



Delivering strategic results while developing a long term consulting relationship for a growing MBA program

Client:
NC State University Jenkins MBA Program

Strategy & Consulting

1 The Challenge

Being the youngest of three might be okay for close-knit families, but it can put you at a distinct disadvantage when you're the youngest and least established of the top three MBA programs in a very competitive region. Such is the case for the North Carolina State University Jenkins MBA Program. NC State's young MBA program holds a unique position in the marketplace as the 'real MBA' in that students work with real clients - such as IBM and GlaxoSmithKline - on real projects, with real results. But the program still battles for applicants with better known and more established MBA programs at Duke University and UNC Chapel Hill.

It's been clear to the Jenkins MBA Program that effective marketing is the way to battle a perception issue like the one it faces, but after contracting a number of different agencies in previous years, they were still getting mediocre results.

2 What we did

Although they had gone through a number of 'strategy' engagements with different firms, VisionPoint insisted that we conduct our own comprehensive strategy engagement so that our team could fully understand the goals and the target audience of the Jenkins MBA Program. The MBA leadership team was understandably a bit skeptical about yet another outside consulting firm conducting the same research over again but they conceded that it was the right thing to do. VisionPoint conducted internal stakeholder interviews, competitive analyses, communications audit, technology audit, and student focus groups. VisionPoint then worked with the program leadership team to establish the goals and unique attributes and messaging points of the Jenkins MBA program. These were to become the foundation of all MBA program online marketing practices moving forward.

Though the Jenkins MBA program approached VisionPoint primarily seeking a website redesign, it became clear during the strategy engagement that the program needed a more comprehensive, long term marketing plan and deliverables if it was to achieve its goals. Based on the findings, VisionPoint established a 3-year plan with specific recommendations that would ensure maximum, time-sensitive results, while still remaining strategically minded.

When VisionPoint presented their research findings and strategic recommendations, the leadership at the program was won over by the quality and depth of the work; and more so by the fact that VisionPoint's team had introduced a number of important concepts and recommendations that had never before been considered.

Addressing short term tactical needs while building a long term strategy

Seeing that the top goal of the program was to increase enrollment and the strategy engagement was cutting into a valuable part of the year when prospective students actively searched and applied for MBA programs, VisionPoint launched an online banner ad campaign that would drive traffic and invite prospective students to Jenkins MBA program information sessions or request a program viewbook. This interim campaign leveraged early research findings (like key messaging points for the program), was

The program's dean, having been through similar engagements with four previous agencies, was thrilled to see that the value that VisionPoint has brought to the program far exceeded his expectations.”

extremely effective (driving record numbers of applicants), and allowed VisionPoint to continue research and develop the online marketing strategy without having to spend a lot of time chasing new applicants.

Bringing the strategy to life

With the interim banner ad campaign in place, and strategic goals and messaging agreed on, VisionPoint focused its efforts on redesigning and developing a new user-friendly, inviting, and informational website that continually reinforces the key messaging points of the program through content, design and use of technology. The new site was designed and developed in a way that not only addressed immediate program concerns; it also had built-in flexibility for future growth. After speaking with program leaders, it was clear that the Jenkins MBA program would inevitably grow and it was important to have a site that could grow with it and not have to be redesigned. With this in mind VisionPoint set aside plenty of time for the development of an information architecture that establishes a strong foundation for the site, while being scalable enough to allow growth.

Another component of the comprehensive online marketing plan was the launch of a paid search campaign. VisionPoint worked with the program leaders to identify specific keywords that would appeal to prospective MBA candidates. The paid search ads were narrowly targeted and produced qualified leads from prospective students seeking program viewbooks or requesting to attend an on-campus information session. The paid search campaign delivered big results at a low cost.

Since technology was one of the Jenkins MBA program's key messaging points, it was important that the program makes use of new technologies, including social media tools, in a way that supports the Jenkins brand. Based on research findings and program goals, VisionPoint developed a social media strategy that allows the program to utilize the most prominent and effective social networking sites in an effort to meet their target audiences where they spend much of their time. VisionPoint also provides ongoing consultation on how to effectively use the sites to generate content that allows the MBA program to be part of an overall online conversation.

To always ensure success, the initial strategy findings have continued to serve as the underlying structure and guide for all online marketing efforts with the Jenkins MBA program. VisionPoint was able to research and develop a strategy tailored so effectively to the NC State Jenkins MBA program that the recommendations have consistently been on point. As established, trusted, long-term consultants for the program, the NC State Jenkins MBA program continues to look to VisionPoint as an expert partner in guiding ongoing and future online marketing efforts.

3 Results

As a client that had been jaded by the past efforts of their former marketing firms, the Jenkins MBA program was continuously impressed with the results VisionPoint delivered. The added value of working with a strategic marketing firm, and not just a web design company, was essential for the Jenkins MBA program's success.

Project tasks and deliverables include:

Stakeholder Interviews	Focus Groups & User interviews	Competitor Analysis
Brand & Communications Audit	Messaging & Content Audit	Technology Audit
Marketing Strategy & Marketing Plan	Key metric measurement and reporting	Website Design & Development



17th Annual Supply Chain Meeting

In May 2008, the Supply Chain Resource Cooperative's (SCRC) semi-annual partner company meeting drew industry leaders from across the nation and several countries for a discussion of supply chain issues affecting their industries.

International industry leaders look to the future of supply chain economics at NC State

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MBA NEWS

MBA EVENTS

Triangle Game Conference - Free Passes for NCSU Students!

Friday, April 17 - Ron Jenkins, Deputy Director for Development and External Affairs at the Guildhall at SMU, has extended a terrific offer to NCSU students interested in attending the upcoming Triangle Game Conference: the Guildhall will cover the cost of their student registration to the conference.

New Fall 09 Course: Social Media and Management

Friday, April 10 - This course explores current issues in the rapidly changing arena of social media and virtual communities (web 2.0 and 3D.)

AfterCollege Career Network Digest

Monday, April 06 - Featured Announcements

MBA Highway

Monday, April 06 - The MBA Highway is an MBA job and internship search website created by a second-year MBA student at the Mason School of Business at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, VA. It was created to help MBAs get jobs and internships in this tough economy.

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JENKINS MBA SOCIAL MEDIA

NCSU Jenkins MBA Around the Web

The MBA Program uses many different sites to connect with students and get the word out about events and programs. Please check out our various presences and subscribe to any you like. Whether you are someone interested in our program, a current student, a faculty member, or anyone else who'd like to share something, we invite you to participate and become part of the conversation!

SUBSCRIBE

Jenkins MBA has several RSS feeds that you can subscribe to:

- MBA News
- MBA Events
- Wachovia Lecture Series
- College of Management News

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SHARE

Help spread the word about NC State's Jenkins MBA, a real-world perspective and experience that can be applied immediately in your life and career, by using your favorite social network.

share:

Submit a Story or Event

STUDENT & FACULTY BLOGS

Want to know what it's really like at the Jenkins MBA? Hear it straight from our students and faculty members.

- Interactive Voice Response
- Ryan Mills

→ Check out this and other videos by the MBA program on our **YouTube Channel**

flickr

Below are images from our Flickr Group available at <http://www.flickr.com/groups/ncstatemba/>. If you are a Flickr User and have pictures of MBA events feel free to add them and they will show up here and in the group.

North Carolina State University Jenkins MBA Program

◀ Browse more stores



Location: NC State MBA Program, Campus Box 8114
Raleigh, NC, 27695-8114
Phone: 919.515.5584

▼ Information

Website: <http://www.mgt.ncsu.edu/mba/>
<http://www.twitter.com/ncstatemba>

▼ YouTube Video Box

Perspective on the Challenging Economy: Part 1 of 4

Steve Allen, Associate Dean for Graduate Programs and Research, College of Management and Professor of Business Management and Economics gives an overview and his thoughts on the current economic c...



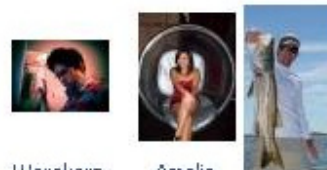
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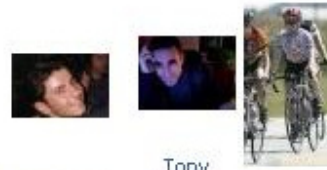
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NC State MBA

Real World. Real Choices. Real Impact.

In the MBA program at North Carolina State University's Jenkins Graduate School of Management, you will learn by doing — working on real projects for companies, gaining a real-world perspective and experience that can be applied immediately in your life and career. You will make decisions about your education that will help you distinguish yourself in today's competitive global marketplace and make a real impact with real preparation and solid qualifications to meet and surpass real-world expectations.

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Banner ad campaign stills

Client Profile

The Jenkins MBA Program at North Carolina State University is a specialized degree program emphasizing innovation and technology management. The program allows students to develop expertise in managing the development of new products, production methods and processes, and the creation of new ideas.