfall of the program could be the similarity of the program to others nationally, but in this case that is a strength as the cost of Drury is much more affordable than the competition so a student would receive the same quality education at a lower price than the competition.

This plan consists of a well-researched demographic applicable to the product to ensure a focused and successful marketing plan; both of which are explained in full throughout the report. To summarise, the target of this IMC strategy is to target young millennials between 26-35, females and individuals primarily located in the Greater Springfield area.

The program would be branded as a high-quality, accessible MBA education for all regardless of their background (due to the available boot camp option). The message for this will be 'Inclusive Business Education. This is to encourage any individual who is interested in progression, regardless of background, to feel they can access this program. The avenues of chosen marketing will be digital marketing techniques, traditional advertising, PR, brand visibility, B2B and forming a brand community.

The running time of this campaign will be from January 2023-July 2023 with a budget of \$7000. This budget will be split with \$500 dedicated to digital, \$2000 dedicated to traditional advertising, \$2000 dedicated to streaming, and \$2500 dedicated to a networking event.

The digital platforms will focus on website work (the main hub of information), personalized emails targeted using information gathered about interested individuals from the networking event and using videos correlated from our video marketing and alumni brand ambassadors, and specific video content consisting of general testimonials. Our video marketing strategy will follow the model of AIDIA to ensure the effectiveness of the campaign. PR would consist of news releases, speechwriting, and content development to increase brand awareness and identity. The featured content as part of PR is related to our video strategy. The alumni testimonials would be categorised into relevant groups already identified for personalised marketing; individuals with no business background planning on accessing the MBA through boot camp and those with 4 or more years of business experience.

One of the most important aspects of this IMC plan is our networking event which will help on university grounds, in the new business building to save on costs and showcase the facilities. This event will last 3 hours and follow a schedule which would include networking, a welcome from the Drury executive, featured speakers and a closing thank you from MBA professors. This event will incorporate other aspects of our plan such as the interest forms which will guide our personalised marketing strategy. Invitations for the event would be sent to alumni working at local businesses, larger business organisations and small business owners.

Another unique selling point of the MBA program which we would propose is incorporating it as part of our networking approach. Willing alumni would volunteer to act as mentors for current MBA students. A group of students would be allocated to relevant alumni using the same groupings as our interest forms: individuals who have had no business experience using the boot camp or people who have 4 or more years of business experience prior to enrolment. This will provide extra guidance to students who may feel overwhelmed by the course as well as put into practice the community element of the Drury brand.

# SITUATION ANALYSIS

## THE INDUSTRY DEFINED

In the United States, getting a post-high school degree helps foster interest and passion to fuel a career. Once the desired undergraduate degree is in hand, some students take the step into further postsecondary education by pursuing a master's degree (also known as a graduate degree) in their chosen field. A degree of this nature is normally two years in duration and can be enrolled to at any point in an individual's life (UC Berkley, 2022). Some will even go on to achieve a doctoral degree in their field.

These postsecondary degrees are voluntary with students choosing to enroll at their chosen colleges, universities or vocational-technical schools. The choice of which subject a student decides to study at the graduate level degree is dependent on either their undergraduate degree or their desired career path (What Is Higher Education?, n.d.). As a rule, masters programs are defined on a continuum starting with some purely academic programs leading to PhD's, somewhat academic programs with application to the world of work but not a requirement of the professional field and ending with purely professional programs which are a requirement of a professional field. There are programs which fall at all points across this continuum. The graduate programs which lie in the middle of the continuum are arguably the most recent advancement of this level of education. They provide skills which can be applied to a number of careers but do not for one specific career pathway and frequently help career progression (Leckie, 2011).

## STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Students consider the cost of a postgraduate degree an influential consideration when deciding which institution to study at. The cost of tuition & fees in general rose continually through 2020 with the exception of a small dip in costs by 5% for private schools and 4% for public schools in 2021 (Gilbert, 2022).

Masters level programs have experienced a growth in enrollment of 20% since 2010 (Wiley Education Services Authors, 2022) and a 7.3% increase in applications to these programs from 2020-2021 (Arnett, 2022). Between 2021-22 enrollment increased further by 97,680 students compared to the previous year (NECS, 2021b), which could be a result of COVID-19 and its impact on careers and approach to teaching; more programs moved online as an adaptation to teaching in a pandemic world but the change has stuck.

In 2020, 61% of graduate students were female and 39% male, which represents a 14% increase in female enrollment since 2009 (COE-Postbaccalaureate Enrollment). Men are still the major gender demographic in STEM fields. This unexpected gender divide between men and women in graduate programs could be due to attitudes and values held about men and women in higher education and professions outside of STEM fields. There are fewer promotions of women in the workplace compared to men which research suggests could be linked to the lower perceived potential of women compared to men, despite there being better actual work performances by women (Somers, 2022). This would stand to suggest women have developed a belief that in order to progress professionally, the only way to show their worthiness over their male counterparts is through further education to tangibly show their abilities. The increase since 2009 would also reflect this as the feminist move gained momentum and women started to increase their professional ambition.

Minority enrollment has also increased with an 86% increase for Latinx students, a 26% increase in Asian and Pacific Islander students and a 14% increase in African American Students (COE-Postbaccalaureate Enrollment). Currently, undergraduate enrollment is also at a diversity high with roughly 30% which, 17% Latino and 10% black (BestColleges, 2022). This would suggest that as these individuals continue to funnel through the education system, the diversity of graduate programs will continue to rise also.

# SITUATION ANALYSIS

## SWOT ANALYSIS

<b>STRENGTHS</b> Boot Camp Co-hort group (do the same 2 years with the same people) 10% discount opportunity Student-focused (better individual and better person) Diversity & viewpoints Small class sizes (relationship between students & teachers) Flexibility for further academic development Synchronous learning	<b>WEAKNESSES</b> Smaller school in a smaller location (less networking opportunities) Synchronous learning Similar to other MBA degrees
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> Business-exposure to generate enrollment Connections through professors High quality education at lower cost	<b>THREATS</b> Several other MBA programs to choose from across the country

## COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Our main competition for this campaign is other colleges and universities offering an MBA program within Missouri. This list includes:

- Missouri State University
- Columbia College
- Bryan University
- University of Missouri - Kansas City
- Webster University

Looking at our competition, we trend lower in overall price point, which is a common reason people choose a master's program. Factoring in the MBA Boot Camp, we can expand our potential audience pool beyond just those with a business background. These two pieces of our MBA program can really set ourselves apart from our competition.

## CONSUMERS

Our target audience, young millennials, are described in detail on the next page. But, it's important to understand the habits of this audience as we begin our campaign. Looking at millennial spending habits (Jacimovic, 2022), we can see the following:

- Millennials spend a daily average of \$208.77, more than any other generation
- 78% of Millennials say they prefer spending on experiences rather than things they desire
- The spending power of Millennials is \$2.5 trillion

In addition to having a large amount of spending power, millennials are also trending to be a more educated generation compared to older generations, with 39% having a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 15% of the Silent Generation, 25% of Baby Boomers and 29% of Generation X (Bialik & Fry, 2022).

# TARGET AUDIENCE



## BUSINESS BETHANY

- AGE: YOUNGER MILLENNIALS (26-35)
- GENDER: FEMALE
- INCOME: \$40,000-60,000
- RACE: WHITE
- LOCATION: GREATER SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI AREA

## PSYCHOGRAPHICS

Our targeted audience should be ambitious people who value hard work. They are strategic and logical, looking for job security, opportunities to grow in their careers, and wanting to climb the ladder in their company. Drury itself describes the MBA course as one for those who are willing to work hard, so applicants need to be ready to tackle the challenge (Drury, 2021). Getting an MBA is a great way to help improve overall job security and potentials for company promotions. Individuals interested in the MBA program are likely to be planners and are wanting to make decisions that provide a sense of security for themselves and their family.

## GEOGRAPHIC

There is almost no limit to where we can geographically target Drury's MBA marketing since classes are now taught synchronously over zoom twice a week. Considering the classes are held in the evening Missouri time, considerations for time differences across the United States should be taken into account. Marketing should be focused on areas in the United States which share Central Standard Time and areas within that which offer high-speed internet to enable access to the class. To further narrow our audience, we are looking at city/urban areas in the US, where there is more accessibility to business-related careers with opportunities to grow and obtain promotions within companies. Despite the feasibility of marketing to any of the areas identified, the brief of this project is to focus on the Greater Springfield area. This will also drive down the price of media due to a reduced geographical target area (Juska, 2021, p. 100).

Main geographic areas:

1. Greater Springfield, Missouri Area (Main focus)
2. Major cities across the United States (Secondary focus)

## DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

STRATEGIC

LOGICAL

SEEKING JOB SECURITY

ADVOCATES FOR

GROWTH

HARD WORKERS

PLANNERS

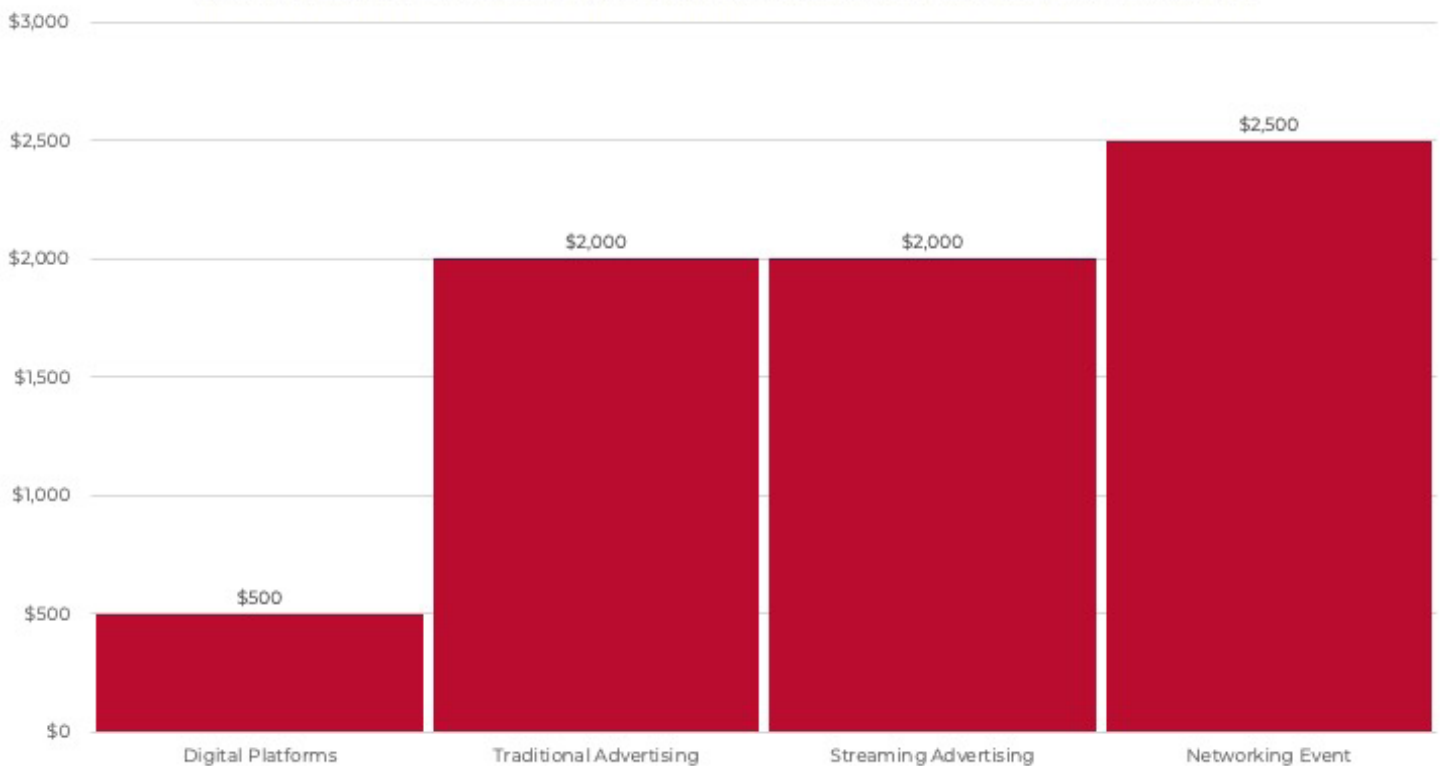
# BUDGETING

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

We have \$7,000 to spend on our Integrated Marketing Communications plan for Drury's MBA program, as shown below. We will cover the exact spending breakdown in the IMC mix section of our proposal, starting on page 10.

WHERE THE MONEY IS GOING	HOW MUCH
DIGITAL PLATFORMS	\$500
TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING	\$2,000
STREAMING ADVERTISING	\$2,000
NETWORKING EVENT	\$2,500

**MBA INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS BUDGET BREAKDOWN**





# THE BIG IDEA

## INCLUSIVE BUSINESS EDUCATION.

### BRAND POSITIONING

When it comes to positioning the MBA program, we're wanting to follow the example of effective brand positioning from HubSpot (2022) to be perceived as "favorable, valuable, and credible to the consumer." To do that, we'll position ourselves as a high-quality education at a lower cost than the competition. Our MBA program is a strong option for those with or without previous business experience and is an affordable option for those considering their next career move.

### THE BIG IDEA

**Inclusive business education.** The idea is meant to resonate with those who are looking for the next step — whether it's a promotion or understanding how to run their business better — and communicate the idea that everyone deserves a chance to learn and grow. This encompasses those who have a business undergraduate degree, experience in the fields of business and management or those who have no prior experience. Everyone can be a part of the Drury University MBA community.

### REACHING OUR AUDIENCE

Looking at our positioning statement and our big idea, we'll be taking a multi-faceted approach to effectively leverage our IMC plan and send the right message to the right people at the right time in the right place for the right reason (Juska, 2021, p. 32). This will include communication avenues like digital platforms, traditional advertising, public relations, brand visibility tactics, business-to-business marketing and building a strong brand community.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Increase awareness of Drury University College of Graduate Studies brand
2. Increase total enrollments to MBA program for full-paying students
3. Set a foundation for further integrated marketing communication campaigns for the MBA program

# CREATIVE BRIEF

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

Drury University is a private higher education institution in Springfield, Missouri. The Masters in Business Administration provides an opportunity for career progression for anyone who is willing to make the financial and time investment regardless of their undergraduate degree. Drury University has been providing educational opportunities since 1873, serving students of all ages and backgrounds. We're targeting primarily females between the ages of 26-35 (late millennials). Males will not be excluded from our marketing strategy but there is the opportunity for increased growth by targeting females. The goal of this campaign is to bring awareness to Drury University's brand and drive applications which convert into full-time, full-fee paying enrollments to the MBA program.

## VALUE PROPOSITION & BRAND MESSAGING

- No matter the background, everyone can get an advanced business education
- Drury is a place to explore your passion and advance your career
- Drury can meet you where you are
- Learn from home
- Better together: Get a discount when 3 or more of your co-workers join the program together

## TARGET AUDIENCE

- Late millennials (26-35)
- Business-minded professionals with an undergrad degree
- Initial audience are those with 4 or more years in a business setting or an undergraduate GPA of 3.50 or greater

## GEOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE

- Greater Springfield, Missouri Area
- Major cities across the United States

## AD TIMING & FREQUENCY

- Daily digital advertising (done in 2-3-week groups)
- Monthly TV & radio advertising

## BRAND GUIDELINES

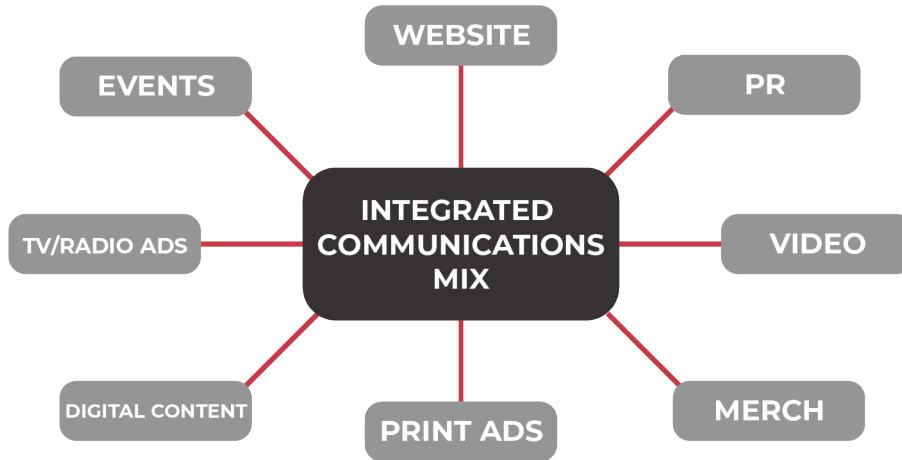
We will follow the Drury University brand guidelines to keep the brand identity consistent with other marketing, communication, and advertising initiatives within the university. Drury as a brand has a range of audiences from current students to global observers to competition schools. Part of Drury's mission is to be a warm and personable place for all affiliated with the university. Hence the importance of a unified approach to advertising and marketing across the school to ensure the same brand message is shared, regardless of the specific department responsible for the information being shared. Drury clearly states this saying "A unified campus with a consistent brand and mission strengthens the university" (Drury, n.d.). This again reinforces the importance of this IMC marketing plan being consistent with other advertising from the university, while ensuring it is specific to the needs of the product.



# IMC COMMUNICATION MIX

## OVERVIEW & GOALS

Our integrated marketing communication mix will run from January 2023-July 2023 to bring awareness to Drury University and encourage applications for the 2023-2024 academic year. This mix will include digital platforms, traditional advertising avenues, public relations activities, brand visibility opportunities and business-to-business marketing tactics.



## DIGITAL CONTENT

### WEBSITE

Drury.edu — and specifically the MBA section on it — will be the central hub of our IMC mix, where we can publish featured stories, embed videos and provide quick access to program information, all in one place. This is also where people can apply online. So, this is the place to hit every piece of the marketing sales funnel: awareness, consideration/interest, conversion and loyalty.

MyDrury Email Canvas OneLogin

DRURY UNIVERSITY Undergraduate Admission Evening & Online Graduate

### Master in Business Administration

Drury University > Graduate Studies > Master in Business Administration

Drury University - MBA Ventures program Watch later Share

- Master In Business Administration
- How to Apply
- Admission Requirements
- Synchronous Classes
- MBA Curriculum

# IMC COMMUNICATION MIX

## DIGITAL CONTENT

### EMAILS

As part of our IMC communication mix, emails will play an integral part and go hand in hand with our video marketing testimonials and networking event (information on these follow). The integrated approach is to form groups of testimonial videos from alumni with similar career or educational backgrounds. For example, we would ask alumni who had no business background prior to enrolling in Drury's MBA program to film a testimonial of their experience of the boot camp, their life before and their life after Drury's MBA. Another group of alumni would be individuals who had 4 or more years of business experience. They will be asked to be involved in testimonials about their experience of Drury and their life before and after. This will be done for a number of alumni groups who attended Drury over a number of years. Then, using an 'interest form' which will be made available on Drury's MBA website and at Drury's MBA networking event, a personally addressed email containing an appropriate video from one of the predetermined categories will be sent. This email will also include a link to Drury's MBA home page which, as already outlined, is the hub of our IMC mix and contains a number of other videos and information resources. These emails will be the initial contact with follow-up emails containing general Drury information will be sent to start forming brand loyalty early.

### ONLINE VIDEO

With 90% of information people consume being visual, content like online videos is vital for any communication strategy (Idomoo, p. 2). Video content is continually one of the top consumed content types, with 66% of people saying they get information from videos and spending an average of 6 hours and 48 minutes watching videos per week (YouTube Statistics 2022, 2022). Our identified target audience for Drury's MBA graduate program are the younger end of millennials. This is an important consideration when deciding on the importance of video marketing. The research suggests over half of millennials are much more likely to engage in video marketing than reading a newsletter and they find this medium of information sharing incredibly valuable during the initial research and comparison stage of a service or product (Sukhrui, 2022). However, the majority of millennials (two-thirds) can see through overly promotional advertising in videos and will disengage with the message and product if they feel this is the case (Sukhrui, 2022).

Below is an outline of how Drury's MBA marketing videos will be applied to the AIDIA model which represents how consumers travel through a process prior to purchasing a product or service (Juska, 2022 p.47-48).

#### AWARENESS STAGE

Here, we need to build a strong brand for anyone who has limited to no information about Drury University. We will create brand videos to showcase life as a Drury University graduate student and why they should be interested in enrolling. These will essentially tell the Drury University story and why they should be a part of it.

We will follow this up with educational videos, featuring MBA and Graduate Studies staff members, that talk through what the Drury MBA can offer in terms of education and advancement while showcasing the experience of our professors and staff.

#### CONSIDERATION/INTEREST STAGE

Here, we're wanting to tell our audience why they should consider enrolling. This stage is in the middle of the ethos (credibility), pathos (emotional) and logos (logical) persuasion types, and is critical in creating conversions (Detisch, 2022). To meet these needs, we will develop testimonial and cultural videos showcasing current and former Drury MBA students. By doing this, we'll establish credibility by having people share their own success stories. The use of videos for testimonials allows those watching to identify with the individual better than if it were just an image and increases trust in the service being sold (FilmmakerLifestyle, 2021). Testimonials also tug on heartstrings by people talking about their experiences and hit the logical side of people's brains by addressing what the program can offer. Essentially, we're showing what success looks like as a Drury MBA student and encourage others to enrol. Testimonials have another beneficial effect on the consumer's journey to purchase by aiding them in forming conclusions about the product. By sharing the testimonial in a video format, there are a number of advantages such as including on-screen text sharing facts and figures about the program (Idomoo, 2022). This enables important information which left-brain logical thinkers find valuable in decision-making to be shared in a digestible format which is not boring or overly 'salsey' which is important when targeting millennials.

# IMC COMMUNICATION MIX

## DECISION/CONVERSION STAGE

Finally, as prospective students move into the decision stage, we can use two video types to motivate them to apply: FAQ videos and personalized videos. FAQ videos hit the logos persuasion type by providing information on things like financial considerations, class schedules, the application process itself and more to convince people to apply. Meanwhile, personalized videos would hit the pathos persuasion type to show what experiences as an MBA student would look like to encourage applications. This combination of pathos and logos persuasion types is crucial for encouraging a decision, especially in our target audience.

## VIDEO DISTRIBUTION

To get these videos out in front of our audience, we can leverage our website, social media, and even TV advertising. All videos can be embedded on the Drury MBA page of [drury.edu](http://drury.edu) as a central hub for information. From there, they can be broken down into smaller pieces of content and shared across Drury's social media channels with links back to the website to watch the full video and get more information.

The framework of our video marketing needs to appeal to the psychographics identified on page 5. The way we intend to do this is by using a combined approach of frameworks which appeal to left-brain thinkers in one effective video. These frameworks would include technical, inspirational, aspirational and before/after (Juska, 2022 p.131-143). By using the medium of video, the marketing can successfully play into the attitudes and values of the left-brain thinkers which include logic, objective, verbal and planned (Juska, 2022 p. 121) but display the messages in a format which elicits an emotional response. The emotional response is essential for any marketing campaign to work and be successful, but the brand needs to be able to align with the values of its target customer for this to work (Magids et al., 2015).

For our brand and cultural videos, we can repurpose them to be used as TV ads on local stations to generate brand awareness and interest. This also allows us to cut down on the total number of content pieces to create, but still hitting all of our IMC strategies.

## TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING

### NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE ADS

Combining a tactic from business-to-business marketing, we're going to be using vertical and horizontal media advertising placements to reach our audience. Since the majority of our prospective students are likely to be business-oriented, taking this B2B approach will help create a more focused approach to our advertising and lower total ad spending. Vertical media — publications that cover specific topics or industries — and horizontal media — publications that are more general in scope — can provide a good blend of opportunities for the MBA program as well as the Graduate Studies department as a whole (Juska, 2021, p. 275). By identifying vertical media publications — like the Springfield Business Journal, 417 Biz, and the Missouri Business Magazine — we can use a blend of traditional and PR tactics to bring awareness to the program by placing ads and pitching stories that already exist in other parts of our IMC plan. For our horizontal media, we can focus on building up brand awareness for the Graduate Studies department by placing ads in local magazines and newspapers like 417 Magazine and the Springfield News-Leader. As for cost, we would run 3 ads in both the Springfield Business Journal (at around \$150 per ad) and the Springfield News-Leader (at around \$95 per ad). For 417 Biz and 417 Magazine, we will take their base monthly rate package — totaling \$1,174 — which would get an ad in every magazine that year, as well as placement in the spring issue of The Design, a feature in May, an ad spot in their e-newsletter, an editorial sponsorship and a category take-over in an issue of the magazine.

COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

## INCLUSIVE BUSINESS EDUCATION.

**ADVANCE YOUR CAREER AND BECOME A LEADER IN YOUR FIELD WITH DRURY UNIVERSITY'S MASTER'S IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEGREE**

Even if you don't have a ton of business experience, you can still apply for our MBA program by taking our MBA Boot Camp.

**BOOT CAMP**

Drury's summertime MBA Boot Camp offers a more direct preparatory path versus traditional prerequisites and can help prospective students who:

- Did not complete an undergraduate business degree
- Want to refresh their knowledge

**GROUP DISCOUNT AVAILABLE**

Drury offers a 10% group discount for employers with three or more employees concurrently enrolled in the MBA Program.

Learn more and apply online at [drury.edu](http://drury.edu)

 DRURY UNIVERSITY

# IMC COMMUNICATION MIX

## STREAMING ADS

To reach the target audience, ads which are traditionally saved for TV and radio will be run on local podcasts - both video and audio styles. 41% of Americans have said they listen to a podcast, so it's a good place to get information to our audience group (Audio and Podcasting Fact Sheet, 2022). To cut down on content creation time and costs, we can use video and audio from our online video strategy to create our streaming ads. To make this happen, we would spend \$864 on :30 ads across 4 local business podcasts – 90 Ideas, Ozarks First Daybreak, SGF Business Insider, and Plugged In; these would be one ad a week across 12 weeks from May-July. We would also allocate \$800 to run ads on YouTube, targeting business users in our target audience on the platform, specifically on business-related video podcasts.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

### PRESS RELEASES

A combination of news releases, speechwriting, content development and events can elevate the Drury University brand identity and encourage interest in the MBA program, leading to successfully hitting the goal of PR: to “to influence opinions, attitudes, beliefs and images about a brand, business, organization or social issue” (Juska, 2021, p. 242).

An initial news release could be used early in 2022 to re-introduce the program to the target audience through targeted media contacts, specifically those who work in the business and finance beat – i.e., reporters at the Springfield Business Journal or the business/finance reporters at the Springfield News Leader. Then, additional news releases can be used to promote networking events throughout the campaign. It's important to reach professionals who write in this sector to reach the right audience and get the news release picked up, which is something reporters look for when news releases come into their inbox (PR Week, 2022).

### FEATURED CONTENT

The crux of the PR strategy would be in content development for social media and the MBA section of the Drury University website. Here, we could highlight featured stories from current and past MBA students — interviews, blog articles, Q&A's, etc. — that could then be broken down and shared on our Drury social media accounts with links back to the original content. These features can also include videos from our online video strategy to create a hub-spoke model where we create one, consistent message in one place and then share it across our platforms, creating less work for a marketing and PR team while also building brand awareness and authority through digital channels (Kadish, 2021). Relevant here is also the use of alumni testimonials which are broken down into categories and sent accordingly to appropriate recipients based on their responses to an 'interest form' which will include optional questions about their previous experiences prior to enrolling in the MBA program. This concept is outlined in full in the digital marketing and video section of this proposal.

## BRAND VISIBILITY

### NETWORKING EVENT

To get Drury University's name out in our community and attract business-minded people, we will host a morning network event in June. At the event, we will have signage for both the College of Graduate Studies and the MBA program, with an information center for anyone interested in the degree. At the information center, we will have ways for people to fill out an interest form, asking for information like their name, contact information and their business background and experience. We would take that information and tailor follow-up emails, including features and videos from current and former MBA students who had a similar experience. An example is if someone indicates they don't have a strong business background, we would send them a tailored email with information on the MBA Boot Camp, testimonies from Boot Camp alumni and ways to get more information.

# IMC COMMUNICATION MIX

The event would be approximately 3 hours long, held in the C.H. "Chub" O'Reilly Enterprise Center and Breech School of Business Administration and Judy Thompson Executive Conference Center to cut down on venue costs and equipment rentals. We would invite local businesses leaders and owners, with a tiered invitation list (listed below), aiming to have 200 attendees.

## The run of show for the event would be:

- Networking
- Welcome: Drury University Executive
- Featured Speaker: Area Business Leader – Alumni from Drury University's MBA
- Closer/MBA Promotion/Thank You: Drury University MBA/Graduate Studies Representative
- Networking

## Invitation Plan

- We would send out invitations to 3 separate groups:
- An initial invitation list to alumni at local businesses to encourage early registration for the event
- A secondary invitation push to other local larger businesses
- A final invitation sent to local small business owners

## Budget Considerations

- Information center banners (x2): \$155
- Décor: \$710 to hire a freelance decorator
- Gifts: \$445 for branded College of Graduate Studies notebooks
- Catering: \$350 (coffee and a light breakfast)
- Printed invitations: \$215
- Mailing: \$125
- Digital Advertising: \$100
- Expense Buffer: \$400
- Total: \$2,500

If the budget was flexible or expanded, an opportunity would also exist to sponsor a separate networking event in the area, which would focus on brand awareness. The risk is there is no guarantee of individuals seeing or recognizing the brand, as opposed to an event hosted by the university.

## BRAND AMBASSADORS & COMMUNITIES

Brand communities are defined as "a structured set of relationships among people who are keen on a brand" (McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002, as cited in Gabrielli & Baghi, 2014, p. 2). In short, brand communities are made up of people who love a brand and want to share it with their own networks. According to Gabrielli & Baghi (2014), within a brand community, the relationship between a brand and its consumer can become so close that it feels almost like a friendship (p. 15). This shows that communities create stronger bonds that lead to higher conversions. For the MBA program, our community is based in our alumni network. We can leverage this network to show prospective students true success stories straight from past students themselves. They can become our brand ambassadors, in online videos, feature stories, and as speakers at different events to represent the MBA program in our community to our audience.

Then we can take that a step further and offer a mentorship program with our alumni network acting as peer mentors to current MBA students. This would be a great incentive to prospective students, especially Boot Camp students who might be looking for extra guidance during their program.

## BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS

### INBOUND MARKETING

Inbound marketing is a passive form of marketing, meaning that the content created is meant to bring individuals to a brand instead of seeking them out (Juska, 2021, p. 272). According to one of the leading organizations in inbound marketing, Hubspot (2022), inbound marketing is "the method of growing your organization by building meaningful, lasting relationships with consumers, prospects, and customers." This is done by attracting, engaging and delighting users with the content you're providing (Hubspot, 2022).

# IMC COMMUNICATION MIX

## INDUSTRY REPORTS & TRENDING TOPICS

Industry reports help promote knowledge and experience of a company or organization by highlighting trends and data from the industry that others can use, while trending topics highlight something popular for a short period of time (Juska, 2021, p. 273-274). For Drury's Graduate Studies department, we can use industry reports and articles on trending topics to highlight changes in the business, leadership and management industries to bring users to our website. From there, we can include language and call-outs on how having an MBA from Drury can help navigate the changes in the industry and provide more experience, since people who are visiting these links are already more likely to be interested in these fields.

## WEBINARS

86% of businesses use video as a marketing tool, and 92% consider it a valuable part of their strategy (Wyzowl, 2022). These numbers include the use of content like online webinars. This could be a part of a series hosted by the Graduate Studies department, featuring speakers who are local experts in the areas of business, management, and leadership to get interested audiences engaged. Then, during the webinar, there can be time allocated for a Drury University representative to talk about the Graduate Studies department, and specifically the MBA. There can even be polls given during the webinar to gauge individual interest for follow-up after the webinar is over to continue building a relationship and turning it into an application.

# CAMPAIGN TRACKING & EVALUATION

To measure the effectiveness of our campaign, we'll track the following metrics for each piece of our strategy:

## DIGITAL PLATFORMS

### WEBSITE

- Page views
- Time spent on the page
- Bounce rate - the number of people who leave a page without interacting with any content
- Where users came from - i.e., social media, search engines, directly clicking on links
- Conversions - the number of people who complete an application for an MBA degree

### EMAIL

- Open rate - the number of people who opened an email
- Click-through-rate - the number of people who clicked on a link in an email
- Growth rate/unsubscribes

# CAMPAIGN TRACKING & EVALUATION

## ONLINE VIDEO

- Views
- Likes, comments, and shares
- Watch time
- Clicks and click-through-rate
- Conversions

## TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING

## STREAMING ADVERTISING

- Downloads - to see potential audience size
- Source traffic from podcast links



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