

Marketing Message Analysis

This semester our class was given the opportunity to work with community members of Selinsgrove to help build the relationship between the Selinsgrove community and Susquehanna University. After conducting many interviews, in-depth research about Selinsgrove and receiving the data based on those interviews, our team decided to establish a Susquehanna University Community Liaison program. This program would consist of a few SU students who would network with local businesses, attend monthly meetings with business owners to update them on SU information and be a continuous line of communication between the University and the residents of Selinsgrove. These liaisons would bridge the gap between SU and the town by talking to local residents and businesses about their wants and needs from SU.

Describe the audience that this communication is designed for (use segmentation strategies and audience analysis data to support)

The purpose of our project is to improve relations between SU and the borough of Selinsgrove by helping residents communicate their concerns and ideas through a team of community liaisons. The general audience of this project is the entire residential population of Selinsgrove. Our team used market segmentation to divide the Selinsgrove population into groups of people with similar traits. We discovered that the average Selinsgrove resident is over the age of 65 and that the average resident makes between 50,000 and 75,000 dollars per year (Claritas). Keeping these facts in mind when formulating our idea helped us create a program that is easily accessible to the older population and that is of no cost to the town. Based on the interviews we conducted, we observed that local business owners and active community members were the most vocal and specific in their opinions regarding SU-Selinsgrove relations.

Because of their obvious concern, we believe that addressing this market segment will be the most effective strategy for introducing our community liaisons to the Selinsgrove population.

Describe the vehicle/ format used to deliver or circulate this message (leaflet dropoff in stores, posters in downtown, local radio, Facebook messages, Youtube videos). What is the affordance or constraints of this format/ vehicle?

Our team decided to use a brochure to introduce our proposed solution in a physical format that will be easy to distribute to local business owners. The tri-fold brochure includes the purpose of our community liaisons, the activities the liaisons will perform to improve communication, and contact information for anyone who wants to become involved. An affordance of the brochure format is that the liaisons will have the opportunity to interact with our target audience by visiting storefronts on Market Street to hand-deliver the brochures to business owners and answer any immediate questions. Ideally, business owners will accept additional brochures to keep on display for any of their patrons who would be interested in taking advantage of the opportunities our liaisons offer. Another approach to distribution would be through the local Selinsgrove community meetings that our liaisons will be attending. The main constraint of the brochure format is that, because it is not a digital form of communication, there is no convenient link or button that would serve as our call to action for the target audience. To overcome this, we have included links with simplified URLs so that business owners and community leaders are provided with the “next steps” to contact SUCL.

Narrative Framing: What is the “big story” behind this message? How have you used shared values to communicate with your audience?

The overall “big story” behind the message the brochure conveys is that community members and local business owners need to become more informed about events that occur at Susquehanna University. Residents also need to know that SU students can be used as a resource to the town. The brochure shows that Susquehanna University students are willing to give back to the community. Approximately 50.4% of Selinsgrove residents surveyed said that they were not aware of any volunteer opportunities that students are involved with on-campus or in the town. In a two-semester school year, SU students and alumni put in 25,000 volunteer hours. We especially want to show that Susquehanna University is not a separate entity from the rest of the town, rather the liaison program attempts to bridge the gap between the university and Selinsgrove. The shared values, of which both Susquehanna University and Selinsgrove have, are that they want to build a better community while students continue their education and families grow. It’s important that we value open communication between the town and the university, understanding, trustworthiness, and serving the community that surrounds SU.

What evidence led you to design this message in this way? (Interview insight, competitive analysis, auditing of existing messages)

We were able to gain better insight into the community members' thoughts, feelings, and values through community forums and interviews with residents. The interviews were the most valuable tool because one of the questions asked the community members about how they receive their information about SU. Many of the respondents had said they would prefer to receive information either through Facebook or in a tangible form (i.e. newspaper, or flyer). Also, based upon our demographic research many of the community members are older (65 years and up) which means they might not be as technologically advanced as younger community members. Our team wanted to ensure that our marketing message would not exclude

anyone. These responses led our group to create a brochure since it would be a tangible object to convey our information with community members. The brochure allows our team to provide detailed information about the SUCL and how it will impact the Selinsgrove community for the better.

Describe the content of the message including any items of importance e.g. Aesthetics (sound, color, logo, pictures, images) or Stories, Roles and Values. Why did you design it in this way?

The content of our message covers the bases of SUCL's main purpose and mission, addressing that this is our solution to the problem of miscommunications. We have emphasized within this narrative that SUCL was developed in response to the feedback provided by Selinsgrove residents. To attract the attention of our target audience of local business owners and community leaders, we introduce specific examples of the ways that SUCL will improve communication between the university and the borough. The links and contact information included in the brochure serve to encourage businesses and local organizations to reach out to SUCL and initiate their involvement/interactions with our liaisons. While the liaisons will be contacting business owners and organizations themselves, the brochure is intended to serve as a more efficient way of attracting those who will be most interested in following through with participation. The brochure was designed using the official Susquehanna University orange and maroon to demonstrate the association SUCL has to the university. The images show actual Susquehanna University students on Market Street and on campus. These decisions were made to add legitimacy to SUCL as an extension of the university.

What are the allusions/ feelings/ emotions that you are trying to evoke from the message? Why is this important?

The brochure for SUCL is informative and gives community members an opportunity to become more involved with Susquehanna. The message that we want to evoke is a logos-based call to action. Logos is a message that is centered on logic while the call to action is a command or prompt for a specific action. Within the brochure, the “call to action,” or logos, is the opportunity that the community members and business owners have to contact the SUCL if they would like to become a community partner or if they would like Susquehanna University students to intern/work for their local business. The allusion that the brochure and the organization will create is one of comfort and familiarity. Most residents are already familiar with Susquehanna University, so this brochure communicates that SU wants to have a more active role as a part of the community and is willing to open channels of communication with the town in order to improve their relationship.

In seeing this message, what is the action you want your audience to take or the role you want your audience to take on?

The brochure is the way in which our group will convey the importance and the reasoning for creating SUCL to our audience, the local business owners, and community organization members of Selinsgrove. We want our audience to take action by telling the SUCL how they would like to develop a mutually beneficial relationship with Susquehanna University and become more involved with students. This could involve developing incentives for students to visit local businesses or connecting business owners and students to create internships or other opportunities for students to apply their coursework in a real-life setting. By introducing these potential outcomes in our brochure, we are encouraging the target audience to reach out to the SUCL so that the liaisons can put them in contact with the correct students, department, faculty or staff at SU.

Works Cited

Claritas. Claritas Pop-Facts Demographics, 2019, <https://claritas360.claritas.com/mybestsegments/#zipLookup>. Accessed 16 December 2019.