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Spring 2019

The NAA Challenge: Serving Millennials Through Subscription Boxes

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Gaul, Katie; Brechbill, Tommie; Yakel, Kylee; Schirmer, Grant; Burnham, Regan; and Gunderson, Paris, "The NAA Challenge: Serving Millennials Through Subscription Boxes" (2019). *Honors Theses, University of Nebraska-Lincoln*. 157.
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The NAA Challenge: Serving Millennials Through Subscription Boxes

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**MNGT 475H
Dr. Laura Poppo**

Executive Summary

As an older generation of University of Nebraska-Lincoln graduates phases out, capturing the attention of millennials becomes more and more important. Unfortunately for the Nebraska Alumni Association (NAA), many soon to be and recent UNL graduates do not see the value in spending hundreds of dollars to become a lifetime member. Although some people we interviewed saw an NAA membership as just a donation and are not expecting much in return.

We believe that the Nebraska Alumni Association can take advantage of its connections with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to offer experiences through subscription boxes that will engage millennials and increase membership interest. Our survey has shown us that interest is high in UNL themed subscription boxes with our millennial targets. We have laid out the basic expenses and revenues associated with the subscription boxes and have estimated that the NAA could make additional money while greatly growing millennial's interest in the association. Approximately seventy-five percent of our survey respondents noted that Nebraska Alumni Association subscription boxes would have a higher value than other benefits such as coupons or university news. This shows that the value in a subscription box service would increase millennial's interest in joining the NAA.

Key Problem

The key problem is the lack of millennial interest in obtaining a Nebraska Alumni Association membership. According to our survey results, fifty-percent of millennial recent or soon to be college graduates do not see the value in obtaining a membership right now. The price of an NAA membership is too much of a roadblock to getting recent college graduates to join when they aren't sure of the benefits. Our survey results show that overall, recent UNL graduates are happy with their college experience and do care about what is happening at the university. However, that does not translate directly to NAA membership interest. We believe that this does put NAA in a good position to capture the love for Nebraska from recent graduates and offer subscription box experiences that will ideally increase interest in membership.

Overview of the Company

The Nebraska Alumni Association is a Nonprofit organization that aims to “connect alumni with Dear Old Nebraska U, and with each other, for the betterment of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln”. With nearly 90 alumni chapters around the United States and approximately 25,000 members, the NAA is one of the best ways to connect with UNL after graduation. The NAA prides itself on its ability to connect University of Nebraska-Lincoln alums with each other around the world across all ages, professions, and walks of life.

The NAA's mission according to their website is as follows: “The Nebraska Alumni Association's mission is to promote the achievements and aspirations of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln by engaging its students, alumni, and friends. Lastly, the NAA's vision according to their website is: “The Nebraska Alumni Association is the trusted heart and home for alumni engagement at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The association works collaboratively with its campus partners to transform alumni pride and loyalty into action for the advancement of our university.”

Our Focus

Value of Nebraska Alumni Association to Millennials

Although the NAA serves alumni of all ages, the focus of our thesis is how the NAA can adapt its offerings to increase millennial interest in NAA membership. According to our survey, only around fifty percent of millennial graduates or soon to be graduates currently see the value in obtaining an NAA membership. If the NAA wishes to get more millennial memberships then they must adapt. The good news for the NAA is that our survey showed us that millennials do care about UNL news and generally enjoyed their college experience, this is just not immediately translating into NAA membership interest. We believe that we offer the NAA an affordable way to increase millennial interest in NAA membership while also sharing Husker pride.

Strategic Opportunities

There is no currently strategic difference for the NAA when targeting millennials versus a UNL alum that is a member of a different generation. We believe that this is something that the NAA should change if they wish to be as successful as possible moving forward. Our primary strategic recommendation is the implementation of Nebraska themed subscription boxes that will be available to NAA members and aim to recreate the Husker experience that we have all learned to love. We believe that the subscription box service will be successful for the NAA because we have seen through primary research that there is significant interest in such offerings. Additionally, the NAA is in a perfect position to meet millennial desire for nostalgia and experiences and drive new interest in NAA memberships.

Power of Nostalgia

According to our secondary research (Appendix Part III), nostalgia is an extremely powerful motivator for millennials. Reliving old experiences that they are fond of is extremely desirable. An additional trend in marketing to millennials is the fact that millennials now prefer experiences over physical items: approximately 76% of millennials said so in a recent survey. However, experiences do not just mean things like parties and vacations. Experiences that millennials crave can still be created by physical items. An example of this is subscription boxes. Opening up a box and taking out all your favorite things is an enjoyable process and can even be considered “Instagrammable”. One of the biggest reasons millennials enjoy experiences rather than just physical things is because they can share their experiences with their peers via social media apps like Instagram.

Industry Analysis

Current Trends

The Nebraska Alumni Association is firmly within the alumni association industry, where “rival” alumni associations are not competitors, but peers to look to for best practices. Alumni associations must strike a balance between providing a benefit to alumni and facilitating benefits to the university. Our research (detailed in appendix III) found that current trends in alumni associations reflect the rise in millennials as a subset of alumni. As social media has matured, alumni can interact with each other without an alumni association facilitating the interaction. In response, alumni associations need to find a way to make their role more relational rather than transactional, and provide a benefit above and beyond mere connections. NAA needs to have

information in the channels where alumni are already looking in order to stay relevant, and needs to provide value to the alumni before asking for donations. More detailed information can be found in the appendix regarding trends in the industry.

Buyer Power

The most significant force affecting the alumni association industry is the power of buyers. In this case, buyers are the alumni, and their preferences are the biggest driver in this industry. Since there are no direct competitors for NAA, the biggest challenge is competing for alumni's dollars by convincing them that the NAA's benefits are worth the membership fee. As alumni are increasingly members of the millennial generation, the NAA must cater to millennial needs to stay relevant. Currently, revenues from membership are \$576,000. The revenue from subscription boxes (discussed in detail later) would amount to roughly \$1,890. This number would have a multiplier effect as millennials would be increasingly likely to join the NAA because of the subscription boxes, thus driving up membership revenue. In this way, the preference of alumni is a huge driver in the alumni association industry, and the NAA needs to find ways to adapt to the millennial alumni.

Key Success Factors

The Nebraska Alumni Association's three key success factors are the tangible and intangible benefits offered to their members, experiences created through their venues, and established relationships with alumni, the university, and Nebraska community. A significant factor the Nebraska Alumni Association must deliver on to satisfy the needs of their customers, alum, are the advertised benefits of membership. The Nebraska Alumni Association is recognized for providing members with various career advancement opportunities, through networking with fellow alums, career coaching (resume reviews, interview preparation, and general advice), and utilizing an exclusive job board. In addition, membership provides alumni with greater access to arts and athletics tickets, as well as various savings and discounts. Through the Nebraska Quarterly Magazine, members are notified of university news, research, and other current events. This satisfies the members' need to stay connected with the University and learn about things that may not otherwise be common knowledge. These and additional benefits satisfy members' nostalgia towards their college experience, connect them to fellow Huskers, and stay up to date with University events. Not only do these benefits need to be produced, but they need to satisfy the needs of newer generations. With each generation comes different wants and needs from an alumni membership.

An additional factor the Nebraska Alumni Association has is the ability to serve with various market segments through their venues and events. 33% of the NAA's revenue comes from venue rentals. The revenue received from these events enables the association to have lower membership fees and reliance on the University and the Foundation. Through hosting events, the Alumni Association can increase their brand awareness among the diverse group of people utilizing their services.

The last factor the Nebraska Alumni Association needs to deliver on comes from their mission statement: *to promote the achievements and aspirations of UNL by engaging its alumni, students, and friends*. The Nebraska Alumni Association is a recognized organization to connect alumni with each other, the community, and current students. Members need to feel involved in the organization and still a part of the Nebraska, UNL, and alumni community. In order for the NAA to be successful, members must feel an emotional connection to these communities and the

alum identity. The NAA can exploit the nostalgia related to one's college experience. Members want to feel connected to their university, similar to how they felt when they were enrolled. The Nebraska Alumni Association should recreate these feelings, and when this connection exists, the NAA is differentiated amongst its competition because it is the only organization that can deliver this benefit to its alumni.

Current Strengths and Weaknesses

The Nebraska Alumni Association's resources and capabilities distinguish itself from the competition. A notable competency of the NAA is their venues: the Wick, Nebraska Champions Club, and Nebraska Innovation Campus Conference Center. Not only do these provide the NAA with revenue, but owning venues is unique among alumni associations across the country. These locations provide alumni with opportunities to connect with fellow alums and experience Husker events. Millennials value experiences over physical things, so access to these venues provides the NAA an opportunity to provide younger alumni with an unique value.

The Nebraska Alumni Association has 17,000 life members and 24,000 total members, although there are over 200,000 alumni. 19,000 of NAA members are 49 years old or older. There is a need for growth with the younger alumni, although there are benefits to having an older alumni demographics. These alumni are more likely to be further along in their professional life and have more disposable income than their younger alum counterpart. This demographic is a useful resource for younger alumni for professional connections.

Business-Level Strategy

The alumni association industry is an interesting one because there are no direct competitors. They are mainly competing for alumni of their respective schools to join following graduation. They aim to use a differentiation strategy by offering their members benefits they believe will make being a member seem better than not being one. These benefits, as mentioned above, include discounts, a magazine, and various networking opportunities. The NAA's key problem at this time is reaching millennials. How they currently try to differentiate themselves is not enough for the millennial generation. They need clear, tangible benefits that they can see a direct value from.

Currently, the NAA's business-level strategy is the same for every single one of their members/potential members. They do not try to differentiate themselves to different demographic groups. This has proven to be problematic because not every generation has the same needs. In almost every industry millennials are proving to act differently than all of the generations before them. What they want and what they expect from the companies they interact with require a different strategy. The Nebraska Alumni Association has to recognize this or this generation will choose to spend their money elsewhere.

Survey & Results

In order to evaluate the value of a subscription box service for the NAA we created a survey. We did this using Google Forms and sent it out to the other MNGT 475 classes. We also put it on our personal Facebook pages so it could reach a wider audience. In total we received 285 responses. However, since we are focusing on millennials we deleted any responses, we deleted any responses that were older than 29-years-old. This gave us a total of 276 responses. It should be noted that because we had the MNGT 475 classes respond, 220 of our respondents were from the University of Nebraska College of Business.

The first interesting result was the fact that 44% of millennial respondents either planned on or were already a member of the Nebraska Alumni Association, which indicates a good base of support for the NAA. However, 48% of respondents said they believed that a NAA membership would be beneficial to them. This indicates that perhaps not everyone who would like to be a member of the NAA has the means to become a member when they would like to.

The next few questions delved into the appetite among this millennial audience for a Husker subscription box. 27% of our millennial respondents said they had ever purchased a subscription box, whereas 53% of respondents said they would be interested in purchasing a Husker-themed subscription box. This indicates that the Husker brand could hold a lot of power for the NAA as they try to brand themselves, seeing as the number of people who would buy a Husker-themed subscription box is nearly double the number of people who have bought a subscription box ever.

Finally, we asked respondents what they would be willing to pay for a Husker-themed subscription box. In order to do this we asked two questions: “How often would you be interested in receiving a subscription box?” and “How much would you be willing to pay per subscription box?” We evaluated the results by finding the average of the responses of each of these questions, which ended up being 3.89 times per year and \$16.39 per box. We rounded each of these up to find that people were willing to buy 4 boxes per year at a price of \$20 per box. However, the NAA would want to make sure that the boxes they send out were good quality, so we are recommending that they send out 2 boxes per year at a price of approximately \$40 per box.

Summary

The NAA’s main strategic issue currently is millennial membership. This poses a major challenge as the older generation, who finds more value in being a member, is starting to die off. If the Nebraska Alumni Association cannot find ways to get millennials to join, they stand to face a decrease in revenue. Engaging millennials is often difficult but the NAA does have some internal capabilities that will help make this strategy shift easier. As mentioned earlier, millennials want experiences and are willing to spend more money on something that gives them a desirable experience.

The Nebraska Alumni Association owns multiple venues on and nearby campus which will make creating experiences for millennials easier. They are already experts on running events and managing these venues and shifting to target millennials in this area will require only slight adjustments. Millennials need to see that the money they are giving to the organization is creating value for them and events are one way to do this. The utilization of these venues will only be useful, however, to alumni who have stayed local following graduation.

Another internal capability that will be beneficial in trying to better reach millennials is the NAA’s relationship with local businesses and the University. An easy way to create value is through physical items. Due to the strong relationship, NAA has with a lot of local businesses they have a lot of “swag” in storage that can easily be combined or reworked in a way that creates value for millennials. Their relationship with the University allows them to utilize the University’s brand. This helps them gain credibility and establish themselves as a strong way to stay connected to the University following graduation.

Recommendations

Our recommendation for the Nebraska Alumni Association is to develop a subscription box service for their members who are recent grads. Given that our target group is millennials, we believe that a subscription service will entice them to become members to be able to receive these boxes.

Subscription Services

The popularity of subscription boxes has grown exponentially in recent years. The ability to customize your shopping experience combined with the convenience of the products you want being sent to your door is something many people desire. A study done by McKinsey and Company showed that around 15% of online shoppers have signed up for 1 or more recurring subscriptions. This number is only growing as the subscription e-commerce market has grown by more than 100% a year over the past 5 years. Consumers in this market want a great end-to-end experience and are willing to subscribe only where automated purchasing gives them tangible benefits.

Additionally, our secondary research showed us that 72% of millennials prefer to spend their money on experiences rather than physical items. We often associate the word “experience” with vacations or parties but that isn’t always the case. This statistic shows the opportunity to create an experience with physical items. This is a growing trend with many retailers that the alumni association can adopt.

Through our interviews and survey results, we found that overall students rated their college experience at Nebraska at an 8 out of 10. This shows that students who went to Nebraska in general valued and enjoyed their college experience. They have enjoyed their time at UNL and are looking for ways to replicate their experience here. The adjustment from college to the real world can be a difficult one but allowing people to leave the chaos of their daily lives and remember simpler times makes them happier. The Nebraska Alumni Association can connect with alumni on an emotional level by trying to help them relive their glory days here at the University.

In our initial interviews we asked some general questions about subscription boxes and 64% of the people we interviewed said that if they received a Husker subscription box they would want it to contain unique or exclusive items. Millennials crave exclusivity and giving them a subscription box with exclusive items combines their desire to have experiences with their need to have exclusive items.

Our recommendation is to send out two \$40 boxes per year to all of the younger members/recent graduates, since our survey respondents on average were willing to pay \$80 per year on this service.

The Boxes

Our first box concept, as shown below, is the “There Is No Place Like Nebraska” box. This box is geared towards Husker gear and reminding people of their time in Lincoln during their college experience. Many people said that they would want unique Husker apparel in the box, so ideas we have included in this specific box are shirts, hats, water bottles, etc. Our idea for creating the design for this apparel would be to work with the UNL Arts or Textiles department to have it be unique and Nebraska made. Other items we wanted to include in this box were things like posters or local art, which could also come from student or alumni artists. This box is

also targeted towards people who maybe do not care as much about Husker athletics as some students, since we want to appeal to all alumni.



Our second box concept which can be found below is a Tailgate Box, to remind alumni of how big Husker athletics impacted their college experience and help them feel as though they are in Lincoln on gameday. This essentially would be a tailgate in a box and include all of your tailgate essentials such as temporary tattoos, gameday beads, and party supplies. We also thought this box could include some local Nebraska food items such as Runza ranch, Valentinos sauce or Dorothy Lynch, since we had many people say how much they missed some of the foods they could only get in Nebraska after moving away post-graduation.



Each of these boxes would cost roughly \$33 to produce not including shipping costs. Since the alumni association currently sends out new member kits, they are already

equipped/successful at sending items to members. Since this service could essentially replace the need to send out things like new member kits, we did not include shipping costs in our price breakdown, which can be found in the appendix.

Implementation

The alumni association is very well equipped to implement this recommendation. Due to the fact that they already send items out to their members, such as the new member kits or items for Future Huskers, they would be able to adopt a service like this with little to no logistics issues. They currently have a basement full of products such as the ones that we have suggested that they could use or model after to create subscription boxes. Also, given their strong relationship with other organizations through the university such as Athletics or the Foundation, they should be able to adopt partnerships for products with few issues. Additionally, our suggestion to include discounts to local establishments only further promotes benefits that the alumni association already provides to its members.

Stakeholder Analysis

The key stakeholders involved are future potential members of the association, current members, and the association as an entity. Potential members will benefit from this product as it is targeted towards millennials who are recent graduates of the university. They will find the service enticing, filling their desire for exclusivity and giving them an experience they crave. Current members, specifically those who are millennials, will benefit from this service as it is something that they will desire and benefit from in the same way as new potential members. Both of these groups will also reap all of the other benefits that the association provides to its members, such as the networking and development opportunities, special events, and discounts. Current members who may not be attracted to this product due to the stage they are at within their lives may not benefit from this service directly, but will benefit due to the increased number of active members whom they can network and interact with. The association as an entity will benefit slightly from some additional revenues that the boxes can provide, but the main benefit that they will receive is the additional membership and engaged members. This service will not only entice graduates to join the association, but will excite the members about the organization, thus encouraging members to become more active in the other activities put on by the association as well as recruiting more alumni to join.

To-Do List for the Nebraska Alumni Association

The Nebraska Alumni Association has many different things that it needs to implement in order to be successful, especially with millennials. We feel the order of priority for these issues should be:

1. Staffing
2. Rebranding
3. Building Partnerships
4. Create a Mission Specific to Millennials
5. Marketing

Staffing should be the NAA's first priority because currently, they have a small staff where each staff member has many different duties. By restructuring job duties, the Nebraska

Alumni Association can give their staff ownership over strategic initiatives and allow them to become experts in areas important to the organization. These changes in staffing will allow the NAA to successfully rebrand their organization. Following this rebranding, the NAA should work with local businesses and organizations to build partnerships that will be mutually beneficial for strategic priorities. Creating a mission specific to millennials allows the NAA to utilize their already existing partnerships to maximize engagement. Finally, the Nebraska Alumni Association needs to market these new strategic initiatives in a way that millennials respond to.

Appendix: Part I, Box Pricing

There Is No Place Like Nebraska Box	
Item	Price
T-Shirts	\$5.50-\$11.40 (depending on brand)
Hat	\$13-15 (depending on style)
Posters/Local Art	Work with UNL for designs and printing
Water Bottle	\$13.60
Coupons/Discounts at Local Establishments (ie discounts at the Lied, Ross, local restaurants, etc.)	Partner with the local establishments for these
Total	~\$33.10
Profit	~\$7

Tailgate Box	
Item	Price
Dorothy Lynch	\$3
Koolaid Packets	48 pack for \$14
Local Restaurant Food Items (ie Runza Ranch, Valentinos Sauce, etc)	Work with these establishments for free or discounted prices
Temporary Tattoos	4 pack for \$4 (price could decrease with a bulk order)
Game Day Beads	Corn Cob Beads for \$3 (could get cheaper prices for bulk order)
Nebraska Plates	10 count for \$2.80
Nebraska Napkins	24 count for \$2
Nebraska Cups	8 count for \$4
Total	~\$32.80
Profit	~\$7

Appendix: Part II, Interviews

Kailee Schmidt: 24, works at Hudl, NAA member

- Background
 - Extremely involved while in college
 - In 4 professional organizations but none with dues
 - Responsible for student loans but doesn't affect desire to join NAA
 - Frequent use of social media
 - Receives emails from NAA and graduate programs office
 - 10/10 interested in news
 - 10/10 experience
- Perspectives on Alumni Association
 - Joined to stay connected to University community
 - Paid for it herself after graduation
 - Views membership as a donation
 - Loves Women's leadership network, notifications on opportunities to be involved as an alum
- Subscription Boxes
 - Currently has 2 subscription boxes (one every 2 months, other 3 times a year)
 - \$20-\$30 each
 - Sees added value in husker subscription box
 - Willing to pay between \$20-\$50 depending on frequency
 - Items:
 - Food and exclusive memorabilia
 - Don't need more t shirts but smaller, unique, fun, husker apparel would be fun
 - Home goods items to use or decorate your house

Allison Goodman: 28, high school business teacher, non-member

- Background
 - Frequent social media use; posts once a month
 - 9/10 experience
 - Involved in professional organizations requiring dues
 - 8/10 interested in university news
 - New programs/buildings, awards, big things students have accomplished, athletics
- Perspectives on Alumni Association
 - Currently feels like she could afford membership
 - Needs to **“get something back”** from membership
 - Views it as donation and exchange
 - Would be more willing to be a member if **“it involved an exchange of benefits and I felt part of a community”**
 - Perception of financial obligation affects desire to join
 - **“If I wanted to donate I just would”**
- Subscription Boxes
 - Has FabFitFun subscription
 - \$175 a year – can personalize every box
 - sent 4 times a year
 - Sees added value in husker subscription
 - would pay \$100-\$150
 - would also purchase add ons

- Items:
 - things that go with the season
 - corn on the cob that is really popcorn
 - pop socket
 - **“Basically anything you can find at husker hounds but that is special to the box”**

Madison Bierman: 22, *current Northwestern University senior, non-member*

- Background
 - Not responsible for student loans
 - Frequent social media use
 - Transferred to Northwestern after 2 years at UNL
 - Feels more tied to Northwestern but still like Husker football a lot
- Perspectives on Alumni Association
 - Value
 - Networking
 - Community building
 - Giving back to current students
 - Doesn't feel she can afford to be a member until she finds employment (wants to go to medical school)
 - Feels like tuition is enough contribution to the university
 - Views it as donation and exchange
- Subscription Boxes
 - No current subscription boxes
 - Sees subscription box as nice but wouldn't make or break decision
 - Would pay \$50-100 annually on top of alum dues
 - Would like to see items related to current events at the university

Katie Daniels: 23, *Senior Actuarial Assistant, NAA member*

- Background
 - Originally from Kansas City, attended UNL, currently works in Omaha
 - Uses social media daily, but rarely posts
 - Does not subscribe to newspapers or magazines
 - Involved in 2 dues-paying organization as undergrad
 - Member of professional organization (Nebraska Actuaries Club)
 - 6/10 interested in news
 - College of Business and Actuarial Science
 - Gets news from social media
 - 8/10 experience
- Perspectives on Alumni Association
 - Sees it as an exchange for benefits rather than a donation
 - Values discounts, connections, career advancement
 - Feels as though she can afford it
 - Wants to see what alumni are doing around the world
- Subscription Boxes
 - Does not use subscription services
 - Wouldn't pay more than \$10 per box if it wasn't included in the membership

McKenna Ahlgren: *21, Associate Actuarial Analyst, non-member*

- Background
 - From Minneapolis, attended UNL, currently works in Minneapolis
 - Currently receives communications from UNL College of Business
 - Uses social media frequently, likes posting updates and cute things
 - 9/10 experience
 - Responsible for student loans
 - 7/10 interested in university news
 - Football, Cob, Actuarial Science
- Perspectives on Alumni Association
 - Sees membership as being an exchange
 - Feels as though she can afford it
 - Didn't feel like she had to join the association right away after graduating, would do it down the road
 - Doesn't feel strong obligation to pay for association while paying off student loans
- Subscription Boxes
 - Enjoys husker themed items and would like getting things from university

Haley Steger: *early 20's, accountant, non-member*

- Background
 - From Lincoln and now works in Seattle, Washington (attended UNL)
 - Focusing her efforts on young professional groups/networks in Seattle
 - Receives emails from university, but doesn't spend time opening and reading them
 - Follow Nebraska business on Instagram and see updates through that platform
 - 8/10 interested in knowing what the university is up to
 - New research/initiatives, events/causes alumni are involved with, how to get involved/contribute
- Perspectives on Alumni Association
 - Not a member, but have considered
 - **"I feel a large reason I, and many others, avoid the alumni network is because they feel they will only be asked for money and not gain much from it otherwise."**
 - When asked about her perception of her financial obligation to the university...
 - **"Yes – I think it is a common deterrent. Other than giving back to the University, I guess I still don't really have a good knowledge of the potential perks of being a part of an alumni association (especially if you aren't living in the area)."**
 - Didn't know you could join an out-of-state alumni group
- Subscription Boxes
 - Used to receive 2 monthly subscription boxes: Sephora Play and Facetory
 - **"I think it's a great idea, especially for those of us that move away and get a little nostalgic over our alma mater!"**
 - Items:
 - Wide variety of merch and apparel, James Arthur wine, Nebraska-sourced items found at Made in Omaha, cute cards, décor, mugs

Elizabeth McClurg: *early 20's, current UNL senior, former member*

- Background
 - From Illinois, will be moving to Illinois after graduation
 - Member of professional organization (Assoc. of Supply Chain Management)
 - Has student loans

- Was an SAA member Freshman and Sophomore year because of an Out of state scholarship
- Gets emails from her sorority, the COB, and supply chain department
- 7/10 interested in news from the university
 - New buildings, new majors/programs, any programs tying professionals to undergrads in the same field
- Uses social media frequently, posts quite often
- 10/10 experience
- Perspectives on Alumni Association
 - Plans to join alumni association
 - Moving out of state- main benefit is networking
 - **“I would also want an experience that makes me feel that I am still involved and important in the University.”**
 - Perception of financial obligation doesn’t affect desire to join
 - Sees it as a donation
 - Can probably pay for it right away (monthly)
- Subscription Boxes
 - Currently doesn’t subscribe to any but interested in Husker-themed box
 - Willing to pay \$15 monthly or \$30 quarterly
 - Items
 - Shirts, candy, updated information on the University, gameday stuff like necklaces or tattoos

Dalton Dey: *early 20s, Ohio State Graduate Student, former NAA member*

- Background
 - Went to UNL because it was close to home and a big school
 - Very involved on campus; 9/10 experience
 - Receives emails from UNL College of Business
 - 6/10 interested in news of university
 - sports, College of Business Honors Academy, NSE
 - No loans and could afford membership
 - Attends Ohio State for graduate school but feels more connected to Nebraska
 - Active on social media but rarely posts
- Perspectives on Alumni Association
 - Considers it an exchange for benefits; **“However, I don’t consider the benefits worth the donation cost at the moment”**
 - Wants deals & discounts especially for Husker Stuff
 - Was a member of NAA for a year after graduation but lapsed (cap & gown deal)
 - Hesitant to join NAA at the moment but said he could afford it and may eventually join
 - No plans to join Ohioans for Nebraska
- Subscription Boxes
 - Currently no subscription boxes
 - Open to buying subscription box at \$10 price point
 - Items:
 - Apparel, shirts, ties, lapel pins, stickers, coupons

Eastin Allgood: *early 20’s, Technical Problemsolver at Epic, NAA member*

- Background
 - From Lincoln and now works in Madison, Wisconsin (attended UNL)

- Get information via university news email and sometimes read it
- 7/10 interested in news
 - Want to know about the direction of university and sports
 - Identify more with COB than university
- Networking: LinkedIn and leveraging people I know
- Perspectives on Alumni Association
 - Member of alumni association - did it with new alumni discount
 - Wanted to see what they offer and what benefits I can get out of; thought it could help him with the move
 - Hasn't gotten that much benefit from it, but I definitely would have used it more if the job I have didn't offer the community it has and would've used it to find people in Madison
- Subscription Boxes
 - Would not want to pay an additional fee for a box, but a great idea and would enjoy receiving them
 - Uniquely Nebraska things and brands, recipes, something unique with sporting events in the area

Anie Bista: 21, current UNL senior, non-member

- Background
 - 5/10 interested in info about university; receives info about university on social media
 - Frequent social media user
 - No student loans; doesn't feel like she could afford being a member
 - Very involved as an undergrad, 6/10 experience
 - Lived on campus
 - Will be a graduate student after graduation
- Perspectives on Alumni Association
 - Sees value in **“keeping in touch with initiatives I was involved with during my time at UNL”**
 - Sees membership as exchange for benefits
 - Perception of financial obligation affects desire to join
- Subscription Boxes
 - No current subscriptions
 - Willing to pay \$10/box for **“any items that remind me of UNL”**

Maddie Stuart: 22, Media Associate at Starcom, NAA Member

- Background
 - Very involved as an undergraduate, in a dues-paying organization; 8/10 experience
 - Receives monthly donation requests from NU Foundation
 - Receives info about UNL from NAA, Daily Nebraskan
 - 7/10 interested in news
 - Cares about sports, can receive info about other programs from those programs
 - No student loans
 - Builds network through talking with Nebraskans who moved to New York
 - Subscribes to New York Times, reads Journal Star online
 - Frequent social media
 - Especially Snapchat and Twitter
- Perspectives on Alumni Association
 - Joined while getting cap and gown because she got a free cup

- Views membership as a donation
- Doesn't feel like she can afford to be a member
- Feels as if she should donate through membership: **“In theory, I didn't give the university any money because I was on scholarship, so I feel like I should sometimes.”**
- Subscription Boxes
 - Currently doesn't subscribe to any
 - In response to Husker boxes: **“I'm like kind of intrigued. If I got free Nebraska stuff I would be a lot more likely to pay to be a part of it. People in New York love seeing other Nebraskans in their Nebraska gear.”**
 - Would pay \$100 annually
 - Items
 - T-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs
 - **“I want t-shirts that I couldn't get somewhere else”**

Ellie Walstad: 22, Current Carnegie Mellon University senior, non-member

- Background
 - Not currently a member
 - Very involved as an undergraduate; no dues-paying organizations; 8/10 experience
 - Receives info about university from business school magazine and university emails
 - 8/10 interested in information
 - No student loans
 - Has family members who are members of alumni associations
 - Receives 3 requests for donations/year
 - Frequent social media user but infrequent poster
- Perspectives on Alumni Association
 - Not currently a member of CMU's alumni association but planning on joining after graduation
 - Main value: staying connected with classmates and receiving university updates, access to a network of faculty and other students that can offer career connections
 - Views membership as exchange for benefits because of alumni infrastructure and events
 - Feels as if she could afford membership after graduation
 - Perception of financial obligation affects desire to join: **“Because tuition is so high, I'm slightly worried that joining the alumni association is just a cover for the university's easy access to donors.”**
- Subscription Boxes
 - Currently no subscription boxes
 - Would be willing to pay \$20-50/box depending on frequency and product quality
 - Items:
 - T-shirts, socks, Christmas ornaments, mugs, pens, hats
 - **“A constant stream of CMU swag”**

Katie Kost: 21, Current UNL Senior, Non-member

- Background
 - Very involved as undergraduate, 2 dues-paying organizations, 10/10 experience
 - 10/10 cares about university news
 - changes to campus or curriculum
 - Receives quarterly donation requests
 - Uses social media very often, posts for **“something significant, an event with friends”**
 - No newspaper or magazine subscriptions

- Perspectives on Alumni Association
 - Views membership as donation **“because I don’t know what they offer”**
 - Doesn’t feel like she could afford membership but might in the future
 - Perception of financial obligation doesn’t affect desire to join
 - What she wants out of alumni association: **“I don’t know- maybe this is just the ambiance I’m looking for, but I want to feel like I didn’t’ leave campus and like I didn’t leave the University- I don’t just want to feel like I’m a part of the alumni association, I want to feel like I’m still a student and feel like I’m constantly in the know and know what’s going on with the University.”**
- Subscription Boxes
 - Currently no subscription boxes
 - **“I’ll want to get my hands on as much Husker gear as I can since I’ll be out of state. Whenever I go out of state, I need to wear Nebraska gear.”**
 - Items:
 - Mugs, baseball caps, themed t-shirts for games
 - Willing to pay \$30/box

Hallie Lockhart: 22, *current UNL senior, NAA member*

- Background
 - Very involved as an undergrad; 6 dues-paying organizations
 - Receives university news from sorority, athletic department, SAA, College of Business, social media
 - 8/10 interested in news about university
 - Current events, athletic programs, what they’re doing with my money
 - 9/10 college experience
 - Subscribes to Hail Varsity
 - Posts more than once a day; very active
- Perspectives on Alumni Association
 - Current member, was signed up as a freshman by parents
 - Biggest value: free t-shirts
 - See membership as donation and exchange
 - Feels like she could afford membership
 - Perception of financial obligation affects desire to join
 - **“As long as I feel like I am getting back equal to what I paid it’s worth it to me. Honestly even if I didn’t, I probably would still pay because I loved my time here, I loved Nebraska even before I came here so giving back after all it’s given me isn’t hard.”**
- Subscription Boxes
 - Currently receives StitchFix, costs \$20/box and \$200/box if all items are purchased
 - Would pay \$20-50/Husker box
 - Items:
 - Tshirts, socks, tickets to sporting events, local Lincoln things such as coffee from the Mill, **“things that remind me of my time at school”**

Appendix, Part III: Secondary Sources

Alumni Associations

- <https://thespun.com/college-football/16-most-loyal-fan-bases-college-football>
 - Nebraska has the most loyal fan base in college football in 2018
- <https://www.businessinsider.com/most-loyal-fan-bases-in-college-football-2014-7>
 - Nebraska has the most loyal fan base in college football in 2014
- <https://www.masterstudies.com/article/Four-Reasons-to-Get-Involved-With-Alumni-Associations/>
 - Alumni associations provide networking opportunities, career building tools (mentorship, job fairs), benefits (events, free tickets, discounts)
 - Giving back to the university is important because a strong alumni association attracts students through scholarships, mentoring, and opportunities
- <https://www.redbrickresearch.com/2015/10/29/the-importance-of-the-alumni-network/>
 - Alumni networks provide support and expertise to the university
 - Alumni are international ambassadors for the university
 - Alumni can help current students' employability through opportunities and mentoring
 - Bournemouth University uses birthday emails, social media, and a dedicated alumni blog to share alumni successes
 - Social media presence: 92% of millennials are on Facebook, 42% on Twitter and 38% on Snapchat
- <https://www.huskeralum.org/s/1620/social.aspx?sid=1620&gid=1&pgid=395>
 - University of Nebraska Alumni Association benefits
- <https://alumni.iu.edu/join/member-benefits/index.html>
 - Indiana University Alumni Association benefits
- <https://www.osu.edu/alumni/membership/your-membership/benefits.html>
 - Ohio State University Alumni Association benefits
- <https://thebestschools.org/magazine/influential-alumni-associations/>
 - Most influential alumni associations
- <https://www.alumni.psu.edu/s/1218/16/interior.aspx?sid=1218&gid=4&pgid=4103>
 - Penn State University Alumni Association benefits
- <https://napagroup.com/2018/01/02/trends-in-alumni-relations/>
 - Relational over transactional: millennials want interaction and personalization directed at “me” and “now”
 - Maturing of social media: alumni can engage with each other outside of an alumni network, emphasizing the role of the alumni network as a relationship manager
 - Sophistication of metrics
 - Strategic integration with development
 - Collaboration with student affairs: start student-alumni activity early so students know the value of giving back when they graduate
 - Alumni advocacy on behalf of university priorities
 - Rethinking engagement

- Recasting business and organizational models
- http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/452752/Top_Trends_eGuide.pdf?t=1460649171602
 - Describes top trends in alumni relations
 - Changing landscape
 - No more silos between alumni and rest of university
 - Tailor-made communications
 - Need information in channels where millennials are looking
 - Provide value before asking for money

Millennials

- <https://www.cnbc.com/2016/05/05/millennials-are-prioritizing-experiences-over-stuff.html>
 - Millennials value experiences over stuff; 72% prefer to spend money on experiences
- <https://relate.zendesk.com/articles/millennials-driving-experience-economy/>
 - Millennials care about better human connection, making it personal
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2018/06/04/understanding-the-research-on-millennial-shopping-behaviors/#31a42aef5f7a>
 - Millennials grew up during 9/11, Great Recession, War on Terror, and unlimited access to information
 - Shopping behavior of millennials:
 - Want their purchases to make them feel good
 - Place value on experiences
 - Like sharing with their friends
 - Shop promiscuously
 - Trust peer-generated endorsements
 - Seek relevancy
- <https://www.eab.com/research-and-insights/advancement-forum/expert-insights/2017/millennials-stewardship>
 - Stewardship for repeat donors included certificates and trinkets (72% discarded as soon as they arrive)
 - Millennials seek opportunities with limited availability and short time frames, and then share them → they expect the same from nonprofit interactions
 - Example: Boston College's Presidential Consultation Program gives 60-75 donors an exclusive opportunity to talk with leaders
- <https://www.affirm.com/content/how-millennial-shoppers-make-purchasing-decisions/>
 - Millennials have constant exposure to social media: check phones 43 times/day
 - Budgeting is a way of life
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurenfriedman/2016/08/02/why-nostalgia-marketing-works-so-well-with-millennials-and-how-your-brand-can-benefit/#53ed91f33636>
 - Brands such as Lego, Coca-Cola, and Microsoft use nostalgia marketing to hook millennials
 - Reminding consumers of a positive memory can be a powerful motivator
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/10/03/14-things-to-remember-about-millennials-when-developing-your-marketing-strategy/#6ce28147e16c>
 - Key things to remember when developing marketing strategy towards millennials

- Millennials care about transparency, their values, and are looking for a purpose
 - They need to feel engaged and connected with personally
 - They want exclusive, quality content
 - Millennials are willing to “spread the word” through social media
- https://www.huffingtonpost.com/jacqueline-gualtieri/its-not-just-homesickness_b_6159546.html
 - Millennials have “youthsickness”
- <https://www.newarkadvocate.com/story/news/local/2019/02/16/arnold-millennials-thrive-customer-centric-business/2770076002/>
 - Millennials crave convenience
- <https://blog.accessdevelopment.com/millennials-loyalty-statistics>
 - Statistics about millennials and brand loyalty
- <https://www.adweek.com/creativity/5-ways-marketers-can-successfully-leverage-fomo-amongst-millennials/>
 - 5 ways to create FOMO in consumers
 - show demand, create exclusivity, cultivate competition, create social pressure, bring it to life
- https://eventbrite-s3.s3.amazonaws.com/marketing/Millennials_Research/Gen_PR_Final.pdf
- <https://www.webscribble.com/blog/increase-millennial-memberships-association/>
 - Characteristics of millennials
 - Frugal, tech-savvy, value personal fulfillment, care about connection
 - How to cultivate millennial memberships
 - Tell a story, sell idea of togetherness, use social media, appeal to education
 - Show how organization has a broader purpose
- <https://www.walsworth.com/blog/how-to-engage-millennials-and-boost-association-membership>
 - Smartphones are primary device for 92% of consumers
 - Associations need to be faster and anticipate consumer demands

Subscription Boxes

- <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/high-tech/our-insights/thinking-inside-the-subscription-box-new-research-on-ecommerce-consumers>
 - 15% of consumers have signed up for one or more subscriptions for products
 - Subscribers are more likely to be 25-44, with incomes of \$50k-\$100k
 - Curation services make up 55% of subscriptions, showing personalization is key
- <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/313813>
 - Subscription services focus on products and services that satiate need for experiences
- <https://www.mytotalretail.com/article/merchants-take-note-millennials-are-driving-the-subscription-economy/>
 - Millennials are more likely to have a subscription
 - 92% of millennials have an active subscription service
- <https://www.retaildive.com/news/millennials-more-likely-to-have-a-subscription-service/503809/>
 - Millennials are more likely to have a subscription

- https://www.mden.com/product/ProudBox_University_of_Michigan_Football_Fan_Subscription?PBFAN
 - University of Michigan subscription box
- <https://michigantoday.umich.edu/2016/09/23/mail-order-pride/>
 - University of Michigan ProudBox contents remain a surprise until it arrives
- <https://www.inc.com/melanie-curtin/3-ways-millennials-differ-from-generation-z-in-2019-trends.html>
 - Gen Z and millennials agree on the trend towards subscription boxes, enjoy the data-driven personalization