The Big West Conference Women's Golf Championship 2014: An Application of

Communication Principles

A Senior Project Presented to

The Faculty of the Communication Studies Department California Polytechnic State

University, San Luis Obispo

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree Bachelor of Arts

By

Taylor Yoshitake

June 10, 2014

| Dr. David Askay | | |
| Senior Project Advisor | Signature | Date |

| Dr. Bernard Duffy | | |
| Department Chair | Signature | Date |

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Introduction

        The value of effective communication can be traced in every aspect of one's life. In order to get one's point across to an audience, one must first understand whom they are communicating with. Religious life, academic, relationships and professional life, are all examples of times in our lives where communication is significant. As the audience may vary, so must the ways of our communication be tailored to their needs. According to the Communication Studies department at Cal Poly, current "courses in Communication Studies focus on the theory and practice of human communication in a variety of contexts: interpersonal, intercultural, instructional, organizational, political, in dyads, in small groups, and in the mass media" (Cal Poly Communication Studies). With the combination of theories drawn out from these classes, students are taught the assorted ways in which to understand their audience.

        I believe the best way to learn something is to put it into practice. F. Scott Fitzgerald once said, "genius is the ability to put into effect what is on your mind." Understanding Mr. Fitzgerald's reasoning I knew that an applied senior project would best exemplify the knowledge I learned over the past four years. My two passions in life are golf and communication studies; so the combination of the two was an ideal senior project. As a member of the Cal Poly Women's golf team and student-athlete, the opportunity of part time internships related to sports are easily accessible. As Cal Poly was to host the Big West Conference championship in April of 2014, the internship with the Big West was made available for this event in February. I took on the challenge of this internship as my senior project to help run the Big West Conference championship. I was excited to have the opportunity to work alongside such a great organization and apply communication concepts that I have learned while at Cal Poly.

Origin

The Big West Conference is a collegiate athletic conference that consists of nine universities in the west coast region (Big West Conference). Affiliated with the NCAA, this Division I conference strives for academic and athletic success for its students. The conference began in 1969 and has undergone many changes over the years. The university members whom which belong to this conference have changed, the committee members have been replaced but one factor has remained the same; the conference championships for each sport have relied heavily on volunteerism and marketing. Each sport has a conference championship at the end of the season, for many of the teams this is their most important event of year. Throughout the season, the championships are heavily marketed through various forms of communication to attract volunteers and fans to attend the events (Big West Conference).

As it was mentioned before, my two passions in life are golf and communication studies. With the desire to work in the field of sports marketing, I found the Big West Conference women's golf championship to be a perfect match. I applied for a voluntary internship with this sector of the Big West Conference for my senior project. This was an opportunity to gain experience in a field of my interest, as well as volunteer my time to an organization I appreciate. I received the internship and was given the opportunity to co-host the golf championship tournament along with an associate commissioner of the organization. This opportunity was possible due to the fact that it was Cal Poly's turn to host the event. The championship tournament rotates every three years to a university that is a member of the conference. It was Cal Poly's last year to host the championship and I was given responsibilities to host; but there were many limitations to areas of the event in which I was able to partake in running. There are strict rules in the NCAA of an athlete's

organization of the event while participating in it at the same time. Since I am a member of the Cal Poly women's golf team, making me a participant of the event, the Big West associate commissioner required my duties to stay within limits of the NCAA rules

My role prior to the Big West Conference Championship was to obtain members of the community to volunteer during the event. The use of the volunteers were vital to the operation of the event, I was given an important job to persuade 60 willing people. Understanding the communication techniques of persuasion and the presentation of self informed my strategy for completing this task. During an initial Skype meeting with a Big West associate commissioner, I proposed a new duty that had not been previously done for the championship tournament. I suggested getting local businesses in San Luis Obispo (because it was held at SLO country club) to sponsor the holes, which would then eventually lower the cost or expunge the cost to nothing for the participating teams. Usually the cost of a conference championship tournament is split up amongst the nine teams and paid out from there.

These two strenuous tasks required me to have a small team of people to help recruit and organize the volunteers while I was golfing. The communication and planning of my small group was crucial to the outcome of the event. The small group communication in which I delegated helped make the Big West Conference Championship possible. In the two-month process of planning and running the event, the implementation of small group communication, persuasion, and commitment and consistency techniques became essential tools to successfully complete my tasks.

Using Communication To Make A Group Into A Team
The result of putting on a well-organized event was made possible through the efforts of my small group. Small groups require people to work together towards a

common goal while employing small group communication. This is, "communication amount a small group of people who share a common purpose, who feel a sense of belonging to the group, and who exert influence on one another" (Beebe & Masterson 2012, pg. 4). In general terms, groups are individuals that come together for a common purpose. The roles are not always explicitly defined and the rules of the group are developed according to the group's needs (Beebe & Masterson, 2012).

With the prior understanding that teams perform better than groups, my goal for this senior project was to encourage my small group to become a team through effective communication that I learned in class, small group communication. Beebe and Masterson (2012) refer to a team as "a coordinated group of individuals organized to work together to achieve a specific, common goal" (pg. 6). Much of past literature has proven that teams work more effectively than groups (Beebe & Masterson, 2012; West & Lyubovnikova, 2012). Team members collaborate and discuss while working together. Roles and responsibilities are specialized for each member while being committed to the team goals (Beebe & Masterson, 2012). These characteristics of effective teams are the ones I used to encourage the transition from group to team. The transition was made possible through the communication from group to team. Communication about the clear roles for each team member and the application of PERT were used to foster my team.

Clear Roles and Responsibilities

My team consisted of Scott Cartwright, Montana Kosty and myself. These two people were specifically picked for my team because they both brought skills and resources that would assist in completing the tasks. Montana Kosty is a teammate on the Cal Poly women's golf team but not a participant of the event. She brought knowledge that was needed in organizing volunteers for a golf tournament because she worked as a

golf tournament coordinator in the summer. Scott Cartwright was chosen because he has an extensive network with the community of San Luis Obispo, as well as the coach of the golf team. Since he was my coach, it was made clear very early on that he would assist with tasks that needed to be completed but not take charge of the event since it was my senior project.

With the specialties that each member brought to the team, responsibilities and roles were clearly communicated and defined by their skill. Scott used to be the Head Golf Professional at San Luis Obispo Country Club, the location of the tournament, so he was vital in networking the recruitment of volunteers for the event. His task became to compile a large list of possible volunteers through his network with the community and country club. Scott's role was a specialist because he had expert knowledge and resources in this area of networking which was vital for our team's success (Beebe & Masterson, 2012). Montana's role was to organize the volunteers during the tournament. She had to check each person in, inform them of their duties and attend to any problems that occurred while I was competing. My roles were defined as contacting and recruiting all volunteers and hole sponsors, as well as prepare documents that informed the volunteers about their duties. Beebe and Masterson (2012) said, "teams usually have a clear sense of their particular role of function…greater care must be devoted to explicitly ensuring that the individual roles and responsibilities are clear and linked to a common goal or outcome" (pg. 6-7). The creation of these defined team-member roles developed through the application of the PERT technique.

PERT

The inner workings of the team's efforts were successful through the use of the small group communication technique of PERT (initials for Program Evaluation and

Review Technique). This six-step model provided the team with the plan of successfully attaining the common goals. PERT has the advantage of producing a realistic plan of attack and providing a step-by-step analysis by working backwards (Applbaum & Anatol, 1971). By communicating the exact steps and tasks that needed to be completed, it aided and enhanced the group goals. With the end goals in mind, I created a timeline and the division of labor was determined through the communication of PERT.

PERT is an analytical model that utilized communication on a small group project to structure a group (Karls, 1972). The Big West Conference Championship tournament presented itself as a challenge at first, but through a breakdown of each step of PERT, the team was able to meet its goals. Beebe and Masterson (2012) presented the six steps to this technique and my team followed them accordingly.

1. *Identify the Project Goal*

In the first team meeting I described my job of attaining 60 volunteers and hole sponsors from local business to reduce the cost of the tournament. The hole sponsors needed to consist of 20 local businesses to donate $100. Collectively we brainstormed measurable and concise goals that would help achieve the job at hand. The purposed of the well-defined goals were so that everyone knew once the job was complete and to use as motivation to perform better (Beebe & Masterson, 2012, pg. 6).

> Goal 1: Commit 60 volunteers and have five extra people (just in case)
>
> Goal 2: Attain 20 hole sponsors at $100 each, 1 week prior to event (4/13)
>
> Goal 3: Day before tournament have scoreboards, volunteer materials, snacks, hole sponsor signs all set up at San Luis Country Club

2. *Identify the activities need to complete the project*

After defining the goals of the team, the next step we took was to identify the steps that were needed to reach those goals (see appendix A). This step of reflective thinking process created criteria of acceptable activities down to the very last detail (Karls 1972; Beebe & Masterson, 2012, pg. 273). The many activities acknowledged were: a database of possible volunteers would need to be compiled, 60 volunteers would need to be committed to working, a system of checking in, as well as organizing volunteers during the event would need to be created, and obtain 20 businesses to donate money for hole sponsors.

3. *Identify the sequence of activities*

Once the activities needed to reach the goals were identified, the next step the team took was ordering the tasks of completion. Past research has shown that of all the steps, this is the most crucial (Karl, 1972), so with that in mind we took the longest amount of time with this step. Collaboratively we decided that the task of compiling the volunteer list needed to complete first. The list would then advance the action of calling volunteers and committing 65 people. During this time the process of reaching out to potential hole sponsors for donations would be made. The task of creating a systematic way facilitating the volunteers would then made last, since the job consisted mainly during the event. By doing this, the team shared a timeline and an ordering of the tasks.

4. *Estimate amount of time it should take to complete each task*

The tournament was two months (April 13-15) away from when I began this project. In order to accomplish the various tasks of recruiting volunteers and hole sponsors, I had to balance my time and my group member's time accordingly. A Gantt Chart was used to

show the individual tasks and expected amount of time for completion (See Appendix A).

I was sure to budget extra time for each task just in case any emergencies were to rise.

5. *Determine which group members should be responsible for each task*

Taking into mind the specialized skills that each team member brought to the team, as well as amount of availability, I assigned each of the members' tasks accordingly. Since Scott has strong ties with the San Luis Obispo Country Club members, as well as the community, he was assigned to compile a list of possible volunteers. I assigned myself to go door-to-door to for the donations of hole sponsors, and also to call the list of possible volunteers that Scott created. In soliciting donations, I drew from persuasion techniques to attain these tasks. Montana has a lot of knowledge about running golf tournaments because she had previously worked with the Southern California Professional Golf Association: Junior Tour (SCPGA) as a field staff representative. Her previous knowledge of running golf tournaments and skill of organizing volunteers from working the SCPGA helped influence the responsibilities. I designated her to be the facilitators of volunteers and attend to any problems that were to arise during the competition. In facilitating she had to check people in and show the volunteers their where their roles were to be completed.

6. *Develop a chart that shows the relationship of the tasks, times, people, and*
   sequence of events that are needed to accomplish the project

Through periodical meetings prior to the event, Montana, Scott and myself created a Gantt chart to grid tasks that needed to be done and assign the responsibilities for each action (See Appendix A). The reasoning for doing this was to ensure everyone was aware

of what needed to be done and by when (Beebe & Masterson, 2012). By working

backwards the tasks were completed.

<u>Analysis</u>

   The team's creations of the six steps of PERT were communicated during the first

team meeting. The completion of this technique is what helped my team reach its' goals.

By communicating the goals, we created a framework to organize the group tasks. The

use of PERT is also what helped the group transition into a team. As previously stated, a

team consists of clear goals, well-defined responsibilities and clear expectations (Beebe

& Masterson, 2012, pg. 6). In completing PERT with my team, these specific

characteristics of an effective team were satisfied.

   Although my small group resembled a team, there were shortcomings that existed

in this transition from group to team. For this reasoning, my group was more of a *pseudo*

team. A pseudo team is defined as, "a group of people working in an organization who

call themselves or are called by others a team; who have differing accounts of team

objectives; whose typical tasks require team members to work alone or in separate dyads

towards similar goals…" (West & Lyubovnikova, 2012, pg. 26). As my group satisfied

many aspects of a definitional team, we did not fulfill all. One area in which there were

shortcomings was with the direct interdependence of the team. In a team, the typical tasks

are accomplished with team members working closely together each step of the way to

complete those tasks (Beebe & Masterson, 2012). My team did not work directly with

each other, but rather the tasks were completed individually. We did assist each other

with minuscule tasks if assistance was needed, but the majority of the work was done

independently. The reasoning for the separation of tasks was for two reasons: the two-

month time period of preparation was pressing and their specialized skills did not require

the interdependence of others so they had mini-goals in completing their tasks. Although the tasks were completed independently, there was still interdependence within the team because we relied on each other's resources and skills to complete our own jobs. We were interconnected because if one person failed to complete their role then the tournament would have not been possible. Although the direct interdependence did not occur, interdependence was present and through our communication about each person's role, we were still able to resemble a pseudo-team.

Another aspect in which we fell short into becoming a team was with reflexivity. West and Lyubovnikova (2012) found in research that team reflexivity occurs when "team members systematically review team performance and adapt future objectives and processes accordingly" (pg. 27). This process of systematically reviewing team performance occurred on a very low level. I checked in with Scott two days prior to his task due date about the list of volunteers and it's progress. I also made sure every night before the tournament that Montana had everything under control and if she had any problems with the volunteers that I needed to take care of. Although this performance check did occur during the process, we did not as a team systematically reflect back on the preparation for the tournament as a whole. As football teams review their film after each game so see how they can improve, we failed to complete this final review. The reflexivity was present but not all the way carried out. Various aspects of a team were accomplished through communication, and although we were not fully a team we obtained some aspects of a team that made us a pseudo team. Without the communication about defined member roles, interconnectedness, task due dates and clear goals we would have not been able to accomplish any of the tasks. The communication assisted this pseudo team to completing each goal, which served as evidence to a successful event.

Using Persuasive Techniques To Solicit Hole Sponsor Donations

Persuasion has been utilized throughout history to influence the receiver of a message. This art of rhetoric presents itself in various forms and methods of communication. In order to influence the audience of the message, one must enhance the effectiveness of the techniques that researchers have proven to be effective. My task of attaining 20 local businesses to donate $100 each was a hearty one to accomplish. I knowingly understood that the only way this goal would be met, would be through the proper use of persuasive communication.

The city of San Luis Obispo, formerly titled "The Happiest Place in America" by Opera Winfrey, is known for its support of local schools and businesses. I planned to go door-to-door to local businesses ranging from restaurants, law firms, produce farmers and financial bankers to ask for donations for this collegiate golf event. In return for their donation I offered to advertise their name on a sign for one of the eighteen holes on the golf course. The sign would be placed on the tee box of the hole, a place that is seen by most of the public. The success of persuasion has been confirmed through many studies that face-to-face requests are more efficient than a mail or phone call request (Cialdini & Schroeder, 1976; Gueguen, 2013, Dillard, Hunter & Burgoon, 1984). This prior research supported the action of going door-to-door to solicited hole sponsors for the Big West Conference Championship. Gueguen (2013) demonstrated the face-to-face technique gained a large amount of compliance especially when paired with the "foot-in-the-door" technique.

Foot-in-the-door is a compliance gaining technique researched by Freedman and Fraser (1966), it demonstrated the likelihood of obtaining a favor would increase substantially when asked for a second favor by the same person. Since the donations that

I was seeking for the Big West required only one favor, this technique was mixed with the Reciprocal Concessions model (Cialdini, Vincent, Lewis, Catalan, Wheeler & Darby, 1975) and Legitimizing Paltry Contribution (LPC) techniques (Gueguen, 2013). When paired with the foot-in-the-door technique, it was found that the most compliance was gained (Gueguen, 2013). The reciprocal concessions model, investigated by Cialdini et al. (1975), is a procedure made for rejection of a request and then acceptance of another right after. First a larger request would be made and be rejected by the receiver; right after a smaller request would follow and it was discovered that people would increase the compliance to the second smaller request in order to relieve the pressure of reciprocation (Cialdini, et al. 1975). The legitimizing paltry contribution deeply investigated the reasoning of Cialdini and Schroeder's (1976) statement of "even a penny will help…" (pg. 600) association of greater donor participation (Gueguen, 2013). The research found the effectiveness of the legitimizing effect occurred because of a "barrier removal effect" (Gueguen, 2013, pg. 310). This explained that when confronted with "even a penny will help…" makes it hard for a person to argue not to comply.

Taking this past research into consideration, I developed a rough script that incorporated the recommendations of these studies (see appendix B). While I adapted the precise conversations to the various people I spoke with , I explained the need for donations in order to have a successful Big West Conference Championship golf tournament. It was found that when I went into restaurants, law firm, banks, etc., they were very happy to meet me face-to-face. I clarified that this particular event was the last time it would be located in San Luis Obispo for a very long time and as my senior project, my goal was to reduce the cost of the tournament for all the teams.

The conversations varied, but in every encounter the techniques of my communication were the same. First, I requested a donation of $200 and then very quickly followed saying "or even $100." This sequential request of a lesser amount was based off the reciprocal concessions model, as researched by Cialdini, et al. (1975). Principles of the reciprocal concessions model constitute that the participants of an interaction are more likely to compromise to requests in order to save the fear of exploitation on one's self (Cialdini, et al., 1975). Another phrase for this model is to "meet the other fellow half way." In the next step of the conversation I handed them a document that I created; it explained the event and the need of donations, along with my contact information (see Appendix C). Before leaving the conversation I reminded them, "even a penny will help…" and thanked them for their time. This last use of legitimizing paltry contribution was operated in support of Cialdini and Schroeder's (1976) research of reducing the doubt that participants may have about money being requested. To possibly increase compliance, the very small request of "even a penny will help…" left the businesses with little reasoning to say no (Cialdini & Schroeder, 1976; Gueguen, 2013).

Through the literature, I was able to utilize the persuasive techniques of foot-in-the-door, combined with the reciprocal concessions model, and the legitimizing paltry contribution to work in my advantage. This procedure suggested that the compliance of local businesses would be increased when following their principles. Through these communication techniques my goal of raising $2,000 from hole sponsors was reached. From researching their literature and applying the techniques I was able to communicate

persuasively. Although the goal of raising $2,000 from hole sponsors was a

accomplished, there were some difficulties along the way.

<u>Analysis</u>

The success of reaching the goal of 20 hole sponsors was made possible through

the persuasive communication that occurred. The use of foot-in-the-door paired with

reciprocal concessions model and legitimize paltry contribution made the communication

persuasive. Although the goal of raising $2,000 in donations from hole sponsors was

attained, the process of which it occurred was very difficult. Out of the 48 local

businesses contacted, 20 succeeded (see appendix D for list of contributors). This made

the success to failure rate 5:12. An interesting manifestation occurred, out of the 20

successions, four were individuals from the local businesses that donated but the

donations were made from the individual and not the business. When I asked one of these

hole sponsors why their donation was made from an individual payment rather than the

business payment they replied that the business already had too many donations to give

but as the owner, he still wanted to help Cal Poly Golf. This compulsion that the

individual business owner felt can be credited to the persuasive techniques of foot-in-the-

door, reciprocal concessions model and legitimize paltry contribution.

While success of attaining the 20 hole sponsors was reached, the large amount of

rejection cannot go unnoticed. Following the same general script for each encounter, 16

rejections or no responses occurred. If possible, I tried to arrange it so the communication

would take place with a manager or owner of the business, but that was not always

possible. I noticed that majority of the businesses that did not sponsor were ones that I

communicated with a person who did not have the authority to give a donation, and had

to send the message up the organizational ladder. The manager or owner would have

received a hard copy flier of my solicitation but lacked the face-to-face communication of my messages. This supports the past research claiming that face-to-face communication is more persuasive (Cialdini & Schroeder, 1976; Gueguen, 2013, Dillard, Hunter & Burgoon, 1984). The businesses that I communicated with the owner or manager were much more receptive to my requests.

The use of these persuasive techniques has found to be successful. The foot-in-the-door technique has been reinforced by much of past research to be effective in gaining compliance (Cialdini, et al. 1975; Cialdini & Schroeder, 1976; Gueguen, 2013; Freedman & Fraser, 1966), and this study also supports the literature. Over the years, researchers have experimented with various applications and different methods of this persuasive technique. Numerous scholarly analyses tested the boundaries of foot-in-the-door and its' arguments became an underlying technique to the creation of many others (Vaidyanathan & Aggarwal, 2005). In particular to this study, one is the theory of commitment and consistency.

Using Commitments To Drive Volunteer Consistency

Historically, volunteers play a vital role in the operation of collegiate championships. The willingness of individuals who offer their time and energy allow for these events to be made possible. The Big West Conference championship required the service of volunteers for two roles: "live scorers" and "spotters." In the context of this senior project, a "live scorer" is —a person who shadows a single group of golf participants through all 18 holes and texts in the scores for each player, after each hole; also known as a score keeper. The text messages are sent to a Big West employee who enters the scores on an online scoreboard database, *GolfStat*. The live-scoreboard is accessible for everyone; fans use it to follow athletes, coaches use it guide their players

and athletes use it as a point of reference to their position in tournament. "Spotters" are individuals that are assigned to a specific location on the golf course. Their task is to watch the players hit their shot from the tee box and locate where their ball comes to rest. They are typically placed on a hole that has a blind spot, a place where the players hit their shot off the tee box and are unable to see their ball land because it is blocked by trees. The spotters are intended to quicken the speed of play by reducing the time players spend searching for their golf ball. In order for the Big West Conference championship to operate properly for 45 collegiate players over three days of competition, it was imperative that I recruited 60 people to volunteer for the tournament.

My task became to persuade community members to volunteer their time and energy for the Big West Conference championship. My initial perception of the task was that it would be simple, because 60 people seemed like a possible amount. As it was mentioned in step 5 of PERT, the clear roles and responsibilities of tasks were determined. Scott had lived in San Luis Obispo for over 20 years and used to be the Head Golf Professional at San Luis Obispo Country Club. His extensive network within the community allowed for him to compile a large list of people, along with their contact information as potential volunteers.

Before calling the list of people, I created a bare-bones script that intended to guide my communication. The script was strategically constructed to help influence the receiver of the message to comply with the request and make a commitment to volunteer. This script was created utilizing the commitment and consistency theory. Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal (2005) describe the commitment and consistency theory as, "the general idea of using a commitment for influencing future related behaviors" (pg. 233). Their

research described buyer's intentions and linked it with their behaviors for cause-related marketing. They found that in order for people to seem consistent by others with their expressed commitments, people are more willing to follow through with their purchase intentions (Vaidyanathan & Aggarwal, 2005). Although cause-related marketing does not apply to soliciting volunteers, the principle of expressed commitment to drive the volunteer's behavioral intention to follow through was employed. Encompassing these principles, the creation of the script and its' application was determined (see Appendix E). The script aided in explaining the need for volunteers, while it purposefully lead my persuasive communication of the commitment and consistency theory.

The list of potential volunteers encompassed various branches of Scott's networks in the community. The use of Scott's vast network is supported by research that several types of social networks from the recruiter promote volunteerism (Paik & Navarre-Jackson, 2011). The social networks included: a couple of women's golf groups who were known for volunteering, members of the San Luis Obispo country club, members of golf courses in the county, and various community individuals that support Cal Poly women's golf. The personal networks of Scott can be interpreted as bonding social capital. Social capitol uses a person's network to promote volunteering through their network of relationships (Paik & Navarre-Jackson, 2011). As depicted on the script, the first thing mentioned while calling was my affiliation with the Cal Poly golf team and my ties to Scott Cartwright. The reasoning for the evidence of social ties is based around Wilson's (2012) notion of *bonding social ties*. The bridge that connected the list of people with myself was Scott and my participation on the golf team. The bonding social ties are the most influential and effective social attributions for the commitment of

volunteerism (Paik & Navarre-Jackson, 2011; Wilson, 2012).

The social capital of bonding social ties in which Scott embodied became my social capital as well. The acknowledgement of a social tie can act as a motivation to volunteers because it fulfills the social pressures to behave in a desired way (Clary, Snyder, & Ridge; 1992; Wilson, 2012). Cialdini defines this form of motivation as *social influence*; it is the pressure of an outside agency that influences change in one's beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors (Guadagno &Cialdini, 2010). The existence of a social influence is controlled by consistency of the receiver's message (Guadago & Cialdini, 2010). To fulfill the social influence to behave in a desired way created by the social tie, the receiver of the message must stay consistent in order to do so. By drawing upon an established social tie with Scott, this theory suggests that I can increase the likelihood of volunteer commitment and their consistency to follow through.

Analysis

The majority of the people that I had spoken with on the phone had committed to volunteer at least one of the three days for the Big West Conference championship. Their response was consistent with the expectations of drawing from bonding social ties. It is notable to mention, many of the requests to the volunteers had influenced commitment and they were all really excited to help. With that noted, it also must be recognized that the bulk of the people on the list did not pick up the initial phone call. If a person did not pick up the call, a voicemail was left on their phone that followed the same script, which was previously mentioned. The main problem I faced while utilizing this method was that 19 people did not respond to the voicemail, or even attempt to call back my initial phone calls. This created a drawback. I recognized that if the method in which I presented this theory did not alter, then the deadline to meet the goal of 60 volunteers would not be

satisfied.

Since the commitment and consistency theory was rooted from the foot-in-the-door technique, the same basic principles were applied when modifying the method. Having considered the prior success from the hole sponsors, the face-to-face requests had shown to be more effective than a mail or phone call request (Cialdini & Schroeder, 1976; Gueguen, 2013, Dillard, Hunter & Burgoon, 1984). This influenced the second approach in which the commitment and consistency theory was carried out. I decided to attend club meetings of specific groups that had bonding social ties with Scott and Cal Poly women's golf.

The motive for attending group meetings, rather than one-on-one, was devised through the research of social influence, as well as the consistency from public commitments. A behavioral study conducted by Stults and Messe (1983) investigated the relationship between public commitments and the intentions of the behavior that followed. Their findings implied that the public announcement of intention had a positive relationship to increased behavioral consistency in order to remain consistent in the eyes of the public (Stults & Messe, 1983). Previous research supported that the indication of a public commitment to a request increased the level of consistency to that commitment (Cialdini & Ascani, 1979). Since consistency is viewed as a positive attribute in society, "people have a strong desire to appear and be consistent in their behaviors" (Vaidyanathan & Aggarwal, 2005, pg. 234). Taking the literature as grounds for my method, I personally attended various group meetings. During the meetings I publicized the need for volunteers as "live-scorers" and "spotters" for the Big West Conference championship. I then requested to the group at large, if any members were able and

willing to volunteer for the tournament, to commit during the meeting. The remaining volunteers were collected, many more than needed, and they had committed during the face-to-face group meetings.

Since the methods of committing volunteers were different from each other, a later analysis measured the levels of consistency achieved through the two forms of commitment. There were a total of six volunteer cancellations one week prior to the event. Four of six cancellations were people who had made a commitment via telephone, and the other two were people who had made a public commitment. During the event there were four cancellations; all four of them being volunteers that which committed via telephone.This analysis agrees with Cialdini's claim about social ties as an influential social resource for committing volunteers (Guadagno &Cialdini, 2010) when accomplished over the telephone. But it disagrees with Vaidyanathan & Aggarwal's (2005) use of social capital and expressed commitment to drive the volunteer's behavioral intention to follow through consistently.

The analysis supports the literature indicating public commitment increases behavioral consistency (Stults & Messe, 1983; Cialdini & Ascani 1979; Vaidyanathan & Aggarwal, 2005). Out of the total ten cancellations, only two were volunteers who committed publically; that is a 1:5 ratio of inconsistent behavior from public commitment to telephone commitment. The volunteers that were used to replace the cancellations were also people who committed publically. Every single volunteer was a bonding social tie to Scott Cartwright. This use of his social capital, paired with the communication techniques of commitment and consistency are what made the completion of the goal in attaining 60 volunteers possible.

Conclusion

   The completion of this senior project to co-host the Big West Conference golf championship was made possible through the communication theories and concepts that were predetermined. As a student at California Polytechnic State University, I was able to take the knowledge gained through the various Communication Studies classes and apply them to real life situations. This senior project was a journey that I can continue to learn from. I learned that a team not only shares common goals but they also support each other in moments of minor panic. This conversion of a small group into a team was the support that also made the event possible. It was comforting to learn that people in the community of San Luis Obispo truly want to help a good cause. When utilizing persuasive communication for soliciting hole sponsors, many of the responses were positive even if they couldn't donate money. I also learned that finding people to give their time, rather than money, is a tougher jug to fill; but with the use of a single person with lots of social networks it is made easier.

   When reflecting back on this senior project, a quote from St. Francis of Assisi sums up my insight of this journey: "Grant that we may seek not to be understood rather to understand." Through my studies of the various Communication discipline classes, I was able to understand the communication concepts that needed to be applied in order to fulfill my goals. In the end, by understanding the communication that needed to take place I could be understood. Personally, the struggle that I dealt with the most was the fear of rejection. Asking for money and help from others did not easy for me. By having created the bare bones scripts that lead my communication, it allowed for me to grow past that fear. I knew there would always be people to say no, but the reassurance from the literature about my communication was comforting. The experience of this project made

me step out of my comfort zone when it came to asking for help and money from others. My task became to not have others understand my need for them, but rather for me to understand the human communication needed to be understood.

The Big West Conference championship was an experience for me to widen my understanding. I was able to experience different scenarios of communication and through experience learn how to apply the communication concepts to aid conversations. This event was a way for me to move past barriers of fear, as well as reaffirm strengths of persistence and understanding. The interworking of the women's Big West Conference championship tournament can also be applied to future Cal Poly golf tournaments. My hope is that this senior project can serve as a framework for future endeavors in hosting golf tournaments in San Luis Obispo. I experienced great joy and knowledge from the success that the communication concepts generated while attaining my goals. I was able to apply the knowledge that I gained in the classroom and truly experience the Cal Poly slogan of "learn by doing.

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Appendix A

<u>Gantt Chart</u>

Big West Conference			2014									
Deliverables	Name	W	Feb	8	9	Mar	11	12	13	April	15	16
Planning phase			1	2	3	4						
Create phone script	Taylor	1	n	n		n						
Compile volunteer list	Scott	1,2,3	n	n	c							
Create hole sponsor script	Taylor	2										
							1	2	3			
							n	n	n			
									n			
							n	n	n			
										1	2	3
										n		
										n		
											n	c
Implementation phase										n	c	
Find Hole sponsors	Taylor	4,5,6,7,8									c	
Call Volunteers	Taylor	1										
Go to ladies club meetings	Taylor and Scott	3,1										
Learn Duties for Volunteers	Montana	2										
Organize Voulteers	Montana	3										
Hole signs and scorecard printed	Taylor	2										
Closure phase		0										
Task I	name	5										
Task II	name	5										
Annotations												
W	Duration (Weeks)											
n	normal											
d	dependent on others											
c	critical											

Appendix B

<u>Script: Soliciting hole sponsor donations</u>

- Hello nice to meet you, my name is Taylor Yoshitake and I am a member of the Cal Poly Women's golf team. How are you?
- As part of my senior project, I am interning with the Big West Conference and assisting in hosting the women's golf championship tournament here at San Luis Obispo Country Club. It is the last time the women's team will host conference for at least 8 years, so it is really a great opportunity to experience women's colligate golf in SLO.
- Part of my senior project is to reduce the cost of the tournament for the participating teams my soliciting donations and creating them as hole sponsors.
    - The donations will be used to fund the event: tee times, tournament equipment and etc.
- Each hole sponsor will have their name on a tee sign, giving recognition to those who helped make Big West Conference championship possible.
- I chose to speak with your business because _____
- Would you be interested in becoming a hole sponsor and donating for the Big West Conference championship?
    - $200?... or even $100?
- Honestly even a penny will help…
- (Give flier)
- Thank you very much for your time!

Appendix C

Hole Sponsor Flier

2014 Big West Conference Women's Golf Championship
Hosted by Cal Poly and San Luis Obispo Country Club

- April 13-14-15, 2014
- Come out and watch some of the best Women's College golfers on the West Coast take on your San Luis Obispo Country Club.

In order to make this championship one that the players will remember, we need your help. We will be making hole sponsor signs for each hole and the driving range. Hole sponsorship is $100.00 and we will provide you with the sign as a remembrance. The cost of putting on a first class event can be daunting so any penny will help!

Checks can be made out to: Cal Poly Golf

Names _____

Hole requested _____ Phone # _____

E-mail _____
Please return to: Taylor Yoshitake c/0 Cal Poly Golf
                 1 Grand Avenue, SLO, CA. 93407
                 (310) 729-9411

Thank you for your support and Go Mustangs!

Appendix D

<u>List of businesses who contributed</u>

1. Ciopinot
2. Pepe Delgado's

3. Petra
4. Art and Therese Hanlon
5. Creo Care
6. Village Host Pizza
7. Rancho Grande Motors
8. Hall, Hieatt, & Connely Law Firm
9. Pattie & Lloyd DeMartini
10. Betty Willaman-Cal Poly Donor
11. Louisa's Place
12. Hicks Pension Service
13. Michael & Sammy Pineau
14. Meathead Movers
15. Tim Gonzalez
16. Luke & Jane Faber
17. Firestone Grill
18. Koog Bars
19. Edufii
20. Criki Tiki

Appendix E

<u>Script: Phone call to volunteers</u>

- Hi_____, my name is Taylor Yoshitake, how are you?
- I am a member of the Cal Poly Women's golf team coached by Scott Cartwright.

Scott passed along your contact information to me because he thought that you would be interested in this volunteer opportunity to support Cal Poly golf and the Big West Conference championship.

- This championship tournament is being held at San Luis Obispo Country Club (SLOCC) April 13, 14, & 15th
    - It is the last time the women's team will host conference for at least 8 years, so it is really a great opportunity to experience women's colligate golf in SLO.
- I am looking for people to volunteer as live scorers during the tournament.
    - All Volunteers will receive coffee and donuts in the morning. The live scorers will be given a group of golfers to follow and keep their score. You will be given a golf cart to follow that is fully stocked with drinks and snacks, provided by Big West.
- Will You be available one or all of these days to volunteer for the conference championship?

If yes…

- Thank you so much Scott and I really appreciate your help!
- Basically you will keep the score for the three golfers in the group that you are assigned to follow. Then you will text the scores into the phone number that will be given to you in the morning. Those scores will keep the live scoreboard updated.
    - Since I am also a participant of the tournament I will be in and out of communication, depending if I am on the course or not.
    - My teammate Montana Kosty will be there in the mornings to check you in, give you a clipboard with all the information you will need, as well as your golf cart.
- If at any time you have questions or concerns and I am unable to be contacted, please call Montana and she can help you. Her number as well as other Big West officials will be on the bottom of the clipboard.
- Does _____ tee time on _____ work for your schedule?
- Thank you so much again!! I look forward to seeing you on ___!
- Go Mustangs!

Appendix F

<u>Volunteer Flier and Sign Up</u>

2014 Big West Conference Women's Golf Championship
Hosted by Cal Poly and San Luis Obispo Country Club

- April 13-14-15, 2014
- Come out and watch some of the best Women's College golfers on the West Coast take on your San Luis Obispo Country Club.

In order to make this championship one that the players will remember, we need your help. We will be doing live scoring for each group during play of the Championship. Scorers are needed to ride along with each group and radio or phone in scores after each hole. Scores will be posted on-line at www.golfstat.com for viewing across the country.

Times needed
Sunday…Tee Times are from 7:30-9:40am…
Monday…Tee Times are from 9:00-11:10am…
Tuesday…Tee Times are from 7:30-9:40am
- Rounds take 4 – 4 ½ hours to play
- Breakfast and Lunch will be provided as well as snacks during play.

Name _____

e-mail _____ Phone _____

Day or days you would like to do scoring _____

Return to: Taylor Yoshitake c/o Cal Poly Golf
   1 Grand Avenue, SLO, CA. 93407
   (310) 729-9411

Appendix G

Information document for volunteers

2014 Women's Big West Golf Championship
Score Keeper Information

Please follow and keep the scores for the players your group. After each hole, *call* or *text* the scores into the person assigned for that day. Please let the person know the scores by saying or texting:

"Group #, Hole #, Player A (Score), Player B (Score), Player C (Score)"

> * Sunday Play…805-801-7899…Donovan
> * Monday Play…805-550-3427… Eric
> * Tuesday Play…805-801-7899… Donovan

For those using Radios, radio in the scores using the same format.

Rules Officials
If any problems arise, Scorers may call Rules Officials to get the proper rulings. Rules Officials are assigned to every five groups and there are rovers.

Sunday: *Groups 1-5*…Lance Parker 805-748-9482….*Groups 6-10*…Lou Carpine 805-748-3715…*Groups 11-15*…Mike Weeks 805-459-6654…*Rover Official Steve* Cutts PGA & Dan Unrue PGA

Monday: *Groups 1-5*…Lou Carpine 805-748-3715…*Groups6-10*…Kent Lauble 805-471-6196…*Groups 11-15*..Mike Weeks..805-459-6654…*Rover Official* Jordan Bridges

Tuesday: *Groups 1-5*…Jordan Bridges 805-234-3333…*Groups 6-10*…Lou Carpine 805-748-3715….*Groups 11-15*…Mike Weeks 805-459-6654… *Rover Official* Bryan Pierce

Athletic Trainer
An Athletic Trainer will be on site Sunday-Tuesday, and will be located outside of the Women's Locker Room--Krystal Slover: (805)-801-5157

Contact information:
Taylor Yoshitake- (310) 729-9411
San Luis Obispo Country Club- Pro-Shop: 805-543-4035
Montana Kosty- (760) 707-3537
Scott Cartwright- (805) 748-7048

Thank you for all your help and Go Mustangs !!