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Outline for the 1993 National Award Competition for the Outstanding Student-Run Firm

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NOTES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

❖ This project for the University Honors program, is an outline of the award entry for the Best-Run-Student Firm in the nation, for Pyramid Public Relations, which is a part of the Public Relations Students Society of America-Raymond D. Wiley chapter (PRSSA).

This is, as mentioned above, only an outline, as the work done has been assessed for only half the semester. There is much to be completed in the various accounts next semester, which this project does not deal with. This project is to be merely a guide for the actual awards entry in 1993.

At this point, I would like to thank the following people for their invaluable help and encouragement without which, my work at PRSSA would not have been as wonderful an experience as it has been these two years.

Dr. Michael Parkinson, for his advice, encouragement and guidance, Phyllis Fulgaro, for being a friend in need and a wonderful executer of tasks, Kapil Kamal Mehra, for allowing me to use his wonderful computer extensively for this and other projects, my parents and Vijay Sankaran for being constantly supportive.

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PYRAMID PUBLIC RELATIONS

❖ **Pyramid Public Relations** was established in 1980, as a part of the Raymond D. Wiley chapter of PRSSA and holds the distinction of being selected twice as PRSSA's most outstanding. In November, it was chosen as the Outstanding Student Agency sponsored by the St. Louis PRSA for the second straight year.

Pyramid Public Relations is the only student-run PR firm in southern Illinois. It exists under the guidance of faculty and professional advisors. Students are at the same time given the independence to out new and creative ideas in a professional way in one of the the nations most successful student run firms.

Pyramid Public Relations took part in the 1992 National Conference in Kansas City, which SIUC was chosen to host, by helping the chapter put together the closing ceremonies as well by participating with the entire chapter in the overall preparation of the conference.

Pyramid Public Relations always tries to establish a well-rounded client base, by choosing clients from various areas of interest. This year some of the clients are, the Neighborhood Co-op, an environmentally sound grocery, the Pinckneyville/DuQuoin Airport for community service, the Institute of Management Consultants, a national account and the 1992 National Conference closing ceremonies, to foster strong overall team spirit. The accounts this year have both local and national appeal.

Pyramid Public Relations provides various opportunities for students to practice public relations by learning to tackle problems, think critically, execute ideas effectively, and for clients to experience the results and satisfaction of working with a professional team.

Pyramid Public Relations motivates its staff internally by certificates of recognition and awards. Students are taught to deal with deadlines and hold responsibilities while nurturing their confidence and allowing freedom for creative thought.

Pyramid Public Relations pledges its priority to client satisfaction and to meeting their needs in the most efficient and professional way. An agreement is signed prior to beginning work on any account between the client representatives, the Pyramid Account Executive and the Executive Director. This agreement includes, the objectives, timeline for the semester and the budget as agreed to by all the three parties. Through this, the expectations of the clients are understood and the Account Executives take control of their accounts as per the wishes of the clients.

Pyramid Public Relations shows quality client service by carefully selecting and training all new Account Executives prior to starting work. Account Executives are to meet or get in touch with the client every two weeks to update the client.

Pyramid Public Relations encourages active brainstorming during its fortnightly meeting with the entire staff of Pyramid as well as young leaders and dedicated team members.

Pyramid Public Relations is everything and more any student and client can hope to get from a public relations firm.

❖ **Client:** **The 1992 PRSSA National Conference**

Closing Ceremonies

The Raymond D. Wiley chapter was awarded the honor of hosting the 1992 National Conference at Kansas City. Pyramid Public Relations took this opportunity to combine forces with the entire chapter to help the conference organizing committee on particularly, the closing ceremonies, which it took on as an account.

Objective: To plan the closing ceremonies and coordinate the activities for the evening.

Implementation: A 10 minute slide show was presented, showing as many of the people from the 173 chapters as possible. The photos were taken throughout the conference. Speeches were given by the National President as well as the announcement of the 1993 PRSSA National Conference Host. There was also a presentation of the winning 25th anniversary logo. After thanks yous from Colleen McDonough and Jerald Smith, Conference Committee Chairman, the closing flag ceremony followed.

Results: Overall the closing ceremony went off as successfully as expected. There was a lot of enthusiasm among the participants to see the slide show.

Possible reasons why some did not show up could be:

- 1) Being the last day, people felt a need to relax and some to go home.
- 2) Some did not see the need as they were not in either of the competitions.

On the whole, participating in this event enabled the firm to cooperate with the chapter and the chapter to benefit from the firm's input.

❖ Client: **The Institute Of Management**

Consultants (IMC)

The IMC, founded in 1968, is a leading national membership association of individual management consultants. The professionals in IMC are engaged primarily in consulting to management level personnel. Their members are diverse in the sense that they are either sole practitioners or members from smaller firms or individuals from larger firms or consultants from public accounting firms. Each member is affiliated with an IMC chapter which is in turn linked to the national organization. Most of the chapters are in major metropolitan areas.

The Certified Management Consultant (CMC) designation is awarded to consultants who meet the IMC standards of integrity, experience and competence. To become a CMC, an individual needs five years experience as a full-time practitioner of management consulting or to complete a candidate study program (CSP) and get certified with five years of practice. They must also pledge in writing, to a code of ethics, provide six clients and references, five written client summaries and pass a written exam and an oral interview.

Objectives: To increase the recognition of the CMC to that of the CPA. Also, to implement an IMC public recognition program. PPR's objective for the year is to come up with an overall IMC recognition campaign proposal as well as to use the upcoming IMC's 25th anniversary in April 93, as a tool to

promote the CMC to both the consultants as well as potential clients. Hence, there are two accounts with two objectives.

Account team one: The IMC- St. Louis. (General)

The proposal is due in February 1, 1993.

The proposal was delayed due to the chapter's efforts in the National Conference.

Account team two: The IMC-Chicago

The general plan of this account team is to use the IMC's 25th anniversary in April 93, as a vehicle to promote the benefits of the CMC to both the potential clients as well as the consultants in the IMC itself. The team is planning on using several wire services if possible to target the national media.

The proposal will be ready late January, 1993.

❖ **Client: The Pinckneyville/DuQuoine Airport**

Since our last campaign, the hangar was approved and hence, the airport has once again considered Pyramid Public Relations to develop a campaign to further increase the community's support for the airport. A dedication of the hangar is being considered.

Objective: To increase the enthusiasm among private pilots, aviation fans in the area and the community in the airport, thereby causing an increase in the financial support for the airport from the town council.

Ideas for implementation: The enthusiasm for the airport could be increased by planning community activities in the airport where people can come and participate in the fun and games planned for them. This will provide an opportunity for the community to bond with the airport and make it part of their lives in the area.

The account team is presently in the planning stage for this account. Some of the ideas are, to hold an antique airplane show to tie in with the dedication of the hangar and to also have a flea market. The program is being planned for the third Saturday in April 93.

Experimental Airplanes Association could be approached to fly their planes, or a group of individual could be asked to display their airplanes. The account team is presently looking into some hot air balloons. Craft booths as well as a push cart with food items are part of the present plans.

Results: Yet to be seen in April 93.

❖ **Client: The Neighborhood Co-op**

The Neighborhood Co-op is an innovative not-for-profit organization. It sells grocery as well as other products that are environmentally sound and safe. This is a long time account for Pyramid Public Relations as it fulfills our environmental niche, provides valuable consumer experience for the account team. The Co-op has been satisfied with our work for a long time.

Objectives: To produce several advertisements and to develop a newsletter and brochure to promote the upcoming events at the Co-op to the student population at SIUC thereby continuing with the overall objectives of last year, namely, to increase the membership from the present 700.

Implementation: Several press releases and PSA announcements to the radios in the area were distributed at the beginning of the semester to announce the extended hours of the Co-op, an open house and to announce September as the Organic Month. An half page ad was placed in the university's McLeod theatre's program sheet. This ad will be there in all of the theatre's forthcoming events till the end of next semester. Flyers were printed and posted all across campus during the Halloween celebrations to promote the Co-op's largest organic pumpkin, which was grown without using any pesticides or fertilizers. Two ads were also placed in the university's daily newspaper, the Daily Egyptian, promoting the Co-op's one month free membership. The account team is working on a newsletter and brochure that is expected to be out by the beginning of the spring semester.

The monthly newsletter reaches out to all the Coops across the nation and it is to talks about the benefits of hiring student run PR firms, besides other matters.

Results and client evaluation: The account team is presently working on the newsletter and brochure. According to the client, Jane Reh, the overall work of the account team was more than satisfactory. She felt all their goals are successfully being met with the help of the Pyramid account team and was extremely pleased with the ads that were placed as well with all the creative ideas that she was given. She is eagerly looking forward to another semester with Pyramid Public Relations. At the end of the semester, the membership increase will be a mark of the success of the work put in for the Pyramid Public Relations team.

❖ **Possible upcoming projects in Spring 1993.**

Recruitment Brochure: To complete the recruitment brochure started last year.

Pyramid Staff Manual: To update and improve upon the 1992 staff manual.

APPENDIX

❖ PYRAMID'S MOMENTS

APPENDIX 1

This is in the appendix section. Several photographs taken during firm client meetings, during execution of events and activities, Pyramid's general meetings, account team meetings, meeting with reporters, the faculty advisor advising the V.P.O or a senior account executive, account supervisors supervising account teams, team members placing flyers, attending luncheons or when receiving any form of award(s) could be placed. The key here is, I feel, in the ACTION in the photographs. Instead of many individuals posing, several action photos go a long way in showing the enthusiasm, energy and professionalism that goes into this organization. As the saying goes, "a picture speaks a thousand words."

❖ APPENDIX 2, 3, 4 &5

In these sections, in addition to the senior account executives quoting something valuable, it may be good to put some photos of the results-e.g a satisfied client, dedication of the hangar, or a crowded Co-op.

❖ APPENDIX 6

I feel, in here, there should be photographs of clients and their quotes on how they feel about the work Pyramid Public Relations has done.

❖ APPENDIX 7

In this section a photograph of the entire Pyramid Executive Board and some quotes.