

Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies

Background

Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies (SCS) offers several types of programs including professional degree programs, liberal studies programs, professional certificates, and graduate certificates that meet industry demands for today's working professionals.

These programs empower students to make an immediate impact in the workplace and excel within their industry. Georgetown has a strong reputation in the Washington, D.C. region, due to the top-tier quality of its educational offerings, student and alumni networks, and foundation in ethical leadership and values.

The 2020 Georgetown SCS brand media plan was developed to build awareness in the area surrounding Washington, D.C., especially among a young professional target audience.

While many are familiar with Georgetown's iconic main campus, the School of Continuing Studies is located in a modern downtown D.C. facility. This convenient location makes it highly accessible to the professionals in the city and surrounding areas, but it is not as widely known.

Additionally, SCS has adapted to market demand for more flexible learning by offering multiple format options: on-campus, online, and hybrid. Many other major universities have also pivoted to an online model, making it an increasingly competitive and crowded field. Additionally, at the time of the campaign in early 2020, the job market was strong. Graduate education tends to have slower growth when there is a strong job market, as people are able to find steady careers without additional education.

Objective

The campaign endeavored to communicate the alignment of the School of Continuing Studies with the larger university brand through an "ALL Georgetown" slogan.

One mission of the School is to provide a more accessible Georgetown education for students of all backgrounds, and this provided additional guidance to the creative. The campaign promoted the School as a whole, the flexibility of its program formats, and the convenience of its downtown location for students that prefer on-campus classes. Given the target audience of working professional millennials in D.C., it aimed to strike a tone that was modern, casual, and approachable. Through advertising, the campaign sought to keep SCS top-of-mind as an option for further education in order to build the enrollment funnel among key groups. This could be monitored as an increase of web traffic from qualified, converting audiences.



Strategy

The Brand campaign was developed to reach a young professional audience as they went about their workday. From metro and bus ads during their commute, to sleeves on their afternoon cup of coffee and even the coasters under their happy hour drinks, there were several potential physical touch-points.

The plan included placements to drive awareness with high impact, contextual creative, as well as several digital, audio, and social placements that reflected the key audience's media consumption habits. It also leveraged opportunities for digital and OOH to complement one another, such as mobile geofencing around locations where OOH was placed in Metro stations. The campaign ran from January through March, which aligns with the peak for information inquiries and applications for the subsequent Fall semester. The specific OOH units were selected based on key neighborhoods within the Washington, D.C. metro area that index higher for young professionals, increasing the efficiency for reaching the target audience.

The selected OOH placements were as follows:

Capital Bikeshare Poster Units

12 units were chosen throughout the city. Capital Bikeshare is a popular way for the Millennial target to get around town. These units not only provided visibility to those renting bikes but also to heavy pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Bus Ultra Super Kings

12 of these units were chosen because of their high impact and visibility. Two routes were chosen specifically for their paths through highly trafficked areas where the target audience would be likely to work or live.

Media Digital Metro Platform

100 digital screens were selected in busy WMATA metro stations due to their ability to reach commuters while they wait for trains. This placement was augmented by a mobile geofencing campaign around metro stations, which would reach users on their phones both during and after they were physically at the stations with the campaign.

Digital Transit Bus Shelters

10 units were purchased within a network that received a lot of exposure to commuters and pedestrians. It directly built frequency with the Ultra Super Kings.

Custom Coffee Sleeves and Coasters

200K coffee sleeves and 100K coasters were distributed to independent coffee shops and bars in key zip codes. The coffee sleeves put the campaign ads in the hands of professionals during the work day, with the bar coasters serving as a reminder in a relaxed setting after hours.

Plan Details

Market: Washington DC

Flight Dates: January 2020–March 2020

OOH Formats: Digital Transit Shelters, Custom Branded Coffee Sleeves and Coasters, Capital Bikeshare, Bus Ultra Super Kings

Target Audience: Adults 22-34

Results

There was a 36% uplift in website visitors YOY, which is notable because there was no brand campaign in the prior year. This indicates an increase in awareness due in part to the execution of this campaign. Additionally, several programs exceeded the prior year's application and enrollment numbers for the Fall semester. In the subsequent months after the campaign, there was a 27% overall increase in the number of admitted students and an 11% increase in students that accepted year-over-year. While several factors contributed to these positive results, this brand campaign provided a foundation for success in the D.C. area.

Additional Info

The SCS Marketing team promoted the campaign via social media. They posted on their owned social channels prompting followers to take photos of OOH ads and post them Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram tagged with #ALLGeorgetown. Participants were entered into a drawing to receive branded Georgetown prizes. This generated additional buzz around the campaign and extended the number of online organic impressions via user submitted entries. Additionally, Georgetown SCS was voted as a finalist by locals in Washington City Paper's "Best of D.C." publication for "Best Graduate Program".