

Promoting Wellness Programs to College Students

RELAX program at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

Danielle Tucker

Advised by

James Keese

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ABSTRACT

Within this research paper, I will discuss the many components to marketing a wellness program to college students. I will discuss the marketing techniques that have been successful, the different marketing styles, information about wellness programs, what quality of life is and how wellness programs promote it, the marketing techniques applicable to college students, history of Academic Health Centers, Social Marketing Theory, and preventative healthcare for college students. The RELAX Program, at California Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo, is what I will really be focusing on and the marketing styles that apply to it and the demographic it is being marketed to.

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Project Proposal

For my senior project I will be marketing a wellness program at PULSE in the Health Center. It is a new program that is focused on relaxation as a way to de-stress; called Relax. I will be marketing Relax to a target audience; the students at Cal Poly. Any student has the opportunity to come in and use our Relax facility. The facility is comprised of a private room with a state of the art massage chair, aromatherapy, soothing music, and calming light fixtures. The program allots for 15 minute sessions of room use, but if at any time the participant feels uncomfortable they can use the intercom to have a Peer Health Educator come assist them.

I plan to make this program known to students with handouts, which I will distribute to classes, as well as getting a feature article and “Word on the Street” coverage in the Mustang Daily, and PSA’s on KCPR radio and Cal Poly TV, to describe the program. I will use stakes along Via Carta to promote Relax. I will also have Peer Health Educators hand out a flyer, or have information incorporated into all the presentations that are given. I will identify a graphics savvy student and work with them to create posters to be put up within the upper level of the Health Center, and distributed throughout the campus. I will develop a Relax website template for inclusion on Cal Poly’s HCS website.

For the second part of my senior project I will write a 25-30 page paper on marketing a program toward a target audience. Within this paper I will discuss

the ways programs have been successful in marketing wellness programs, as well as the ways in which they have been unsuccessful. I will discuss specific cases and their results. I will discuss in detail how I marketed Relax as well as the results I obtained. I will have a survey for each participant to complete at the end of their time in the program and find which marketing technique I used was the most successful.

Annotated Bibliography

The wellness boom. (2007). *Economist*, 382(8510), 51-52.

The article focuses on the wellness industry. It's an industry that includes spas, traditional and alternative medicines, spirituality, fitness, nutrition, and beauty products. The article profiles Canyon Ranch, a fitness resort in Tucson, Arizona as an example of the industry's need for a multifaceted business plan. Several other companies aimed at becoming major players in the industry and their strategies are discussed. There is growing evidence that focusing holistically on wellness can reduce health-care costs by emphasizing prevention over treatment. A growing number of employers now promote wellness at work, both to cut costs and to reduce stress and health-related absenteeism. Surveys find that three out of four adult Americans now feel that their lives are "out of balance", says Mr. Kelly. So there is a huge opportunity to offer them products and services that make them feel more "balanced". But, there is much debate about the health benefits of vitamin supplements, organic food and alternative medicines, let alone different forms of spirituality. The wellness boom seems to be sustainable and doesn't seem to be a fad about to go out of style. This article

is important to my senior project because it discusses wellness programs, which I am trying to market. (202words).

Evans, D. (1997). Health promotion, wellness programs, quality of life and the marketing of psychology. *Canadian Psychology*, 38(1), 1-12.

This paper focuses on 15 yrs of research into the definition of quality of life and the factors that influence it. There were four studies with 3 samples of 780 residents of London, Ontario, are presented. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between behavioral, affect, and satisfaction measures of quality of life. The results show that different measures of global quality of life and wellness are measuring essentially the same thing, that there may be some basis for viewing the mental health component measure on the survey as highly indicative of quality of life, and that important psychological factors contributing to health and quality of life include such personality factors as hardiness, self-esteem, optimism, locus of control, and extraversion. It also describes a strategy to enhance quality of life using the Quality of Life Questionnaire, and group interventions to enhance personality characteristics. It brings up an important point, it can be argued that one avenue to the development of health promotion programs is the development of programs to enhance quality of life. [Day and Jankey \(1996\)](#) have suggested that an individual's personality determines the way in which they confront their circumstances and equivocally their quality of life. This is pertinent to my senior project because it discusses promoting health programs, which is also what I am doing. (221 words)

Robin, J. (1997). Tactics for attracting the college crowd. *Nation's Business*, 85(12), 10.

This article was not lengthily, but it gave many good tactics for marketing towards college aged people. Ian Leopold, president of Campus Concepts Inc., a Baltimore advertising firm that targets the 18-to-24 age group, offers these easy and relatively inexpensive suggestions. The first is to set up a table in the campus center or student union to market your products and services or simply gauge student interests. It also suggested hiring a student representative to post signs, invite people to events you're sponsoring, or hand out fliers. Such workers are relatively inexpensive and can boost sales by putting a youthful face on your business. He also suggests sponsoring college teams and clubs. Intramural sports are among the most popular extracurricular college activities. Leopold suggests putting your logo on team uniforms, distributing free samples of your product at games, and sponsoring tournaments. This article had many good strategies for marketing to a target audience; college students. This article helps me in my senior project because it discusses many tactics in which one would market towards college aged students, which is my target audience. (182words)

Souba, W. , Haluck, C. , & Menezes, M. (2001). Marketing strategy: An essential component of business development for academic health centers. *The American Journal of Surgery*, 181(2), 105-114.

In this article the history of academic health centers (ACHs) is discussed. It shows how ACHs didn't market effectively from a business standpoint. The

marketing strategies and tools currently being developed and utilized by AHCs were reviewed. Word-of-mouth promotion was their primary, if not sole, marketing strategy. Less emphasis was placed on preparing, pricing, distributing, and promoting these services to targeted audiences. They found that understanding the customers' needs was not a top priority. In an effort to attract customers and win contracts, AHCs are now aggressively marketing themselves by designing new services. They are promoting those services much more intensely, changing the entire distribution system that delivers those services, and crafting pricing strategies that build in flexibility for their target audience. With growing frequency, these marketing tactics are part and parcel of a carefully crafted data-driven strategic plan designed to meet the business-development goals of the institution. These changes came about because of the driving force behind health-care reform and the alleged inability of employers to continue to bear the rising costs of health care. Other powerful stakeholders, including the government, patients, and insurers, also favored reducing health-care expenditures. This article relates to my senior project because it discusses marketing towards a target audience, which is what I am doing. (211 words)

Hayes, T. (2007). Delphi study of the future of marketing of higher education. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), 927-931.

This paper discusses taking a historic perspective on the discipline of marketing of higher education. From this, the paper offers an insight into what the future holds for educational marketing foundation in the market. The reported study sets groundwork for future research and debate. It concludes by drawing attention to

what administrators and marketers will need to consider in the future. That this view simply reflects reality is an alternate explanation. In the past five years, CASE has embraced the concept of marketing in higher education. The American Council on Education (ACE), which serves and helps train university and college presidents, has yet to include marketing in the organization's curriculum and conferences. Until the associations leading higher education to the future become more open to marketing thought, theory and practice, a shift is not likely. In particular the importance of blending strategic planning with marketing and developing integrated marketing systems is developed. Perhaps the most interesting and potentially insightful prediction is that marketing offices will morph into existence. The participants express a strong belief that marketing departments will eventually combine with offices of strategic planning. This article is helpful for my senior project because it describes past marketing tactics towards college students, and what was affective for them. (208 words)

McGuigan, F. (1994). Stress management through progressive relaxation.

International Journal of Stress Management, 1(2), 205-214.

This article discusses the shortcomings of stress management programs and explores the techniques of progressive relaxation which can more effectively help an individual deal with stressors in their life. This article discusses how stress management programs often tell someone what to do but not how to do it. They also sometimes offer prescriptions that complex in that mental events can control physical behavior and yet be simple in that they only consider limited systems of the body. I. M. Sechenov's (1863) paradigm to control behavior, the "how", is

that some bodily event can control other bodily events. E. Jacobson's Progressive Relaxation (PR) provides the strategies and tactics for such self-control, principally through covert speech and eye responses that can be electrically measured. Applications of PR are for preventive and therapeutic purposes when one must adapt to, rather than change, stressors. It is discussed how the practice of PR naturally leads to control over emotional behavior and eventual achievement of stress management purposes. For example, as managing time well, setting priorities and efficiently reaching both short and long term goals. One long term purpose is to develop healthy, non stressful relationships, as in the workplace, or with family and friends. This article pertains to my senior project because it discusses Progressive Relaxation, and I am marketing a relaxation program. (218 words)

Gries, J. , Black, D. , Coster, D. (1995). Recruitment to a university alcohol program: Evaluation of social marketing theory and stepped approach model. *Preventive Medicine: An International Journal Devoted to Practice and Theory*, 24(4), 348-356.

This study was a first initiative to evaluate the application of social marketing theory. This article discusses social marketing theory (SMT) and a stepped approach model (SAM) of public health strategies that include focus groups and in-depth interviews to develop materials to recruit undergraduates to attend an alcohol abuse education program. Recruitment materials were introduced to 727 residents in the treatment hall who were compared to 706 residents in the control hall plus 3 historical halls separately and combined. The students received the

recruitment materials normally provided to residents. There were 17 treatment, all of whom were moderate/heavy to heavy drinkers, attended, while no control attended the program. The percentage attendance did not differ from marketing literature expectations. Results suggest that the social marketing theory and public health methods used are helpful in developing recruitment strategies and are an important initial step of the stepped approach model. One of the important study findings was that the data they received was very similar to what they expected based on previous marketing studies. The students responded more favorably to the new “experimental” marketing strategy compared to the “traditional” strategy. This article is pertinent to my senior project because it discusses the social marketing theory and has data on its effectiveness on college students, which is my target audience. (215 words)

Carey, M. (1984). Peer health advisor program to reduce the health risks of university students. *Public Health Reports (1974-)*, 99(6), 614-620.

This article is about how the US needs to address reducing health risks in young adults. The conditions that lead to the majority of early disabilities and deaths are related to lifestyle choices. With the cost of health care rising, professionals are trying to find new ways they can use preventative measures to prevent future health problems. They would like to change the standard from curing the sick to being promoting wellness before the sickness. Reducing health risks will increase longevity, improve quality of life, and reduce health care costs. If they can change a younger person’s behavior, maybe they can change their lifestyle patterns for the rest of their lives. An individual’s health can be shaped by the

attitudes, behavior, and knowledge adopted during the early years of independence. Because of these reasons, promoting peer advising on wellness is strongly urged. The peer advisors conduct one-on-one sessions and outreach programs in the subject areas of fitness, nutrition, health-impairing habits, stress management, and sexuality. Promoting these healthy habits early on can set lifelong positive health habits. Trained peer health educators can be a great preventative measure for people to lead healthier lives in the long run. This article applies to my senior project because it discusses peer advising on wellness, which is almost exactly part of my marketing strategy. (219 words)

Outline

Title Page

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Research Proposal

Annotated Bibliography

Intro Chapter

- Topic
- Expansion on research topic

Body

- Marketing techniques that have been successful

- Different marketing styles
- Information about wellness programs
- Discuss quality of life and how wellness programs promote it
- What marketing techniques are applicable to the college demographics
- Discuss the history of Academic Health Centers, and what role they play in student wellbeing
- How effective stress management programs are, and what their shortcomings are
- Social Marketing Theory
- Reducing health risks in young adults
- Preventative health care and how to market it to a younger audience

Conclusion

- Restate topic and bring entire paper to a closure.

Bibliography

Introduction

Relaxation can be an incredible tool for your health. On a college campus there are many students who do not take care of their health, and who do not realize the impact stress can have on their health. Having a wellness program on campus that is dedicated to relaxation is not a standard across the US, but California Polytechnic State University, in San Luis Obispo, is implementing a

Relaxation Program Winter Quarter 2010. The Peer Health Education Center already has information on alcohol and drug awareness, nutritional health, and sexual health and they just implemented a Relaxation Program called RELAX. There have been many studies done on the effectiveness of relaxation programs on college campus's, and the best ways to market the program towards college students. I wish to review these studies and find what the best methods are for marketing a wellness program to college students.

There are many topics within marketing a wellness program to college students that I will also address. The different marketing styles, and techniques, that have been used to market programs towards college students is a topic of interest. Many college students work very hard, yet they see no immediate results of their effort. The classes college students take can feel like a full time job, yet they pay for that privilege. In our economic times, not having a college degree makes getting a well-paying job very difficult, and those who do go to college can end up with heavy loans when they graduate. With all these stressors, a college student can end up very stressed-out, which can lead to many health issues, so a relaxation program available to them at no cost is a huge asset.

I will also address the different types of wellness programs and how they are used on college campuses across the US. There are many different areas of a student's well-being, and relaxation is only one. One can also see how someone's quality of life can be impacted by stress, and how wellness programs can promote their quality of life. Quality of life can be used to measure ones

well-being and I intend to address the different ways a wellness program can impact a person's quality of life. Quality of life is an important thing to any person at any stage in their life, many college students may take it for granted because most are still young and healthy. Being able to educate and promote quality of life to college students can be a difficult task, but with the right marketing techniques it can be achieved.

The marketing techniques that are applicable to college students are what I am most interested in because that is the demographic that I am marketing towards. The college I am marketing towards does not have much diversity, which makes the process easier. A college campus with a small amount of diversity means the marketing techniques I use should be able to reach the majority of the population on campus. I plan on also using a variety of techniques to hopefully reach the entire population. I will also discuss the history of academic health centers and the role they play in student's well-being. Most college campuses have an academic health center, or peer health education center. The purpose of these centers is to educate students through their peers and to promote campus mental and physical health.

There are many different types of stress management programs, and some are effective, and others are not. I will discuss the different types of programs and their effectiveness. I will also delve into the shortcomings that can be associated with stress management programs. Marketing a stress management program to college students should be a simple thing; don't all

students want to be stress free? Unfortunately it can be difficult marketing to all types of demographics on a college campus.

Social Marketing Theory is also something I will discuss throughout this paper. "Social marketing is defined as the 'design, implementation, and control of programs seeking to increase the acceptability of a social idea or practice to a target group(s)'" (Black, Coster, Gries, 1995). Social marketing theory can be used to promote a society's well-being as a whole. I will apply the social marketing theory to marketing a wellness program to college students on my campus, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Marketing a wellness program to a target audience isn't an entire population but it is a large sample within this community's population.

Reducing health risks in young adults is a huge task that has been undertaken by many recently. The upcoming generation has many health risks due to unhealthy lifestyle choices, and stress can only negatively impact them. Relaxation can help college students alleviate some stress and hopefully lead healthier lives because of it. Another area related to reducing health risks in young adults is promoting preventative healthcare to a younger audience. Preventative healthcare is important to young adults because it can help them lead healthier lives in the long run. Relaxation is considered a preventative healthcare tactic, and marketing it to college students is an important issue. When marketing a wellness program to college students, one has to keep in mind that not all students are preparing for a healthy future.

While implementing the RELAX program on campus, I wish to keep in mind the many studies previously done on how to market a wellness program to a college campus. This new program at PULSE, the Peer Health Education Center at Cal Poly, hopes to take some of the daily stressors away from the students on campus and help them relax. The different studies and information I will discuss will also help me market this new RELAX program to the students at Cal Poly effectively.

Marketing Styles and Techniques

The different marketing styles and techniques that have been used to market programs towards college students is a huge tool in making a wellness program successful. There are many different techniques that have been found to be successful when marketing to college students. One of those is the Internet, "Gain exposure on the Internet" (Robin, 1997). Here an article written by Joshua Robin, in "Nations Business", gives tips on how to market to college students. He states that the Internet is one of the most powerful marketing tools that one can use to reach today's college students. Students are constantly on Facebook, or other networking sites, where advertisements are being marketed towards specific college demographics. These advertisements can be very effective because most students belong to a social networking site, and therefore some will at least have the opportunity to see it on their pages. The Internet also allows for mass marketing. With most students having Internet access at least on campus, they have the capability of being exposed to many marketing

campaigns. Internet also brings up the possibility of mass e-mailing. If one were to have access to campus e-mail addresses, marketing through e-mail would be an efficient way of getting a product exposure. There are many avenues of marketing that the Internet affords, and it is a very good way to market to a generation that has grown up with it, and has used it in daily life for a large amount of time.

Being able to reach a large population of students can be difficult, but Robin has a useful tip for this task. "Set up a table in the campus center or student union to market your products and services or simply gauge student interests" (Robin, 1997). By being in an area where there is a large amount of student traffic, one would have the opportunity to be able to expose their product to a large amount of students. Also if one wanted to find out how students would respond to their product, before marketing it, they could ask students, in a main area on campus, for their opinion. Doing this might help with the marketing strategy one would use, if students responded badly to marketing materials, or a campaigning pitch, one would be able to change it to something students would react better to. Also being in a highly populated area on campus will give you exposure to many different types of students, as not all students spend time in the library, or the coffee shop on campus, being in an area with high traffic will catch some of those students who would not normally see advertising in the places that things are advertised most. By doing this, a product can get much more exposure than just posting signs up around campus.

Another marketing tool that Robin has to offer is using peer outreach.

“Hire a student representative to post signs, invite people to events you're sponsoring, or hand out fliers”(Robin, 1997). In doing this, one would be able to have a peer of the target audience, whom students are more likely to respond positively to, representing your product. When a student represents a product, other students are more likely to believe that the product will be useful for them as well. Many students look to their peers when they want advice on a product. By having someone that they can possibly relate to marketing that product, one would be more likely to have positive results. Many students respect the opinion of a peer, rather than someone blatantly trying to sell them on something, and by having a student helping with marketing, one has a better chance of legitimately reaching their demographic. Also, college students are more likely to respect the opinions of their peers, as they may be able to relate to them on a more personal level. Using this tool to market towards college students, one will be not only effectively getting their product out there, but also financially supporting some students that are apart of that demographic, which will only help your products success. By having a peer of one's target audience marketing their product, they will have a chance at being more successful.

The last tip that Robin gave was to use popular images and themes when marketing to college students. “Popular images and allusions in your advertising...will draw students' attention” (Robin, 1997). By marketing with things that students are interested in, one can help their product stand out. For example, by having a picture of a celebrity doing yoga, one would be able to put that with advertising for yoga classes on campus, and make students more likely

to take note of the connection between celebrity status and yoga. Although those two things do not have much in common, by using them together one will put the connection there for their demographic to take notice of. Using trends to theme your product will also help with the positive feedback on a product. Many college students like to keep up with what is trendy, so if there is a way to market a product along side of a current trend, the product will most likely gain some popularity because of it. By getting students attention with a popular theme or trend with your advertising, one would be able to make their product more popular within the demographic they are marketing towards.

Wellness Lifestyle Programs and Quality of Life

There are many different types of wellness programs that are available to the general public right now. They are being marketed as a “wellness lifestyle”, which encompasses many different things. "There is a new market category called wellness lifestyle, and in a whole range of industries...consolidates a lot of sub-categories" including spas, traditional medicine and alternative medicine, behavioral therapy, spirituality, fitness, nutrition and beauty” (Economist, 2007). One could basically call any avenue of promoting a healthy lifestyle as a wellness lifestyle program. The RELAX program at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo’s PULSE center is definitely under the wellness lifestyle program umbrella. With its state of the art massage chair, aromatherapy, calming music, and soothing lighting, it creates the perfect relaxing environment. Relaxation techniques are apart of the wellness lifestyle program because they lead to many different health benefits.

Though there are many who are skeptical of the new-age type healthy lifestyle, there are also those who believe it to be beneficial. “A growing number of employers now promote wellness at work, both to cut costs and to reduce stress and health-related absenteeism” (Economist, 2007). Some employees depend on their mental health days for when they are too stressed out to come into work. By implementing wellness programs for their employees, companies are able to help prevent those days where their staff may need to take a day off. Relaxation can help with not just emotional health but also physical health as well. There are many physical benefits to relaxation, and many of which can help cut down on doctor’s visits. “There is growing evidence that focusing holistically on wellness can reduce health-care costs by emphasizing prevention over treatment” (Economist, 2007). In today’s society where health care is not yet universal in the United States, preventative measures are becoming very important. Many are eating organic foods, and more nutritious meals in the hopes that they will get sick less often. People are also trying to live healthier lifestyles by exercising regularly as well as being more cautious about unhealthy routines they may have been in previously. Relaxation is a tool that can help.

Quality of life is also becoming more important to many people’s health. Quality of life has been a topic of discussion when it comes to those with debilitating diseases and mental and emotional problems, but has only recently really come into play with wellness programs. Some believe that quality of life is one of the most important things a person can have, and it is beginning to catch on. “Quality of life has been used interchangeably with such terms as well-being,

psychological well-being, happiness, life satisfaction, positive and negative affect, and the good life” (Evans, 1997). All of these terms show how someone can be satisfied with his or her life, and in today’s society many are constantly trying to reach unattainable goals. The wellness industry portrays quality of life as something everyone has a right to, and makes it seem as if they can easily reach it.

Relaxation is a tool that one can use to reach psychological well-being, happiness and even balance out positive and negative affect. If relaxation is used as a health tool, and is promoted to many, it has the opportunity to improve the quality of life of many. “Several authors have equated the goal of health promotion with the enhancement of quality of life and the achievement of optimal well-being” (Evans, 1997). While implementing the RELAX program at Cal Poly, I tried using the marketing strategy of promoting well-being and a healthy lifestyle to the students. The community surrounding Cal Poly is very conscious of a healthy lifestyle; there are many hiking trails, health food stores, yoga studios, and healthy restaurants. All of which can be considered to be under the umbrella of wellness. Being apart of this community for at least four years exposes many students to a healthier way of life, and using the RELAX program would continue to help them improve their quality of life by alleviating their stress levels. Just by taking the initiative to come in and make a RELAX appointment, a student is acknowledging the importance of a healthy lifestyle, which could be considered to be half the battle. Of the many different types of wellness programs available, and the many variations of quality of life, the new RELAX program at Cal Poly

San Luis Obispo falls nicely into and represents each category.

Marketing Techniques for the College Demographic

There are many different marketing techniques that are specifically geared towards college students. The higher education demographic can be a very lucrative for businesses in the area. Marketing towards the higher education demographic is important for anyone trying to get his or her product out to those students successfully. Sending out one cohesive message is important for marketing. "The driving force behind integrated communication is the belief that an institution of higher education should effectively communicate the same message across all divisions of the school"(Hayes, 2007). By sending the same marketing message to the entire demographic, one would be able to market their product consistently. By using the program name RELAX, PULSE is sending a unified message about the program. RELAX's name promotes its benefits for the students it is available to. Relaxation is important in overall health, therefore by marketing this new program as RELAX, PULSE is making it clear that students know it is a beneficial program for their health.

By using the name consistently across the higher education demographic, RELAX is creating its own brand. "Branding is important to set a specific institution apart from other colleges and universities. Successful branding efforts are introspective and build from data analysis. A brand is a promise made to constituents. Brand builders must keep the promise if the brand is to be successful"(Hayes, 2007). With the brand name RELAX, PULSE is presenting

this new program as a relaxation tool that students will find helpful with their well-being. This tool is being marketed and attempting to be branded in a way that there will be promises of a program that will help alleviate stress and make a students wellness a priority. RELAX will be one of the few stress relievers on campus that is free and available to students. As every student it different and has their own way of de-stressing, RELAX is a universal relaxation method, and is easily accessible to Cal Poly students.

For higher education students, school is not always the only priority. There are many students who have children, full time jobs, or are even on athletic teams. These are just a few different possible other concerns that a student can have, on top of all their schoolwork. With these stressors, a student can become overwhelmed if they do not have a proper stress reliever. RELAX is a 15 minute session that has been shown to significantly reduce a persons stress levels. The atmosphere has been designed to be as relaxing as possible. In a questionnaire given to students after using RELAX, those who rated their stress levels at a 5 (highest) before RELAX rated their levels at a 2 or below after using RELAX. This shows that a student can come in very stressed and leave significantly better. Stress relieving techniques should be promoted to students their first year, as they will be definitely be needed during the rest of their college experience.

For those students who have more on 'their plate' than those who focus solely on their academic work, having a reliable and healthy outlet for stress is very important. "Ultimately, a college or university will focus on the total

educational experience and not just on what goes on in the classroom”(Hayes, 2007). For those students who have a heavy burden outside of school, adding the pressures of being a full time student can undeniably impact their well-being. If they were to use RELAX, they would be able to help relieve some of their stress in a healthy manner. Marketing this program to those students who have other things going on, and making sure to emphasize it is available and free is very important for its success. There are many different techniques that are used to market towards a college aged students and it is important to keep your demographic in mind while marketing.

Academic Health Centers

Academic Health Centers, or ACH's, are important to student life in higher education, because it gives students a chance to help each other as well as gain invaluable experience. But as they are focused on the students, and not profitability, their marketing strategies in the past have not been overly successful. “Historically, AHCs have detached themselves from commercialism and entrepreneurship. They have relied heavily on their reputation and word-of-mouth promotion was their primary, if not sole, marketing strategy” (Souba, 2001). When trying to get a product or program out into the market word-of-mouth can be a great asset, but it should not be the only strategy one employs. In the past, many Academic Health Centers have assumed that their quality of service would make them successful, and to a degree it will, but without other advertisement they will only get so far.

In the current times, Academic Health Centers must market themselves effectively if they want to be successful. In doing so they focus more on their demographic and the quality of their services. “In response to the new environment, most AHCs have shifted their marketing orientation from the product concept (largely internally focused) to a marketing-concept approach that has the patient as its focus” (Souba, 2001). When representing your product or program, one would want to give the best depiction of that product or program. If one represents something in an unfavorable light, it can do serious damage to their goal. Just as good word-of-mouth can promote a product or program, bad word-of-mouth can hinder it. By focusing on those that are benefiting from your program one is able to show those who come to you that they are your focus. With the RELAX program, making sure that each person that comes in is satisfied, and taking any complaints and doing what we can to improve upon them is very important. But it is also important to note that sometimes one cannot make changes based on every complaint. For example, we received one complaint about how the massage chair is noisy. The chair making noises cannot be helped because the noise is the chair doing its job. If it were quieter it would not be on or working. Unfortunately we do not have a budget that allows for a personal masseuse, so the semi-noisy mechanical chair is all we have.

When coming up with a marketing strategy, the leader needs to make sure to include all aspects of their program. “In formulating a strategic plan, the senior leadership should align each business initiative with a marketing strategy. In so doing, it is crucial to distinguish between purpose (what the academic health

center exists to do), strategic objectives (what it wants to accomplish), limitations (what the academic health center cannot do), and constraints (what it must do to survive)” (Souba, 2001). The purpose of a program is very important to establish before beginning a marketing plan. RELAX is designed as a program for students to come in and take 15 minutes for themselves and to let all the stressors of college and personal issues float away. In them focusing on themselves, they are de-stressing in a healthy manner that is at no cost to them but a little bit of time. Having written goals for a program is also very valuable. The main goal for RELAX is to bring something to some students who have no other outlets for the strain that they are under. Unfortunately there are some limitations to RELAX; the chair cannot support someone who is taller than 6’2 or weighs more than 250 pounds. These limitations do cut down on the amount of people who are able to use this program. There are also other constraints to the RELAX program as it is a part of PULSE and PULSE is funded by a grant, and therefore financially limited to spending a certain amount of money on this program. RELAX is a small program compared to the three others that are apart of PULSE. The other programs focus on sexual and nutritional well-being, and alcohol and drug abuse on campus. These other programs are also vital to students on campus, so the RELAX program is important but not the main concern at PULSE. The RELAX program is a 15 minute session in a private room with a massage chair. There is aromatherapy, calming music, and relaxing lighting. Academic Health Centers have been making progress with their marketing strategies, and will hopefully continue to do so in the future as they are

important to student life on campus.

Social Marketing Theory and Marketing Integration

Social marketing theory can be used to promote a society's well-being as a whole. Trying to market a program to a large group within a population can be difficult when one does not have the right knowledge. "Social marketing is defined as the 'design, implementation, and control of programs seeking to increase the acceptability of a social idea or practice to a target group(s)'" (Black, Coster, Gries, 1995). While marketing a new program, one must keep the acceptability and the social implications of it in mind. For RELAX, some people find it uncomfortable to come in and make an appointment. They may want to get help, but do not know if it is really beneficial. One must also think about the legitimacy of their program. Someone might not think that a massage chair in a dark room will be relaxing, but to market this program effectively, convincing any skeptics is key. By getting a small article about our program in the college newspaper, "Mustang Daily", students would be more likely to think of this program as legitimate. Posters and flyers are also helpful while marketing RELAX and including information about it in all presentations and consultations we do has helped spread the word. While marketing this program, social marketing theory has helped with marketing to a large group.

When marketing one needs to keep in mind the audience they are geared towards. If they are a younger group, then marketing through social networking sites is important. Or if it is an older crowd, a news article or advertising in the

paper may gain a product or program some attention. "Social marketing theory (SMT) may serve as on means of designing a marketing campaign to abate apathy among students and generate interest..." (Black, Coster, Gries, 1995). Using the concepts and principles of social marketing theory has helped to make my campaign stronger. By focusing on the benefits of this program I have been able to show students that they can be happier and healthier by using the RELAX program. By appealing to their sense of well-being and showing them how they can feel better because of RELAX, the program has been somewhat successful. This component of social marketing theory has helped RELAX gain interest.

Marketing Integration has also helped design an efficient marketing program for RELAX. "...the importance of another concept, 'marketing integration,' or 'marketing mix.' The marketing mix focuses on the appropriate mixture of the 4 P's, which are price, place, promotion, and product. These concepts are instrumental and provide a framework for social marketing"(Black, Coster, Gries, 1995). The 4 P's are important to focus on because they help to frame a marketing plan. The price is very important to people, especially in the recession we have been experiencing. The place is important because if the location is not easily accessible, less people will be inclined to come in. Promoting your product or program is also very important, because without the right promotion people will not know about it. The product is what is being marketed so in order for your strategy to work, the product or program must be shown to be necessary or beneficial to the target audience. For PULSE's RELAX program, the price is a huge promotion in itself. Because the program is

free to all students, it is also accessible to all students. The place of RELAX is located underneath the Health Center and on campus, therefore making its prime location better for students to stop by in between classes to have a session. Promoting RELAX has been a little bit of a struggle as clubs and groups are constantly promoting something on campus, standing out is difficult. The product, or program in the case, is RELAX and by branding the name and spreading the word, it has been successful considering it has only been available for a few months. Social marketing theory and marketing integration are important principles to consider when promoting a product or program.

Preventative Health Care for College Students

There are many students who are working very hard at their academics to prepare for their future, but they are not always preparing their body for their future. Preventative health care is becoming a very important asset to students who wish to lead healthier lives later on. Simply by exercising and eating healthier, many are changing the way they will live later on in life. "The development of effective techniques for the promotion of individual responsibility for health lifestyle improvement is potentially this country's next major health care advance" (Carey, 1984). Because of how quickly some medical advancements have come up, many younger people are relying on the 'cures' that will save them later on in life. Younger people are not taking responsibility for taking care of themselves now. The misconception that it doesn't matter until you get older is a false one, which has been perpetuated for too long. An easy thing that

younger people can do, and doesn't take much time or energy, is relaxation techniques. At Cal Poly San Luis Obispo's Health Center, there is a program that enables students to take a 15-minute time-out for their health. By coming in and using the RELAX program, they will be lowering their stress levels significantly, and therefore promoting a healthier life style for themselves.

For some college-aged people, making these healthier decisions for themselves comes easily, but for others it is like pulling teeth. Giving those individuals that find it harder to make healthier choices a lot of options is important. "The challenge of health promotion programs is to provide information and alternatives so that people are free to make informed choices about their health" (Carey, 1984). College students today like to be informed about the decisions they are making, and they should be well informed on the things that affect their health. Stress can severely impact an individual's health, and having proper outlets is especially important for those under constant stress, for example college students. The RELAX program is a great tool for a student who finds themselves under a lot of stress and in need of a healthy outlet. In doing this, they could be avoiding using improper stress relievers, such as alcohol or drugs. Making this program easily accessible to all students is also imperative to this programs success. Marketing it effectively to them now will promote healthier lifestyles now, as well as later in their lives.

Being able to use relaxation as not only a stress reliever, but also a technique for high stress situations is vital. "Protective applications of Progressive Relaxation prevent the body from deleterious reactions to stressors.

One who has acquired the ability to momentarily relax in the face of a stressor creates the opportunity to rationally select the most appropriate mode of responding” (McGuian, 1994). So if one were to be in an extremely stressful situation, and be able to use relaxation as a method to stay calm and make the appropriate choice of action, they would be using relaxation to make healthier decisions in life. Having the level headedness to make a calm and rational decision when faced with a situation where one would normally do the first thing that came to mind, can make a person’s life and health better. If a student were to use RELAX and be able to call upon the feelings of relaxation they experience during their session, they would be able to make healthier decisions.

When trying to get college students to care about making healthier decisions for themselves, there are a few things to keep in mind. First one needs to give a reason that will encourage them to listen, and second there needs to be a clear plan of action as well as the benefits of taking this advice. “ At the university level, there are two major needs: 1. to educate young adults in health promotion- disease prevention strategies that can reduce health risks leading to early disability and death. 2. to promote healthier lifestyles and provide education about self-care in order to reduce spiraling national health care costs” (Carey, 1984). In giving students a reason and clear outcomes of making healthier decisions, a marketing strategy will be more likely to be successful. Also by explaining how they may be able to save money on future health care costs, which can get very expensive even with health coverage, reaching the college aged demographic may be more successful. The RELAX program is a part of

the preventative health care measures because it lowers stress levels, which in turn enables students to lead happier and healthier lives. If they can maintain a healthy stress relieving technique throughout life, they will be better prepared for the stressors of a job or a family later on.

By using RELAX they are taking the initiative to de-stress in a healthy manner and by doing so, they are taking the first step to preventing future health problems, and lowering their risks for many debilitating diseases that can come from the hazards of not taking care of oneself at an early age. “An individual person’s health destiny can, in fact, be greatly shaped by the attitudes, behavior, and knowledge adopted during the early years of independence” (Carey, 1984). By adopting preventative health care tactics at a relatively young age, one can save themselves from the dangers of leading an unhealthy life. There are many benefits to taking time out for yourself and using relaxation techniques, but possibly living a longer and healthier life may be the most vital one.

Conclusion

Using relaxation can be an incredible tool for your health. When living as a college student, one may encounter many different types of stressors and having an appropriate and healthy outlet is very important. Many students turn to drugs and alcohol to help with their stress levels, and this can be extremely dangerous. The wellness program that was set up at Cal Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo, to be dedicated to relaxation is not offered at every campus. The RELAX program that is being offered through Cal Poly’s PULSE,

peer health education center, is providing a free and easily accessible relaxation tool to all of the students. This program is easier to market because of the lack of diversity on the Cal Poly campus; therefore the demographic is more concise and easier to identify.

Throughout this paper I have addressed many different topics; the many marketing techniques that are successful and also the many different types of styles that are used to market effectively, information about wellness programs and quality of life, the marketing techniques that are applicable to college students, the history of Academic Health Centers, social marketing theory and marketing integration, as well as preventative health care for college students. I have also discussed how all of these different topics apply to effectively marketing the wellness program, RELAX, at Cal Poly. Throughout my research I have found many helpful tips to use while marketing RELAX, as well as information that will be valuable to myself in the job realm later on.

While marketing the RELAX program I found that getting the word out about a program is not difficult, but getting those within the demographic to care can be challenging. I tried to come up with promotions that would catch their attention and make them see how relevant RELAX is to their lives. For example, marketing RELAX during finals as a stress-reliever worked well. I also found that staking signs had to be done at the beginning of the week; otherwise campus facilities will take them down soon after you put them up. This program is significant because students now have a relaxation program that is free to them as well as beneficial to their health.

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Appendix A

RELAX - Massage Chair Questionnaire

Please take a few minutes to answer these questions, Thank you.

1. Before using the massage chair, how would you rate your stress level?

Low stress
1
2
3
4
5
neutral
high stress

2. After using the massage chair, how would you rate your stress level?

Low stress
1
2
3
4
5
neutral
high stress

3. I enjoyed my experience in the massage chair?

1
2
3
4
5
strongly disagree
neutral
strongly agree

4. I intend to use the massage chair again.

1
2
3
4
5
strongly disagree
neutral
strongly agree

5. How did you hear about the massage chair?(check one)

- Handout
 Mustang Daily
 KCPR radio
 Cal Poly TV
 Stakes
 Presentation
 Poster in the Health Center
 Peer Health Website

6. Is this your first time using a massage chair similar to this? Yes

No

Comments: