

Marketing and Communications Focus Group

Summary

Focus group facilitators met with nine separate groups of students ranging from first to final years to obtain feedback regarding their experience with marketing and communication at Thompson Rivers University (TRU) in February and April of 2018. The goal was to explore first, middle and final years domestic and international students' communications and marketing experiences and preferences at TRU.

Following the face-to-face focus group sessions, the audio recorded comments were transcribed ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. Comments and suggestions were thematically arranged. Students articulated that they like reminders, streamlined information, concise messaging, use of giveaways and appealing words or images, and prefer connection to the content. As far as social media preferences, students prefer Instagram followed by Facebook, then Snapchat using filters and lastly Twitter. Posters, flyers and TVs were not preferred while videos and emails were. Tabling needs to be planned with quick engagement activities, food, giveaways and engaging people. Students suggested a centralized events place either in the TRUGo App or MyTRU not the website.

Highlighted Student Comments:

- *Reminders are the main thing that we need for any event.*
- *If there were emails of events and descriptions that are concise with links that I can go look at for more information.*
- *Again, coming back to someone that I know. There were seriously TRU videos that came out, and I look first at the ones that had people I knew in the videos.*
- *I think Instagram is better if you want more people to see it because Facebook has a lot of content and people might skip through it.*
- *Posters just blend, because there's so many. There's like 50 on there at one time, and they just overlap.*
- *Everybody checks their emails these days, and everybody also checks their Facebook and Instagram.*
- *Almost every TRU student logs into mytru, so creating another segment in mytru that shows events. They can click on it and know about the events coming.*
- *The TRU Go app is really a nice thing, but it should have an event page.*
- *If I'm sitting in Old Main with my friends, there's a possibility I'm looking at the TV slides and what's going on over there, but I'm probably looking at my phone instead, that's the place I get my information.*
- *Seeing parts of campus through the videos makes the students more comfortable in going to the places themselves than if they had never seen them before.*

TRU can strategically use this information to inform students where to find different types of information. For example, all formal communication could be emailed. Events could be centralized on the app or in myTRU with pages set up on Facebook and promotions on

Instagram. Instagram and Snapchat can be used for livestreaming during events. The placement of bulletin boards and TVs needs to be strategically planned: Where are students waiting? Where might they be looking- up or around? Are they looking around in hallways? Training should be provided for people doing tabling with planning regarding purpose, quick appealing activity and training in icebreaking skills. Use less posters and flyers and more videos in marketing. The videos should include students as students share and connect with peers.