An Evaluation of Marketing Communication Strategies to Increase

High School Graduates' Enrollment Directly into

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College

by

Joanne M. Kocik

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Dr. Carol Mooney

The Graduate School

University of Wisconsin-Stout

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The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin-Stout
Menomonie WI

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ABSTRACT

The biggest challenge to Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC) is attracting

the recent high school graduate to enroll at the institution directly from high school. A number of

recruitment and marketing communication strategies are in place to entice those recent graduates

to make WITC their school of choice. A study of the students at the New Richmond campus of

WITC was conducted to determine which of these strategies had the most influence on their

decision to attend WITC-New Richmond (WITC-NR). The students targeted for this study were

those from the millennial generation which is any person born after 1981 and thus would have

graduated from high school in the year 2000 and beyond. This study started with administering an

Education Influences Survey (developed by the author) to the present WITC-NR students. The

survey results were then tabulated and analyzed to reveal those recruitment and marketing

communication strategies that were most influential in their decision making process.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Background Information

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC) is one of sixteen technical colleges in the state of Wisconsin (Wisconsin Technical College System, 2006). The WITC district covers the northwest corner of Wisconsin. The WITC district extends from Douglas County in the north to Iron County in the east to St. Croix County on the southern edge of the district (Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, 2005a). In total, the district encompasses 11 counties, with a total population of over 250,000 residents.

The WITC district has four campuses along with an administrative office located in Shell Lake (Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, 2005a). The four campuses are located in Superior, Ashland, Rice Lake, and New Richmond. The campuses all have programs that are unique to that campus along with programs that are similarly offered at each of the campuses. For instance, Marine Repair Technician is a program that is only offered at WITC-Ashland. On the other hand, Accounting is an associate's degree program offered at each of the four locations.

The overall district enrollment for the four campuses totaled 2,937 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in fiscal year 2003 (Capes, 2006). The district enrollment then fell to 2,892 FTEs in fiscal year 2004, which is a decrease of 1.56% (Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, 2005b). This downward trend continued in fiscal year 2005, with the FTE headcount falling to 2,843. This represents another 1.69% decrease in fiscal year 2005. Of the four campuses, only Ashland posted a gain of two students in fiscal year 2005, which equates to a .48% increase. The other three campuses had enrollment declines of 2.15% in Superior, 1.44% in Rice Lake, and 2.53% in New Richmond. Districtwide, the college has experienced a decrease in FTEs of 3.4% since fiscal year 2003.

According to Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, (2005b), the percentage of high school students enrolling directly into WITC has decreased from 13.7% in the 2001-2002 school year to 10.1% for the 2004-2005 school year. This compares to a statewide average of 12.87% of the recent high school graduates enrolling directly from high school into a Wisconsin technical college. This loss occurred even though the number of high school graduates who graduated between 1997 and 2005 in the WITC district had increased to 3,847 (Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, 2005d). The high school graduating class of 1997 shows total enrollment within the district high schools of 3,575 students. This is a 7.6% increase in high school graduates districtwide.

One factor affecting the loss of student enrollments from this millennial generation (Howe & Strauss, 2003) is the disinterest in the Youth Options programs (Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, 2005b). Districtwide, FTEs from the Youth Options program decreased from 90.44 FTEs in fiscal year 2002 to only 39.80 FTEs in fiscal year 2005. This is a remarkable decrease in students involved with Youth Options. However, the decrease in Youth Options students may be tied to the State of Wisconsin changing the parameters for the Youth Options program (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2005). Now students must be in good academic standing and have an acceptable disciplinary record to enroll in Youth Options.

Another factor affecting the enrollment of recent high school graduates is the underutilization of advance standing or prior credit (Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, 2005b). In fiscal year 2005, only 40 students took advantage of advance standing credits. This is down from fiscal year 2001 when the number of students earning advanced standing was at 60.

To curb the further deterioration of enrollment districtwide at WITC, the WITC Board of Trustees has passed a Policy Ends Statement on the subject of high school relationships (Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, 2006b). The Ends Statement sets forth five goals:

1. More students will enroll in WITC directly after high school based on a greater awareness of opportunities. Short-term goal is 2% increase per year. The ultimate goal is 25% of high school graduating classes.

2. More students will enroll at WITC with advanced standing or prior credit. The benchmark is 40 students who have utilized articulated credit in FY05.

3. The success rate of students who come to WITC directly out of high school will be demonstrated to high schools.

4. The college will more fully utilize the website to provide college information to high school students.

5. High school and postsecondary personnel will work together to transition area graduates into meaningful postsecondary options. (p. 1)

The New Richmond campus of WITC has been hit the hardest by the declining numbers (Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, 2005b). The New Richmond campus has seen a steady decrease in FTE enrollments since 2002 (Capes, 2006). At its peak in 2002, the New Richmond campus had 833 FTEs. That number fell to 805 in 2003. The decline continued in 2004 with 796 FTEs and then for fiscal year 2005, the FTE enrollment was 775. These FTE numbers include all ages of students including: working adults, returning adults, displaced adults, young adults, GED/HSED students, Youth Options, and recent high school graduates enrolling directly into WITC.

According to the WITC Board of Trustees (Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, 2006b), an effort must be made to increase enrollment by recent high school graduates. The WITC Board hopes to achieve this goal by raising the awareness of the educational opportunities available at WITC. To increase awareness and achieve this goal, efforts must be made to improve communication with the recent high school graduates who fall into the generation labeled the millennial generation (Howe & Strauss, 2003). This communication must be in a preferred form (Goff, Patino, & Jackson, 2004). These millennial teens are a target market that is very different from any other generation the colleges have tried to recruit in the past (Howe & Strauss, 2003). According to Perna (2005b), it is essential to get the right message to the right audience at the most crucial time. These groups of students (and their parents) also expect more student services be provided to meet their needs, be it economic or social (Smith, 2005).

To appeal to the millennial student, different methods of communication must be implemented by colleges to recruit these students (Howe & Strauss, 2003). For example, one of the new forms of communication tried by Binghamton University in New York is instant messaging (Santovec, 2005a). Instant messaging is a way to respond to the millennial student on their terms – that is, when they want and with whom they want. In another example provided by Gibbs (2005a), non-traditional marketing and recruiting methods such as high school speaking tours were used by South Central College (SCC) in North Mankato, Minnesota, to attract students.

Another form of electronic communication implemented by Philadelphia Biblical University is a new type of chat technology (Benjamin & Lee, 2005). This technology captures those nameless, faceless web visitors who would otherwise go in and out of the college website without being tracked. This new version of the chat technology allows the university to engage in

an electronic conversation with the potential student who is just looking and turn that passer-by into a potential enrollee.

With the declining FTEs at the WITC-New Richmond (WITC-NR) campus, marketing efforts could be enhanced to recruit recent high school graduates to attend the college. According to Howe & Strauss (2003), oral and written communication seem to be key marketing factors in attracting these recent graduates (the millennial students) to institutions of higher learning.

Statement of the Problem

There has been a decline in the percentage of recent high school graduates directly enrolling at WITC-NR upon high school graduation. To date, an evaluation has not been completed of the oral and written communication methods used to attract these recent high school graduates who are students of the millennial generation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the method(s) of communication most preferred by recent high school graduates in deciding to directly attend WITC upon high school graduation. Data from this study should reveal how these students want to receive information about WITC and if those methods of oral and written communication are an effective recruitment tool (Howe & Strauss, 2003). It should help determine what communication methods, if any, entice the recent high school (millennial) graduate to enroll at WITC directly from high school.

The results of this study could be used by WITC-NR to increase recent high school graduate direct enrollment by gearing their marketing efforts to those marketing communication methods most preferred by potential students. WITC can then use their marketing resources more effectively and efficiently to meet the Board's goal of increasing high school direct enrollment by 2% districtwide (Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, 2006b). It should help WITC

determine, which marketing strategies to eliminate and which to enhance to attract the millennial generation high school graduates.

The results of this study could be used by professionals at other technical colleges and even four-year colleges in attracting recent high school graduates to their campuses. The study should help these institutions of higher education develop new marketing strategies or at least revamp current marketing strategies to fit the college information gathering needs of the millennial student and their parents.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

1. What are the millennial high school graduate's reactions (ranging from strongly influential to not influential) to the WITC print materials?

2. How influential is WITC personal interaction in attracting the millennial high school graduate to WITC-NR?

3. To what extent does non-WITC personal interaction have an effect on millennial high school graduates in making the decision to attend WITC?

4. What influence do the electronic media including the website have on the millennial high school graduate to enroll at WITC?

5. How important are the WITC-NR amenities in attracting the millennial high school graduate to enroll at WITC-NR?

6. What are the preferred means of marketing communication with the millennial high school graduates?

Importance of the Study

This study is important for the following reasons.

1. This topic is of great importance to the future of the technical college. If enrollments continue to decline, the college will have to make decisions about which programs are viable and sustainable or basically, which programs will continue to be funded. With the declining enrollments come faculty cutbacks and sometimes even program elimination. WITC-NR cut one Office Assistant program faculty position and one associate dean's position because of the declining enrollment. This danger also exists at other colleges. As experienced at SCC, declining enrollment could lead to possible departmental budget cuts (Gibbs, 2005a). Declining enrollments mean decreasing revenues for the college from two sources: state tax dollars and tuition dollars paid by the students.

2. This topic is of utmost importance to the students who rely on the college to have programs that will ensure the success of their working careers. If the college does not have the dollars to pay for offering new programs or keeping current the existing programs, the residents of the district will not be able to update their skills to meet the future demands of the workplace (Wisconsin Technical College System, 2004).

3. This topic is also extremely important to the employers in the area who rely on the college to train their present and future workforce (Severson, 2003). Without the college, employers will not have the skilled workforce they need to be competitive in the global marketplace.

Limitations of the Study

The following are anticipated limitations of the study.

1. The students may feel a need to answer the questions in favor of WITC-NR since the person administering the survey is a representative of WITC-NR.

2. The students chosen for the study will be millennial high school graduates that are enrolled at WITC-NR. Since the participants are already students at WITC-NR, they might already have a positive bias towards the campus and skew their perceptions of WITC-NR.

3. Time might be a limitation since the study will be conducted over the fall enrollment period and the communication pieces might change slightly over that period.

4. The survey will be developed by the author of this thesis and will not be tested for validity or reliability.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were introduced in this chapter and their definitions are given below.

Advanced standing or prior credit - is the term used to describe credit for prior skills and knowledge (Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, 2006a).

Gen Xer – those people born between the years of 1961 and 1981 (Howe & Strauss, 2003).

Millennial generation - those people born between the years of 1982 and the present with high school graduation years of 2000 and beyond (Howe & Strauss, 2003).

Technical college - a college of further education that teaches practical skills and applied sciences that are necessary to industry and business (Allwords.com).

WITC Board of Trustees - provide governance for the college (Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, 2006c).

Youth Options - Wisconsin's Youth Options program allows public high school juniors and seniors who meet certain requirements to take postsecondary courses at a University of Wisconsin institution, a Wisconsin technical college, one of the state's participating private nonprofit institutions of higher education, or tribally-controlled colleges. Approved courses count toward high school graduation and college credit (Lewis, 2005).

Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter will include a discussion of the two main topics of research for this thesis. The first topic is the characteristics of the millennial generation. These characteristics are then linked to the second topic, which is the recruiting tools or marketing strategies that colleges and universities are using to attract this new generation of students.

The Millennial Generation

The current high school graduate and all other high school graduates born between 1982 and the present comprise the millennial generation or sometimes referred to as millennials (Howe & Strauss, 2003). It has been found that this generation has a unique set of core values that guides the decisions made about education and careers. These core values or traits may not be demonstrated by each member of this generation, but most millennials do demonstrate at least some of the core traits. The seven core values or traits are special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, conventional, pressured, and achieving. Let's look at each of these traits individually.

Special. In terms of the millennials, special refers to the constant consideration given to this generation (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Parents and professionals in authority such as teachers, police, and government officials have focused on what is best for the children of this generation. The discussion of every national disaster – violence in schools, war on terror, the nation's economy – comes back to what affect will this have on the children. This generation has been deemed to be vital to the success of our nation. Just as their parents have made them feel special, they expect the same personal attention from colleges during the college recruitment process (Santovec, 2005a).

Sheltered. This generation is the first generation to be deluged with child-safety rules and protections from every new harm thought of by their parents and society (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Their reaction to societal and school violence is tougher laws and harsher punishment. They are overprotected by their parents and expect to be protected by their parents even into the post-high school years. In that same vein, according to Santovec (2005a), they tend to stay at home while attending college to save money and to remain close to their parents.

Confident. This group of young people has a high level of trust and optimism in their personal lives and in their country (Howe & Strauss, 2003). They believe that good will come to all who try. The focus of their lives is not careers as in the past generation, but it is finding that balance between career and personal time that is most important. However, they have set their sights high to contribute more than their parents ever did and expect to get good jobs (Santovec, 2005a).

Team-oriented. Millennials have strong beliefs in working as a team since they have worked in groups and teams all of their lives (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Starting in the elementary grades, this generation has learned how to work with others and is closer with their peers than earlier generations. They tend to do things with their friends in larger groups, rather than just with one or two individuals. Along this same line, they tend to join student groups once in college (Santovec, 2005a).

Conventional. Millennials have adopted the environment of rules and regulations as being necessary to keep order and peace in the country (Howe & Strauss, 2003). They are quite proud of their improved behavior over other rebellious generations. They like to support positive social change (Santovec, 2005a). The millennials have a smaller generation gap with their parents (Howe & Strauss, 2003). They tend to like the music of their parents and their parents like a lot

of today's music as well. The millennials feel their parents are much more in touch with the times and with them. The millennials have grown up with a multitude of materialism, which is now passé to them. This has led the millennials to return to the traditions of values, morals, and honesty.

Pressured. Millennials have been pressured to work hard in school, get good grades, and thus excel in life (Howe & Strauss, 2003). With all the new technology such as email, instant messaging (IM), and cell phones, millennials are feeling pressured into instantaneously responding to others demand of their time. The millennials are pressured to be competitive and to earn high marks, not only in school, but also for volunteering, getting involved in social causes, and becoming an attractive find for the best colleges. This is confirmed by Santovec (2005a) when her research showed that the millennials feel the need to get good grades and to volunteer in their communities.

Achieving. With all the pressure to do well in school, not only from their parents, but also from the rise of global competitiveness, this generation is slated to be the brightest and best-educated generation of all of the generations that have passed in this country (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Most of this generation has their life planned out with educational attainment a high priority. According to Santovec (2005a), overall academic reputation is of utmost importance to the millennial generation.

Recruitment Tools or Marketing Strategies

After examining the characteristics of the millennial generation, it becomes apparent that college recruitment methods must be varied to appeal to each targeted segment of this generation (Goff, Patino, & Jackson, 2004). According to Howe & Strauss (2003), marketing strategies used in recruiting the millennials must be geared to the core values of this generation (as outlined

earlier in this chapter). These various recruitment tools or marketing strategies are described in relationship to those core values in the remaining pages of this chapter.

Special. With parents so involved in their children's lives, the college decision is now a mutual decision made by student and parent (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Marketing promotional pieces would be more appealing to this segment of the generation by using more pictures of adults or the parent figure showing involvement with their child's education. According to Goff, Patino, & Jackson (2004), using parental figures in marketing promotions of the college might be of some benefit. It might also be advantageous to target parents by the use of direct mail and easily navigated websites where parents can find out more information about the college.

A good example of a successful direct mail piece was designed and mailed by SCC when it revamped its Computer Integrated Machining program and added custom bike building to the curriculum (Gibbs, 2005a). As part of the curriculum, students are taught to machine custom bike parts and thus build their own bike frame. These successes were then photographed to become part of a four-color brochure. This brochure was mailed to thousands of high school juniors and seniors, which resulted in the doubling of enrollment in the program.

Howe & Strauss (2003) also believe there is a need to make the potential student feel special at the college. To do this, the student should see images of historical accomplishments of the college and community ties, with opportunities for the student to be recognized as a special contributor to the success of the college.

Another way to make a potential student feel special is to target mailings to them once they have inquired at the college according to Perna (2005a). Marketing strategies for these prospects include repeat mailings of either catalogs or promotional postcards or letters. This

should be done each enrollment period to keep them informed of what is happening at the college and to keep them thinking of possibly enrolling at the college.

Sheltered. For those students who have been sheltered by their parents from all types of dangers, a safe and secure college is a main selling point to the new recruit (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Colleges can take advantage of their safety records and publicize the safety and security of their campuses. Small colleges are typically safe, not only in security measures, but also in just the mere fact that they have smaller class sizes, instructors who know the students (even by name), and the feeling of a small, close-knit community of staff and students. This provides tremendous comfort to both the parents and the students.

An example of parents sheltering their graduating high school senior is when parents do not allow them to explore technical college programs (Perna, 2005a). Direct mail campaigns can be developed to convince parents that even their four-year bound student can pick up valuable skills at a technical college, which will help him/her succeed at that college and in their career down the road.

Confident. The recruiting message to the millennials needs to be one of positive reinforcement, unlike the preceding Gen Xers, where fear of the consequences was the message (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Colleges need to emphasize the great learning, great careers, and great lives that students will progress to if they attend that college. Recruiting materials need to reinforce the positive aspects of the college and the local community.

Gibbs (2005a) gave a great example of this from SCC. The Computer Integrated Machining (CIM) instructor took the custom built motorcycle made in his program at SCC on a tour of the area high schools and showed the students how great success in the CIM program can be extrapolated to a successful, fruitful career in the manufacturing industry.

Team-oriented. With peer relationships stronger than ever among high school students, millennial students are less reluctant to venture out on their own to a college (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Often, students make decisions about where to go to college based on where their friends are going. Colleges need to invite students to bring along their buddies to campus visits to entice them to choose that college together. Recruiting materials need to show groups of students either in learning situations or doing fun activities.

One way to bring a group of students to campus is to work with the local K-12 school districts to bring their students to the college campus for a visit (Perna, 2005c). In this example, Perna (2005c) explained how the 8th grade field trip to the college campus begins to fill the enrollment funnel. This enrollment funnel fills by meticulously courting these students starting in the 8th grade with a non-threatening visit to the campus with their friends and peers. Hopefully, this will lead to creating a positive feeling about the college, which will lead to post high school enrollments.

Conventional. The millennials have grown up being bombarded with brand names, so that is what they are seeking when it comes to picking colleges as well (Howe & Strauss, 2003). This leads students to wanting to attend a college that has a big brand or big name. This popularity catches on with other students as talk goes around about what colleges to attend. However, they want this college to be a mix of student types so that they do not stand out from the crowd. The millennials want to attend a college where they can blend in, but still be able to brand themselves as having attended a big brand college.

Using the college website might prove to be an invaluable way to build your college brand (Mentz & Whiteside, 2003). Students can be informed and persuaded that attending your college is prestigious by tailoring your site to the informational needs of the potential student.

Pressured. As the millennials progressed through the elementary and secondary education years, the pressure to prepare themselves for the best colleges becomes increasingly intense (Howe & Strauss, 2003). With those years now behind them, the millennials are now prepared to get into any college they wish and now the pressure has subsided some. Recruiting those students can be challenging and should include information about where the college fits into the student's plan for life after high school. It should convey an atmosphere of learning with many opportunities for helping the community. They want a chance to escape from the structured lives they have led to this point.

Gibbs (2005b) offered an example of technical college students volunteering their time to help the local community. Southwest Wisconsin Technical College has many programs at the college do service projects with the community such as having the bricklaying and masonry program students build a concession stand in a local recreational park. This offers the student a chance to learn along with a chance to get away from the structure of their lives by getting out into the fresh air and doing good things for the community.

Achieving. This group of millennials has enjoyed great academic success and is looking for a college experience that will challenge their intellect, but also offer opportunities for leadership and participation (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Recruitment materials for these students should put an emphasis on available leadership positions in the areas of campus publications or student government.

This set of high achieving students is accustomed to easy access to digital technology. They take laptop computers, wireless Internet, instant messaging, and cell phone accessibility as a given. Colleges need to have the latest technology readily available to keep these students.

Santovec (2005a) found that instant messaging has been used successfully at Binghamton University. It provides a quick means for students to get their questions about the college answered quickly and easily.

Chat rooms are also another avenue of getting information requests from students (Santovec, 2005a; Benjamin & Lee, 2005). Champlain College built a chat room into its website (Santovec, 2005a). If someone is not available from Champlain for an instant chat, the potential student is able to leave a message. Once the message is retrieved the next time a Champlain representative logs on, a live chat time can then be arranged with that student.

The Internet is used widely by prospective students to research colleges (Mentz & Whiteside, 2003). Students like to use the Internet for this purpose since they can do it in the privacy of their own homes and it does not involve having to interact with another person to find the information they are seeking. It also provides them with instant answers to their questions without having to wait for a response back from a representative. The students also find the frequently asked questions (FAQ) sections of the website extremely helpful. Continuously improving a college's website is an extremely valuable tool in recruiting students.

Summary

According to a study done by Goff, Patino & Jackson (2004), those students intending to attend a two-year college find the most important information sources are many and varied, just like the examples given in this chapter. A method that works for one segment of the millennial generation may not always work with another segment of that generation. Knowing your target market is vitally important to successful recruitment (Perna, 2005b).

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

With the goal of increasing recent high school graduates direct enrollment into the technical college, a study to determine the type of marketing communication strategies that is most effective in attracting these students would be beneficial. The methodology used to gauge the effectiveness of these strategies will be discussed in this chapter. This chapter will include a description of research methods, selection and description of subjects, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and limitations. Each section will be described in detail below.

Description of Research Method

The research method used for this study was a causal-comparative. The survey reviewed the marketing strategies used by the technical college to determine if these strategies had a positive effect on millennial high school graduates directly enrolling at the technical college.

Selection and Description of Subjects

The population selected for this study was the millennial high school graduate who was a student at WITC-NR during the duration of the survey period. To define this further, the study included WITC-NR students who earned a high school diploma. Particular attention will be given to those students who graduated from high school in the year 2000 or later. This group was targeted for this survey since they had already selected WITC-NR as their higher education choice. This group would provide the most meaningful data as to what marketing materials may have attracted them to WITC-NR.

The sample selected for this study was chosen using the cluster method. The sample included random classes selected from the total of number of classes offered at WITC-NR in the fall semester of the 2007-08 school year. A call to action was sent to all classroom instructors at

WITC-NR with the survey given to those classes where the instructor indicated a willingness to have their class participate in the study.

The classes that did participate in the survey included an Agriculture and Power Equipment Technician class, an Information Systems-Network Specialist class, and a Job Quest class. The sample size and participant number was 47 total from all three classes. No minors were included in this sample.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for the study was not a standard instrument. It was a survey designed specifically for this study and thus it did not have measures of validity or reliability documented. It was a printed survey that asked questions specifically concerning the marketing strategies used by WITC-NR during the survey period. It also asked for certain demographic data such as age and gender. The basic premise for the survey questions came from researching other theses and from notes taken during the Research Foundations class.

The instrument used a variety of item formats. The item formats included Likert scale, matching, and open-ended questions. This allowed for maximum flexibility in capturing data pertinent to the study.

The survey used the Likert scale for answering the marketing strategies questions. This gave the students a range of answers to choose from. The Likert scale was developed with this range of answers: not very influential, somewhat influential, influential, and very influential along with not applicable. This range of answers allowed the participant to determine how each of the marketing strategies or materials was an influence on their decision to attend WITC-NR.

In addition, the survey instrument used matching items. The matching items were used as options to answer questions concerning demographic data. These questions included high school

graduation year, post-secondary decision making time, gender, high school location name, ethnic/racial background and age.

Each of the demographic items excluding decision making time, gender and age contained an open-ended item for a write-in answer. For example, if the high school graduation year or high school name did not match the answers provided, the survey participant had the option of writing in the appropriate answer.

The survey instrument ended up being four pages long using 8 1/2" x 11" sheets of paper. There were 35 questions on these four pages. Of these 35 questions, six were pertaining to demographic data and 29 were concerning the various marketing materials or strategies used by WITC-NR.

The survey was approved by the University of Wisconsin-Stout IRB before the survey was printed and distributed. The approval was indicated on the survey instrument itself.

Data Collection

The survey was printed and distributed in person by the author of this study. The survey was distributed in the classrooms of the WITC-NR instructors who agreed to have their classes participate in the study.

The author of this thesis distributed the survey to the participants during class time. The author reviewed the instructions with the participants and was available in the room to answer any questions concerning the survey itself while the participants were completing the survey. The author also showed the appropriate marketing printed materials to the participants as a group while the participants completed the survey.

The survey was distributed to the students during the first semester of the 2007-2008 school year. The data collection period was from October 1 – 19, 2007.

Permission needed to be garnered from the parents of the millennial high school graduate attending WITC-NR who had not attained the age of 18 as of the survey date. To allow these students to participate in the survey, a space was provided on the survey instrument to obtain the proper parental signature. The instrument needed to be signed by a parent before it could be accepted by the survey author. If a minor did complete the survey and did not obtain a parent signature, the student was not allowed to participate in the study. (No minors completed the survey.)

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was conducted using all appropriate statistical methods. The University of Wisconsin-Stout personnel ran the computer analysis on the raw data. The statistics derived from the raw data include frequency counts, means, and percentages – simple, valid and cumulative – of the responses.

Limitations

The methodology limitations for this study are given below. One limitation was the survey itself as it was not a standard instrument, so the validity and reliability of the survey instrument cannot be documented.

The second limitation is the selection of the sample size and sample participants. Although the selection is based on the analysis described under the Data Collection section above, other participants could have been picked using different rationale.

Another limitation was the danger in taking the data collected from the sample and inferring it to other millennial high school graduates who would graduate in subsequent years. Caution must be exercised in doing this as there might be other factors not examined in this study, which might have an influence on those students.

An additional limitation was the distribution of the survey. The distribution of the survey was done by the survey author. This might have made some participants feel they had to participate in the survey since the author was standing there right in front of them.

The last limitation was the procedure for collecting the data. The procedure for collecting the data has the same limitations as those for the distribution of the survey. The author was in the classroom while the data was being collected. This may have made the participants feel they had to complete the survey differently because a WITC-NR employee was the author and standing in the room.

Summary

In summary, the methodology used for this study was causal-comparative. The population for the study was the millennial high school graduates enrolled at WITC-NR during the first semester of the 2007-2008 school year. The sample was determined using the cluster method. The instrument was a survey designed specifically for this study. The data collection was conducted in the specific classrooms of WITC-NR during the fall semester of the 2007-2008 school year. The data analysis was conducted using all appropriate statistical methods. Although there were some limitations noted such as the validity of the instrument itself along with the subject selection, the data collection method, and the inference danger, the study went forward.

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

With the data now collected through the survey, an analysis of the data was completed.

This chapter will give the details of this data. This detail will include a breakdown of the

demographic information of those who responded to the survey. The results of each item are

analyzed to show the preferences of the participants. The final section of this chapter will review

the research objectives first stated in Chapter 1 with the added feature here of reporting the

results of these objectives.

Demographic Information

All of the survey participants were students of WITC-NR at the time of the survey, which

was the fall of 2007. There were 49 surveys distributed of, which 47 were returned. All 47 of the

returned surveys were usable. None of the surveys were incomplete. This produced a return rate

of 96%.

Of the 47 participants, 32 were male (68%) and 15 were female (32%). The racial

diversity of the participants was minimal with 45 or 96% of the participants being self-identified

as White or Caucasian, one participant (2%) was Native American, American Indian or Alaskan

Native, and one other participant (2%) was Asian, Pacific Islander, or Filipino. The age range of

the participants yielded the following results: 33 participants (70%) were in the 18 – 22 age

bracket; five participants (11%) were in the 23-27 age bracket; two participants (4%) were in the

28-32 age bracket; five participants (11%) were in the age bracket of 33-43; and two participants

(4%) were in the 44-54 age bracket.

To continue with the demographic data, the high school graduation year of these

participants was also recorded. Only one participant (2%) had a graduation year of 2007. Those

with a graduation year of 2006 numbered 13 (28%). The largest group of participants, 18 or

38%, had a graduation year of 2005. To further break down the data, there were two participants

(4%) who graduated from high school in 2002 and 12 participants (26%) had graduation years

before 2002. There were no graduates from the year 2003 who participated in this survey.

Please refer to Table 1 on the next page for the high school graduation location data.

Table 1

High school graduation location

High school	Frequency	Percentage
Amery	2	4%
Baldwin/Woodville	1	2%
Clayton	2	4%
Clear Lake	1	2%
Frederic	2	4%
Glenwood City	5	11%
Hudson	1	2%
Luck	1	2%
New Richmond	5	11%
Osceola	1	2%
Somerset	2	4%
St Croix Central	1	2%
St Croix Falls	1	2%
Unity	2	4%
Webster	1	2%
Other	16	34%
Homeschooled	3	6%

When you take into account the high school these participants graduated from, as demonstrated in the table above, the data is quite spread out. The most frequently selected

answer for this question was "other." In the "other" category, 16 participants or 34% selected

this answer. The next most frequently selected answer was five or 11% who graduated from

Glenwood City High School and another five or 11% who graduated from New Richmond High

School.

Item Analysis

The first question on the survey was "To the best of your recollection, what time of year

did you decide to attend WITC-New Richmond (WITC-NR) after high school?" The results are

given in the Table 2 below:

Table 2

When did you decide to attend WITC-NR

Time of year	Frequency	Percentage
Before Junior year of high school (HS)	5	11%
August-December of Junior year of HS	2	4%
January-July of Junior year of HS	1	2%
August-December of Senior year of HS	9	19%
January-June of Senior year of HS	6	13%
Summer after HS graduation	7	15%
Worked/away from HS for some time and then decided to attend WITC-NR	9	19%
Transferred to WITC-NR after attending another college	2	4%
Dropped out of another college at some point; then decided to attend WITC-NR	1	2%
Data missing	2	4%

The table above for Question 1 shows a tie in the results for the most frequently selected answer. The table shows that one of the two most frequently cited points-of-time a participant decided to attend WITC-NR was the August-December time frame of the senior year in high school (nine participants or 19%). The other most frequently cited time frame was working or being away from high school for some time (nine participants or 19%).

Not too far behind, was summer after graduation. In this category, seven participants or 15%, made their decision to attend WITC-NR during the summer immediately following their high school graduation date.

Question 2 was "Did attending the WITC-NR Career Day (formerly known as *Taste of Tech*) where you did hands-on activities have an influence on you attending WITC-NR?" The participants who found Career Day somewhat influential, influential, or very influential totaled 15 or 32%. The participants who found this item not applicable were 28 or 60%. Four of the participants (8%) found Career Day to not be very influential.

The third question was "To what degree did a visit from a WITC-NR representative to your high school lunchroom or guidance office have an influence on your decision to attend WITC-NR?" The largest percentage of the participants (35 participants or 75%) found this question not applicable to them. Those who found this visit anywhere from somewhat influential to very influential totaled seven or 15%. Only five participants (10%) indicated the representative visit was not very influential.

Question 4 was "To what degree did a presentation in your high school classroom from a WITC representative (not a WITC instructor) influence your decision to attend WITC-NR?" The results of this question reveal that eight participants or 17% were somewhat influenced or influenced by this presentation. Four participants (8%) indicated the presentation was not very

influential to their decision to attend WITC-NR. There were 35 participants or 75% who found this question not applicable to them.

The next question is Question 5. This question was "To what extent was a classroom presentation from a WITC instructor influential in your decision to attend WITC-NR?" This question produced the following results: one participant (2%) was not very influenced very; eight participants or 17% were somewhat influenced, influenced, or very influenced; and 38 (81%) indicated this question was not applicable to them.

The format for Question 6 changed somewhat. That question was "Did attending a career fair at your high school influence your decision to enroll at WITC-NR?" The results totaled eight participants or 17% who were somewhat influenced, influenced or very influenced by the career fair. Four participants (8%) did not find a career fair very influential to their decision. The results showed that 35 participants or 75% found this question not applicable to them.

Question 7 dealt with education fairs. This question was "Did a visit with a WITC representative at an education fair have an influence on your decision to attend WITC-NR?" Of the 47 participants in the survey, 33 (70%) indicated this question was not applicable to them. Another 11 participants or 24%, reported that a representative at an education fair was somewhat influential or influential on their decision to attend WITC-NR. Three participants or 6% found that a representative at an education fair was not very influential.

The next question moves the intent of the next three questions into the venue of on-campus visits by the potential student. Question 8 was "How influential was your individual visit to the WITC-NR campus to meet with the Admissions Advisor and/or take a tour?" Thirty-four participants or 72% rated these experiences as somewhat influential, influential, or very

influential. Only 8 participants (17%) were not very influenced by this visit. In total, five participants (11%) indicated this question was not applicable to them.

Another question related to an on-campus visit is Question 9. That question was: "How influential was a school organized group tour of WITC-NR in making your decision to attend WITC-NR?" These results were as follows: two participants or 4% were not very influenced; 11 participants or 24% were somewhat influenced, influenced, or very influenced; and 34 participants (72%) found the question was not applicable to them.

The last question concerning the on-campus visit is Question 10. Question 10 was: "How influential was a program shadow at WITC-NR in your decision to attend WITC-NR?" An overwhelming majority (40 participants or 85%) indicated this question was not applicable to their situation. Six participants (13%) rated the influence level as either somewhat influential, influential, or very influential. Only one participant (2%) indicated the shadow was not very influential in helping them make a decision to attend WITC-NR.

Now the survey turns away from the interpersonal interaction between WITC-NR and the potential student to the marketing materials designed by college to attract students to the WITC-NR campus. Questions 11-19 are related to these marketing materials. The main question for each of these items was: "Please rate the influential effects of the following WITC marketing materials in your decision to attend WITC-NR:" A display of the printed materials was presented to the participants while they were completing the survey. The table on the next page presents the results for Questions 11-19.

Table 3

Question 11-19 results

Marketing Material	Not Very Influential frequency/%	Somewhat Influential frequency/%	Influential frequency/%	Very Influential frequency/%	Not Applicable frequency/%
Top 10 Reasons Brochure	3/6%	2/4%	1/2%	1/2%	39/83%
College Catalog	4/9%	9/19%	11/23%	7/15%	16/34%
Cluster Brochure	5/11%	6/13%	9/19%	5/11%	20/43%
Local radio or station ad	6/13%	3/6%	2/4%	3/6%	32/68%
Mailing to your home	7/15%	10/21%	6/13%	5/11%	19/40%
Local newspaper ad	8/17%	1/2%	3/6%	1/2%	33/70%
Local movie theater ad	7/15%	5/11%	3/6%	0	31/66%
Outdoor electronic campus sign	9/19%	11/23%	3/6%	6/13%	18/38%
Website	4/9%	12/26%	10/21%	10/21%	10/21%

A quick synopsis of Questions 11-19 is given below starting with Question 11. Question 11 referred to a special printed marketing piece, which showcased the top 10 reasons to attend WITC. This piece revealed that 39 participants (83%) found this piece not to be very influential.

Question 12 concerned another printed marketing piece, the college catalog. This proved to be the most influential printed marketing piece that the college produces. Twenty-seven participants (57%) were either somewhat influenced, influenced, or very influenced by the catalog. A group of 16 participants (34%) indicated this question was not applicable to them.

A question concerning the cluster brochures was the focus of Question 13. The cluster brochures did not have very much influence on five participants (11%). It did influence 20 participants (43%) anywhere from the somewhat influential to the very influential level. Another 20 participants (43%) found the brochures to not be applicable to their decision.

Local radio station ads were the topic for Question 14. The radio ads were not applicable to 32 participants (68%) in the sample. There were eight participants (17%) who were somewhat influenced, influenced, or very influenced by the radio ads. The results did bear out that six participants or 14% were not very influenced by the radio ads.

Question 15 addresses mailings to the participant's homes. Twenty-one participants (46%) indicated the mailings were somewhat influential, influential, or very influential in their decisions to attend WITC-NR. The not applicable category was indicated by 19 participants or 40% of the surveys.

Question 16 rates the influence of the local newspaper ads in attracting students to WITC-NR. Only five participants (11%) had indicated any level of influence from the newspaper ads. Eight participants (17%) described the influence as not very influential from the newspaper ads. Not applicable was indicated by 33 participants (70%) of the respondents.

Local movie theater ads were the subject of question 17. Most of the participants (66% or 31 participants) found the theater ads to not be applicable to them. There were a total of eight participants (17%) who indicated that they were somewhat influenced or influenced by the theater ads. The results also showed that seven participants (15%) found the theater ads to not be very influential.

Question 18 measures the influence of the outdoor electronic campus sign that sits in front of the WITC-NR main building. This sign was found to be somewhat influential, influential, or very influential for 20 participants (42%). In addition, nine participants (19%) were not very influenced by the sign. Another 18 applicants (38%) found this question as not applicable.

The last marketing piece the survey addressed was the WITC website. The WITC website was the most influential of all the marketing pieces measured by this survey. In total, 32 participants (68%) found the website to be either somewhat influential, influential, or very influential in the decision the participants made in attending WITC-NR. This question also showed the fewest number of participants who indicated this question was not applicable (10 participants or 21%). Only four participants (9%) found the website to not be very influential.

The next part of the survey measures the influential effects of other factors in the decision to attend WITC-NR. Specifically, Questions 20-30 are prefaced with this question: "Please rate the influential effects of these other factors in your decision to attend WITC-NR:" Table 4 on the next page presents the results for Questions 20-30.

Table 4

Results for questions 20-30

OTHER FACTORS	NOT VERY INFLUENTIAL frequency/%	SOMEWHAT INFLUENTIAL frequency/%	INFLUENTIAL frequency/%	VERY INFLUENTIAL frequency/%	NOT APPLICABLE frequency/%
Parent/parents	6/13%	9/19%	16/34%	9/19%	7/15%
Friend/friends	10/21%	9/19%	9/19%	9/19%	10/21%
HS guidance counselor	12/25%	6/13%	5/11%	5/11%	19/40%
HS teacher	13/28%	3/6%	5/11%	6/13%	20/42%
Adult neighbor, in community	12/26%	4/8%	5/11%	4/8%	22/47%
Other relative	17/36%	2/4%	4/9%	3/6%	21/45%
Offered program wanted	2/4%	3/6%	12/26%	27/57%	3/6%
Location close to home	3/6%	8/17%	10/21%	24/51%	2/4%
Location away from home	20/43%	4/8%	1/2%	0	22/47%
Education yields good salary	8/17%	6/13%	15/32%	17/36%	1/2%
Tuition/costs	4/9%	9/19%	19/40%	13/28%	2/4%

Question 20 rated the influential effects a parent or parents had on the participant. Thirty-four participants (72%) rated their parents as somewhat influential, influential, or very influential in their decision to attend WITC-NR. Only seven participants (15%) indicated not applicable as their answer. The remaining six participants (13%) rated their parents as not very influential.

Question 21 measures the influence that friends have on the participants decision to attend WITC-NR. Few participants (10 participants or 21%) relayed that friends were not very influential in this decision. Also, 10 participants (21%) found friends not applicable in their decision. This leaves 27 applicants (57%) as rating their friends as somewhat influential, influential, or very influential.

The high school guidance counselor is the focus of Question 22. The not applicable category had 19 participants (40%). To reinforce these high numbers, 12 participants (26%) indicated the guidance counselor was not very influential. However, the guidance counselor was somewhat influential, influential, or very influential for 25% or 11 of the participants.

Question 23 gauges the influence of high school teachers on the participant's decision to attend WITC-NR. A large number of participants (20 participants or 43%), found the teachers as not applicable to their decision. Along with that, 13 participants (28%) found teachers to be not very influential in their decision making about WITC-NR. This results in 14 participants (30%) who rated their teachers as somewhat influential, influential, or very influential.

The focus of Question 24 is the adult or neighbor in the community. Thirteen participants (29%) reported to be somewhat influenced, influenced, or very influenced by other adults. Those participants that are not very influenced by other adults stands at 12 participants or 26%. The not applicable category garnered 22 participants (47%).

The influence of other relatives was measured in question 25. Other relatives were not applicable for 21 participants (45%). Nine participants (19%) felt that other relatives were somewhat influential, influential, or very influential. This left 17 participants (36%) rating other relatives as not very influential.

Question 26 shows how the programs offered are a major influence on the participant's decision to pick WITC-NR. Of the 47 total participants, 42 participants (89%) found the programs offered to be somewhat influential, influential, or very influential in the decision to make WITC-NR their school of choice. Only three participants (6%) and two participants (4%) indicated that programs were not applicable and that programs were not very influential.

The desire to be close to home is strong for some participants. This is addressed in Question 27. This question reveals a high number of participants (42 participants or 89%) who are somewhat influenced, influenced, or very influenced by the desire to be close to home. The not applicable and not very influential numbers were two participants for 4% and three participants at 6% respectively.

Question 28 measures the desire to be away from home. This factor was not very influential for 20 participants or 43% of the participants. In addition, the amount of participants (22 participants or 47%) answered the question as not applicable.

Education that yields a good salary did have some influence on the student's decision to attend WITC-NR. For Question 29, 38 participants (81%) determined that the indication of a good salary was somewhat influential, influential, or very influential. Only one participant (2%) found this question not applicable. Eight participants (17%) found that salary was not very influential in their decision to attend WITC-NR.

The last topical question of the survey is Question 30. The low tuition cost had the most influence on the participants to attend WITC-NR. Somewhat influential, influential, or very influential was the answer of choice for 41 participants (87%). The not applicable answer was the choice for two participants (4%). These results are joined by four participants (9%) who felt that tuition costs were not very influential.

Research Objectives

Research Objective #1 - What are the millennial high school graduate's reactions (ranging from strongly influential to not influential) to the WITC print materials?

Questionnaire items related to WITC print materials were 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16. These questions dealt with five different types of print materials. These print materials were the *Top 10 Reasons* brochure, the college catalog, the cluster brochures, home mailings, and the local newspaper. The mean of the print materials was 2.39. The results indicated that of those participants who answered these questions, the responding participants rated print materials as being between somewhat influential and influential.

Research Objective #2 - How influential is WITC personal interaction in attracting the millennial high school graduate to WITC-NR?

The questions that dealt with this objective were 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. The personal interaction items evaluated by the survey participants were WITC *Career Day,* a WITC representative visit to the high school, a WITC representative classroom presentation at the high school, WITC instructor classroom presentation at the high school, career fair at the high school, education fair, individual high school student visit at WITC, high school group tour of WITC, and program shadow at WITC. Of those participants who responded to this question, the mean of

these questions was 2.48. Thus, the results showed that personal interaction was halfway between somewhat influential and influential in a student's decision to attend WITC-NR.

Research Objective #3 - To what extent does non-WITC personal interactions have an effect on millennial high school graduates in making the decision to attend WITC?

Questions 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 comprised the questions relating to the influence of non-WITC personal interaction in the decision to attend WITC-NR. The following items related to this objective: parents, friends, high school guidance counselor, high school teacher, adult in the community, and other relatives. The participants that responded to this objective found non-WITC personal interaction to be the least influential of all of the influences. The mean for this category was 2.20. These results show that non-WITC personal interaction was soundly in the somewhat influential category.

Research Objective #4 - What influence does the electronic media including the website have on the millennial high school graduate to enroll at WITC?

Electronic media had four questions in the survey. These were questions 14, 17, 18, and 19. The electronic media types included in this survey were radio ads, movie theater ads, outdoor electronic campus sign, and the WITC website. In rating these electronic media, the participants who answered this question produced a mean result of 2.32. That is, electronic media was well within the somewhat influential category.

Research Objective #5 - How important are the WITC-NR amenities in attracting the millennial high school graduate to enroll at WITC-NR?

Questionnaire items 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 dealt with this objective. Items considered as WITC-NR amenities include programs offered, location close to home, location away from home, education yields a good salary, and tuition/other costs. Clearly, the amenities of WITC-

NR were the most influential of all of the categories in a student's decision to attend WITC-NR. The results of the amenities questions had a mean of 2.89. Thus, the participants of the survey who answered these questions found amenities to be very influential in their decision to attend WITC-NR.

Research Objective #6 - What are the preferred means of marketing communication with the millennial high school graduates?

In reviewing the results of the five categories of influences in the participants to desire to attend WITC-NR, the clear category of highest influence was the amenities of the WITC-NR campus. In order from most influential to least influential, the objectives line up as follows:

Table 5

Categories of influences to attend WITC-NR

Influence categories	Mean
WITC-NR Amenities	2.89
WITC-NR Personal Interaction	2.48
WITC-NR Print Materials	2.39
WITC-NR Electronic Media	2.32
Non-WITC-NR Personal Interaction	2.20

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter will include a discussion of the results of the questionnaire. It will examine the findings in relationship to other studies conducted about the influences on the decision making process of recent college entrants. After the discussion, the conclusions of this study will be given. It will basically give a short summary of the results. After this summary, the researcher's recommendations will be given based on the results of the research conducted during this study.

Discussion

This study linked two main topics. It linked the topic of the millennial generation and its characteristics with the recruiting tools or marketing strategies used by institutions of higher learning to attract this generation of students to their respective campuses.

According to Howe & Strauss (2003), the millennial generation has a unique set of seven core values. These core values are special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, conventional, pressured, and achieving. Each of these values will be compared and contrasted to the results of the survey.

Special. According to Santovec (2005a), this generation has been made to feel special by their parents and they expect the same attention from college recruiters. The results of the survey really did not bear this out. Although personal interaction with WITC personnel was the second highest influence on the participants, it was a somewhat distant second to the influence of the campus amenities. What was even more surprising was the fact that the influence of non-WITC-NR personal interaction was dead last in the results. Apparently, in this survey, parents and other

relatives who supposedly make this generation feel special, had the least influence, collectively, on the participants decision to choose WITC-NR.

In reviewing the recruitment or marketing strategies used to appeal to this generation's feelings of being special, the principal means of marketing for most higher education institutions is printed materials. According to Perna (2005a), targeted and repeated mailings of catalogs and promotional materials was expected and welcomed by students. The survey results show that printed materials had one of the least influences on the survey participants. The results of the survey refute the findings of both Howe & Strauss (2003) and Perna (2005a).

Sheltered. Howe & Strauss (2003) found the millennials to be the most overprotected generation by their parents when it comes to child-safety rules and violence in general. This group also tends to stay home while attending college to save money and to be with their parents (Santovec, 2005a). This study tends to agree with the sheltered concept. The results show that the most influential factor for students to attend WITC-NR was the amenities, which includes how close the campus is to home and to savings in tuition costs compared to other higher education institutions.

The marketing to this group needs to emphasize the safety and security of the campus (Howe & Strauss, 2003). This was not a concept that was covered in the survey.

Confident. This group of young people has optimism in its personal lives and where the future will take it (Howe & Strauss, 2003). The millennials want to contribute more to society and they expect to get good jobs so they can do so (Santovec, 2005a). The results of the survey support the idealism of the millennials. Again, the most influential factor influencing this generation to attend WITC-NR was the amenities. One item under the amenities umbrella was

that of salary. The participants chose to attend WITC-NR because it has programs that yield a good salary.

According to Howe & Strauss (2003), the millennials need to receive marketing messages that emphasize great learning, great careers, and great lives after college. The results of the survey reinforce this thinking. One of the major influences in attracting students to WITC-NR was the good salary and program choices. These equate to great careers and great lives for WITC-NR graduates.

Team-oriented. This generation likes to do things with their friends in larger groups (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Three of the questions on the survey gauged the response of students in a group. WITC *Career Day,* education fairs and career fairs, all events most students attend in groups, had a high influence on the survey participants. *Career Day* was judged to be somewhat influential, influential or very influential for 79% of the survey participants. Education fairs, another group activity, were rated as influential or somewhat influential by 78% of the survey participants. Career fairs held at various high schools, another activity students attend in groups, was deemed somewhat influential, influential or very influential by 67% of the survey participants. These numbers support the notion that the millennials like to do things in groups – even when it comes to choosing an institution of higher learning.

The marketing strategies used to attract the millennial student to college campuses needs to include the buddy or group concept. That is, invite potential students to visit the campus in groups through a field trip sponsored by the local K-12 district (Perna, 2005c). This strategy was reinforced by the results of the survey as stated in the paragraph immediately above this one. That is, the millennials like to do things in groups and group activities do have an influence on the members of the group.

Conventional. The millennials tend to follow the rules knowing that it will keep peace in their lives and in the country (Howe & Strauss, 2003). The millennials also have a smaller generation gap with their parents and like the same things, such as music and traditional values and morals (Howe & Strauss, 2003). This observance by Howe & Strauss (2003) was reiterated in the results of the survey. When the survey participants were asked how influential their parents were on the decision to attend WITC-NR, the response was overwhelming. The results showed that 85% of the participants were somewhat influenced, influenced and very influenced by their parents when making the decision to attend WITC-NR. However, other non-WITC-NR personnel dragged this statistic down when looked at collectively.

One of the marketing strategies used to influence student interest in a college is the college website (Mentz & Whiteside, 2003). The results of the survey show that the WITC website had a substantial impact on students. Of those participants in the survey who answered the question, 90% rated the WITC website as somewhat influential, influential, or very influential.

Pressured. According to Howe & Strauss (2003), millennials feel the need to work hard in school, get good grades, and respond instantaneously to others' demands. This characteristic was related to Question 1 of the survey asking about the decision making time period for the participant to select WITC-NR. Only 20% of the participants made the decision to attend WITC-NR from the usual decision period for high school seniors, which is the August – December period of their senior year in high school. The rest of the answers were all over the board. This shows that this group did not feel pressured to make career decisions early in their senior year of high school. This result refutes the writings of Howe & Strauss (2003).

The millennial student is always looking for ways to give back to the community and wants the opportunity to learn while doing those good deeds. Marketing to these students needs to include examples of volunteer opportunities or community service Gibbs (2005b). Although this question was not in the survey per se, there are student activities showcased on the WITC website, and the website was a very big influence on a student's decision to attend WITC-NR.

Achieving. Most of this generation has their life planned out with education attainment as a high priority according to Howe & Strauss (2003). This correlates well with the results of the survey. One of the highest influences for the participants to attend WITC-NR was the fact that the campus offered a program that was wanted by the participants. In this case, 95% of the survey participants were somewhat influenced, influenced or very influenced to attend WITC-NR because they could attain their educational goals at that campus.

The millennials like to use the various means of technology to access post-secondary information and help them research the various options. This includes the use of instant messaging (Santovec, 2005a), chat rooms (Benjamin & Lee, 2005) and the Internet (Mentz & Whiteside, 2003). This realization was reinforced with the results of the reaction to the WITC website. Of those participants in the survey who answered the question, 90% rated the WITC website as somewhat influential, influential, or very influential.

Conclusions

As with any marketing plan, knowing the target audience is vitally important to the success of the plan (Perna, 2005b). As with any other market segment, some concepts work and some do not. In looking at the results of the survey, certain characteristics of the millennials have a definite connection to the various marketing strategies. The most important connections were made with the characteristics of sheltered, confident, team-oriented, conventional, and achieving.

Those marketing strategies used to support these characteristics involved the influential factors of amenities (programs offered, location close to home, good salary, and tuition). Another influential factor was WITC personal interaction (groups). Another one was electronic media – mainly the WITC website.

Those characteristics that did not make a positive connection with various influential factors include special and pressured. The related influential factors that refuted the objectives were printed materials and non-WITC personal interaction.

Recommendations

In reviewing the study, a number of changes should be made in the selection of the participants and with the addition of other marketing strategies. The first item is to work more closely with other instructors on campus to have more students participate in the survey. The second item would be restructuring the questions to address certain "modern" marketing strategies. For example, other questions need to be added concerning the various forms of electronic media including instant messaging, blogging, webinars, pod-casting, MySpace, YouTube, etc.

Recommendations for college recruiters. The main recommendation for college recruiters based on this study is to read as much as possible about the millennials. A majority of WITC instructors still think this generation should be recruited using the same old methods of newspaper ads and give aways. These strategies do not work with the millennials. The millennials and a majority of their parents do not read the newspaper. So ads in the local newspapers do not work. The millennials are not a materialistic generation (Howe & Strauss, 2003) thus they do not desire the cheap, chintzy give aways that recruiters think work. College

recruiters should be encouraged to limit the cheap give aways and give give aways that are deemed to be more useful or at least recyclable.

The recruiters need to really enhance their personal interaction with potential students. This can be accomplished through increased efforts to secure classroom presentations. The students see the college representative in front of the class so when the college representative returns for the school visit, the college representative is recognized and the student then feels more comfortable meeting with that person individually.

Recommendations for marketing personnel. This study was eye-opening when analyzing the rankings of the influential factors. The traditional methods of mass mailings, printed catalogs, fluff brochures and other printed materials are not embraced by the millennials. The millennials want just the facts and do not like to see trees wasted on meaningless fluff.

Marketing personnel ought to stress the amenities to prospective students. As revealed in this study, students attend WITC-NR because of the programs that are offered and the salary potential. The most effective way to communicate this to prospective students is through the use of electronic media including the website. This generation likes to go to the Internet and find this information. Also, WITC needs to implement pod-casting, instant messaging, and blogging into their marketing arsenal.

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Appendix A: Education Influences Survey

WISCONSIN INDIANHEAD TECHNCIAL COLLEGE NEW RICHMOND EDUCATION INFLUENCES SURVEY

This project has been reviewed by the UW-Stout IRB as required by the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46

Please do not write your name on this survey. Your participation is voluntary and appreciated.
(If you are under the age of 18, please provide a parent signature [found on the last page] before participating in this survey. If a parent signature is not provided, please do not complete this survey.)

Please complete the survey as honestly as possible. Your answers will be combined with other WITC-New Richmond attendees to improve the communication process to attract future students.

For the questions given below, please circle the one most appropriate answer.

1. To the best of your recollection, what time of year did you decide to attend WITC-New Richmond (WITC-NR) after high school?
   _____ (1) Before Junior year of high school
   _____ (2) August – December of Junior year of high school
   _____ (3) January – July of Junior year of high school
   _____ (4) August – December of Senior year of high school
   _____ (5) January – June of Senior year of high school
   _____ (6) Summer after high school graduation
   _____ (7) Worked/was away from high school for some time and then decided do attend WITC-NR
   _____ (8) Transferred to WITC-NR after attending another college
   _____ (9) Dropped out of another college at some point; then decided to attend WITC-NR
   _____ (10) Other reason(s) _____

2. Did attending the WITC-NR Career Day (formerly known as Taste of Tech) where you did hands-on activities have an influence on you attending WITC-NR?
   _____ (1) not very influential
   _____ (2) somewhat influential
   _____ (3) influential
   _____ (4) very influential
   _____ (5) not applicable – did not attend Career Day/Taste of Tech

3. To what degree did a visit from a WITC-NR representative to your high school lunchroom or guidance office have an influence on your decision to attend WITC-NR?
   _____ (1) not very influential
   _____ (2) somewhat influential
   _____ (3) influential
   _____ (4) very influential
   _____ (5) not applicable – did not meet with the representative during a school visit

4. To what degree did a presentation in your high school classroom from a WITC representative
(not a WITC instructor) influence your decision to attend WITC-NR?

_____ (1) not very influential
_____ (2) somewhat influential
_____ (3) influential
_____ (4) very influential
_____ (5) not applicable – a WITC representative did not do a presentation
               in any of my high school classes

5. To what extent was a classroom presentation from a WITC instructor influential
in your decision to attend WITC-NR?

_____ (1) not very influential
_____ (2) somewhat influential
_____ (3) influential
_____ (4) very influential
_____ (5) not applicable – did not attend a classroom presentation by an WITC instructor

6. Did attending a career fair at your high school influence your decision to enroll at WITC-NR?

_____ (1) not very influential
_____ (2) somewhat influential
_____ (3) influential
_____ (4) very influential
_____ (5) not applicable – our high school did not have a career fair

7. Did a visit with a WITC representative at an education fair have an influence
on your decision to attend WITC-NR?

_____ (1) not very influential
_____ (2) somewhat influential
_____ (3) influential
_____ (4) very influential
_____ (5) not applicable – did not attend an education fair

8. How influential was your individual visit to the WITC-NR campus
to meet with the Admissions Advisor and/or take a tour?

_____ (1) not very influential
_____ (2) somewhat influential
_____ (3) influential
_____ (4) very influential
_____ (5) not applicable – did not meet with an advisor or take an individual tour

9. How influential was a school organized group tour of WITC-NR
in making your decision to attend WITC-NR?

_____ (1) not very influential
_____ (2) somewhat influential
_____ (3) influential
_____ (4) very influential
_____ (5) not applicable – did not participate in a school organized group tour

10. How influential was a program shadow at WITC-NR in your decision to attend WITC-NR?

_____ (1) not very influential
_____ (2) somewhat influential
_____ (3) influential
_____ (4) very influential
_____ (5) not applicable – did not attend a program shadow

Please rate the influential effects of the following WITC marketing materials
in your decision to attend WITC-NR: (display copy of items)

1 = NVI	2 = SI	3 = I	4 = VI	5 = NA
Not Very Influential	Somewhat Influential	Influential	Very Influential	Not Applicable

	NVI	SI	I	VI	NA
11. WITC Top 10 Reasons Brochure	1	2	3	4	5
12. WITC College Catalog	1	2	3	4	5
13. WITC Cluster Brochure	1	2	3	4	5
14. WITC ad on a local radio station	1	2	3	4	5
15. WITC mailing to your home	1	2	3	4	5
16. WITC ad in a local newspaper	1	2	3	4	5
17. WITC ad at a local movie theater	1	2	3	4	5
18. WITC outdoor electronic campus sign	1	2	3	4	5
19. WITC website	1	2	3	4	5

Please rate the influential effects of these other factors in your decision to attend WITC-NR:

	NVI	SI	I	VI	NA
20. Parent/parents	1	2	3	4	5
21. Friend/friends	1	2	3	4	5
22. High school guidance counselor	1	2	3	4	5
23. High school teacher	1	2	3	4	5
24. Adult neighbor, in community	1	2	3	4	5
25. Other relative (aunt, uncle, grandparent)	1	2	3	4	5
26. Offered program you wanted	1	2	3	4	5
27. Location close to home (want to be by family)	1	2	3	4	5
28. Location away from home (want to be on own)	1	2	3	4	5
29. Education that yields good salary	1	2	3	4	5
30. Tuition and/or other costs	1	2	3	4	5

31. What year did you graduate from high school or did your class graduate if you earned a GED/HSED? (please check one)
_____ 2006
_____ 2005
_____ 2004
_____ 2003
_____ 2002
_____ prior to 2002 – please write-in the year of graduation here: _____

32. What is your gender (please circle one)?   Female   Male

33. What high school did you graduate (or earn your GED/HSED) from?
(please put a check by your high school or write in the name and city of the school below)

_____ Amery	_____ Grantsburg	_____ Siren
_____ Baldwin/Woodville	_____ Hudson	_____ Somerset
_____ Clayton	_____ Luck	_____ St. Croix Central
_____ Clear Lake	_____ New Richmond	_____ St. Croix Falls
_____ Frederic	_____ Osceola	_____ Unity
_____ Glenwood City		_____ Webster

If your high school is not listed above, please write in the name of the high school and city below:

Name _____   City _____

34. What is your ethnic/racial background (please check one)?
_____ Native American, American Indian, or Alaskan Native
_____ Asian, Pacific Islander, Filipino
_____ Black or African American
_____ Hispanic, Chicano, or Spanish American
_____ White, Caucasian
_____ Other – please specify _____

35. Please indicate which age group represents your age (please check one):

_____ 17 or younger – Parent's signature _____
_____ 18 – 22
_____ 23 – 27
_____ 28 – 32
_____ 33 – 43
_____ 44 – 54
_____ 55 or older

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your individual answers will remain confidential and will not be shared individually with any person or any organization.

Upon completing this survey, please place your survey in the basket provided.