

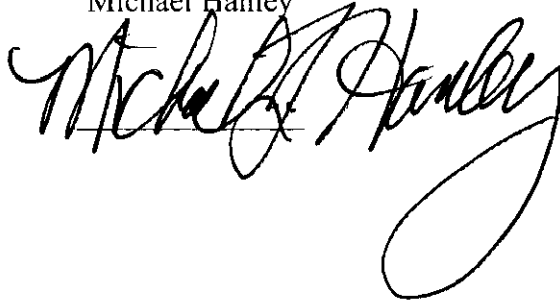
**Guidelines for putting together a student advertising campaign**

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

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Thesis Advisor  
Michael Hanley

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Hanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

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## **Abstract**

Each year, the Ball State University chapter of the American Advertising Federation (AAF) competes in the National Student Advertising Competition (NSAC). In this competition, college chapters across the nation learn how to effectively put together an advertising campaign, from how to conduct the research required, to how to make the creative executions, to where to place the advertisements in order to be most effective in reaching the target consumers.

In this project, I have put together a guidebook for the leaders of our future AAF chapters on how to successfully create a campaign for the NSAC. This guidebook will help to guide them through the various stages of the campaign as well as provide insights into what has worked in the past. I arrived at this set of best practices through my direct observations and experience while competing in the NSAC over the past three years.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Michael Hanley for advising me on this project and providing me with feedback along the way.

I would also like to thank Chris Campbell and Katie Banfield for the countless hours spent with me over the past three years, putting together winning campaigns and learning what works through trial and error.

## **Creative Project Author's Analysis**

The purpose of this project is to create a guidebook for the leadership group of the Ball State chapter of the American Advertising Federation (AAF). This student chapter's function is to allow students to gain experience in the field of advertising outside of the classroom. The bulk of this experience is gained through participation in the National Student Advertising Competition (NSAC). My guidebook outlines the most effective ways to put together this campaign.

### **About the organization**

There are currently 210 student chapters of AAF. These chapters can be found in many of the colleges and universities throughout the country that offer advertising programs of study. Emphasis in many (155) of these student chapters is placed on putting together an effective campaign for the NSAC. This competition is seen as a great learning experience for students because it allows them to participate in everything required to create a successful advertising campaign. Other things that these chapters may be active in are establishing professional contacts and relationships, touring advertising agencies, group-building activities and fundraising in order to cover the many costs of participating in the National Student Advertising Competition.

All of the 210 college chapters of AAF are given the opportunity to participate in the NSAC. If they choose to complete, each chapter is then given the same case study from which to build an advertising campaign. This campaign will include a brief background of the client, the challenges that this campaign aims to solve for the client

and any requirements and restrictions the client has given as to how the campaign is to be put together.

In order to be successful in this campaign, each student chapter must first conduct a large amount of research on the client, the target markets that they hope to reach with the client's message and any competition also trying to gain the attention of the targeted consumers. The first step is to gather stacks upon stacks of secondary research and carefully read through all of it in order to glean everything possible from studies that have already been conducted. The more secondary research that is collected, the fewer holes that must be filled through research that the student chapter must collect itself. Once nothing more can be gained from secondary research, the chapter can determine which types of primary research are necessary to create a successful campaign. Chapters try to get as much of the necessary information from secondary research as possible because it is much less time-consuming and expensive to collect. Popular forms of primary research used include focus groups, in-depth interviews and surveys. These methods are used to gather both quantitative and qualitative research.

Once the research portion of the campaign is completed, the focus moves to developing a creative "big idea," the lynchpin around which all of creative executions revolve. The unifying big idea is what takes a series of advertisements and creates from them a campaign theme that the consumer can both identify and respond to. This creative idea should stem directly from what the research found to be most important and interesting to the target consumer in order to be effective in selling the product, not simply entertaining the audience members. Along with this, it is important for the

creative to be unique and memorable so as not to be lost in the clutter of all of the other advertisements vying for the target market's attention.

After the creative big idea is developed, the next logical step is to place the creative executions in places where they can be seen by the targeted consumers.

Effective media placement should be researched so that you can make sure to place your ads in vehicles where the target will see them. For example, putting an ad for a product aimed at teenagers in the AARP magazine would not be the most efficient use of your advertising dollars. In today's advertising heavy culture, alternative media executions are also important. These executions put ads in places where the target is not expecting to see them, causing them to become more memorable to consumers.

Tying all of the pieces of the campaign together are integrated marketing executions. These include things like direct marketing, promotions and public relations. Integrated executions reach your target market through means other than traditional advertising. Many also aim to involve consumers with the brand. An example of this can be seen by convincing consumers to register for a sweepstakes your brand offers. The hope is that this sweepstakes will allow the brand to become top-of-mind for the consumer the next time she is looking to make a purchase in your product category.

For the competition, all of these aspects of the campaign come together in a 32-page plans book. The purpose of this book is to highlight everything done by the student chapter to create a successful campaign. This includes everything that I have already discussed, as well as how the budget set by the client will be allocated and how the effectiveness of the campaign will be measured. These plans books must be mailed to the

district and national headquarters for judging by April 1, the score for which comprises half of the overall score for the NSAC.

The other half of the score comes from a planned and scripted presentation given at the district competition. In this presentation, five members from the student chapter have exactly 20 minutes to cover the aspects of the campaign that will be the most interesting and relevant to the judges. This is followed by a 10-minute question and answer session between the judges and the presentation team. These answers, along with the scripted portion, are judged to form the presentation score.

### **Our student chapter**

Ball State competes in the sixth district of AAF, out of the 15 districts across the nation. The sixth district is made up of the colleges and universities from Indiana, Illinois and Michigan that have student chapters. The winner of this district competition then proceeds to the national competition. At the national finals, all of the district winners compete against one another and one is crowned the winner of the NSAC.

Last year, Ball State's AAF chapter won the sixth district competition and went on to place 12<sup>th</sup> in the nation. After this happened last June, many things changed in our student chapter. Our long-time advisor decided that it was time to step down, putting a new advisor in his place. Along with this, we took the time to complete the paperwork to become an officially recognized Ball State student organization for the first time in around 20 years. This caused many of the aspects of the organization, such as the structure, to become formalized. This formalization was a definite departure for the group as the organization's structure in the past was rather loose and informal. This

structural change in turn caused many things to change in the manner in which the organization was run.

## **My Project**

All of this change and evolution led me to select how our organization is most effectively run to compete in the NSAC as my senior honors project. I have spent the past three years with our AAF chapter at the center of my collegiate experience. I have spent these three years working on the campaign at least three evenings a week and most weekends throughout the school year. All of this time spent has allowed me to gain much experience learning what it takes to put together a successful campaign for the NSAC. Along with this, my experience of being one of the members on the presentation team that competed in the NSAC last year allowed me to learn what a successful campaign presentation requires.

Through my three years with the organization, I have also witnessed and participated in three different leadership styles of running the chapter. As we are a student chapter, the leadership turns over every year as the seniors graduate and new students take their places. These turnovers in leadership have allowed me to see many approaches to running this student chapter: those aspects that worked and those that did not.

## **Methodology**

The conclusions found in the guidebook were arrived at through the methods of observation and personal experience. I spent the past school year carefully paying attention to everything that went on within the organization and how our members responded to everything that occurred. I made notes about what got our membership

most excited, what they showed no interest in, and what angered them. I kept track of the process of our putting together the campaign in a brief journal, which is included in the appendix to this work. This journal consists of brief descriptions of what we did each week. I put this together both to track how long it took to complete specific aspects of the campaign and to jar my memory of what things our leadership group attempted that worked and what things we had to change mid-stream to get a positive response from the membership.

I then combined these observations of what worked and what did not over this past year with my observations from my previous years of involvement with the student chapter. For example, two years ago there was a very strong president who dictated nearly everything that occurred in the organization and how it was to be done. As a sort of compensation for this, last year there was a president who led by example and delegated all of the individual parts of the campaign. I thought back to specific scenarios and incidents that occurred those years and considered whether these leadership methods were effective in dealing with these incidents.

Finally, I informally spent much time talking with other student members in the organization around me: what they liked, what they didn't, what they would do differently if they had the opportunity to do so. I did this to make sure that I wasn't missing any important perspectives by being too caught up in my own opinions and ways of doing things. This was necessary because I was very involved in the campaign and I wanted to make sure that I was not blind to the mistakes that I might be making as a leader.

I took all of these observations and experiences of the past three years in the student organization to draw conclusions that I used to form a set of best practices guidelines. I did this by sitting down and writing down every aspect of the campaign that the student leaders have to plan and control. I then looked back to my observations and notes and wrote brief explanations of why these methods have been successful in the past and guidelines of how to be similarly in the future.

After my guidelines were decided, I put my recommendations together in a format that would be most readable and useful for college students: that of a short and concise handbook. Student leaders of our AAF student chapter have neither the desire nor time to wade through a research paper to find the nuggets that might be useful to them during their time as a leader of AAF. To accommodate the needs of these student leaders, I shortened my suggestions to include just the highlights and put them in the logical order in which the leadership group will deal with these particular issues. The handbook starts with how to put the NSAC leadership group together and take on the particular responsibilities and finishes with how the presentation, given near the end of April, should be put together.

My hope for this project is that it will be used by next year's leadership group as a reference for whenever they get lost and want to know what worked in the past in similar situations. I also hope that it does not stay stagnant in this form, but through the leadership group, it will become a living document that is edited and added to by each year's leaders. I believe that this is important because things change and evolve in both the advertising industry and AAF and I want my project to stay relevant and remain a resource for student leaders for years to come.

## **Appendix**

**Journal of the 2004-2005 Ball State AAF Chapter**

## Week One (August 23, 2004)

The first week of the semester also signifies the first meeting of the leadership group for this year's chapter of AAF. It's a social "how was your summer" sort of thing, but also is a sounding board for how the year is going to be laid out. Several things are decided at this meeting, the important things being:

- which areas of concentration the returning "senior leaders" are going to hold
- how we should deal with the issue of officers as we didn't hold elections the year before
- where to place people who aren't necessarily born leaders but who might feel hurt or left out if they don't have a title
- the issue of a vice president as our constitution says we must have one, something that the organization hasn't had until this moment
- an upcoming trip to Minneapolis over fall break in order to get to know each other better and visit advertising agencies

We also decided to break tradition and not break into individual groups this year as over the last few years, when this was done, not many people wanted to do the research necessary to put the campaign together and everyone just wanted to make the ads. We figured that if we did this and placed the importance on the planning, we might teach the new members that there's more to advertising than simply putting together ads.

Overall, we were pumped and ready to make a brand new start with Yahoo!

## Week Two (August 30, 2004)

This week we participated in a freshman call-out meeting for journalism student organizations and programs of study. It was very hot and took too long to hold the interest of most of the students, who by the end, looked bored and just wanted it to be over. On the plus side, our informational video seemed to entertain quite a few people by being upbeat and featuring a fun musical soundtrack (we are advertising majors, after all). The biggest plus was that we got word out about our call out meeting the next week.

## Week Three (September 6, 2004)

This week was the big call-out meeting for everyone who wanted to be in AAF this year, or wanted more information for those who didn't know what it is exactly that we do. We showed the video that we made for the freshman meeting the week before and talked about what we do throughout the course of the year. We talked a little about the Yahoo! Campaign itself, the case study for which we got from nationals the day before. We also talked about all of the different sections that someone can be involved with: marketing, media, creative and promotions. We answered any questions that people had, fed them all pizza and sent them on their way, telling them that our first official meeting would be the next week.

## Week Four (September 13, 2004)

This week we met with our advisor to go over what needed to be done this year. We talked about the steps that needed to be done to make us an "official" Ball State student organization, including voting on our constitution and officers. We also discussed the possibility of having committees for things other than the competition, such as for professional development and fundraising. We decided which of us would run uncontested for president, vice president and treasurer, so that we could take care of this quickly and move on. We finally talked about what would happen at the meeting the next day.

We started the first official AAF meeting by voting on officers by hand raising so we could move on to business. We told about how we were going to run things a little bit differently this year as opposed to years in the past: that we would focus only on marketing until fall break, which would be worked into the big meeting. After fall break, we will start working on other aspects of the campaign as well.

The main concentration of this meeting, however, was getting as much information about our members as we could. We had them each fill out information sheets about themselves so we could learn their email addresses, which days of the week would be best to meet and which areas they were most interested in.

Afterward, we considered it a success, even though we crammed about sixty people in our tiny room. We agreed that we needed to try to find a way to get a larger room in which to meet.

#### Week Five (September 20, 2004)

We met as a leadership group to plan the meeting the next day. We decided to have a standing leadership meeting on Tuesday nights to catch up on what was going on in all facets of the campaign and the organization and to plan on what would happen in the future.

We decided on our agenda for the next meeting and divided the nine sections of the campaign among us to research with the AAF members. We also planned fundraisers as well as social events to get people involved.

At the meeting we explained all of our upcoming events. We then broke into groups (I had Yahoo! Search) and explained to the people in our groups what the product was and told them how to best research it.

#### Week Six (September 27, 2004)

At our officer meeting, we caught up on all of our fundraising events and saw how they were going. We also decided that our first small group meeting would be during the week of October 27.

At our meeting, which was cut short due to a PIR that night, we had people sign up to work Colts games as a fundraiser, voted on colors for Muncie! shirts that we're going to sell as a fundraiser and encouraged people to continue their research on the various aspects of Yahoo! to go over during the next meeting. We also told people that if they wanted to go to Minneapolis with us over fall break, a \$20 deposit would be due by October 5.

The next night, we had a party at Chris's house, where we hung out, got to know each other a little bit better and watched Mean Girls (a popular movie among members of our target) on the side of his house.

#### Week Seven (October 4, 2004)

At our officer meeting, we discussed the progress with the Muncie! shirts, which we are going to begin selling next week. We got the scramble light to sell them at, which will help us get exposure throughout campus. We also talked about meeting once more as our section groups to provide continuity to our members before starting the next week on the situation analysis part of marketing.

At the meeting, we discussed Muncie! shirts and had people sign up to sell them at the scramble light. We also caught people up on other AAF chapter business before breaking up in section groups for 15 minutes to discuss our findings and any problems or opportunities they might provide our campaign. We then reconvened as a group to share our findings and let everyone get a basic idea where we were coming from. We made sure to make the non-leadership members of the group speak in order to get more people involved.

#### Week Eight (October 11, 2004)

This week we began our Muncie! shirt fundraiser and camped out at the scramble light on Monday and Tuesday in order to sell them. Due to bad weather, we have just sold enough to break even, so we are now looking for other opportunities to sell them, such as parent's weekend, so that we are able to turn a profit.

Finding more opportunities to sell these shirts was the main topic of conversation at the officer meeting. We also discussed putting surveys together and how to go about researching with the marketing group and break up the situation analysis.

At the big meeting we once again asked people to sign up to work Colts games. We discussed the progress of the Muncie! shirt fundraiser and encouraged our members to sell more whenever and wherever possible. We then reminded our members that we will begin breaking into small groups the week of October 27.

Those people not interested in marketing research left, and we divided the others into three groups to do research for the situation analysis: history, political/legal and trends. These groups will report back next week to share what they have found.

#### Week Nine (October 18, 2004)

This weekend a group of us went to Minneapolis as a road trip/group bonding event. We visited advertising agencies, an advertising grad school and generally bonded and got to know one another as people. I think that this bonding will lead to some stronger teamwork as the year progresses.

We then got together as officers to discuss a problem with the marketing group. We now have an opposite problem to previous years: the group is just too big now and is not very productive. We've decided that the problem is that it's attached to the tail-end of the big group meeting and everyone thinks that, about five minutes after Chris is

finished speaking, we should be able to leave. This means that people are restless and aren't willing to put the necessary work into the marketing group. We decided to rectify this situation by moving the big meeting to Thursday nights before we break off into media, creative and pr/promotions. This way, marketing, the most important section this semester, can be free-standing and can get everything that needs to happen done.

We made this announcement at the meeting, where we also talked about how all of journalism student organizations are fundraising for the United Way and discussed the possibility of throwing a Halloween party in order to raise money for that. We also reiterated about the training for the Colts games and how people over 21 need to get their liquor licenses.

During the marketing section of the meeting, we went over the necessity of collecting as many surveys of members of our target market. Our research is what gave us the advantage necessary to win districts last year, and we believe it will be the same this year. We also discussed what we were asked to research for this meeting and talked about researching competitors for next week.

#### Week Ten (October 25, 2004)

This was the first week that we broke off into separate groups. Marketing (all by itself) was on Wednesday. We ended up with a group of fifteen or so who were committed to research, which is what we wanted. We assigned everyone different subjects to go more in depth with about our competitors, both primary (AOL and MSN) and secondary (Google and iTunes). We also asked everyone to bring a "trend" to discuss at the next meeting.

The next day we had the big group meeting for about five minutes just to make sure that everyone was on the same page in regard to fundraisers, etc. We then showed as video of the national winning campaign two years ago. We did this to make sure everyone was aware of what our end goal is. After this, we broke into groups to assign research for other parts of the situation analysis: the media group for the media spending information of the competitors, the creative and promotions to look into this information about the competitors. We left, hoping that everyone comes through with their research.

#### Week Eleven (November 1, 2004)

During our planning meeting, we hammered out several fundraising activities, such as working our first Colts game, selling Abbey candles and selling some more Muncie! Shirts. We also worked to put our survey online through the InQsit system so that it's easier for us to tally.

In the marketing meeting, we went over the information they had collected about our competitors. We then thought of qualitative questions to ask the target, both through the journals and through in-depth interviews. We also assigned various aspects of the target to research for next week.

Most of the big meeting was taken up from Anne Condran from AdFed telling about why students should join and why people should help work the auction this upcoming weekend. Once she left, the creatives were given several design assignments: design a cover for the journal we will begin passing out to members of the target market over Thanksgiving, design flyers to post up around campus in order to sell more Muncie! Shirts and to design agency names and logos. The promotions group was given the

assignment to look up promotions aimed at teens and the media group was to look up spending by competitors.

#### Week Twelve (November 8, 2004)

At our planning meeting, we discussed how successful our first Colts game went, with our organization making around \$900. We then decided not to meet next week as all of the officers have their campaigns books due the next week and don't want to give three days to AAF meetings, as per usual.

During the marketing meeting on Wednesday, we went over target market research and thought of questions during indepth interviews. For next week, the members of the marketing team will continue to collect surveys, look for current positioning of Yahoo! and its competitors and start conducting indepth interviews with member of the target market.

The creative/promotions/media meeting was quick due to the lack of research brought by members of the group. We simply went over current fundraisers, the little research that was brought, and called it a night.

#### Week Thirteen (November 15, 2004)

There were no meetings this week due to the campaigns projects of the officers.

#### Week Fourteen (November 22, 2004)

There were no meetings this week due to Thanksgiving.

#### Week Fifteen (November 29, 004)

The research group discussed all of the research gathered thus far, and figured out where the holes still were. They also decided on a date for a focus group with the teen market. Their last assignment for the semester is to fill in the holes.

The creative group discussed good ads aimed at teens and agency names. The agency name will be decided this next week so people have winter break to work on logos. Promotions was told to look for promotions aimed at teens by Yahoo! and their competitors. Everyone in the media group was assigned a particular medium to research and decide why or why not it is applicable for this campaign.

#### Week Sixteen (December 6, 2004)

The main thing that was done during the marketing meeting was passing out the consumer research journals to be completed by members of the target over research break. The homework for over the break was to try to find ads, especially technology ads, aimed at teens.

The main group meeting began with one of the campaigns groups presenting their idea to the organization in order to show what we're aiming for in a few months. We then tried to decide on an agency name, to no avail. We finally discussed all research brought to us before wishing everyone a wonderful semester break.

#### Week Seventeen (January 10, 2005)

This week we started to wrap up our research and collected everything that the members had collected over break, whether it be through the consumer research journals, indepth interviews, focus groups or surveys.

#### Week Eighteen (January 17, 2005)

This week we held a war room of about ten individuals where we locked ourselves in a room with the research for about eight hours. As a result of this, we came up with a “big idea” for our campaign and a jumping-off point for our creative ideas: “because you can’t do this in real life.”

Leading up to this big idea, we also held a focus group with the target market this week. We talked to them in their own environment (in this case, while bowling and playing pool) and gained many consumer insights that helped us come up with a way to reach them with our advertising.

We also finished up collecting our research this week and wrote a rough draft of the situation analysis for the case report.

#### Week Nineteen (January 24, 2005)

This week we met for a last time as a marketing group and discussed what was accomplished and what insights we had gained. We also held try-outs for presenters and finalized the presentation team for when we head to district competition in April.

#### Week Twenty (January 31, 2005)

This week, the officers all met and figured out the schedule of when to have things completed for the book so that everything could be finished and steps would be finished in a timely fashion.

#### Week Twenty-One (February 7, 2005)

This week we broke off into separate IMC and media groups in order to finalize those parts of our campaign. We also began our Sunday afternoon work meetings this week, in which we firmed up our creative ideas into actual ad concepts.

We also sold Muncie! Shirts again this week as an additional fundraiser.

#### Week Twenty-Two (February 14, 2005)

This week, we hammered out a rough creative strategize and finalized our concepts for our ads. In IMC, we brainstormed various promotions and in our media group we brainstormed alternative ideas.

#### Week Twenty-Three (February 21, 2005)

This week, we finalized our promotions in the IMC group, wrote the goals, objectives and rationales for the media group and conducted concept testing in creative. Our concept testing reinforced our big idea, so we continued along with what we had already planned to do.

#### Week Twenty-Four (February 28, 2005)

The final version of the situation analysis was completed this week. The IMC tactics and rationales were also completed and ready for editing. We also decided all of

the props that would be needed for our commercials so that we could assemble them over Spring Break.

#### Week Twenty-Five (March 7, 2005)

During this week, those of us who didn't leave Muncie for Spring Break got together in order to assemble and build all of the props necessary for our commercials. Along with this, we worked on many aspects of the book, trying to get the final drafts put together.

#### Week Twenty-Six (March 14, 2005)

This week both the situation analysis and the IMC sections of the case study were finalized. Once they were finished, we put together the layout for the plans book and started inserting the text for these pages into it. With this finished, we were able to calculate how many pages we would have left for the creative and media sections of the campaign.

This weekend we also filmed all of our commercials. While they were time-consuming, they turned out very well. It was exciting to see all of our ideas come into existence, many times turning out much better than I imagined that they would be.

#### Week Twenty-Seven (March 21, 2005)

Crunch time has begun! Five of us begin pulling at least nine hours a day in the labs trying to put together the final campaign project. During this week, we created all of our creative executions, including television spots, print advertisements and all alternative media executions. It's more difficult this year because we must cite the sources of all of the Getty images.

The cover of the book is designed, and as elements of the campaign are completed, they are plugged into the book. Remaining, previously unassigned, sections of the plans book, such as recommendations and evaluation techniques are written and put into the book.

On Thursday, we realize that the media director has dropped the ball on the media portion of the campaign. He hasn't done large portions of what he was supposed to do and what he has done is done correctly. Therefore, the planning director and IMC director spend all day on Friday redoing the entirety of the media plan in order to make it worthy of the rest of the campaign.

Saturday is spent finalizing and getting everything into the plans book. The creative strategy is rewritten as it is missing several important chunks of information and is re-inserted into the book. All of the charts and graphs throughout the plans books are finalized and inserted as well.

We finally have a draft of the book that includes every aspect of the campaign, and Sunday is spent carefully editing every page and changing these edits in the book.

#### Week Twenty-Eight (March 28, 2005)

And the end is here! On Monday, we meet with our advisor one last time to finalize any other suggestions to the plan and spend several hours finalizing everything and making final edits. Finally, a little after one in the morning, our campaign is finished.

Tuesday at 7 a.m. the plans book is taken to Kinkos to have 25 copies printed. Once they are completed (around 5 p.m.), every copy to be mailed out is looked through in order to catch any printing errors that might have occurred. Finally, that evening, they are sent overnight to the various judges. Eight months after we began, we have something to show for all of our work, and it is something worth being proud of.

# **A Guide to Creating a Successful Campaign for the AAF National Student Advertising Competition**

Written by Christy Wirt  
April 20, 2005

# And they're off...

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## Introduction

So, you think you have what it takes to run the Ball State Chapter of the American Advertising Federation this year? Sure, you felt the thrill of competing in Detroit last year, but now you have the sinking suspicion that there may have been more going on behind the scenes to get the team to Detroit than you realized at the time.

Chin up. If you've got the will and determination to create yet another district-winning campaign for the National Student Advertising Competition, you'll be fine. What I'm going to do over these next few pages is show you what, based on my observations over my past three years in the organization, I have learned goes into creating a successful AAF campaign. Ultimately your personality decides what leadership style is right for you. Despite this, if you are ever at a loss as to how to handle situations you face in putting together the campaign, here are some guidelines that have worked in the past. Just think of this as a road map for every part of the campaign that you will have to put together over the next several months and the stops along the way are the ones I have seen result in success in the past. Good luck!

# Lead Me On

## The Leadership

The leadership team necessary to put together the campaign has five roles that must be filled. One of these is the president, who is in charge of the organization and planning for it, as well as serving as the figurehead on the leadership board for the journalism student organizations as well as the Advertising Federation of East Central Indiana. Another role is that of the marketing director, who is in charge of the research and strategic planning for the campaign. Next comes the creative director, who is responsible for orchestrating the creative ideas and executions. The media director's responsibilities include media planning and budgeting, while the director of integrated marketing communications is responsible for the public relations, promotional and direct marketing components of the campaign. These are the positions necessary to complete the campaign, however other positions that could be assigned within the organization include the secretary/treasurer, social chair, fundraising chair, community relations chair and any other position that is deemed necessary to the leaders of the organization.

From this point on, any reference to the leadership of the organization refers to these five positions as well as any other natural leaders of the chapter, whether or not they have titles assigned to them.

When it comes to choosing the leadership, it is often important to keep in mind that these are ideally good

organizational people, not necessarily the idea people. This is especially important to keep in mind when choosing the creative director. You want to find someone who is good at keeping the creative ideas focused on the strategy and everyone on schedule, not the wacky guy who comes up with the great creative ideas.

Once the leadership is chosen, it is important to encourage the leaders to attend all of the meetings, not just the ones for their department. Knowing what is going on in all other functional areas is important in keeping every component of the campaign on strategy and as a logical part of a cohesive whole.

It is also helpful, when possible, to allow the president the freedom from having to lead another department as well as the organization as a whole. This will allow the president to focus on the administrative duties of the position without having to worry about wearing another hat as well.

This advice of only one position per person applies to everyone else as well. You would be surprised at how much time and work goes into each of the leadership positions within the campaign, and taking on more than one role will lead to unnecessary stress.

Titles are all well and good – they make people feel important and like they have a specific purpose. However, in this organization, titles don't mean much of anything. All

# Lead Me On

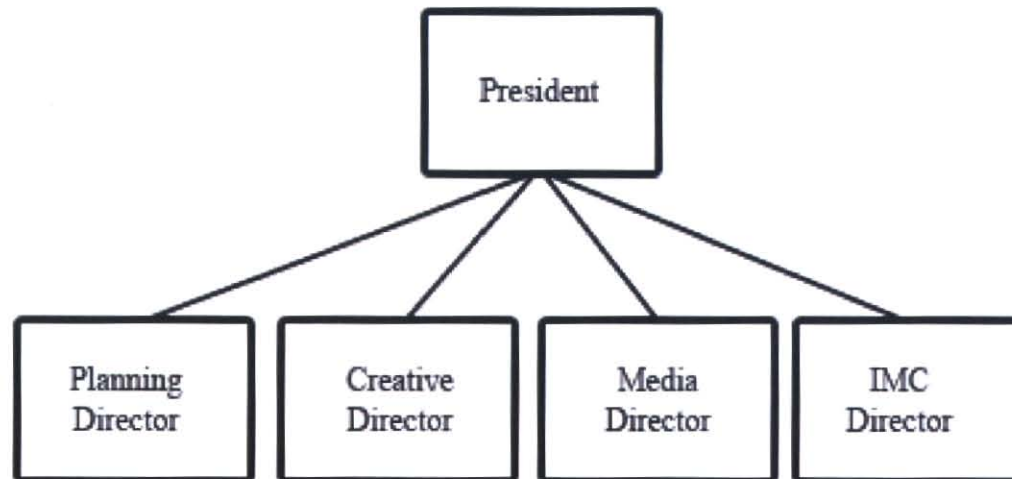
of our members, those with titles and those without, are ultimately volunteers. They are putting in long hours for this organization simply because they love what they are doing. Because of this, don't put too much stock in the titles of the people who hold them. Natural leaders will emerge, whether or not they hold a title. This stepping up should be encouraged because it ultimately makes the organization much stronger.

The leadership group should make a point of meeting regularly with one another, no matter how hectic everything else gets. This will allow time to plan schedules and

timelines, have the time to check how all of the aspects of the campaign are coming along and ask for help and input when needed. These meetings should be set up at the same time each week so that everyone is able to schedule around them accordingly.

Finally, delegation is not a dirty word. Distributing tasks not only will make life much easier for you as leaders, but will also help to prepare next year's leadership group. They won't know what to do in different situations if you don't allow them to help you when faced with those situations.

The functional areas necessary to put together the campaign:



# The Adult Factor

## The Advisor

As a student organization, there is a unique give-and-take relationship with the faculty advisor. Unlike in a “real” company, the advisor is not the CEO with all of the power for the ultimate decisions. Rather, all of the major decisions about the campaign are to be made by the students, such as how to put the campaign together around the “big idea” or which media vehicles in which to advertise. The advisor’s role is more of that of an outside consultant. In terms of the campaign, the advisor’s role is to give expert advice based on what he or she has learned in the real world of advertising. Ultimately, however, this is a student organization, so it is the leadership team’s decision whether to go along with the recommendations given to them by the faculty advisor.

Along with consulting, it is also the advisor’s role to take care of all of the administrative paperwork for the

organization with the outside world including, but not limited to, making sure that the chapter is registered and in good standing with the national headquarters, passing along information sent to the chapter to the appropriate leaders, i.e. information about training dates necessary to work at the Colts games, and serving as the chapter’s contact person with the national and district headquarters.

The chapter leadership should meet with the advisor at least every other week throughout the school year and more frequently than this as the book nears being due. These meetings are important in order to keep on top of where everyone is in their tasks. In the few weeks leading up to when the book is due, meetings are necessary to make sure that all of the different sections of the book are on track to be finished by the deadline.

# Summer Cleaning

## The Summer Before

Before the school year begins, there are a few very important administrative things that should be done. One of these is to determine the officers and who those in leadership positions should be. By the end of the previous year, the decisions should be rather obvious – people will have shown their leadership prowess in the area in which they are interested. Officially taking care of elections and decisions at the end of the previous year, however, will avoid the hassle of having a new class of members vote on people that they know nothing about. This will also avoid the opportunity for people to call “foul” about having people in leadership that they didn’t vote for in what should be seen as a democratic organization.

Once the officers have been chosen, the summer is a good time to take care of all of the official organizational paperwork – both with the AAF national headquarters

and the university in order to make sure that we are still officially recognized as a student organization.

It is also a good idea to encourage senior leadership to take their campaigns class during the fall semester. This will require them to complete the NSAC campaign in 14 weeks and give them a jump start on the research and will force them to begin to consider the best ways to tackle all aspects of the campaign.

Finally, the summer is a good time for the officers to begin preliminarily researching the client. You will know this prior to the beginning of the school year, as it is announced at the previous year’s national competition. It is helpful to begin this research, even though you will not yet have the official case from the national office. This research will help you to wrap your head around what it is that you have to advertise. You to better explain to new members what it is, exactly, that they’re going to help you to do throughout the school year.

September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
Research							
			Strategy				
					Creative		
					Media		
					Media		
							Presentation

# Shirley A new semester, a new beginning

## First Semester

The first semester has started, you're ready to go, now what? The first thing the leadership should do is sit down together and work out a schedule for the semester. This will not be set in stone, but it's nice to have a map setting out the basic route by which you wish to travel.

This scheduling should also include figuring out on which nights to have the various departmental meetings. Deciding this early on will lessen the confusion among the members of the organization who also need to schedule around them.

Many other student organizations use a point system in order to determine rewards for their members: i.e. to determine who get to go to the district competition in Detroit. This has never been transparently done in AAF, to the best of my knowledge, but if you feel this is necessary to eliminate potential bias in such situations, you should sit down as a leadership group and determine the hierarchy of points: attendance vs. bringing in research vs. creating ads, etc. This should be determined before the first official meeting of the year in order to avoid backpedaling and changed minds later.

The first semester is also far less jam-packed than the second. This means that it's the ideal time to allow members to get a first-hand glimpse of what the professional world will be like. This can be done either through bringing professionals in to speak or going on agency tours. Either way, it will give members a better idea of how advertising works in the "real world" and what they are working toward with this campaign.

First semester is also when the fundraising should be done so that there will be time to concentrate on creating the campaign during the second semester. Fundraising is necessary so that the organization can cover the many costs of participating in the NSAC. If members are uninterested in the research, they should be encouraged to participate in the fundraising in order to stay active, involved and known by the officers. There are certain fundraisers we have done often in the past: i.e. working concessions at the Colts games and selling Muncie! shirts and Abbey candles. However, as a creative advertising person, don't let this limit you from other unique ways to raise money.

# The Greatest of these is research

## Research

The first semester of the campaign is all about the research. It is impossible to have effective creative, media or promotional ideas without first truly understanding both the target and the product. This understanding comes directly from the research. This quest for the research is an incredibly overwhelming task, and chances are good that you'll end up with much more information than you know how to process. This is a good thing; it is only at this point that you can be confident that you've covered all of your bases and now know enough to move forward with the campaign.

The easiest part of the research will be that about the product – what it is, what it does, how it is used. Truly getting to know the target market is far more difficult. This includes things such as figuring out how they use the product, why they use it and how it fits into their larger lifestyle. This will take up the larger bulk of your researching time. However, if you are able to grasp this, you will be able to effectively sell this product to the target.

Due to the importance of this research, I would recommend avoiding breaking into individual groups (i.e. media and IMC) until the research portion is nearly completed. I recommend this for a few reasons. One is that all of the other parts of the campaign are dependent upon the research and therefore nothing much else can be done effectively in these individual meetings without a

good handle on the research. Another reason is that if you have too many meetings on too many nights a week too early into the campaign, you're apt to burn out members before the time comes that they can truly contribute anything to the organization. Finally, this assists members in understanding that in the real world, creatives can't go about making ads for the client before truly understanding what the problem is that these ads need to solve.

That being said, you should make the research meeting a different night of the week than the general AAF meeting, where you will cover business, fundraising, etc. Making research a part of the big meeting leads to a lot of waste as not everyone is truly interested in research. Along with this, people are less likely to contribute when they see 30 other people who can look up the information rather than them. Encourage everyone to come to the research meeting, and those committed few who come are going to be those who help you find the information that you need.

# Show me the money, The time for productivity

## Second Semester

Second semester is a good time to reach out to students in other departments. This is important because these students often have production skills that other members may be lacking. Examples of this include the filming and editing abilities of telecommunications students, the photography skills of photography or photojournalism students and the drawing abilities of art students. It is also important to find them early in the semester before they, too, have final projects to take up all of their time. Conversely, if you attempt to recruit these students in the fall, there is a possibility that they will lose interest before their skills are needed.

It is also important to keep the creative idea-having open to the largest number of interested people as is possible. While it seems much more efficient to lock two or three good creative people in a room together for several hours to churn things out, this could also, by its nature, lead to missing a great new insight that someone else might have. Along with this, it could lead to resentment from other members of the team who felt like they were not given the opportunity to contribute to the creative at the time that it mattered.

## The Book

Once the writing of the book begins, make sure that there is only one copy that people are allowed to edit. This will help to avoid confusion as to which copy is which and sending the wrong copy to the competition, as has unfortunately occurred in the past.

It is also important that this one computer copy is backed up on a daily basis, then promptly hidden away so no one will make edits to it. This will reduce panic about the possibility of ever losing everything.

Try to make a point of finishing the book early because, in many cases, proofreading is a decision factor among the judges. Having the time to carefully read over every page with multiple sets of eyes will greatly reduce the number of noticeable errors and ideally get rid of them all together.

Try to delay deciding who goes (and doesn't go) to Detroit until the last minute that you possibly can. You might be surprised how many people stop coming to meetings and contributing just as the train is entering the station and who the committed few who use the long hours of the Sunday meetings as their time to shine turn out to be.

# The write way, Stage 1eft

## The Presentation

Deciding who will serve as presenters at the district and national competition is a two-tiered process. Equally important in the people chosen are presentation skills and knowledge and background of the campaign. Ideally, your strongest members should serve as your presenters because they are the ones who know the campaign forward and backward and will be the most comfortable with the material during the 20-minute presentation and especially for the 10-minute question and answer session with the judges.

Due to the importance of knowledge of the campaign among the presenters, a brief audition process should be used to establish basic presentation skills in the candidates. Once this has been established, the candidates with the best credentials regarding the campaign should be chosen.

Also because of the importance of overall campaign knowledge and understanding, auditions for presenters should be held near the middle of the second semester, around the middle of March. There is a large drop-off in active members throughout the second semester and you want to make sure to choose presenters who remain active as the campaign all comes together. Also by waiting this long to choose presenters, it can serve to motivate members to work harder in order to better their chances of being chosen as a member of the presentation team.

If possible, it is also beneficial to make sure that at least one member of the presentation team is an underclassman. This is helpful because it ensures that the next year, at least one member of the presentation team will know what is necessary to put together a successful campaign presentation.

The best advice I could possibly give you about the presentation is to sit down as a presentation team and write it together. This will make the presentation a cohesive whole as well as allow everyone to have an input about what is said. As a presenter, this will allow you to claim ownership for your presentation along with allowing you to understand what is done and why it is being done this way, even while you are not the one who is speaking.

This may be self-explanatory, but practice, practice, practice the presentation until you know the full 20 minutes forward, backward and inside-out. The naturally tendency is to put it by the wayside after spending months on end writing the book. If you keep in mind that it is worth 50 percent of your score at competition, you will work to make it just as spectacular as the book. You would be wasting eight months of hard work by numerous people if you did not make this presentation a top priority.

# The end is nigh, Go! Go! Go!

## Alumni Connection

As seniors graduate each semester and head off into the “real world” of advertising, try to keep a record of their contact information. This contact information should be kept in a format that can be easily maintained as the torch of AAF passes from one class to another. Over the years, this can become a database of contacts for jobs, internships, advice and professionals to come and speak.

## Conclusion

All in all, it is you who can make this year in AAF be its most successful. If anything, your experience as a leader in this organization will show you that the world of advertising is filled with many strong personality types. If the entire leadership of our chapter agrees on every single thing about the campaign throughout the year, the earth will begin to rotate backward. The important thing is to keep a level of respect and camaraderie throughout the organization, especially within the leadership. The trust that this generates will allow you to work most effectively as a team, which will, in turn, generate the best campaign. And this, as you might recall, was the reason you signed up for AAF in the first place.

This is meant to be used as a reference for you when dealing with various leadership issues that I have seen arise within the AAF chapter in the past. As we know, the advertising industry is constantly evolving and with it, what is required to be successful in the NSAC is revolving as well. Therefore, please add to these guidelines as your time as an AAF leader comes to a close. This will only help future classes of AAF leadership because it will allow them to hear suggestions from people with many different points of view, ultimately allowing the Ball State chapter to be as strong as it can possibly be: a goal we all share.