Researchers among Us

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Emory University

- Atlanta, Georgia
- 7,500 undergraduates
  7,000 graduate students
- Private, R1, liberal arts
- 30,000 undergraduate applications per year
What we will cover

1. WHAT WAS NEEDED?
2. THE CREATIVE SERVICES PROPOSAL
3. FINDINGS OF DISCOVERY
4. THE NEW BRAND
5. VALUE TO ENTERPRISE AND LESSONS LEARNED
6. RESOURCES
7. ASK US ANYTHING
1. WHAT WAS NEEDED?

Reimagining a key university site
It all started with a website . . .
Do we know if our current site . . .

a. Contains the necessary content written clearly?

b. Has a user-friendly structure and functionality?

c. Appeals to the students the university wants?
   • Design
   • Images
   • Stories
   • Inspiration
Why we decided to stay in-house

- Cost
- Shared knowledge and experience
- Positive working relationship and trust
2. THE CREATIVE SERVICES PROPOSAL

A discovery process with all the trimmings
How Creative Services Got in the “Discovery” Business

• State of play in Communications and Public Affairs
• Realization of a long-held promise
• Brave, foolish?
Our Charge

Our charge was to create a unified communication strategy for Emory Undergraduate Admission that expresses its ethos while being in concert with the messaging of Emory University. Ultimately, we articulated from this discovery process a platform, which will serve as the foundation for your new website and other communication channels going forward.
The Discovery Components

One survey with 12,000+ responses
Five brand workshops that featured 31 participants

Competitive Analysis
- Emory

Discovery

Focus Groups
- Private high schools
- Guidance counselors
- Emory students
- Accepted students
- Parents

Interventions
- Nineteen stakeholder interviews
## The Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Marketing</th>
<th>Office of Admission</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Editors/Writers</td>
<td>1 Project Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Web Developers</td>
<td>2 Senior Managers</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Survey Expert</td>
<td>2 Web Developers</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Contractor</td>
<td>1 Graphic Designer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 Survey Expert</td>
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Brand Workshops

• 5 brand workshops, 1-3 hours each
• 31 staff from 10+ teams and departments
  • Financial Aid, Admission, Registrar, Advising, communications people from each college, Scholar programs, Student Finance, Orientation, Housing, etc.
• Admission selected whom to invite
• Communications ran the workshops
Focus Groups

- 6 focus groups, 1 hour each
  - Current Emory students
  - Parents of admitted students
  - Admitted students
  - High school guidance counselors
  - Current high school students

- Admission selected whom to invite

- Communications ran focus groups
Stakeholder Interviews

• 19 Stakeholder interviews, 1 hour each

• Key leadership positions or those who were important but could not attend a brand workshop
  • Vice provosts, deans, directors, etc.

• Admission selected whom to invite

• Communications conducted the interviews
Competitive Analysis

- Looked at Usability/Experience, Content Features, Addressing Target Audiences, and Integrations
- Admission selected peer institutions
- Communications performed analysis
Web Survey

- Emailed to prospective juniors and seniors
- 15-question survey
- Gave away (5) $25 Amazon gift cards to incentivize
- Admission and Communications wrote survey together
- Admission sent survey
3. FINDINGS OF DISCOVERY

A new brand platform and communication pillars
Elements of Discovery Findings

• Positioning platform (1)
• Communication pillars (3)
• Defined audiences (3)
• Brand values (3)
• Personae (6 students, 4 parents, 5 influencers)
4. THE NEW BRAND

The big reveal and moving forward
Where it all started . . .
New website
How we used the discovery work

• Personae inform stories and writing style

PUBLIC SCHOOL COUNSELORS
Public school counselors have large numbers of students whom they are charged with getting to college, the military, or successfully graduating from high school.

COMMUNITY-ORIENTED STUDENTS
Those who have been involved in extracurricular activities, including leadership and service at their schools, and would bring that focus to their college community.

INTERNATIONAL PARENTS
Parents navigating the admission process from outside the US and who may or may not speak or read English fluently.

STEM STUDENTS
Those who excel at science, technology, engineering, and/or math, and who are interested in studying a STEM major in college.
5. VALUE TO THE ENTERPRISE

Charting a new course and the lessons we have learned
Value to the Enterprise

Of course the new site is clean and bright. It looks great!

It’s also telling our story better to students Emory should and does appeal to. The new site has led the way in helping the university embrace its position and reputation.

Paul Marthers
Vice Provost of Enrollment
Looking back on Metrics

- **Google analytics**
  - More mobile friendly...
    - 5% increase in pages/session (mobile)
    - 6% increase in session duration time (mobile)

- **Questions from the public**
  - They can find it on our site . . .
    - 14% fewer calls
    - 7% fewer emails

- **Questions from staff**
Unintended Positive Consequences

• New templates for website for future clients

• New framework for discovery process with future clients

• Writers learned from contractor how to write personae narratives.

• Discovery research on prospective students benefited many other departments on campus.
Lessons Learned along the Way

• Build a project timeline. Give yourself grace.

• Have redundancies in project leadership where possible.

• Paid training is worth it for your CMS.

• Understand how to weight what you hear.

• Don’t be afraid of hard conversations.
**6. RESOURCES**

**Brand Workshop Outline & Activities**
https://apply.emory.edu/_includes/documents/pdf/conference_materials/brand%20workshop_ppt%20deck_emory%20university.Pdf

**Brand Workshop Script**
https://www.apply.emory.edu/_includes/documents/pdf/conference_materials/Brand%20Workshop_script_Emory%20University.pdf
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