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Marketing and Public Relations

Dianne Downing-Nelson
dmdowning-nelson@dmacc.edu

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DMACC Marketing and Public Relations History

Dianne Downing-Nelson

In 1965, Iowa Gov. Harold Hughes proposed a group of public colleges whose mission would be to train people for jobs. From that first “enabling legislation” the die was cast for a group of post-secondary colleges set in 15 strategic areas around the state. In central Iowa, 11 counties within its district became Area XI.

Vocational/technical schools were new to the state. What were they? How could they help us? Could students get a good education? These were questions that needed to be answered and conveyed to the people in central Iowa. That was the job the marketing or PR person had to tackle. Fifty years ago there was one person, one phone, one desk and one typewriter. State legislation mandated that only vocational/technical classes could be advertised to the general public so as not to compete with Regent schools. A college course catalog was published, and in the first quarter in the spring of 1967, 28 students enrolled.

As the years went by, many things changed. Area XI became Des Moines Area Community College, legislation eased as it became more comprehensive in offerings, and technology evolved. The staff increased, budgets increased, enrollment increased. Each year the department used traditional tools to attract students, such as advertising in newspapers, on television and radio and on billboards; produced college catalogs and other collateral print material; actively sought media attention through press releases and established a community relations outreach program. A little more than a decade ago, the DMACC website was established, and since then it has had over one million viewers.

The Department has hosted presidents, first ladies, dignitaries from all over the world and even a clown. It has been instrumental in ground breakings, building dedications, and county fairs. Millions of news releases have been sent, news conferences held and a rapport with local media established.

The DMACC Marketing and Public Relations office has seen many changes in technology over the last 15 years. Improvements in technological communication have sped up the process of creating print media. One primary way the process has evolved is through email and digital print production.

During the early 2000s, the print industry was changing from traditional paste-up, which included printing out copies of designs in the marketing department and running the paper through a wax roller machine and literally pasting them to an art board. Then, those hard copies were sent to a commercial printer where they were photographed and converted into a printing plate where they could be used to reproduce and make copies on a commercial press. The department later owned its own film output device and saved time by sending film directly to the printer. As technology further developed, the industry demanded all print projects be sent electronically, and the marketing department converted all traditional paste-up projects into a digital format and used desktop publishing software to make print pieces.

The print industry has change dramatically in the last decade. Many time-saving improvements have created a fast turn-around for creating brochures and print pieces. Some of the time-saving improvements include the following:

- Communication via email, including use of PDFs,
- Files uploaded directly to the printer via FTP (File Transfer Protocol),
- Printer proofs sent via electronically or online sign-off,
- File-tracking improvements through software-tracking programs,
- Digital photography replaced developing film,
- Online stores became available for graphic file download,
- Royalty-free photography offered online for instant download and use,
- Typography and design online for purchase and inspiration,
- Tablet and phone improvements connected designers,
- Apps offered to design on tablets and other devices, and
- Cloud sharing improved file sharing and storage backup of projects.

The marketing department has stayed with Apple products since the early '80s. Some of the computers the department has owned have been the Apple IIICI and the Apple SE/30. Many Macs have come and gone, including the Apple Lampshade Mac, and PowerMac G3 and G4. In the early 2000s it was a major concern to have too many programs open at once, and it took a long time to open Photoshop files. Currently, processor speed has increased dramatically and computers are more reliable. Multi-processors have created a secure and reliable way to quickly create publications.

There have also been some unique undertakings. For the 10th year anniversary of DMAACC, Director Tom Clarkson rented a WW2 searchlight and purchased several very large helium balloons. During an evening event he let the balloons loose and turned on the search light, which caused an eerie glow in the night sky. The area residents called in claims of UFOs over Ankeny. Instead of finding UFOs, the press found the DMAACC celebration.

In another instance, Director Tom Nelson's marketing team joined the conservation class for the first annual "Duster Dunk." The notion was to take everything out of the Duster, set it on the lake, and sell raffle tickets to see when it fell through the ice. It dunked, but it happened on the weekend, so nobody knew exactly when it went in.

Through the years the department has been responsible for developing and implementing communication plans, as well as programs and projects that support DMAACC's mission. The Marketing Department has put a face on DMAACC, created its brand, and helped to make it one of the fastest growing two-year institutions in the U.S.

The past 10 years has been a very exciting and vibrant decade for the College, marked by a tremendous growth of enrollment, programs, facilities, faculty and new technology. DMAACC offers a wonderful educational experience for students. It's the job in Marketing and Public Relations to communicate DMAACC's many advantages to potential students and the communities it serves.

APPENDIX A

1967-1978 – Public Relations Office, Dorothy Gilliland, Director

Biggest Accomplishments –

- Promoted the new name Des Moines Area Community College
- Prepared first college catalog
- Coordinated dedication of two permanent buildings on Ankeny Campus in 1970
- Coordinated ground breaking for Urban Campus in 1972
- Coordinated first NCA visit in 1974 (received accreditation)

Biggest Challenges –

Staff: Director

1976-1981 – College Relations Office, Tom Clarkson, Director

- Created speakers bureau
- Planned 10 year anniversary party
- Purchased the first billboard

Biggest Challenges –

Staff: Director, News Service Coordinator, Photographer

1981 – 1987- College Relations Office, Tom Nelson, Director

Biggest Accomplishments--

- Created speakers' bureau
- Created new college logo
- Revised materials to reflect Des Moines Area Community College rather than Area 11
- Revised creative materials from quarter to semester; worked with ad agency to create new look
- Introduced the Macintosh Apple computer to the department
- Produced one-year catalog instead of two-year
- Coordinated Iowa State Fair Booth
- Created memorable tag line: "Putting Education and Training to Work"

Biggest Challenges – technology, moving from typewriters to computers

Staff: Director, News Service Coordinator, Designer/Typesetter/Photographer, Publicity Coordinator, Secretary

1987-1992 – Institutional Relations, Tom Clarkson, Vice President

Biggest Accomplishments –

- Passed 1st 201/4 levy
- Created a Sunday morning radio show hosted by Dianne Nelson and Mark Pogge "DMACC News and Views"
- Translated 45 program videos into Spanish and Russian for business incubator
- Planned and executed a week-long gala for the President of Yaminashi Prefecture
- Produced "Times 4" video series

Biggest Challenges –

Staff: Vice President, Director, Publications and Promotions; Designer; Photographer, Media Liaison; merged with Media Staff - Director, Producer, Writer, Gaffer, 2 secretaries

1992-1996 – Publications and Promotions, Dianne Downing-Nelson, Director

Biggest Accomplishments –

- Coordinated and promoted opening of the Newton Polytechnic Campus
- Coordinated and promoted opening of the Indianola Education Center
- Planned and executed 25th Anniversary celebration
- Promoted classes for new Newton campus
- Coordinated 1995 NCA visit--DMACC received 10 years accreditation
- Hosted the first Iowa Children's Water Festival
- Coordinated and promoted "Conversation on Health" with First Lady Hillary Clinton

Biggest Challenges – New technology and personal computers, coordinating on campus printing

Staff: Director, Publications and Promotions; 2 Designers; Photographer, Marketing Specialist, Secretary, On Campus Printer

1996 – 1998 - Marketing and Public Relations, Pam Reinig, Director

Biggest Accomplishments –

- Started "Advantage" magazine
- Established Food, Fun and Facts high school campus visit days which have evolved into Discover DMACC Days
- Coordinated all graduation ceremonies

Biggest Challenges –

Staff: Director, Coordinator, Special Projects and Promotions, two designers, secretary

1998 – 2005 - Marketing and Public Relations, Don Honnold, Director

Biggest Accomplishments –

- Continued growth
- Planned Inauguration of third president, David England,
- Promoted Skills 2000, where DMACC partnered with companies like John Deere to prepare people to enter their workforce
- Promoted all-campus expansion
- Planned and executed West Campus open house
- Coordinated statewide IACCT conference

Biggest Challenges--PR situation with the arrest of DMACC President David England

Staff: Director of Marketing, Associate Director of Marketing, 2 designers, Special Projects coordinator, Media Liaison, Secretary

2005-present - Marketing and Public Relations, Todd Jones, Director

Biggest Accomplishments –

- Assembled a team of full-and part-time professionals with nearly 300 years of combined marketing experience
- Launched a new brand – "Life's Calling"
- Helped launch new brands within DMACC including STEM, Center for Advanced Manufacturing, Center for Information Solutions, University College at DMACC
- Built greater collaborations with program chairs and campus organizations

- Planned and implemented an effective digital advertising program that includes helping to craft a new mobile app
- Planned and launched a comprehensive social media program that targets current and potential students, allied organizations and communities
- Created new internal, quality control processes to address the growing workload
- Created a greater presence among DMACC in the media
- Helped pass two voter-approved tax levies by the widest margins ever
- Mentored student interns to prepare them for a future career in marketing
- Expanded community relations program to include more than 125 sponsorships, event hosting, job fairs and other outreach events
- Collaborated with other universities and colleges for the betterment of Iowa students
- Promoted visual marketing through the creation of a new DMACC television program and hosting/posting more than 200 DMACC videos on YouTube
- Annually participated in more than 130 events, sponsorships, and activities in Central Iowa

Biggest challenges--

- Dramatic shift in the way we communicate with each other. Today's students live in a world of digital media; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and others. It's been a priority of the department to proactively pursue these new communication channels and monitor this flow of information about DMACC.
- Further improve the market penetration of DMACC throughout Central Iowa
- Leverage the unique and cultural differences of the campuses and learning centers while building a strong college-wide brand

APPENDIX B

Original name--Public Relations Office

Current Name---Marketing and Public Relations

Mission The mission of the DMACC's Marketing and Public Relations Office is to enhance the image of the college, promote public awareness of DMACC's resources, and inform prospective students of the many opportunities for success at DMACC.

The current Marketing and Public Relations office consists of the Director of Marketing, Associate Director of Marketing, Media Liaison, Web Master, Web Assistant, Designers, and Special Projects Coordinator. The office is responsible for maintaining a consistent editorial and graphic identity in all official DMACC publications and external communications, including but not limited to public relations, promotions advertising, signage, website, and other visual communications, media relations.

- Responsible for establishing and enforcing communication and media relation policies to ensure that all official DMACC publications, both print and online, and external communications project a consistent editorial and graphic identity that upholds the image of the college

- Responsible for the implementation college-wide marketing strategies that incorporate media relations, direct mail, and advertising.
- Responsible for producing or approving all official publications and advertising required by all divisions and departments.
- Work with vice presidents, provosts, deans, admissions, administrators, and department heads to facilitate marketing communications strategies and implementation for their specific areas, including publicity, media buying, and negotiations.
- Media Relations
- Responsible for maintaining DMACC's website
- Adult marketing

Created August 2015 in celebration of DMACC's 50th Anniversary.