

Creation and Implementation of Marketing Collateral for the Agricultural Education and
Communication Department at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

A Senior Project
Presented to
The Faculty of the Agricultural Education and Communication Department
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Bachelor of Science

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In 1950, agriculture employed more than 75% of the total workforce in traditional agrarian societies. Today, in more advanced countries, only about 2.5% of the population remain in the agriculture workforce (Federico, 2010, p. 1). With a population expected to reach 9.3 billion people by 2050 and a decreasing amount of people in the agriculture workforce, recruitment of newer and younger people is becoming more important for the future of the agriculture industry (Lee, 2011, p. 1). As advanced communication technologies become more mainstream, the public increasingly relies on electronically mediated information to educate them about the agriculture industry. The Internet, television, newspapers, and social media manage to fill the communication gap between agricultural producers and consumers. Because consumers rely on this technology it is critical that the information being conveyed is correct.

Agricultural communication is the exchange of information about the agricultural and natural resources industries through effective and efficient media, such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and the Web, to reach appropriate audiences (Telg, R. & Irani, T., 2012 p. 1). At California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Agricultural Communication is housed in the Agricultural Education and Communication Department within the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences. Though the department is very effective at recruiting new students, they are bringing in these students without utilizing one of their most effective tools: their professors. The purpose of this project is to create tools to be used online, on social media and in print to highlight the work and efforts of the professors at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo's Agricultural Education and Communication Department.

Methodology

In January, 2019 the author created a template in Adobe InDesign to input information to be gathered from professors. The intent of the template was to display relevant information to help students learn more about their future faculty: hometown, areas of research, industry/teaching experience, alma maters, among other information (email address, office location, and office phone number). The author then developed questions and emailed all of the faculty and staff in the Agricultural Education and Communication Department along with a request for a headshot from each member. For those who did not have a headshot available to them, or who simply wanted theirs updated, the author made them self available to take professional headshots for them. The staff and faculty members were given a deadline for when the author needed the answers returned and once the relevant information was gathered, the author could begin to input the information into the template created in January, 2019.

Once the initial templates were created for every faculty and staff member they were then formatted to fit social media guidelines, i.e. Facebook and Instagram, and for the departmental website. Once the three different formats were created the author took the PDF versions of the print sizes to University Graphic System to be printed for display outside the Agricultural Education and Communication Department office in Building 10 on Cal Poly's campus. The

social media versions were handed over to Dr. Ann De Lay who is responsible for the departmental social media accounts for publication as the department sees fit. The website versions were published by student assistant Quincie Gourley who manages the departmental website.

Along with the creation of new marketing material for the Agricultural Education and Communication Department that featured departmental professors, the author was also asked to create material to feature students. This material has already one iteration created by Professor Megan Silcott. The author was asked to create new material to feature a wider breadth of students from within the department. These students come from different towns, socioeconomic backgrounds, future career plans, and all represent the department differently for the audience that will be viewing the collateral.

Results

The author developed 10 faculty and staff biographies which encompassed the head of the department, all of the professors, the South Coast Region FFA chair, and the administrative coordinator. Each biography was recreated for three different formats of web, print, and social media. The author also developed five posters depicting student features in three different size formats: letter, legal, and 11x17 inches. All the materials were organized in digital media folders and placed on the Agriculture Education and Communication department's marketing drive for future use and updates.

Conclusion

Given the variety of faculty and staff knowledge and skill development, the material developed was able to show students the breadth of education, knowledge, and industry experience the faculty holds, as well as the students within the department. The creation of a template in InDesign means as faculty and staff come and go, new members could have a one-sheet created about them with very little effort on the part of the person who is inputting the information. This is also true with the student collateral, because of the ease of changing information in InDesign all that would need to be changed to showcase new students is a new photo, and in some cases, a new quote pertaining to futures in Agricultural Education or Communication.

With the recent push the Agricultural Education and Communication department has made in their marketing plan and utilizing all of the resources available to show students that Cal Poly is the right school for them, these one-sheets will contribute greatly to the reputation that students already are aware of.

Sources

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