



Creating a Marketing Plan for the WPI Project Engagement Portal

Caroline McLaughlin (MIS & PW)

Advisors: Professor Kevin Lewis (PW), Professor Jim Ryan (MIS)

Introduction

It is one challenge to create a product, but another challenge to convince people to use it. Marketers address this challenge by organizing promotional strategies and relevant supporting context into a formal business document known as a **marketing plan**.

The **WPI Project Engagement Portal (PEP)** exemplifies the need for a marketing plan. The portal allows students to post their project (IQP, MQP, GPS, HUA) and class-related surveys and respond to their peers' surveys. Without an active user base, the WPI PEP would be impractical and unviable. A marketing plan would serve as a roadmap for persuading the student body to utilize the portal.

For this project, I determined marketing plan best practices through a **literature review of marketing plan research** and an **analysis of four sample marketing plans**. I applied these best practices as well as findings from a **survey about WPI students' advertising and engagement preferences** to create a marketing plan for the WPI PEP.

Literature Review



Purpose: Serves as a road map, aligns business functions, relevant to target audiences (employees, stakeholders, management)



Components: Executive summary, situation analysis, goals and objectives, marketing tactics, financial projections, implementation controls



Modern Trends: Digitalization (social media and AI), globalization, sustainability, agility

Gaps in Literature



Implementing rhetorical strategies



Developing marketing plans for free offerings

Marketing Plan Analysis

Target Audience Analysis

- Defines the typical geographic, demographic, psychological, and behavioral traits of each audience
- Fictional "personas" specify consumer preferences by combining target audience traits with individuality
- Reliance on a single target audience reduces versatility

Competitive Landscape Evaluation

- Provides an overview of the industry: growth rate/forecast, main competitors, recent developments
- Offers positioning and differentiation strategies

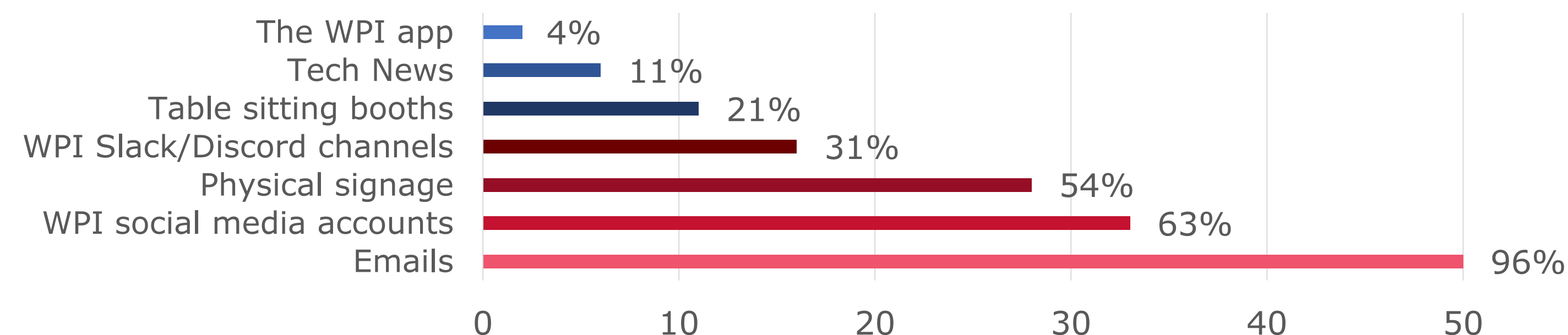
Marketing Mix Strategy

- Each strategy aligns with a specific goal/objective
- Clearly outlines the relevant communication channels, promotional messaging, and key performance indicators
- The marketing mix strategy has a unique organizational structure depending on the company

Key Survey Results

My survey about community engagement preferences received **52** total responses from WPI students (38 undergraduates and 14 graduates).

Where student respondents find out about WPI news and events:



Effectiveness of different participation incentives (rated out of 6):

Incentive to Attend a WPI Event	Average Rating	Incentive to Respond to a Survey	Average Rating
Recommendation from a friend	4.69	Helping a close friend	5.10
Free snacks	4.50	Helping a professor or faculty member	4.37
Recommendation from a professor or faculty member	4.08	Gift card raffle	3.87
Free raffle	3.35	No incentive	2.90

Conclusions & Final Marketing Plan

Marketing plan best practices include organizing the plan with relevant and detailed sections/components, incorporating modern trends, integrating rhetorical strategies, and using an accessible yet visually interesting format. For **cost-free offerings** such as the WPI PEP, marketing planners should prioritize fostering long-term engagement and offering incentives to users. I used these best practices to develop a marketing plan for the WPI PEP.

WPI PEP Marketing Goals & Strategies



Goal 1: Get students to post their surveys to the WPI PEP

- User-generated testimonials
- Student ambassador program



Goal 2: Get students to respond to surveys on the WPI PEP

- Monthly gift card raffles
- Advertising campaign



Goal 3: Enable professors to advocate for the WPI PEP

- Informational seminars
- Partnerships with professors of research-centric courses



Scan the QR code to read the full WPI PEP Marketing Plan