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### Marketing

“What do I want to do for the rest of my life?” That’s the question we all ask ourselves when deciding on a major. Some students know exactly what they want to do with their life before coming to college, making it extremely easy for them to decide on majors, minors, and concentrations. However, a majority of students have yet to decide what career path they plan on pursuing. This makes the process of choosing a major very difficult. During my junior year of high school, I took a sports marketing class. Throughout this class, I created brochures, posters, and tickets to promote different professional sports teams as well as their upcoming events. As the semester progressed, my love for creating these types of things deepened. We were assigned a project that included creating our own sports team, a logo, and choosing an event to promote. I enjoyed this project because it allowed me to consider multiple different aspects of the sports industry as well as consider what sports fans enjoy most. I channeled my creative thinking and was able to create an entertaining new volleyball team. Since I enjoyed this class so much, I decided that pursuing business in college, specifically marketing, is the best fit for me.

The definition of marketing, according to the American Marketing Association, is the activity and processes for creating, communicating and delivering offerings that have value for customers, clients, and society at large. Ultimately, it’s all the activities that help businesses reach their target market successfully. Marketing is such an important aspect in a business

because it drives consumers to interact with their brand, purchase their products, and it encourages positive changes at all angles of the brand.

When discussing a successful marketing strategy, the target consumer is a huge part of the conversation. Since the main goal of marketing is to teach consumers why they should choose their product or service over those of their competitors, the most successful companies engage in very consumer oriented marketing (“Introduction”). However, before choosing a target audience, it’s important for the company to have very good visibility of what they have content-wise and to take in all of their data. After configuring all of that, they spend enormous amounts of time, money and resources interpreting the data, examining the everyday lives of resources, and creating products to meet their needs. One of the best ways to incorporate a vision into branding is with personalized and relatable content. Effective marketing strategies also aid consumers in solving their problems by defining and delivering benefits. These companies strive to connect with consumers and make them feel understood so that they can position their business as the solution to their problems (“What are the”). After all, if a company believed that their product or service wouldn’t meet the demands of their customers, they would most likely choose not to sell it.

Although the ideation, research, and selling stages of marketing are very important, advertising is argued to be the most important aspect in determining a brand’s success. Social media marketing offers another marketing channel for creating brand awareness and driving sales - and it’s free. Social media marketing is so beneficial to any company because it’s an effective way to spread awareness about products through multiple different platforms. Consumers want to be part of a community that is recognized on social media and within popular

culture. Promoting products on popular apps like instagram, snapchat and facebook allows brands to increase digital exposure, traffic, expand sales, and cut marketing costs. Appropriate use of social media marketing can also attract new customers and develop significant market research (ConnecTheDot). Mobile apps are another way to increase digital exposure and increase business outside of retail locations, and a majority of companies rely on social media to promote it. According to the scholarly article I found regarding social media's big impact on marketing, more than one-third of companies (34%) prioritize social media marketing over app store optimization and content marketing to attract customers to their mobile app ("The Manifest Survey").

Along with effective advertising, running a successful marketing campaign is crucial for promoting new products. Marketing campaigns are organized, strategized efforts to promote a specific company goal, such as raising awareness of a new product or capturing customer feedback (Decker). They typically aim to reach consumers in a variety of ways and involve a combination of media, including email, television or radio advertising, and social media. Many successful marketing campaigns elicit positive emotion. Marketers have always used unstated but ever-present cues to elicit emotion to connect with and commit the consumer. Feeling down, 'retail therapy' will make you happy. Getting 'I wanna have' will produce happy satisfaction. Today there is the expressed promise of happiness stamped on the ingredients label of nearly every product, service and experience (Coughlin). From P&G's "Thank You, Mom" to Coca-Cola's "Share a Coke" to Nike's "Dream Crazy," marketing campaigns have a way of sticking with us long after an impression or purchase because campaigns make companies memorable (Coughlin). They also give brands identity, personality, and emotion. Apple's "Think

Different” campaign is one of the greatest marketing campaigns ever made because it highlighted how people with huge imaginations who invent and create are the ones who push the human race forwards. According to Apple, the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world actually do. Now, if you don’t feel inspired after experiencing that campaign, I don’t know what will.

The marketing campaigns I mentioned were so successful because they dug deep into consumers’ values. Unlike a majority of marketing campaigns, their reach stretched far and wide because the campaigns weren’t targeted towards a specific group of people. Although a successful marketing campaign is the goal for every company, there is a different type of campaign that I believe is equally, if not more, effective. Why? Because it pushes consumers to buy better versions of themselves. ‘The Pepsi Generation’ was revolutionary because it was the first time a brand decided to promote the type of user that purchased a product as opposed to the product itself. This is one of the most powerful aspects of this industry because not only should marketing strategies appeal to the lives of its target audience, it should also push consumers to buy products that are advertised to make them feel better or look better.

As mentioned earlier, marketing requires an abundance of data that aids companies in deciding what they should sell, how they should sell it, and to whom. However, when dealing with overwhelming amounts of data, challenges arise. According to Howard Belk, CEO and CCO of Siegel+Gale, one of the biggest marketing challenges that businesses face today is using data to create simple frameworks that people can understand and further use to drive change. Taking in all of the behavioral, transactional, and cultural data in order to create a brief that writers and designers can execute upon is a difficult end goal (“What are the”). For those that

are able to crack that code, suddenly the company knows exactly what customers care about, what they're doing, and when they buy the products. From data and analytics to customer experience and everything in between, challenges are prone to arise in this business. According to the trade journal I found that focused on at-risk marketing strategies, marketers have vast opportunities to set themselves apart from the competition, but equal challenges to overcome in order to do so (Gartner Report). Lack of team cohesiveness, constant change in direction, disconnect between sales and marketing departments, and unrealistic deadlines are among the other challenges that people in the marketing industry face on a daily basis.

However, when I sat down with Sara Mclean, Vice President of Marketing for Boyd Gaming, she made sure to emphasize how the benefits outweigh the challenges. Her favorite part about working in the marketing industry is the fact that no two days ever feel the same. That statement really stuck with me because many people choose not to pursue a business career in fear of landing a boring desk job that is painfully repetitive. After hearing those opinions, I started second-guessing my decision to pursue a business degree. However, while speaking with Mrs. Mclean, I became excited about my decision. Marketing is so diverse and allows individuals to channel their creative side and apply it to their work. Mrs. Mclean also added that this field of business exposes individuals to a variety of perspectives and ideas that collectively aid in solving problems through fun, engaging content.

As we continue to live through changes in the economy and advancements in technology, the way in which brands advertise their products will inevitably change. By 2023, consumers will watch 20 percent fewer minutes of video advertising per day than they do today. Brands will adapt by embracing short-form video ads (Gartner Reports). Companies will also

deal with these changes by seeking professionals who will aid in creating a smooth transition through these adjustments. These professionals will also offer new strategies in attracting, converting and retaining customers across multiple platforms. According to the American Marketing Association, hiring managers want to see a connection between an individual's day-to-day duties, the firm's bottom line, and a desire to keep up with the latest marketing trends and best practices (Domeyer). In-demand digital proficiency isn't enough. Soft skills - including written and verbal communication expertise, ease when collaborating with others, client relations experience and a positive attitude - are just as valuable. Overall employment of advertising, promotions, and marketing managers is projected to grow 8 percent from 2018 to 2028, faster than the average for all occupations ("Advertising"). This statistic speaks to the changing economy and the entrepreneurial spirit of the next decade.

As consumers, we experience the powerful impact that marketing has on our purchasing habits. It is made up of every process involved in moving a product or service from a retail store to a consumer's home. (Lake). It's not only the best product or service that wins, rather, it's the one with the best marketing. After all, the products that capture either our interest or our goals are the ones that we will most likely purchase. In the future, I hope that I will have a strong voice in creating appropriate and successful marketing campaigns that will appeal to an endless range of customers. Finally, if it wasn't for marketing, the economy would not be as prosperous. After all, without the promotion of new goods and services, consumers would have minimal, if any, desire to buy new products, and when consumers don't put money into the economy, it fails.

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