


THE TURNING POINT

Turning Research into Recruitment

Melodie Bard
JOUR 8206
July 23, 2019

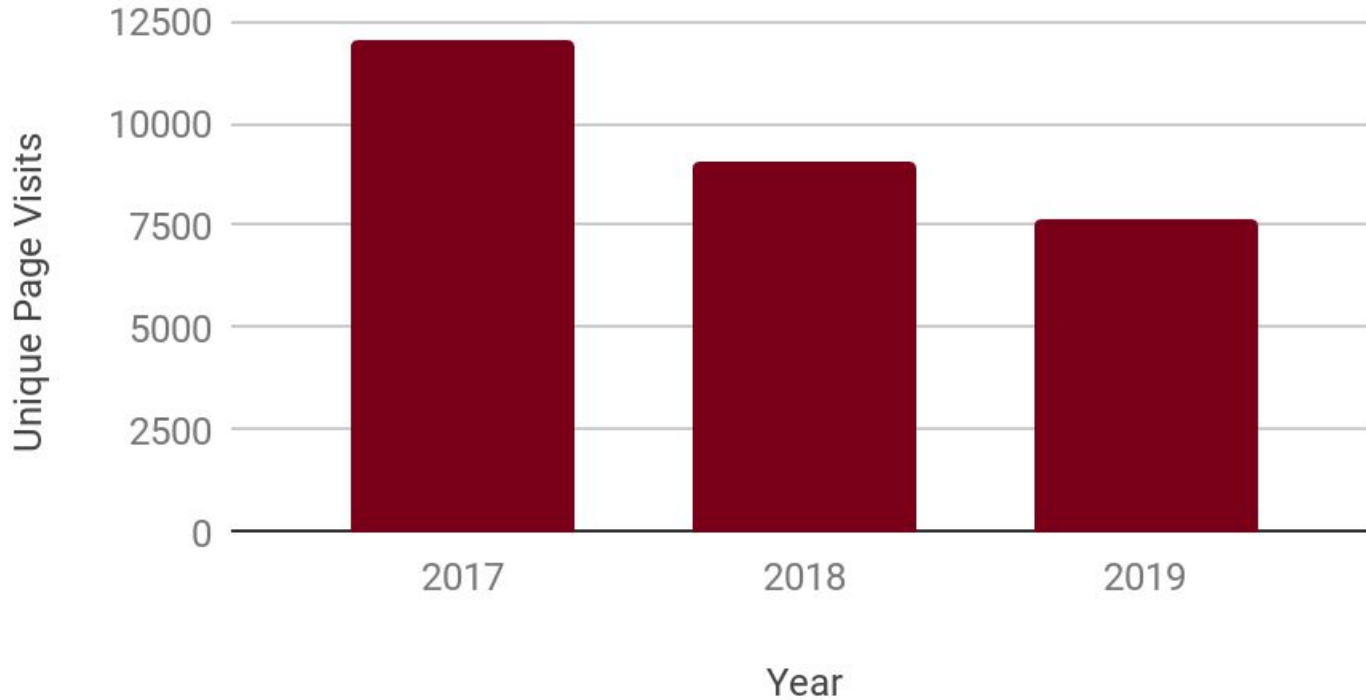


The background of the slide is a photograph of a city street during sunset. The sun is low in the sky, creating a warm, golden glow. In the foreground, there are dark silhouettes of trees and a road. In the background, there are several multi-story buildings, some with balconies. A yellow rectangular box is overlaid on the upper half of the image, containing text. A smaller, dark red rectangular box is overlaid on the lower half of the image, containing additional text.

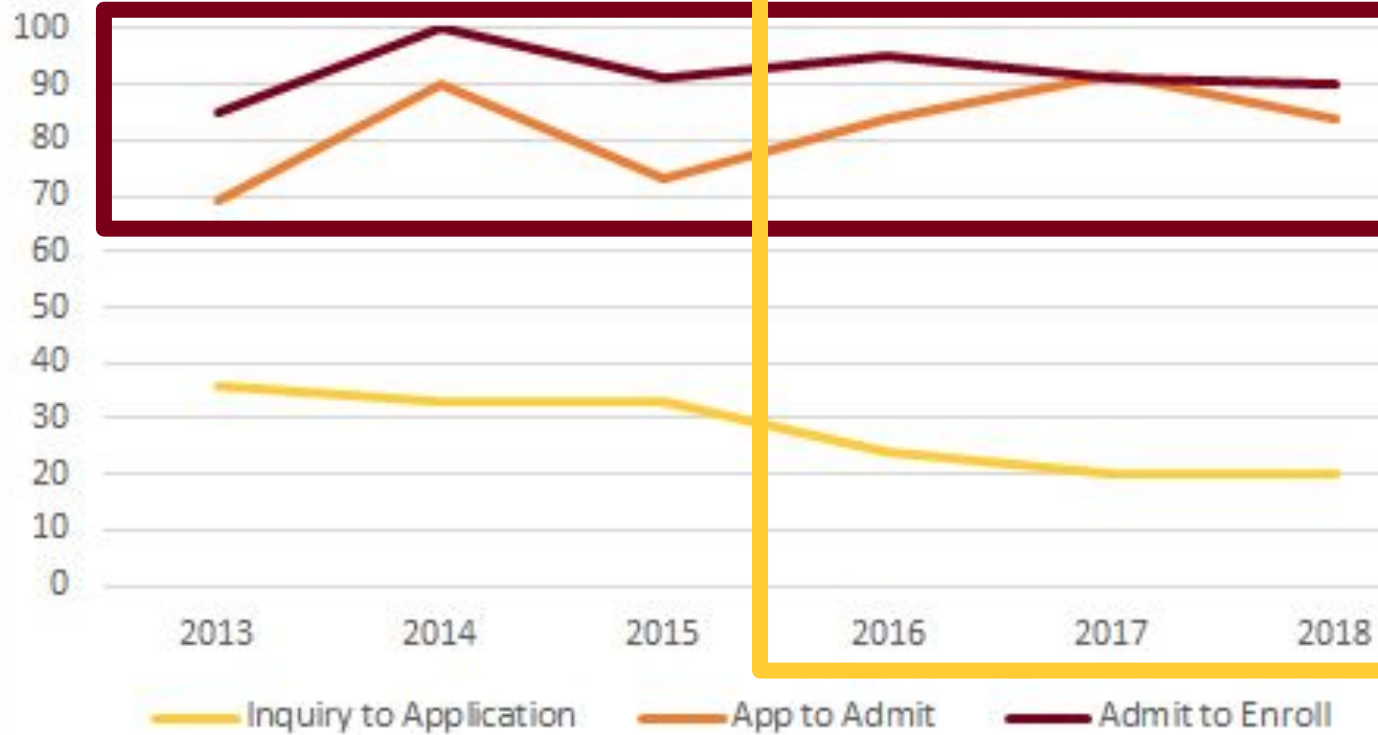
The MA in Strategic Communication has seen a decline in both prospects and inquiries, leading to an overall decrease in the volume and quality of applications.

This presents a challenge as the program has a goal to enroll a class of at least 20 well-qualified students

Unique Page Visits, Oct - April



Funnel Conversion Rates





Research



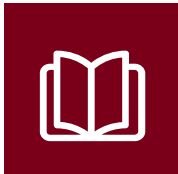
Expert Interviews

Including a Graduate Management Education marketing expert and those with expert knowledge of program and graduate school resources



Syndicated Research

Pulled a profile from the Simmons Spring 2016 database



Secondary Research

Including both industry white papers and articles, and Dan Polhamer's program research

Current Landscape

STRENGTH

90% alumni satisfaction
Strong alumni outcomes
Quality of instruction
Good location - major metropolitan city
Scholarships available

WEAKNESS

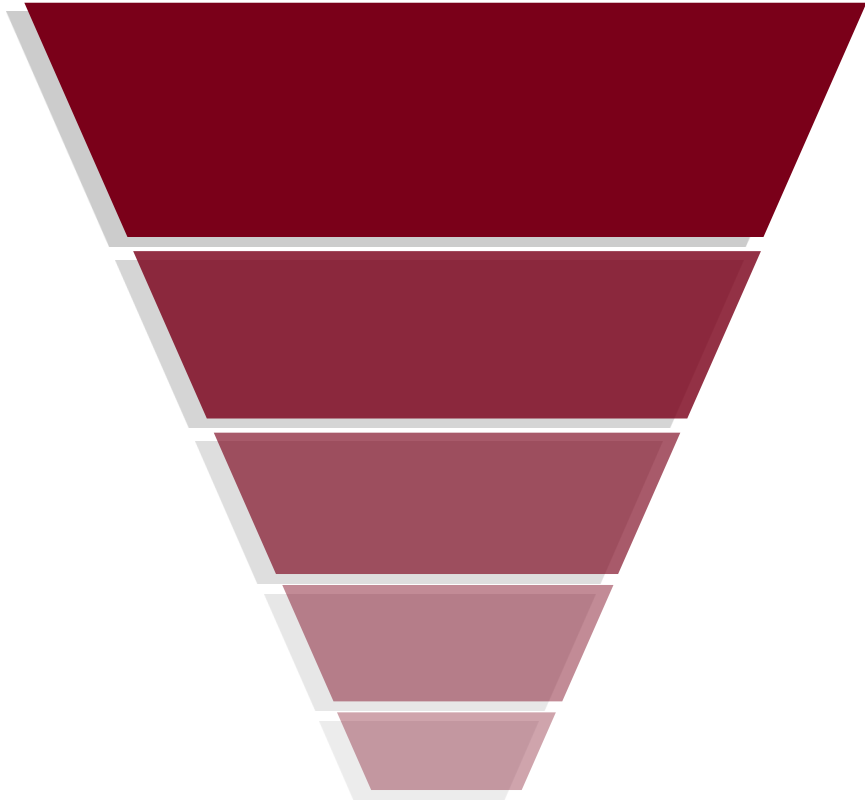
Limited staff resources
Limited budget
Dirty data
Weak messaging
Misuse of CRM capabilities

OPPORTUNITY

Only local program available
Cohort-style model
On campus format
Ability to offer GRE waiver
CRM resource available

THREAT

Decline in GRE test takers
Unclear value of PPC ads
Increased concern from Millennials to take on additional debt
Decrease in employer support



MA in Strategic Communications
Enrollment Funnel

PROSPECTS/VISITORS



INQUIRIES



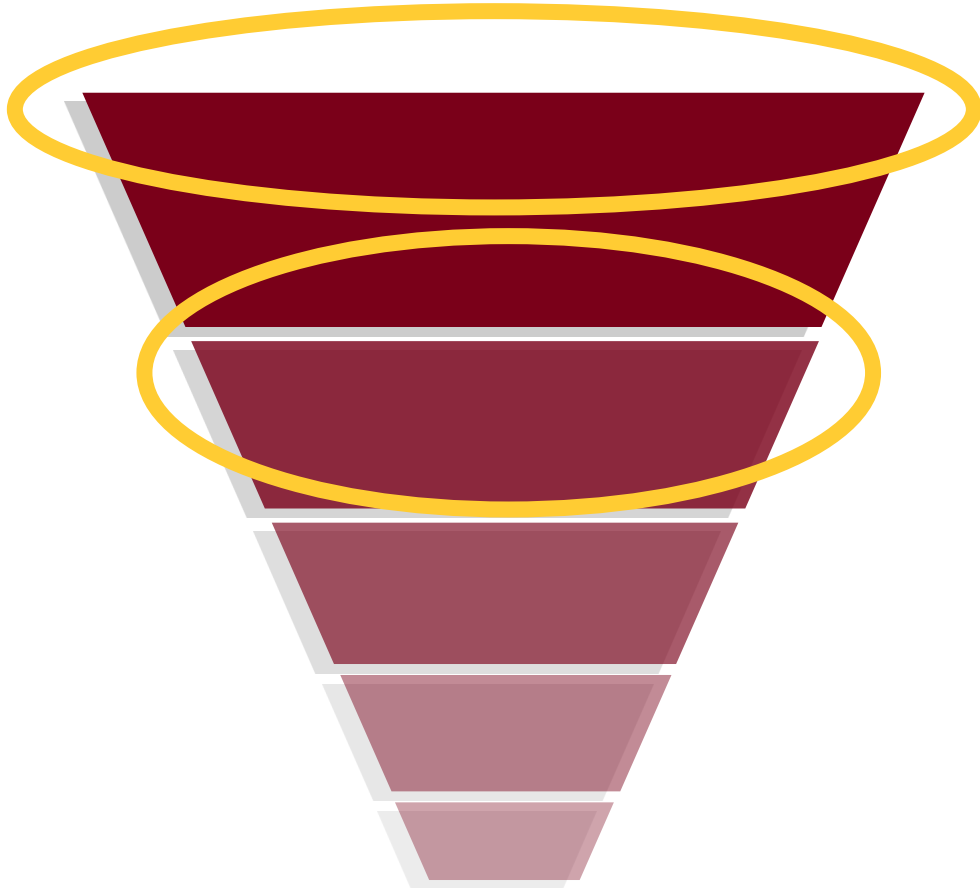
APPLICATIONS



ADMITS



ENROLLED



MA in Strategic Communications
Enrollment Funnel

PROSPECTS/VISITORS



INQUIRIES




APPLICATIONS



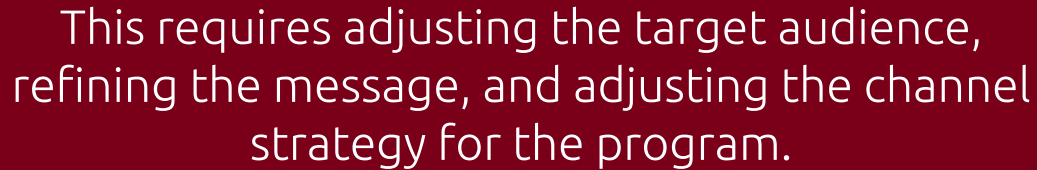
ADMITS



ENROLLED

A photograph of a brick building with a yellow text box overlaid on it. The building is made of red brick and has a dark roof. There are trees with yellow leaves in the background. The text is in a bold, dark red font.

By running a campaign focused further down the enrollment funnel, the MA in Strategic Communication will increase its inquiries, and as a result, its application volume as well.

A dark red text box overlaid on a grassy area. The text is in a white font.

This requires adjusting the target audience, refining the message, and adjusting the channel strategy for the program.

Current efforts

Target Audience

The program began with a psychographic target of “Alice”

2018 alum Dan Polhamer proposed a motivations-based approach, segmenting students who do the program into: Future-Mes, Planner-Climbers, and Pivoters

Current messaging aligns most with Pivoters

Message

The program is leaning heavily on a message centered around the idea of

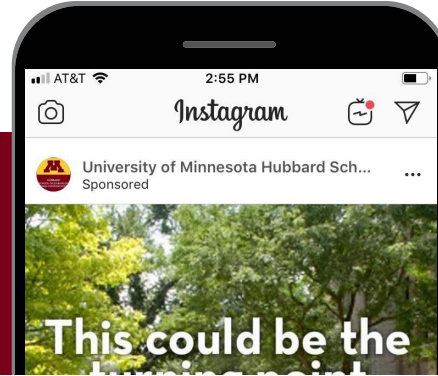
The Turning Point

Channel Strategy

With the current top-of-funnel focus, the program is primarily investing in paid search efforts, with some supplemental purchase lists and email marketing



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



Every successful career has a turning point, make this yours.

Visit Full Website

Request Information

Every successful career has a turning point, make this yours.

Professional Master of Arts

Professional M.A. In Strategic Communication



Program Information

Designed exclusively for working professionals in advertising, public relations or corporate or nonprofit communications, the Professional MA in Strategic Communication focuses on the study of communications strategy, planning, and evaluation. 041101_0505 - Windows Photo Viewer

Upcoming Information Sessions RSVP Today!

RSVP for Strategic Communication M.A. Information Sessions through this form. All sessions are open to the public.

First Name *

Last Name *

Email *

Upcoming Information Sessions

- July 30 from 5:30-6:30 in Murphy Hall Room 100

Your title and employer

Current efforts

Target Audience

The program previously had a psychographic target of “Alice”

2018 alum Dan Polhamer proposed a motivations-based approach, segmenting students who do the program into: Future-Mes, Planner-Climbers, and Pivoters

Current messaging aligns most with Pivoters

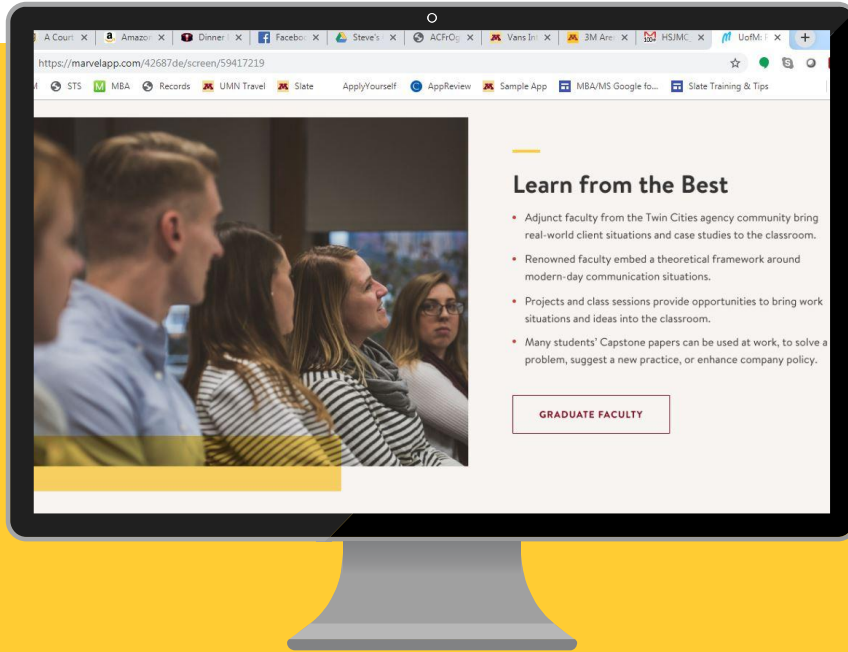
Message

The program is leaning heavily on a message centered around the idea of

The Turning Point

Channel Strategy

With the current top-of-funnel focus, the program is primarily investing in paid search efforts, with some supplemental purchase lists and email marketing efforts



Learn from the Best

- Adjunct faculty from the Twin Cities agency community bring real-world client situations and case studies to the classroom.
- Renowned faculty embed a theoretical framework around modern-day communication situations.
- Projects and class sessions provide opportunities to bring work situations and ideas into the classroom.
- Many students' Capstone papers can be used at work, to solve a problem, suggest a new practice, or enhance company policy.

GRADUATE FACULTY

Recommendations

New Target: Molly

She spends time online visiting Facebook (146), Instagram (283), and LinkedIn (281)

She tends to look at the work she does more as a career than as a job (136)

Molly gets most of her information online (139) and is connected as long as she is awake (206)

While she may not always be careful with her money (96), she does like to know as much as possible about an investment before committing (119)



	Discovery 90%	Action	10% Community
Drivers	Awareness, News	Activation	Loyalty
Communication Tasks	Notice	Act	Advocate, Reward
Key Messages <i>"This could be the turning point of your career..."</i>	Build a trusted network of peers by seeing your cohort on campus twice each week x% of alumni reported a salary increase within 6 months of graduation Update CTAs to 'Request Info'	Make it possible with available scholarships - apply now! Let us evaluate you based on your experience, no GRE necessary! See if you qualify here.	Help expand the brand of the MA in Strategic Communication - refer a colleague to the program! Turn referrals into fuel - if your referral starts an app, get \$10 to Starbucks on us!
Key Media or Channel Strategy	Mix of Paid, Owned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investment in SEO ● Infographic on results ● Social ads & retargeting ● Paid Search 	Mix of Owned, Paid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Website ● Emails ● Events ● Social retargeting 	Mix of Owned, Earned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Branded swag to give alumni ● Referral form in email ● Word of Mouth

Channel Strategy

Social Ads and Retargeting-
Instagram, Facebook,
LinkedIn

Limited Paid Search

digital radio/podcast ads

Recommend leveraging
external partner

Awareness, News,
Activation

PAID

\$18k

Twice yearly alumni email
blast with referral form

Branded swag giveaways -
have alums and current
students be walking
billboards

Buzz, Loyalty

EARNED

\$2k

Update website with new
RFI, career outcome
infographic, scholarship and
tuition information

Spring forum, 3 on campus
info sessions, 3 webinars

External partner for SEO

Drip campaign emails

News, Experience,
Activation

OWNED

\$20k

IMPLEMENTATION	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July
Drip Emails		Active								
Social Ads & Retargeting				Active						
Events		Active			Active					Active
SEO and Website Work	Active									
Paid Search							Active			
Alumni Referral Email				Active				Active		
Digital Ads			Active				Active			

Evaluation

Increase Inquiries

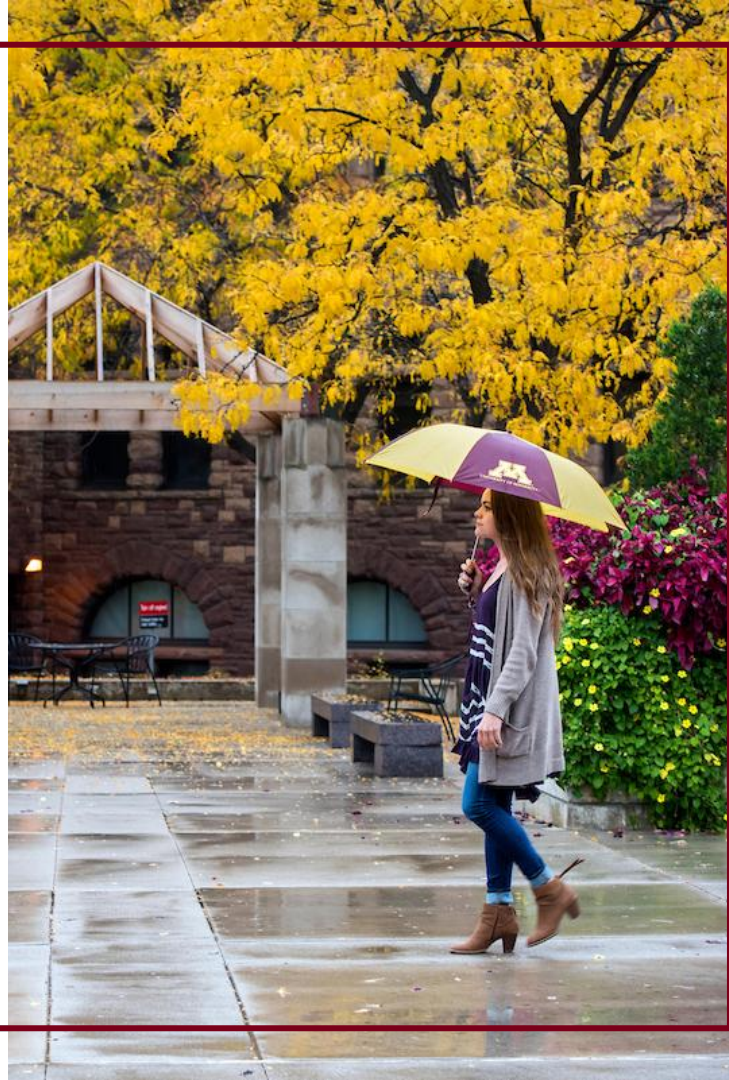
Increase from average of 80-110 to 130-150
By changing RFI CTA, leveraging new messaging in social ads and retargeting, referral pipeline

Increase Event Attendance

YOY Attendee rate up (online and on-campus)
Move Event RSVP to an 'Attend an Event' link- no longer primary CTA, offer new webinar format

Increase Applications

Maintain average conversion rate of 26%
Inquiry to Application status should increase volume of apps to 33-39





Focus on inquiries

Target more broadly

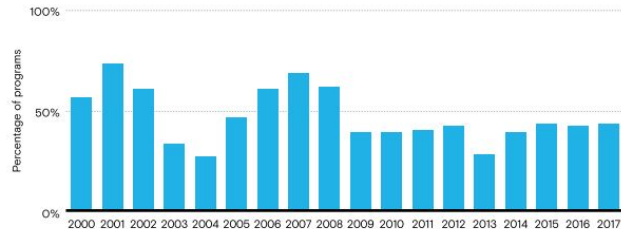
Highlight differentiators

Leverage alumni

Thank you!

Appendix I: GMAC White Paper data

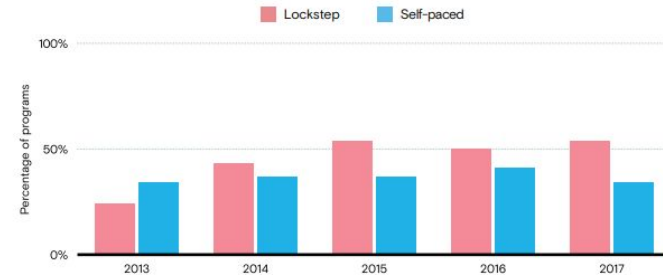
Percentage of US part-time MBA programs reporting year-on-year application volume growth



Source: GMAC (2000-2017). Application Trends Survey.

¹Graduate Management Admission Council (2000-2017). Application Trends Survey.

Percentage of US part-time MBA programs reporting year-on-year application volume growth, by program format



Source: GMAC (2013-2017). Application Trends Survey.

²Graduate Management Admission Council (2017). Application Trends Survey.

Source:

https://www.gmac.com/market-intelligence-and-research/research-library/admissions-and-application-trends/keeping_pace_insights_and_strategies_for_the_future_of_us_part_time_mba_programs?fromsearch=1

Appendix II: Enrollment Data for MA in Strategic Communication

Professional M.A. Enrollment Funnel

Sept.-Oct. (Cohort #)	2013 (9)	2014 (10)	2015 (11)	2016 (12)	2017 (13)
Visitors/ Prospects	2,341*	3,878*	3500+***	7555* 6800+**	4827* 5800+**
Inquiries	80	60	90	108	123
Applications	29	20	30	26	24
Admissions	20	18	22	22	22
Enrollment	17	18	20	21	20

*web site page views

**landing page visits

***estimated landing page and web site page views (year CLA changed web site)

Appendix III: Brand Architecture

Professional Strat Comm M.A.
Content Blueprint

PROMISE

Driven to Discover

We want to link our content strategically to the University of Minnesota's key brand benefit of discovery.

Goal: Increase enrollment from prospects who work for blue chip corporations and agencies.

Target Profile: Alice, 30ish, undergrad in design, worked 3 years for a small agency, then 5 years as a marcom manager for Best Buy, wants to grow professionally but feels trapped in a tactical world. Her firm will pay for some but not all of her tuition.

Key Insights: 1.) Alice can often feel professional loneliness. She doesn't have the mentorship or peer group to stimulate her growth. 2.) With the proliferation of media choices and owned, paid and earned options, she feels like a talented musician in an orchestra without a strategic conductor. She wants to be the conductor. 3.) She seeks a grad program with the rigor and respect of an M.B.A., with less number crunching and more creative problem solving.

Key Barriers: 1. Alice is concerned about the return on her education investment. Will it translate not only to career growth but also to financial growth, in the way she's heard an MBA can? 2. Time is a precious commodity. Alice wonders how completing a Master's Degree will affect her work life balance?

Key Messages: Discover a Pathway to Transformation
Your Performance, Your Career, Your Network

Reasons to Believe: 1. Faculty that's a blend of scholarship and industry leadership. 2.) The power of our cohort model, which works like a professional support group 3.) High graduation rates—nearly 90% have graduated in two years. 4.) Professional improvement—nearly 90% of alumni agree that the program helped them become a better professional. 5. In class professional experimentation: a way to test ideas in a friendly environment.

Voice: Explorer Persona—Independent, forward thinking, courageous

Appendix V: Interviews

Link to full expert interview questions and responses:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/12g4R7moL0hFRXuvsg_h2FtqKrMiNlivuNtoLNkeW6u8/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix VI: Simmons Data

Link to full export of Simmons Syndicated Data pull, Spring 2016:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1YT5dqm50nFck_Pvqsvku6Am3nVKQKbdm

Appendix IV: Current Candidate Journey

DISCOVERY

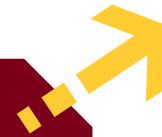
Google Search
Ad Click
Landing page
Website Visit



Ignore CTAs on busy landing page
Request Info and get no response
Want info but not an info session

ACTION

Download brochure
Explore website
Sign up for info session
Send email
Attend a class
Begin/submit application



COMMUNITY

Enroll in program
Promote to others

No show info session
See GRE requirement
Can't find tuition cost
Can't find contact
Can't find relevant MA
in Strat Comm
information

Sources

Evans, Pat. "11 Mind-Blowing Facts about the US Economy." *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 10 Mar. 2019.

Hazenbush, Matt. *Keeping Pace: Insights and Strategies for the Future of US Part-Time MBA Programs*. 2018. Graduate Management Admission Council. Print.

Polhamer, Dan. *Cohorts Creating Cohorts: Leveraging Strategic Communication M.S. Students and Alumni to Increase Program Application Rate*. 2018. Minneapolis. Print.

"Professional MA in Strategic Communication." College of Liberal Arts | University of Minnesota, 2019, cla.umn.edu/hsjmc/graduate/degree-programs/masters-programs/professional-ma-strategic-communication.

Schlangenotto, D., Kundisch, D. & Wunderlich, N.V. *Is Paid Search Overrated?* *Electronic Markets* (2018) 28: 407. <https://doi-org.ezp1.lib.umn.edu/10.1007/s12525-018-0287-4>

Yu, Tian and Marakas, George. How People Perceive Sponsored Search Ads: Toward A Unified Research Model. *Title of Conference*, Cancun, 2019. Unpublished Conference Paper. Association for Information Systems, 2019. Print.

All photos are property of the University of Minnesota PhotoShelter:
<https://university-relations.umn.edu/resources/photo-and-video-libraries>

Credits

This is where you give credit to the ones who are part of this project.

Did you like the resources on this template? Get them for **free** at our other websites.

Presentation template by [Slidesgo](#)

Icons by [Flaticon](#)

Images & infographics by [Freepik](#)

Author introduction slide photo created by **katemangostar** - Freepik.com

Big image slide photo created by **jcomp** - Freepik.com

Text & Image slide photo created by **rawpixel.com** - Freepik.com

Text & Image slide photo created by **Freepik**