

Foothill College

2009-2010 Marketing and Communications Plan

Introduction and Overview

Vision statement/mission

The Foothill College Marketing and Communications department develops and implements communication and marketing strategies to enhance public awareness of and participation in, the colleges many programs, services and activities. The office contributes to and supports the Foothill College mission by providing high-quality communications, timely service and by responding to new trends and technologies.

Introduction & Market Research

This document provides an overview of the 2009-2010 activities of the Marketing and Communications Department at Foothill College. Included are a summary of goals, annual marketing plan and a re-design of the college website.

The emphasis of this plan was determined by evaluating the changing needs our diverse student body through current market research as well as the college's past marketing experience. Based on these factors, we determined the effectiveness of various communications media, including print, television, radio, direct and email marketing and online advertising; key printed pieces including *The Heights* and the *Schedule of Classes*; the college Web site and other strategies.

As the natural progression of generations occur, the resonating style of communication in a culture changes as well. This shift happens about every 20 years. Looking at generations as groups of people who were exposed to world and national events in their childhood sheds light on the formation of their general world-views when they are adults. This information sheds light on:

1. How the different generations want to communicate;
2. What kinds of messages (and technologies) they receive more readily; and
3. Strategic communication tactics that have a higher likelihood of being effective.

A summary of generational groups that are included in the Foothill College community is below.

Silent Gen elders (1925 – 1945) – Value nuanced communication, sensitivity to minority positions; they are masters of policy, committees and processes. They trust credentialed experts. Communication style: administrative, policy-oriented, letter of the law. Masters of the expert opinion, think tanks.

Boomers (1946 – 1964) – Value vision and mission; believe in the importance of personal indulgence over institutional might. Communication style: megaphone.

Brilliant message crafters. Good creators of content that aligns to purpose and values with appeal to higher purpose and meaning. Masters of radio and television delivery.

GenXers (1965 -1980) – Value a pragmatic, realistic approach to daily life. Now-oriented, tech-savvy, nimble. Interested in function, efficiency and resourcefulness. Communication style: independent, not connected to an organization; focused on micro-subjects and personal expression of work. Masters of the Internet, blogging and publishing resources.

Millennials (1980 – 2002) – Value team, cohesiveness and their special mission as a generation. Collegial, conventional and deeply focused on peer-oriented activities. Communication style: upbeat, rally together, focused on the activity and approval of their peers. Masters of mobile and hand-held devices.

Homeland Gen (2002 to present) – Too young now, but will begin consuming media soon. To reach them, think Silent Gen (above), but with using new tools and technologies. Think virtual for reaching them.

To effectively communicate and market to existing and prospective students, Foothill College must use of a variety of strategies, based on our target audiences, and constantly re-evaluate its marketing methods and messages to meet our diverse student population.

Goals 2009-2010

1. Create and implement a 2009-2010 marketing plan to continue to address college-wide marketing needs and promote the Foothill brand. Work with research and enrollment managers to focus strategy. Expand use of online marketing venues such as Google Adwords and social networking sites.
2. Publish new collateral materials with consistent look and feel including a new Foothill view book brochure, Student Success Brochure, Transfer Brochure, PSME Transfer Track Brochure and Basic Skills Math brochure.
3. Implement a re-designed college Web site to improve visual identity, access to information and consistency of information and design.
4. Advance the use of electronic communication tools to communicate and market to students.
5. Direct successful implementation of student and employee portal connected to new Banner EIS, by June 30, 2010. Coordinate information rollout plans for student and employee groups. Create online collateral material for training groups to use the new system.
6. Improve office internal workflow processes to provide faster service to clients and better utilize department resources.

I. 2009-2010 Marketing Plan

Overview/strategy

This plan supports and overall campaign that positions the College in the community as well as provides a specific campaign for Fall 2009. Utilizing a targeted marketing plan, attract and recruit new students, encourage current students to continue and raise awareness of college image in the public. Assert the Foothill brand as distinct and superior to other community, technical and private colleges.

Brand Identity

Foothill College positions itself as a leader in high-quality transfer education, career training and professional development. All marketing and communications materials present a consistent reinforcement of this position and the core ideals behind it, through use of images, slogans and language.

Target Audience

Foothill College's marketing plan is focused to spend dollars in media outlets that will reach the largest potential number of students. Foothill defines its two primary target audiences as adults between ages 17 and 24 and ages 25 and 34. While Foothill College students span a huge diversity of age, ethnicity and demographic differences, these two large age groups define the largest part of the total enrollment. The marketing strategy uses age and location of current students as the primary indicator in determining key groups to market to.

Fall 2008 Foothill student demographics:

Age:	17-24	23%	Residence:	FHDA District	72%
	25-34	46%		San Jose	17%
	35+	31%		San Mateo Cty	11%

Based on these factors, Foothill defines its two primary target audiences as adults between ages 17 and 24 and ages 25 and 34.

The Competition

As technology and generational expectations change related to accessing higher education, Foothill must evolve its methods of communications in response to stay competitive in the marketplace. For instance, consumers now expect constant access and availability through the Internet, and our marketing communications need to convey Foothill's viability in terms of responding to technology and appealing to shifting values and preferences.

As we determine how to represent Foothill's unique value to prospective students we must remain knowledgeable regarding the strategies and benefits promoted by the following competitors:

1. Silicon Valley Community Colleges
2. Four-Year Public Institutions
3. Four-Year Private Institutions
4. Private For-Profit Institutions
5. On-Line Certificate and Degree Program

Why market Foothill when we have reduced class offerings and increased demand?

Continuity is the single most important factor in effective advertising. Foothill has spent over 50 years building its brand as a leader in high-quality transfer education, career training and professional development. With so many choices for higher education available to today's student, we can't afford to stop communicating our message and risk losing our competitive advantage.

As Sandra Golden mentions in her March 2009 *Community College Times* article "*Don't sell marketing short in bad economic times*," "While the temptation is to say we don't need to "market" when we already have more students than we can serve, effective strategic marketing and related public relations planning can provide tools that help colleges build support to survive these times and set a base for future effectiveness. Additionally, while overall enrollment may be up, some individual programs and specific underserved markets have not been saturated and still need attention and growth."

Marketing Objectives/Goals

Foothill's Associate Degree and certificate programs, student services, institutional development efforts, administrative functions, and college-sponsored community activities receive support and strategic direction from the Marketing and Communications Office. This includes creative and production support for: advertising, promotions, public relations, schedule of classes, catalogs, brochures, flyers, direct mail and web pages. These are the main tools that Foothill uses for communicating information and creating a positive, professional image.

For 2009-2010, the Marketing and Communications Office has prioritized communication strategies and promotional opportunities related to three primary objectives. We expect that focusing resources in these key areas will allow us to increase the effectiveness of our efforts.

- Develop a unique positioning for Foothill College to set it apart from competing schools in the Silicon Valley.
- Develop a Web 2.0 presence for the college.
- Extend Foothill's brand and image across all marketing vehicles to distinguish the college as superior to others in the area.

Messages

- Foothill College. Welcome to Success.
- There is something beautiful happening in the Los Altos Hills.
- Upgrade. Advance.
- Foothill College is a multicultural institution committed to meeting the evolving educational, economic and cultural needs of an increasingly technology-based global community.

Methods, Marketing Materials & Media Usage

1. ADVERTISING

The 2009-2010 marketing campaign combines television, radio, print, direct mail, email, and online marketing efforts to reach potential students. Mass marketing combined with targeted campaigns are designed to maximize communication with the College's audience.

Television

Foothill distinguishes itself from other community colleges through the beauty of its campus and its excellence in academic achievement. TV provides us with a unique opportunity to showcase that distinction.

The 30-second TV spot, "There is something special in the Los Altos Hills" targets our 25-39 year old audience and helps:

- Reinforce Foothill's brand to a large viewing audience.
- Reach viewers when they're the most attentive.
- Convey our message with sight, sound, and motion and help provide Foothill with instant credibility.

Timeline: **Sept. 7 through Sept. 20**

Channels: FX, MTV, Cartoon Network, USA, VHI, Oxygen TV, Style Network, Comedy TV, Discovery, TLC, Entertainment TV, Gala TV & Travel Channel

Frequency & Reach: 3.1; Gross impressions: 185,538

Radio

Radio advertising remains an affordable and effective medium for delivery of advertising to targeted audiences. It is a universal medium enjoyed by people at one time or another during the day, at home, at work, and in the car and allows us to personalize Foothill through the creation of campaigns using sounds and voices and reinforce Foothill's brand.

This fall Foothill developed two distinct radio spots to achieve the following goals:

- Promote general recruitment and brand awareness;
- Promote ESL Orientation for new students through Spanish radio.

The first spot, “Welcome to Success,” compliments the TV spot and is designed to reach our two core audiences (17 – 24 and 25 – 34). We select stations that best target each group, but also have a good crossover into large age categories.

The second spot, “ESL Orientation for New Students” promotes the ESL events Sept. 1 & 15 and is targeted to our two core audiences.

“Welcome to Success” ad

Timeline: Sept. 7 through Sept 20

Channels: KYLD 94.9 FM, KITS 105.3 FM and KMQV 99.7 FM

Frequency & Reach: 2.1; Gross impressions: Santa Clara Co. = 553,400, San Francisco Co. = 1,494,000

“ESL Orientation for New Students” ad

Timeline: Aug. 25 through Sept. 15

Channels: KRZZ 93.3 FM, KVVV 105.7 FM & KSOL 98.9 FM

Frequency & Reach: 3; Gross impressions: Santa Clara Co. = 227,000

Print

Foothill targets its print ads to reach the 35+ audience who regularly read a newspaper. While print advertising does cross over to reach the colleges two core audiences, its primary reach is in older students and parents of younger students. The ads emphasize retraining and career options.

Timeline: Winter/Spring quarters

Channels: *San Jose Mercury News, San Francisco Chronicle, Los Altos Town Crier, Palo Alto Weekly, Mt. View Voice, The Independent, and the Business Journal.*

Direct Mail

Direct mail provides many benefits in reaching our audience: it’s targeted, it’s personal, it’s flexible, and it’s tangible. It allows us to physically place our message in our customers’ hands and encourage interaction. This campaign uses targeted mass mailing and personalized direct mail to engage our audience.

The Heights - A mass-mail newsletter, designed to stimulate enrollment growth and highlight innovative classes, programs and faculty. The publication is mailed to 137,000 residents of the FHDA District four times a year in advance of the college’s new student registration period for fall, winter, spring and summer quarters.

Timeline: July, November, March and May.

New Student Orientation Postcard - mailed to 1141 students who were either enrolled in Counseling 50 during the summer session or a new student, 25 years or younger, with less than an associate degree, who are attending Foothill for the

first time in either summer or fall. We personalized the postcard to every recipient to help maximize results.

Timeline: Sept. 1

Parent Orientation Postcard – Primary objective: to get parents of students invited to New Student Orientation to come learn strategies to help their college student succeed, student rights and responsibilities, Foothill programs and support services, and financial aid and scholarship information.

Timeline: Sept. 1

E-Mail

E-mail marketing provides Foothill with the opportunity to develop better relationships with students, staff and community members and is more dynamic and adaptive than traditional marketing methods. It also provides us with a cost-effective method to connect with our supporters beyond the traditional fall recruitment timeframe.

Foothill Fusion, an e-newsletter with a subscriber list of 29,887, is distributed electronically every other week, with the goal to have subscribers stay informed of Foothill news and activities. Special alerts, like registration announcements, are periodically sent as stand alone emails for maximum impact.

Timeline: Sept. 17, Oct. 8, Oct. 29, Nov., 12, Dec., 3, Dec., 17, Jan., 21, Feb., 4, Mar. 4, Mar. 18, Apr. 1, Apr. 22, May 6, May 20, June 3 & June 17.

Online

The Internet has brought many unique benefits to marketing, including lower costs and greater capabilities for the distribution of information and media to a global audience. The interactive nature of Internet marketing, both in terms of providing instant response and eliciting responses, is a unique quality of the medium.

Foothill's marketing campaign takes advantage of these unique benefits through search engine marketing, online advertising and social medial marketing.

Search Engine Marketing

Google AdWords - Foothill's marketing campaign includes sponsored links and optimized page rankings of the Foothill name and Foothill programs with the Google search engine. Through Google AdWords, Foothill College purchases placement for general and program specific placement within the search engine.

Timeline: ongoing

Foothill Landing Page - Traffic from our search engine marketing is directed to our landing page (vs. our home page) and offers us the opportunity to follow up with prospective students and personalize their contact with Foothill College. Depending upon a student's interests, personalized email responses are sent out covering areas of study in Business, Fine Arts, Fitness, General Studies,

Healthcare & Technology. Additional emails are sent to prospects during registration periods and financial aid or program specific deadlines.

Timeline: ongoing

Online Advertising

Partnered with other methods of advertising, promote Foothill's brand through online ads on an advertisers website.

Timeline: Winter and Spring Quarter registration periods

Social Media Marketing

As Web 2.0 moves onto the Foothill campus, social media marketing plays a key role in developing relationships with our two core audiences (17-24 and 25-34). Social media allows people to connect with each other on levels, otherwise not possible. It allows people to get away from the usual commercial marketing messages — interruption marketing — that we see on the TV, and closes the barriers that usually exist between the user and the provider. Here's the best part: social media allows people to build relationships that can turn into something bigger, much bigger: alumni support, advanced degrees, etc.

Foothill's campaign incorporates profiles on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to reinforce the College's brand.

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/foothillcollege?ref=ts>

Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/Foothillnews>

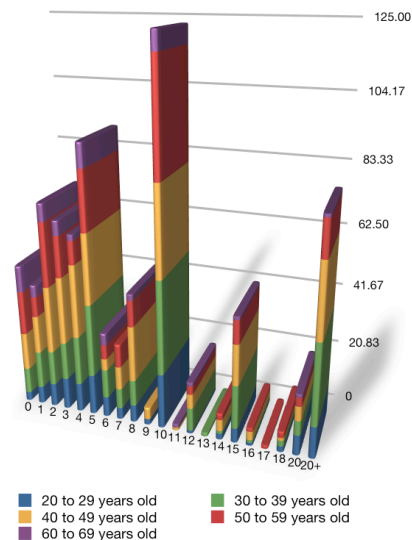
YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/FoothillCollege>

Social Media Marketing Age factor

People aged 30 to 39 are most likely to be using social media marketing (44.8% spending 10+ hours weekly), followed by 20- to 29-year-olds (40.3% spending 10+ hours weekly) and then 50- to 59-year-olds (38.7% spending 10+hours weekly).

*source: Social Media Marketing Industry Report © 2009 Michael A. Stelzner



Timeline: ongoing

On-Campus

LED display panel at Lohman Theater

Keep students on-campus informed of student activities, registration and financial aid deadlines.

Timeline: ongoing

Plasma display announcements – various spots on campus

Work with student affairs to keep students on campus informed of student activities, registration and financial aid deadlines.

Timeline: ongoing

2. PUBLICATIONS

The Foothill College Marketing and Communications Office, develops a wide assortment of college promotional and education materials. In addition to specific program requests, the Marketing and Communications Office produces:

Schedule of Classes: bundled with *The Heights* for currently enrolled students.

Timeline: July, November, March and May

2010-2011 Course Catalog

Timeline: July 2010

Foothill College General Brochure

Timeline: Sept. 2009

Student Handbook

Timeline: June 2010

International Program Brochures

Timeline: Sept. 2009

Commencement Program

Timeline: June 2010

3. PUBLIC RELATIONS

Press releases and articles placed in the media highlighting enrollment periods and registration. Focus for fall is register early.

Timeline: ongoing

7. EVALUATE EFFECTIVENESS

The following strategies will measure how much of our target audience is receiving Foothill College messages and which advertising venues they utilize the most.

- Fall 2009 Marketing Survey – Online survey to students to gather information on media patterns and advertising effectiveness.
- Google Analytics- College website pageview rankings and comparison pre and post campaign.

Timeline: Oct 2009 and April 2010

II. Web Redesign Plan

Project Plan and Goals

Overview

The Foothill College Web site has served the college well for many years, but in order to stay current and viable, an update to its graphic identity and site navigation is needed to improve access to information. Campus imagery needs to be outdated and campus life is needs to be more evident. Channels for new students, continuing students, registration and schedule need more clarity.

Plan

Foothill College began a college-wide process to update its site in Dec. of 2008. The Technology Task Force served as the lead shared governance group to oversee the process and ensure appropriate input was gathered. The ASFC also convened a student group that met frequently with the marketing and communications office to provide specific feedback. Following a concept development period from January of 2009 through May of 2009, a concept was approved and the work of converting the site began. The update will be ready for Winter 2010 and development work will continue through Fall Quarter 2010.

Research and Data Driving Project Goals

The marketing office and student services groups gathered data from internal and external surveys to inform decision-making for the new site. The information gathered includes issues and recommendations raised by students, faculty and staff. New concepts will be tested with students, faculty and staff, and data gathered will help our decision-making process throughout the project.

Project Goals:

- Improve clarity of site navigation to key content areas such as schedule, catalog, and new student information. Reduce the number of clicks to key content areas.
- Create role-based (new students, continuing students) and subject-based (classes, about Foothill, campus life) navigation channels on the home page.
- Reduce the information clutter on the home page and enhance the value of and traffic to pages such as News and Information and Student Services.
- Update campus imagery to communicate the quality and excellence of the campus.
- Create easy access to the new portal from the home page.
- Create community with enhanced campus life features.