

Agenda

1. What is Market Research, how it can be applied to Institutional Advancement, and methodologies
2. Areas of Inquiry and some learnings
3. Types of questions to ask
4. Issues to keep in mind

1.

What is Market Research...how it can be applied to Institutional Advancement... methodologies

Purpose of Market Research

To better understand the needs, wants, feelings, perceptions, and behavior of key constituencies (ie. alumni, students, parents)...

to provide your organization with valid, reliable data...

to help you make more informed decisions, develop more effective strategies, and provide more valuable services and resources.

Market Research in Advancement

- Measure attitudes, feelings, and perceptions
- Measure reach and effectiveness of communications
- Test fundraising messages and develop strategies
- Evaluate success of programs, services, and events
- Evaluate and improve customer service
- Test and develop advertising
- Understand town-gown issues and community relations
- Brand Identity and positioning

Smart Schools

- Adelphi University
- American College
- American University of Beirut
- Boston College
- Cardinal Stritch University
- Carnegie Mellon University
- College of Charleston
- Columbia University
- Dartmouth College
- Emory University
- Georgetown University
- Gustavus Adolphus College
- Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- Johns Hopkins University
- Lehigh University
- McGill University
- Macalester College
- Merrimack College
- Middlebury College
- New Jersey Institute of Technology
- Northwestern University
- Penn State University
- Pomona College
- Princeton University
- Queen's University
- Rutgers University
- Ryerson University
- Simon Fraser University
- Stanford University
- St. Norbert College
- Swarthmore College
- Temple University
- Trent University
- University of British Columbia
- University of California Berkeley
- University of Denver
- University of Maine
- University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
- University of Michigan-Flint
- University of the Pacific
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Southern California
- University of Toronto
- University of Virginia
- Vanderbilt University
- Washington College
- Willamette University
- Yale University

Methodologies

Quantitative

For **breadth** of information, to generalize

- Surveys
- Data mining

Qualitative and Observational

For **depth** of information, the whys and wherefores

- One-on-one interviews
- Focus groups
- Feedback mechanisms (e.g., pop-up surveys)
- User testing

2.

Areas of Inquiry and Some Learnings

Areas of Inquiry For Research On:

Development

Alumni Engagement

Communications

Program evaluation

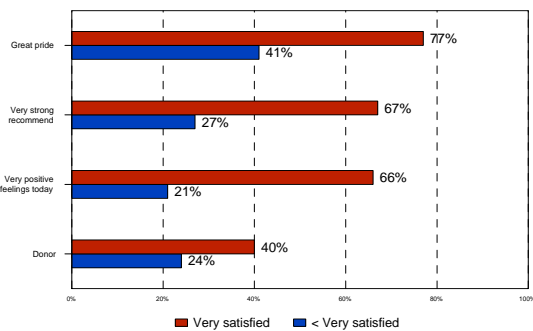
Branding

Areas of Inquiry: Development

- Feelings about their student experience
- Affinities and affiliations
- Feelings about and relationship with the university **today**
- Perceptions and awareness of the university **as it is now** - especially what it is doing to **deserve** their support
- Where they get news and information about the university
- Where they think donations go and where they **want** donations to go
- Unrestricted giving - does it reassure or raise questions
- Unrestricted vs designated giving (if applicable)
- Message testing - reasons to give
- Obstacle testing - reasons to **not** give
- Messengers - interest and trust

Learning: Student Satisfaction Correlates With Alumni Feelings and Support

Student Satisfaction and Advancement (Canadian University)



Learnings About Awareness and Affiliations Graduate Alumni from a US University's School of Engineering

Awareness

- Low awareness of why the School deserves their support - Rube Goldberg contraption

Affinities and Affiliations

They were twice as likely to identify with their department as with the School as a whole.

- Recommended that the School switch from School-based appeals to Department-based appeals.
- Following year: 44% increase in participation and 28% increase in dollars raised.

Learnings from Message Testing (US University)

Certain messages being used were not effective:

- Tuition does not cover the cost of the education, and even those who paid full tuition were subsidized and owe something in return.
- Alumni gifts help the university provide the great teaching and stimulating classes from which they benefited.
- Alumni have an obligation to give.

Certain new messages not being used could be more effective. University could demonstrate the IMPACT gifts have on:

- Individuals - through financial aid
- The University - by funding new programs and teaching initiatives
- The world we live in - research and scholarship done at the university lead to advances that make the world a better place.

Learnings About Obstacles to Giving: Graduate Alumni from a US University's School of Education

"Can't afford it" is an excuse, not a reason, for not giving.

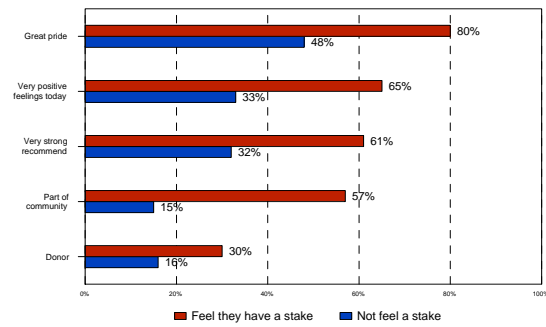
Low awareness of the School's impact on the world

- 70% - 90% of alumni had not even heard of five cutting-edge programs at the School designed to address the very issues they were most concerned about.

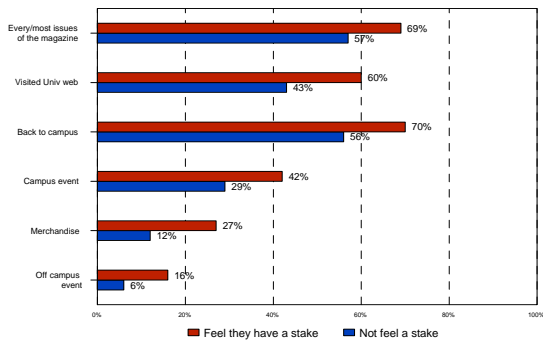
Areas of Inquiry: Alumni Engagement

- Feelings about their student experience
- Affinities and affiliations
- Feelings about and relationship with the university *today*
- Where they get news and information about the university
- How they currently interact/engage with the university and other alumni
- Interests: How they would *like* to interact/engage – focusing on benefits, not features
- Performance: How well they think the university is doing at providing those ways to interact/engage (benefits)

Learning: Feeling Invested Correlates With Alumni Feelings and Support Stakeholders and Advancement (Canadian University)



Learning: Feeling Invested Correlates With Continued Engagement Stakeholders and Activities Done in the Past Few Years (Canadian University)



Additional Areas of Inquiry For Alumni Associations

- If membership-based – reasons for joining or not joining, perceived benefits, perceived value
- Awareness of the Association and its programs and services
- Perceptions of the Association and its goals/mission

Areas of Inquiry: Communications

Readership surveys

- Where they get news and information about the university
- How often and how thoroughly they read the publication
- What sections they read
- Perceptions of the publication
- Feelings about the coverage given to different topics – are their needs being met
- How well does the publication achieve its editorial objectives

Web site usability testing

- Look and feel
- Content
- Navigation

Learning From User Testing and Focus Groups for a US University's Alumni Association Web Site

- "Dismembered roadkill, because it's something that's quite disjointed, with a lot of good parts that if you could put together into an organism might be quite beautiful."
- "A box of tiny little mice because it's got all these voices, but you have to listen really hard to figure out what each mouse is saying."
- "A hippo because it's ungainly, not too swift, seemingly approachable but isn't."
- "A duck because it's harmless and not exciting."

Learning From User Testing and Focus Groups for a US University's Alumni Association Web Site

Comments and user testing suggested deficiencies in design rather than content

- Organized by internal org chart (departments) rather than according to user needs (personal connections, events and clubs, learning, career, etc)
- Too much clutter on home page.
- Confusing navigation and labeling
- Site lacked character and personality
- Some features needed more robust functionality

"It looks like a lot of pro bono work just glommed together."

Areas of Inquiry: Program Evaluation

Before

- How they heard about the program
- Reasons they wanted to attend – benefits, features
- Feelings about registration and customer service

During

- Feelings about the different parts of the program
- Expectations
- Perceived value

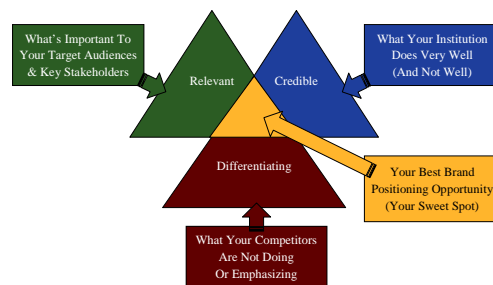
After

- To what extent did the program achieve its objectives and desired outcomes
- How likely to recommend to fellow alumni

Areas of Inquiry: Branding Research

- Current brand image
 - awareness,
 - Perceptions
 - +/- associations
 - Triggers
- Brand architecture opportunities
 - House of Brands vs. Branded House
- Aspirational brand identity
 - Core Brand Essence
- Brand positioning opportunities
 - Relevant/Meaningful
 - Credible
 - Differentiating

Areas of Inquiry: Branding Research



3.

Types of Questions to Ask

Feelings About the University

Feel a great deal, a fair bit, only a little, or not much at all?

- Pride in your UBC degree
- An emotional connection to UBC
- A sense that UBC is part of who you are
- A feeling that you are still part of the UBC community
- A sense that you have a stake in UBC's success and achievements
- A feeling that you only hear from the University when it's asking for money
- Etc

Engaging with the University

Focus on *benefits* (e.g., socializing), rather than *features* (e.g., pub nights)

Interest: Very interested, somewhat interested, not interested

- Socializing with other alumni
- Networking with other alumni
- Staying informed about campus news and what's happening at the University
- Events or resources with an intellectual or educational focus
- Job and career services
- Getting involved with current students
- Etc

Performance: How good a job is the University doing at providing xxx – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Perceptions of the Alumni Association

Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree

Statements

- The primary purpose of the alumni association is to raise money
- The alumni association does more to serve the needs and interests of the University than the needs and interests of alumni
- The alumni association is a good organization for alumni like me
- The alumni association seems more clique-ish than broad and diverse
- Etc

Adjectives/Phrases

- Innovative
- High quality
- Diverse
- Welcoming
- Not relevant
- Outdated
- Stuffy
- Timid
- Etc

The University As it is Now

Awareness: How informed they feel they are about positive developments (that demonstrate the constructive role the university plays in the community/world or why it deserves their support)

Perceptions of the university's strengths and weaknesses – open-ended (top of mind) and closed-ended questions testing specific items

Feelings about changes (very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, very negative)

- The higher GPA now required for admission to UBC
- The development of University Town
- The increase in the international student body
- The variable tuition rates charged by faculties and for international students
- The new UBC Okanagan campus
- Etc

Editorial Objectives

How good a job does the magazine do at xxx – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

- Keep you informed about the research and scholarship being done at the university
- Keep you informed about student life at the university today
- Keep you informed about alumni and what they are doing
- Reflect the complexity and diversity of XXX and the XXX community
- Give you a feeling for why you should care about the university today
- Reflect the range of ideas explored on campus
- Give you a sense of the university's history
- Etc

Program Evaluation: Objectives and Outcomes

How much did your experience at Leading Matters Seattle enhance or reaffirm xxx – a great deal, a fair bit, only a little, or not much at all?

- Your pride in your Stanford affiliation
- A sense that Stanford values its alumni
- Your interest in attending other alumni events in the area
- A sense that you should be involved with Stanford
- Your understanding of the university's vision for the 21st century
- Your interest in volunteering for Stanford
- Your understanding of The Stanford Challenge

The Net Promoter Question: Measuring Positive and Negative Word of Mouth

On a scale of 0 to 10 – where 0 is “not at all likely” and 10 is “extremeley likely” – how likely would you be to recommend xxx to a classmate?

- 9 and 10 = Promoters
- 7 and 8 = Passives
- 0-6 = Detractors

Net Promoters = Promoters - Detractors

Follow-up question (open-ended):

- For promoters: Main reasons gave it that score
- For detractors: What would we need to do to get a higher score?

4.

Issues to keep in mind

Who should conduct the research – internal or external?

- Time, budget, research expertise vs knowledge of topic, objectivity vs bias, confidentiality, political considerations

Defining the population – whom do you want to learn about?

Methodology – quantitative, qualitative, observational

If survey: What mode – phone or online?

- Coverage
- Response
- Sample/quota control
- Questionnaire design – logic, tables, stimuli (graphics, video, etc)
- Cost
- Time

If survey: Determining the sample size, sub-groups to analyze (e.g., age, gender, region, faculty, etc)

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