Student-Run Advertising Agency: A Showcase for Student Work.

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ABSTRACT One of the best forums for teaching creativity in advertising is the student-run advertising agency. It is organized like a typical advertising agency with a creative department, a media department, a research department and an account service department, and has a pyramidal structure. Student-run advertising agencies exist for two primary reasons: (1) they help to give the student experience; and (2) they provide a service to the community. Comments from former participants in student-run advertising agencies who are now employed in advertising show that experience in on-campus agencies gives students a competitive edge in their job searches. The teaching environment in a student-run advertising agency is more like the professional world and less like the academic world because it teaches by doing, in a hands-on environment. (Nineteen examples of student work are attached.) (SR)
Student-Run Advertising Agency: 
A Showcase for Student Work

by

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Student-Run Advertising Agency: 
A Showcase for Student Work

One of the best forums for teaching creativity in advertising is in the student-run advertising agency. These agencies are generally filled with energetic advertising majors who have a great desire to "build their book". Since student agencies have recently gained recognition as a laboratory opportunity for advertising students, the next step is to use this ready-made environment for teaching.

The student-run advertising agencies' increased level of attention is a function of the increasing advertising student enrollments in colleges and universities throughout the United States. In the thirteen year period ending in 1988, undergraduate programs, in general, increased by 18%, while journalism programs increased by 32%. Advertising has led the growth in journalism and now accounts for more than 15% of all the nation's journalism and mass communications students—1989 was the first year that advertising surpassed news-editorial in number of students. (1)

Foskit and Wolter found only eight student-run advertising agencies in 1989, but there has been growth. (2) While no one knows how many of these agencies exist in total, a study conducted at the University of Kansas found that when the 370 U.S. universities registered with the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications were surveyed, twenty-three indicated that they have a student-run advertising agency. A prediction that this learning environment will increase in the future is easily accepted. (3)

It is not unusual to find students dedicated to the success of the student-run advertising agency. One such agency meets at 7:30 Wednesday mornings, yet as many as 135 people might show up. This dedication and desire to make the agency live, can be translated into a learning environment for the students. This learning environment is aided by the organization, the inherent reason for these agencies' being, and a unique teaching methodology. These benefits translate into quality student work worthy of a portfolio. The quality of the student's portfolio will impact on the quality of the career starting position a student can expect after graduation.

"Advertising agencies are looking for the very best portfolios they can find." (4)
Organization:

The student-run advertising agency is organized like a typical advertising agency with a creative department, a media department, a research department and an account service department. Each department is headed by a director. This "Navy chain of command" allows for an ideal teaching environment. The creative director oversees several associate creative directors (ACD) who in turn oversee a group of writers and artists. Each ACD is responsible for an account or group of small accounts. This pyramidal structure allows the instructor to review creative work after it has filtered up to the creative director. Quality control and an easy teaching environment can be implemented because the instructor need only educate one student about the importance of professionalism and the responsibility that goes with it.

For example, one student advertising agency pitched the student yearbook on a trade-out basis. The yearbook agreed to grant a full page ad to the student-run advertising agency, and the agency agreed to prepare the advertising that the yearbook needed for the student-run newspaper. When the ACD consistently came up with mediocre creative work, the creative director preached quality control to the ACD and only involved the instructor for support.

Reason for Being:

Student-run advertising agencies exist for two primary reasons. The key reason for the agency's being is the opportunity the agency provides for students to gain experience. Students increase their propensity to acquire a solid start in the advertising profession when they have had actual experience. This experience is available and is important for every advertising discipline—account management, media, research and creative. Secondarily, the agency gives student, faculty and the university an avenue for providing service to the community.

Helps to give the student experience (Laboratory):

A student-run advertising agency is one of the best opportunities available to students whether
they are seeking a writing or visual creative career. It is one of the first opportunities that students have to test their new-found knowledge, and they get to do it while they are still in the learning environment of the university. It is a strong introduction to professionalism for those that want a career in advertising. They can try a variety of positions in the Agency (they could never do that in real life). The opportunity to work in account management, media, research, art, and/or copy can help them to determine their interests. Students can then hone their talents in what will be the best and most rewarding field for them. They can also apply their immediate classroom learning to real life problems; for example, they can take a visual or graphics course and try their hand as an art director, or they can take a media class and then go to work in the media department. Whatever class they are taking can be put into practice through the student agency. It helps prepare students for the competition they will face after graduation, because it is theory put into practice.

The next generation of advertising professionals is running student advertising agencies now. These quasi-professionals are learning, making mistakes [but not being fired for those mistakes] and learning to not make them a second time. They are learning what advertising is really about from the safe environment of the student-run agency. They are also learning that clients are tough. Clients suddenly change from the pleasant person giving an in-class assignment to someone signing a check. Account people are learning how to develop basic strategy, they are also learning to communicate effectively with their clients and within the Agency. Media people are learning to present information correctly and how to deal with salespeople. The creatives are learning to stand up for what they think is right, they are getting a chance to put produced pieces in their portfolio. Research people are learning how to personally interview respondents (because there is never enough money for research). Everyone is learning that advertising is very different when you are actually doing it, not just reading about it. This experience is helping to give students confidence, and is allowing them to approach the title "professional". (5)
Provides an opportunity to give something back to the community.

The student-run advertising agency can provide low-cost advertising service to businesses that do not currently employ the services of an advertising agency. This could be due to of the cost of a professional agency, or the simple fact that many small businesses do not understand the value of an agency. The service that the agency provides will benefit the university, the unit, the professor and the student. All have the chance to give something to others. Advertising has a propensity to attract people interested in getting all they can for themselves. That's okay, because advertising is a competitive business by its very nature (and the advertising itself is becoming more and more competitive), but the student-run advertising agency may be an opportunity for this next generation of advertising professionals to learn altruism—on a small scale.

Given these two goals, it is important to recognize key constraints that may exist. The most important of which is for the agency to remain competitively neutral. That is, the student-run advertising agency may not compete with private enterprise. Most states have statutes prohibiting government from competing with private industry. [Student-run advertising agencies will have some benefit from the university—free space or a place to meet if nothing else—and since many universities are supported by state government, some people construe student-run advertising agencies as enterprises supported by the state.]

Helps to find jobs after graduation (accountability):

Advertising is a university program that is increasing in popularity at alarming rates each year. There may be as many as fifteen thousand students who will graduate with a degree in advertising (according to some estimates) yet there may be as few as four or five thousand jobs. The Los Angeles Times recently reported that the job market for new advertising graduates is so poor that many of the students initially work without pay just to get the connections they need to find a paying job. (6)

But this dismal picture may be offset through the student-run advertising agencies.
Student-run agencies are doing the same thing for advertising students that student-run newspapers have been doing for news/editorial and photo students. In fact, student-run advertising agencies are providing a new accountability test for advertising programs. (3)

On-campus agencies are giving advertising students a competitive edge—a positive point of difference that is helping these students in their job search. Here are a few examples:

Craig Simpson, a copywriter at Kirshenbaum & Bond in New York City and formerly a copywriter at Allen Hall Advertising (the student-run advertising agency) at the University of Oregon, puts student-run advertising agency experience into perspective. "It helped me to understand what an agency is all about. It's a realistic introduction to the purpose of advertising. I present my work to my clients at Kirshenbaum & Bond the same that I did at Allen Hall. It really prepared me."

Another ex-campus agency person relates her story of interviewing after graduation. She was told by personnel that three people were going to be hired in the agency's account service department that year, and that the three candidates had already been chosen. She asked if any of the three had helped to build an advertising agency from scratch, or if any had experience actually working in account service for an advertising agency? When personnel guffawed, she said, "You might as well call number three right now, because I'm taking that spot." And she did. She obviously learned assertiveness along with advertising.

Jed Schroeder is in account management at Foote, Cone & Belding in Chicago. He is also the past president of Oread Advertising (the student-run agency) at the University of Kansas. Jed gives a lot of credit to his campus agency experience in saying, "I know that my experience at Oread got me interviews. Once (I was) in the interviews, people were impressed with the drive it took to run an on-campus agency. They were also impressed with the practical experience that could not be gained in a classroom, and was not offered in any graduate program."

(More)
When asked if his student-run advertising agency experience helped him find his first job, Jack Fund, past president of Allen Hall Advertising and currently a copywriter at Rubin Postaer in Los Angeles said, "The confidence I learned dealing with clients gave me the where-with-all to deal with advertising people in interviews."

Journalism schools, incorporating advertising programs, have long prided themselves on their ability to place graduates in professional positions. Since advertising now has so many graduates, the ability of the students to actually find advertising jobs after graduation has become more difficult. Students are learning that they have to create ways to differentiate themselves from the hordes. The on-campus advertising agency is certainly one method. Jed Schroeder may have said it best, "If I didn't have experience at Oread Advertising, there is no way I would have the job I have now."

The student run advertising agency can provide an avenue to make advertising students more marketable in the highly competitive job market that follows graduation. (3)

Teaching Methodology:
The student run advertising agency provides an environment that fosters hands-on teaching. The teaching environment is more like the professional world and less like the academic world because it teaches by doing, in a hands-on environment. A large number of professionals learned in the same way, with one person teaching and one person learning by doing. The chain of command with multiple layers makes this learning environment possible, because quality and thinking filter down. Students quickly learn, however, that this method can be frustrating as their associate creative director approves some work only to find the student agency creative director votes thumbs down. Occasionally, this will happen at the advisor level as well.

The benefit of the chain-of-command organization outweighs the negative of distancing final approval from the advisor. S/he can then help the agency to actually increase the quality of the (More)
work for clients, service to the community, and quality of student portfolio pieces. The pyramidal organization allows this to be done without letting the advisor get bogged down in the minutia of evaluating every piece of advertising, every concept, every research proposal or every time an account person recommends a change in a newspaper ad size. This freedom is mandatory for time commitment reasons for virtually every faculty member that will serve as a student-run advertising agency advisor.

The advisor acts as the ship's captain ... neither steering, nor navigating, nor powering the vessel. There is a great temptation to do more, but the advisor must take great care to only advise. (7)

The Future:

As advertising programs continue to increase in numbers and as advertising jobs become fewer, the students that make it as creatives in the advertising business will have to separate themselves from the multitudes. The student-run advertising agencies are providing the opportunity for students to do just that. Universities, journalism programs, and especially advertising programs are finding themselves graduating too many people for the job market. Preparation of the students is key. And, outcomes assessment is a major factor in these programs. Students must find a way to become more competitive, and to differentiate themselves in the job market. The student-run advertising agency is helping. It is not, however, a substitute for classroom learning.

Conclusion:

Students, faculty, and administrators have to address the problem of preparing students for the highly competitive job market. Creative people need a portfolio. The student-run advertising is one way to allow creative people to acquire that portfolio. Account people, media people and
research people need the work experience to separate themselves from all the other advertising graduates. The student-run advertising agency is providing that experience.

The work that the students can put into their portfolio is the real test of whether student-run advertising agencies are making it or not. The following nineteen pieces are examples of student work (see attached).

Examples:

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<td>6. Travis &amp; MaGuire</td>
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<td>&quot;We don't copy...&quot;</td>
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References:


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Energy III

Baseball Promotion

The baseball promotion included a three piece mailing to building contractors. The first mailing included a letter telling the potential customer about Energy III insulation and included a baseball bat in a box with the copy, "THE ONLY BATT WORTH USING" printed on the box.

The second mailing included a baseball with the copy, "THE ONLY PITCH WORTH USING" printed on the box, with another letter telling the benefits of Energy III insulation.

The third mailing had the letter with benefits and a baseball-like ticket to a breakfast presentation for the construction industry to learn about Energy III.

(Slides will be available if the paper is accepted for presentation.)
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Polly Flug is the S-J-M-C Internship Coordinator.  
Office: Meredith 105. Phone: (515) 271-3867

In the 1990’s, the role of communications in all sectors of society will be even more important. From the reporter at a small weekly newspaper to the account executive of a major advertising agency, professional journalists and mass communicators will have more demanded of them and expected of them than at any time in the past. To meet this challenge, the School of Journalism and Mass Communication offers a comprehensive program designed to broaden and deepen the student’s understanding of theory and practice of journalism and mass communication.

Dr. Michael Cheney, Dean, Drake University’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication knows how to prepare its students for the demands of the “real world,” and it shows. The curriculum we’ve developed for all SIMC majors sets them on their way to achieving their life’s goals. Over 93 percent of SIMC majors are employed within six months of graduation.

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...use up-to-date cameras, processors and other equipment essential to contemporary radio and television.

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...are involved with student television productions and campus and community operations.
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D.D.B. Needham

J. Walter Thompson

An informational meeting for new interns will be held on Wednesday, January 23, 1991 at the University YMCA, Conference Room K1 at 7:00 p.m. For more information, please call (217) 373-4300 or (217) 367-7286.

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Two salons with a single purpose
No matter how rebellious we all once were, we simmer down sooner or later. As Tuscola National Car Loan Officers, Dave Lecher and Larry Kresin know all about that.

Dave used to speed around in a souped up T-Bird, and Larry's Studebaker Silverhawk was a thing of beauty. They'd race those things as fast as the country road would let 'em.

Believe it or not, these "rabble rousers" have settled down. Now they're serious about loaning, so that others will have their own set of keys. And they've been making car loans for quite a few years now.

That doesn't mean the thrill of new cars has left them. No, it's just the reverse. Dave and Larry are as excited for your new car as they were for their beauties.

They're fast racers in a different way. They'll bend over backwards to get you a car loan as fast as they can. Most of the time, you'll have your financing in an hour. And Tuscola National car loans are for the car you want, not the slow-selling car that dealer financing pushes.

When it comes to car loan approvals, Dave and Larry put the pedal to the metal.

Stop in and ask for Dave Lecher and Larry Kresin for your Tuscola National Car Loan.

Tuscola National
Car loans faster than the going rate.
This week, Burrito Man has some helpful study tips for finals week...

Translation:
"First, find a well-lit study area with plenty of room for notes and books."

Translation:
"Then call up some classmates who would make a good study group."

"Then go to La Bamba for a well-deserved study break!"

La Bamba!

Food for Thought.
Food for Lunch.

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