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Marketing Lindenwood University Through a Promotional Video

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MARKETING LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY THROUGH A PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

Deidamia Batista
And
Karen Cordoba

**A Culminating Project Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate
School of Lindenwood University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Mass
Communication**

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ABSTRACT

In recent times video productions have been used as an effective sales tool. Moving pictures, like those that video provides, are an effective way to communicate in a quickly growing business market. With a video a company is able to reach and approach clients more effectively, because they can present information which is attractive to people.

We have seen over the last decade that the use of technology has invaded every market, including the education market. It is common to see how the business community within the education center has been quick to embrace video for many different purposes—one of which is to enroll more students.

Virtually every university or college in The United States has developed a video in which they try to reflect all the advantages and benefits new students can find once they are enrolled in the institution.

This thesis will focus in the idea to create a promotional video regarding Lindenwood University. We will present the reasons why we believe Lindenwood University should have a well-structured video.

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Moreover, we will intend discuss quotes that have some similarity or discrepancy with our research in order to give authenticity and credibility to our Culminating Project.

The purpose of the present study is supported in the fact that over the last two years Lindenwood University has grown in terms of the number of students enrolled. It is therefore important for the University to display a solid image which will be reinforced through our video.

The ideas included in the video were previously analyzed taking in consideration how the current promotional video presents the university's image. We included in our video some important elements that were ignored in the current video such as, interviews with students and deans of the school.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an exchange of information between people. Information alone does not involve an exchange; it is simply the act of providing someone with data, a one-way flow. When we establish communication we are really attempting to influence another person with our ideas. Most of the time, we are trying to change or mold that person's attitude about something, so that it becomes congruent with our own ideas. We must make communication and attitude formation into a continuous process.

Statement of Purpose

A video can be purely informational, or it can have a distinct point of view and be a vehicle of communication, through which we try to express specific ideas of what we want others to learn about a certain topic. Moving picture is a process of communication that uses electronically reproduced moving images, speech, sound effect, and music. It is also an industry that uses complicated equipment, expensive facilities, and vast amounts of human effort to produce and distribute programs.

Video, a moving picture medium, takes many forms, ranging from expensive network productions to simple consumer recordings of a child's birthday party. Its purposes include documentation of important events, instruction, persuasion, and artistic expression.

In recent times video productions have been used as an effective sales tool. Moving pictures, like those that video provides, are an effective way to communicate in a quickly growing business market. With a video a company is able to reach and approach clients more effectively, because they can present information which it is attractive to people.

In fact, research analysts have found that moving pictures are five times more effective in closing sales than printed brochures, because "the visual impact of television holds the viewer's attention more effectively than printed material, lectures and demonstrations, or even print and face to face used together" (Deger 20). Coupled with this, the video action accompanied by color and sound involves the viewer in what is happening or what is being said.

Videos are also a valuable part of any company's training program. For example, with a video, information can be presented to employees consistently, no matter who is giving the presentation. Techniques, procedures, and company policies are emphasized through

the power of motion pictures, making it easier for employees to remember and review vital information. With a video companies do not have to worry about having a person present when promoting a service or company. They can simply send a video to those interested. This way, promotional videos save time and distance when used as a sales tool.

Video production is only one of the methods that can be used to present information. Before motion pictures were available, colleges and universities used other forms of visual communications like pictures in catalogs, slides, visual presentations, etc., to present messages to audiences with effective results. These non-video methods of presenting information are, together with video, what create today's communication mix. Each of these alternative ways of presenting moving picture singles out a particular audience, presentation, and message.

American colleges and universities have been forced to adopt aggressive marketing and recruitment practices. One of the most often-applied communication techniques is the production and distribution of image or recruitment videotapes, or video brochures.

Today, the use of technology has invaded every market, including the education market. It is common to see how the business community within the education sector has been quick to embrace video for many different purposes – one of which is to enroll more students.

Virtually everyone has heard of the saying "A picture is worth a thousand words." Well, if a still picture is worth a thousand words, consider the fact that a video is made up of 30 pictures per second – this amounts to a lot of words. However, even though a video may "contain" a vast amount of words, they do not mean much unless they are carefully planned and executed.

Video has an overall effectiveness in visual rhetorical power and message retention. Results of a research to determine the effectiveness of College Image/Recruitment presented at the Joint Meeting of the Southern States Communication Association in New York in the year 1993, show that videos tend to follow similar content and sequential patterns. Additionally, the visual messages presented in the beginning of a video have the highest level of student message retention, and play the largest role in influencing a student's choice of university.

In today's educational market, virtually every university or college in the United States has developed a video in which they try to reflect all the advantages and benefits new students can find once they are enrolled in the institution. The idea to produce a promotional video is useful and profitable when an educational institution desires to reach its largest possible audience. Videotapes can be sent by mail to attract new students throughout the United States, or from other countries.

The use of selectively produced videotapes as image-building and student-recruitment mechanisms has been gaining momentum in the United States throughout the past decade (Roehr 1). This marketing tool's development is primarily due to its domestic accessibility. Currently, around 90 percent of US households own, and know how to operate, a video cassette recorder.

For a number of years schools, colleges, and universities have been interested in using video that extol their virtues. Since the mid-1980's, institutions of higher education have essentially been forced to enter the electronic age, and promote themselves through the contemporary communications tools, such as videotapes.

In the specific case of Lindenwood University, we have seen how for the past couple of years this institution has grown significantly in terms of the number of students enrolled. New international students and students from across the vastness of the United States are interested in applying to Lindenwood University.

This means that Lindenwood needs alternative ways to diffuse and enhance its image – especially if they are trying to appeal to international students. In this sense, video represents one of the most effective venues through which Lindenwood University can disseminate positive information about itself.

Taking the power associated with the medium of video into consideration, we decided to produce a promotional video, to be used as a potential way to inform new students about Lindenwood University. Our target audience will be American as well as international students.

Furthermore, we are convinced of the fact that video represents an excellent way to offer vast quantities of information in a relatively short span of time. This can be done in a way that is very effective, while still entertaining. The cost of producing a promotional video is small, compared with the benefit and durability this product has as a marketing tool.

Television has been used for decades to deliver instructional programming. Until relatively recent times, the use of the television medium has required expensive, centralized production and broadcast facilities that not only absorb enormous resources, but control programming content and viewing schedules as well. As broadcast television hardware evolved during the 1970's and 1980's, a new video technology emerged that no longer required masses of immovable, virtually unaffordable equipment. Small videotape formats and tremendous advances in electronics produced a technology that became inexpensive, portable, simple, and reliable. A basic consumer-level

camcorder, currently selling for less than $1,000, produces images superior to the $10,000 industrial video camera of a decade ago.

The combination of substantially reduced prices and simplified equipment operation has opened up the application of video production to a group of people previously unable to access this technology. We refer in this point to the changes that video technology has brought in education, and other fields.

Murray (1988) talks about the changes in educational television during the past decade as the transition from broadcast television to the video age. This all came about because people desired greater control over the use of this medium. Educators, trainers, and dealers no longer need to stand on the production sidelines while the television professional controls the medium. Video technology is evolving along the same path that the computers did when control of computing power shifted from resources hungry central authorities operating expensive mainframe computers, to the individual freedom of autonomous personal computers. Videocassette recorders are now not only present in most American homes, but they have begun to permeate the developing world as well.

A variety of people in developing countries have already successfully produced videotaped programs illustrating their needs and

their successes. Stuart (1987) provides examples of grassroots video production to address the needs of specific populations in developing countries. Farmers in China, for example, produced a series of videotapes that helped farmers in Guyana produce natural gas from farm waste. In another example, a rural woman's literacy project in Mali produced video programs on infant nutrition, childcare, and agricultural practices. Women in small villages became more receptive to the project when they viewed videotapes of a woman's cooperative in another village and "saw it was their reality."

This illustrates the greatest power of video technology – that of being able to show people the reality of others living, working, and learning in a similar environment. Even in less developed areas of the United States, Native Americans such as the Hopi in Arizona, the Ute in Utah, and the Creek Nation in Oklahoma are successfully using video production as an extension of oral traditions to help preserve their varied cultures (Weatherford 1990).

There are a number of reasons that educators, dealers, and companies should find video attractive. McLellan lists several advantages of video produced for development needs:

1. Ease of operation.

2. Instantaneous Feedback.

3. Ease of recycling and distributing videotapes.

4. Production values are less important for local as opposed to broadcast use.

5. Material can easily be adjusted to viewer needs.

6. Local language can be used to facilitate communication (5).

The general idea behind a collegiate recruitment tape is to give prospective students information about the respective institution, provide a view of the campus and student life, and peak interest in attending the college.

Our intention is create a video that gives a simple profile of Lindenwood University. We will describe the unique features of this institution and its programs, including the number of students enrolled, special programs, activities, philosophy, and so on. Moreover, we will try to emphasize some aspects that can provide prospective students with an introduction to the friendliness that Lindenwood University hopes they encounter on campus.

This promotional video should point to the different career related studies the university offers students. Often the best way to gather and present information in a video format is through the use of one or several interviews. The interview device is especially useful in instances when an expert on a specific topic best presents information.

Taking this into consideration, we will attempt to gather information through interviews with the various deans of the different schools, who can offer detailed information on the academic programs offered by their various schools. However, in order to avoid our audience becoming bored, we will incorporate into our strategy the "MTV Syndrome", which is going to be explained in the following pages.

It is important for the video to enhance that Lindenwood University is an educative institution with the main goal of preparing students for the transition to adulthood. The institution also prides itself on its capability to help students determine their field of study, and develop the skills and the self-confidence necessary to subsequently accomplish their goals. In order to achieve this, it is essential to bring forward that the vigorous academic programs at Lindenwood University encourage students to work at their highest levels.

One of the most efficient ways to get a complete image across to required audiences is for the university is to promote itself, preferably in a wide variety of manners. In this sense, if Lindenwood fails to employ means of self-promotion the institution will be at a disadvantage. Perceived image is the key here. People who have seen or experienced

only one kind of Lindenwood program will assume that this represents the extent of what is offered by this institution.

For example, let us suppose that although Lindenwood University offers undergraduate as well as graduate classes, the public has little or no knowledge of the fact that Lindenwood University offers the latter kind of education. It follows that they will associate Lindenwood University with merely undergraduate classes. This represents a situation in which self-promotion by Lindenwood can alter the public's perception or create a new public image of the institution, such an effort is especially relevant with the recent change from college to university status.

In September of the current year (1997) Lindenwood acquired university status, which gives it more prestige in the public eyes, enough reason to the increase public awareness of what the institution is presently doing, and what it is aiming for in the near future. This can be done effectively and efficiently through self-promotion.

According to the book The Art and Business of Creative Self-Promotion, the publicity is to value an organization includes:

"-Establishing, change, or enhancing its image;

-Positioning the organization in the creative marketplace and/or

-Developing new business contacts" (Herring & Fulton 9).

The first, and most important, task we have to do is to precisely define what Lindenwood aims to accomplish with its self-promotion. The objectives are to create a new image, recruit and educate a larger student body, make the public aware that Lindenwood has acquired the status of a University. We need to focus on all these aspects in order to accomplish the self-promotion of Lindenwood University.

It is important to define the "whys" and "whats" of our project: Why we are doing it, and What we expect it to accomplish.

WHY: Shrinking student enrollments and related state funding cutbacks have created a highly competitive recruiting environment within the United States. These elements have forced administrators to develop aggressive marketing strategies for the promotion of their educational and social products.

Moreover, the importance of college and university administrators as a potential tool to be used for targeting their shrinking audiences and retaining traditional student populations has increased. The anticipated benefits of videos, and their visually dominant messages, is supported by research that suggests a better retention of visual elements as compared to audio messages, and that video is especially appealing to young people (Hunt and Carter, 1986, Landers, 1986, Vinocur, 1990).

The unique vantage point held by marketing through video is the following: Once a video is playing, it captivates its audience. Viewers are focused upon nothing but the video's messages until the video is over. There are no other channels or viewing options to choose, until the viewer consciously turns the VCR off or the video has concluded. Since most video viewing takes place because of the viewer's desire to watch the content of a tape, there is a greater likelihood that the image portrayed by the video will be allowed to make its full impact.

WHAT: with our self-promotion video we want to accomplish a set of different goals, such as:

-Establish and/or develop Lindenwood's image.

-Change the current perceived image of Lindenwood University.

-Attract more students from across the United States.

-Attract new students from across the world.

-Expand Lindenwood beyond its current frontiers.

-Promote Lindenwood as an educational center at university level.

Lindenwood's current video does not contain enough information about the different career training paths offered by the university. We think it would be very useful to expand the video's discussion regarding the various majors available to students. This information has a significant impact on a potential student's choice of what institution to

apply to. Again, we intend to interview a number of the deans of the various schools in order to provide this data.

Due to obvious limitations, we cannot interview every individual dean of the university. We therefore intend to select the schools with the most significant number of students registered, and interview their respective deans.

In these interviews, more emphasis will be placed on the different career related studies available for undergraduate and graduate students. This is an area potential students would like to hear more about in order to decide whether this university best serves as their educational center.

We also intend to include the student opinions about the academic program in which they are enrolled, as well as students' opinions regarding the social life on and around campus. This information is particularly useful for international students, who typically have no choice but to live on campus. Accordingly, international students have a special interest in information regarding the housing conditions provided by Lindenwood University. We intend to portray the interior and exterior of dorms in order for students to obtain an idea of housing conditions at this university.

This promotional video would also include information on various social activities students can get involved in, such as theatre,

sports teams, art, music, dance, sororities, and fraternities. This would show interested applicants the wide array of life styles they have the ability to carry out while attending this university. We will include interviews with students in order for them to offer their points of view on this issue

We feel it is of significance to discuss in somewhat greater depth the location of the various facilities Lindenwood University has to offer. This would include references to the metropolitan St. Louis area – the main campus being located a mere twenty-minute drive from downtown St. Louis. St. Louis offers several tourist attractions, such as the famous Gateway Arch, the mighty Mississippi river, the Art Museum, the St. Louis Zoo, the Botanical Garden, the Science Center, etc. We further intend to discuss the city of St. Charles, including its own tourist attractions. We believe that if by portraying these aspects on the video, they could help to persuade viewers to consider an educational career at Lindenwood University, not to mention making the video a bit more interesting and visually compelling.

In a few words, we will focus our promotional or recruitment video on eight main categories: testimonials, student-professor interactions, campus/building/town aesthetics, text, varsity athletics, student activities, academic symbols, and programs. According to some

of the recruitment videos that we have studied, it is vital to project the student-professor interaction, student activities, and the programs that are the most significant, in order to have the desired effect on prospective students.

Researchers often mention the usefulness and the profile of the "MTV Syndrome," which suggests that videos should at least partially rely on fast paced scene changes and have a total running time between six to eight minute long.

Accepting the MTV Syndrome, as a reality with the target audience, we intend to use this in a strategic way. A number of fast shots will be coupled with appropriate music, in order stir greater interest among viewers and avoid the ever-possible sense of boredom when watching a promotional video.

In order to achieve effectiveness, our promotional video must motivate our target audience – in this case American as well as international students – to discover more about the institution and the services this university offers. It must arouse students' interest, while at the same time give them confidence in the university and its services. To do this effectively, our video must be based on a sound, creative script. It must further contain captivating images about the institution, and be professionally edited. This will not only incite the desired emotional

response in the viewer, it will also effectively describe the characteristics of the university itself.

The production process includes a number of steps we need complete before production can be commenced. Generally speaking, the production process can be divided into three main phases: pre-production, production, and post-production.

In the pre-production phase, we will develop the initial idea of what we are looking to produce, define the type of audience, and subsequently select the people and television equipment necessary in order to translate our initial idea into a video.

The production phase involves the operation and coordination of the visual and audio images into the video or program we are producing.

The post-production, lastly, includes selecting the best program bits, enhancing their picture and sound quality if necessary, and then assembling them in a coherent manner. For large programs that require a great deal of editing, this is the phase that will take the longest time.

Our first priority when producing this video is to develop the initial idea, and then move directly to what (ideally) we want the viewers to learn, feel, or do. This is the main objective when producing a promotional video. To fully understand how to best establish close contact with the target audience and convince them to accept the

institution we are promoting, we first have to learn how the public perceives the reality of Lindenwood University, and how this perceived reality affects them.

Herbert Zettl talks about the effect to cause of the production model. This model suggests that the first thing we have to do is to move from our basic idea to the effects desired on our viewers. The intended effect is the response we want from our audience. This step is called the defined process message. After we have our process message defined, we do our backup and decide on the medium requirements necessary to produce the cause of the process message. Then the actual process message moves through the phases of production and is delivered to the target audience. The success of the production depends on matching the defined process message with the actual process message.

As we can see, the effect to cause model discusses four distinct steps: "1. move from the basic idea to the defined process message; 2. determine which are the medium requirements necessary to produce the effect; 3. to take the actual process message through the production phases; and finally, 4. to evaluate the actual effect and to see to what extent the defined process message and the actual process message overlap" (Zetll 8).

The process message will give us a clue or idea as to what facilities and people we need in order to translate the basic idea into an actual video program. An effective production process depends on a fairly clear idea of what we want to communicate to our target audience.

Before one produces a video it is very important to fully develop a clear idea of what we really want to show to our audience, and how we can best approach them in order to achieve maximum desired influence.

For our project, the basic idea is to show the image of Lindenwood University as a center of higher education. The defined process message is to obtain a closer connection with our target audiences (American and international students), and to persuade them of Lindenwood's capabilities as an educational center able to satisfy the every educational need of its students.

The third step will involve development of the script and audience analysis. We further need to analyze what equipment will be necessary to carry out production. This includes cameras, lighting, sound, videotape recorders, and editing equipment. Finally, our real effect will be to convince our audiences to choose Lindenwood University as their educational center.

The production process requires a continuous evaluation of each of the steps. We cannot wait until the end of our production process to

determine whether our product is up to par. Rather, we need to repeatedly check every major phase during the production to see whether we can proceed to the next step, or whether we must back up to improve the previous one. "This procedure is called formative evaluation, which refers to evaluate each production phase while the production is in progress" (Zetll 13).

Advertising plays an important role in the process of making a promotional video. When constructing a promotional video, advertising objectives have to be set. "The advertising objectives should be based on an understanding of the customer or prospect and on what must be communicated" (Arens 202).

The first objective should be to instill awareness among the viewers by acquainting people with the company, product, service, or brand. The next objective is to develop comprehension in order to communicate enough information, ensuring that some percentage of the aware group recognize the product's purpose, image or position, and perhaps some of its features.

To effectively use advertising in our video we have to communicate enough information to develop a conviction. The intention is to persuade our target audience to believe that Lindenwood University is the most suitable educational center for them. Thus, of those who

become convinced, some may be moved to enroll at Lindenwood. Finally, some of those desiring to be enrolled at Lindenwood will take action in an effort to obtain admittance at Lindenwood.

Over time, as an educational facility uses advertising, the number of people who are aware of the institution will inevitable increase. Correspondingly, as more people understand what services an educational institution is able to offer them, the number of people who believe in the institution, desire to attend, and take actions to be part of its student population will increase.

Advertising objectives declare where we want to be with respect to target-audience awareness, attitude, and preference. Regarding this point we need to describe the advertising strategy in order to understand how to get the attention of our audience.

The advertising strategy refers to the elements of the creative mix, which are "target audience, product concept, communication media, and advertising message." Each of these elements should be clearly defined in order to accomplish our advertising goal.

Our promotional video about Lindenwood University will attempt to accomplish all these purposes. All the information and images presented in this video can arouse possible avenues toward improving its overall communication. Coupled with this, the university's image will be

reinforced, student recruitment will be increased, and popularity will be expanded.

There is no doubt a promotional or recruitment video can change the perspectives that future prospective students have about any college or university.

We trust that our video will be useful to promote Lindenwood University anywhere in the United States as well as beyond its borders. Furthermore, our video will be evidence of the effectiveness of this contemporary communication tool in terms of recruiting students or promoting an institutional image.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, our main purpose is to compare and analyze different ideas and quotes that have some similarity or discrepancy with our research. Mainly, we will intend to discuss those quotes that support our ideas in order to give authenticity and credibility to our Culminating Project.

Concept of Video

During our research we found many definitions about what video is. However, the book Understanding and Using Video gives us a clear and complete definition about the concept video:

> Video tells a story quickly, vividly and economically. Video sells products, services and intangibles with impact, consistency and polish. Video teaches in any learning environment with a limitless variety of impact-filled presentations and hard-hitting 'live' demonstrations. Video reaches any audience large or small, geographic or demographic, general or specific. Video shows situations, events or products faster, more economically and an unlimited number of times. Video grows to meet new challenges with virtually limitless combinations and capabilities (Deger 18).

As we can see, this quote is evidence of why we used video to promote Lindenwood University. Videotape can present a dynamic, persuasive portrait of Lindenwood University. The creation of this kind

of positive impression through a story about the university is important in order to attract new students.

Moreover, if our intention is to present a story about Lindenwood, there is no better way to do this than using a video. In today's competitive educational world there is a need for a medium that permits the sharing of information with motion, color, and sound to a generation who identifies more with television than print.

Advantage to Use Video

According to the book <u>Video in the 80s</u>, "the generations now coming into adulthood have grown up with television and appear better able to absorb information through this medium than through traditional print formats" (Dranov, Moore, and Hickey 2).

The International Association of Business Communicators supports the quote above stated with these words: "The visual impact of television holds the viewer's attention more effectively than printed material, lectures and demonstrations, or even print and face-to-face used together" (Deger 2).

Before choosing the idea of creating a video to promote Lindenwood University, we wondered over some questions that eventually found answers. These are some of the basic questions that were considered:

- Is a video the best way to promote Lindenwood University?

- What are our goals in terms of Lindenwood with the creation of this video?

- What are the specific advantages of using video?

Obviously, the first question was answered with a "Yes, it is," and the second question was explained above in chapter 1. However, the third one will be discussed in this chapter. In order to avoid the emergence of doubts about the advantages of using video, we decided to support our ideas with some quotes that were found during our research.

Video has gained acceptance in an environment of many new electronic forms of communication (such as, online service, teletext, and viewdata) at a time when the transfer of information has become even more important than before. Although video is not appropriate for every purpose, there is no doubt that in the case of promoting a university or recruiting students, the visual element is crucial and video is clearly the best alternative.

The International Association of Business Communicators establishes four visual qualities associated with the use of television that can add to the impact of videotape recruitment:

"-Motion, the ability to communicate a subject requiring action, speech, drama or emotion.

-Sound and color, qualities that heighten the impact of the message, interest and motivation of the audience.

-Mobility, enabling the communicator to electronically take an audience anywhere men and machine have traveled" (Deger 20-21).

By applying this quote, we can compare how motion, sound, color, and mobility fit perfectly into what we want to get with our promoting video. Thus, we can communicate with our subject—which means promoting Lindenwood and recruiting students through the video—using a simple narrative, but one complete and entertaining enough to capture the attention of our target audience.

In addition, it is evident how extremely useful sound and color can be to provide a powerful transmission of our message. With the use of these elements, the motivation that we stimulate in our audience will determine the success of our video. There is no doubt of the potential impact sound and color has over the way the message is received and accepted by our target audience.

On the other hand, portability plays an important role when the university needs to spread the information across the United States, or to other countries. Definitively, video has the advantage that it can be sent by mail to students who cannot make campus visits.

According to <u>Understanding and Using a Video</u>, "Video has cost benefits resulting from reductions in travel and use of time. Delivering a message on videotape can be much less expensive than holding a meeting or conference requiring travel and lodging for several executives. Producing, duplicating and distributing a videotape for organizations with up to several hundred locations is more cost effective than traveling to each facility to deliver the message" (Deger 19).

Taking this quote into consideration, it could be a good idea to assess whether Lindenwood is able to establish a network for getting videotapes to international students—especially now, as this institution is expanding its frontiers. This network can be a person at a specific site who receives a copy of the tape and then arranges to show it. Thus, Lindenwood would not have to have a person travelling miles and miles to promote the institution. In a few words, if Mohammed will not come to the mountain, bring the mountain to Mohammed. Or in this case, Lindenwood can bring the video to its audience.

The article *"The Video Volley"*, from the magazine *Current* gave us a targeting idea of how to reach international students: "Redubbing your tape into other languages can extend your reach even further. You can send your tape to individual students (who will be able to share it with

family members who may not know English) or show it on foreign-language TV (Rubman & Thieblot 50).

Definitely, it would not be a bad idea to translate our promoting video to different languages, in order to get more coverage internationally, and thus attract more international students.

There are other advantages from using video, among these:

- The sense of being there and sharing in an activity – especially important for prospective students who are away from the university and unaware of most things about the institution. Thus, video can provide students with a clear description of the opportunities and expectations of the university available to them.

- Viewing can be scheduled at the audience's convenience.

- Message can be viewed more than once and portions of messages can be emphasized.

- "One additional advantage to a video approach is its versatility: It can be used to reach vast numbers of individuals or to guide a small group through the latest procedures in graphic design" (Deger 6)

The general advantages of video have already been noted. These include the effectiveness of visual impact, sound, color, mobility, versatility, scheduling flexibility, etc. In many situations, these benefits will result in considerable cost savings.

The Role Marketing Plays in a Promotional Video

As we have said in the introduction, marketing plays an important role in the promotional video because we need to find effective ways of selling the product. The book Film & Video Marketing defines marketing as "the strategy employed to find the most effective way to get to your audience or buyer" (Wiese 13).

Arens said that marketing is "the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distributing of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy the perceived needs, wants, and objectives of individuals and organizations" (Arens 107).

"Marketing" comes from the word "market." Dictionaries also list "bazaar," "carnival," "circus," and "fair." Wise refers to the fact that marketing also entails "lots of confusion, lots of noise, lots of competition, and lots distributing, peddling, retailing, wholesaling, and vending"(13). In this way, marketing could be defined as colorful, noisy, memorable way of selling our product.

When carrying out a project, focus should not be on the project alone. We need to consider how the project fits within the context of the industry as a whole. It is not enough to dream up a great film or video. We also need to see where it fits in the bigger picture.

In the marketplace several pictures are more or less similar. Therefore, we should do something entirely new so that it can capture the attention of the target audience. Regarding this, Wise states that we need to think about the question of "Who do you want to be? What kind of supplier of programming do you wish to be? How do you want to be perceived in the marketplace? in order to be very valuable" (Wiese 22). With the answer comes understanding, a sense of purpose and a greater clarity of our own work, and how it fits into the marketplace.

In order to know who we want to be, Wiese suggests that we need to be specific regarding what our goals are. In addition, we have to define our target audience, specify how our objective relates to the publicity campaign, which are the concept requirement, marketing development, and improve the product distribution.

Once we have done this, we will perhaps begin to see ourselves in a different light. Wise states that, if we use this approach, we can make many adjustments on our initial purpose and bring new change to it. "Until we step away from ourselves and try to make an honest appraisal, it is not always clear to us what ace we have to play" (Wiese 25).

Once we learn what works best, we can identify the primary product we want to produce. When the last step is over, we can start to

look for the appropriate markets and distributing channels through which to deliver the product to its audience.

How can we effectively communicate to an audience so that they will see it? Regarding this question, Wiese states that we have to reach a situation in which all pieces fit, from the product to the distribution system to the market itself. "Without very strong existing distribution streams between the communication piece and its intended audience, we will be terribly disappointed because the video will be never seen by the right audience" (Wiese 27).

The Role of Advertising and Public Relation

In order to promote a video we have to look for some type of promotion as a way of reaching the target audience effectively. Schultz and other authors state in regards to this point, that the advertising and public relations are two types of promotion which "generally affect the awareness, the information gathering, and perhaps the evaluation stages for new product, as consumers learn more about products" (Schultz 4).

The advertising and public relations are communication tools which can be used as means of increasing sales, and disseminating information about the institution or product in question. The advertising and public relations are usually perceived as investments, with sales occurring at some undetermined point in the future. "These kind of promotion can

show results in a period of time no longer, inclusive within days or even hours" (Schultz 2).

The first main role of the advertiser is to determine the interests and needs of the specific target audience. When we are making a production "we must start with a clear understanding of the needs and interests of our target audience in order to be successful" (Television Production-Capturing and Holding Viewer Attention, p. 2). Target audience is the term used to indicate the specific segment of a potential audience we are aiming at. By knowing the target audience, we may deliver the right message to the right people.

The first function of a public-relations practitioner is preparing an overall public-relations program for the entire organization. "The public relation person must constantly monitor, measure, and analyze changes in public relation attitudes and opinion toward the organization" (Arens 457).

When public relation activities are used as a marketing tool, the term "marketing public relations" is often used. In support of marketing, public relations activities can raise "awareness, inform and educate, raise understanding, build trust, make friends, give people reasons or permission to buy, and create a climate of consumer acceptance" (Arens 457).

In an integrated marketing communications program, advertising and marketing public relation should be closely coordinated in order to maintain good feedback of the tasks done, and improve the service or product that is promoted.

Today, Public relation has become a "management discipline that encompasses a wide range of activities, from marketing and advertising to investor relation and government affairs" (Arens 458).

The Public Relation Department could gain feedback from their customers through opinion sampling such as "phone interview, focus group, analysis of incoming mail, and field report" (Arens 456). This could be one of the best ways to get to know the needs of people, as well as what they think about the promoted product.

To be able to conduct promotion activities effectively, it is helpful for the marketer to first answer the following questions:

1. who are the customers we want to reach? A large percentage of traditional marketing activities are oriented toward segmenting consumers into relevant groups and determining the appropriate message to be used to target each group. In other hand, we have to specify the target audience by demographics, psycho-graphics, and other personal characteristic.
2. What are the reasons for that behavior? It is very important to know why the consumers behave the way they do, because this may affect whether - and by how much - they will be influenced by a particular promotion program.
3. What is the goal of the program? There are many reason why self promotion is used and this need to be considered in the

planning process in order to deliver a right message to the right people (Schultz 9).

It is very important to answer each one of these questions in order to be clear of what we should portray in our promotional video to convince the target audience with our message. If we specify each of these aspects, it may be easier for us to elaborate the right message to the right people.

In order to be successful with our project, we need to know the needs of people, who the audience that we want to reach is, and what our objectives are.

The success of our production is heavily dependent upon the process of production paperwork, which contains the different aspects of preparation and planning for the production. Planning on paper and communicating those plans in a clear manner to recipients usually leads to successful production.

The paperwork varies from one setting to another depending on the kind of production that is desired. The paperwork includes the proposal, the content of the production, style, and description of the target audience and the budget.

The proposal is a brief description of the program's purpose. It should be clear and simple. "The purpose statement should identify

exactly what an audience should be able to do after viewing the program" (Breyer 281). The content should contain a brief description of what the viewer will see and hear, and in what order once the program is completed. The style is a way to describe the intended program into a program- or film-category, such as "journalist documentary, music video, quiz show, etc" (Breyer 282).

The target audience should be defined as clearly as possible. "For broadcast programs, the target audience is usually described in terms of broad demographics (early teens, young mother, males over thirty-nine)" (Breyer 280).

Finally, the budget should be a statement of the anticipated needs for the production. "There might be four categories of needs to address: money, time, facilities and people" (Buyer 282). If we use paperwork for our production we can develop a clear vision of our needs and our main intention for the project. This could be catalogued as a guide for performing a good job.

Video-Production Process

When we decided to create a video to promote Lindenwood, one of the most important steps we followed was defining the message. "Deciding what the message is can be one of the most difficult stages in the process because it so often gets confused with the creative idea.

You need to make clear what you want the audience to know and do, as well as what they want to know and do" (Degel 62).

Our first goal was establish the fact that our video would be used to promote Lindenwood University, and at the same time recruit students. We determined that to achieve this, we would have to inform our audience in order to persuade them to take action due to our message.

According to the book Understanding and Using video "There are three categories of messages that you might want to deliver to an audience: First, information that an audience has a 'need to know.' Second, information in which audience members expressed interest or 'want to know.' Third, information that is 'nice to know' that is not essential to the performance of a job or crucial to a decision by your audience in meeting the video's objectives.

You need to weigh your message against your audience's needs. If the message falls into the 'need to know' category, you can decide how much time and attention it requires. If the information is important to your audience, it may warrant a special live telecast reaching your audience simultaneously at many different locations" (Degel 159-160).

Our video fits into the three categories above mentioned. The information that an audience "needs to know," is conceived in our video

by the information deemed important for potential students to know, such as what Lindenwood expects from them, the reputation the university has, and the compromise that Lindenwood has with them.

The information that an audience "wants to know," is based in the information students are interested to know about the university. For example, academic programs offered by the university, housing and board, etc. The information that is "nice to know" is defined by the information that details tourist places in St. Charles and St. Louis. Coupled with this, it is "nice to know" about student-campus activities, such as sports, clubs and organizations.

All these steps mentioned above are vital to the ongoing operation of the video facility. But ultimately, the most important function of a video facility is the production of videotapes. Therefore, it is essential to carefully perform the three main steps of the production process: Pre-production, Production, and Editing.

According to the book Regarding Television, "[p]erhaps the most time-consuming of all activities are those related to pre-production. That shouldn't surprise anyone considering that here the project is defined, shaped, planned, budgeted and coordinated" (Kaplan 109).

Undoubtedly, the pre-production process will take us a long time. We pondered several ideas in order to assure a successful beginning. We

spent long hours trying to organize a coherent outline of our promotional video.

In the pre-production phase many questions came to us, among these: How much do potential audiences already know about Lindenwood? Is the promoting video important to Lindenwood? Who is the specific audience for this videotape?

Once these and others questions were answered we had a clear image of what our potential audience should be, and thus, it was easier to address their needs in the video. As our expectations became clearer, we realized that our video had more than just one main objective—that of promoting Lindenwood University.

Regarding this, Kaplan states that "a program may have several secondary objectives"(111). Accordingly, we found other objectives, such as recruiting more students, expanding Lindenwood beyond its current frontiers, and to detail Lindenwood as an educational center at university level, etc.

Kaplan states that "[i]f your needs analysis determines that a videotape is the best medium, and you have prepared an objective statement that clearly focuses the direction of the videotape, and the investigation of content shows that an informative and widely useful tape can be prepared, then you are ready for the next stage, production"

(Kaplan 112).   After we analyzed all possible factors that could determine the success of our video, we were ready to next step: Production.

According to the book <u>Video Basics</u>, "[i]n production you actually translate, or encode, the original program idea into a television program. Production involves the operation and coordination of production and technical people and a variety of production equipment" (Zettl 6).

In this stage, our ideas that originated in the pre-production phase were materialized in sound and color. The interviews and shots of Lindenwood, as well as attractions in St. Charles and St Louis were filmed.   However, all the information had to take shape. In a few words, we had to organize all the visual information to be presented with coherence and logical sense in the video.

In order to achieve this, we had to resort to the editing stage. Zettl explains the editing purpose in this statement: "Basically, we edit to tell a story with clarity and impact.   All editing equipment is designed to make the selection of shots, and their joining through a variety of transitions, as easy and efficient as possible.   But whether you work with very simple videotape editing equipment or a highly sophisticated nonlinear computerized editing system, the functions and basic aesthetic principles of editing remain the same" (Zettl 238).

In our case, we used Lindenwood's equipment, which is very simple in terms of technology, to edit our video. However, we were carefully to take advantage of this. We selected the most important shots and most significant event details, and proceeded to put them into a specific sequence to tell the story with clarity and impact. This stage posed an ideal time to fix production mistakes, to combine program portions, to select shots that expressed the best essence in our video, etc.

Finally, after long hours spent in the production process, we were able to achieve our main purpose of a culminated project—to give birth to our promotional video.

Chapter III

DISCUSSION

The general idea behind collegiate recruitment tapes is to give prospective students information about the respective institution, provide a view of the campus and student life, and piqur interest in attending the college.

Explanation of the Visual Content

Our proposal was to design a promotional video regarding Lindenwood University that could show interested applicants visual information about all the advantages this university can offer them.

When finally we decided to design the promotional video, our first objective was to supply the students with basic information about Lindenwood University, such as what programs the university offers, what social activities students can participate in, what support programs the university offers to the students like financial aid, work and learn study, scholarship, among others.

We started to compile a large amount of information that could be recorded in voice over, and filming all the shots to accompany and reinforce this material. Then came the task of ordering facts and

footage in a logical sequence. In a few words, we started the complicated editing process.

We decided that the video should starts with a sequence of shots that move very quickly with the intention to capture the attention of the viewers from the beginning. These shots give us a brief profile of the university and show students engaged in social activities. These sequence shots are inserted in the first 20 seconds. In order to give more impact these shots are complemented by rhythmic sound that we selected to accompany the sequence of shots.

After the beginning, we included a brief introduction about the university. There we mentioned where the university is located and when it was founded. This information is no longer than 25 seconds in order to keep the attention of the viewer.

For this voice over, we used shots about the university campus in which we included a close-up of a sign, which tell when the university was founded. Our intention in the shots about the campus was to show the viewers how the university campus looks. We wanted to convey its beauty.

There is no doubt of the fact that Lindenwood University has beautiful buildings which maintain an older architecture of the nineteenth century. Taking this fact into consideration, we decided to

show the buildings that best represented this architecture. According to our point of view, the campus's attractive look could be one of the most important aspects that prospective students could take into consideration to chose Lindenwood as their educational center.

We included in our video several shots showing students interacting. The shots were filmed in the library and in the computer lab. These places are where the students spend their time studying and working on research papers. In the voice over, we tried to tell about the facilities that Lindenwood offers to the students, such as a comfortable computer lab that has access to the Internet and World Wide Web.

We also included shots of the TV studio and radio station in order to show other types of facilities that Lindenwood offers to their students where they can develop their abilities in their highest potential. The students may participate in the operation of the KCLC-FM, through the Communication Department. Moreover, an industrial-level television facility allows communication students to make corporate videos and produce cable television programming. This is an example of the type of interesting information to be conveyed through the video which, at the same time, promotes one of Lindenwood's major academic programs.

The academic programs are one of the most important aspects that prospective students look when they want to apply to an specific

university. This fact was enough reason to convince ourselves that there are some categories, such as academic programs—that are inherently more significant to the portrayal of a university and, therefore should receive a greater amount of time than other potential subjects in the video.

Taking this into consideration, we decided give to the academic programs wide coverage within our video. In order to support this decision, we included after the shots of academic facilities interviews with the former Dean of Business and the Dean of Communication.

We decided to perform the interviews with them because the Business and Communication schools are the programs that have the highest percentage of majors at Lindenwood. We tried to keep the information that is provides by former Deans of Business brief to avoid boring the viewers.

We did the interview to the former of Dean of Business because the current Dean of Business is new in that position and she does not know the program very well. The current Dean of Business requested that the last Dean of Business be interviewed instead of her because he currently has more knowledge about the program than her.

In order to support information about the classes at Lindenwood University and the relationship that the students can establish with their

professor, we include an interview with a student. That interview support our point of view about the professors and classes at Lindenwood University which are small enough to let the students interact with their professor. We include for that voice over a long shot of a classroom while the professor is teaching, and after that shot we include a medium shot of one of the students participating during the class.

To keep a sense of movement and to convey some of the social activities available, we include shots about athletic events such as soccer, volleyball and basketball game in order to persuade the viewer that Lindenwood offers to students the opportunity to participate in various sports teams. We also include long and medium shots about the cafeteria showing social events in order to display the students interacting and having a good time. We also included shots of the cafeteria for the viewers to have an impression of the comfort that Lindenwood offers to their students.

We talk about the local attractions in Lindenwood's surrounding region; among them we include various recreation attractions that the students can visit in their free time such the Zoo, the Botanical garden, and the famous Arch. We also include different shots about Saint Charles county where Lindenwood University is located. We show

views of little stores and restaurant located on Main Street, one of the tourist attractions in Saint Charles, a historic city which was Missouri's first capital and the staging area for the Lewis and Clark expedition, with the intention to persuade the viewer that Lindenwood is located in a nice place which they can enjoy in their free time.

Finally, the video ends with various types of shots which include long, medium, and close shots, showing the commencement ceremony. We decide to include these shots for the end because this is a very emotional and triumphant culminating movement in a student's life. After these shots we include visual information regarding how the prospective students can know more about the university.

Weaknesses of the Video

In order to ensure adequate research following this thesis, it is necessary to discuss some problems that arose during the video editing process.

Our first intention was to create a promotional video that could give a simple profile of Lindenwood University. However, during the development of our research we found many obstacles that limited our initial capacity to create a "perfect video". In a few words, many of our initial ideas were discarded because they could not be accomplished given the reality that were facing at that moment.

In order to be clear, it is important to state that it is normal that in the whole process of creating a video some difficulties arise that we cannot control because they are out of our hands. In our specific case, these inconvenient and uncooperative elements were weather, technical problems and technologic limitations.

Having access to the right equipment at the right time was one major problems. We had to ask for the equipment at least two days ahead of use. We on several occasions, our intentions to take the best shots were cancelled because the day was not "appropriate" to do it. Thus, cloudy days or in the worst of the cases, raining and stormy days become our worst nightmare.

As strange as it may seem, our wishes to take shots were determined by the forecast. Sometimes we delayed reserving equipment based on weather forecast, only to see them prove wrong, but our schedule was still pushed back.

Although, there is no doubt of the fact that Lindenwood University is making great efforts to acquire more and better equipment, at this moment the university, which has a rapidly growing student body, lacks enough equipment to meet students demands. A few times, when we required the equipment, it was not available at that moment, and that meant a delay production.

Another unforeseen limitation that developed was that as international students, we did not have a transportation medium at our disposal 24 hours per day to carry out the equipment. We had a hard time trying to carry out the heavy equipment when we had to move from a site to another one. It was even harder when we had to film off campus, especially when we did the Main Street shots.

Another difficult situation that we had to face was in regard to technical problems. Once we asked for a tripod, but when we were going to use it we realized that it was broken. Due to time limitations and lack of enough tripods we had no option but to make shots without a tripod, that would have better with one, resulted in "jumping shots".

The batteries also represented a problem. For example, these have a durability of approximately of two hours of continuous use and we could ask just for two batteries, which means that during a day of shooting we could use the batteries around four hours. More usage entailed approximately one hours recharging the batteries, then using them four more hours. The process was cumbersome and exhausting.

Our recording camera did not have auto-focus, so that means we had to focus the lens manually. Sometimes, when we did the focus manually, the shots through the lens of the camera seemed to have good focus but when we could see the shot in the TV screen, they looked

blurry. Whether it was faulty equipment or technique, the results were not what we had hoped for.

The editing equipment that Lindenwood owns is very simple, not at all sophisticated which represented to us some limitation, especially with our ideas for video special effects that would make a big difference in the visual content of the video. Coupled with this, the quality of the video was often lost while we are doing edition. This is due to the endless number of time that the video is rewound in editing and viewing, and the wear and tear on the equipment.

Despite of all the obstacles that we encountered during the video editing process, the promotional video was designed following every single step of the editing process—pre-production, production and post-production. Therefore, we hope this video would prove useful for the university in order for the institution to promote itself in other countries, as well as for the academic development of Lindenwood University.

Even though the problems, headaches, and frustration, making the video was a valuable learning experience because each time that we made a mistake when handling the editing machine and the video camera to make the same mistake once.

Making a video to promote a institution have been a very interesting part of the communication process, because we have to learn what is the best way to get the viewer's attention.

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