Using relationship theory to improve STEM outreach to corporations:

A case study for STARBASE Los Alamitos

A Senior Project

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By

Mark Gibson

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to improve corporate outreach efforts for an educational program called Starbase Los Alamitos. This Starbase program is part of a larger effort by the Department of Defense to improve STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education in the United States.

This study was guided by the following research question: How can STEM programs use relationship management theory to improve corporate outreach? A review of the literature was performed and this study used relationship theory to design eight questions for a four person focus group. Control and treatment websites were identified. Participants were shown the control and treatment websites and then were asked the eight questions. The data was analyzed and then findings and recommendations were made.

At the conclusion of the study a presentation was made to the Director of Starbase Los Alamitos recommending the use of communications that intentionally fostered relationships with corporations rather than merely providing information. Appendix N contains the information that was presented to the Director.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 ............................................................................................................. 1
  Introduction ................................................................................................. 1
  Statement of the Problem ......................................................................... 1
  Background of the Problem ...................................................................... 1
  Purpose of the Study .................................................................................. 2
  Setting of the Study ................................................................................... 2
  Research Question ..................................................................................... 2
  Organization of the Study .......................................................................... 3
  Definition of Terms .................................................................................... 3

CHAPTER 2 ............................................................................................................. 4
  Literature Review ...................................................................................... 4
    Starbase 2.0’s Website ............................................................................ 4
    Relationship Management Theory ......................................................... 4
    Two-way Symmetrical Communication Theory ....................................... 5
    What are Science Communicators? ......................................................... 6
    Communicating to Corporations about Science ...................................... 7

CHAPTER 3 ............................................................................................................. 8
  Data Collection and Analysis .................................................................. 8
    Existing Website Pages ........................................................................... 8
    The Focus Group ..................................................................................... 9

CHAPTER 4 ........................................................................................................... 11
  Presentation of Data ................................................................................ 11
    The Participants .................................................................................... 11
    Control Question #1 ............................................................................. 11
    Control Question #2 ............................................................................. 12
    Control Question #3 ............................................................................. 13
    Control Question #4 ............................................................................. 14
    Control Question #5 ............................................................................. 14
    Control Question #6 ............................................................................. 15
    Control Question #7 ............................................................................. 16
K. Treatment Website - Mission Page ................................................................. 49
L. Treatment Website - Students Page ............................................................ 50
M. Treatment Website - Testimonials Page ..................................................... 51
N. Treatment Website - What’s New Page ....................................................... 52
N. Presentation Handout for Client ................................................................. 53
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Participant Yes Response Rates to the Control Websites .................................................................25

Table 2. Participant Yes Response Rates for the Treatment Websites .............................................................26

Table 3. Results of Participant Yes Response Rates by Websites ......................................................................28

Table 4. Results of Participant Trust Factor Scores by Websites ......................................................................29

Table 5. Results of Yes Response Rates Between Websites by Questions .......................................................30

Table 6. Results of Yes Response Rates by Gender .........................................................................................31

Table 7. Results of Trust Factor Scores by Gender .........................................................................................32
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Starbase 2.0 is a Department of Defense educational youth program that provides students an opportunity to engage in science, math, and physics learning opportunities (Department of Defense, 2016). The Department of Defense started the first Starbase program in 1991 in Detroit, Michigan (Department of Defense, 2016). There are about 52 Starbase programs in the United States (Department of Defense, 2016).

The director of Starbase 2.0 at Los Alamitos, California, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Stacey Hendrickson, is hoping to attract more interest and investments from major STEM companies that work with the United States Government and military. Whether that be monetary investments or actual volunteers from these companies. The problem is that they have yet to garner the attention they want from these companies. Because of this they have yet to be able to expand and help the amount of people they know they can help. The goal of Starbase 2.0 is to reach out to groups that are typically underrepresented in the STEM field. Starbase 2.0 knows they can do much more to help increase representation of those groups if they can get major companies working with Starbase and providing support.

Background of the Problem

The problem seems to stem from the issue that many organizations that would be perfect candidates for supporting Starbase 2.0 just do not know about the program
or have had no communications with the program. It is also may be hard for these corporations to see the benefit of helping such a program as Starbase 2.0.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose is simple, how can we advise Starbase 2.0 to use its resources in a way that can help garner more interest and support from these target organizations. The key is to figure out what they are doing wrong or not doing at all and to help advise how they can do it better while using communication theories to ground the advice and to help strategize a response to increase the effectiveness of their communications with those groups.

**Setting of the Study**

The study will be completed by showing a focus group webpages and asking a series of pattern questions. The webpages from Los Alamitos served as the control webpages. The webpages from the Department of Defense served as the treatment webpages. The study concludes with linking the findings to the goals of Chief Hendrickson, director, Starbase Los Alamitos.

**Research Question**

The following research question was developed to help figure out the best practices for improving a website so that it is more effective at garnering attention and interest from outside corporate interests:

How can STEM programs use relationship management theory to improve corporate outreach?
Organization of the Study

Chapter 2 will determine the strategies and tactics in developing and maintaining successful corporate outreach and reviewing scholarly literature regarding the topic. Chapter 3 will focus on the methodology of the study. Chapter 4 will measure the outcome of the focus group. This data will be analyzed and interpreted with the findings in the review literature. Chapter 5 will summarize the end of the study and include recommendations for Starbase 2.0 and future public relation consultants on using a website to increase corporate outreach.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are presented to the reader to clarify repeating topics of the study and assist in further knowledge.

Two-way symmetrical model of communication: Uses communication to negotiate with publics, resolve conflict, and promote mutual understanding and respect between the organization and its publics (Grunig, 2001; Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

Starbase 2.0: Program that is set up for exposing youth to the technological environments and positive role models found on military bases and installations, provides common core curriculum that meets or exceeds the National Standards. And nurtures a winning network of collaborators and builds mutual loyalty (Department of Defense, 2016).
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The review of literature outlines the use of public relations communication theories and how to use them to make Starbase 2.0’s website more appealing to incentivize corporate outreach.

Starbase 2.0’s Website

An effective website can be one of the best sources for interest and engagement with outside publics. A website can make or break the first opinions of those outside publics wishing to know more. For an organization to create a good first impression they need a website that is both professional and informative. The website is an informative website to a degree. It provides pages that are typically required for a business to give an overview of itself. Frequently asked questions, mission statement, curriculum, about, home page and photo gallery. The other side of this research is looking at the main Starbase website and its style and functionality. The research on these two websites is going to be the basis for all application of the communication theories.

Relationship Management Theory

The study of organizational public relations has attracted considerable attention from public relation professionals in recent years (Huang & Zhang, 2015). The value of public relations can be found in the relationships that stakeholders have with organizations (Grunig, 2015). When an organization has good relationships with its stakeholders the organization is likely to be more successful (Huang & Zhang, 2015). All of the relevant literature on organizational public relations underscores the premium to
be placed on building successful relationships between organization and their stakeholders (Huang & Zhang, 2015, p. 3). In fact, research shows that relationships between an organization and its stakeholders is more important than the reputation of the organization (Grunig & Hung-Baesecke, 2015).

Four factors can be used to measure a relationship (Grunig & Hung-Baesecke, 2015, p. 87):

- Control mutuality -- the degree to which the parties in a relationship are satisfied with the amount of control they have over the relationship.
- Trust -- the level of confidence that each party has in the other and its willingness to open itself to the other party.
- Commitment -- the extent to which both parties believe and feel that the relationship is worth spending energy on to maintain and promote the relationship.
- Satisfaction -- the extent to which both parties feel favorably about each other.

**Two-way Symmetrical Communication Theory**

From all of the communication theories postulated in being helpful for this project the most applicable and useful one is going to be the two-way symmetrical model of communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). When our focus here is to improve investor relations through public relations practices we see that the most commonly used way is the two-way symmetrical model, because of its successfulness. “Results show that such investor relations officers predominantly practice the two-way symmetrical model” (Kelly, K. S., Laskin, A. V., & Rosenstein, G. A. 2010). But what we see in (Sturm, K., &
Eller, D. 2014) is that there are ethical concerns to think about when applying such a model of communication. But in the end we see that (Maak (2007, 329–330), “businesses and their leaders are increasingly held accountable for what they do and fail to do by multiple stakeholders and society at large ... good stakeholder relationships are key to organizational viability and business success”. The importance of proper communication and imaging is important as ever before. We also find the importance of interactivity in website to draw people to actually spend time with the website and use it for more than just information. By doing that people end up finding more worth in the organization (Mcmillan, S. 2002). The research predominantly supports the effectiveness of using a two-way symmetrical model to both increase relations with your publics both inside and out but also increase interest and positive views of your organization.

**What are Science Communicators?**

Science communicators are people like Neil Degrasse Tyson. Although Tyson is more of a media personality now. It is people who help communicate for people who have great things to share but are not specifically talented in the field of communication. Meaning it is harder for them to communicate these great things successfully. So there has been a growing trend in people whose sole role is to be knowledgeable in the field they are communicating in and to also be great communicators so that they themselves can help communicate for their colleagues (Sánchez-Mora, 2016) brings to light this issue by providing a framework for all science communicators to help them communicate more concisely. In general there is a need to help STEM people
communicate with outside publics better and that outside help is usually a successful way to help better their communications.

**Communicating to Corporations about Science**

This is a topic that needs more research. The goal with this research question is to help find out how to better communicate with corporations about science. But what I did find was that research supports hosting events to build interest, especially if the events are targeted for a specific group like possible investors (Moore, 2014). And lastly just some general stuff about building brands (Temporal, 2015). There definitely is a lack of research on this area of study so no real conclusion can be made on specifically how to increase corporate interest in donating to or investing time in working with an organization or how to better communicate with corporations about science.
This study is aimed to answer the following research question: How can STEM programs use two-way symmetrical communication to improve corporate outreach?

This chapter outlines the data collection methods that will be used to collect data than can answer the research question. The chapter starts by describing how existing STARBASE website pages will be collected. The chapter concludes by describing how the focus group will be administered. Admittedly, this is a convenience sample. The focus group was comprised of people currently in the business of sales and marketing and also current Cal Poly students from communication and STEM majors.

**Existing Website Pages**

Why collect the existing website pages? Because they gives you a starting point for analysis. And they will serve as the “control” group for the before and after comparisons that are presented at the focus group. The pages you create are the “treatment” group. I will collect all pages from the "control" webpage for there are only seven. The reason I am also collecting them is because all parts of the website are essential to its current function. The website pages will have been collected by screenshots and then resized to fit the margins in the paper.

The webpage for Starbase Los Alamitos has a standard layout with about, home, mission statement, and curriculum, contact us, gallery, and news tabs (Starbase Los Alamitos, 2016). This website served as the control website for this study.
The webpage for the Department of Defense Starbase webpage has about us, what’s new, students, testimonials, and surveys tabs (Department of Defense, 2016). In addition it has login, register, contact us, and a search screen (Department of Defense, 2016). This website served as the treatment website for the study.

The Focus Group

A focus group was used to solicit input from participants regarding the control and treatment group websites. Focus groups are one way to collect detailed data from participants. In addition, focus groups can collect a large amount of data in a short period of time.

The following focus group questions were generated as a result of the literature review:

1. Do you feel connected to this website?
2. Do you feel like you have a relationship with this organization?
3. How much do you trust this group?
4. Would you feel comfortable contacting this group?
5. Does this website feel professional?
6. After viewing the website, do you feel like you have a good understanding of what they do?
7. If you were part of a corporation would you feel comfortable sharing this website to your boss, as a possible place to do philanthropic work?
8. How would you feel about donating time to this organization based on its website?

Each of the focus group questions had the following follow up questions:
• Why do you feel that way?
• Could you give an example?
• What else could be done to improve the website we are talking about?

The next chapter presents the data that was collected as a result of the collection methods described above.
CHAPTER 4
Presentation of Data

This chapter presents the data that was collected during the focus groups mentioned in Chapter 3.

The Participants

The participants were recruited from the San Luis Obispo County, CA based upon an in person interview. The participants are described as follows:

Female #1: White, Field: Business field/sales
Female #2: White, Field: Business field/customer relations
Male #1: Hispanic, Field: Engineering
Male #2: White, Field: communications/integrated marketing communications/

Control Question #1

The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #1 - Do you feel connected to this website?

Female #1
1. No not really
   a. Colors were intense, little overwhelming.
   b. Colors and a lot of writing.
   c. Short and sweet, warmer colors, better font.

Female #2
1. Yes
   a. Can appreciate the cause.
   b. Seeing photos of soldiers helping kids.
   c. Smaller snippets of information.
Male #1
1. No.
   a. I have no reason to look into it, doesn’t involve me or my interests.
   b. Couldn’t Relate.
   c. Pictures of people working with the kids would have helped.

Male #2
1. Not particularly
   a. Subject matter didn’t apply to my life.
   b. Focuses on STEM careers and youth, already past that stage in my life.
   c. Little more focus on aspect of building community and relationships with schools and impact this organization could or would have. More inspiring narrative to help build a story.

Control Question #2
The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #2 - Do you feel like you have a relationship with this organization?

Female #1
1. No.
   a. The website was not interesting
   b. Not many photos on pages
   c. More photos on pages

Female #2
1. No
   a. Too brief of an overview.
   b. Short on content.
   c. Interface needs help, feels like reading a book.

Male #1
1. No
   a. Didn’t get me interested.
   b. Lack of info for how people like me would go about helping, too much blocks of text.
c. Include pictures with the kids would help. Less wordy. Aesthetics need work.

Male #2

1. No
   a. Just exposed, never heard of them before now, not personal interesting.
   b. Lack of narrative.
   c. Focus more on examples of kids having fun, lacks the human element.

**Control Question #3**

The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #3 - How much do you trust this group?

Female #1

1. Neutral
   a. Didn't get a good or bad feeling from the website.
   b. Neon colors, not enough photos
   c. Larger photos.

Female #2

1. 6/10 trust scale
   a. It was well explained but looks did hurt.
   b. Mission statement and foundation were good, general layout and design.
   c. Looks would help, doesn't feel professional.

Male #1

1. 8/10 trust scale
   a. Very explicit in what they do, seems legit.
   b. Being ran by a brigadier general, many established locations.
   c. Pictures of people who created or run the Starbase 2.0 program.

Male #2

1. 7.5/10 Trust Scale
   a. Comprehensive view.
   b. Federally funded, pictures and good info.
   c. More personable, more abstract things, better sense of community, more pictures
Control Question #4

The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #4 - Would you feel comfortable contacting this group?

Female #1
1. No
   a. Not a strong connection.
   b. Website feels more like computer code.
   c. Contact page could be formatted better. Phone number higher up.

Female #2
1. Yes
   a. Foundation of it is good, people helping people.
   b. Whole basis of website, the about section.
   c. None

Male #1
1. Definitely
   a. I feel comfortable because they are for better education, trying to help students in need, emotional appeal.
   b. Layout of website, content, info are all simple.
   c. If there was a contact person you would call that would help a lot so you knew who you were contacting.

Male #2
1. Sure
   a. I know a lot about them.
   b. Content, info is clear and there is lots of it.
   c. Give me a reason to contact them, making a want clear. Add a tab about donating time or partnerships, what that would mean and look like.

Control Question #5

The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #5 - Does this website feel professional?

Female #1
1. No
a. Difficult to absorb.
b. Choice of color and aesthetics
c. Probably do something like prez

Female #2
1. Not really
   a. Doesn’t feel like there was much finesse in the design. Doesn’t read well.
   b. Dark background, layout and design.
   c. Better spacing, bigger graphics and text.

Male #1
1. No
   a. Kiddish feeling.
   b. Black background, greenish color, website looks like crap.
   c. Fix website looks, get it professionally done.

Male #2
1. Yeah, for the most part.
   a. Looks good.
   b. Formatting, errors and typos.
   c. Style, color scheme, wasn’t warm or inviting. Better color theory, different fonts and formatting.

Control Question #6

The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #6 - 6. After viewing the website, do you feel like you have a good understanding of what they do?

Female #1
1. No
   a. Hard to absorb
   b. Too long, color, formatting.
   c. About and history can be shortened and made more concise

Female #2
1. Yes
   a. Very clear.
b. The first thing in the About section is very concise and clear about what they do.

c. None

Male #1

1. Yes
   a. Well explained and full of info.
   b. About page.
   c. Applicant form, would be helpful for understanding their requirements to sign up.

Male #2

1. Yes
   a. Really informative.
   b. Lots of sections, pretty varied, comprehensive.
   c. Consider the aims of the website, what they want to get across, matters their aims, more pictures of things in action, info on who has participated, names of the schools.

Control Question #7

The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #7 - If you were part of a corporation would you feel comfortable sharing this website to your boss, as a possible place to do philanthropic work?

Female #1

1. No
   a. Doesn't strike and emotional cord.
   b. Presentation, lack of photos, general look is meh.
   c. Make website more engaging.

Female #2

1. Neutral
   a. Visually it is not very pleasing but the information is good.
   b. Layout and design and ease of reading.
   c. Spacing, size of text and graphics and color.

Male #1
1. Yes
   a. Program is about helping the youth.
   b. None.
   c. Website style and design.

Male #2
1. No, needs tweaks to be a yes.
   a. People judge on aesthetics, boss might be turned off.
   b. Typos, misspellings, formatting.
   c. Different color scheme, more inviting, fix typos, something other than black.

Control Question #8
The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #8 - How would you feel about donating time to this organization based on its website?

Female #1
1. Maybe.
   a. Doesn’t look fun
   b. Lack of videos and photos to make it look fun
   c. Add fun videos of interactions and photos of fun things.

Female #2
1. Yes
   a. I really like what they stand for.
   b. The about page.
   c. Some part of the website with suggestions on how people can help, whether through donating time or money.

Male #1
1. I would not.
   a. Not interested enough.
   b. Age range of students.
   c. I don’t know.

Male #2
1. Good
a. There is a sense of community, gives back and helps kids at risk.

b. Was informative throughout, facts and the federal funding.

c. Make it more personable, tell a story, give it a mascot, give it a face and build a narrative around that face.

**Treatment Question #1**

The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #1 - Do you feel connected to this website?

Female #1

1. Yes
   a. Cool stuff is going on.
   b. More pictures, more engaging.
   c. Nothing.

Female #2

1. Yes
   a. A lot of information to process.
   b. Lots of content.
   c. None

Male #1

1. No
   a. Cannot see myself helping the organization.
   b. Lack of photos of them doing the projects.
   c. More photos of the people doing the things that Starbase does.

Male #2

1. Yes
   a. It was inviting.
   b. Pictures, quotations, narrative, relate ability.
   c. I don't know.

**Treatment Question #2**

The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #2 - 2. Do you feel like you have a relationship with this organization?
Female #1
1. Yes
   a. More interactive, and interesting.
   b. Articles are interactive
   c. None

Female #2
1. Solid attempt.
   a. There were a lot of different ways to process the information.
   b. Social media, testimonies and surveys helped.
   c. I don’t know.

Male #1
1. No
   a. I don’t know.
   b. I don’t know.
   c. Videos of people interacting with the students would help.

Male #2
1. Not particularly.
   a. Relational aspect will only come with time and effort. I would have to interact with the website and use it regularly for it to be able to build a relationship with me.
   b. First time visiting.
   c. Add more contrast with the colors, more social media links around the website and on the contact us page.

**Treatment Question #3**

The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #3 - 3. How much do you trust this group?

Female #1
1. 7/10 trust
   a. It’s because it truly looks like they are here to educate
   b. Articles, cool thing that grab attention, testimonials.
   c. None
Female #2
1. Yes, sounds super legit. 8/10 trust scale.
   a. It feels trustworthy.
   b. Layout, incorporates social media and graphics. Lots of interconnectivity.
   c. It just takes time to build trust.

Male #1
1. 10/10 trust scale.
   a. Professionally done.
   b. Mission statement on front page, lots of content, testimonials, actual quotes from students.
   c. None.

Male #2
1. 8/10 trust.
   a. Lots of info, not vague, I know why and what they are.
   b. Presentation was good, testimonials, pictures.
   c. I don’t know.

**Treatment Question #4**

The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: 4 - Would you feel comfortable contacting this group?

Female #1
Neutral
   a. If I did have a need to contact the group, I probably would.
   b. Testimonials made a big difference.
   c. None

Female #2
1. Yes.
   a. Good sense of anonymity.
   b. Easy email access.
   c. If there was a phone number on the contact page, front and center.

Male #1
1. Very Comfortable
a. Professional vibe from website.
b. Quality construction, social media tabs.
c. None.

Male #2
1. Yes
   a. Aims are clear, info presented in an informative way.
   b. Background information.
   c. Incentives for contacting them, share opportunities for what they can do, why should or would a person contact them. Give a reason to contact.

Treatment Question #5

The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #5 - Does this website feel professional?

Female #1
1. Strong yes
   a. I can tell there was a lot of thought put into it.
   b. Layout, design, photos, interactivity, whole package.
   c. None

Female #2
1. Yes, absolutely.
   a. How it incorporates a bunch of stuff from outside of its website.
   b. Outside sources, reviews, testimonials, social media.
   c. None.

Male #1
1. Yes.
   a. Well made.
   b. You can register an account, they have twitter and Facebook links, and it’s not just a website.
   c. Nothing.

Male #2
1. Absolutely.
   a. Flows nicely
b. Graphics, no typos, no formatting issues.

c. Nothing.

Treatment Question #6

The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #6 - After viewing the website, do you feel like you have a good understanding of what they do?

Female #1
1. Yes
   a. Because of how clear and concise it is.
   b. Program description and mission statements are very clear.
   c. None

Female #2
1. Yes
   a. Very simple and clear.
   b. Everything you need is right on one page.
   c. Simplify a little more, possibly more detail.

Male #1
1. Yes
   a. Clear program descriptions of what they do.
   b. Program description.
   c. Front page has too much going on. Would suggest removal of bottom bar of links and news sidebar.

Male #2
1. Yes
   a. Very informative, comprehensive.
   b. Background info and story.
   c. Present the information more succinctly but looks good as is.
Treatment Question #7

The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #7 - If you were part of a corporation would you feel comfortable sharing this website to your boss, as a possible place to do philanthropic work?

Female #1
1. Yes
   a. Looks professional, shows people get something positive from this program.
   b. Testimonials
   c. A partnerships tab would help.

Female #2
1. Yes, absolutely.
   a. Seems composed, concise and specific.
   b. Ton of good information and current news.
   c. None.

Male #1
1. Yes, very much so.
   a. Well done, geared towards helping students.
   b. Nice front page.
   c. Nothing.

Male #2
1. Absolutely
   a. Professional aesthetic, felt really comfortable.
   c. Nothing.

Treatment Question #8

The focus group was asked to respond to the following question: #8 - How would you feel about donating time to this organization based on its website?

Female #1
1. Might consider it
   a. Looks like it would be a fun place for kids to enjoy.
   b. Articles and media pages, consolidated what they do, important mission statement.
   c. Nothing

Female #2
1. Yes.
   a. I would but I feel a little intimidated as if I need a government clearing to do so.
   b. Nowhere that it says where to donate or how and what it means to donate.
   c. A tab where is tells people how to donate their time, effort or money to support the program.

Male #1
1. 10/10 comfort ability
   a. Really well done website.
   b. Sponsored by the secretary of defense and military.
   c. Nothing.

Male #2
1. Pretty good, I would.
   a. Mission is helping kids, passion for learning.
   b. Mission statement.
   c. Highlight more aspects of the program, felt like aspects went unreported, more stories, testimonials from people who have donated time and money to the organization. Something for possible donors to connect with.

Control Websites Yes Response Rates
The table on the next page summarizes the participant yes response rates to the control websites. For this study, the more yes responses indicate a better relationship between and organization and its stakeholders.
Table #1
Participant yes response rates to the control websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (connected to website)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (relationship with company)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (trust the company)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (comfortable contacting)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (professional website)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (purpose of website)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (share website with boss)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (donate time)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (connected to website)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (relationship with company)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (trust the company)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (comfortable contacting)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (professional website)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (purpose of website)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (share website with boss)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (donate time)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Counts: 0/50 4/50 3/80 4/80 11/65

There are 32 possible yes responses and the control websites earned 11 or 34%.

Female #1 did not like the control websites as she had zero yes responses to the seven response questions. The other three participants had modest yes response rates.

Cumulatively there are 11 yes responses for the control websites. The average trust score for the control websites was 65.

**Treatment Websites Yes Response Rates**

The table on the following page summarizes the participant yes response rates to the treatment websites.
Table #2
Participant yes response rates for the treatment websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (connected to website)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (relationship with company)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (trust the company)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (comfortable contacting)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (professional website)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (purpose of website)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (share website with boss)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (donate time)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5/70</td>
<td>7/80</td>
<td>5/100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are 32 possible yes responses and the treatment websites earned 23 or 72%. Female #1’s yes response rate went from zero to 5 with the treatment websites. The other three participants has better response rates. Cumulatively there are 23 yes response rates for the treatment websites. The average trust score went from 65 to 83 with the treatment websites.

In summary, the treatment websites had over double (72% v. 34% or 110% increase) the yes response rates for the factors that measured the relationship between an organization and its stakeholders.
CHAPTER 5

Results and Recommendations

This study aimed to answer the following research question: How can STEM programs use two-way symmetrical communication to improve corporate outreach?

Based on the literature review, the following questions were asked to measure the relationship between an organization and its stakeholders:

1. Do you feel connected to this website?
2. Do you feel like you have a relationship with this organization?
3. How much do you trust this group?
4. Would you feel comfortable contacting this group?
5. Does this website feel professional?
6. After viewing the website, do you feel like you have a good understanding of what they do?
7. If you were part of a corporation would you feel comfortable sharing this website to your boss, as a possible place to do philanthropic work?
8. How would you feel about donating time to this organization based on its website?
Results - Participant Yes Response Rates

The following table analyzes the participant yes response rates between the control and treatment websites.

Table 3
Results of participant yes response rates by websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female #1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female #2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>110%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of the four participants improved their yes response rates when shown the treatment websites. Even if you ignore Female #1, the treatment websites generated an average 60% improvement in the yes response rates from the other three participants.

Results - Participant Trust Scores

The following table analyzes the participant trust scores between the control and treatment websites.
Table 4
Results of participant trust factor scores by websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female #1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female #2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #1</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #2</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>210%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three of the four participants had increases in their trust scores with the treatment websites over the control websites. Together, the three participants had a 42% increase in trust when viewing the treatment websites.

**Results - Yes Response Rates Between Websites**

The following table analyzes the yes response rates between control and treatment websites by questions.
Table 5
Results of yes response rates between websites by questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (connected to website)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>200%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (relationship with company)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (trust the company)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (comfortable contacting)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (professional website)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>300%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (purpose of website)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (share website with boss)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>300%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (donate time)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The treatment website had better participant responses in seven of the eight questions with question #4 being a tie. Of the seven focus group questions, the treatment website had 3 had modest gains in trust, the purpose of the website, and would donate time to the company. And had four significant gains in connection to the website, relation to the company, professional website, and would be likely to share the website with his or her boss. The average trust score went up 22% with the treatment website.
Results - Yes Response Rates by Gender

The following table summarizes the participant yes response rates by gender.

Table 6
Results of yes response rates by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>200%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals 11 23 110%

While both genders increased their yes response rates, the female participants were significantly higher (200%) than their male counterparts (55%) when viewing the treatment websites. This is approximately a 265% increase.

Results - Trust Factor Scores by Gender

The following table summarizes the trust factor scores by gender.
Table 7
Results of trust factor scores by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>260</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Combined the male participants had higher trust scores than the female participants (340 v. 250). While both genders increased their trust factor scores, the female participants had a 50% improvement in their trust factor scores when viewing the treatment websites while their male counterparts had a 15% increase. The female participants had nearly a 230% increase in trust over the male participants when viewing the treatment websites.

**Recommendations**

Finding #1, based upon Table 3: Each of the four participants improved their yes response rates when shown the treatment websites, by an average of 60%.

Recommendation: Revamp the control website to focus its message to be more about building relationships.

WHY: It is important to build a relationship with the websites users to cause them to want to interact and support the organization.
Finding #2, based upon Table 4: Together, the three participants had an average of a 42% increase in trust when viewing the treatment websites, with a combined increase of 210%.

Recommendation: Add photos of the people who run the program and add photos on every page, preferably of students being interacted with.

WHY: Trust is the foundation all relationships are built upon, without trust people will be unwilling to put time, effort and or money into an organization or its services.

Finding #3, based upon Table 5: The treatment website had better participant responses in seven of the eight questions, with question #4 being a tie. The average trust score went up 22% with the treatment website. And in the fields of, do they feel the website is professional and the field of, would they share this website with their boss, those numbers went up 300%.

Recommendation: Replicate the style, design and format of the treatment website.

WHY: Each of these questions are factors for building relationships. Our goal is to build relationships and the treatment websites do this better than the control.
Finding #4, based upon Table 6: The control group was not relating to women at the same scale that it was relating to men. The treatment group on the other hand proportionately related to both groups and in higher numbers for each group.

Recommendation: Upgrade the design to be more gender neutral, by using a different color palette, more photos and more things to bring out an emotional connection.

WHY: We live in a world of two genders and if we only communicate well with one group and not the other, then we have problem and are missing out on communicating properly with a large proportion of the population.

Finding #5, based upon Table 7: The control website is unintentionally biased in its communication style, by disproportionately resonating with male audiences.

Recommendation: Build a connection with the viewer by replicating the communication style of the treatment website.

WHY: Trust is everything and if we are only successful garnering trust for one gender over the other then we are missing out on a huge number of people to connect with.

Summary
Throughout this project one theory of communication has shined brightest and that is relationship management theory using the relationship type messaging style. Our
goal is to build relationships with those who view this website. What we have seen from this research is that, the website that builds a good relationship with the viewer is more successful at its end goals. My finding is that the treatment websites are as successful at what they do because, they are using the relationship type messaging style. The use of photos that can be connected with, a professional design and being relatable are just some of the things the treatment website does right to build that relationship with the viewer. All of the relevant literature on organizational public relations underscores the premium to be placed on building successful relationships between organization and their stakeholders (Huang & Zhang, 2015, p. 3). I advise a transition to a relationship type messaging style and using the treatment website as a template for doing so.
REFERENCES


ATTACHMENTS

A. Control Website - Landing Page
C. Control Website - Contact Page
D. Control Website - Curriculum Page
MISSION STATEMENT

By exposing youth to the technological environments and positive role models found on military bases and installations, we will provide 21 hours of exemplary instruction using a common core curriculum that meets or exceeds the National Standards. We will nurture a winning network of collaborators and build mutual loyalty.
H. Treatment Website - Contact Page
I. Treatment Website - Description Page
L. Treatment Website - Students Page

Featured Poll
What's your favorite activity on snowboards?

Reading

Math

Science

Geography

Total votes: 35

Featured Testimonial

I love the program, it looks like so much fun, and you taught us hard things in 2 minutes because you made the process so simple.

Nico Luna - Student at UNLV

Featured Alumni

Samantha Johnson

My name is Samantha Johnson. I am a member of the Olympic Ski Team. I ski in the New York City Ski School. I am a star skier.

Native American Stem Club Graduates 12 Students

Samantha Johnson, a Native American, has graduated from the Starbase program with honors and is set to attend the University of California, Los Angeles. She is the first Native American to graduate from the Starbase program.

Science in Hollywood - Computer Modeling and Animation

New casting: STEM experts
Many movies — not just animated ones — use computer simulations to create special effects.

The Chemistry of Root Beer Floats

An introduction to the science of root beer float.

What Is Mole Day? - Data and How to Celebrate

A day to celebrate the mole, a fundamental constant in the world of chemistry.

CoD STARBASE SE Indiana Summer Campers Send Experiments into Sky

From 1st graders to 12th graders, the Indiana Summer Campers sent their experiments into space.

Multimedia

Why Some Penguin Feathers Never Freeze

Penguins are afraid of the cold, so they need to keep their feathers warm. In some cases, their feathers are not effective. However, the feathers from penguins living in the cold do remain warm. In other cases, the feathers are removed. The feathers from penguins living in the cold do remain warm.

1 of 2 next »
Using relationship theory to improve STEM outreach to corporations:

A case study for STARBASE Los Alamitos

By

Mark Gibson

The study of organizational public relations has attracted considerable attention from public relation professionals in recent years (Huang & Zhang, 2015). The value of public relations can be found in the relationships that stakeholders have with organizations (Grunig, 2015). When an organization has good relationships with its stakeholders the organization is likely to be more successful (Huang & Zhang, 2015). All of the relevant literature on organizational public relations underscores the premium to be placed on building successful relationships between organization and their stakeholders (Huang & Zhang, 2015, p. 3). In fact, research shows that relationships between an organization and its stakeholders is more important than the reputation of the organization (Grunig & Hung-Baesecke, 2015).

Four factors can be used to measure a relationship (Grunig & Hung-Baesecke, 2015, p. 87):
• Control mutuality -- the degree to which the parties in a relationship are satisfied with the amount of control they have over the relationship.

• Trust -- the level of confidence that each party has in the other and its willingness to open itself to the other party.

• Commitment -- the extent to which both parties believe and feel that the relationship is worth spending energy on to maintain and promote the relationship.

• Satisfaction -- the extent to which both parties feel favorably about each other.

Based upon a literature review of recent research: When scores (in this study measured by yes response rates) are better for these four factors the relationship is stronger and the organization is likely to be more successful.
Table #1
Participant yes response rates to the control websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Female 1</th>
<th>Female 2</th>
<th>Male 1</th>
<th>Male 2</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (connected to website)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (relationship with company)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (trust the company)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (comfortable contacting)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (professional website)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (purpose of website)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (share website with boss)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (donate time)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counts</td>
<td>0/50</td>
<td>4/50</td>
<td>3/80</td>
<td>4/80</td>
<td>11/65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are 32 possible yes responses and the control websites earned 11 or 34%.

Female #1 did not like the control websites as she had zero yes responses to the seven response questions. The other three participants had modest yes response rates.

Cumulatively there are 11 yes responses for the control websites. The average trust score for the control websites was 65.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (connected to website)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (relationship with company)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (trust the company)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (comfortable contacting)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (professional website)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (purpose of website)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (share website with boss)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (donate time)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/70</td>
<td>7/80</td>
<td>5/100</td>
<td>6/80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are 32 possible yes responses and the treatment websites earned 23 or 72%. Female #1’s yes response rate went from zero to 5 with the treatment websites. The other three participants has better response rates. Cumulatively there are 23 yes response rates for the treatment websites. The average trust score went from 65 to 83 with the treatment websites.
In summary, the treatment websites had over double (72% v. 34% or 110% increase) the yes response rates for the factors that measured the relationship between an organization and its stakeholders.

Table 3
Results of participant yes response rates by websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Websites</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female #1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female #2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male #1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male #2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|               | Totals      | 11   | 23        | 110%     |

Each of the four participants improved their yes response rates when shown the treatment websites. Even if you ignore Female #1, the treatment websites generated an average 60% improvement in the yes response rates from the other three participants.
Table 4

Results of participant trust scores by websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female #1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female #2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #1</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #2</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals 11 23 210%

Three of the four participants had increases in their trust scores with the treatment websites over the control websites. Together, the three participants had a 42% increase in trust when viewing the treatment websites.
Table 5
Results of yes response rates between websites by questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>控制</th>
<th>治疗</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (connected to website)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>200%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (relationship with company)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (trust the company)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (comfortable contacting)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (professional website)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>300%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (purpose of website)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (share website with boss)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>300%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (donate time)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The treatment website had better participant responses in seven of the eight questions with question #4 being a tie. Of the seven focus group questions, the treatment website had 3 had modest gains in trust, the purpose of the website, and would donate time to the company. And had four significant gains in connection to the website, relation to the company, professional website, and would be likely to share the website with his or her boss. The average trust score went up 22% with the treatment website.
Table 6

Results of yes response rates by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>200%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While both genders increased their yes response rates, the female participants were significantly higher (200%) than their male counterparts (55%) when viewing the treatment websites. This is approximately a 265% increase.
Table 7

Results of trust factor scores by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding #1, based upon Table 3: Each of the four participants improved their yes response rates when shown the treatment websites, by an average of 60%.

Recommendation: Revamp the control website to focus its message to be more about building relationships.

WHY: It is important to build a relationship with the websites users to cause them to want to interact and support the organization.

Finding #2, based upon Table 4: Together, the three participants had an average of a 42% increase in trust when viewing the treatment websites, with a combined increase of 210%.
Recommendation: Add photos of the people who run the program and add photos on every page, preferably of students being interacted with.

WHY: Trust is the foundation all relationships are built upon, without trust people will be unwilling to put time, effort and or money into an organization or its services.

Finding #3, based upon Table 5: The treatment website had better participant responses in seven of the eight questions, with question #4 being a tie. The average trust score went up 22% with the treatment website. And in the fields of, do they feel the website is professional and the field of, would they share this website with their boss, those numbers went up 300%.

Recommendation: Replicate the style, design and format of the treatment website.

WHY: Each of these questions are factors for building relationships. Our goal is to build relationships and the treatment websites do this better than the control.

Finding #4, based upon Table 6: The control group was not relating to women at the same scale that it was relating to men. The treatment group on the other hand proportionately related to both groups and in higher numbers for each group.

Recommendation: Upgrade the design to be more gender neutral, by using a different color palette, more photos and more things to bring out an emotional connection.
WHY: We live in a world of two genders and if we only communicate well with one group and not the other, then we have problem and are missing out on communicating properly with a large proportion of the population.

Finding #5, based upon Table 7: The control website is unintentionally biased in its communication style, by disproportionately resonating with male audiences.

Recommendation: Build a connection with the viewer by replicating the communication style of the treatment website.

WHY: Trust is everything and if we are only successful garnering trust for one gender over the other then we are missing out on a huge number of people to connect with.

OVERALL BRIEFING SUMMARY:

All of the relevant literature on organizational public relations underscores the premium to be placed on building successful relationships between organization and their stakeholders (Huang & Zhang, 2015, p. 3). I advise a transition to a relationship type messaging style and using the treatment website as a template for doing so.